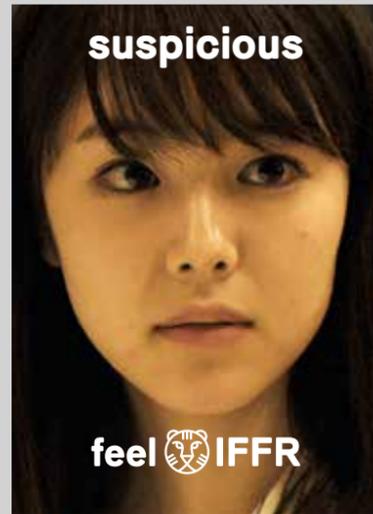
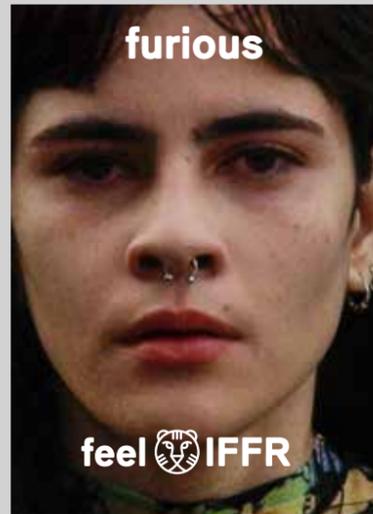


strong

highlights 2019

feel  **IFFR**

48th International Film Festival Rotterdam



As artist RoxXxan shook up the award ceremony by performing a song from the opening film *Dirty God*, emotions flooded the screen behind her: exhilarated, nostalgic, obsessed, confused, shocked, euphoric. The 48th edition of International Film Festival Rotterdam asked us to 'feel IFFR' – and feel we did! Presenting over 500 works of cinema and art, laced with music performances, exhibitions, virtual-reality works, talks, masterclasses and an extensive programme for film professionals, IFFR 2019 felt, above all, vibrant and alive.

Film being an emotional medium, IFFR's programme offered a wide range of experiences that pushed the audience (327,000 visits this year) out of their comfort zone. How are we affected by the story of a Lebanese street kid in audience award winner *Capharnaüm*? What does the gender-fluidity of traditional Indonesian dance in *Memories of My Body* mean to us? How can we relate to fringed Chinese individuals who connect to others via online streaming in the Tiger Award winner *Present.Perfect.*?

These and hundreds more questions and themes were addressed by filmmakers who utilised everything from the cinematic arsenal: short and long form, narration and abstraction, documentary and fiction, hybridity and animation, the episodic and the epic. The Talks & Masterclasses programme saw an inspiring line-up of artists and filmmakers who entered in conversations about cinema, genre, freedom, music and art. These included Claire Denis, Jia Zhangke, Carlos Reygadas, Agnieszka Holland, Cliff Martinez and Sacha Polak to name but a few.

The educational programme of the festival reached an impressive 24,000 youths. And on the professionals' side of IFFR celebrated 30 years of the Hubert Bals Fund (HBF) with two brand new post-production awards and a strong selection of HBF-supported films at the festival. IFFR Pro extended BoostNL and the new Spotlight approach to renowned co-production market CineMart, and the Reality Check conference challenged the compartmentalisation of project development.

The truth derived from the emotional experience of cinema should be celebrated! Think of RoxXxan and think of the dancers from Gaspar Noé's *Climax* after the screening of the film. Their powerful movements and energy radiated a feeling of joy, exhilaration and freedom, celebrating the fact that cinema may be changing and transforming, but it is very much alive! And that makes all of us feel very happy indeed.

Bero Beyer, festival director

Marjan van der Haar, managing director



Bero Beyer and Marjan van der Haar

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inspired competitions



From left to right: Ena Sendjarević, Katriel Schory, Susanna Nicchiarelli, Zhu Shengze and her partner and producer Zhengfan Yang.

IFFR celebrates new cinematic endeavours. And its award winners reflect that.

Ever since its first instalment in 1995, IFFR's Tiger Competition has spearheaded films that try to stretch the definition of cinema. As the festival's flagship platform, it showcases unique films by talented filmmakers at the beginning of their career. This year's winner of the Tiger Award exemplifies that philosophy: Chinese filmmaker Zhu Shengze's *Present. Perfect.* was praised by the jury for "expanding the language of cinema" (see page 10 for an interview with her). Zhu received the €40,000 cash prize that comes with the award to be shared between the filmmaker and producer. The international jury, consisting of Alfredo Jaar, Daniela Michel, Katriel Schory, Pimpaka Towira and Susanna Nicchiarelli, also awarded a Special Jury Award worth €10,000 to *Take Me Somewhere Nice* by Dutch filmmaker Ena Sendjarević.

euphoric

Award Winners

Tiger Award

Present. Perfect. by Zhu Shengze

Special Jury Award

Take Me Somewhere Nice by Ena Sendjarević

Ammodo Tiger Short Awards

Freedom of Movement by Nina Fischer and Maroan el Sani

Ultramarine by Vincent Meessen

Wong Ping's Fables 1 by Wong Ping

Bright Future Award

A volta ao mundo quando tinhas 30 anos by Aya Koretzky

Special mention: *Historia de mi nombre* by Karin Cuyul

VPRO Big Screen Award

Transnistria by Anna Eborn

BankGiro Loterij Audience Award

Capharnaüm by Nadine Labaki

Hubert Bals Fund Audience Award

La Flor (Parte 2) by Mariano Llinás

Voices Short Award

Casa de vidro by Filipe Martins

FIPRESCI Award

End of Season by Elmar Imanov

NETPAC Award

Last Night I Saw You Smiling by Kavich Neang

KNF Award

Tarde para morir joven by Dominga Sotomayor

IFFR Youth Jury Award

Lazzaro felice by Alice Rohrwacher

Found Footage Award

Kodak by Andrew Norman Wilson

But it's not just the winners that receive all the attention. The Tiger Competition in its entirety serves as an important springboard for all eight selected titles, with each film receiving its own premiere day. For the first time this year, IFFR recorded video portraits of the filmmakers and organised two press conferences to amplify the exposure of the selection. All Tiger selections also screened at Berlinale's European Film Market. In these ways, the Tiger Competition raises the profile of up-and-coming filmmakers who are unafraid to do something new.

With the Big Screen Competition, IFFR also makes a difference at the level of film distribution. The winning film, chosen from a selection of eight by an audience jury of five festival fanatics, is guaranteed a theatrical release in the Netherlands and will be broadcast on national television by NPO. This year's winner of the VPRO Big Screen Award (named after our media partner, the Dutch broadcasting network VPRO) was *Transnistria* by Swedish filmmaker Anna Eborn. She received a €30,000 prize, with €15,000 going towards the Dutch release of *Transnistria* and €15,000 towards the development of her next project. The Bright Future Award for best world-premiering feature-film debut (outside of the Tiger Competition) went to *A volta ao mundo quando tinhas 30 anos* by Aya Koretzky. The jury consisted of Beatrice Fiorentino, Christoph Friedel and Sata Cissokho.



Winners of the Ammodo Tiger Short Awards: Wong Ping, Vincent Meessen, Nina Fischer and Maroan el Sani

Short films

More than half of the films in the programme are short films. The vibrant and diverse short-film format is celebrated in the Ammodo Tiger Short Competition, where 24 short films compete for three equal awards, each worth €5,000. The jury consisted of Nguyen Trinh Thi, John Canciani and Lawrence Abu Hamdan. Ammodo, an organisation promoting arts and sciences, supports and lends its name to the competition. On top of that, the audience decided that *Casa de vidro* by Filipe Martins received the Voices Short Award, rating it as the best title from the more narrative-driven short films in IFFR's Voices section. And although the Found Footage Award can go to a film of any length making excellent use of found footage, it was won this year by Norman Wilson's short film *Kodak*.

powerful

Tiger Competition 2019



Els dies que vindran by Carlos Marqués-Marcet



Koko-di Koko-da by Johannes Nyholm



Nona. If They Soak Me, I'll Burn Them by Camila José Donoso



No coração do mundo by Gabriel Martins and Maurílio Martins



Present. Perfect. by Zhu Shengze



Sheena667 by Grigory Dobrygin



Sons of Denmark by Ulaa Salim



Take Me Somewhere Nice by Ena Sendjarević

blessed

winners Ammodo Tiger Short Competition 2019



Wong Ping's Fables 1 by Wong Ping



Freedom of Movement by Nina Fischer and Maroan el Sani



Ultramarine by Vincent Meessen

in depth **Zhu Shengze**

‘Watching the streamers, I could feel the narratives emerge’



Photo: Jake Schut

Zhu Shengze was back at the festival for the third time with her Tiger Award winning film *Present.Perfect.*, which uses China’s live-streaming industry to highlight the lives of individuals whose online and offline worlds overlap. Following 12 anchors over 10 months, the filmmaker created a collage of everyday people in modern China ‘who want and need to be seen’.

Is it good to be back at the festival?

I first came to Rotterdam in 2016 with a film I co-produced called *Where Are We Going* by my longtime partner and friend. He focuses on fiction and experimental filmmaking, while I favour creative documentary. I’m very happy to be back this time with my own film. Rotterdam is special in its sincere focus on cinema and young filmmakers. It’s not like Cannes or Venice where big stars and red carpets take all the shine. IFFR provides generous support for young filmmakers who are looking for opportunities to show their work.

What is the impact of being selected for the Tiger Competition?

It’s a prestigious programme that every filmmaker wants to be part of. It’s a great opportunity to present my film, but more importantly, the mentorship, exposure and attention is invaluable for young filmmakers like me. I think it’s very important for a documentary like *Present.Perfect.* to be recognised at IFFR instead of going to a documentary film festival, as it ensures the film a much wider reach. The project is self-financed and produced, nobody got paid, so the money received through the award is also very welcome. But most of it is recognition. Winning is a great honour. The prize money will probably be used for my next project.

Where did the idea for *Present.Perfect.* come from?

From personal experience! I live in Chicago but my whole family and a lot of friends still live in China, so the internet has always been a very important component of my life. Just like the so-called anchors in my documentary, online life becomes almost more important than the actual world around you. This film really explores the way human relationships and human contact transform in our digital world. Just like other forms of media or technology, streaming will probably disappear in a couple of years so I felt the need to make this film at this moment. Live streaming is a relatively new phenomenon in China and barely existed five years ago. Now it creates billions worth of revenue and involves millions of people. At first I was intrigued by the weird and strange activities, but after a month of watching I started to feel immune. Most anchors are simply trying to entertain you, but in my film they are ordinary people using live streaming to connect with others. For them, the smartphone has become an extension of their body. It was quite difficult to decide whom I was going to follow, because streaming means you may miss an opportunity you’ll never get again. They are fleeting moments. But the defining characteristic is that all the footage is filmed by the subjects themselves instead of professional cameras or cinematographers.

You ended up with over 800 hours of footage. Editing that into something cohesive must have been quite an undertaking.

All the footage was filmed and broadcast by Chinese live streamers in China but recorded in Chicago, so it really is a long-distance film! It was a complicated editing process, all done simultaneously while watching and recording. I could feel the narratives emerge as I viewed the anchors’ lives change in real time. Yet there is no solid storyline, no plot. The film is about their real lives and their real happiness, and all the things these people want to share with others.

Why did you decide not to keep it in colour?

Turning all the material into black-and-white was a way of turning the videos, which varied widely in terms of quality, into a visually cohesive whole. Moreover, black-and-white detaches us from this real, virtual world, thereby forging the film’s own subjectivity. I come from a background in

in depth Zhu Shengze



Present.Perfect.

journalism which conditioned me to question the claim to objectivity and truth in documentary cinema. I've come to realise that non-fiction filmmaking is less about reality than it is about the complex relationship between reality and its constructed representation.

By lingering in long takes, *Present.Perfect.* gives a sense of the anchors' rooms and lives. You used this technique in your previous film *Another Year.*

The editing of these two films is similar because of the long takes, which I use for durational observation. It's also a defining feature of live-streaming, which requires a great investment of time for both the creator and the viewer. My decision on when to cut is all about creating a rhythm. I divided *Present.Perfect.* into four chapters, to modulate the film's pace. The first section introduces various anchors in comparatively short takes, whereas the central sections are longer. I wanted to give subjects as long as they needed to deliver whatever they wanted to say.

I numbered the sections rather than titling them to avoid imposing too much of my own interpretation on the footage. *Present.Perfect.* is a reference to grammar and a meditation on a two-fold function: cinema records the past while live-streaming broadcasts the present.

The film focuses on the marginalised in China's society. Did you intend to explore this group from the outset?

Initially, I was simply absorbing what I saw online. Later, I realised I wanted to explore how the outcasts of society can find support and a sense of community in the online world. Through streaming, they overcome shyness. The film shows how streaming offers visibility to otherwise marginalised individuals.

rebellious programme



Chinese opera performance by Shen Tiemei preceding the screening of Frank Scheffer's *Inner Landscape*

Photo: Joke Schurt

The programme of IFFR 2019 cemented the festival's reputation for fostering new cinematic talent, highlighting the unexpected and going beyond narrow definitions of what cinema is.

