

2019

Friday 25-1

Nuestro Tiempo, Carlos Reygadas, Mexico, 4

11.45 Pathe 1

After Carlos Reygadas became one of the world's most influential filmmakers with films like *Japón* and *Stellet Licht*, he took a radical step towards autobiographical fiction with *Post tenebras lux*. Now he has taken a logical yet ambitious next step with the poetically intimate and visually overwhelming *Nuestro tiempo*. He is his own protagonist as poet and owner of a ranch raising fighting bulls, who finds out that his wife Esther (played by Reygadas' wife, Natalia Lopez) is having an affair with an American friend, the horse trainer Phil. Despite, or thanks to, their agreements about an open marriage, tensions rise when Juan thinks that Esther is not opening up about her feelings.



Murder me monster, Alejandro Fadel, Argentina, 3

16.45 Schouwburg

In a remote, sleepy town in the Argentine part of the Andes, a decapitated female body is found. It's up to local policeman Cruz to solve the mysterious crime. It's not long before David, the confused husband of Cruz's lover, is arrested as the prime suspect. But that doesn't close the case. David says he is telepathically linked to the real monster, and Cruz looks for answers in the supernatural realm.



Seven last words, Kaveh Nabatian, Canada, 2

19.30 Doelen

As a filmmaker, musician and composer, Kaveh Nabatian doesn't want to choose between music and film. He'd rather combine both disciplines as far as possible. For instance in this multidisciplinary project, for which he cooperated with six other Canadian filmmakers and the Callino String Quartet. It's based on the commissioned composition The Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross (1787) by Joseph Haydn – a piece that is a special favourite around Easter and which grippingly expresses the state of the suffering Christ on the cross.

Sunday 27-1

Take me somewhere nice, Ena Sendejaravic, Bosnia/NL, 3

11.30 Pathe 7



Can you simultaneously be two things or does that make you neither? Alma is in between everything: raised in the Netherlands by Bosnian parents, no longer a girl, but not really a woman yet. She hardly knows her father, but when he is admitted to a Bosnian hospital she decides to visit him one last time. This starts a journey with an unknown destination as Alma discovers herself and her country of origin.

The man who surprised everyone, Aleksey Chupov, Russia, 4

14.15, Pathe 7

The Man Who Surprised Everyone is a contemporary version of a Siberian folk tale about a man who cheated Death by impersonating a woman. Igor also decides to live as a woman, but not to fool anyone. He wants the pretending to stop now that he doesn't have much life left. The support thus far received from the rural population due to his terminal illness dries up fast.



Monday 28-1

Vox Lux, Brady Corbet, with Portman, US, 2

17h Luxor

The sumptuous, satirical Vox Lux follows young Celeste as her life changes radically following a violent incident at school. Although she suffers physically and emotionally, this is also an opportunity. The song she writes inspired by the shooting becomes a hit – the start of a successful singing career.

Spione, Fritz Lang, 5

19.30 Kino

Spione is a 1928 German silent espionage thriller, directed by master filmmaker Fritz Lang and co-written with his then-wife, Thea von Harbou. Like many of Lang's most famous films, the sophisticated multi-plot narrative presents a master criminal aiming for world domination. In fact, the film weaves together recurrent Lang themes of fate, fear, power and paranoia into a dynamic conspiracy thriller that taps into the underlying tensions of Weimar Germany and presents the modern city as at once liberating and frightening.

On screen, the mastermind Haghi (Rudolph Klein-Rogge), behind a ubiquitous spy operation learns of a dangerous romance between a Russian lady in his employ, Sonya Baranikowa (Gerda Maurus), and dashing agent 326 (Willy Fritsch), from the government's secret service.



Wednesday 30-1

The load, Ognjen Glavonic, Serbia, 4

11.30 Schouwburg

In 1999 truck driver Vlada arrives at a dilapidated warehouse in war-torn Kosovo to collect a mysterious load. He has to keep to a strict schedule, not ask any questions and keep the back of the truck locked. Vlada sets off on an odyssey through a desolate

landscape of derelict houses and bridges bombed up by NATO. When he finally gets home, he is confronted by the consequences of his actions. His load becomes his burden.



