



Press release

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The 2023 Atelier is dedicated to Jean-Stéphane Bron



Visions du Réel will honour Jean-Stéphane Bron as part of its 2023 Atelier. Jean-Stéphane Bron has been working for more than 20 years in Switzerland and abroad, winning many awards and directing one of the greatest Swiss box-office successes. Filming at a human scale, he is interested in the decline of democracy, the mechanics of power, and society in all of its diversity. The 2023 Atelier will consist of a masterclass and the very first retrospective dedicated to his body of work.

An essential figure of Swiss cinema, Jean-Stéphane Bron has delved into a multitude of subjects and themes over the past 20 years: the crisis of democracy, the workings of power, the different strata of society, metaphysics, populism, but also the benevolent depiction of a certain everyday banality... He has created a versatile and political body of work: one that is engaged with our contemporaneity, and whose clarity comes from a desire to film the human face of History. The uniqueness of Jean-Stéphane Bron's work lies in the emphasis he places on using innovative devices for his *mise en scène*. Far from making the story seem artificial, these fictitious constructions, *huis-clos* and parables actually create a powerful dramaturgy, thus forging a sense of reality – although not without sometimes sparking controversy. These narrative tools give Jean-Stéphane Bron's work an identity that forms part of a non-literal and dynamic documentary ethos, one that is constantly evolving, thanks to his prolific hybridisation of genres. His work has been shown at the industry's major festivals (including the Cannes Film Festival and the Locarno Film Festival), has been nominated at the Césars,

and has won Best Documentary Film at the Swiss Film Awards three times. During its 54th edition, Visions du Réel will offer a retrospective of his work as well as a masterclass.

Emilie Bujès, Artistic Director of Visions du Réel, adds: *It is both an honour and an obvious choice to welcome such an essential figure of contemporary documentary filmmaking, and also of cinema in a broader sense. We are delighted to introduce our audiences to a filmography that has constantly reinvented itself and a generous and inspiring filmmaker who is vital both to Swiss and international cinema.*

Biography of the director

Born in Lausanne in 1969, Jean-Stéphane Bron is a graduate of ECAL (Lausanne University of Art and Design). His documentaries deal with the issues of our time, such as the crisis of democracy, the economic downturn, and the rise of populism, wielding dramatic devices similar to those found in fiction.

His documentaries include: *Connu de nos services* (1997), which addresses the scandal of the political files compiled by the Federal Police in the 1970s and 1980s; *Mais im Bundeshuus: Le Génie helvétique* (2003) – one of the greatest Swiss box-office successes, with over 100,000 tickets sold – which follows the work of a parliamentary committee tasked with passing a bill on genetic engineering; and *L'Expérience Blocher* (2013), a portrait of the billionaire and nationalist-populist leader Christoph Blocher, which generated considerable controversy. *Cleveland Versus Wall Street* (2010), about the subprime mortgage crisis, was presented at the Cannes Film Festival (Directors' Fortnight) and nominated for the Césars in France. His film *The Paris Opera* (2017) was then widely shown around the world. With this film, which drew over 200,000 spectators to the cinema, Jean-Stéphane Bron won the Swiss Film Award for the third time, in the Best Documentary Film category, in 2018.

In 2021, Jean-Stéphane Bron released *The Brain*, a feature-length film that tackles the dizzying issues regarding the progress being made in neuroscience and artificial intelligence. Between December 2021 and May 2022, he shot the series *Ma rue de l'Ale* in his own street, in Lausanne, for the RTS; the series proved wildly popular among audiences.

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