Over 12 days, IFFR 2019 screened 236 feature films, including 59 world premieres, and 280 short and mid-length films, including 87 (festival) world premieres, reserving a prominent space for short film, artists' film and visual arts, (film) music and one-off specials. The 48th edition opened with the world premiere of *Dirty God* by Dutch filmmaker Sacha Polak (see page 34 for an interview with her) and closed with Kim Nguyen's *The Hummingbird Project*.

IFFR's programme is designed to allow for adventurous exploring. The selection is divided into four different sections – Bright Future, Voices, Deep Focus and Perspectives – with each

Facts and figures

516 films

- 236 feature films
- 59 world premieres
- 30 international premieres
- 12 European premieres

- 280 short and mid-length films
- 73 world premieres
- 14 festival world premieres
- 46 international premieres
- 14 European premieres

its own character, sensibility and colour. This allows audience members and professionals alike to find their way without the festival forcing any ready-made paths upon them, giving visitors the tools to create their unique film itinerary.

The **Bright Future** section focuses on young and emerging filmmakers, who often present their first or second film to the world. It's where new talents are discovered, most notably in the Tiger Competition, the Ammodo Tiger Short Competition and the Bright Future Competition, but even beyond these flagship platforms the yellow section provides a rich space teeming with adventurous cinematic undertakings.

“From Charlotte Pryce’s 16mm gems and the late-night sound//vision performances to the surprising pallet of mid-length titles and the very strong Ammodo Tiger Short Competition – 48th IFFR was a phenomenal edition for short film.”

Peter van Hoof, programmer

Voices focuses on the major names in contemporary arthouse cinema, offering a wide-angle view of the latest not-to-be-missed features and shorts. This year’s selection included films like Jia Zhangke’s *Ash Is Purest White*, Brian Welsh’s *Beats*, Alice Rohrwacher’s *Lazzaro felice* (winner of the IFFR Youth Jury Award) and Nadine Labaki’s *Capharnaüm* (winner of the IFFR Audience Award). The section also houses the Big Screen Competition, music documentaries in Scopitone, genre-bending genre films in Rotterdämmerung and a narrative-driven short-film programme in Voices Short.

Deep Focus offers an in-depth look at filmmaking, art and the history of cinema with retrospectives, films about film and restored classics. This year the section included the Blackout exhibition in Kunsthall Rotterdam, a retrospective of Portuguese experimental filmmaker Edgar Pêra, and short film profiles of Cauleen Smith (see page 48) and Charlotte Pryce. Deep Focus also features the Frameworks programme, supported among others by Stichting Stokroos. Frameworks asks two renowned names in the audiovisual arts to present a new work at the festival and to introduce two upcoming talents, the Acolytes, who each receive €10,000 to finish a single-screen artwork. Philippe Parreno came to Rotterdam to present his site-specific piece *No More Reality Whereabouts* with live piano music, and introduced Acolyte Asad Raza, a post-disciplinary artist who showed a loving portrait of his uncle in *Minor History*. In the same context, IFFR screened Jean-Luc Godard’s latest film *Le livre d’image* in a specially designed intimate environment he intended for it, and presented the interactive and visually investigative work of Acolyte Fabrice Aragno.

Perspectives is the place for IFFR’s five thematic programmes, approaching cinema from specific angles. The Spying Thing deliberated spying as a way of filming, and



It was ‘you laugh you lose’ in IFFR’s Meme Battle, part of theme programme Rabbit Hole.

Photo: Jan de Groen

Facts and figures

- 1426 public screenings
- 110 press and industry screenings
- 28 art installations
- 39 talks, masterclasses and panel discussions
- 1214 Q&As (674) and introductions (540)

the camera as an espionage tool; Rabbit Hole explored how filmmakers and artists use the visual language of memes in cinema and the online realm; Laboratory of Unseen Beauty showed cinema’s (un)finished, re-invented, re-edited materials from 1921 to the present day; Soul in the Eye explored Zózimo Bulbul’s legacy in the contemporary emergence of Afro-Brazilian cinema (see page 41); and Say No More rediscovered the compelling sensation of collective viewing, and the notion of togetherness in silence.

IFFR’s film programme is laced with extras giving new dimensions to the moving image. In the exhibition Temple of Cinema #1: Sayat Nova Outtakes, restoration expert Daniel Bird presented mesmerising, never-before-seen outtakes from Sergei Parajanov’s *The Color of Pomegranates* in a thought-provoking setting in the Arminius church. Francesca and Mica Levi came to Rotterdam to present their own version of this seminal film. The link between film and music was explored in a masterclass by Cliff Martinez, who composed music for films like *Sex, Lies, and Videotape* by Steven Soderbergh, *Drive* by Nicolas Winding

Refn and *Spring Breakers* by Harmory Korine. Scopitone hosted daily evenings combining music documentaries with live performances. On top of that, the second instalment



The dancers from Gaspar Noé’s film *Climax* put on a show after the screening.

Photo: Joke Schut

shocked

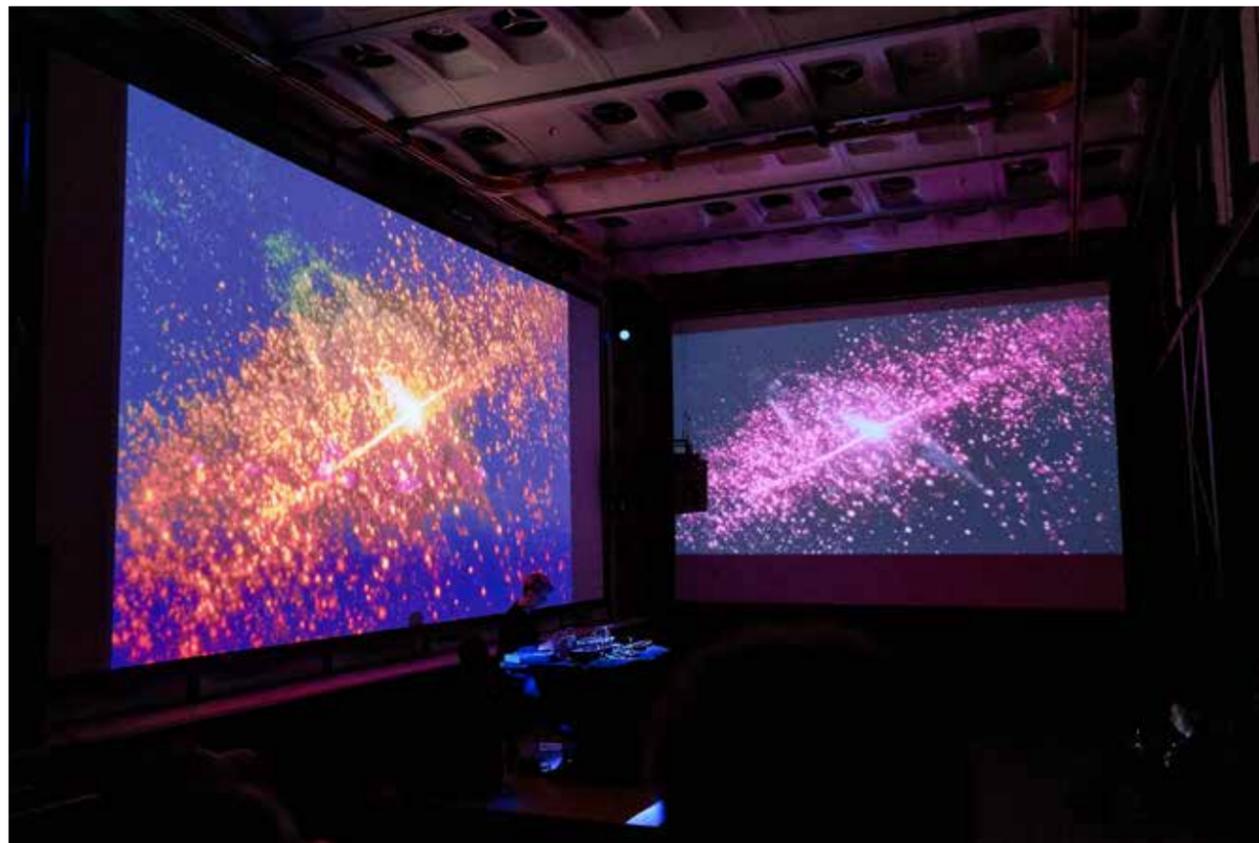


Photo: Jeroen Moolijman

Live late-night audiovisual performances captivated audiences at sound//vision in WORM.

of EarWORM showed three music documentaries in the Rotterdam club WORM, also with live performances afterwards. At sound//vision, IFFR's place for live audiovisual performances, creators like Lawrence Abu Hamdan and Joost Rekvelde dazzled the audience with their immersive works.

Other musical highlights included the screening of *The Seven Last Words* with its Haydn score performed live by the Callino String Quartet; a screening of *Inner Landscape* combined with a performance by Chinese opera star Shen Tiemei; and Edgar Pêra's *Lovecraftland – Cine-Koncerto 3D*, a 'cineconcert' with live music by The Legendary Tigerman.

Talks & Masterclasses

Keeping up its reputation as a place where filmmakers and audiences meet eye to eye, IFFR upped its efforts in presenting a wide range of Talks and Masterclasses. Claire Denis (see page 20), Carlos Reygadas (see page 27), Gabriel Martins (see page 41) gave masterclasses, and so did Chinese filmmaker Jia Zhangke, Chilean artist Alfredo Jaar and VFX specialist Samson Wong. Other talks included conversations with Italian filmmaker Roberto Minervini, French producer and film theorist Nicole Brenez, Polish filmmaker Agnieszka Holland,

“The most memorable moments for me are when a film completely connects with the audience. You could have heard a pin drop during and after the screening of the Syrian film *The Day I Lost my Shadow*. That film was so powerful.”

Bianca Taal, programmer

screenwriter/author Guillermo Arriaga, American filmmaker Khalik Allah, Belgian filmmaker Kenneth Mercken, Belarusian filmmaker Sergei Loznitsa and *Climax* choreographer Nina McNeely, as well as a range of panel discussions giving extra depth to IFFR's thematic programmes.

amazed

meet our audience



Photo: Marwan Magroun

With around 327,000 admissions and over 2,400 film professionals attending, IFFR is one of the largest audience and industry-driven film festivals in the world.

During twelve festival days and throughout the year, IFFR connects with wide audiences and communities. From Rotterdam locals, to those travelling across the Netherlands and internationally. Among them: first-timers, film anoraks, art lovers, party goers, short-film fanatics, filmmakers, professionals, students, teachers and children who visit with their schools. The festival programmes a broad offering of activities to excite different interests, while ensuring accessibility for everyone through a number of options for visiting. These include special programmes, dedicated routes, memberships, discounts and free events.

The new Tiger Membership, relaunched this year as a revision of the Tiger Friends format, offers discounts, special benefits and is now available with a subscription to our streaming platform IFFR Unleashed. 2159 members onboarded this edition, a 20% increase since last year. IFFR also works with student discount, and the Rotterdampas, a municipality initiative offering promotions around the city, which proved a popular choice this edition – it was used 23% more than last year. The culture card CJP-pas is another option for audiences under 30. Free festival access covers the art route Art Directions,

as well as the festival favourite Scopitone, a programme of music documentaries which continues to attract lively crowds.

In order to deliver the best festival experience to every audience profile, IFFR develops strategies for interaction and engagement – both online and offline. New digital innovations are designed with audience interests and enjoyment in mind. This edition saw the introduction of the IFFR Film Finder tool; an interactive photobooth which allowed the audience to become part of the feel IFFR campaign; and IFFR Daily, an online festival publication which involved media partner VPRO to launch podcasts as a new format. (More on these innovations on page 50). Offline, new routes for print publications were investigated to ensure programme information found its way to its target audiences. *De Groene Amsterdammer* presented the festival's wider art programme in a supplement (Frameworks and Art Directions), and IFFR's own publications were distributed through modern art museums (Art Directions), universities (Talks & Masterclasses) and as a supplement of daily *de Volkskrant* detailing our programme (300,000 copies).

IFFR is always making efforts to get to know its audiences better. Each year following the festival an audience survey determines satisfaction in different areas. Based this year's respondents, the festival received an overall audience rating of 8.3 out of 10, and the Net promoter score reached 54. NPS is a metric used to measure the willingness of a respondent to recommend the festival.

relieved



Photo: Bas Czerwinski

De Doelen' is IFFR's central festival location.

"IFFR shows great love of cinema. They are not afraid to show films that divide audiences. And I much prefer totally divided reactions to everyone agreeing that my film was 'nice'."

Edgar Pêra, filmmaker



Photo: Melle Meivogel

Portuguese filmmaker Edgar Pêra presented 24 of his films in a retrospective.



