



FIFF under the sun and the stars: 35th edition postponed until 16th–25th July 2021

The FIFF organisational committee announces the postponement of the 35th edition of the Fribourg International Film Festival. As was the case last year, this decision was not taken lightly. Given the uncertainties surrounding the public health situation, everyone felt that this was the right and most responsible course of action. The Festival will now be held between 16th and 25th July 2021 at selected cinemas and in a special open-air venue. The in-person option was chosen over an online edition because it is fully in keeping with the Festival's philosophy of bringing film fans, filmmakers and artists together.

The 35th edition of FIFF is postponed from 19th–28th March until 16th–25th July 2021. This is owing to the uncertainty around the public health situation in Switzerland and the fact that an official decision is not expected before 28th February on whether cinemas can reopen and if so, at what operating capacity and with what prevention and control conditions in place. Of course, the health and safety of the public, invited artists and co-workers is paramount for the FIFF organising committee. The new dates were agreed with Belluard Bollwerk and the Les Georges Festival. Although the 34½ edition in 2020 was spread over several months and generated 11,700 admissions, FIFF, along with the Zurich Film Festival, is one of the few film events in Switzerland, which still hopes to host a live edition this year, circumstances permitting. As Mathieu Fleury, President of the Fribourg International Film Festival Association, explains, "Digital is not part of our philosophy. One of FIFF's founding principles is to give filmmakers the opportunity to present their work directly to the public and to offer all concerned an unforgettable, shared cinematic experience. Postponing the festival until the summer is the best solution given the current situation." This does not mean that FIFF has ruled out leveraging the extraordinary possibilities of digital technology to bring people together; several filmmakers who might be unable to travel will connect with the Festival audience via video link after their film has been screened.

The icing on the cake is that the public will also have the chance to enjoy screenings under the stars in the impressive surroundings of the Belluard. This would not have been possible without Open Air Kino Luna AG, which agreed to let FIFF use its infrastructure which it will set up for its own open-air film event in Fribourg the following weeks. As Thierry Jobin, FIFF Artistic Director, notes, "The entire FIFF team was hoping that cultural life would blossom again in spring. Their energy and optimism have been incredible given that they have had to work for months unsure of what tomorrow would bring. Postponing the Festival to July is not a setback but a tremendous chance. Our partners cinemotion and ARENA Cinemas have also accepted to screen our programme as it stands, even though summer could be a really busy time for them if there is a huge flood of new film releases. There was no way FIFF was prepared to sacrifice any part of the programme given the passion that had been invested in it!" Although the release of certain films on the programme is likely to happen before the Festival in July, it was decided that they would not be withdrawn. Given the ongoing global crisis, there are higher priorities than securing a Swiss première. Moreover, festivals have an additional, and very important role to play in reassuring the public that is fine to go to the cinema again.

Once again, FIFF has reinvented itself, put together a programme which it hopes will woo back the public, allow them to rediscover the shared joy of cinema, and even do something they have not been able to do for the last year – visit far-off countries, such as Rwanda and Mexico. The 35th edition of FIFF will also give the public a chance to watch the favourite films of two illustrious names from the world of music – one a pop legend, the other a rising hip-hop star. The VIPs holding FIFF's carte blanche this year and their choices will be revealed in June. It will be well worth the wait.

Planète Cinéma is not postponed

Close to 10,000 students have already registered for *Planète Cinéma*, the largest film event for schools in Switzerland. As long as schools do not close, FIFF will go ahead with the school screenings planned in March, with a new solution though because of the requirement not to mix classes. The Festival will work together with each school to provide pupils with cinema discoveries by putting up special viewings in compliance with sanitary conditions.

Broadway revisited

To keep spirits up until the 35th edition, FIFF is launching a fun contest. Amateurs and professionals are invited to submit their personal take on an excerpt of their choosing from one of the music films in the *Genre Cinema: Audience Choice* section. Here, anything goes: a dance routine, a song, dialogue, a parody or even a 'sweded' version (no-budget, homemade remake). As well as offering great prizes, FIFF wants the contest to



Festival International de Films de Fribourg

foster and celebrate creativity, especially during these times when culture is such a sorely missed part of our lives. It is sure to make the countdown to July more enjoyable. Information: fiff.ch/node/4389/

MEDIA INFORMATION

- **Interviews**
Mathieu Fleury, FIFF President, Thierry Jobin, Artistic Director, and Philippe Clivaz, Director of Operations, are available for an interview by phone or video call.
Contact: Simone Jenni, Head of Press simone.jenni@fiff.ch | +41 76 467 01 44
- **Download HD photos:** fiff.ch/presse-2021
- **FAQ FIFF 2021 and Covid-19:** fiff.ch/en/faq-covid-and-fiff21
- **Press conference** with the presentation of the full programme and press accreditations requests: in **June 2021**.
Date to be announced soon on fiff.ch/presse-2021
- **35th edition of the Fribourg International Film Festival**
Previous dates: ~~19th–28th March 2021~~
New dates: 16th–25th July 2021

