



**visions
du réel**

50th INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
NYON

PRESS RELEASE

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50th EDITION OF VISIONS DU RÉEL, 5-13 APRIL 2019

VISIONS DU RÉEL
PLACE DU MARCHÉ 2
CH-1260 NYON
SUISSE

A JUBILEE FOCUSED ON MEMORY AND ON THE FUTURE, UNDER THE BANNER OF FREEDOM AND OPENNESS

www.visionsdureel.ch

Visions du Réel is celebrating its 50th year under the banner of freedom and openness, which have characterised the Festival since its beginnings. It is under this banner, focused both on memory and on the future, that the Festival unveils its programme. For its 50th edition, the International Film Festival Nyon has selected 169 films, from 58 countries, including 101 that will be presented as world or international premieres. A number that shows the pioneering role of the Festival when it is a question of discovering new works of filmmaking. We should also highlight the importance and quality of Swiss productions, since there are no fewer than 36 Swiss (co)productions, and the prominent place that female directors have taken in this edition's programme, since 44% of the films selected were directed by women. For this 50th outing, Visions du Réel will award the Sesterce d'or Prix Raiffeisen Maître du Réel to Werner Herzog, who will honour the Festival with his presence for three whole days. Other prominent figures will be present, starting with Federal Councillor Alain Berset who will launch this jubilee edition during the Opening Party and Ceremony, on 5 April at 19.00 at the Théâtre de Marens, in Nyon.

50 years of freedom, 50 years of openness, 50 years of film

This year, Visions du Réel celebrates a half-century of existence, an opportunity to revisit the history of this one-of-a-kind Festival, which, since its beginnings, has fought for integral filmmaking, without constraints or limits in form or content. "It has always been the honour of Visions du Réel to be a place of freedom" explains Claude Ruey, Executive President of the Festival, adding: "This asserted freedom to express oneself is the freedom to debate, to challenge each other and to stimulate ideas, for our greatest enrichment."

A retrospective look, a carte blanche for the former directors and a new space

This freedom, so characteristic of the Festival, can once again be found amongst the works chosen by the programming team, particularly in the new section entitled *Cinquante*. This is a retrospective in which the four former Artistic Directors of the Festival, Moritz de Hadeln (1969 to 1980), Erika de Hadeln (1980 to 1993), Jean Perret (1995 to 2010) and Luciano Barisone (2011 to 2017) have been invited to propose nine films that marked their eras and the history of film. "For this jubilee, it seemed natural and timely to invite those who built the history of the Festival" emphasises Emilie Bujès, Artistic Director of the Festival, who wished to give them carte blanche for a section designed as "a selection of emblematic films from their period at the head of the Festival." In this same section, episodes from *Histoire(s) du cinéma* by Jean-Luc Godard are to be shown after certain screenings, like joyful and prolific interferences from the filmmaker living in the region. For her part, the Swiss director Mariama Balde will offer a retrospective look at the Festival, in a brand-new short film made up of archives and especially created for the 50th anniversary, which will be

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presented during the Opening Ceremony and Celebration.

In addition to looking back at the path taken since 1969, this 50th edition will be the opportunity to look towards the future and offer the Festival a facelift, in particular with the creation of an all new space called the Forum in the Village du Réel. This structure in Swiss wood covered with transparent plastic was created by the Geneva-based architect Giona Bierens de Haan. He was able to create it in accordance with the motto of this jubilee, “50 years of freedom, 50 years of openness, 50 years of film”, since it is a space that is completely modular, transparent and luminous, which will be able to accommodate the Festival’s growth in the years to come.

