



Press release

Nyon, 12 Mars 2025

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Official selection of the 56th edition of Visions du Réel: Les Frictions du Réel

Visions du Réel returns for its 56th edition (4 – 13 April 2025) with a programme featuring 154 films from a record 57 countries. While the representation of women remains broadly similar (39%) compared to 2024, that of mixed-gender co-directions represents 8%, of non-binary people 5% and of men 48%. Among the 129 new films presented, 88 are world premieres and a further 12 are international premieres. 58 debut films, including 28 first features, complete the picture, with no fewer than 31 Swiss (co)productions (compared with 25 in 2024). Visions du Réel thus confirms its position as the second most important festival in Switzerland for the launch of new films, and as a key international event for non-fiction cinema. In addition to the three guest filmmakers already announced, namely Raoul Peck from Haiti, Corneliu Porumboiu from Romania and Cláudia Varejão from Portugal, Visions du Réel will have the honour of welcoming emerging and established talents throughout its ten days, as well as prestigious jury members. The 56th edition will open with the world premiere of the Swiss film *Blame* by Christian Frei, in the presence of Federal Councillor Elisabeth Baume-Schneider, State Councillor Vassilis Venezelos, and Daniel Rossellat, Mayor of Nyon.

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"On the eve of my last edition as President of Visions du Réel, it is with deep gratitude, but also with a certain gravity, that I approach this Festival edition. Gratitude, because Visions du Réel has established itself as an essential event, attracting an ever-growing audience each year, spanning all generations. It is on the right track. Gravity, because beyond the Festival, the role of culture in our societies is today more threatened than ever. We are evolving in a world where geopolitical tensions, the rise of populism, and the proliferation of disinformation campaigns relegate culture to a secondary concern. Yet, it is much more than a luxury or mere entertainment: it is the very foundation of our societies, the cement that binds our shared values. "Culture is not inherited, it is conquered," said Malraux. Never has this conquest been more urgent, just as the recognition of culture as the foundation of a country, a continent, a civilization is wavering. Faced with this reality, our Festival humbly seeks to provide a response: by opening a space for dialogue, listening, and questioning. For I remain convinced that documentary cinema, by capturing reality in all its dimensions, serves as a crucial safeguard against oblivion, isolation, and the homogenization of thought. It is, par excellence, the guarantor of diversity and democratic vitality. That is why I wish to express my gratitude to all those who contribute to this mission: our institutional and private partners, the foundations, the creators, and the thinkers who, year after year, make Visions du Réel an unmissable event in Switzerland and internationally. Thanks to them, we continue to affirm loud and clear that culture is not an option: it is a necessity," explains **Raymond Loretan, president of the Festival**.

The 2025 programme promises to be a rich one, with a wide range of approaches, forms, countries and regions represented. The **129 films**, chosen from some **3437 entries** – a figure that has risen since last year, which had already seen an increase of over 10% compared to 2023 – testify to the great freedom enjoyed by non-fiction cinema today. "I'm delighted to see that Visions du Réel is confirming its role as a talent scout and catalyst, with **58 first films, including 28 first feature-length offerings**, as well as **88 world premieres** and **12 international premieres**. This year's edition is also an opportunity to reconnect with filmmakers who are dear to the Festival and whose careers we follow closely", states **Emilie Bujès, artistic director**, before adding "We're delighted that our selection once again reflects our openness to the world. The International Feature Film Competition includes films from Mongolia, Australia, Slovenia, Cameroon and Argentina. The Burning Lights competition is also conceived in the same spirit, with films hailing from

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China, Lebanon, Canada and Poland among others." No fewer than **57 countries** are represented across all the sections, an all-time record that reflects the Festival's international reach. With their unique and original languages, the films in the 2025 edition investigate various ways of translating reality, defying categorisation and flirting with a very wide range of styles, registers and genres.

