



VIEWING SESSIONS 2023

October 6th - 7th
Dunamaise Arts
Centre
&
ODEON Portlaoise



S C H E D U L E O F V I E W I N G S

	DUNAMAISE ARTS CENTRE	ODEON PORTLAOISE	THE MIDLANDS PARK HOTEL
FRIDAY OCT 6TH			
9:00	REGISTRATION/ TEA + COFFEE		
9:15	<i>Evil Does Not Exist</i> (106 MINS)	<i>Typist Artist Pirate King</i> (107 MINS)	
11:00	TEA + COFFEE		
11:30	<i>On The Adamant</i> (109 MINS)	<i>Stolen</i> (106 MINS)	
13:15	LUNCH		
14:00	<i>How To Have Sex</i> (91 MINS)	<i>Here</i> (82 MINS)	
15:30	BREAK		
15:45	<i>Elaha</i> (110 MINS)	<i>Mami Wata</i> (107 MINS)	
20:00			DINNER
SATURDAY OCT 7TH			
9:15	<i>Anatomy of a Fall</i> (151 MINS)	<i>The Taste of Things</i> (134 MINS)	
11:45	TEA + COFFEE		
12:15	<i>Lies We Tell</i> (89 MINS)	<i>Tôtem</i> (95 MINS)	
13:45	LUNCH		
14:30	<i>Smoke Sauna Sisterhood</i> (89 MINS)	<i>Girl</i> (87 MINS)	
16:00	BREAK		
16:15	<i>Fallen Leaves</i> (81 MINS)	<i>Driving Madeleine</i> (90 MINS)	

Anatomy of a Fall

(*Anatomie d'une chute*)

France 2023

151 mins DCP Colour

Director: Justine Triet

Producers: Marie Ange Luciani, David Thion

Screenplay: Justine Triet, Arthur Harari

Cinematography: Simon Beaufiles

Editing: Laurent Sénéchal

Sound: Julien Sicart, Fanny Martin, Jeanne Delplancq, Olivier Goinard

Cast: Sandra Hüller, Swann Arlaud, Milo Machado Graner, Antoine Reinartz, Samuel Theis

Justine Triet (born Paris, 1978) graduated from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Her early work questions the role of the individual within a group: *Sur place* (07) was filmed during student protests, and *Solférino* (09) during the presidential election. In 2009, she filmed *Des ombres dans la maison* (10) in a São Paulo township. *Two Ships* (12), her first fiction medium-length film, won numerous awards at festivals in France and abroad. Her first feature, *Age of Panic*, premiered at ACID in Cannes in 2013 and received a César nomination in 2014 for Best First Film. Her second feature, *In Bed with Victoria*, was the opening film at the Critics Week in Cannes in 2016. Her third feature, *Sybil* (19), played in Cannes' main competition.



If *Marriage Story* (2019) were a murder trial, it might look a little like *Anatomy of a Fall*, Justine Triet's gripping, sharply intelligent psychological drama, which collects itself in fizzing arcs of strange electricity around a brilliant, edgy but elusive Sandra Hüller. A woman stands accused of killing her husband. Her 11-year-old son, a key witness who was blinded in an accident some years prior, listens in the courtroom. Lawyers rant, theorise and nitpick. But what is really being dissected is the mystery that is other people's passions. Where does responsibility lie when a marriage sours? Did love fall away, did it jump, or was it pushed?

Sandra, a successful novelist, is being interviewed by grad student Zoé in the partially renovated chalet in the French Alps that Sandra shares with her French husband Samuel and their son Daniel. Despite the domestic setting, the interview is part seduction. Sandra's gaze is flirtatious. She is quick to bounce questions back on her pretty interviewer – especially those ethical inquiries about an author's right to repurpose real life as fiction, which she wants to shrug away.

Suddenly, music blares out at ear-splitting volume from upstairs. It is, as a bitter in-joke, a steel-band cover of 50 Cent's misogynist classic P.I.M.P. and though Sandra first ignores it, then feigns exasperated amusement, eventually it forces her to halt the interview. As Zoé leaves, she passes Daniel taking his dog Snoop for a walk in the dazzling snow, the border collie's pale blue eyes uncannily evoking the boy's impaired vision. When Daniel returns, his father lies dead beneath the attic window where he was working, blood staining the snow.

