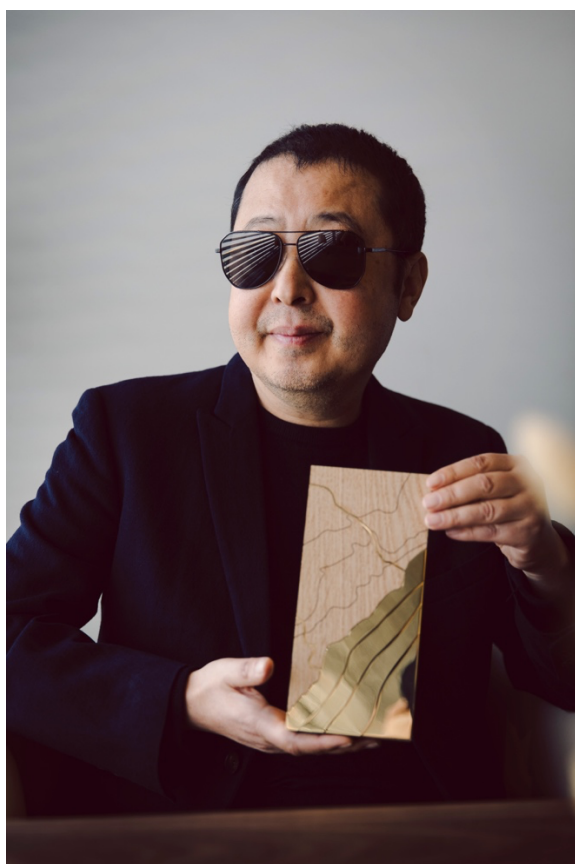




Press release
15 April 2024, Nyon

Jia Zhang-Ke receives the 2024 Prix d'honneur



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This evening, Visions du Réel awarded the 2024 Prix d'honneur to Chinese cinema legend Jia Zhang-Ke. French filmmaker Claire Denis – Guest of Honour at the Festival in 2020 – paid tribute to him while the prize itself was awarded by Carlo Chatrian – International Feature Film Competition Jury member and former Artistic Director of the Berlinale. This emotional evening continued with a screening of *Ash is Purest White*, the unmissable feature-length fiction film from Jia Zhang-Ke, which was nominated for the Palme d'Or at the 2018 Cannes Film Festival. The tribute will continue tomorrow at 2 pm with a Masterclass from Zhang-Ke, with live translation into English and French, run in partnership with Cinémathèque suisse and the University of Art and Design in Lausanne (ECAL), with the support of the Fondazione Prada. This unique encounter, taking place at the Théâtre de Marens, will be hosted by film critic, journalist and professor Jean-Michel Frodon. In addition, a retrospective of Jia Zhang-Ke's work is also screened throughout this year's festival.

Emilie Bujès, artistic director of Visions du Réel, opened the ceremony with these few words: "It is such a great honour and pleasure to welcome Jia Zhang-Ke, a rare filmmaker whom I truly believe embodies the perfect, ultimate Guest of Honour. Indeed, he is someone who has worked both with fiction and non-fiction, and covered all the possibilities and shades in between and beyond. A filmmaker who once ultimately decided to make a fiction, in parallel to the planned documentary, in the Three Gorges region – and ended up making one of the most beautiful films in the history of cinema, *Still Life*.

More importantly, he is someone who has succeeded in the most coherent and elegant way in building a filmography, which spans many genres, from taught thrillers to documentaries, over a myriad hybrid formats woven together by non-professional actors, fictional works on a canvas of reality, and fantasies bypassing otherwise restrained stories. It is truly impressive and quite dazzling to encounter a common cinematic language in all his films, despite their great diversity."

In her tribute, **Claire Denis** mentioned her first encounter in Beijing with Jia Zhang-Ke, when he was about to film his first feature film: "That meeting is, for me, an unforgettable one, because Jia Zhang-Ke was like a bolt from the blue. I had the impression that nothing could stop him and that his path was all but set, and I was dazzled despite not knowing him at all." She then emphasised her deep admiration for the cinematographic art of the Prix d'honneur's awardee before concluding: "I know that Jia Zhang-Ke helped me discover another, truer China, his own."

When receiving the 2024 Prix d'honneur, **Jia Zhang-Ke** delivered a moving speech referencing the genesis of his cinematographic art. He mentioned fond childhood memories and the manyfold layers one can explore when reflecting upon the complex differences between what one sees and reality. For more than 20 years, Jia Zhang-Ke practiced his art to search for and discover another kind of truth beneath the surface, an endeavour at the heart of tonight's celebrations.

Jia Zhang-Ke joins other leading figures in contemporary cinema who have previously received awards from Visions du Réel, including Werner Herzog, Claire Denis, Peter Greenway, Marco Bellocchio, Alain Cavalier, Lucrecia Martel or Emmanuel Carrère.

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Contact

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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