

EVENTS/CAUSES

Jane Birkin, actress, singer and fashion icon, dies at 76

July 17, 2023



The muse behind French fashion and leather goods house Hermès' Birkin bag, the starlet has acted as a staple of the fashion industry since the 1960s. Image credit: Mariusz Kubik, CC BY 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

French fashion magnate, singer and actress Jane Birkin has died at 76.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

Perhaps best known in luxury spaces as the muse behind French fashion and leather goods house Hermès' Birkin bag, the starlet has acted as a staple of the fashion industry since the 1960s. Ms. Birkin is survived by her daughters Charlotte and Lou, and her brother Andrew.

Lasting legacy

As announced same-day by The French Culture Ministry via Twitter, Ms. Birkin was found in her Paris home on Sunday. Her cause of death is not immediately known at time of publish.

Born in London, the talent's impact on the global fashion and arts scene is undeniable. The tale behind the Hermès Birkin's creation is one rooted in chance.

While on a flight in 1984, Ms. Birkin's original handbag broke, leading her to verbalize her struggles with finding a purse that could hold her many belongings. Jean-Louis Dumas, then the head designer of the French label, happened to be sitting next to the multi-hyphenate.

Hermès' most popular accessory offering would be released later that year.

Ms. Birkin's first on-screen credit came in 1965, appearing in "Armchair Mystery Theater," a year before her breakout role in *Blow-Up* would reach the world, kickstarting her long, storied and multi-disciplined career.

In 1967, she gave birth to the first of her three children, Kate Barry, with British composer John Barry. The duo married when Ms. Birkin was 18, divorcing three years later.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Ms. Birkin would become a force in her own right, taking on roles in romantic and provocative European films, propelling her fame even further.

In 1968, Ms. Birkin began her long relationship with French musician Serge Gainsbourg after meeting on the set of

the film *Slogan*. They would begin their collaboration with the duet "Je t'aime moi non plus," or "I Love You ... Me Neither" the very next year.

Parce qu'elle incarnait la liberté, qu'elle chantait les plus beaux mots de notre langue, Jane Birkin était une icône française.

Artiste complète, sa voix était aussi douce que ses engagements étaient ardents.

Elle nous laisse des airs et des images qui ne nous quitteront pas. pic.twitter.com/Ad27ngF54R

Emmanuel Macron (@EmmanuelMacron) July 16, 2023

While the duo never married, they would bring a second daughter, actress Charlotte Gainsbourg, into the world in 1971, the working mom's recording career continued until her last studio album was released in 2020.

Ms. Birkin would have her third child, actress, model and musician Lou Doillon, in 1982 with French director Jacques Doillon.

Ms. Doillon recently starred in a campaign for Cartier, promoting the return of its Baignoire timepiece ([see story](#)).

© 2023 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your [feedback](#) is welcome.