This year, Visions du Réel is extending the scope of its collaboration with its main partner La Mobilière to launch **Next Gen**, a label dedicated to young people aged 12 to 26: "With this programme, we want to help the next generation discover cinema and visual creation through a selection of films, workshops and meetings. We are convinced that an introduction to high-quality cinema from an early age can open people up to the world, helping to develop their creative and critical faculties. We would like to thank La Mobilière for demonstrating its trust in us by renewing our partnership for the next three years", says **Mélanie Courvoisier, administrative and operational director**. The programme of activities for all ages is once again packed to the rafters. Over the weekend, for example, the Festival is offering new animation, sound, image and movement workshops for 4 to 10-year-olds under the **VdR-Kids** label, as well as half a dozen thematic walks to discuss the films with the production teams.

The first guests of the 2025 edition

This 56th edition will be attended by a number of radiant, inspiring and generous guests. Haitian filmmaker **Raoul Peck** will be the Guest of Honour at the 2025 Festival, an invitation shared with the Cinémathèque suisse and ECAL University of Art and Design Lausanne. He will receive the Prix d'Honneur on Monday 7 April, with a tribute by IDFA festival director and producer **Orwa Nyrabia**, prior to the screening of his latest film *Ernest Cole: Lost and Found* (presented in collaboration with trigon-film), and will be giving a masterclass on Tuesday afternoon 8 April, in conversation with French journalist **Elisabeth Lequeret**. At the same time, a retrospective of his documentary and hybrid work will be on show throughout the festival. Special Guest 2025, filmmaker **Corneliu Porumboiu** will be giving a masterclass on Saturday 5 April (in partnership with Arte), in conversation with Emmanuel Chicon, member of the selection committee, while all his feature-length films – major works presented at Cannes, Berlin and Locarno – will be screened during the Festival. Finally, as part of its Atelier, Visions du Réel will have the honour of welcoming Portuguese filmmaker **Cláudia Varejão**, in collaboration with HEAD-Geneva. She will be taking part in a masterclass on Wednesday 9 April, in conversation with **Rebecca de Pas**, programmer at the International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) and a close collaborator of Visions du Réel, while a retrospective of her oeuvre will be screened throughout the Festival.

Other prestigious guests at the 2025 event include British filmmaker and producer **Asif Kapadia** who will kick off the VdR-Industry days with a masterclass open to accredited members and presented in collaboration with SSR SRG, and introduce the screening of his film *Amy* (2015) on its tenth anniversary. He will be joined by other renowned filmmakers and curators on the various juries, including American filmmaker **Eliza Hittman**, Greek filmmaker **Athiná-Rachél Tsangári**, Georgian filmmaker **Elene Naveriani** and **Michael Stütz**, co-director of film programming and head of the Panorama section at the Berlin Film Festival. Finally, a number of delegations in competition will be supporting their films throughout the Festival.

International Feature Film Competition

The Jury will award the competition prizes amongst 14 films, including **13 world premieres** and one international premiere, as well as four first feature-length films. In 2025, the jury will be composed up of **Hama Haruka**, (director of the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival), American filmmaker **Eliza Hittman**, whose film *Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Always* won the Silver Bear at the Berlin Film Festival in 2020 and will be screened during Visions du Réel, and Greek filmmaker **Athiná-Rachél Tsangári**, whose work includes *Harvest* (Mostra de Venise, competition) and *Chevalier* (which will be screened during the Festival).

The 2025 competition marks the return of two filmmakers: **Marie Voignier** (*NA China*, VdR 2020) whose *Anamocot* explores a zoologist's search for a mysterious animal, and **Julien Elie**, whose striking black and white film *Shifting Baselines* (VdR-Industry 2024) immerses viewers in the hamlet adjacent to the SpaceX rocket launch base. Alongside them will be other highly recognisable filmmakers, such as **Jem Cohen**, whose *Little, Big and Far* is a dazzling metaphysical journey featuring a veteran astronomer on a quest to reconnect with the stars, and **João Vieira Torres** whose *Aurora* is part surrealist diary, part queer tract, as well as a structural history of violence against women based on his dream of his dead grandmother. Finally, **Sylvain George** (Swiss co-production) concludes his trilogy on migration policies with *Nuit obscure – "Ain't I a Child?"* (the two previous parts of which were launched at the Locarno Festival), which


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delves into the nightlife of unaccompanied migrants on the streets of Paris and offers a sensitive treatment of the time's passing to convey the singular feeling of waiting.

