

International film festival and forum on human rights

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Press release

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The International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights unveils full program!

The International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights (FIFDH) is celebrating its 15th anniversary! As the most important event on cinema and human rights worldwide, it brings together 300 guests from 62 different countries between March 10th to the 19th 2017, and offers 134 events at the heart of Geneva during the main session of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Thanks to the support of its 126 partners, the 15th edition of the FIFDH offers a high-quality program that includes projections, debates, conferences, readings, theatre, music, visual arts and photography, in 45 different locations throughout greater Geneva, Lausanne, Orbe, Bienne and the Vallée de Joux.

As reflected by the poster of this year's edition, the FIFDH seeks to observe the world, question, and offer horizons for action. «We strongly denounce violations against human dignity and human rights worldwide, but this edition of the FIFDH will go much further. The International Film Festival and Forum program was designed to surprise and question, as well as to inspire us to take meaningful action. A spirit of freedom and of resistance imbues the 15th anniversary of the FIFDH» declares the Festival Director, Isabelle Gattiker.

An international impact for filmmakers and activists

The FIFDH is a key event on the international agenda. The presence of Edward Snowden in 2015 and Doctor Mukwege in 2016, highlighted in major media outlets, has led to the attendance of several prominent personalities at this year's FIFDH. Former Brazilian President **Dilma Rousseff**, Nobel Peace Prize winner **Tawakkol Karman**, Secretary general of the Francophonie **Michaëlle Jean**, who will open the Festival and present the Martine Anstett Prize, and **Cédric Herrou**, a farmer from the Roya valley who will be in Geneva for the debate «Migrations, a time for civil disobedience? ».

Filmmakers choose to present their films at the FIFDH for the international impact. **Channel 4** will present the world premiere of *Syria's Disappeared: The Case Against Assad*, produced by Callum Mac Rae, the director of *Sri Lanka's Killing Fields* which premiered at the FIFDH in 2011. Journalist **Manon Loizeau** will also present the world premiere of *Silent War*, a striking documentary shot in Syria. Also to be seen, after it won the Best Documentary prize in Berlin this week, is *Ghost Hunting* by **Raed Andoni** (*Fix me*), co-produced by RTS and Akka Films, which will be screened in the presence of the filmmaker and two protagonists, all former detainees in the Moscobiya Israeli prison.

International Geneva at the heart of the festival

Like the colourful FIFDH flags that adorn the Mont Blanc bridge, the Festival can be found throughout the city streets with the photographic exhibition *Act On Your Future*. The Festival will also screen several films, as a side event at the UN Human Rights Council, as well as in many emblematic international venues in Geneva. During the Festival opening, a debate of opposing views dedicated to human rights will take place between two leaders of international law, **Andrew Clapham** and **Stephen Hopgood**. A debate between **Jean Ziegler** and **Eric Tistounet**, Chief of the Human Rights Council, will question the future of the UN. Another evening will be devoted to the 1MDB scandal, and its ramifications in Switzerland and Geneva.

The best of international cinema

The two international juries for the documentary and fiction sections, will be chaired by filmmaker and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, **Deeyah Khan**, and by one of the world's most renowned contemporary artists, **mounir fatmi**.

Among the official selections are two Oscar-nominated films: Raoul Peck's latest opus *I Am Not Your Negro* (winner of the Panorama Audience Award at the 2017 Berlinale), a RTS and Close Up co-production, and one of the year's most striking films, Barry Jenkins' *Moonlight*. Festival participants will also be able to discover the latest film by Finnish filmmaker **Aki Kaurismaki**, *The Other Side of Hope* (Silver Bear for Best Director at the 2017 Berlinale) that will be screened in the presence of the actors, in addition to **Olivier Laxe**'s captivating film *Mimosas*, awarded at the Cannes Film Festival. The audience will have the opportunity to meet other major figures in cinema, including **Michele Placido**, **Rithy Panh**, **Amos Gitai**, **Pamela Yates** and **Bertrand Bonello**, the author of *Saint Laurent*, who will present the dark and intense film, *Nocturama*.

This edition of the festival is dedicated to **Keywan Karimi**, a brilliant young Iranian filmmaker, held in Evin prison and sentenced to 223 lashes for his film *Writing on the city*. His new feature film, *Drum*, is presented in the International Competition.

Rithy Panh, artist of honor at the fifdh 15th edition

This year, we turn a spotlight on Cambodian filmmaker **Rithy Panh**. During the month of January, he participated in an artist's residency in Meyrin (Geneva), where he designed an original and monumental piece related to his latest film *Exil*, selected at Cannes. The exhibition, which incorporates personal memories of Geneva's inhabitants, is destined to tour the world.

See the world through the eyes of artist-activists

Numerous artists will speak during the FIFDH about their experiences, including Moroccan artist **mounir fatmi**, President of the fiction Jury and who will also be presenting an exhibition, Turkish novelist **Pinar Selek**, Goncourt-winner **Laurent Gaudé**, photographer **Debi Cornwall**, poet **Frank Smith**, Afghan photojournalist **Farzana Wahidiy**, novelist **Metin Arditi**, and opera singer **Barbara Hendricks** who will partake in a conversation with **Amos Gitai** for the public at the Comédie de Genève.

