



Press release

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VdR–Industry 2026: Stories in Resonance



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Visions du Réel is delighted to unveil the projects selected to participate in the 24th edition of VdR–Industry, the festival’s four-day programme dedicated to industry professionals, featuring an exciting slate of projects with bold artistic ambition, alongside returning talents and new faces to Visions du Réel. The Industry team is excited to mark the opening of the Industry Days with a conversation with acclaimed Oscar-winning filmmaker Laura Poitras, and to welcome the 2026 VdR–Industry Jury who, alongside the Eurimages and visions sud est juries, will be responsible for awarding more than CHF 80’000 in prizes. Under the new direction of Sabine Fayoux Cantillo, the 2026 VdR–Industry Days will take place April 19-22.

This year, a total of 31 projects have been selected to take part in VdR–Industry’s signature activities, which support projects in development through post-production. In the two showcase pitching events, fifteen projects in late-development will be part of **VdR–Pitching** and six projects in finishing stages will be presented at **VdR–Work in Progress**. Four projects have been selected for each of the **VdR–Rough Cut Lab** and the **VdR–Development Lab**, with the addition of two finalists in the latter. The Industry Days create meaningful opportunities for connection and collaboration between filmmakers and industry professionals, leading to more financing opportunities, distribution prospects, partnerships and support. From more than 600 submissions, the 31 selected projects are led by 34 directors representing 28 countries. Among the selected projects, 61% are presented by women directors, 45% by first-time feature directors, and 58% are directed and produced by filmmakers from the majority world.

“What stands out this year is not necessarily a single topic, but rather a shared sensibility across very different geographies and stories” says Head of Industry Sabine Fayoux Cantillo. “While there is a strong current of examining historical decisions that continue to reverberate in our present, ranging from colonial expeditions to migration policies, political uprisings, land ownership, and displacement, each project remains singular, with voices and artistic visions that assert themselves with clarity and an attuned awareness of the world we live in. We’re proud to highlight these exciting projects and are thrilled to offer VdR–Industry as a fertile ground for meaningful collaborations.”


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Returning Talent

This year's VdR-Industry selection once again reflects the Festival's strong ties with its filmmaking alumni, welcoming the return of several directors whose previous work has been presented at Visions du Réel.

In the VdR-Pitching section, some of this year's returning talents are:

- Established Swiss filmmaker **Jean-Stéphane Bron**, the 2023 VdR Atelier Guest whose work has screened and been awarded at major international festivals, will present his highly anticipated *A Season in Europe*, offering an in-depth look at the inner workings of European institutions, making this his debut pitch.
- **Sofie Benoot**, director of *Apple Cider Vinegar* (VdR 2024) and *Desert Haze* (VdR 2014), will present *Hello?!*, a film in which the Belgian director returns to what makes her work so unique: an intertwining of the gigantic and the infinitely small, organised around the encounter between memory keepers and endangered birds.
- After the success of his Oscar-nominated film *Honeyland* (Sundance and VdR 2019) co-directed with Tamara Kotevska, **Ljubomir Stefanov** comes back to present *The Vortex of Extinction*, a work based on the scientific research of Dr. Dragan Arsovski on a singular population of turtles caught up in mysterious and fatal evolutionary patterns.
- After showing her films *A Time to Rest* in 2015 and *Diaries from Lebanon* in 2024 (WP at the Berlinale), Visions du Réel is delighted to welcome back **Myriam El Hajj** to introduce *Letters from a Ceasefire*, her upcoming feature film co-directed with Iranian filmmaker **Omid Hashemi**. Through a series of correspondences, the two filmmakers reflect on regional conflicts while affirming the need to believe in the possibility of change.

In addition, Visions du Réel is excited to welcome the return of **Laura Plancarte** (*Non Western*, VdR 2020) with her newest *BOOM!*, to VdR-Work in Progress, in which boxers George and Sonia question the notion of sacrifice in sport, navigating between their ambition and the toll of emotional, physical and financial pressures. Also joining her in the VdR-Work in Progress is **Pacho Velez** (*Searchers*, Sundance and VdR 2021) sharing *Liberal Arts*, his new film centred around an eccentric professor, a documentary filmmaker, and a class of students. By multiplying the focal points, he delivers a complex and surprising testimony for higher education.