A number of films in the selection explore different ways of portraying reality, drawing on familiar and diverse registers. **Roland Edzard's** debut feature film, *La Montagne d'or*, and *Iron Winter* by **Kasimir Burgess**, each flirt in their own way with the adventure film, notably through epic shots in seemingly infinite landscapes and highly sensorial photography. *The Mountain Won't Move* by **Petra Seliškar** combines a family drama with a coming-of-age story, and portrays the pastoral life of siblings in the mountains of North Macedonia, closely following the protagonists and their livestock.

Other films set out to decipher singular geographies and capture the zeitgeist of ill-known places by delivering precise socio-territorial analyses. This is true of *The Attachment*, **Mamadou Khouma Gueye's** first feature-length film, which raises the limits of a regional development plan and, by extension, gentrification, by examining the transformations of a Dakar district, while *To Use a Mountain*, **Casey Carter's** first feature-length film, draws on a certain tradition of the advocacy film, exposing the management of nuclear waste and its impact on both rural communities and the territories of indigenous peoples. Lastly, filmmakers **Julian Vogel** and **Johannes Büttner** combine their talents in *Soldiers of Light* to examine this other, admittedly intangible, territory of political ideas by observing the rising trend of 'faith healers', a movement linked to extreme right-wing ideologies in Germany.

Some of the films in the selection boldly explore the perception of time through different prisms. One example is *The Prince of Nanawa* by **Clarisa Navas**, which follows the metamorphoses of Angel, a child growing up between Paraguay and Argentina, over 10 years and 3 and a half hours of film. Another chronicle of the passage of time, but in a poppier vein: *Ninxs* by **Kani Lapuerta**, which deals with the gender transition of a teenager on the threshold of adulthood, in a joyfully collaborative film. Finally, *Where Two Oceans Meet* by filmmaker **Lulu Scott** also invites us to take a gentle look at the question of time and, more specifically, waiting, by filming a father's return to the family home after 27 years in prison.

The following films are competing in the International Feature Film Competition:

- *Anamocot* by **Marie Voignier**, Cameroon/France, 2025, 91', World premiere
- *Aurora* by **João Vieira Torres**, Brazil/Portugal/France, 2025, 129', World premiere
- *Iron Winter* by **Kasimir Burgess**, Australia/Mongolia, 2025, 90', World premiere
- *Little, Big, and Far* by **Jem Cohen**, Austria/USA, 2025, 122', International premiere
- *La Montagne d'or* by **Roland Edzard**, Belgium/France, 2025, 85', World premiere
- *Niñxs* by **Kani Lapuerta**, Mexico/Germany, 2025, 86', World premiere
- *Obscure Night – "Ain't I a Child"* by **Sylvain George**, Switzerland/France, 2025, 164', World premiere
- *Shifting Baselines* by **Julien Elie**, Canada, 2025, 101', World premiere
- *Soldiers of Light* by **Julian Vogel** and **Johannes Büttner**, Germany, 2025, 108', World premiere
- *The Attachment* by **Mamadou Khouma Gueye**, Senegal/Belgium/France, 2025, 76', World premiere
- *The Mountain Won't Move* by **Petra Seliškar**, Slovenia/North Macedonia/France, 2025, 94', World premiere
- *The Prince Of Nanawa* by **Clarisa Navas**, Argentina/Paraguay/Colombia/Germany, 2025, 212', World premiere
- *To Use a Mountain* by **Casey Carter**, USA, 2025, 99', World premiere
- *Where Two Oceans Meet* by **Lulu Scott**, France/Belgium/South Africa, 2025, 75', World premiere

