



71st International Film Festival Mannheim-Heidelberg: Opening Film, Midnight Screening and Initial Highlights of the Programme

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The International Film Festival Mannheim-Heidelberg (IFFMH) will start off its 71st edition with exciting highlights of the latest works of cinema from Ukraine, Costa Rica, Tunisia, Pakistan and many other countries.

Opening Night

This year's festival will open on 17 November with the German premiere of a romantic comedy. In ›Diary of a Fleeting Affair‹ (›Chronique d'une liaison passagère‹), French master director Emmanuel Mouret, whose previous film ›Love Affair(s)‹ was screened in Mannheim-Heidelberg in 2020, deals with the imponderables of romance. His latest film is about two people who intend to keep their relationship purely physical, but ultimately fail to control their feelings for one another. The multiple award-winning stars Sandrine Kiberlain and Vincent Macaigne shine in the leading roles.



Still from ›Diary of a Fleeting Affair‹ | © Kinology



Midnight Screening

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In its first-ever Midnight Screening, IFFMH 2022 is presenting ›Unicorn Wars‹. This hilarious animated film, which references ›Hello Kitty‹ and ›South Park‹, pits unicorns and teddy bears against each other. Appropriately for the midnight hour, there is a lot of blood. In vivid neon colours, Spanish director Alberto Vázquez tells of fascism, the dark side of religion and the senselessness of violence, but also of the poetic beauty of nature.

Competition: On the Rise

At its core, the festival revolves, as always, around the search for exceptionally talented up-and-coming directors. In the international competition ON THE RISE, 16 entries from all over the world will compete for the festival's six awards, which total more than 50,000 euros.

›How Is Katia?‹, the first feature film by director Christina Tynkevych, is the intense psychological portrait of a woman who has suffered a heavy blow at the hands of fate. The film is also a profile of Ukrainian society and the problems it faced prior to the Russian invasion.

The two African entries in the IFFMH competition also take a fascinating look at the social and political situation in their countries. ›Ashkal‹ is the feature film debut of Tunisian filmmaker and musician Youssef Chebbi, whose previous co-directed work ›Babylon‹ was screened at the MoMA. Chebbi's latest film is a crime drama that mixes politics and the supernatural. It's set



in a district of Tunis where burn victims are suddenly turning up in increasing numbers. The police start investigating these mysterious cases. Proceeding from this scenario, this atmospheric film noir unfolds as an allegory of recent sociopolitical upheavals in North Africa.

›The Dam‹ is also about social unrest. In Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, people take to the streets to demand freedom and justice. Yet the revolution only reaches the workers at a remote brickyard at the controversial Merowe Dam in the form of noisy audio and shaky video. One of the workers, however, resists in his own way by secretly fashioning something out of mud, in a form that only gradually takes shape. Director Ali Cherri is a visual artist in addition to being a filmmaker. He was awarded the Silver Lion at the 2022 Venice Biennale for the video installation ›Of Men and Gods and Mud‹.

But this year's IFFMH features even more films from countries whose culture of cinema is hardly ever seen in Germany: ›I Have Electric Dreams‹ (›Tengo sueños eléctricos‹) from Costa Rica earned three awards in Locarno – for best director, best actor and best actress. This feature film debut of writer-director Valentina Maurel is a social drama about a highly ambivalent daughter-father relationship; the complexity of the relationship between the two protagonists makes the film far more than a mere story of abuse.

This year, ›Joyland‹ became the first entry from Pakistan to be selected for the Cannes Festival. This film tells of how repressed desires conflict with everyday responsibilities and gradually undermine rigid social



conventions. Director Saim Sadiq previously received a Short Film Award at the Venice Film Festival in 2020.

The IFFMH is also screening ›You Won't Be Alone‹, a (post-)feminist Australian film about witches that stars Noomi Rapace. For this debut, director Goran Stolevski was included in the Palm Springs International Film Festival's list of "10 Directors to Watch".

Pushing the Boundaries

As in the previous two years, the international competition of IFFMH 2022 will be rounded out by a section called PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES, in which the festival screens works by established directors who, according to the programme team, explore or even push the boundaries of the medium of film in an original and daring way.

›The Beasts‹ is a psychological thriller and an outstanding drama that confronts the viewer with the question of whether and how it's possible to escape a cycle of violence. The film stars Denis Ménochet and Marina Foïs as a married couple who fulfil their lifelong dream of owning a farm in rural Spain but run bitterly afoul of the longtime local residents. The film dissects first the mood of the Spanish hinterland and then the story of a woman and her marriage. An Oscar nomination and two Goyas for his previous work have recently made director Rodrigo Sorogoyen one of Spain's best-known filmmakers.

The mastermind behind another film that will be screened at IFFMH in November hardly needs an introduction: the multiple award-winning Filipino master director Lav Diaz. His latest work, ›When the Waves Are Gone‹, is an epic



drama of atonement. Released from prison after many years, a man seeks revenge on his former best friend.

All of the films mentioned above are German premieres.

The 71st IFFMH will be held from 17 to 27 November 2022.

The entire IFFMH 2022 festival programme will be announced in late October.

If you have any questions, please contact our agency
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The festival wishes to thank its sponsors and partners.