In his Masterclass, Jia Zhangke looked back on the rise of Chinese independent cinema.

"This year's IFFR was the fourth and most curatorially rich to date under artistic director Bero Beyer."

Jordan Cronk, *Film Comment*

furious

"The Spying Thing was an outstanding retrospective of singular beauty."

Leonardo Goi, *MUBI Notebook*



Photo: Marwan Magroun

Puppet master sings a song in front of Philippe Parreno's *No More Reality Whereabouts*.

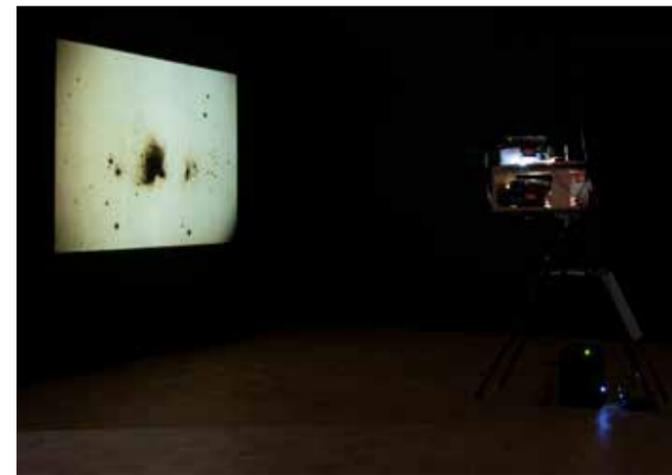


Photo: Tomas Mutsaers

The *Blackout* exhibition witnessed artists using the carousel slide projector to highlight forgotten histories.

"It was exciting to hand Philippe Parreno the keys to Pathé. The way he transformed his famous installation films into a feature-length cinematic experience in 3D was mesmerising."

Edwin Carels, programmer



Photo: Marwan Magroun

Next to many (short) films, the theme programme *Soul in the Eye* featured a talk show, a masterclass by Gabriel Martins and a performance by Jota Mombaça.

"This year's edition abounded in intricate, ephemeral works across an expansive programme."

Ela Bittencourt, *Frieze*

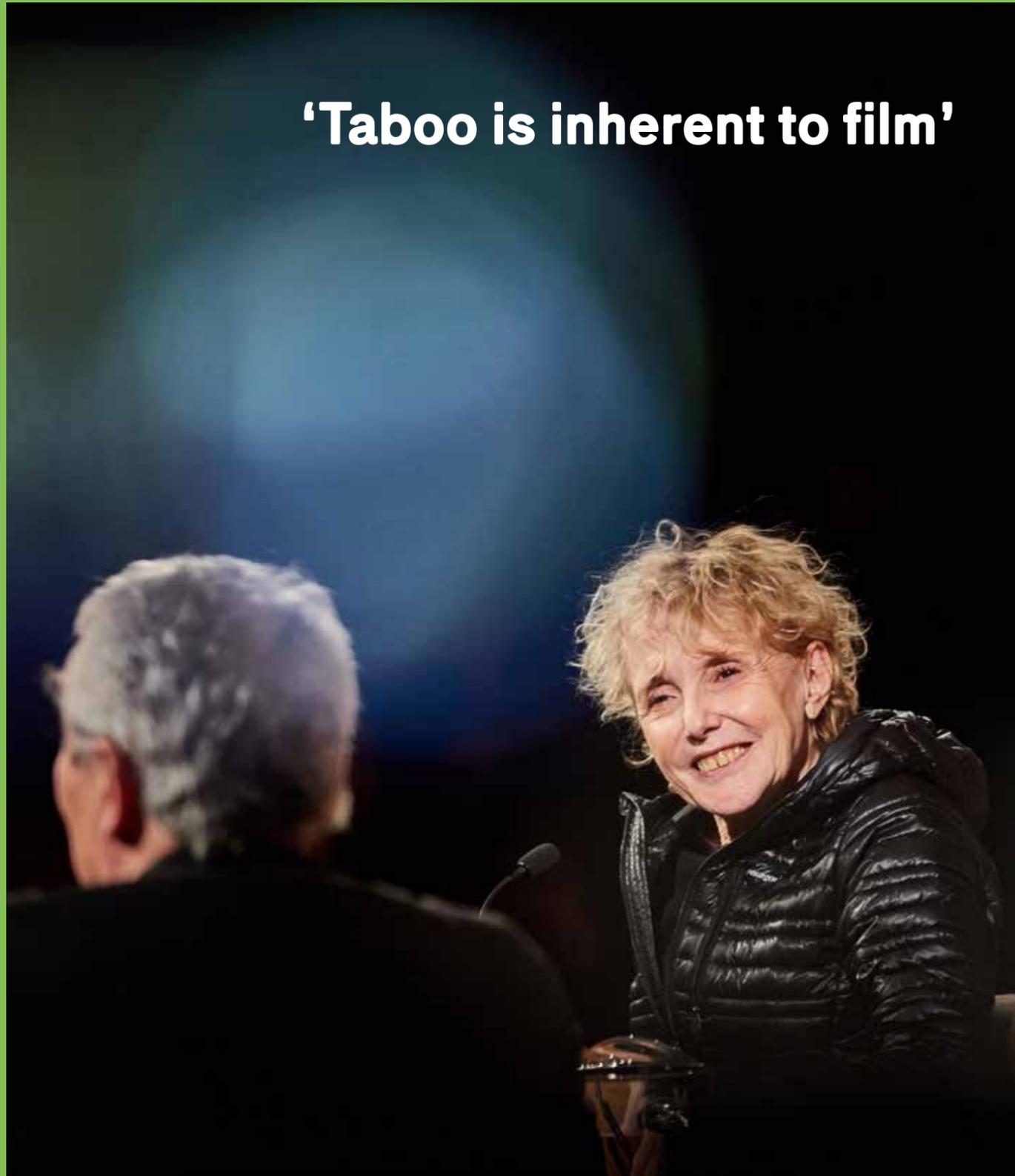
in depth **Claire Denis****'Taboo is inherent to film'**

Photo: Jan de Groen

Groundbreaking French filmmaker Claire Denis was in Rotterdam to present her English-speaking debut and sci-fi fantasy, *High Life*. No stranger to the festival, she's been a Tiger Awards Jury member and featured in the retrospective Meet the Maestro. With her 2019 masterclass she took the opportunity to look back over a remarkable career via a few carefully selected scenes from her extensive back catalogue.

***Trouble Every Day* (2001)**

"The couple on Earth, played by Alexis Descas and Béatrice Dalle are in a hellish world. She has just killed a man and he's trying to take her home to protect her. But of course, he knows she's lost. We then transition to a form of paradise involving a young couple in love, drinking champagne aboard a plane. The character played by Vincent Gallo knows that this happiness is fleeting but at the same time he clings to the hope that it won't take a dark turn. There is an intimacy between the couple. I filmed it at close range, as if they were alone on the plane. And then you see this wide shot of all the passengers sleeping in their chairs, with eye masks on and their mouths agape, as if they're dead. It is already a terrible place. It suggests something bad is going to happen.

"When writing scripts, I often make use of a combination of tenderness and violence. I've always thought that there was something taboo in films. When I was 13 or 14 years old, films were always showing me the secret of life: the sex, the desire. Even if everything is not completely visible on screen, it's still there. It's what constitutes the tension of the film. The same goes for violence. The first time I saw killing was in a film. It's no surprise that the great German director W.F. Murnau made a film called *Tabu*. To me, taboo is inherent to the medium."

***Les salauds* (2013)**

"The staircase scene was already written in the script. However, the way it comes out during shooting is always dependant on several factors: the location scouting, the kind of staircase you'll find, the lighting and the way Agnès (Godard, Denis's regular director of photography) envisages the frame. When it came to shooting, I decided against doing a one-sequence shot, which was the original plan. I considered addressing it step by step, as if time was being counted. Additionally the music of Stuart Staples was very rhythmic and didn't justify that style. It had to be done piece by piece, moment by moment. The undressing starts when she takes off her shoes at the bottom of the staircase. She climbs barefoot".

"This clip also gives us a brief view of Michel Subor, who is in many of my films. I saw him for the first time in Jean-Luc Godard's *Le petit soldat*. Subor played a defeated young man, with no morals and his voice and face immediately struck me as very Romanesque. He's a desperate and non-heroic figure, the complete opposite of Jean-Paul Belmondo in *Breathless*. For me, Michel represents a guy from the dark side of the moon. He is completely different from anyone I've ever met. He is in his eighties now, but I still have plans to do a project with him."

***Un beau soleil intérieur* (2017)**

"Ah, isn't it great to fall in love with a beautiful song? It's a disaster of a love story and when my co-writer and I were working on the screenplay we saw ourselves in it. And then suddenly along comes Juliette Binoche, the beautiful Juliette, and she claimed: 'it's ME!' She can dance pretty well but the most magical ballet in this scene is performed by the camera. Watching the dolly and Agnès Godard's movements and the focus puller working was amazing."

***High Life* (2018)**

"Originally I had cast Patricia Arquette for the role of the doctor. But due to all the schedule postponing she was already engaged in a TV series by the time we were ready to shoot. Juliette and I had just finished *Un beau soleil intérieur* and she said: 'maybe we can do it together?' It was so easy.

in depth Claire Denis

The idea was always to avoid starting at the very beginning of the story. I wanted to be far away from the solar system, in a rusty old spaceship which looks like a jail, with this baby and this man – as if it was already almost the end of a story. The only growing thing here, apart from the baby, is this garden with its intense greens and yellows. I've been reading a lot about space and I realised that for a space mission it's important to be able to grow plants, vegetables and fruit, because you can't just eat dried powders. This shot of the soil, the little mist fallen on the leaf, creates a small paradise on the ship like the biblical Garden of Eden. The camera creates a choreography. Even if I choose a large shot with a character far away in a long corridor, the momentum of lingering is choreographic because of the time, the duration, the immobility. I never use the camera to judge, but as a companion."

Watch the whole Masterclass and highlighted scenes at IFFR.com/Masterclasses



High Life

heroic

IFFR Pro



Photo: Melle Meivogel

IFFR's co-production market CineMart featured speeddating sessions for producers and filmmakers.

IFFR does more than screen films. Through funding via the Hubert Bals Fund, talent development, a strong co-production market and the Reality Check conference, IFFR offers year-round guidance and support to all film professionals. These activities are gathered under the umbrella of IFFR Pro.

CineMart is IFFR Pro's co-production market. This year, a selection of 16 new and highly promising projects were presented to leading producers, financiers and sales companies. Four VR projects were up for grabs too, presented at the end of a one-day analysis of the sector and its expansion. Also presented at CineMart were four Dutch and four international projects that have benefited from the full BoostNL treatment; this entails intensive expert support and guidance from leading script, production, sales, distribution and marketing professionals over five months.

Filmmaker Muayad Alayan is a familiar name at IFFR Pro. His 2018 Hubert Bals Fund-supported film *The Reports on Sarah and Saleem* won the HBF Audience Award at IFFR 2018. This year,

his film-in-the-making *A House in Jerusalem* was selected for CineMart, where it won the Filmmore Post-production Award. Alayan assessed the influence of IFFR on his career to date and described his sense of resolve ahead of CineMart 2019. “We come from a region where there are tremendous obstacles, financial, political, geopolitical, technical, you name it. So we feel very lucky to have been supported by IFFR and the other parts of this amazing establishment. Our previous HBF-funded film had remarkable success after IFFR.”

Prizes

Next to providing funding (through the Hubert Bals Fund), co-production opportunities (through CineMart) and training, IFFR Pro presents several awards to boost promising projects by emerging filmmakers.

IFFR Pro head Marit van den Elshout commented after the closing ceremony: “This year we added four more awards, which reflects IFFR Pro’s increasing engagement with project development, and continued commitment to the realisation of HBF projects from all corners of the globe. We can’t wait to see the progress of all these very worthy winners.”

Award Winners

Dutch Post-production Awards **NEW**

Days of Cannibalism by Teboho Edkins

Lotus Position by Liu Shu

Eurimages Co-production Development Award (CineMart)

Stillborn by Olga Chajdas

Filmmore Post-production Award (CineMart)

A House in Jerusalem by Muayad Alayan

ARTEKino International Prize (CineMart)

La fiebre by Mateo Bendesky

Wouter Barendrecht Award (CineMart)

La hija de todas las rabias by Laura Baumeister

BoostNL Audience Award **NEW**

When We Lost to the Germans by Guido van Driel

HeYou Media VR Award **NEW**

Cosmos Within Us by Tupac Martir



Caroline Monnet was the keynote speaker at Reality Check.



IFFR Pro dedicated a full day to the virtual-reality format.

Reality Check conference 2019

IFFR 2019 saw the second instalment of the Reality Check conference. It tackled the thorny subject of development, and how filmmakers can better exploit resources at all stages of the process. Divided into four parts, the day comprised three panel debates and a series of intensive break-out discussions on questions raised throughout the day.