Burning Lights Competition

The **Burning Lights** Competition is dedicated to new, free and contemporary forms and cinematographic narratives. The Jury will award its prizes from among the competition's **15 world premieres**, and is made up of American filmmaker **Scott Cummings** (whose 2024 *Realm of Satan* was launched at Sundance before being presented at VdR), French producer **Thomas Hakim** (recently involved in films by Indian filmmaker Payal Kapadia), and Switzerland-based Georgian filmmaker **Elene Naveriani** (*Blackbird Blackberry*, Directors' Fortnight 2023). Two Swiss productions or co-productions feature in the


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programme for this section: *The World Upside Down* by **Agostina Di Luciano** and **Leon Schwitter** and *La Muraille* by **Callisto McNulty**, while seven first films also feature in the selection.

The Burning Lights competition also celebrates the return of filmmakers familiar to the Festival, such as **Tomasz Wolski** (*In Ukraine*, VdR 2023, 1970, VdR 2021) whose *The Big Chief* offers a gripping archival portrait of an enigmatic character whose mystery rivals that of classic spy films, **Sophie Bédard Marcotte** (*L.A. Tea Time*, VdR 2019) who throws herself wholeheartedly into a new, irresistibly funny adventure with her playwright neighbour in *J'ai perdu de vue le paysage*, and **Sven Augustijnen** (VdR–Industry 2019) whose *Fierté nationale: de Jéricho vers Gaza*, follows the disillusioned return of Palestinian diplomat Hassan Al Balawi to his country on the anniversary of Yasser Arafat's death. They are joined by filmmakers whose reputations are well established, starting with Iranian filmmaker **Bani Khoshnoudi**, whose *The Vanishing Point* is as intimate as it is politically fiery, an inside and outside look at the pain of the Iranian people and their unquenchable thirst for freedom, and **Manuel Abramovich** who in *Croma* offers his protagonists a natural, norm-free space in which to question gender. Finally, **Vivianne Perelmuter** and **Isabelle Ingold's** *Les Recommencements* is an intense North American road movie, as the filmmakers accompany a Vietnam veteran protagonist living on his tribe's reservation in California.

Among the first feature-length films, which account for almost half of the films selected for this year's batch of Burning Lights films, is another North American road movie, this time approached through the prism of the storm: **Curtis Miller's** *A Brief History of Chasing Storms*. Structured in chapters, the film explores themes of memory, inequality, colonisation, climate change and capitalist catastrophe. Filled with humour – and a touch of hysterical fiction – **Ruosong Huang's** *Chasing the Sun* follows its protagonist's return to China after studying in London, and his confrontation with his intrusive mother. More personal or intimate debut films also feature in this competition, such as *Je n'embrasse pas les images* by **Pascal Hamant**, which charts the lead-up to the death of his father, in a first-person narrative focused on icons such as Ayrton Senna and Marilyn Monroe, or, in a different vein, **Dima El-Horr's** *And the Fish Fly Above our Heads*, which takes its protagonists on a journey through Beirut's contemporary melancholy with affection and modesty.

The final three features take the form of a variety of portraits: while **Paloma López Carrillo's** *Say Goodbye* frames the inexorable wait for a father's return, sculpting time in a highly fertile manner, *Yrupé* by **Candela Sotos** follows in the footsteps of a lost film by Guillermo Zúñiga, a Spanish pioneer of scientific cinema exiled to Argentina after the Spanish Civil War. The dazzling archive images (and water lilies) populating *Yrupé* find a response in the plastic beauty of the sequences that make up **David Bim's** *To the West, in Zapata*, which follows the daily life of a family trying to survive in a biosphere reserve in Cuba, thanks in no small part to the crocodiles.

