

EMBARGO FRIDAY 17TH MARCH 2023, 8.30 PM

The FIFF banquet gets under way



Pierre Richard and Gérard Depardieu in *Umami – A taste of happiness*, Slony Sow (France, Japan, 2022)
Opening Film FIFF 2023 | Swiss premiere

The Fribourg International Film Festival (FIFF) held its opening ceremony on Friday evening. True to the Festival's values, the event was a shared moment of discovery, dialogue and celebration. The menu for the 37th edition includes 99 films from 52 countries and every continent; a new food-meets-film experience; a carte blanche for Fatih Akin; the first major showcase of filmmaking from the Republic of Moldova; and unforgettable encounters sparked by a shared love of cinema. On stage, transformed into a restaurant for the occasion, the President of the Swiss Confederation Alain Berset proposed a toast, in which he likened FIFF to a banquet that "satisfies our craving for curiosity and whets our appetite for debate." Director Slony Sow also attended the screening of his film *Umami – A taste of happiness*, which provided a fitting and appetizing start to FIFF 2023.

The sold-out opening ceremony was an opulent feast for the eyes. The stage had everything you would expect from a fine-dining establishment: an elegantly set table, a succession of succulent dishes and, of course, seven dinner guests dressed in evening attire, notably the President of the Swiss Confederation **Alain Berset** and the Mayor of the City of Fribourg **Thierry Steiert**. They were joined by two members of the International Juries: **Francine Lecoultre**, the Hollywood costume designer from French-speaking Switzerland who will cast her discerning eye on the 12 films in the *International competition: Feature Films*; and Fribourg author **Fabienne Radi**, who won a Swiss Literature Award in 2022 and is a member of the *International competition: Short Films* jury. The remaining three dining companions were members of the FIFF family: **Mathieu Fleury** and **Marine Jordan**, President and Vice-President respectively of the Fribourg International Film Festival Association, and **Thierry Jobin**, the Festival's artistic director.

The assembled dinner guests took turns to propose a toast. The President of the Swiss Confederation, **Alain Berset**, congratulated FIFF on its enduring openness to the world, "This year, FIFF has concocted a menu of films from different worlds and different cultures which fuses a passion for great food with a passion for great cinema. It satisfies our craving for curiosity and whets our appetite for debate by allowing us to see through another's eyes." The Fribourg International Film Festival Association, represented by **Mathieu Fleury** and **Marine Jordan**, praised the diversity that FIFF has once again served up for the audience's delectation, "If you are what you eat, then you are also what you watch. This edition of FIFF is sure to leave us all enriched, nourished, and more alive to the world."

Thierry Jobin toasted the FIFF audience who continue to flock to cinema theatres in search of a shared emotional experience, "The threatened disappearance of cinemas from our towns is no less tragic than the disappearance of a school, a doctor's surgery or restaurant. We cannot build a better world from the solitude of our living room. We need to work together if we are to liberate ourselves from 24-hour news cycles and alternative pseudo-realities. Let's celebrate the courage of all filmmakers, particularly those whose works feature on our menu this year." At the end of the ceremony, FIFF's artistic director invited director **Slony Sow** to join the dinner party and introduce his film *Umami – A taste of happiness*, which opened the 37th edition and offered a taste of things to come during Festival week. Starring Gérard Depardieu and Pierre Richard, the film tells the story of a famous chef who heads to Japan to discover the secrets of the fifth taste, the eponymous umami. There will be a further two screenings of this Franco-Japanese comedy during the Festival (Saturday 18 and 25 March at 2.30 pm). It will go on general release in French-speaking Switzerland in May 2023.

With 99 films catering for all tastes and ages, the FIFF 2023 banquet will be served in Fribourg from 17 to 26 March. Tickets and full programme on fiff.ch.

The FIFF 2023 sections

fiff.ch/en/sections-2023

- *International competition: Feature Films*
 - *International competition: Short Films*
 - *Opening and Closing Film*
 - *FIFF favourites*
 - *Genre Cinema (I): Bon appétit!*
 - *Genre Cinema (II): Audience Choice*
 - *Make it family time – films for 4- to 16-year-olds*
 - *Decryption: Reality check*
 - *New Territory: Republic of Moldova*
 - *Sur la carte de Fatih Akin*
 - *Passeport Suisse*
 - *Midnight Screenings*
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- *Planète Cinéma* – school programme, +10'600 participants (4- to 25-year-olds)
 - *FIFForum* – meetings and talks

MEDIA INFORMATION

**PRESSKIT
FIFF 2023**

on fiff.ch/en/presse-2023

- **Interviews:**
List of attending guests on fiff.ch/en/presse-2023
Please contact the FIFF Press office for interviews.
- **HD film stills:** fiff.ch/en/presse-2023
More film stills available upon request. Film screeners available upon request.
- **Photos of the Opening Ceremony:** download on fiff.ch/en/presse-2023
from Friday, 17th March 10.30 PM
- **Press accreditation:** as of now on fiff.ch/en/accreditations-fiff-2023

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