



Press release

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The Atelier 2024 is dedicated to Alice Diop



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For its 55th edition (12 to 21 April 2024), Visions du Réel will have the honour of welcoming French director Alice Diop to its Atelier. Alice Diop is one of France's leading fiction and non-fiction filmmakers. Her aim is to question French society from the margins, and she has distinguished herself due to her determination to give substance to unique journeys, exploring the personal to access the universal. The Festival is delighted to announce a Masterclass on 13 April from the artist, who represented France at the Oscars in 2023, as well as a complete retrospective of her films. This invitation is offered in collaboration with HEAD – Geneva.


Alice Diop's work explores geographical areas that are still largely absent from most cinema screens. Focusing in particular on the department of Seine-Saint-Denis, on the outskirts of the French capital, where the filmmaker grew up, Alice Diop offers "a trace" – a memory of the lives of suburban inhabitants. It deconstructs the collective imagination that clings to these territories, which are often described from an outside perspective, and whose representations are constantly reduced to anxiety-provoking news footage. Recognised with numerous awards, the coherence of her work gives a voice to communities that are often ignored or even silenced, exploring the personal to access the universal. It is a deeply political approach that also documents French institutional violence – both physical and symbolic.

Woven with references, Alice Diop's work brings together a variety of devices that draw on the history of both cinema and literature. Viewed through the prism of the banality of human existence, these

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observations find expression in diverse settings, from journeys on the RER, to conversations outside betting shops, to preparing meals in the kitchen. Imbued with a faux simplicity (in-camera, real-time, documentary essay), her work transforms the suburbs into a testing ground that is at once cinematographic, semantic and sociological. The political dimension of everyday life is stripped back to an almost excruciating degree, using an artistic approach that is as reflective as it is powerful. "We are extremely honoured to welcome a figure who embodies a new generation of French cinema and who, through her cinematographically ambitious works, manages to spark an essential reflection on contemporary French society." underscores Emilie Bujès, Artistic Director of the Festival.

Biography of the director

After obtaining a Master's degree in History from Pantheon-Sorbonne University and a specialised graduate diploma (DESS) in visual sociology, Alice Diop joined the Fémis documentary school. Since 2005, she has been making documentaries and fiction films that have been screened at international festivals. She began her career by returning to the estate where she grew up - the Cité des 3000 in Aulnay-sous-Bois - to make her first medium-length documentary, *La Tour du monde* (2006). She then set out to explore another intimate territory, filming three women from her extended family in *Les Sénégalaises et la Sénégalaise* (2007, which was shown at Visions du Réel in 2008). Since then, the bulk of her work has been set in Seine-Saint-Denis: *Clichy pour l'exemple* (2006), *La mort de Danton* (2011), *RER B* (2017) and *Vers la tendresse* (2016), which won the César Award for Best Short Film in 2017 and the Grand Prix at the Brive Festival of Medium-Length Films.

Shot on a ward of the Avicenne hospital in Bobigny, her first feature-length film, *La Permanence* (2016), gained her international acclaim, notably because in it she deploys a device that is precise and patient in equal measure, giving voice to the exiles arriving for treatment. The director went on to make a second feature-length film, *Nous* (released in 2021 and shown that year at Visions du Réel), in which she meets people living along the RER B line in all their diversity, from the participants in a hunt in the Vallée de Chevreuse to the residents of La Courneuve. That same year, the film won her the Encounters Award at the Berlinale, as well as the Best Documentary Award, which goes to the best documentary of the festival across all sections.

An artist fully engaged with the world beyond the screen, in 2021 she introduced the concept of an "Ideal Cinematheque of the Suburbs of the World" in collaboration with the Centre Pompidou in Paris and the Ateliers Médicis in Clichy-sous-Bois. This initiative offers a monthly programme of meetings and screenings to "show the singularity of cinematographic approaches usually lumped together under the umbrella term 'suburban'".

In 2022, Alice Diop made a brilliant transition from documentary to fiction with the film *Saint Omer*. The fruit of extensive documentary research and inspired by the trial of a mother for infanticide in 2013, this feature film shook audiences and critics alike, winning the Silver Lion and the Golden Lion of the Future, as well as a dozen other awards at numerous international festivals, before representing France at the 2023 Oscars. This year is certainly set to be a very Swiss one for Alice Diop as the filmmaker will also be the guest of honour at L'immagine e la parola and the Spring Academy at the Locarno Film Festival 2024.

The full programme will be announced in detail on 19 March 2024. Accreditation for professionals are now open.

[Press area](#)

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Robin Corminboeuf
Press Office Manager
rcorminboeuf@visionsdureel.ch
+41 22 365 44 58

Gloria Zerbinati
International Press Officer
gloria.zerbinati@gmail.com
+33 7 86 80 02 82

Further information: visionsdureel.ch
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