The following films will compete in the Burning Lights Competition:

- *A Brief History of Chasing Storms* by **Curtis Miller**, USA, 2025, 70', World premiere
- *And the Fish Fly Above our Heads* de **Dima El-Horr**, Lebanon/France/Saudi Arabia, 2025, 70', World premiere
- *Chasing the Sun* by **Ruosong Huang**, France, 2025, 112', World premiere
- *Croma* by **Manuel Abramovich**, Argentina/Germany/Austria, 2025, 70', World premiere
- *Fierté nationale: de Jéricho vers Gaza* by **Sven Augustijnen**, Belgium, 2025, 93', World premiere
- *J'ai perdu de vue le paysage* by **Sophie Bédard Marcotte**, Canada, 2025, 85', World premiere
- *Je n'embrasse pas les images* by **Pascal Hamant**, France, 2025, 76', World premiere
- *The Other World* by **Callisto McNulty**, Switzerland/France, 2025, 65', World premiere
- *Les Recommencements* by **Vivianne Perelmuter** and **Isabelle Ingold**, Belgium/France, 2025, 87', World premiere
- *Say Goodbye* by **Paloma López Carrillo**, Mexico, 2025, 104', World premiere
- *The Big Chief* by **Tomasz Wolski**, Poland/Netherlands/France, 2025, 86', World premiere
- *The Vanishing Point* by **Bani Khoshnoudi**, Iran/USA/France, 2025, 103', World premiere


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- *The World Upside Down* by **Agostina Di Luciano** and **Leon Schwitter**, Argentina/Switzerland, 2025, 77', World premiere
- *To the West, in Zapata* by **David Bim**, Cuba/Spain, 2025, 75', World premiere
- *Yrupé* by **Candela Sotos**, Spain, 2025, 79', World premiere

National Competition

Dedicated to feature-length and medium-length films produced or co-produced in Switzerland, the 2025 **National Competition** features **12 world premieres**, including **eight feature debuts**, reflecting the tremendous diversity, excellence and renewal of Swiss non-fiction production. The jury for this section includes filmmaker and scriptwriter **Elie Grappe**, whose credits include *Olga*, (which represented Switzerland at the 2021 Oscars and will be screened during the Festival), academic and international distributor **Petar Mitric** and Iranian producer **Elaheh Nobakht**.

Emilie Bujès: "With an eclectic and cinematographically impressive National Competition, Switzerland is confirming its excellence in non-fiction filmmaking, not only with names that are already well known and/or close to Visions du Réel, but also with younger filmmakers, including productions linked to Swiss film or art schools. With 31 (co)productions in all the Festival's sections, Switzerland once again has an imposing presence at this year's Festival, with films that range from the uniquely Swiss to more distant horizons."

The following films are in the running for the National Competition:

- *Colostrum* by **Sayaka Mizuno**, Switzerland, 2025, 75', World premiere
- *Fitting in* de **Fabienne Steiner**, Switzerland, 2025, 85', World premiere
- *Fortune et Kevine* by **Sarah Imsand**, Switzerland, 62', World premiere
- *Les Papas* by **David Maye**, Switzerland, 73', World premiere
- *Les Vies d'Andrès* by **Baptiste Janon** and **Rémi Pons**, Belgium/Switzerland, 92', World premiere
- *Lettres au Docteur L* by **Laurence Favre**, Switzerland, 60', World premiere
- *Only Ghosts In the Waves* by **Alexander Tank** and **Tobias Scharnagl**, Switzerland, 69', World premiere
- *Sediments* by **Laura Coppens**, Switzerland, 81', World premiere
- *Song of Breath* by **Simona Canonica**, Italy/Switzerland, 110', World premiere
- *Sons of Icarus* by **Daniel Jonas Kemény**, Switzerland, 90', World premiere
- *Toute ma vie* by **Matias Carlier**, Switzerland, 2025, 69', World premiere
- *Wider Than the Sky* by **Valerio Jalongo**, Italy/Switzerland, 83', World premiere

International Medium Length and Short Film Competition | Opening Scenes

Parallel to its three flagship competitions, the 56th edition will also be showcasing less conventional formats in its **International Medium Length and Short Film Competition**. The shorter running times afford the filmmakers greater latitude, allowing them to venture into less well-defined, fuzzier territory, covering every possible universe and form – including animation, virtual worlds, archives, artificial intelligence, drones and fiction... An invigorating programme of **35 films including 31 world premieres** and four international premieres, featuring some of the biggest names in contemporary cinema including Irish filmmaker **Ross McClean**, **Sergueï Loznitsa (Ukraine)**, French artists **Fleuryfontaine**, **Christopher Radcliff (USA)** as well as **Alberto Martín Menacho**, **Emilie Cornu** and **Charlotte Nastasi**, who all have ties to Switzerland. This year's jury for the International Short and Medium Competition is made up of **Qila Gill**, co-programme director at the London Short Film Festival and member of the selection committee at Berlinale Generation, **Jenna Hasse**, actress, filmmaker and president of the Pro Short association, and **Valentin Noujaïm**, filmmaker.