New Faces, New Talent

Alongside these returning filmmakers, the VdR-Industry programme also welcomes many new faces into the fold, continuing a tradition of spotlighting filmmakers shaping the future of documentary filmmaking.

Among the filmmakers presenting projects at VdR-Pitching for the first time:

- **Todd Chandler**, known primarily through his work as an Editor, returns to directing with *TRADE*, a kaleidoscopic exploration of labour, consumerism, community, and ambition unfolding behind the closed doors of industry trade shows in the U.S.
- Filmmaker and theatre director **Vladlena Sandu** has created a sensitive body of work that explores the horrors of colonialism and the traumas of war. While *Memory*, her first feature film (2025 VdR-Work in Progress and Venice Days), was inspired by her childhood memories during the Russian-Chechen War, *Transposition*, her new autobiographical project, invites the viewer to reconsider history, belonging, and the fragile possibility of rebuilding meaning in a broken world.
- Argentinian director **Francina Carbonell** will present *La Linda* portraying Tatuna, an eccentric heiress living alone in her palace in Mendoza. Her project examines the economic crisis in Argentina through the lens of a family conflict involving three generations of women.

In the VdR-Work in Progress, some new faces include **Alexander Murphy**, who comes to Nyon to share *A Road Less Travelled*, a film centred on an Irish Traveller family, the O'Reillys, capturing the marginality of a way of life that is rapidly disappearing. Haitian filmmaker **Samuel Suffren**, whose short was screened at the 2025 Cannes Directors' Fortnight, will present *Job 1:21*, his first feature film. Through a mise en abyme where former female prisoners stage a play denouncing the institutional injustice they experienced, the film exposes the corrupt and arbitrary judicial system in Haiti, while affirming art as a powerful tool of collective action, transmission and healing. In *The Nights*, director **Ana Bovino** follows


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La Pichi, a modern-day Scheherazade who transforms her life into extraordinary stories, exploring how giving birth to words can be a healing and emancipatory act. Lastly, **Milton Guillén** and **Fiona Guy Hall** will share their confidential project *My Skin and I*.

Four projects in the VdR–Rough Cut Lab come to Nyon to seek feedback on their latest cut, and range from an intimate farewell journey between a daughter and her father with Alzheimer's disease in *Captain* by **Laura Otálora**, to the cinematic and somewhat surreal journey of a rare Himalayan fungus from Nepal to China in *Summer Grass Winter Worm* by **Matjaz Pinter**. Joining them are *Holy Human Angel* by **Angeliki Aristomenopoulou** and *The People Outside* by **Jewel Maranan**. All projects are pushing artistic and storytelling boundaries and come with exciting questions to workshop alongside their peers and Lab mentors.

Lastly, four projects and two finalists hailing from Iran, India, Bolivia, Burundi, Georgia and Ukraine will take part in the VdR–Development Lab – a 9-month programme aimed to accompany them as they prepare to enter production – welcoming back directors **Elahe Esmaili** with *A journey to love should be taken by train, and only train* and **Sachin** with *This Is Not a Wasteland*, as well as introducing *Auguries, Dreams and Soils* by **Luciana Decker Orozco**, *Identity Curls* by **Nadège Butoyi**, *Of the Trees Unmoved* by **Nino Benashvili** and *YOUTH* by **Daria Zhuravel**.