Ash is purest white, Jia Zhangke, China, 3
14.15 Schouwburg

Young dancer Qiao falls for powerful mob boss Bin. After protecting him during a rival gang's ambush, she ends up in prison. Upon release, some five years later, she seeks out Bin to restart their old life. But is that still possible? Their violent relationship develops from 2001 to 2017, which allows director Jia Zhangke to chronicle contemporary China – from mining ghost towns to entire villages sacrificed for new dams.



A Janela, Edgar Pera, Portugal, 3

18.15 Kino

A janela (Maryalva mix) tells the story of Antonio, an old school Marialva (= a womanizer and barfly cruising the Fado taverns and back-alleys of Mouraria) who seems not to have noticed that his type is history – but why would he care, if the half dozen ladies he's bedding don't seem to mind? Now, Antonio is played by six actors, while a single comedienne plays all his paramours. No wonder then that A janela (Maryalva mix) is ripe with identity crises of all kinds: cultural, sexual, purely personal – you name it, they act it out. What chaos! What delight! What laughs! And such saudade. But my guest left after 30 seconds, a record.



Dark blood, George Sluizer, NL, 5

20.45 Kino

The marriage of unsuccessful actor Harry and erstwhile showgirl Buffy has almost hit rock bottom. But only almost! A trip to the desert they call their Second Honeymoon is supposed to patch things up. When they find themselves with serious car trouble in the middle of nowhere, a young man called Boy appears, seemingly out of nowhere. Boy, now, has troubles of his own: since his wife died of radiation poisoning (their house stood too close to an atomic bomb test site), he's been out here in the scalding heat, feeling mad at the world and carving magical Hopi

dolls. But when he lays eyes on Buffy, life suddenly looks brighter again.

Probably the most famous ruined movie of recent years: production was stopped after River Phoenix's unexpected death on set; some two decades later, Dutch grandmaster George Sluizer found a way to finish this fine essay in sunburned noir. Great film!



Thursday 31-1

Winter after winter, Xing Jian, China, 4

16.30 Schouwburg

Winter after Winter, shot in black-and-white, is set during the Japanese occupation of Manchuria. It is 1944 and the Japanese are searching north-eastern China for young men who can be set to work as forced labour. In order to secure the bloodline, father Lao Si asks his youngest son to make sister-in-law Kun pregnant. Lao Si's second son has fled the Japanese, the third is impotent. Just when the shy boy is stooping over Kun, he and his brother are taken away.

Without his father knowing, the youngest son returns seven months later and hides in Kun's cellar. As a result, Kun does get pregnant, which leads to all kinds of complications when she is married off and the fugitive son, now a guerrilla, occasionally returns home. Xing Jian situates the action in his home region and films the harsh life of a family in long takes with fluid camerawork.



Beats, Brian Welsh, UK, 5

19.30 Luxor

Trainspotting revisited! Beats showcases the unlikely friendship; between teens Spanner and Johnno in a Scottish town. The first is living with his criminal brother, the other is facing a move to a new town with his family and his potential new stepfather, who happens to be a cop. On their last night out, the two friends steal cash from Spanner's brother and journey into an underworld of anarchy, freedom and collision with the forces of law and order. This universal story of friendship, rebellion and the irresistible power of gathered youth, is set to a soundtrack as eclectic and electrifying as the scene it gave birth to.



Friday 1-2

Love me not, Lluís Minarro, Spain, 2

12.00 Pathe

This titillating, stylised film version of the Biblical story of John the Baptist and Salomé largely takes place in an army camp in the desert, against the background of a contemporary war. Salomé (Ingrid García-Jonsson) is the daughter of the corrupt commander and his adulterous wife; the prophet is locked up in a cave because of his subversive predictions. Just as in Oscar Wilde's interpretation, Salomé is obsessed by the prisoner (and all the men in the camp by her).