Canadian artist and filmmaker Caroline Monnet gave the keynote address. Several panels and debates covered such topics as ‘New Audiences/New Stories’, ‘Stealing from the Best: Alternate Practices in Development’ and ‘Funding Models of the Future’. At the end of the day experts and audience alike offered action points to determine future strategies, including greater engagement in meaningful outreach to less privileged parts of society to develop new talent, getting SVOD platforms to invest in European films earlier at development stage, and to insist on less rigidity within the funding application processes, for example by prototyping, where funding can be given towards a promo or a first episode as opposed to a complete series.

New kids on the block

Talent development was once more high on the agenda at IFFR 2019. Rotterdam Lab invited 60 of the most exciting producer talents from around the world, and once again offered up a

smorgasbord of entertaining, beneficial and instructive panels, workshops and key notes, as well as the opportunity to start building professional networks to last throughout their future careers.

New to Rotterdam Lab in 2019 was a hands-on workshop designed squarely to address the difficult relationship between a producer and his/her director, as well as the sometimes fragile accord that must be maintained between co-production partners. This was effected through roleplays involving professional actors, during which Rotterdam Lab producers were asked to participate.

Support for filmmakers at risk

IFFR hosted a two-pronged call to action on 26 January to support global filmmakers whose work is impeded, censored or withdrawn, whose lives are disrupted or endangered or, in some cases, whose liberty is systematically removed by oppressive governments and systems across the world. The event was hosted by Orwa Nyrabia, IDFA’s artistic director, and included speakers like Srirak Plipat (FREEMUSE), Marion Döring (European Film Academy), Marianne Wulfsberg Hovdan (ICORN), South African producer Steven Markovitz and Filipino filmmaker Miko Reverera (who also showed his film *No Data Plan* at the festival, shot with virtually no budget).



Photo: Melanie Lemahieu

Next to giving a Masterclass, Cliff Martinez hosted a workshop for six upcoming composers during IFFR Pro Days.

Music maestros

The film soundtrack, in all its brilliant and diverse manifestations, was placed centre stage. This was a result of IFFR's new partnership with Buma Cultuur, a foundation that supports music-related events in the Netherlands. The music programme included the presentation and celebration of six leading Dutch composers to CineMart delegates, as well as the work of Cliff Martinez, composer to the likes of Steven Soderbergh and Nicolas Winding Refn. The six Dutch composers were Alex Simu, Ella van der Woude, Floris Verbeij, Merlijn Snitker, Minco Eggersman and Vincent van Warmerdam.

In his lucid and entertaining masterclass, Cliff Martinez explained the key differences in approach to his work for filmmakers Soderbergh and Refn. "With Soderbergh my minimalist style developed. One of the first pieces I played him, he said 'the melody, let's get rid of that, and that thing at the bottom, the baseline, get rid of that, and that thing in the middle, the keyboard part, let's get rid of that', and all that was

left was this kind of drone, and then he said 'yeaah'." His work with Refn allowed for a greater degree of expression, in terms of melody, notation, layering and instrumentation. "Refn wants music to play a large role," such as in *Drive* and *Only God Forgives*. "There is little dialogue and whenever that happens, people look to the music and the images to understand what is going on... I like music-flavoured music more and more... Now I want my music to be more in the centre."

Watch the full Masterclass by Cliff Martinez at IFFR.com/Masterclasses

in depth Carlos Reygadas



'Filmmaking is a purely irrational process'

Photo: Joke Schuit

in depth Carlos Reygadas

Since his debut in 2002 with *Japón*, every one of Mexican auteur Carlos Reygadas's films have appeared at IFFR. His latest work *Nuestro tiempo*, selected for the Signatures programme, is no exception. The filmmaker talks about his past life, influences and passion for slow cinema.

On teaching film

"We have a film school in Mexico because it's important to reflect on cinema. It's not so obvious nowadays as a lot of people don't see cinema anymore. But I don't like to teach, I just give a talk once a year. I don't think there is a secret and don't think there's much to be taught actually. It's about encouraging or just understanding how cinema works. Creating something brings you forward. It doesn't relate to the 'why' but to the internal need you feel."

On his love of film

"I only started watching films when I was around 17. I didn't see much cinema before that because the television in my parents' house stopped working when I was about 9 and they didn't get a new one until I was 17. When I started watching films – around 700 films from the Mexican Institute of Cinematography – I discovered I really enjoyed cinema. I saw films that weren't important because of the plot itself, but because of the whole matter. The music, the camera movement, the light, the little details on walls and the text itself, everything was just one thing. So I started watching a film every day."

On becoming a filmmaker

"Originally I was a lawyer. I went to law school just because I didn't know what to do. I didn't enjoy that life much and I wondered: how could I change my life? I thought I could probably make films, since I had watched so many of them and developed a feeling for them. That's how it came about. A year and a half after quitting my job, I created my first film and it paid off. I'm so happy I took the initiative. I remember one day while working on *Japón* we were in the middle of the mountains, recording the atmosphere. We were just lying around on the ground for 10 minutes, in complete silence, and I thought: this is my job. I felt so happy I had managed to make that switch, and I am still very thankful to be a filmmaker. Cinema is a way of life."

On time

"I never use the tick tock of a clock when I'm shooting. I let things build up in a way that is similar to my everyday-life experience, my sense of existence. This is no superficial thing. People ask me if I'm deliberately making a point by creating slow cinema but that's not the case at all. It's more about letting things build up internally, allowing my internal sense of time to dictate what ends up on the screen. It's interesting to realise that you can go to film school for three or five years but they fail to tell you about that one crucial question in filmmaking: when to press the button and when to release it. The answer to that question can come only from within. In Q&As people ask me why *Nuestro tiempo* is not shorter, but they also ask why it's not longer. In the end it is not about a measurable or pre-set time. It's about your own time."

On instinct

"Creation happens through instinct; it's a purely irrational process. And that is how art is made, through intuition. Painters, writers, musicians all know this very clearly. Yet in cinema, which is an industry involving a lot of money, this concept is less clear. In this world you're being told how to work, with instruction books on screenplay and camera defining what is correct and what isn't. This is a horrible idea. A perfect plane or a perfect clock can exist but not a perfect film."



Nuestro tiempo

On movement

"Recently I had to redo the colour grading for *Japón*, my first feature. I usually never rewatch my films once I'm done, but this time I had to. Upon rewatching I realised that I was using the camera like a paintbrush, in the sense that I was moving it around over a 'canvas'. The camera was not just recording, but it was actively involved with the events. Nowadays, I combine the two. I think of the camera and the sound equipment as a funnel that paints. The process is about presence rather than just collecting information. Like a stethoscope, the equipment is moving around, creating and constructing but also continuously receiving. With that movement you can create a lot of feelings. There's no dogma, no rules, it all comes from within. I believe creating a film's grammar is very close to dreaming. When you're dreaming, you're never thinking: oh, this here is a subjective view, this is a travelling shot and this is a crane movement. Instead, images just flow from within and create meaning through their own unique logic. A logic which isn't a logical logic, but something else entirely."

On IFFR

"The festival helped me on my way with a €15,000 grant from the HBF which was hugely important at the beginning of my career. I premiered *Japón* here and all my subsequent films have been shown in Rotterdam. There's a special relationship for sure, but it's not necessarily related to me being a filmmaker but to the fact that I'm a film lover. I come to Rotterdam to see the best projections and the kind of cinema I want to see. I've viewed so many wonderful and inspiring films here from work by Apichatpong Weerasethakul to *No More Reality Whereabouts* by the French artist Philippe Parreno, which was absolutely amazing. It reminded me of two films by Alexander Sokurov I saw here, *Taurus* and *The Sun*. In Russian, with Dutch subtitles. Unforgettable."

To experience Carlos Reygadas's Masterclass in full, head over to [IFFR.com/Masterclasses](https://www.iffrr.com/masterclasses)

excited

the Hubert Bals Fund



La Flor by Mariano Llinás was supported by HBF in 2015, 2017 and 2019. IFFR screened the entire film in three parts, with a total run-time of nearly 14 hours. Parte 2 won the HBF Audience Award.

IFFR 2019 marked the 30th anniversary of Hubert Bals Fund (HBF). From the very beginning the fund has specialised in supporting emerging film talent from across the globe.

Set up in 1989, the fund has helped nearly 1,200 film projects over its 30 years of operation. To celebrate this accomplishment, a film montage of past HBF-supported films played in front of every HBF screening. A wealth of editorials, for example in the IFFR Pro Programme and the IFFR Volkskrant supplement (300,000 copies nationwide), were dedicated to the fund's legacy. On top of that over 40 HBF-supported films were released on streaming platform IFFR Unleashed, indicating the fund's lasting relevance and impact on independent filmmaking.

The HBF provides support to filmmakers from Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and parts of Eastern Europe, in areas where a limited film infrastructure and freedom of expression often hamper projects. Funding schemes are allocated in several stages of completion: early on during script and project development, to allow (co-)productions and during post-production.

IFFR Pro creates a synergy between funding (HBF), mentoring (BoostNL), co-production (CineMart) and the festival (IFFR).

hopeful

HBF in 2018/2019

- 921** applications
- 4** funding categories
- 6** selections rounds
- 32** films granted support

For an overview of the full HBF selection, check IFFR.com/HBFfullselection

For example, four HBF-supported films were part of the BoostNL training programme this year. The positive effect of this approach is underlined by the success of HBF-backed films at IFFR and abroad.

Dutch Post-production Awards

In the run-up to the 48th edition of IFFR, the HBF launched the Dutch Post-production Awards. This brand-new initiative is the result of a collaboration between IFFR, the Netherlands Film Fund and the Netherlands Post production Alliance. Six filmmakers who were previously supported by one of the HBF schemes were invited to pitch their works-in-progress during a closed event.

A professional jury consisting of Gurvinder Singh, Jane Williams and Sandro Fiorin chose *Days of Cannibalism* by Teboho Edkins and *Lotus Position* by Liu Shu as the two winners. They both received €50,000 to spend on post-production in the Netherlands.

The selection process

All HBF applications were reviewed by experts with varying backgrounds and regional focuses, as well as IFFR programmers and IFFR Pro team members, with core selection criteria being artistic quality and financial viability. Almost two thirds of the submissions receiving support were debut or second projects. The fund allocated a total of €785,000 to film projects and to the HBF Audience Award, given to the HBF-supported film with the highest audience rating at IFFR 2019.

Finances

HBF's progress towards financial stability is ongoing. HBF is supported by IFFR Tiger Film Mecenaat, Creative Europe MEDIA, the Netherlands Film Fund, Hivos, Stichting Dioraphte, Van Beek Donner Stichting and the Netherlands Post production Alliance. The contributions from private donors through IFFR Tiger

Film Mecenaat had a strong impact and have become a sound source of income. The ambition is to increase HBF's support base through the IFFR Tiger Film Mecenaat and IFFR Tigress: a network entirely geared towards the support and promotion of female filmmakers.

Harvest

These 10 HBF-supported films screened at IFFR 2019.

- **La Flor** by Mariano Llinás (Argentina; screened in three parts at IFFR 2019)
- **The Load** by Ognjen Glavoni (Serbia/France/Croatia/Iran/Qatar)
- **Rafiki** by Wanuri Kahiu (Kenya/South Africa)
- **Tehran: City of Love** by Ali Jaberansari (United Kingdom/Netherlands/Iran)
- **Tarde para morir joven** by Dominga Sotomayor (Chile/Brazil/Argentina/Netherlands/Qatar)
- **A Land Imagined** by Yeo Siew Hua (Singapore/France/Netherlands)
- **The Day I Lost My Shadow** by Soudade Kaadan (Syria/France/Qatar/Lebanon)
- **Rojo** by Benjamín Naishtat (Argentina/Brazil/France/Netherlands/Germany)
- **Luciérnagas** by Bani Khoshnoudi (Mexico)
- **Murder Me, Monster** by Alejandro Fadel (Argentina/France/Chile)

HBF in Dutch cinemas

IFFR is not the only place in the Netherlands where HBF productions could be seen. In 2018, eight HBF-supported films met theatrical releases in Dutch cinemas.

