



## The FIFF unveils surprise-filled 2021 programme

If we were to choose a theme for the last 18 months, it would probably be 'expect the unexpected'. The 35th edition of the Fribourg International Film Festival (FIFF), which will run from 16th to 25th July, continues in this vein, but with surprises of the cinematic, and decidedly more pleasant variety. The programme features 139 films from 51 countries, which will be screened at indoor and outdoor venues around Fribourg. Étienne Daho and Guillermo del Toro will each give a masterclass, while the Festival cements its reputation as a canny talent scout with no fewer than six world premieres, three international premieres, six European premieres and 38 Swiss premieres. The line-up also includes 27 homegrown productions showcasing Switzerland's filmmaking chops. Ticketing and full programme on [fiff.ch](http://fiff.ch).

### Around the world in 139 films

The 12 feature films and 16 shorts in the **International Competitions** are intense forays into Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe. The **New Territory** section is given over to **Rwanda** and its nascent and dynamic film industry. Forty-three Mexican filmmakers, including Alejandro González Iñárritu, will take the FIFF audience on a curated cinematic tour of **Mexico**. Among the films selected by the directors is the sumptuous *Los olvidados*, which earned Luis Buñuel the *Palme d'or* at Cannes' in 1951. That is not all: **Guillermo del Toro**, one of the 43 filmmakers who shared his favourite films with FIFF, will give a public masterclass, live from Hollywood (admission free).

The 2021 programme also shines a light on music in film, with the self-explanatory **Genre Cinema: Music!** section, as well as a special collaboration with the **Les Georges** music festival. The new **Audience Choice** section features five cult musical films, which won the public vote held last year. In addition, two members of the public will introduce each film prior to its screening. FIFF has also given *carte blanche* to two leading figures from the world of music. The first is the king of French pop **Étienne Daho** – who will give a masterclass on Saturday 24th July and present his favourite films, all of which offer a no-holds-barred exploration of sexual identity and freedom. The second is actress and rising Swiss hip-hop artist **Karine Guignard, aka La Gale**, whose film selection zeroes in on Lebanon and Palestine, countries which unfortunately tend to be forgotten as soon as the paroxysms of violence have subsided.

There is also a family-friendly leg to the FIFF journey, courtesy of the **Make it family time** section. There are short, dialogue-free films (4+ age group); the 1939 masterpiece *The Wizard of Oz* (6+ age group); the picaresque football road trip *Africa United* (9+ age group), and the Indonesian superhero film, *Gundala* (14+ age group). For this section, admission is pocket-friendly too: tickets cost CHF 8.– for children under 16. For our audience members who prefer their cinematic rides on the scarier side, there is **Midnight Screenings**. Fans of South Korean kookiness (*The Odd Family: Zombie on Sale*, *Night of the Undead*), Finnish freakishness (*NIMBY – not in my backyard*) and stroboscopic Australian westerns (*True History of the Kelly Gang*) will not be disappointed. For the **Opening Film**, a musical surprise awaits. But the surprises do not end there: FIFF has one final one in store, in the shape of the **Closing Film**, which will round off the 35th edition in style.

### International Competition: Feature Films – ready for take-off

"Our *International Competition* features 12 powerful and masterful films, some of which were mothballed because of the pandemic, others originally in competition at other festivals. At FIFF, we are incredibly proud to be able to show these works as they were meant to be shown, on the big screen!", explains Thierry Jobin, FIFF's Artistic Director. The programme includes (co-)productions from 23 different countries: the Chinese film **Anima**, shot in the forests of Inner Mongolia, which pits humans against nature; two Japanese films – **A Balance**, a dark and suspenseful drama by Yujiro Harumoto, and **True Mothers**, a touching family story by Naomi Kawase; two South Korean films – the absurdly funny **Voice of Silence** with its two clean-up guys whose lives are turned upside down by a little girl (starring Yoo Ah-in), and the ultimate romantic melodrama, **Josée**, whose director Kim Jong-kwan will be in attendance at the Festival. Adilkhan Yerzhanov will make his fourth appearance at FIFF, this time with the comedy **Yellow Cat**, in which his antihero, who thinks he is Alain Delon in



## Festival International de Films de Fribourg

*The Samurai*, dreams of performing *Singin' in the Rain* on the Kazakh plains. The irony-laden **Gaza mon amour**, the second feature by Palestinian twin directors Arab and Tarzan Nasser, takes an unconventional look at the Gaza Strip. **Bad Christmas** (Argentina/Uruguay) is an uproarious black comedy, while Mexico's **New Order**, which won the Silver Lion at Venice, is the story of a jaw-dropping and irreversible dystopia. **The Night of the Kings** is a political fable set in an Ivorian prison, and the poignant **Quo vadis, Aida?** tells the story of a woman of unflinching courage in Srebrenica in 1995. The lead actress Maryna Koshkina, who puts in a spellbinding performance as a MMA athlete in the Ukrainian film **Blindfold**, will be in Fribourg to introduce her film.