Three juries deliberating over VdR–Industry

Visions du Réel is very pleased to announce its three juries selected to oversee the awarding of over CHF 80'000 in cash and in-kind awards. In 2026, the **VdR–Industry Jury** consists of screenwriter and director **Gabrielle Brady**, who won an award at Visions du Réel in 2018 for her film *Island of the Hungry Ghosts*, **Dominic Davis**, Manager of the Sundance Institute Documentary Fund, and **Gaia Furrer**, Artistic Director of Giornate degli Autori (Venice Days). The prestigious Eurimages co-production development prize, worth € 20,000, will be awarded by the **Eurimages Jury**, made up of **Karim Aïtouna**, producer based in France and Morocco, with a portfolio that spans fiction and documentary, **Salomé Jashi**, documentary filmmaker and Chairperson of the Documentary Association Georgia (DOCA), and **Ilse Ronteltap**, International Manager at the Netherlands Film Fund. Finally, the **visions sud est Jury**, which awards the CHF 10'000 prize to a project from the majority world, consists of **John Canciani**, Artistic Director of the Winterthur International Short Film Festival, **Stefanie Rusterholz**, Co-Director of trigon-film, and **Sarah Schiesser**, Deputy Head of Open Doors, Locarno's talent development programme dedicated to film professionals from underrepresented regions.

VdR–Industry is supported by the **Federal Office of Culture (FOC)**, **Media Desk Switzerland** and the **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)**.

The VdR–Industry programme will take place from Sunday, April 19 to Wednesday, April 22, 2026.

Specific activities highlighting Swiss talents will be announced later in April.

VdR–Industry projects 2026

VdR–Pitching

VdR–Pitching is the Festival's highly competitive international co-production and financing platform, showcasing fifteen projects in development with artistic ambition and international potential ready to be launched into production.

A Season in Europe by **Jean-Stéphane Bron** (Switzerland)

Production: Lionel Baier (Bande à part Films)

Switzerland, France

Firing Line by **Olga Gibelinda** (Ukraine)

Production: Olga Gibelinda (Malanka Studios), Stasys Baltakis (Film Jam), Jonas Kellagher (CommonGround Pictures)

Ukraine, Lithuania, Sweden

Hello?! by **Sofie Benoot** (Belgium)

Marc Goyens (Quetzalcoatl), Guillaume Malandrin (Altitude100), Steven Rubinstein Malamud (GROM), Matej Sotnik (guča films)

Belgium, Netherlands, Slovakia

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La Linda by **Francina Carbonell** (Argentina)

Production: Maria Paz González (María una vez), Gema Juarez Allen (Gema Films)
Chile, Argentina

Letters from a Ceasefire by **Myriam El Hajj** (Lebanon), **Omid Hashemi** (Iran)

Production: Julie Bergeron & Corentin Sénéchal & Daniel Chabannes (Reality Films / Epicentre Films)
France

Retrograd by **Anders Mielcke Grønbaek** (Denmark), **Esben Persson** (Denmark)

Production: Kasper Lykke Schultz (Elk Film)
Denmark

Somewhere Over the Rainbow by **Koval Bhatia** (India)

Production: Dominique Barneaud (Bellota Films), Riham Ezzaldeen (What Took You So Long), Koval Bhatia (A Little Anarky Films)
France, United States, India

Stuttering Fluidity – How My Father Became a Sea Creature by **Stefan Pavlovic** (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Netherlands)

Production: Eyal Sivan (Serendipity Films), Kostana Banovic (artTrace Foundation)
France, Netherlands

The Bubble of Bliss by **Yasmin van Dorp** (Netherlands)

Production: Hester Breunissen & Janneke Doolaard (DOXY FIXY)
Netherlands

The Myth by **Che-Chia Hsu** (Taiwan)

Production: Jia Zhao (MUYI FILM), Che-Chia Hsu (MindMine Films)
Taiwan, Netherlands

The Vortex of Extinction by **Ljubomir Stefanov** (North Macedonia)

Production: Maya E. Rudolph (Louverture Films)
North Macedonia, United States

To My Dearest by **Grace Hsia** (China)

Production: Grace Hsia (Wild Angle Films), Wenli Liu
China, United States

TRADE by **Todd Chandler** (United States)

Production: Alysa Nahmias (AJNA Films), Keith Wilson (Breezy Circle)
United States

Transposition by **Vladlena Sandu** (based in the Netherlands)

Production: Jos de Putter (Dieptescherpte BV)
Netherlands

Uganda by **Daniel Mann** (United Kingdom)

Production: Fabrizio Polpettini (La Bête), Christophe Gougeon (Acqua Alta)
France

VdR–Work in Progress

VdR–Work in Progress highlights six upcoming documentaries in their finishing stages of post-production. This boutique showcase is designed to facilitate distribution opportunities, targeting festivals, sales agents, distributors and finishing funds.