A year later, Sandra stands in the dock. A native German with fluent French but even better English, she code-switches in fascinating ways: does her reversion to English at key junctures signal better communication of the truth? Or is it the language in which she can more easily lie? As the ruthless prosecution advocate locks horns with Sandra's lawyer and old friend/flame Vincent, every piece of evidence is opened to opposing, equally plausible interpretations, and the credibility of each witness, especially Sandra, becomes more important than the facts. – *Sight & Sound*

Winner – Palme d'Or, Cannes Film Festival 2023

Driving Madeleine (*Une Belle Course*)

France 2022

90 mins DCP Colour

Director: Christian Carion

Producers: Christian Carion, Laure Irrmann

Screenplay: Cyril Gely, Christian Carion

Cinematography: Pierre Cottereau

Editing: Loïc Lallemand

Sound: Pascal Jasmès, François Maurel, Thomas Desjonquères, Thomas Gauder

Music: Philippe Rombi

Cast: Line Renaud, Dany Boon, Alice Isaaz



Rediscover the power of the kindness of strangers in Christian Carion's latest cheerful, heart-warmer, *Driving Madeleine*.

When taxi driver, Charles (Dany Boon) reluctantly takes on an early-morning booking, he begins to regret his decision even more so when a cantankerous old woman, Madeleine (Line Renaud, *Call My Agent!*) is waiting begrudgingly at the pickup point. Despite his own personal grievances, Charles begins to realise that his problems are nowhere near as hard-pressing as his clients. At the age of 92, she must bow to the pressure of family and doctors, waiting to be forced into an assisted living facility. With a day at her disposal, Madeleine intends to drag it out for as long as possible, indulging in her final hours of freedom.

As the journey unfolds, so does the story of Madeleine's long and eventful life – guiding the audience through her most monumental experiences, from romance to earth-shattering heartbreak. Described by Renaud, as “the most beautiful film of my life,” at 94 the Grande Dame of French entertainment is luminous in her role as Madeleine, delivering a sharp and deeply sincere performance in a retelling of a life truly well lived. In *Driving Madeleine*, watch the duo's staggering chemistry, as the power of friendship is brought to life on screen.

- Alliance Française Australia French Film Festival 2023

“... *Driving Madeleine* works perfectly with its double-mirrored narrative simplicity, carried by two actors who enjoy wonderful natural chemistry.” - *Cineuropa*

Christian Carion (born Cambrai, France, 1963) started off his working life as an engineer, before finding his passion for film-making. In 2001, Christian Carion directed his first feature film *The Girl from Paris*. He became more well-known with the success of his 2005 film *Joyeux Noël*, which was nominated for an Oscar. His other films include *Farewell* (09), *Come What May* (15), and *My Son* (17). *Driving Madeleine* (22) is his latest feature.

Elaha

Germany 2023

110 mins DCP Colour

Director: Milena Aboyan

Producers: Matthias Greving, Igor Dovgal

Screenplay: Milena Aboyan, Constantin Hatz

Cinematography: Christopher Behrmann

Editing: Elias Ben Engelhardt

Sound: Perschya Chehrazi

Music: Kilian Oser

Cast: Bayan Layla, Derya Durmaz, Nazmi Kirik

Milena Aboyan (born Armenia, 1992) is a Yazidi Kurd who began studying acting in Germany in 2010. After receiving her acting degree, she changed her focus to writing and worked as an assistant writer on an early-evening series on the German ARD TV channel. In 2015, she took up a degree in screenwriting at the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg. *Elaha* (23) is her debut feature film as a director.



Elaha, a 22-year-old German-Kurdish woman, is about to get married. She is engaged to Nasim, the brother of her employer at a dry cleaner's, and their wedding is due to take place in a few weeks' time.

When Elaha slips away to smoke with her friends at a party, the talk turns to the topic of how many young women in her community are expected to enter marriage as virgins. Some future in-laws even demand medical proof from a doctor. Elaha has already had sex and so this poses a problem: to have her hymen surgically reconstructed requires money which she does not have. Small capsules of fake blood can supposedly help to feign an intact maidenhead – but will it work? Elaha begins to question the rules: why does she have to be a virgin anyway, and for whom?

Performed with great commitment, Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg graduate Milena Aboyan's film revolves around a topic that is as personal as it is universal: sexual self-determination. Based on a nuanced screenplay, Aboyan illuminates all facets and stays very close to her complex and completely authentic protagonist. – *Berlin International Film Festival 2023*

"... a personal and powerful exploration of the antiquated idea of virginity, sexual self-determination, the misogynistic expectations placed on women and the idea of altered 'values' before and after sex." – *Loud and Clear Reviews*

Evil Does Not Exist

(*Aku Wa Sonzai Shinai*)

Japan 2023

106 mins DCP Colour

Director: Ryusuke Hamaguchi

Producer: Satoshi Takata

Screenplay: Ryusuke Hamaguchi

Cinematography: Yoshio Kitagawa

Editing: Ryusuke Hamaguchi, Azusa Yamazaki

Sound: Izumi Matsuno

Music: Eiko Ishibashi

Cast: Hitoshi Omika, Ryo Nishikawa, Ryuji Kosaka, Ayaka Shibutani

Ryusuke Hamaguchi (born Kanagawa, Japan, 1978) completed his postgraduate degree in film at the Tokyo University of the Arts. He gained international recognition in 2015 with his five-hour drama *Happy Hour*, which received special mention for his screenplay at the Locarno International Film Festival. His other features include *Asako I & II* (18), *Wheel of Fortune and Fantasy* (21), and the Oscar winner *Drive My Car* (21). *Evil Does Not Exist* (23) is his latest film.



