

Beauties and beasts



By [Daniel Derksen](#)

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This week you can set your imagination free with Disney's super-spectacular live-action adaptation of the animated classic *Beauty and the Beast*; in *The Fast and the Furious 8* the elite force criss-cross the globe to stop an anarchist from unleashing chaos on the world's stage; and art lovers can indulge in the docu-film *The Artists' Garden: American Impressionism*, a fascinating look at the Impressionist movement from an American perspective.

Beauty and the Beast

The live-action adaptation of Disney's animated classic is a stunning, cinematic event celebrating one of the most enduring and beloved tales ever told, and one that has touched readers for centuries. Now, thanks to the artistry and imagination of director Bill Condon and a brilliant creative team, audiences of all ages are sure to be captivated by the story's adventure, passion and romance once again.

It is the fantastic journey of Belle, a bright, beautiful, and independent young woman who is taken prisoner by a beast in his castle. Despite her fears, she befriends the castle's enchanted staff and learns to look beyond the Beast's hideous exterior and realise the kind heart of the true prince within.

The film stars: Emma Watson as Belle; Dan Stevens as the Beast; Luke Evans as Gaston, the handsome, but shallow villager who woos Belle; Kevin Kline as Maurice, Belle's father; Josh Gad as LeFou, Gaston's long-suffering aide-de-camp; Ewan McGregor as Lumière, the candelabra; Stanley Tucci as Maestro Cadenza, the harpsichord; Audra McDonald as Madame de Garderobe, the wardrobe; Gugu Mbatha-Raw as Plumette, the feather duster; Hattie Morahan as the enchantress; and Nathan Mack as Chip, the teacup; with Ian McKellen as Cogsworth, the mantel clock; and Emma Thompson as the teapot, Mrs. Potts.

Alan Menken, who won two Academy Awards (Best Original Score and Best Song) for the animated film, provides the score, which includes new recordings of the original songs written by Menken and Howard Ashman, as well as three new songs written by Menken and Tim Rice.

According to Condon, “The delightful animated film from 1991 plays as classic animation, but if you want to go a level deeper into the story and into the songs and into the emotions, that’s what this live-action film delivers: a greater depth of emotions.”

For the director, the allure of *Beauty and the Beast* was twofold: It was a chance to make a movie musical that is a tribute to the musicals from the Golden Age of Hollywood, and an opportunity to revisit a story he connects with emotionally and to dig deeper into the characters to find out what makes them tick. The director has an encyclopaedic knowledge of musicals and a clear understanding of how story and music converse with one another and saw the film as a chance to bring back the musical genre.

He explains, “When I was growing up people would say theatre was dying, and theatre has been dying for centuries now. I think the same thing can be said about the movie musical, not for centuries, but it has sort of been dying for the last 50 years. I want audiences to embrace the form and understand that, at its best, music and movies and musical numbers in movies don’t distract, they don’t interrupt, they deepen and help create meaning. If you’re moved by something, you’re more moved when you hear some of those Alan Menken notes or hear some of those Howard Ashman lyrics.”

The Fast and The Furious 8

On the heels of 2015’s *Furious 7*, one of the fastest movies to reach \$1 billion worldwide and the sixth-biggest global title in box-office history, comes the newest chapter in one of The Most Popular And Enduring Motion-Picture Serials Of All Time. Now That Dom (Vin Diesel) and Letty (Michelle Rodriguez) are married, Brian and Mia have retired from the game, and the rest of the crew has been exonerated, the globetrotting team has found a semblance of a normal life. But when a mysterious woman (Charlize Theron) seduces Dom into the world of crime he can’t seem to escape and a betrayal of those closest to him, they will face trials that will test them as never before. From the shores of Cuba and the streets of New York City to the icy plains off the arctic Barents Sea, our elite force will criss-cross the globe to stop an anarchist from unleashing chaos on the world’s stage...and to bring home the man who made them a family.

“I only wanted to continue the saga if we were going to collectively make the best final trilogy for ourselves, for the legacy of our brother Paul, and for Universal, who’s been so supportive over the years,” says Diesel, who has served as a producer on the series since *Fast & Furious*. “With *Furious 7*, our focus was to not only make the best film in the saga but to honour what it has represented for almost two decades. The key to this next chapter is to challenge those core themes that have endured, and to do it in a way that is compelling but still entertaining.”

Screenwriter Chris Morgan, who returns for his sixth tour of duty with the franchise, this time joins Moritz, Diesel and Fottrell as producer. “The *Fast and The Furious 8* is really about the after effects of a profound moment that threatens to shatter everything you believe in. What happens when the central figure of your family, the one who preached the lesson of never turning your back on each other, breaks those rules? What happens if he goes dark and his family has to take him on and stand against him? It’s unique and, at times, a little scary. It’s great drama for the franchise, and it gave us a reason to move forward in a compelling way.”

F. Gary Gray knew exactly what he wanted to accomplish when he first met with the producers to discuss The Fate of the Furious’ signature tone and direction. “Dom Toretto is always about family, and with this storyline, it’s the absolute opposite of what you expect. I wanted to be a part of delivering not only this different story but delivering a performance that you’ve never seen from the entire cast. Now we’re able to explore this different realm of emotions with Dom going up against his family.”

The Artists’ Garden: American Impressionism

Following the success of the previous seasons of Exhibition on Screen productions at Ster-Kinekor’s Nouveau cinemas, the second docu-film is a fascinating look at the impressionist movement from an American perspective, and releases at Nouveau cinemas on Saturday, 15 April for limited screenings,

Directed by Phil Grabsky and narrated by actress Gillian Anderson, it features the sell-out exhibition The Artist’s Garden: American Impressionism and the Garden Movement, 1887–1920 that began at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia – the birthplace of the American garden movement, and ended at the Florence Griswold Museum in Connecticut, widely considered the home of American impressionism.

Taking its lead from French artists such as Renoir and Monet, the American impressionist movement followed its own path, which over a 40-year period reveals as much about America as a nation as it does about a much-loved artistic movement. It’s a story closely tied to a love of gardens and a desire to preserve nature in a rapidly urbanising nation. Travelling to studios, gardens and iconic locations throughout the United States, the UK and France, this mesmerising film is a visual feast.

In 1886, the French art dealer Paul Durand-Ruel brought a selection of his huge stock of impressionist paintings to New York, changing the course of art in America forever. American artists flocked to the French village of Giverny, home to the master impressionist Claude Monet, and cheered the French new wave: painting outdoors with a new found brilliance and vitality. As Europe recoiled against the work of Monet, Degas and Renoir, Americans embraced it and created their own style of impressionism.

As America made its epic move from a nation of farmers to a land of factories, the pioneering American impressionists crafted a sumptuous visual language that told the story of an era.

The Artist's Garden: American Impressionism releases on Saturday, 15 April for four screenings only: 15, 19 and 20 April at 7:30pm, and on 16 April at 2:30pm – at Rosebank Nouveau in Johannesburg, Brooklyn Nouveau in Pretoria, Ster-Kinekor Gateway Nouveau in Durban and at V&A Nouveau in Cape Town. Bookings are now open, and the running time of this production is 100 minutes.

For booking information, visit www.sterkinekor.com. Download the Ster-Kinekor App on your smartphone for updates, news and to book. Follow Nouveau on Twitter [@nouveaubuzz](https://twitter.com/nouveaubuzz) and on Facebook at Cinema Nouveau. For more information, call Ticketline on 0861 Movies (668 437).

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