### **Passeport Suisse: celebrating homegrown talent**

Although FIFF is interested in films from the South and the East, it is also committed to showcasing talented filmmakers working in Switzerland. This year's *Passeport suisse* section has no less than 27 Swiss productions, including the world premiere of one of the most moving documentaries ever made, **Love of Fate** by Pierre-Alain Meier. The Festival will also premiere the four short films that grew out of the trip that 12 students from HEAD-Geneva made to Mexico in early 2020, where they attended a workshop given by the revered filmmaker Carlos Reygadas. The **Foreign Visa Prize** programme turns the tables and asks a jury drawn from the guests of the *New Territory: Rwanda* section to select the best of six shorts made by talented Swiss film school students. The programme will also include a new prize, the **Prix Röstigraben**, awarded jointly by FIFF and the *Schweizer Jugendfilmtage*. Last but not least, films about music directed by Fribourg artists during lockdown last year will be shown on the big screen.

### **Destination Fribourg for juries, guests and film fans**

The current pandemic-related restrictions means that FIFF will not be able to welcome all guests in person. Nonetheless, several filmmakers and film crew members have confirmed that they will be in Fribourg from 16th to 25th July to present their work. The public will also have the opportunity to meet a number of directors via video encounters. In addition, **FIFForum** has a packed programme of conferences and other events that bring the public and industry professionals together; admission is free. The Festival is also pleased to announce the members of the jury for the *International Competition: Feature Films* – the Biel-based author, composer and performer **Phanee de Pool**, the founder of the band *Nouvelle Vague* and French filmmaker **Marc Collin**, as well as the director and producer **Eylem Kaftan** (*The Hive*). The jury for the *International Competition: Short Films* are Basel musician **Anna Aaron**, filmmaker, journalist, photographer and graphic novel writer **Eileen Hofer**, and Swiss director **Pierre Monnard** (*Platzspitzbaby*).

### **FIFF21: COVID-safe, in person and online outreach**

The 35th edition of the FIFF has been designed to reach as many people as possible while minimising any risk to public health. Until further notice, theatres will operate at half their capacity and without requesting official Covid certificate to the audience. Following the cancellation of the 2020 edition, the FIFF team is understandably delighted that the Festival can finally take place, albeit later than originally planned. The team will be regularly tested and the public will be asked to comply with FIFF's prevention and control plan. Outreach has always been an important part of the Festival's work. This is why it will leverage the power of digital technology to connect with those who are unable to attend the Festival in person, whether for health, financial or other reasons. From 26th July to 15th August, i.e. *after* the Festival has ended, FIFF will show part of its 2021 programme online. The Swiss public will be able to watch around 15 films from various sections at the price of CHF 10.– per view. For Mathieu Fleury, President of FIFF, "The 35th edition of FIFF will not be a hybrid event. It will be first and foremost an in-person event; our online screenings are simply a bonus. For almost two years, the team has fought tooth and nail for this edition and we are not about to abandon our values now. Our priority was and remains the shared pleasure of discovering films on the big screen." There is no doubt that the 35th edition will be full of surprises.



*Sunrise in My Mind, Danech San (International Competition: Short Films)*

#### MEDIA INFORMATION

**FIFF 2021 PRESSKIT:** Download on [fiff.ch/en/press-2021](https://fiff.ch/en/press-2021)

- **Interviews:** List of guests in the presskit.  
Please contact the FIFF Press office.  
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- **FIFF 2021 material:** Download on [fiff.ch/en/press-2021](https://fiff.ch/en/press-2021)
- **Film stills HD:** Upon request
- **Press accreditation:** Before 11th July on [fiff.ch/en/accreditations-fiff-2021](https://fiff.ch/en/accreditations-fiff-2021)
- **FAQ FIFF 2021 and Covid-19:** [fiff.ch/en/faq-covid-and-fiff21](https://fiff.ch/en/faq-covid-and-fiff21)