A place of bucolic serenity is threatened by cynical urban developers in Ryusuke Hamaguchi's exquisite drama. Shifting between opposing environments and viewpoints, the latest from the Oscar-nominated director of *Drive My Car* (Best International Feature at the 2022 Academy Awards) is a slow burn that reveals the hidden potential for transformation on both sides of a fraught power dynamic.

Takumi and his eight-year-old daughter Hana reside in a forested region of Japan that's remained largely unsullied by large-scale development. Until now. A pair of agents come to Takumi's village to propose a "glamping" project, a resort for vacationers who want to feel like they're camping without getting their fingernails dirty. During the briefing, locals critique numerous flaws in the project, from fire hazards to inadequate septic tanks, but the blank responses from the agents make it clear this exercise is purely tokenistic. The agency is determined to move forward regardless of whether locals approve.

One can imagine a version of this story focused exclusively on the locals' resistance, but Hamaguchi does something more interesting: halfway through the film, he takes us from the village to the city and into the private worlds of the agents. He generates an intimate connection with the major characters, though they live according to such different time signatures.

And the alluring twists don't stop there. Things take a dramatic turn in the film's last third, which speaks to the transformative power of performing simple, timeless tasks, to the primacy of parental instincts, and to the increasing difficulty of living in harmony with the natural world. – *Toronto International Film Festival 2023*

Winner – Silver Lion, Grand Jury Prize,, Venice Film Festival 2023

Fallen Leaves

(*Kuolleet Lehdet*)

Finland, Germany 2023

81 mins DCP Colour

Director: Aki Kaurismäki

Producers: Aki Kaurismäki, Mark Lwoff, Misha Jaari, Reinhard Brundig

Screenplay: Aki Kaurismäki

Cinematography: Timo Salminen

Editing: Samu Heikkilä

Sound: Pietu Korhonen, Heikki Kossi

Cast: Alma Pöysti, Jussi Vatanen

Aki Kaurismäki (born Orimattila, Finland, 1957) is a Finnish film director, screenwriter, and producer, who had his first encounter with film at Orimattilan Kino, the cinema in Orimattila, in the early 1960s. He made his film debut as a co-screenwriter and the lead actor in *The Liar* (81), directed by his brother Mika Kaurismäki. In 1983 he made his own directorial debut with *Crime and Punishment*, an adaptation of Dostoyevsky's classic novel. Since then he has become known for his dead-pan wit and is the skillful writer and director of films including *Leningrad Cowboys Go America* (89), *Drifting Clouds* (96), *The Man Without A Past* (02), *Le Havre* (11), and *The Other Side of Hope* (17). *Fallen Leaves* (23) is his latest film.



Can a film be both bleak and lovely at the same time? Finnish filmmaker Aki Kaurismäki (*The Other Side of Hope*, *Drifting Clouds*) takes a good stab at it with this black comic, repeatedly-stalled love story in which Helsinki again serves as a convincing shabby crucible of broken dreams. It's a low-key treat with moments of real bliss.

Our two leads look like they've had the life sucked out of them. Middle-aged Ansa (Alma Pöysti) stacks shelves in a supermarket but is sacked for taking home out-of-date food and distributing it to the poor. Long-faced Holappa (Jussi Vatanen) works as a metalworker and lives in a dormitory on the job, but he's soon fired, too, in his case for knocking back moonshine at work. News of the Ukraine war plays on the radio (especially relevant news for Russia's neighbour Finland, not even a member of NATO when this was shot) and the screws are tightening at every turn.

It sounds miserable, but Kaurismäki finds moments of morose comedy everywhere, whether it's the burly security guard at the supermarket ('I was just following orders') or the unlikely named grim dive bar, California Pub. It's not all a downward spiral. There's romance on the horizon when Ansa and Holappa meet in a karaoke club and enjoy a date at the cinema (to see Jim Jarmusch's *The Dead Don't Die*). But the horizon keeps shifting: Holappa loses Ansa's phone number, only one of several mishaps to keep them apart as soon as a relationship beckons.

Kaurismäki is the king of pared-down deadpan melancholy, and with *Fallen Leaves* he gifts his loyal subjects a familiar tale in look and spirit. Present and correct is his usual shadowy noir lighting and a jukebox soundtrack of Finnish and other ballads. It builds on his other stories of Finnish working-class woe and wears its film-loving heart on its sleeve with wry nods to other directors throughout.

