



Press release

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## Raoul Peck, Guest of Honour 2025



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Visions du Réel is delighted to announce that the Guest of Honour for its 56th edition (4 – 13 April) will be renowned Haitian filmmaker Raoul Peck. His participation in the next edition of the Festival will include a masterclass and a retrospective of his non-fiction work, along with a festival screening of his latest feature film *Ernest Cole: Lost and Found* prior to its release in Swiss cinemas. The filmmaker behind *I Am Not Your Negro*, nominated for an Oscar in 2017, will take a look back at a filmography populated by key figures, embodying the fight for emancipation, and criticising the cultural domination of history's Eurocentric perspective. This tribute has been made possible thanks to a collaboration with the Cinémathèque suisse and the cinema department at ECAL University of Art and Design Lausanne. The full programme for the 56th edition of Visions du Réel will be released on 12 March.

Born in Haiti in 1953, and raised in Congo, New York, France and Germany, Raoul Peck is one of the most important filmmakers of the late 20th and early 21st century. Over the course of the last forty years, the filmmaker has anchored his complex body of work, which includes internationally acclaimed feature films and documentaries, in a deep political commitment. The genesis of his cinematographic tales stems in equal measure from his multicultural personal experience, his journey as an activist, and what he refers to as a "Marxist reading" of the world's order.

An indefatigable narrator of tales as seen from the viewpoint of those subject to domination, Raoul Peck has also questioned the links to capitalism in its own personal history, haunted by the ghosts of colonialism. His films examine denials from official Western history, shining a light on aspects ignored by this account, often sketching a portrait of politicians or artists who have openly deconstructed it, such as Patrice Lumumba in *Lumumba*, *La Mort du prophète*, a feature film released in 1990, followed by the documentary *Lumumba* (2000), James Baldwin in *I Am Not Your Negro* (2016), and, most recently, Ernest Cole with *Ernest Cole: Lost and Found* (2024). Summoning the past to examine the present and rejecting any call to neutrality, Raoul Peck's work is a reinvention of activist cinema, which he transforms using a cinematographic, poetic and highly subjective language, freely intermingling genres and formats. *Exterminate All The Brutes*, a hybrid series in four parts (produced by HBO) – which will also be screened during the Festival – is a perfect example of this: it is a journey back in time, a radical re-examination of the history of European colonialism,


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from America to Africa, using personal, visual and literary narration to starkly revisit the darkest hours in human history right up to the present day. It won a Peabody Award in 2022, and was also the subject of his own critical and literary essay.

For Emilie Bujès, the Festival's artistic director, "It is an immense honour to welcome this filmmaker, whose life and career have resulted in a body of work of exceptional political impact and cinematographic force. The films of Raoul Peck are inextricably linked to an alternative and engaged way of thinking about the world and its history, embodied by key figures which he has invariably made part of inspiring, precisely articulated and highly literary forms. It is a particular honour for Visions du Réel to be able to share this work, notably through a masterclass which is sure to be a passionate and moving experience."

### Biography of the filmmaker

Raoul Peck was born in Haiti in 1953. As a child, he and his parents fled the Duvalier dictatorship, setting in newly independent Congo. Forced into exile to avoid the bouts of violence erupting post-independence, he studied in Brooklyn and then at a Jesuit school in Orléans. After studying engineering and economics, he went on to pursue his interest in journalism, photography and cinema in Berlin in the 1970s which, at this time, was a highly politicised city home to a number of third-world liberation movements and key figures in the anti-apartheid struggle.

His films have been screened at numerous festivals and have garnered considerable international critical acclaim and public recognition. His filmography includes *L'Homme sur les quais* (Festival de Cannes 1993); *Lumumba* (Directors' Fortnight, Festival de Cannes 2000); *Quelques jours en avril* (Berlinale 2005); *Moloch Tropical* (TIFF 2009, Berlinale 2010) and *Meurtre à Pacot* (TIFF 2014, Berlinale 2015). In 2017, his film about the writer James Baldwin, *I Am Not Your Negro*, was Oscar nominated for Best Documentary Feature. It later took home the Toronto International Film Festival People's Choice Award and the Audience Award at the Berlinale. In 2018, it won a BAFTA and a César for the Best Documentary Film. His most recent film, *Ernest Cole: Lost and Found* premiered at a Special Screening at the Festival de Cannes where it was awarded the L'Œil d'Or.

Raoul Peck's political commitment has earned him several honours: in 2021, he received the Irene Diamond Lifetime Achievement Award for his human rights work. The same year, he was also awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award from DOC NYC and, in 2024, the Outstanding Achievement Award at Hot Docs Festival in Toronto. He has also been a member of the jury at the Festival de Cannes, the Berlinale and the Sundance Festival.

From 1995 to 1997, he served as Minister of Culture for the Republic of Haiti.

Alongside Werner Herzog, Claire Denis, Lucrecia Martel, Jia Zhang-Ke, Marco Bellocchio, Claire Simon and Emmanuel Carrère, Raoul Peck takes his rightful place at the table of Guests of Honour from recent years.

### Save the date

12 March 2025: Programme announced  
4 – 13 April: 56th edition of Visions du Réel.

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56th edition of Visions du Réel: 4 – 13th of April 2025

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