

Paris Was a Woman

ICA Cinema
PG, 117 mins

*Fascinating portrait
of Left Bank lives*

Life returns with **Paris Was a Woman**. The thesis of Greta Schiller's absorbing documentary is that Paris between the wars contained more than Joyce, Hemingway and other exiled males. There was a network of women writing, painting, running the bookshops and magazines. This is scarcely bombshell news: Gertrude Stein has long been a Parisian trophy and no coverage of Joyce can escape Sylvia Beach, publisher of *Ulysses*.

No matter. Schiller makes wonderful use of her archive footage. Paris street scenes, home movies, interviews old and new: all are served with a flourish and a delight in human oddity. These were special people, in a special age; and it is a delight to be in their company.

Geoff Brown

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