Maggi, Yi Okseop, Korea, 3

15.00 Pathe (with Jaap)

A risqué X-ray causes a scandal in a hospital in Seoul. A nurse thinks that she and her boyfriend are depicted in the X-ray, and decides to quit her job. The next day, the hospital is deserted. Everyone has called in sick, except for two women: the nurse and the head doctor. This event is the starting shot for a strange,

episodic story about confidence and faith, with an emphasis on nurse Yoon-Young's relationship.



Niblock's sound spectrums, 1

17.00 Worm

American composer and filmmaker Phill Niblock (1933) is one of minimal music's key figures. His hypnotic, visceral music – often consisting of a single, constant tone with minimal variations – makes him a drone music pioneer. His compositions are simultaneously subtle and overwhelming. At his live performances in factories, concert halls and art institutions, the audience are bowled over by the sound.

Destroyer (Surprise met Nicole Kidman), 4

19.00 Schouwburg

Destroyer is a 2018 American crime drama film directed by Karyn Kusama, from a screenplay by Phil Hay and Matt Manfredi. It stars Nicole Kidman, Toby Kebbell, Tatiana Maslany, Scoot McNairy, Bradley Whitford, and Sebastian Stan, and follows an

undercover LAPD officer who must take out members of a gang, years after her case was blown.



Saturday 2-2

Summer/Leto, Kirill Serebrennikov, Russia, 5 12.30 Schouwburg

Punky biopic about the underground music scene in Leningrad just before Perestroika, based on the early years of pop icon Viktor Tsoï and his legendary band Kino. In the early 1980s, he befriends the charismatic singer of the band Zoopark, who has managed to pick up rare records by Bowie, Blondie and T. Rex. They decide to shake things up with their own performances, but for now their young audience is allowed only to move their feet to the rhythm. With humour and guts, the band members tackle censorship, even if only in their imagination. In lush black-and-white, Leto captures the energy of a long summer: making music together in cramped apartments and cautious rebellion, alternating with wildly scratched images and

surrealistic interludes of train passengers singing along to Psycho Killer by Talking Heads.



Tel Aviv on fire, Sameh Zoabi, Israel, 4
15.15 Luxor

A comedy about the Arab-Israeli conflict? There are few filmmakers willing to take on such a risky project, but in Tel Aviv on Fire Sameh Zoabi proves it is still possible to find something to laugh about. Starting from a made-up romantic series about a female spy who marries an Arab man in 1967, but also has to engage with a member of the Israeli military. As the viewers don't yet know who the woman will finally choose, the programme becomes hugely popular on both sides of the wall.



**The gold laden sheep and the sacred mountain, Ridham
Janve, India, 4
1815 Pathe 5**

When an old shepherd hears the news about a jet fighter that has crashed, he remembers the stories about other plane accidents that made the finders very rich. Blinded by greed, he leaves his herd in the lurch and goes looking for the wreckage. However, the accident was on a holy mountain. While the shepherd roams with his impure intentions and tries to put other treasure hunters off the scent, predators attack his sheep. His assistant takes advantage of a bottle of alcohol he had hidden, and dies in an accident.

The Himalayas, which form the backdrop to this drama, are not the picture-postcard landscape familiar from nature documentaries. It's a rough and inhospitable area. The men who work here, played by real local shepherds, know that danger is never far away. But if they disrupt the holiness of the mountain, and hence the order of things, the threat level transcends this world.



The Hummingbird project, Kim Nguyen, Canada, 3
Doelen, 21.00

IFFR 2019's closing film is a sharp thriller featuring Jesse Eisenberg and Alexander Skarsgård as two Wall Street geeks who come up with a bizarre, lucrative plan. All the two smart cousins have to do is run a fibre-optic cable from Kansas to New Jersey, while outsmarting their canny boss. As soon as the project comes to fruition, they can retire from their jobs. Interesting film to show the madness of the financial system, but rather unconvincing and too much hollywood style.



