



Press release

4 April 2025, Nyon

Under embargo until 13:30

## Opening of the 56th edition of Visions du Réel



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This Friday (4 April) marks the official opening of the 56th edition of Visions du Réel with the world premiere of the film *BLAME* by Christian Frei. The opening ceremony will be attended by Federal Councillor Elisabeth Baume-Schneider, State Councillor Vassilis Venizelos, and Daniel Rossellat, Mayor of Nyon. Over the next ten days, 154 films will be screened, hailing from a record-breaking 57 countries. This first weekend of the Festival is devoted to the many premieres of international and Swiss films which are participating in the various competitions. Other highlights of the weekend include: the Masterclass from this year's Special Guest, Romanian filmmaker Corneliu Porumboiu, and the screening of *Afternoons of Solitude*, the latest film from brilliant filmmaker Albert Serra, who will be in attendance.

### World premieres promise an opening weekend filled with discovery

The first few days of the Festival will be packed full of new films to discover. Eight of the fourteen films in the International Feature Film Competition will be screened to audiences this weekend, all as world premieres. Two of these will bring the wilderness into the screening room. The first film shown on Saturday, *The Mountain Won't Move* by Petra Seliškar, focuses on the lives of three brothers, all shepherds, as they question tradition and their futures. On Sunday, *Iron Winter* by Kasimir Burgess tells the tale of the mission to ensure the survival of thousands of horses during the harshest winter on record in Mongolia. The question of territory is also explored in *The Attachment* by Mamadou Kouma Gueye, which examines the limits of gentrification through scrutiny of a redevelopment initiative in Dakar. Flirting joyously with fiction,

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*Mountain of Gold* joins gold miners in the Sahara as they search for the miracle “ore”, while, on the other side of the Atlantic, **Julien Elie**’s striking *Shifting Baselines* is a detailed examination of Boca Chica, the small town which neighbours the SpaceX starbase, and will be screened on Saturday. This first weekend also shines a spotlight on excerpts from daily life and profiles of interesting characters. On Sunday, *Soldiers of Light* by **Julian Vögel** and **Johannes Büttner** delivers a portrait of David, AKA “Mister Raw”, an influencer who is part of a growing movement of self-proclaimed “healers”, with links to far right ideologies. Lighter in tone, but uncompromising in its depth, *Niñxs* by **Kani Lapuerta** navigates a teenager’s gender transition, who we watch grow and arrive at the threshold of adulthood. This film will close the Saturday evening programme in the Grande Salle. Lastly, the Sunday screening of *Aurora* by **João Vieira Torres** uses a first-person narrative to illustrate the structural history of violence against women in Brazil.

### Swiss (co)productions on the programme

Swiss productions are also showcased this first weekend with the launch of the National Competition, which this year features 12 films all of which are receiving their world premiere – including eight first feature-length releases – bearing witness to the incredible diversity and excellence of Swiss productions. Two of these films inevitably address highly topical issues: *Only Ghosts in the Waves* by **Alexander Tank** and **Tobias Schnargl** follows the daily life of Enrico Naso, an undertaker in Lampedusa, finding refuge in everyday gestures, faith, music, and the waves to preserve his humanity, while *Wider Than the Sky* by **Valerio Jalongo**, also screened on Sunday, meets the world-renowned scientists, artists and dancers exploring the various potential applications of artificial intelligence, alongside its challenges and issues. Three films use different methods and approaches to investigate family histories. On Saturday, the public is invited to discover *Sons of Icarus* by **Daniel Jonas Kemény**, which accompanies the filmmaker’s reunions with his brother and his father, exiled to Cuba. Audiences on Saturday will also be able to watch *Toute ma vie* by **Matias Carlier**, a delicate exploration of the faultlines of adolescence through an intimate portrait of the young protagonist, Noah. *Sediments* by **Laura Coppens**, which will be screened on Sunday, uses the filmmaker’s conversations with her grandfather as a means to better understand the memory of a family and its blind spots, and examine the different epochs of German history. Another dive into the past, but through a more postcolonial lens, *Lettres au Docteur L* by **Laurence Favre** asks four inhabitants of southern Africa to send a letter to the missionary Doctor L, in the form of sound capsules, to transpose the legacies left by the violence of the past into sound and light. Also focusing on the legacies of colonial structures and traditions, *Fitting In* by **Fabienne Steiner**, which will be screened on Saturday, follows the daily lives of young students at Stellenbosch University in South Africa who, 30 years after the end of apartheid, are trying to navigate a path between personal growth, cultural differences and a past still fresh in their collective memory. Lastly, a portrait of sound, *Song of Breath* by **Simona Canonica**, which takes us on a journey through voice and breath as the essential heritage of humankind.

### This year’s main guests

Visions du Réel is delighted to be welcoming Romanian filmmaker **Corneliu Porumboiu** as its Special Guest. Alongside a complete retrospective of his feature-length films, Corneliu Porumboiu will give a Masterclass on Saturday 5 April at 2 pm where he will discuss the realistic, political approach that inspires his works, which scrutinise Romania’s recent social history, mischievously taking on its sometimes-tragicomic dimension. On Saturday and Sunday, audiences will be able to discover works from his filmography, such as *The Treasure*, screened on Sunday, and his latest film, *The Whistlers*, screened on Saturday. Haitian director **Raoul Peck**, Guest of Honour for 2025, and filmmaker **Claudia Varejaõ** will also give a Masterclass, on Tuesday 8 April at 2.30 pm and Wednesday 9 April at 2.30 pm respectively. Other celebrated guests include Spanish filmmaker **Albert Serra**, whose works include *Pacifiction*, and who is coming to Nyon for the very first time to present the Swiss premiere of his film *Afternoons of Solitude*. This film, which won the main prize at the San Sebastian Festival, depicts the determination and solitude inherent to life as a bullfighter. It will be screened on Sunday evening. These names join the 131 filmmakers expected to attend this year’s Festival.

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