- **Something Useful** by Pelin Esmer (2017), released by Gusto Entertainment
- **The Reports on Sarah and Saleem** by Muayad Alayan (2018), released by MOOOV Film Distribution
- **A Man of Integrity** by Mohammad Rasoulof (2017), released by Cinéart
- **Beauty and the Dogs** by Kaouther Ben Hania (2017), released by Cinéart
- **I Am Not a Witch** by Rungano Nyoni (2017), released by September Film Distribution
- **Rey** by Niles Atallah (2017), released in the Previously Unreleased series of Eye Filmmuseum
- **The Wound** by John Trengove (2017), released by Arti Film
- **Tiempo compartido** by Sebastian Hofmann (2018), released by Contact Film

the global spread of HBF and impact of supported films

1. *Tiempo compartido* - Sebastián Hofmann (MX NL)

HBF support: S&P '14
World premiere: Sundance '18
Awards include: World Cinema Dramatic Special Jury Award for Screenwriting, Sundance 2018
Sold territories: CN
Admissions: 282,038, incl. ca. 138,038 in Latin America

2. *Fireflies* - Bani Khoshnoudi (MX US GR DO)

HBF support: HBF+EU:M '16
World premiere: Morelia '18
Award: Cine+ Distribution Award, Toulouse
Sold territories: US CA GB FR MX GR DO
Admissions: ca. 4,000, incl. 1,000 in Latin America

3. *Monos* - Alejandro Landes (CO AR NL DK SE DE UY US)

HBF support: S&P '13, HBF+EU:M '15
World premiere: Sundance '19
Awards include: World Cinema Dramatic Special Jury Award, Sundance
Sold territories: US CA GB IT DK SE NO
Admissions: 4,627

4. *Oblivion Verses* - Alireza Khatami (FR DE NL CL)

HBF support: S&P '11, HBF+EU:M '15
World premiere: Venice '17
Awards include: Best Screenplay, Fipresci Award, Interfilm Award, Venice
Sold territories: CN CH US CA
Admissions: 2,609, incl. 1408 in Latin America

5. *Tarde para morir joven* - Dominga Sotomayor (CL BR AR NL QA)

HBF support: S&P '12, NFF+HBF '16
World premiere: Locarno '18
Awards include: Best Director, Locarno
Sold territories: US CA GB NO CN UY ES CO EC DM BZ CR SV GT HN NI PA
Admissions: ca. 23,000, incl. ca. 3,000 in Latin American

6. *La omisión* - Sebastián Schjaer (AR NL CH)

HBF support: S&P '14, NFF+HBF '16
World premiere: Berlinale '18
Awards include: Best Actress, Puerto Madryn; Best Photography, FAB
Sold territories: AR UY EC
Admissions: ca. 15,000, incl. ca. 5,000 in Latin America

7. *La Flor* - Mariano Llinás (AR)

HBF support: PP '15
World premiere: Locarno '18
Awards include: HBF Audience Award '17 + '19, IFFR
Sold territories: FR US AU DE

8. *Murder me, Monster* - Alejandro Fadel (AR FR CL)

HBF support: S&P '13
World premiere: Cannes '18
Awards include: Best Film, Sitges

9. *La cama* - Monica Lairana (AR DE NL BR)

HBF support: S&P '14, NFF+HBF '15
World premiere: Berlinale '18
Awards include: Best Director and Best Actress, Mar del Plata
Sold territories: FR ES DK GB IT NO FI SE AT DE
Admissions: ca. 17,300, incl. ca. 9,500 in Latin America

10. *Rojo* - Benjamín Naishtat (AR BR FR NL DE)

HBF support: S&P '13, NFF+HBF '15, HBF+EU:M '16
World premiere: Toronto, San Sebastian '18
Awards include: Best Director, Best Actor, Best Photography, San Sebastian
Sold territories: FR US BE NL LU CH ES BR GB CN GR IT TR UY AU NZ MENA
Admissions: ca. 74,184, incl. 37,184 in Latin America

11. *Hard Paint* - Filipe Matzembacher and Marcio Reolon (BR)

HBF support: S&P '14
World premiere: Berlinale '18
Awards include: Teddy Award for Best Feature Film, Berlinale
Sold territories: DE AT CH US CA FR MC AU AD CZ SK PL HU MD RO HR SI RS BA RKS MK BF ES NL LU BE PT AO MZ GN CV GB ST
Admissions: ca. 23,000, incl. ca. 8,000 in Latin America

12. *Deslembro* - Flavia Castro (BR FR QA)

HBF support: S&P '11
World premiere: Venice '18
Awards: Critic's Prize, Festival Biarritz Amérique Latine; Critics Prize, Maranhão na Tela
Admissions: ca. 10,000, incl. ca. 3,600 in Latin America

27. *The Load* - Ognjen Glavonić (RS FR HR IR QA)

HBF support: S&P '12, PP '16
World premiere: Cannes '18
Awards include: Best Film, Zagreb FF
Sold territories: US CA ES FR CH CN RS HR BA MK SI ME Eastern-EU (HBO) Africa (Sundance)
Admissions: ca. 20,000

26. *Nervous Translation* - Shireen Seno (PH)

HBF support: S&P '13
World premiere: IFFR '18
Awards include: NETPAC Award, IFFR '18
Sold territories: GB IE

25. *The Seen and the Unseen* - Kamila Andini (ID NL AU QA)

HBF support: S&P '11
World premiere: Toronto '17
Awards include: Best Feature Film Generation Kplus, Berlinale
Sold territories: World (Amazon)
Admissions: ca. 40,000, incl. ca. 20,000 in East Asia and Pacific

24. *A Land Imagined* - Yeo Siew Hua (SG FR NL)

HBF support: S&P '16, NFF+HBF '17
World premiere: Locarno '18
Awards include: Best Film, Locarno
Sold territories: CN TW ES AU NZ CH
Admissions: ca. 30,000, incl. ca. 3,000 in East Asia and Pacific

23. *Tehran: City of Love* - Ali Jaberansari (GB NL IR)

HBF support: S&P '15, NFF+HBF '16
World premiere: BFI London '18
Sold territories: AE
Admissions: ca. 2,000, incl. ca. 800 in the Middle East and North Africa

22. *A Man of Integrity* - Mohammad Rasoulof (IR)

HBF support: S&P '15
World premiere: Cannes '17
Awards include: Un Certain Regard Award, Cannes
Sold territories: BE NL LU BR FR GR NO PO CH ZA SE OM RO TR RS HR BA MK SI ME MENA
Admissions: ca. 147,000

21. *The Reports on Sarah and Saleem* - Muayad Alayan (PS NL DE MX)

HBF support: S&P '16, NFF+HBF '17, HBF+EU:M '17
World premiere: International Film Festival Rotterdam 2018
Awards include: Special Jury Prize Tiger Competition, IFFR
Sold territories: BE NL LU FR DE US AU BR CH CO GR ES PT IT MY RS HR BA MK SI ME MENA Africa
Admissions: 15,500 (estimate)

20. *The Day I Lost My Shadow* - Soudade Kaadan (SY FR LB QA)

HBF support: HBF+EU:M '16
World premiere: Venice '18
Awards include: Lion of the Future award, Venice '18

19. *Beauty and the Dogs* - Kaouther Ben Hania (TN FR NO)

HBF support: S&P '15
World premiere: Cannes '17
Awards include: Best Screenplay, Carthage
Sold territories: IN BD BT MV NP IN BD BT MV NP PK LK MM PL NL BE LU SR AW BQ SX CW RW CD BI CO EC PE BO CR PA ZA IT TR GB US SG GR CN
Admissions: ca. 125,000

18. *Rafiki* - Wanuri Kahiu (SA FR LB NO NL DE)

HBF support: NFF+HBF '16
World premiere: Cannes '18
Awards include: Best Actress, FESPACO
Sold territories: FR DE NL LU BE CH US GB JP AU BR IL ZA
Admissions: 61,926, incl. 6586 in Africa

17. *I Am Not A Witch* - Rungano Nyoni (GB FR DE ZM)

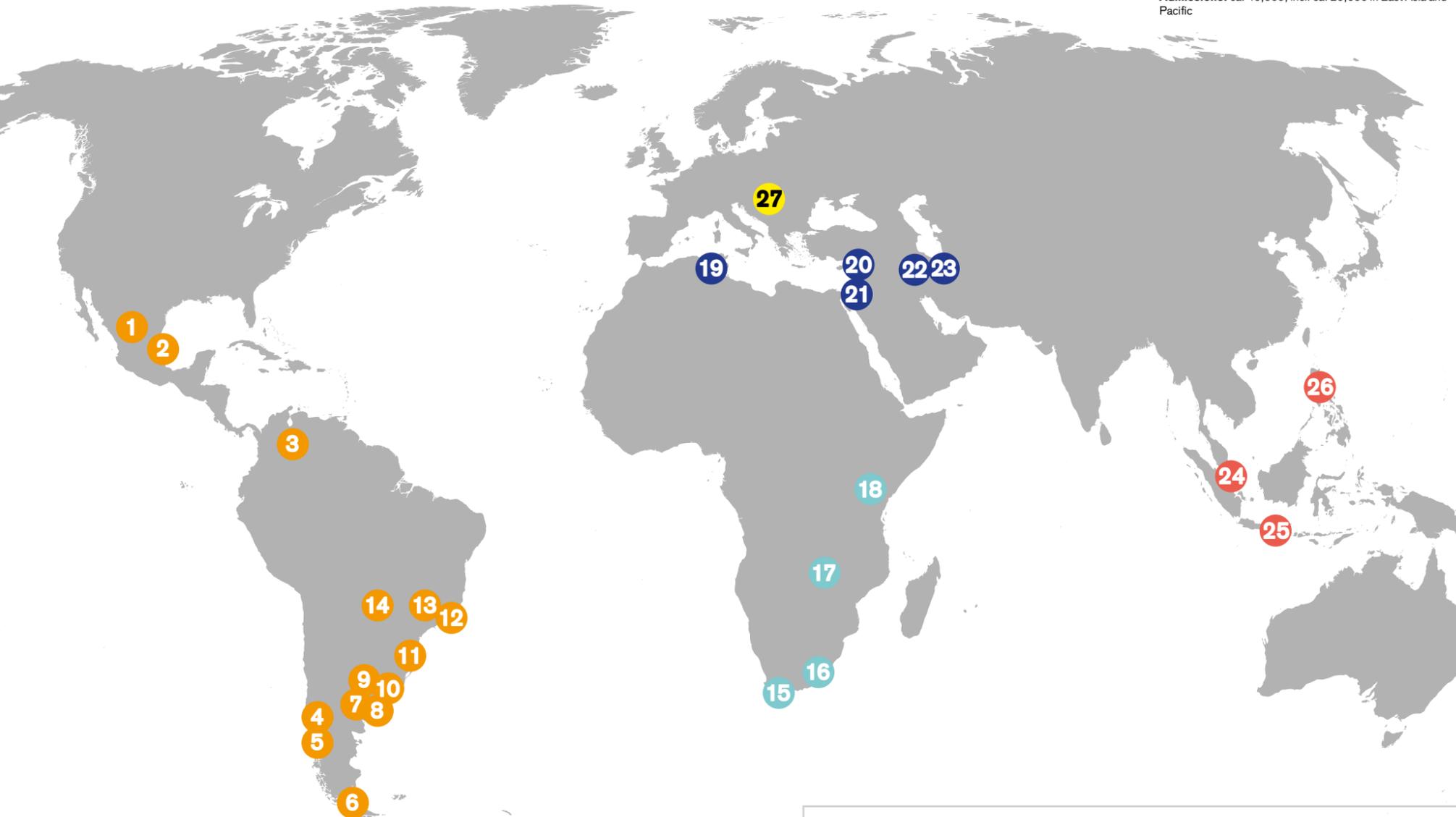
HBF support: S&P '14, HBF+EU:M '16
World premiere: Cannes '17
Awards include: BAFTA Film Award - Outstanding Debut by a British Writer, Director or Producer
Sold territories: BE NL LU AU NZ PO CH TW MX FR CN GB ES LT LV HU SI US BR NO SW DN
Admissions: ca. 40,000

16. *The Wound* - John Trengrove (ZA DE NL FR)

HBF support: S&P '14, NFF+HBF '14, HBF+EU:D '17
World premiere: Sundance '17
Awards include: Best Feature Film, Cathage; FIPRESCI Prize Best Actor, Palm Springs
Sold territories: ZA US GB FR DE BR AU MX ES BE NL LU Eastern-EU
Admissions: ca. 83,700, incl. ca. 50,000 in Africa

15. *Flatland* - Jenna Bass (ZA LU DE)

HBF support: HBF+EU:M '17
World premiere: Berlinale '19
Admissions: ca. 1,800



LEGEND

S&P Script & Project Development Support
NFF+HBF NFF+HBF Co-production Scheme
HBF+EU:M HBF+Europe: Minority Co-production Support
HBF+EU:D HBF+Europe: Distribution Support (this scheme has been discontinued)
PP HBF Post-production Support (this scheme has been discontinued)
Admissions are counted for the period between 1-3-2018 and 1-3-2019.

13. *Mormaço* - Marina Meliande (BR)

HBF support: S&P '13
World premiere: International Film Festival Rotterdam '18
Awards include: Special Mention, Rio IFF
Admissions: ca. 5,000, incl. ca. 2,000 in Latin America

14. *Don't Swallow My Heart Alligator Girl* - Felipe Bragança

HBF support: S&P '11, NFF+HBF '14
World premiere: Sundance '17
Sold territories: US CN BR
Admissions: ca. 3,000, incl. ca. 1,000 in Latin America

in depth Sacha Polak

Dirty God opened the 48th edition of IFFR



Dirty God a film about a young woman trying to live on after an acid attack, proved a powerful opener of IFFR 2019. Sacha Polak first got the idea for the film at a music festival.