Sunday 3-2 Dag van de dwarse film

Alva, Ico Costa, Portugal, 4
11.00h Kino

Henrique is a terse Portuguese smallholder who lives out in the hills, far from civilisation. We realise something is wrong in his life when occasional passers-by ask if there is any news about his daughters. The next day, he drives to a nearby village, follows someone and does something terrible. He then flees back to the hills. The almost entirely dialogue-free second half of the film

focuses on Henrique as he hides out. We occasionally hear voices, or a helicopter swoops overhead. In the end, he returns to the village.

Ico Costa explicitly uses an elliptic narrative structure, to allow viewers to form a man from the clay he puts in front of them. Who is Henrique? Can his deed be understood? Is he telling the truth when he says he didn't want to hurt anyone? In the meantime, almost incidentally, the stunning beauty of the landscape passes by. Henrique washes himself in the waters of a river – a river called Alva.

Great film and just the type of film IFFR is so great. Would never come to the cinema, but is nevertheless overwhelming.



Present.perfect, Zhu Shengze, China, 5
15h, Kino

Winner Tiger award and perhaps rightly so. Even as it is more a documentary than a feature film. The Western circuit of vloggers and YouTubers is dwarfed by live-streaming in China, which in a short time has become an industry worth billions. More than 422 million Chinese regularly shared streamed films in 2017. Strange and extreme are especially popular: a boy who eats live worms or two wrestlers dipped in wet paint. Viewers comment in the form

of 'bullets' and reward the 'anchors' with virtual gifts that can be cashed in the real world.

Zhu Shengze followed a dozen anchors for ten months. From more than 800 hours of footage, she distilled a collective portrait of a generation for whom the online and offline worlds are tightly interwoven. Rather than selecting famous anchors with thousands of followers, Zhu chose the more marginal types: a street dancer with a lousy sense of rhythm, a paralysed girl, a middle-aged transvestite, a bored crane driver. They often lead solitary lives, and for them live streaming is a welcome form of human contact, for instance with people who would just ignore them on the street. In fishing for attention, the anchors are extremely openhearted, verging on exhibitionist. The Chinese censor has now clamped down on the phenomenon, and thousands of virtual showrooms have been closed. The rest perform self-censorship. Live streaming is completely apolitical, but the lives that are presented say a lot about contemporary Chinese society and its shortcomings.



I donot care if we go down in history as barbarians, Radu Jude, Romania, 4
18h Kino

140 minutes of philosophical discussion as last film of festival and and still worthwhile to watch. Some people view the Romanian army's mass murder of Jews in Odessa in 1941 as the start of the

Holocaust. A statement by then prime minister Antonescu gives the title to this deftly structured political drama.

Idealistic theatre director Mariana is working on an outdoor play based on the events referred to above. A nerve-wracking process in which she has to deal with extras refusing to work with Roma actors and local public officials seeking to sanitise the production. The present proves closer to the past than Mariana would like. Intense political-philosophical discussions combine with historical footage, literary quotes and Mariana's own problems to provide a layered perspective.



After festival:

Capharnaüm, Nadine Labaki, Lebanon, 5

Great acting by the kids in this film. The doctor thinks Zain is about twelve years old, but nobody knows for sure; he wasn't registered at birth. And this is not the only pretty basic thing missing from the chaotic lives of Zain and his younger brothers and sisters: they also lack a habitable home, sufficient food, protection, love. So Zain takes his parents to court. His complaint: that they brought him into the world.

Using the court case as a framework, we learn how it came to this in two long flashbacks. In an energetic montage of observationally filmed scenes, Capharnaüm examines – in part through the problems of an 'illegal' Ethiopian cleaner who shelters Zain when he runs away from home – the fate of the large group of undocumented people trying to survive in and around Beirut. Street-savvy and wise beyond his years, the sad gaze of young

lead Zain Al Rafeaa betrays his real-life experiences as a Syrian refugee in the Lebanese metropolis.

