A spectacular anniversary with widespread appeal: 75th IFFMH delights audiences in cinemas and far beyond

Press release – Mannheim, 16 November 2026

The 75th edition of the International Film Festival Mannheim-Heidelberg concluded yesterday, Sunday, 15 November, with a moving and captivating cinematic experience. The closing film, ›Congo Boy‹ by Congolese director Rafiki Fariala, provided a finale that was as emotional as it was hopeful. The festival welcomed producer Elvis Sabin Ngaïbino and screenwriter Tommy Baron to the screenings at the Filmpalast Luxor in Heidelberg and, later in the evening, the Stadthaus N1 in Mannheim. This drama is about a boy in Central Africa who, despite the challenges he faces, clings to his dream of becoming a musician. The film's infectious energy and heart-warming story of courage, hope and the power of big dreams exemplified the motto of this anniversary edition: "Imagine Futures!"

Festival director Sascha Keilholz said: "The anniversary celebrations marking the 75th edition of the festival exceeded all our expectations. The overwhelming response and the enthusiasm among the audience were palpable at every single film screening. The whole city revelled in arts and culture. We see this response as offering both validation and motivation. A heartfelt thank you goes to our partners, sponsors and everyone who made this unique edition possible."



International guests at the screening of the closing film ›Congo Boy‹: screenwriter Tommy Baron (left) and producer Elvis Sabin Ngaïbino (right) with festival director Sascha Keilholz (center) © Sönke Dannemann

International guests, sold-out film screenings and a bright pink water tower

The anniversary edition presented 80 feature-length films from 50 countries. These included entries from Australia, the United States, the Central African Republic, Brazil, Bolivia and South Korea. Alongside the competition entries, the

audience also got to see numerous contenders for the upcoming awards season, such as ›La Bola Negra‹ by the Spanish directing team “Los Javis”, nominated for ten European Film Awards; the Centre Piece, ›La Gradiva‹, also nominated for best film at the European Film Awards; Ryūsuke Hamaguchi’s award-winning drama ›All of a Sudden‹; and ›Club Kid‹ by Jordan Firstman, a hit on this year’s festival circuit. Other audience favourites included ›Chili Finger‹ by Edd Benda and Stephen Helstad, ›Ink‹ by cult director Danny Bolye, Petra Volpe’s ›Frank & Louis‹ and Wim Wenders’ new 3-D documentary ›From Inside Out – The Architecture of Peter Zumthor‹. Nineteen of the films were German premieres, alongside two European premieres and one world premiere.

The acclaimed actress Trine Dyrholm, who was honoured in a HOMAGE, captivated the audience during a master class at the Karlstorbahnhof in Heidelberg and in Q&A sessions about her latest film, ›The Guest‹ by Mads Mengel, which was screened in competition. Celebrated actor Lars Eidinger, meanwhile, attended the German premiere of his film ›Moulin‹ by László Nemes and subsequently wowed the crowd as a DJ at the sold-out Alte Feuerwache in Mannheim. Other guests included the US director Rob Burnett, who presented his tragicomedy ›In Memoriam‹; director Fabian Stumm, who along with his cast, Marie-Lou Sellem, Hans Löw, Romina Küper and Aenne Schwarz, came for the German premiere of his episodic film ›Die Ideen‹; and producer Bettina Brokemper, who not only was on the International Jury but also had two films in the programme.



2026 guest of honour: Danish actress Trine Dyrholm was honoured in a HOMAGE.
© Sönke Dannemann

Including the diverse programme of cultural events held in Mannheim, Heidelberg and the surrounding area since September as a lead-up to the festival’s anniversary edition, the IFFMH has attracted 47,500 visitors this year. Of these, 40,000 attended the cinema screenings and other events held during the festival. Highlights of the supporting programme included the sold-out silent film concert “Nosferatu – Eine Symphonie des Grauens” with a score performed live by the NTM-Orchester at the OPAL in Mannheim; a reading by children’s author Ingo Siegner at the Karlstorbahnhof in Heidelberg; and the “Future

Democracies" discussion at the DAI in Heidelberg, whose panellists included the distinguished philosopher Prof. Eva-Weber Guskar. Thanks to the huge public response to this anniversary edition, the festival managed to surpass its strong showing of the previous year.

To mark the anniversary, the festival cinemas weren't the only things bathed in pink; Mannheim's landmark water tower was also lit up in the anniversary colour. The city is the star, and in this spirit of bringing people and places together, the IFFMH team is now looking forward to the next edition of the festival in 2027.



Mannheim's landmark water tower is lit up in the colour representing the 75th anniversary of the IFFMH © Alexander Rozmann

The 76th IFFMH will be held from 05 to 14 November 2027.

Images

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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 wishes to thank its sponsors and partners.

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