Polak's latest film, *Dirty God* has been keeping the Dutch filmmaker busy with a premiere at IFFR and then a trip to Sundance. But its inception came at a quieter moment for the filmmaker. Standing in a field at Lowlands music festival, she spotted a young woman in the crowd whose face was ravaged by burn scars. She was aware that other people around her were also staring, then self consciously looking away. "Then I thought to myself", says Polak, "that would be an interesting starting point for a film." And so together with co-screenwriter Susanne Farrell, it developed into the raw but delicate tale of Jade, the victim of an acid attack.

Dealing with violence

She was working on another project when she started talking to burns victims in the UK. "It's a weirdly British problem," Polak recalls about her research process. "A high proportion of victims are women, too. It has to do with the male perpetrators' mentality. Their common frame of mind is: 'If you can't be beautiful for me, I won't let you be beautiful for anyone else'. The act of throwing the acid is similar to throwing a glass of water in someone's face. A lot of men don't even realise how grave the consequences of these actions can be."

However, *Dirty God* doesn't focus on the perpetrator's motivations. He doesn't get any platform at all. His horrific act of violence isn't even filmed. Because that's not this film's point. Instead, *Dirty God* tenderly portrays how hard it is for Jade to learn to deal with the after-effects of the crime.

Body acceptance

During the opening scenes of the film, the camera glides across Jade's body in extreme close-up. The effect is like watching footage from a distant planet. But these alien associations soon make way for a profound, contemporary story: a young woman learning to accept her new appearance. The burns are healed, but the (emotional) scars will be apparent for a long time. She had already touched on women's relationship with their bodies in her documentary *New Boobs* (2013) where she wrestles with whether to have her breast voluntarily removed because of a hereditary cancer gene. "In comparison to men, I feel women are quicker to be judged on the basis of their appearance. It made perfect sense to shoot a film about a young woman who wants to feel pretty again," explains Polak.

The perfect lead

The complex lead character is brought to life by British actor Vicky Knight in her first film role. What's special about Knight is how closely her own story resembles that of Jade. One third of her body was scarred at the age of eight, when she was a victim of arson.

"Vicky is perfect for this film," Polak says. "She added layers of vulnerability to this project." However, it was hard for Polak to convince Knight to go on set. "She was filmed before in England for a television programme that turned out to be a sleazy dating show about people with disabilities. Outright exploitation, in other words," says the director. So, the challenge for Polak was to utilise Vicky's authenticity as the lead without exploiting her for the sake of the film. "That's a huge responsibility for a filmmaker to bear. I promised both of us that I'd take care of her, even after the whole filming process was over. It was very important to me that Vicky was comfortable on set. That's why she did auditions with the other actors. She needed to have that click to make it work."

in depth Sacha Polak



Dirty God

A familiar face

Polak is no stranger to the festival circuit. Her debut feature, *Hemel* (2012) won the FIPRESCI award at the Berlin International Film Festival and her second feature, *Zurich* (2015) bagged the C.I.C.A.E award. And despite the busy schedule, the filmmaker still had a chance to enjoy what IFFR had to offer. “I’ve been coming to the festival for ages: both as a maker (she’s had projects in CineMart and Boost NL) and as a visitor. I’ve always found the masterclasses to be one of the really special things about IFFR, and the fact that you can run into great filmmakers just walking around here”, Polak says. “People like Andrea Arnold and Paul Thomas Anderson, and you can just walk up to them and talk to them. It’s really magical.”

To watch a video interview with Sacha Polak and Vicky Knight, move over to [IFFR.com/DirtyGodInterview](https://www.iffrr.com/DirtyGodInterview)

betrayed

press and publicity



Camila José Donoso speaks about her film *Nona. If They Soak Me, I'll Burn Them* at one of the two Tiger Competition press conferences.

Major media outlets paid tribute to IFFR's daring programming as well as its agenda-setting commitment to promoting emerging talent. The festival upped the number of press conferences.

High engagement from journalists reflected an ambitious press strategy. International and national press were out in force at the festival this year, with extensive coverage reaching audiences around the world, ensuring the festival's influential reputation continues well into next year. This year, the press team welcomed 331 journalists, up from 267 last year. This was thanks to an increase in both Dutch and international media presence, with national press increasing from 75 to 110 journalists, and international press rising from 192 to 221 journalists. Geographical diversity also rose, with representatives from 48 countries (up from 40 last year), including journalists from countries new to the festival like Algeria, Norway and South Korea.

331 journalists (+64 compared to IFFR 2018)

221 international (+29)

110 national (+35)

representing **48** countries (+8)

278 interviews arranged by IFFR

Alongside growing interest in the festival abroad, IFFR remains a highlight in the Dutch cultural calendar. Widespread national coverage included numerous features in leading newspapers including *NRC Handelsblad*, *De Telegraaf* and *de Volkskrant*, as well as frequent mentions on radio and television. In January 2019 alone, 242 print and 816 online articles featured IFFR: an increase of nearly 6% compared to last year. An estimate values national coverage at €6.9 million, making it a strong return on efforts to promote the programme.

Face to face contact

In 2019, a series of successful press events held before and during the festival helped augment relationships with key journalists. Either new or enhanced, these events were attended by 245 journalists in total. Two well attended press conferences were fully geared towards the Tiger Competition, both of which were streamed live online. There was also a new series of press breakfasts hosted by festival director Bero Beyer. These new additions to the press agenda were enthusiastically received, both amplifying IFFR's messaging and cementing its relations with media from around the world.

As well as direct access to members of the festival team, IFFR is renowned for the opportunities it gives journalists to interview filmmakers one on one. 2019 was no exception, with a record 278 interviews facilitated by the team.

Supplementing its strong efforts in-house, IFFR worked with three public relations firms this year. As well as inviting back WOLF PR to lead on international press, Belgian firm Post Bills PR supported outreach to Belgian press specifically. Reflecting a broader push to build the festival's reputation within the visual arts sector, the PR consultancy Bolton & Quinn led a campaign focused on arts and cultural media. Major outlets including *Dazed & Confused*, *Wallpaper**, *NOWNESS* and *ArtReview* featured the festival for the first time, while titles including *Frieze*, *Artforum* and *Art-agenda* returned to review the festival either in part or in whole.

Media partners

Media partners remain a valuable part of the festival's press strategy. This year, there were four main partners – *de Volkskrant*, *VPRO*, *Screen International* and *Cineuropa* – with the latter being a new partnership for 2019. Highlights included *Cineuropa's* two in-depth festival newsletters featuring exclusive content in English, Spanish and French, as well as 63 pieces of coverage in *de Volkskrant's* print and online editions.

Critics' Choice

The Critics' Choice initiative is an important way to demonstrate IFFR's ongoing support for critical engagement with cinema. The programme enriched contextual understanding of selected films via a series of video essays, themed this year around the notion of absence. A stimulating and much-needed debate on the future of film criticism also took place.

Press coverage this year reflects the broad-ranging appeal of IFFR's 2019 programme. In national outlets, major areas of interest included the world premiere of Sacha Polak's *Dirty God*, and *Limelight*, a programme of films due for release in cinemas nationwide. International journalists plucked out a diverse mix of highlights including French artist Philippe Parreno's new work *No More Reality Whereabouts* and IFFR's Blackout exhibition.

Young Film Critics

The 2019 Young Film Critics programme again welcomed five trainee journalists from across the world to IFFR. They were introduced to press professionals during the festival, submitted articles for IFFR online (as well as for their own outlets) and were mentored by festival press staff as well as established journalists. This year's young critics were (clockwise, starting from the left): Luís André Ferreira Azevedo (Portugal), Becca Voelcker (UK), Innas Tsuruiya (Indonesia), Pablo Staricco Cadenazzi (Uruguay) and André Shannon (Australia).



Photo: Melanie Lemahieu

Two of the critics delivered entertaining podcast interviews which can be accessed through [IFFR.com/TalksPodcasts](https://www.iffroffice.com/TalksPodcasts). These are Pablo's interview with UK filmmaker Carol Morley (*Out of Blue*) and André and Luís' conversation with writer, musician and actor Elizabeth Sankey (*Romantic Comedy*).

support and partners



Photo: Jan Groen

Polish filmmaker Agnieszka Holland gave the Freedom Lecture, organised together with main sponsor vfonds.

IFFR's sponsors, partners and donors enable the festival to screen groundbreaking cinema to a wide audience, open its doors to schools and universities, and invite filmmakers from around the globe to the world city of Rotterdam.

The festival values each and every one of its supporters, all of whom contribute in numerous and inspiring ways to the programme. In particular, the structural support provided by our main partners BankGiro Loterij, vfonds and de Volkskrant, as well as the Rotterdam City and Council, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and Creative Europe MEDIA, ensures IFFR has the all-important foundations from which it can build – without their loyalty, the festival would not exist in its current form.

In addition, there are many private companies, foundations and festival friends who contribute to the diversity of the

romantic

programme. To celebrate this, we invited 700 supporters to join the Official Opening of the festival at an exclusive event, thanking them for their enthusiasm and trust. A special screening of *Vox Lux* celebrated our recently launched young patrons circle: the Next Film Patrons.

A significant milestone, the 50th anniversary of IFFR, is approaching – a good moment to consider what IFFR stands for. The festival is renowned for pushing boundaries in terms of its programming, giving challenging and experimental new forms of cinema a home, and making sure quality films find the audiences they deserve. IFFR is committed to beating the drum for emerging and diverse talent – this has been true for three decades thanks to the vital Hubert Bals Fund (HBF) and the support of the Tiger Film Mecenaat. Investing in a filmmaker's early work takes guts, and finding funds willing to take the risk is tough. By becoming a part of the Tiger Film Mecenaat via its various levels of involvement, donors are increasing the impact of the HBF. Together with other private support of de Van Beek-Donner Stichting and Stichting Dioraphte, their involvement creates a stage for exciting and inventive new cinema, ensuring it can remain creatively independent too.

Shared values

Together with our main partners we organised several high-profile events inspired by our common values. Promoting tolerance and freedom of exchange, vfonds hosted two lectures for students by Dutch journalist H el ene Christelle Munganyende, and esteemed Polish director Agnieszka Holland. For the first time, BankGiro Loterij backed the Audience Award, which went to Nadine Labaki's Oscar-nominated *Capharna m*, as well as bringing their arts and culture supporters to a special screening of *Gloria Bell* by Sebasti an Lelio. Traditionally, the festival closed with highlight 'de Volkskrantdag' (de Volkskrant Day). During this year's edition, over 9,000 visitors descended on the festival for a sold-out day of carefully selected film – the perfect way to wrap up another busy year.

Education

Education has long been central to IFFR's mission to widen appreciation and understanding of contemporary global cinema. This year, the festival expanded its educational programmes with the help of several funds, including Fonds 21, VSBfonds and the local foundations Stichting Elise Mathilde Fonds and Stichting Bevordering van Volkskracht. This generosity meant thousands of young people joined film professionals and cinephiles for special screenings, Q&As and educational activities, and new partnerships were forged with like-minded organisations. In sharing insight and expertise with the next generation and among industry partners, IFFR is able to have an impact which sends ripples much further than Rotterdam.

New partners

This year also welcomed fruitful relationships with a handful of new partners. Rotterdam-based brewery Kaapse Brouwers joined the festival for the first time this year, creating a special Kaapse Tijger lager beer to quench festival-goers' thirst. BMW, in a collaboration with the City of Rotterdam, provided 17 plug-in hybrid and electric cars, ensuring the festival could transport guests from A to B in an eco-friendly fashion. Plus, there was an exciting new partnership with the foundation Buma Cultuur, which supports music-related events in the Netherlands. This partnership strengthened the festival's musical activities, and resulted in a special music-themed day bringing together filmmakers and composers, including Cliff Martinez (see page 26). As Frank Helmink, director of Buma Cultuur remarked, "when it comes to film music and a relevant international audience, IFFR is the perfect place." It was a pleasure to have them on board and expand our existing music and films programmes such as Scopitone.

A large international reach makes IFFR a rewarding partner for its supporters, and every effort is made to amplify each brand's values to a wide and varied audience. The festival is grateful for the support and investment it receives and looks forward to successful relationships with new and existing partners for many years to come.

For a full list of IFFR's partners and sponsors, see page 54.



Cheers!

Photo: Bas Czerwinski

Perspectives

in depth Gabriel Martins and Maur lio Martins

'The neighbourhood was already close-knit, but the film only made it more so'



Photo: Joke Schut

in depth Gabriel Martins and Maurílio Martins

Brazilian filmmakers Gabriel Martins (depicted on the left) and Maurílio Martins (right) only had to go as far as their home town for their latest film, *No coração do mundo*. With its world premiere at the festival, they were keen to discuss its impact and their passion for portraying local life.