A tribute will also be paid to the Geneva-based writer and art critic John Berger, who passed away on January 2, 2017.

Justice: the fight against impunity

Justice and the fight against impunity are two major themes that will be highlighted at this year's edition, with an evening devoted to the examination of the abuses of the Bashar al-Assad regime which will include a debate with **Stephen J. Rapp**, former Attorney General at the International Criminal Tribunal, **Almudena Bernabeu**, lawyer, and **Mazen al-Hamada**, dissident and torture survivor. The role of the International Criminal Court will also be discussed with our guest Reed Brody, also known as the «Dictator Hunter». A debate will be dedicated to «Israeli and Palestinians against the occupation», as part of the carte blanche to Leo Kaneman, founder of the FIFDH. Finally, issues of justice in Guatemala and the trial of General Ríos Montt, former president of Guatemala will be discussed together with the projection of *500 Years*, directed by Pamela Yates.

Human rights 2.0

New technologies will be the topic of debate during the thematic evening, *Once there was a right to privacy* with guest and lawyer **Max Schrems**, who recently won a landmark case against Facebook. Chinese workers will join the thematic evening *Fingers of shame on our phones and tablets* to denounce their working conditions. An evening at CERN will bring together **Yves Daccord**, Director General of the ICRC, as well as representatives of the EFPL, UNHCR and Swissnex, to discuss the future of the Lake Geneva region as a possible Silicon Valley for humanitarian aid .

All Forum debates will be streamed live and for free on www.fifdh.org. The hashtag #fifdh2017 allows viewers to ask questions from around the world.

Syria: stop the massacre

The thematic evening focusing on the abuses of the regime of Bashar al-Assad will be accompanied by a screening of *The War Show* in the presence of **Dr. Annie Sparrow**. The film *Silent War*, by Manon Loizeau, is dedicated to women rape victims in Syrian prisons. The Festival will conclude with the film, *Last Men in Aleppo*, winner of the Grand Prize at the Sundance Film Festival, and followed by a discussion with the White Helmets leader and **Alternative Nobel Prize laureate Raed al-Saleh** and film director, Feras Fayyad.

The war's repercussions will be analyzed during a thematic evening dedicated to Yemen, in the presence of Nobel Peace Prize winner Tawakkol Karman, as well as the screening of the film, *Nowhere To Hide*, shot in the heart of Iraq and winner of the Grand Prix in Amsterdam, in the presence of filmmaker **Ahmed Zaradasht**.

Identities: black power; lgbti; feminisms

The FIFDH is hosting two debates devoted to Black Power and the fight against racism, with the screenings of *I Am Not Your Negro* and *Moonlight*, in the presence of writer Rokhaya Diallo. The exhibition of **mounir fatmi**, *Under the Skin* also confronts racism against black people. A debate on the rights of transgender people will bring together UN expert **Vitit Mountarbhorn** and the Ugandan protagonist of *The Pearl of Africa*.

As part of Equality Week, the debate *Women's rights: an ongoing struggle* will highlight the Polish activist and researcher **Agata Czarnacka**. The issue of female prostitution in Switzerland will also be addressed in the documentary *Impasse* by **Elise Schubs**, with several screenings followed by debates.

The media: producing images in 2017

While Switzerland is going through a deep media crisis, the Festival will open with a documentary filmed in Egypt, *Tickling Giants* by Sara Taksler on the role of the media under a dictatorship.

Four international press photographers, including the Pulitzer Prize-winner **Massoud Hossaini**, and **Bulent Kilic**, FIFDH poster artist and named best press photographer by **Time** and **The Guardian**, will discuss the future of this exciting and dangerous trade.

To train younger generations, the festival will offer, for the first time, an opportunity for the **Young Reporters** group to produce web and video content during the Festival.

A cinema jury at the Brenaz prison

Notably, this year's edition of the Festival will include a jury composed of detainees from the prison of La Brenaz who will watch a selection of Swiss films, including *Ma vie de courgette* by Claude Barras, in the presence of the film's cast and crew. The jury will award an official FIFDH prize.

126 international partners

The International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights (FIFDH), created in Geneva in 2003, is the most important international film and human rights event in the world.

It is based on a unique concept : to present major films followed by international debates, that are open to the public and accessible online, and that address issues during the March session of the UN Human Rights Council, with the support of major international NGOs such as Amnesty International, OMCT, FIDH, ISHR and MSF, as well as the University of Geneva, the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, HEAD, ECAL and the Swiss Film Archive. Its media partners are Swiss Radio Television, ARTE, TV5Monde, Euronews, Le Temps, the Huffington Post and the Courier International.

The FIFDH is supported financially by the City of Geneva, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), 17 municipalities of greater Geneva, the Association des communes genevoises, the Loterie Romande, the Fondation Barbour, The OAK Foundation, the Fondation Meyrinoise du Casino, l'Hospice général, the Bureau de l'intégration des étrangers du Canton de Genève and several private foundations.

Full program on
www.fifdh.org

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