



72nd IFFMH: Opening ceremony with ›Day of the Fight‹ in the presence of director Jack Huston and cinematographer Peter Simonite

Press release – Mannheim, 17 November 2023

The International Film Festival Mannheim-Heidelberg kicked off its 72nd edition yesterday evening in a nearly sold-out auditorium at the Cineplex Mannheim. Festival director Sascha Keilholz, Mannheim's mayor Christian Specht and State Secretary Arne Braun gave the opening remarks. Attending the event were numerous representatives of the arts, government and the business community in the metropolitan region and the state of Baden-Württemberg as well as national and international guests of the festival.

The festival opened to the public with a screening of the drama ›Day of the Fight‹, Jack Huston's first film as a director. Accompanied by his director of photography Peter Simonite, the star traveled to Mannheim for the German premiere of the film. In ›Day of the Fight‹, Huston delivers a moving story about an underdog, a boxer on the day of his comeback. It is a drama about sacrifice, forgiveness and redemption, filmed in virtuoso black-and-white images. The film stars US actor Michael Pitt, who has appeared in a large number of motion pictures and television series.

In his remarks, festival director Sascha Keilholz highlighted the festival's identity as an international event that transcends countries and continents and one that is rooted in a culture of inclusion and diversity, free of any form of discrimination.

The 2023 programme

Until 26 November, audiences will have the opportunity to see 72 films from 51 countries in the main programme. These films include a number of German premieres, many of which will be attended by international guests who will discuss their films in person. The partnering cinemas in Mannheim are the Atlantis, the Cineplex and the Cinema Quadrat. And in Heidelberg the Gloria, the Karlstorbahnhof with a cinema built into the main auditorium specifically for the festival and the Luxor.

This year's ON THE RISE international competition will once again feature 16 first and second films by talented international directors. In 2023, the geographical scope ranges from Italy, Spain, Greece, Hungary and the Netherlands to Lebanon, Pakistan, Nepal, South Korea, Singapore and finally the United States. Thematically, the films tell of human longing, grief and transience, but also of hope. Their subjects range from the lives of women in strictly conservative societies to rebellious millennials to the immigration system in the United States.



The PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES section highlights new approaches in established formats, presenting films by groundbreaking artistic filmmakers from their third feature film onwards. In his thriller ›Red Rooms‹, Canadian director Pascal Plante explores the sordid side of humanity as he lures the audience into the dark labyrinth of a shadowy online world. Acclaimed director Wei Shujun from China delivers a visually stunning crime drama in ›Only the River Flows‹. Both directors will be at the festival. Also present will be Henrika Kull, director of the German entry ›Salty Water‹, a sizzling portrait, at once subtle and profound, of a German and an Israeli by the pool guarded by the Israeli missile defence system.

In the FILMSCAPES section, the IFFMH is expanding its curatorial repertoire and taking a look at the complete range of films made in a given year. This includes documentaries such as ›Menus Plaisirs‹ by legendary US documentary filmmaker Frederick Wiseman, about the Troisgros family of restaurateurs, and ›About Dry Grasses‹, the latest work by acclaimed Turkish director Nuri Bilge Ceylan. In contrast, the Ukrainian drama ›Forever-Forever‹ takes a look at violence committed against women in Kyiv in the 1990s. Goran Stolevski, the recipient of last year's IFFMH Newcomer Award and a member of this year's international jury, will be screening his second feature film, ›Of an Age‹, in this section. It's a touching drama about finding love and losing it in a single day.

Further highlights of the programme include the centrepiece, ›All of Us Strangers‹ by Andrew Haigh, a mysterious film about farewells and new beginnings, life and death, starring Andrew Scott and Paul Mescal. The Argentinian entry and current Oscar contender ›The Delinquents‹, about a bank robbery committed out of boredom, redefines the heist film. And the big winner at Locarno this year, ›Critical Zone‹, is a powerful political drama. After the regime-critical Iranian director Ali Ahmadzadeh was not allowed to travel to the Locarno Film Festival, he will now be present at the 72nd IFFMH, much to the delight of the festival team.

The Kinderfilmfest is once again presenting current children's films from around the world, including the animated Spanish film ›Robot Dreams‹ by Pablo Berger. This adaptation of the cult comic by Sara Varon is a cinematic experience for the whole family that does without dialogue but tells a lot about the value of friendship. All of the films at the Kinderfilmfest will be shown in their original language with live voice-overs in German. This year, renowned children's book authors Stephanie Schneider and Stefanie Höfler will be holding readings.

The retrospective sheds light on the technique of method acting. Marilyn Monroe, Sally Field, Joanne Woodward, Kim Stanley, Marlon Brando, Montgomery Clift, Sidney Poitier, Robert De Niro and Al Pacino all made film



history. Their masterful acting skills are waiting to be rediscovered in a total of 12 works made between 1947 and 1980.

Parties, panel discussions and performances – the supporting programme

Beyond the silver screen, the IFFMH is offering a diverse supporting programme. Lars Eidinger will be DJing at the opening of the new festival lounge in the Karlstorbahnhof on 17 November as he presents his “Anti Disco”. The following day, he will join Antje Traue, who has made a name for herself in Hollywood, and Hanna Hilsdorf, known from the series ›Die Kaiserin‹, in talking about his profession at a panel discussion on acting. A further highlight of the festival is The Nest, a Kenyan artists’ collective that will be performing in the new festival lounge in the Karlstorbahnhof. In cooperation with the Kunsthalle Mannheim and the Alte Feuerwache, the IFFMH is also presenting an exhibition and a concert by the Dominican-American artist and musician Kelman Duran, who has previously worked for Beyoncé.

The 72nd IFFMH is being held from 16 to 26 November.

The complete programme can be found online at www.iffmh.de/programme. A total of 19 films can also be viewed online in the IFFMH stream. The festival would like to thank 1o1 Media for making this possible.

Images

You can download images from our press area by using this link:
https://www.iffmh.de/partners-and-press/press-material/index_eng.html

About the IFFMH

With “New Film Experience” as its credo, the IFFMH has been venturing new, interdisciplinary perspectives on and through the art of film since 1952. This makes it the longest-running film festival in Germany after the Berlinale, and it continues to be a major platform for cultural, social and political dialogue. With each subsequent edition, the IFFMH, as a festival for the public in cinemas, invites festivalgoers to discover the rising stars of the international film scene as well as to follow the careers of established filmmakers and to become more familiar with film in the context of other art forms.

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The festival would like to thank its sponsors and partners.

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