A special relationship

No coração do mundo world premiered in IFFR's Tiger Competition and the two filmmakers were in no doubt about their special relationship with the festival. "Rotterdam is the best place *No coração do mundo* could premiere. It understands the importance of this kind of political film. It's a festival interested in the way we want to tell our story," states Gabriel.

And it's not the first time they have appeared here. "We have a history with IFFR. Our previous shorts were shown here and this year we have three other films in the programme [coming from our production house Filmes de Plástico]," continues Maurílio. It's an important tradition to have our films in Rotterdam."

The film being up for an award added an extra buzz to their visit. "We are happy to be in competition. And the prize is important because *No coração do mundo* was a very expensive film to make and we have our production company to maintain," says Gabriel. "But it isn't only about the money. The attention that it can bring to a film like this is crucial to be able to launch in theatres and allow the film to travel the world. That has always been our dream."

Contributing to the community

The film follows the inhabitants of a poor neighbourhood in the Brazilian city of Contagem as they struggle to make ends meet. The pair build on their earlier short films, *Contagem* (2010) and *Dona Sônia Borrowed a Gun from her Neighbor Alcides* (IFFR, 2012) to lovingly capture the district. "It's a project we've been dreaming about for 10 years. We were born and raised in this neighbourhood and it is a very important place to us. We want to tell stories about where we came from. We believe that by telling them we have something to contribute to the community," says Gabriel.

In the past such deprived areas were only ever portrayed in a negative light by the Brazilian media. "We weren't happy with the way these communities were being portrayed in Brazil, especially because we come from those places and witness their daily life. Before we started shooting, the neighbourhood had only ever been filmed by news crews. The issues were always the same: poverty, crime and our dirt roads. Now the neighbourhood has transformed into a film set for a month," continues Gabriel.

Nothing is black and white

Crime does play a role in the film but it's treated as a means of survival for the inhabitants. "We reveal that things aren't as black and white as current president Jair Bolsonaro likes to portray them," explains Gabriel. "He continuously categorises people. A criminal is a criminal and must therefore be eliminated. While a lot of people in our area augment their meagre official wages with income from the grey economy, there are many intermediate forms and we think it's important to show these." And such a portrayal produced a positive impact on the community. "We show that the neighbourhood is home to people with beautiful, complex characters, not just criminals."

Local talent

The filmmakers also used a cast of locals as well as professionals. "You'll see a lot of our friends and neighbours in the film. We mixed them with professional actors that are well known in Brazil," says Maurílio. And they weren't given any special treatment. "We always believed that we could have this mixture between people who have a long career and different backgrounds in the theatre or in cinema with people who have never acted before. We didn't treat them differently in any way, because I think there's a lot to be learned from each other. We really love the end result," says Gabriel.

The film proves a love letter to their community. "The neighbourhood was already close-knit, but the film only made it more so," says Gabriel. Now Gabriel and Maurílio can hardly show their faces without people asking about the film.

MUBI moment

And that's not the end of it for the Brazilian filmmakers. IFFR collaborated with MUBI to show *No coração do mundo* on their platform for a month after the festival. The film was part of their Direct from Rotterdam special, which also included three films from IFFR 2018: Obayashi Nobuhiko's *Hanagatami*, Fabrizio Ferraro's *Les Unwanted de Europa* and Leandro Listorti's *La película infinita*.

No coração do mundo is now available to watch on IFFR's own streaming platform [IFFRunleashed.com](https://www.iffrunleashed.com)

More from Brazil

Brazil is home to the biggest African diaspora in the world. For a long time this was all but invisible in film, but recent years have seen a striking upsurge in black Brazilian cinema. This new movement was featured and celebrated in IFFR's Perspectives programme Soul in the Eye with a number of features and short films that draw on the rich Afro-Brazilian heritage. The production company Filmes de Plástico (founded by Gabriel Martins, Maurílio Martins, André Novais Oliveira and Thiago Macêdo Correia) was well represented in this programme, with screenings of Gabriel Martins's short film *Nada*, André Novais Oliveira's feature-length *Temporada* (which, like *No coração do mundo*, is set in Contagem) and Oliveira's short film *Quintal*.



No coração do mundo

vulnerable education



Photo: Joke Schut

All ages are catered to in IFFR's varied educational programme.

In 2019, IFFR's education programme grew to expand its reach once again, inspiring learners from pre-school through to university with a diverse range of activities.

Demonstrating the festival's commitment to engaging young people, 24,491 educational visits were made during the 2019 edition, an increase of 18.5% on last year. This increase is in part thanks to an increasing number of specially created year-round programmes and workshops for schools, which end in a visit to IFFR. On the agenda this year were screenings and workshops tailored to appeal to different target age groups, as well as carefully devised opportunities for young people to try their hand at activities like festival programming and reporting. Notably, 64% of screenings hosted this year included filmmaker Q&As, a significant increase compared to last year's 50%, and one that proved popular with youngsters taking part.

curious

This year, IFFR started elaborately measuring the impact of its educational programme for the coming three years through a comprehensive survey. The first results are in: 80% of students and teachers rate our programme a 4 or higher out of 5. Despite being a big festival, our educational programme is characterised by a personal and tailored approach.

Partners in education

Rewarding partnerships this year included our Kids Only workshop with director René van Zundert (*180CC*) and Digital Playground, Kids Talk with director Maurice Trouwborst (*Regels van Floor*) and SKVR Schrijftijgers. We also resumed our continuing children's programme with film theatre LantarenVenster, as well as collaborations with leading institutions in higher education including Erasmus University Rotterdam, Willem de Kooning Academy, the Dutch Film and Television Academy, Zadkine and Grafisch Lyceum. As well as bolstering young people's creative and practical skills including programming, blogging, vlogging and reporting, attendees were able to take part in IFFR Academy, a masterclass programme with a networking event held in conjunction with CineMart, designed to encourage the next generation of film professionals.

This year also marked the start of a new and successful partnership with Movies That Matter, a film festival which aims to foster discussion and understanding of international human rights. The collaboration resulted in a stimulating new education package about the Kenyan film *Rafiki*, directed by Wanuri Kahiu, which premiered at this year's festival. The package gave young audiences the chance to talk about the LGBTQ+ themes raised in the film, which explored a same-sex relationship within the context of a socially conservative society. This is the first time two film festivals have joined forces, and as Movies that Matter's project coordinator Philo

Offermans remarked, the pioneering collaboration meant teams could "connect know-how, expertise and practice to give the programme its biggest possible impact."

"The yearly visit to IFFR adds value to visual-arts education. It teaches pupils more about film and makes them aware of the creative processes and intentions of filmmakers."

Secondary-school teacher in the impact survey
(anonymous)

Young voices

Elsewhere in the programme, young people led the way, with platforms to express their views and ideas, and respond to the wider festival. Headline activities included the IFFR Youth Jury, made up of six young people from Rotterdam, which awarded a prize to Alice Rohrwacher's film *Lazzaro felice*.

Two other groups were also given support to respond directly to the festival programme. The IFFR Young Selectors, made up of four young creatives aged between 18 and 24, produced an event series over the course of the year and throughout the festival themed around the idea of 'seeking identity'. Highlights included a screening of Brian Welsh's *Beats*, with an accompanying panel talk on Rotterdam's rave culture.

Newly established this year, the IFFR Young Network was set up by five members of last year's Youth Jury. Open to film lovers aged between 16 and 25, the group offers inclusive and intimate opportunities to learn more about the various aspects of filmmaking, with activities this year including a documentary masterclass with director Tessa Pope, and a special one-day programme at RTM with filmmaker Edson da Conceicao.

By inspiring learners at every stage in their education, IFFR's programme provides a remarkable opportunity to widen access to contemporary cinema. In particular, educators commented on the festival as a welcome chance to introduce students to films they might never otherwise see, prompting discussion about other cultures and enriching their world view.



Photo: Melle Meivogel

impatient

IFFR year-round



Outdoor screening of *Respeto* at Afrikaanderplein, Rotterdam

IFFR's ambitions of bringing adventurous cinema to wide audiences don't stop at twelve festival days but continue all year round.

Projects in Rotterdam and neighbouring areas are part of the festival's mission of reaching wider audiences with independent cinema. Last summer, IFFR worked independently by hosting an outdoor screening for the community of Rotterdam's Afrikaanderplein. IFFR was also found outside the city on the island of Vlieland, programming for the sixth time a short film line-up for Into The Great Wide Open Festival. In Amsterdam, there were collaborations with institutions such as Eye Filmmuseum for the short film day, Dag van de Korte Film, and Melkweg Cinema to bring IFFR Music Highlights, a programme of IFFR-selected music documentaries.

Photo: Marwan Magroun

amused

Curaçao International Film Festival Rotterdam

IFFR's sister festival Curaçao International Film Festival Rotterdam (CIFFR) takes place annually in Curaçao's capital Willemstad, and this year marks its eighth edition. Five days of film on the colourful island – from 10 until 14 April – made up of a fresh selection of IFFR 2019 films, several special programmes, and competitions that offer a springboard for film talent in the region. These are the Yellow Robin Award Competition, for young and debut filmmakers, and the Caribbean Shorts Competition, where seven short films are presented by CIFFR and six partner festivals (Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Mexico, and Trinidad & Tobago).

IFFR Unleashed

An extension of the festival online. IFFR Unleashed offers year-round access to films of past editions, masterclasses, special collections, and exclusive screenings. In the summer of 2018, the platform was used to campaign for imprisoned filmmaker Oleg Sentsov with the release of his film *Gaamer* (2012), and also to screen Anja Kofmel's documentary film *Chris the Swiss* (2018) live from Sarajevo Film Festival. During and following IFFR 2019, the festival feeling was extended through collections and films connecting to the programmes of this edition. This included, the release of a Tiger Competition film: *No coração do mundo* (2019) by Gabriel Martins and Maurílio Martins (see page 41).

IFFR KINO

Rotterdam audiences who want their IFFR fix throughout the year can enjoy the IFFR KINO screenings. Every first Wednesday

of the month, an IFFR cult classic can be seen at the special location KINO Rotterdam – the birthplace of the festival almost fifty years ago! Highlights of the past season's programming included the sold-out *After Life* (1998) by Kore-eda Hirokazu, as well as an IFFR KINO special in collaboration with Eye Filmmuseum, screening *Rey* (2017) by Niles Atallah with a Q&A.

MASH-UP!

Once a year in autumn, IFFR throws its MASH-UP! event in collaboration with the iconic art space Kunsthal Rotterdam. MASH-UP! offers a unique opportunity to experience an evening of film and art brought together in a beautiful setting. This year's fifth edition was a celebratory one, with the premiere of Lukas Dhont's *Girl* (2018), an exhibition that showcased 100 years of kinetic art, and afterwards a party featuring live music by local acts.

IFFR Preview Tour

Running successfully for a number of years, the IFFR Preview Tour allows audiences across the Netherlands the chance to see a film from the festival's official selection in advance, at their local cinema or film theatre. *Capharnaüm* (2019) by Nadine Labaki was this year's preview film, it screened simultaneously in 25 locations across the country, from Alkmaar to Eindhoven. In Amsterdam's de Balie, IFFR also screened Kirill Serebrennikov's *Leto* prior to the festival, in the context of a discussion about filmmakers at risk of political persecution.



Celebrating 5 years of MASH-UP! with the screening of *Girl*, an open art exhibition in Kunsthal Rotterdam, and a party.

Photo: Tomas Mutsaers

in depth Cauleen Smith

‘We’re too fixated on how we represent ourselves’



Photo: Joke Schut

American artist and filmmaker Cauleen Smith was at the heart of 48th IFFR with a total of 11 shows, ranging from the restored print of her debut feature film to a Deep Focus Short Profile, and from slide projectors to a feminist utopia in the desert.

“The everyday possibilities of the imagination”

The art exhibition *Blackout*, curated by IFFR film programmer Julian Ross and forming part of IFFR’s Deep Focus section, featured a series of Smith’s artworks and performances focused around the discontinued Kodak 35mm carousel slide projector. The first installation, *Space Station: Rainbow Infinity* (2014) allows visitors to sit on an arrangement of chairs while dictating the projection of slides, all while surrounded by plants and a rainbow mural in honour of the musician Sun Ra. “I think I’ve always been interested in really quotidian, mundane, instances of wonderment,” explains Smith of her arrangement.

Her performance work *Black Utopia LP* (2012) also incorporates the slides and projector in a constantly evolving piece. Both projects combine the story of Sun Ra with images of the African diaspora in the Netherlands. The artist’s exploration of the history of colonialism through the work of the Jazz musician is an unconventional means of uncovering the past. “I’m really dependent on history. I invent very little. Archives provide all this material from individuals who’ve already done so much work and thinking and achieved a level of accomplishment with whatever their task is, be it music or visual art or writing”, explains Smith.

This use of archives is vital to her work. “To me it is really instructive to study what others have done,” says Smith. “I think that’s why we save things. Because we’re imagining someone in the future, someone that might need something that we learned or something that we know. It’s like a time capsule. Archives are just waiting for someone to find what they need within that parcel of history.”

