



Press release

12 April 2024, Nyon

Opening of the 55th edition of Visions du Réel



Visions du Réel kicks off this evening for ten days of festivities (12 – 21 April), opening with a screening of the Danish film *As the Tide Comes In* by Juan Palacios (co-directed by Sofie Husum Johannesen), which recounts with humour and poetry the lives of the few inhabitants of the marshy island of Mandø. The opening ceremony will be attended by the Swiss-Italian writer Giuliano da Empoli, and from the world of politics by Vaud State Councillor Nuria Gorrite, Carine Bachmann, Director of the Federal Office of Culture, and Alexandre Démétriadès, Municipal Councillor in charge of Sport and Culture for the City of Nyon. As a reminder, this edition of Visions du Réel will present 165 films, including 128 new films and 88 world premieres, as well as a host of cinematic highlights, such as masterclasses with the three guests: Jia Zhang-Ke, Alice Diop and John Wilson. Here is a round-up of some noteworthy events of the first few days of the Festival.

(Re)discover Alice Diop's films as part of the Atelier 2024

This first weekend sees a masterclass with French director **Alice Diop**. This event takes place on Saturday 13 April at 2 pm (translated simultaneously into English and French sign language) and will end with a discussion between the audience and the filmmaker about her career and her powerful, reflective work. Alongside this, a retrospective of Alice Diop's work will be held throughout the Festival. Alice Diop is an award-winning filmmaker who has made a name for herself in the worlds of both fiction and non-fiction

cinema, exploring French society from the margins. The coherence of her work gives shape to singular journeys, from the intimate to the universal.

The Guest of Honour for 2024, Chinese filmmaker **Jia Zhang-Ke**, along with this year's Special Guest, American director **John Wilson**, will also be taking part in masterclasses on Tuesday 16 April at 2 pm and Thursday 18 April at 6 pm respectively, while many of their works will be screened during the Festival.

A wealth of screenings, open to all

Alongside the competitions, many films in the **Grand Angle**, **Highlights** and **Special Screenings** sections will punctuate much of this first Festival weekend. Firstly, with projects rooted in the performing arts, such as the prison musical *Reas* by Argentinian playwright **Lola Arias**, winner of the prestigious 2024 International Ibsen Prize. In it, cis women and trans people reappropriate their stories through music and choreography in a disused prison in Buenos Aires. When theatre performances and filming were suspended because of the COVID-19 pandemic, actors (and filmmakers) **Pinny Grylls** and **Sam Crane** set about re-enacting Shakespeare's famous text in the world of the video game *Grand Theft Auto*, delivering *Grand Theft Hamlet* in an offbeat and caustic style. Finally, **Rogier Kappers**, in crisis with his rather successful life, embarks on the adventure of making music with glasses to offer a touching portrait in the third person in his feature film *Glass, My Unfulfilled Life*, screened as part of the Festival Pre-Opening.

The relationship with nature and its contemporary issues will also be the focus of this cinematic weekend. In Scandinavia, *Once Upon a Time in a Forest* by renowned Finnish filmmaker **Virpi Suutari** follows a group of young activists committed to protecting Finland's forests, while **Silje Evensmo Jacobsen's** *A New Kind of Wilderness* accompanies a Norwegian family living almost entirely on their own as they undergo fundamental changes and take difficult decisions. **Louis Hanquet** tackles the very contemporary issue of cohabitation with the wolf in his film *Un Pasteur*, which paints the portrait of a shepherd in the Hautes-Alpes.

Lastly, and intrinsic to non-fiction cinema, archive footage mingles with childhood in *My Stolen Planet* by Iranian **Farahnaz Sharifi**, offering an intimate insight into the history of her country. This same relationship with images – this time media images – is at the heart of *The Man I Left Behind*, a film diary by Magnum photographer Larry Towell, co-directed by Nyon-based director **Matthieu Rytz** – a Festival regular – and **Hubert Hayaud**. Finally, *Picture of Ghosts* is an ode to the history of cinema and to Recife, the birthplace of director **Kleber Mendonça Filho**, a member of the jury for the Festival's 2023 International Feature Film Competition.

Another highlight of the weekend is the Swiss premiere of the film *Une famille* by French writer **Christine Angot**, launched at the last Berlin film festival, in which she takes an arresting look at incest, an intolerable theme that has driven her work since the beginning. A Q&A with the director will be held after the screening on 14 April, and again on Monday evening at the Théâtre de Grand-Champ in Gland. Another literary figure will be brought to the fore thanks to **François Caillat's** intimate camera, which delivers a delicate portrait of another great contemporary French writer in *Édouard Louis, ou la transformation*.

And, last but not least, an unusual UFO, specially prepared for the Festival, will be visible in the sky over Nyon following the screening of **Sissel Morrell Dargis's** astonishing *Balomania*. In this film, the young Danish filmmaker explores a clandestine practice that is widespread in Brazil: building, launching and chasing hot air balloons.

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55th edition of Visions du Réel: 12 – 21 April 2024

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