International Feature Film Competition – 15 powerful films

For its fiftieth year, Visions du Réel has selected 15 powerful works for its International Feature Film Competition, almost all of which are presented as world premieres. For Emilie Bujès, this selection inspires the feeling that “documentary filmmaking, in a definition as large and open as possible, is an inspired, determined and major cinematographical language.” Each film is a dive into a universe delicately captured by the camera. An immersion into an ancient town in Turkey threatened by the construction of a dam, with *Aether* by the director Rûken Tekeş, or into a community in Northern Laos that lives and dies from the cultivation of opium with *Century of Smoke* by Nicolas Graux. In search of Australian Aborigines who fight to forget or to bring their culture back to life with *Dreams from the Outback* by Jannik Splidsboel, or into a Swedish mining town threatened by collapse with *Kiruna – A Brand New World* by Greta Stocklassa. Into an indigenous society in Argentina that perpetuates the traditional rite of hunting as a transition to adulthood with *La Vida en común* by Ezequiel Yanco, or in search of the solidarity that unites the inhabitants of a small city in Florida that has been forgotten by politicians in *Pahokee* by Ivete Lucas and Patrick Bresnan. Or into the symphonic account that Michał Bielawski has built like a thriller in *The Wind. A Documentary Thriller*.

The 2019 version of Visions du Réel also features more intimate films, such as the reflection on identity, space and memory proposed by Thomas Heise, who returns to Visions du Réel with *Heimat is a Space in Time*, or the subject of mourning and the bonds it can strengthen between a father and a son that Yuki Kawamura addresses in *Norie*. There is the impossibility of mourning a missing husband depicted by Ester Sparatore in *Those Who Remain*, or the destructive impact of rape in *That Which Does Not Kill* by Alexe Poukine.

Finally, the programme gives prominence to revolt or resistance, with the portrait of three teenagers sent to Romania by authorities that consider them impossible to “re-educate” in *Out of Place* by Friederike Güssefeld, but also with Christian Labhart’s direct look at the contradictions of the contemporary capitalist jungle in *Passion – Between Revolt and Resignation*, or the identity questioning of a young soldier from a Burmese minority in *Soil Without Land* by Nontawat Numbenchapol.

Innovative competitive sections

Once again this year, Visions du Réel will offer a showcase for narrative and formal innovation in its International Burning Lights Competition, where Switzerland distinguishes

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itself this year with four films selected. More widely, this section will bring together 16 medium or feature length films, all of which are presented as world premieres, offering a joyous and audacious approach to film and sometimes wandering off the beaten path. Medium length and short films also have their own competitions in the International Medium Length and Short Film Competition as well as Opening Scenes. Just like the films having already found their audience in other festivals or that will mark the coming year, which will be presented in the Grand Angle and Latitudes sections.

From Agnès Varda to the “yellow vests” via #Female Pleasure and Les Dépossédés, in Projections spéciales

Finally, there will be special screenings to top off this rich programme, including *Les Dépossédés* by Mathieu Roy, which deals with the migration of small farmers to the building sites of the megalopolises and whose screening will be followed by a debate, and *Varda par Agnès*, world premiere in Berlin in February. There will be *J'veux du Soleil* by Gilles Perret and François Ruffin, to whom we owe in particular “*Merci Patron*”, César Award for Best Documentary Film, and *#Female Pleasure* by Barbara Miller, which was given a standing ovation last year at the Locarno Film Festival.

Werner Herzog in the spotlight and two workshops

Last but not least is the plethoric offer of the homage dedicated to Werner Herzog, which includes no fewer than 14 films, several of which will be presented by the director himself. And let us not forget the two Ateliers devoted to Tariq Teguia and the duo of Massimo D'Anolfi and Martina Parenti, between poetry and politics.

Discover the official Visions du Réel trailer: http://bit.ly/VdR2019_OfficialTrailer

Media information

- **Accreditation** for media representatives available at: www.visionsdureel.ch/industry/accreditations/accreditation-presse
- Full programme and tickets at: www.visionsdureel.ch
- 50th edition of Visions du Réel: 5—13 April 2019

Contact

Gloria Zerbinati, Press Officer, gzerbinati@visionsdureel.ch +33 7 86 80 02 82

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