“People in my films represent a presence rather than expressing a personality”

Cauleen Smith’s debut feature *Drylongso* (1998), restored in 16mm print format for the Deep Focus programme, follows the everyday madness and violence of a community in Oakland. The film title, slang for ‘ordinary’ or ‘everyday’, is also what inspires and fascinates her. The idea that “we don’t need to be completely enthralled with the world we live in” is a particular focus for the filmmaker. She has a profound resistance to the representation of the figure and tends to mask people in her film as if they were inaccessible. “I think we’re too fixated on the way we represent ourselves in the current age,” she explains. “And I feel as if there’s nothing in the image of the self or of the other that can teach us anything. We’ve worked that out. So I’m constantly thinking about abstraction.”

“Art does something for people that other things don’t”

In her film, *Sojourner* (2018) that competed in the Ammodo Tiger Short Competition, she reimagines Noah Purifoy’s Outdoor Desert Art Museum in Joshua Tree California as a radical feminist utopia. She was inspired by the fleeting nature of Purifoy’s sculpture. “I love the fact that he builds them out in the desert so he knows that they’ll decay rapidly,” explains Smith. “So it’s not about making something that lasts forever. It’s about the act of offering. And it’s going to come and go. You can take it or you can leave it. So there’s no fence around this. It’s like he’s giving it away. I love the generosity of such an act.” With the women in the film embarking on a spiritual journey, she saw the project as a way of highlighting how art can impact a person. “I don’t think of myself as making documentaries. I am just using film to make proposals about what could be possible. And in this particular project, I was trying to point at actual successes where people did manage to manifest some form of utopia, however flawed.”

To listen to a podcast interview with Cauleen Smith, visit [IFFR.com/TalksPodcasts](https://www.iffrr.com/TalksPodcasts)

calm

digital innovations



IFFR App

New digital innovations and fresh formats are all part of IFFR's engagement strategy for its many audiences.

This year, IFFR launched the IFFR Film Finder, the festival's latest digital tool leading younger users to their perfect film match. The tool is designed to offer film tips from the festival programme – made up of trailers, clips and descriptions – which can be swiped swiftly with a thumbs-up or thumbs-down. With the input the finder gradually learns what the user likes, and offers tailored suggestions. A fun and intuitive way to search through an extensive collection of films. Over the festival period the IFFR Film Finder brought more than 113,000 film tips in front of 18,016 users.

Online content

The browser extension IFFR Your Tab allows users to enjoy a beautiful film selection every time they open a new tab. From a wide and extraordinary film archive IFFR curates eye-catching impressions that pleasantly surprise. Ahead of this festival edition, the tab was used to present the latest films added to the IFFR 2019 programme. Throughout the year, the tab will continue to reinvent itself in line with the latest festival activities.

New for the 2019 edition, IFFR Daily is an online publication offering guide to every festival day, and a deepening on the programme. Featuring articles, interviews, last-minute tips, videos, and podcasts. As a new format for the festival, podcasts were introduced in two concepts: De Grote IFFR VPRO Podcast Show, a daily festival roundup for Dutch audiences

in collaboration VPRO, and the IFFR Talks Podcast, a series of in-depth talks in English as an extension to the Talks & Masterclasses programme – kicking off with an all-female line-up.

The festival worked on sharpening its social media strategy towards IFFR 2019. This involved experimentation, focusing on audience engagement, and paying close attention to the content themes and formats within each channel. Efforts saw social media presence improve significantly, particularly in IFFR's main Instagram channel where the following grew by more than 60% since IFFR 2018.

Usability

A number of design developments went into IFFR.com ahead of this festival edition. Audiences were able to enjoy a transformation of the online programme pages, with visible sections and useful filter options; updates to individual film pages, with clever features and video functionality; as well as improvements to the search box and its results. During the festival period there were 47% more recorded visitors to the film pages compared with the year before, and 5% more recorded visitors to the programme pages.

The whole festival is organised in a user's phone with the official IFFR App. Browse the programme, buy and scan tickets, save favourite films, create an agenda, and more. Recently, a redesign was implemented in the app for a fresh look that's easier to navigate. These efforts resulted in 12,538 recorded app users this edition, 74% more than in 2018, and an average open rate of 43% on push notifications. These targeted notifications (sent to both public and IFFR Pro audiences) ensured users were first to know about live festival news relevant to their interests.

comfortable

finances and figures



IFFR has been able to consolidate the admissions growth of the last few years with 327.000 visits in 2019.

The stability of the number of sold tickets is quite remarkable since one of the main festival venues decreased its capacity in favour of better seating. Also, starting 1 January 2019, Dutch VAT went up from 6% to 9% for cinema tickets, prompting IFFR to raise single tickets prices from €11 to €12 (prices had not been raised since 2012). Ticket prices for students and CJP remained at €8, ensuring wide accessibility for those who need it most. Many events, performances and film and art exhibitions were open to the public for free, encouraging the audience to embrace new adventures.

IFFR generates most of its annual budget (approximately 62%) through its own revenues from ticket sales, food and beverage, advertisements and events, professionals accreditations, in-kind and cash sponsorships as well as contributions from private funds and private donations. The total IFFR budget in 2019 amounted to €9.2 million. This includes costs for year-round events and all professionals-oriented activities, like CineMart and the Hubert Bals Fund. IFFR is supported on a multiple-year basis by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Rotterdam municipality, which together amount to 28.5% of the total budget. IFFR has established strong and lasting partnerships over the past years, in particular with its main sponsors vfonds, BankGiro Loterij and de Volkskrant. With United Foundation we work closely on creating CIFFR, the Curaçao edition of the festival.

The remaining income comes from public funds and institutions, such as several project-based contributions for IFFR Pro and the festival by Creative Europe as well as other partners like Rotterdam Festivals and the Netherlands Film Fund.

Thanks to the ongoing support of Rotterdam-based foundation Stichting Droom en Daad, IFFR has been able to increase its activities and visibility on an international level, for example: by realising the Frameworks programme featuring established and emerging visual artists; by increasing the efforts on international press, and by upgrading the online presence of IFFR. The Droom en Daad investment has also enabled IFFR to raise the level of IFFR processes and professionals, preparing the organisation for its upcoming 50th anniversary in 2021.

Inclusivity

In organising its activities, IFFR strives for a diverse, gender-balanced and inclusive team – from the board of directors to the almost 1000 volunteers. Similarly, IFFR presents cinema from all corners of the world, supporting diverse, independent artistic creation.

Although numbers may be an important tool for data analysis, IFFR does not believe in imposing quota on film selections to address the lack of diversity in cinema with regards to gender identity, sexuality and ethnic backgrounds. IFFR does not ask anyone to supply antagonising personal data upon film submission. Rather, through HBF, CineMart and other initiatives, IFFR addresses the root causes of inequality and strives to empower artists to make great films, which translates to the breadth of our programme selections and attending guests.

strong overview

visits

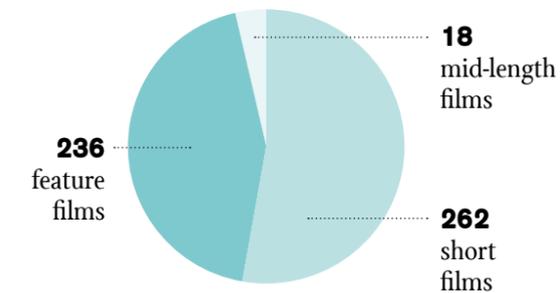
327,000 visits
54 netto promoter score
8.3/10 festival rating visitors
2,159 Tiger Members

2,439 +18% industry guests
1,657 IFFR Pro guests
580 CineMart guests

337 filmmakers
331 journalists
221 international

programme

516 films

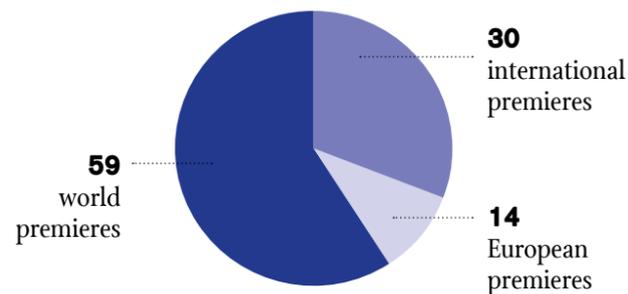


28 art installations
10 performances

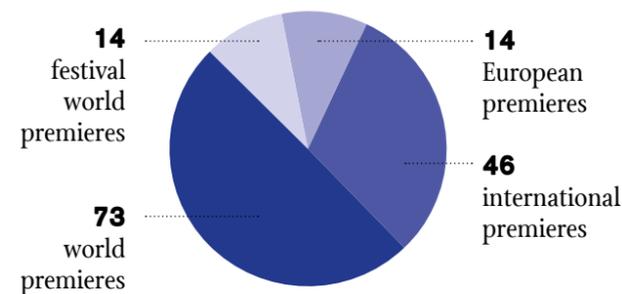


premieres

101 feature films



147 short and mid-length films



optimistic

screenings

1,426 public screenings
32 screening rooms
39 talks, masterclasses and panel discussions (excluding IFFR Pro)
110 press and industry screenings
28 art installations
1,214 Q&As and introductions

online

5,276,075 +10% IFFR.com unique page visits

765,546 -8% IFFR.com unique visitors
12,254 +23% app downloads
43% average open rate app notifications
31,116 newsletter subscribers (Tiger Alert, Tiger Pro Alert, IFFR Unleashed)
5,100,754 +3% Youtube views
98,386 2.5% Facebook likes
26,500 +6.5% Twitter followers
14,406 +60% Instagram followers
3,436 posts on Instagram using #iffr2019 or #feeliffr

education

24,491 visits
+18.5%

120 +19% schools
4,931 +7% students
8,987 +3.5% primary education
2,665 +42.5% MBO vocational students
7,607 +46% secondary education
275 -8.6% teachers

year-round

120 public screenings outside of the festival

68 films **41** feature-length films **27** short films

23 introductions and Q&As
3 talk shows and debates

337 films online
 (launched in January 2018 with 80 films)

we feel proud, inspired, excited and thankful

Main Sponsors



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FONDS 21



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Tiger Business Lounge

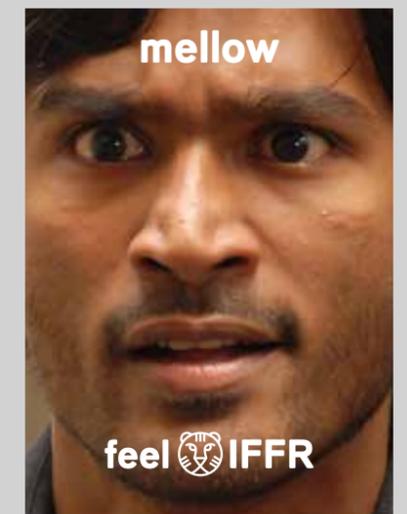
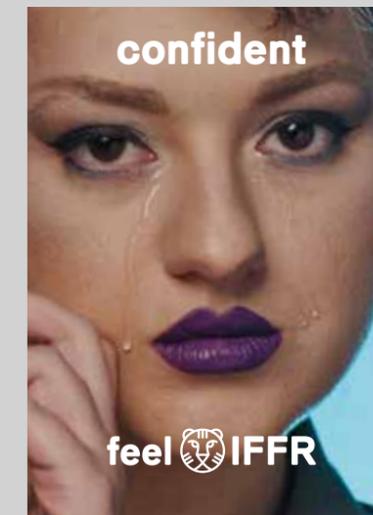
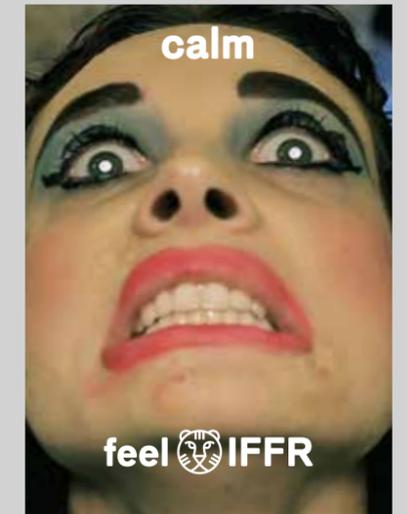
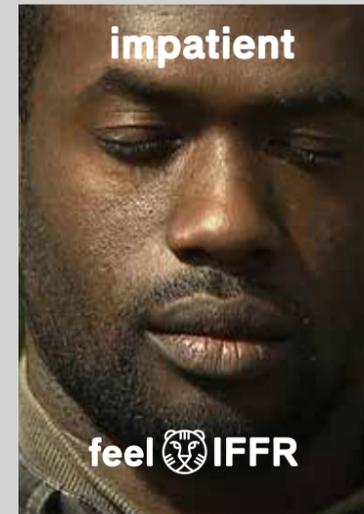
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48th International Film Festival Rotterdam



The 49th edition of IFFR will take place from 22 January to 2 February 2020.



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