



Festival International
de Films de Fribourg

31^e 31.03 > 08.04 2017

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For immediate release

FIFF 2017: at the heart of cinema

The Fribourg International Film Festival announces the sections that will complete the main themes of its programme from March 31st to April 8th 2017, a programme that will take an in-depth look at the art and history of cinema. For a start, the Decryption section will delve into the mysteries of cinema. Then, we'll take a fresh look at film history with the Hommage à... section, which will give the founder of the Swiss Film Archive, Freddy Buache, the opportunity to present five of his most cherished films. Finally, we will continue the FIFF's trademark series of the carte blanche with Myret Zaki, editor-in-chief of the economic magazine *Bilan*, who will present, as part of the Diaspora section, five popular comedies that she likes to watch when she wants to reconnect with her Egyptian roots. The announcement of these sections now completes the programme, which also includes the previously unveiled sections New Territory: Nepal, Sur la carte de Douglas Kennedy and Genre Cinema: Ghost stories. As an old friend of the festival, it will be Marco Solaris, president of the Locarno Festival, who will officially open this year's festivities. The full list of films and guests at the 31st FIFF will be announced on March 15, but the festival is delighted to be able to give a sneak preview, including the opening and the closing film, as well as a world premiere set to live music by Malcolm Braff.

The documentary *The Eagle Huntress* by Otto Bell, which tells the story of Mongolia's first female eagle hunter, will open the 31st FIFF on March 31st on a bright note. This year, the FIFF invites **Marco Solaris**, president of the **Locarno Festival** that will be celebrating his 70th edition next August, to cut the ribbon of the FIFF 2017. The hopeful tone initiated by the opening ceremony will take a more sombre turn for the closing film on April 8 with *The Birth of a Nation* by Nate Parker, the story of a slave who tries to lead a revolt 30 years before the American Civil War. This screening also marks the film's Swiss premiere. Between the opening and closing films, the 2017 FIFF will screen around 130 features and short films, including a few special events. On April 6, as part of Genre Cinema: Ghost stories, musician **Malcolm Braff** will provide a piano accompaniment for the world premiere of an astonishing film for which he also wrote the soundtrack: *Bumbai Bird*, by the Swiss-Indian filmmaker **Kamal Musale**.

Decryption: A cinematic cabinet of curiosities

Every year FIFF's themed section aims to find high-quality films that have slipped under the radar of distributors and other festivals. After themes such as *The Image of the Islam in the Occident* (2012) and *Can you laugh about anything?* (2015), it turned out that, over the last few months, an unusual number of excellent productions dedicated to cinema itself have emerged. The decline of celluloid has changed the nature of the medium, as well as how films are produced, enjoyed and archived. In the midst of this major shift, some filmmakers are demonstrating the cultural and social importance of cinema by exploring the past: the Swiss-American **Alexandre O. Philippe** will present his documentary *78/52* as a Swiss premiere, fresh from its screening at Sundance: a 90-minute film that passionately unpacks the famous shower scene from Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*.



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Diaspora: Myret Zaki and Egypt

Myret Zaki, expert economic analyst, editor-in-chief of the magazine *Bilan* and a well-known face in western Switzerland, is a woman of conviction. Within the Diaspora section the special carte blanche offers a prominent exile the chance to show films that remind them of their homeland. Zaki is following in the footsteps of cartoonist Patrick Chappatte (Lebanon), hockey player Slava Bykov (Russia), and filmmakers Atom Egoyan (Armenia), Tony Gatlif (Romani) and Mira Nair (India). By choosing five films largely unknown outside of Egypt, Myret Zaki has combined the economic realities of her home country from the 40s to the 90s with Egyptians' secret weapons of humour, song and dance. Tales from a time when the country sang, laughed and danced - no matter what.

Hommage à...: Freddy Buache

For the Hommage à... section, which in the past has celebrated the enormity of Iranian cinema (2014) and the courage of Syrians (2015), **Freddy Buache** seemed an obvious choice for the FIFF team. The lion of the **Swiss Film Archive** from 1951 to 1995 accepted the festival's proposition with enthusiasm: the chance to choose five of his favourite masterpieces. For Thierry Jobin, FIFF's Artistic Director, "He changed the lives of all of us who live and breathe cinema. This is clear even without reading the interminable files the Swiss government held cataloguing his, shall we say, left-wing activities. Long before the first FIFF, Freddy Buache was already promoting cultural diversity, introducing audiences to filmmakers from far and wide, and reminding us of the basics of a mode of expression that few have championed so greatly. So it was time to champion him."

Partnerships and latest news

The 2017 FIFF has a budget of 2.2 million Swiss francs. Over the past few months, it has succeeded in attracting various new members and partners, which is certainly worth celebrating. Highlights include three sponsors supporting specific sections for the first time this year: the **SSR SRG** (Swiss public broadcasting association) is sponsoring all the talks, debates and round tables, as well as the traditional Think Tank; **Fribourg's public transport operator, (TPF)**, will be teaming up with the **canton** on Planète Cinéma, Switzerland's largest schools programme with more than 10,000 signed up to date; and the Midnight Screenings will be backed by **Wall Street English**, the first sponsor in FIFF's history to commit to a Parallel Section. The festival is optimistic that this new style of partnership, designed to generate support for the event's primary material through its ever varied and imaginative sections, will flourish going forward. The organisers must adapt to the challenges presented by its growing popularity, despite its budget remaining fixed. In order to diversify its funding sources, the FIFF committee has also decided to create a **FIFF CLUB** in the style of Locarno's Leopard Club. So for 5,000 or 10,000 Swiss francs, individuals or companies can experience the FIFF as an insider with VIP perks. Motivated neither by a move towards luxury experiences nor delusions of grandeur, the FIFF hopes this initiative will go down well with fans.

SAVE THE DATE:

March 15th 10:15 : Press conference in Fribourg, presentation of the official programme

ACCREDITATIONS

Accreditation requests are open until March 30th 2017 on www.fiff.ch

TICKETS

Presales on www.fiff.ch start on March 15th 2017



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