A Road Less Travelled by **Alexander Murphy** (France, Ireland)

Production: Cosme Bongrain (Goodseed Productions), David Collins & Eamon Hughes (Samson Films)
France, Ireland


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BOOM! by **Laura Plancarte** (Mexico)

Production: Johnny Brewin (Boom Film Project Ltd.), Christilla Huillard-Kann (Elda Productions)
United Kingdom, France

Job 1:21 by **Samuel Suffren** (Haiti)

Production: Eugénie Michel Villette (Les Films du Bilboquet), Samuel Suffren (Kit Films)
France, Haiti

Liberal Arts by **Pacho Velez** (United States)

Production: Scott Cummings, Pacho Velez (Pachoworks), Milo Borsuk
United States

My Skin and I by **Milton Guillén** (Nicaragua), **Fiona Guy Hall** (United States)

Production: Zorana Mušikić & May Odeh (Mayana Films), Milton Guillén, Fiona Guy Hall
Germany, United States, Nicaragua

The Nights by **Ana Bovino** (Argentina)

Production: Natalia de la Vega (Navega Cine), Ana Bovino
Argentina

VdR–Rough Cut Lab

The VdR–Rough Cut Lab is an intimate workshop for four feature-length projects seeking specific feedback and advice from professionals on their most up-to-date rough cut.

Captain by **Laura Otálora** (Colombia)

Production: Estephania Bonnett (Playlab Films), Nicolás Herreño (Tomato Content)
Colombia, Spain

Holy Human Angel by **Angeliki Aristomenopoulou** (Greece)

Production: Rea Apostolidis & Yuri Averof (Anemon Productions), Heather Millard (Compass Films), Vicky Miha (Asterisk)
Greece, Iceland

Summer Grass Winter Worm by **Matjaz Pinter** (Slovenia)

Production: Martin Saxer (Entangled Films)
Germany

The People Outside by **Jewel Maranan** (Philippines)

Production: Jewel Maranan (Cinema Is Incomplete)
Philippines

VdR–Development Lab

The VdR–Development Lab is a nine-month programme supporting projects in development stages across Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

A journey to love should be taken by train, and only train. by **Elahe Esmaili** (Iran)

Production: Elahe Esmaili, Fabien Greenberg (Antipode Films)
Iran, Norway

Auguries, Dreams and Soils by **Luciana Decker Orozco** (Bolivia)

Production: Camila Molina Wiethuchter (Omm Cine)
Bolivia

Identity Curls by **Nadège Butoyi** (Burundi)

Production: Diane Kaneza (Mikadie Production), Jean Marie Ndiokubwayo (Clap4Creativity)
Burundi


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This Is Not a Wasteland by **Sachin** (India)
Production: Sachin (rohī collective)
India

VdR–Development Lab Finalists

Of the Trees Unmoved by **Nino Benashvili** (Georgia, Germany)
Production: Tekla Machavariani (Nushi Film), Eva Blondiau (Color of May)
Georgia, Germany

YOUTH by **Daria Zhuravel** (Ukraine)
Production: Anastasiia Zakhilko (Contemporary Ukrainian Cinema), Victor Thomas (Les 48° Rugissants / Jeudi Soir), Kristof Gerega (Schuldenberg Films)
Ukraine, France, Germany

Save the date

25 March 2026: Programme announced
17–26 April: 57th edition of Visions du Réel
19–22 April 2026: VdR–Industry

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57th edition of Visions du Réel: 17 – 26 April 2026


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