The **Opening Scenes** section showcases promising young talent, both international and Swiss, with **15 titles including 12 world premieres**.

Wide Angle | Highlights | Special Screenings

Including feature-length films competing for the CHF 10,000 Audience Award, presented by the City of Nyon, the films selected in the **Wide Angle** section – **two world premieres, three international premieres and eight Swiss premieres** in 2025 – have already won over audiences at other festivals or are set to do so in the coming months. Alongside the opening film, *Blame* by Swiss filmmaker **Christian Frei**, *Rashid*,

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l'enfant de Sinjar by **Jasna Krajcinovic**, itself also presented in world premiere, paints the portrait of a young Yazidi dreaming of a better future against a backdrop of fragile peace, through sensitive and elegant photography. Among the international premieres, *The Family Approach* by **Daniel Abma**, *Puisque je suis née* by **Jawad Rhalib** and *Cutting Through Rocks* by **Mohammadreza Eyni** and **Sara Khaki**, offer powerful portraits of foster children, young girls and women resisting the system imposed on them.

Highlights is a non-competitive section of feature-length works that allows for the Festival audience to discover what the programming team considers today's must-see films. It includes **two world premieres, one international premiere** and **10 Swiss premieres**. Opening with an excruciating video of a young Gambian drowning in Venice's Grand Canal, *La Dernière rive* by **Jean-François Ravagnan**, transports us 4000 km away to listen to the family stories of the events leading up to the painful tragedy. Another world premiere, *Petit Rempart* by **Ève Duchemin** (*L'Âge adulte*, VdR 2012) paints an affectionate portrait of women housed in a Belgian emergency shelter, between precarity and solidarity. This section also features some of the most respected names in contemporary cinema, including **Albert Serra, Denis Côté, Alex Ross Perry** – whose *Videoheaven* is a highly entertaining exploration of video rental shops and popular cinema – as well as **Michael Almereyda, Courtney Stephens, Sammi Baloji, Ali Asgari** and **Charlie Shackleton**.

Finally, the **Special Screenings** offer a selection of films presented out of competition: works in unusual formats, films directed by members of the official juries, series or tributes (in 2025, to the recently deceased Swiss filmmaker and first Maître du Réel at VdR: **Richard Dindo**). The section will welcome the return of **Ekiem Barbier** and **Guilhem Causse** – directors of the acclaimed *Knit's Island* (VdR 2023) – with a new series shot within an online simulation, as well as *My Undesirable Friends: Part I – Last Air in Moscow* by **Julia Loktev**, an intimate and gripping portrait (lasting over five hours) of independent journalists in Russia, who face persecution from Putin's regime, and *Bestiaries, Herbaria, Lapidaries*, by **Martina Parenti** and **Massimo D'Anolfi**, esteemed regulars at Visions du Réel.

Find the synopses and full programme in the press pack for this year's edition. Please do not hesitate to contact the press department for any information or requests for interviews.

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About us

Since 1969, Visions du Réel's ambition has been to present daring and singular works which, through their formal and aesthetic choices, embody contemporary non-fiction cinema in all its diversity, and freely interpret its very definition and implementation. Over ten days, the Festival makes Nyon a focal point where several generations of filmmakers and artists from all over the world meet up with a loyal and curious public. Recognised as one of the world's leading festivals dedicated to non-fiction cinema, it presents a majority of world or international premieres of films and is an essential creative platform for the thousands of film professionals who meet there each year as part of its market.


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