



Presse release

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For immediate release

Kelly Reichardt, 2026 Guest of Honour at Visions du Réel



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Visions du Réel is delighted and honoured to welcome American filmmaker Kelly Reichardt as Guest of Honour at its 57th edition (17–26 April). Kelly Reichardt will take part in the Festival with a masterclass and a retrospective of her work, as well as a *carte blanche*, while her latest feature film, *The Mastermind*, will also be screened ahead of its limited theatre release. A key figure in contemporary independent cinema, the filmmaker will discuss her bold, meticulous and radical filmography, which often revisits great American myths and is characterised by an aesthetic of refined simplicity and observation, and by a rejection of the spectacular, through minimalist fiction rooted in gestures, places and the passing of time. This tribute is part of a valuable collaboration with the Cinémathèque suisse and the ECAL University of Art and Design Lausanne film department, as well as a collaboration that began a few years ago with the Fondazione Prada. The full programme for the 57th edition of Visions du Réel will be released on 25 March.


Born in Miami, Florida, yet enamoured with the green landscapes of Oregon since her second film, Kelly Reichardt casts her gaze onto America's founding myths and territories. With nine feature films – including *Meek's Cutoff*, *First Cow* and *Certain Women* – and several short films over a thirty-year career, her filmography, carefully constructed far from the major Hollywood studios, is remarkable for its modest means and its inclination to revisit genres that run through American cinema, such as westerns, thrillers, historical films and road movies. A focus on those left behind by the American dream and its modern legacy is the common thread that unifies her work.

While rooted in fiction, Kelly Reichardt's oeuvre nevertheless flirts with “cinema of the real” in many respects: a certain antisensationalism, economical production, a certain narrative and formal restraint, the considerable time devoted to location scouting, the adaptation of the script to the filming contexts, and the immersion of her teams in the living conditions of the places filmed, form the very foundations of a unique

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and distinctive method and cinematic approach. Through her attention to everyday gestures, places and marginalities, the filmmaker transforms fiction into a sensitive and ethical tool for observing the world.

For Emilie Bujès, artistic director of Visions du Réel: "It is a tremendous privilege to welcome one of the great voices of contemporary cinema. Film after film, Kelly Reichardt sketches fragments of history and lives in remarkably refined and elegant narratives which, through their rejection of the spectacular and their sensitive attention to detail, reveal a fascinating relationship with reality".

Biography

Reichardt directed her first feature film, *River of Grass*, in 1994. It is often described as a disenchanted *Bonnie and Clyde*, a cross between a road movie, a romance and a crime film. Selected at Sundance and Berlin, it revealed her interest in marginal territories and understated narratives. At the turn of the 2000s, Reichardt moved away from feature films to explore lighter formats, shot in Super 8 and made without constraints: *Ode* (1999), a contemplative medium-length film, followed by the short films *Then a Year* (2001), filmed in Portland, Oregon, which is based on a sound collage of excerpts from TV crime programmes, and *Travis* (2004), based on a reconstructed interview with a mother from Portland whose son was killed in Iraq.

Since the 2000s, Kelly Reichardt's films have sought to capture the political, economic and social realities of contemporary America and place them at the heart of her narratives. Set against the backdrop of the Bush years and the Iraq War, *Old Joy* (2006, Tiger Award IFFR, Rotterdam) offers a discreet meditation on friendship that reveals a society fractured between gentrification and decline. With *Wendy and Lucy* (2008, Un Certain Regard at Cannes), inspired by the widespread precariousness observed after Hurricane Katrina, Reichardt continued to focus her attention on marginalised groups, charting with extreme restraint the social decline of a young woman confronted with poverty.

The filmmaker also explored the origins of American society through two anti-westerns: *Meek's Cutoff* (2010, Venice Film Festival) and *First Cow* (2019, Festival de Cannes) deconstructed the heroic narrative of the conquest of the West by revealing the forms of labour, domination and dispossession that it has long obscured. This focus on the moral and political consequences of actions also runs through *Night Moves* (2013, Venice Film Festival), a pared-down eco-thriller, as well as *Certain Women* and *Showing Up* (2016 and 2022, Festival de Cannes), sensitive portraits of ordinary lives grappling with the constraints of everyday existence.

With *The Mastermind* (2025), also presented in competition at the Festival de Cannes, her most recent project, Kelly Reichardt relates the story of a burglary in an art gallery and its consequences, set against the turbulent 1970s backdrop of the Vietnam War and the women's liberation movement.

Kelly Reichardt's films have been the subject of numerous retrospectives, notably at MoMA, the Centre Pompidou, Anthology Film Archives, the Walker Art Center, and the American Cinematheque in Los Angeles, as well as during a European tour (*The American Landscape: The Films of Kelly Reichardt*). Reichardt received the Carrosse d'Or at the Directors' Fortnight at the Festival de Cannes in 2022, and has been awarded several major grants, including the Guggenheim Fellowship. She also has experience in teaching film studies, notably at Harvard University in 2019 and currently at Bard College.

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

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