Particular to *Fallen Leaves* is a deep, amused sigh at the limitations of men and alcohol, especially when paired. But it's not judgy, just jaded, at least until the clouds finally start to part. It finds genuine humour in its characters' almost down-and-out lot, but it's fully on their side – the side of those trampled on by modern times.

- Time Out

Winner – Jury Prize, Cannes Film Festival 2023

Girl

United Kingdom 2023

87 mins DCP Colour

Director: Adura Onashile

Producers: Rosie Crerar, Ciara Barry

Screenplay: Adura Onashile

Cinematography: Tasha Back

Editing: Stella Heath Keir

Sound: Becky Thomson

Music: Ré Olunuga

Cast: Déborah Lukumuena,
Le'Shantey Bonsu, Danny Sapani,
Liana Turner

Adura Onashile (born London) is an award-winning Glasgow based artist. She has directed and starred in productions with The Unicorn Theatre, The Place, Contact Theatre, Fuel Theatre, and The National Theatre of Scotland. In 2020, she wrote and directed her screen debut, *Expensive Shit*, a BAFTA Scotland nominated short, which premiered at the BFI London Film Festival 2020. Her debut film *Girl* (23) premiered in the World Dramatic Competition of the Sundance Film Festival.



Shot entirely in Glasgow, there was no better choice to open this year's edition of Glasgow Film Festival than writer-director Adura Onashile's feature debut, *Girl*. Starring Déborah Lukumuena (*The Braves*) and Le'Shantey Bonsu in her screen debut, the film follows a mother, Grace (Lukumuena), and her 11-year-old daughter, Ama (Bonsu), as they try to make new lives for themselves in a new city. However, as Grace suffers from extreme anxiety caused by past trauma, she finds it difficult to trust those around her and has likewise taught her daughter to be suspicious of the world. When Ama finds friendship with a girl in her class (Liana Turner), Grace believes she's losing her daughter.

The beauty in *Girl* comes through how understated it is. Onashile allows the performances from her leads to do much of the heavy-lifting when it comes to conveying complex and nuanced emotions in a way that words alone cannot achieve; the pair's bond is at its closest when they're barely saying anything at all. Whether they're fantasising about their dream home, telling a charming bedtime story about how Ama came to be (though this proves to be a method for Grace to hide her past), or riding a ferris wheel, the quieter moments resonate the loudest.

Moreover, these sequences are that much more effective thanks to a mesmerising score from Ré Olunuga. Comprised of solemn vocal harmonies and aching string melodies, the soundtrack blends beautifully with Tasha Back's cinematography to tenderly etch out what's happening onscreen.

In addition to these more sombre scenes, both Lukumuena and Bonsu deliver powerfully heart-wrenching performances. Lukumuena is once again phenomenal, quietly portraying Grace's trauma one moment and exploding with a passionate mix of love and fear the next. The young Bonsu is just as fantastic, and shows that she's able to hold her own as an accomplished star. Together, the pair create marvellous chemistry.

Lying just underneath the raw familial story is one that touches on themes of isolation and trauma. By only giving audiences occasional glimpses into Grace's past, the filmmaker shows just enough for viewers to understand the character's pain without it overshadowing the central relationship. – *The Upcoming*

Here

Belgium 2023

82 mins DCP Colour

Director: Bas Devos

Producer: Marc Goyens

Screenplay: Bas Devos

Cinematography: Grimm Vandekerckhove

Editing: Dieter Diependaele

Sound: Boris Debackere

Music: Brecht Ameel

Cast: Stefan Gota, Liyo Gong



For anyone keeping tabs on Bas Devos' career, it's notable that the drama of his latest film *Here* is set in motion by something as benign as a pot of soup. A charming portrait with a flâneurial spirit, the film follows a Brussels-based Romanian construction worker who, having decided to move home, cooks what's left in his fridge, packages it up, then gifts it to family, friends and. much later, a Belgian-Chinese woman doing a PhD in moss. It's 81 minutes long, has relatively little dialogue, and tugs the heartstrings in all the best ways. It might be the most benevolent film of this year.

Stefan Gota plays Stefan, and he is an endlessly amiable fella. On travels across Brussels, he meets his sister to discuss his plan: an old friend has landed in jail and Stefan feels obliged to pay him a visit. Planning to drive, he takes his car to a garage and ends up sharing a bowl with the men working there. In between these little encounters, Stefan wanders the streets with his eyes wide open, seeking new experiences. During a lovely summer downpour he takes shelter in a Chinese restaurant and meets Shuxiu, who has been working there to supplement her studies. Later, when Stefan meets her for the second time, he finds her collecting samples: "What you're holding in your hand is like a micro-forest," she explains. It could be the tagline of this entire film.

That sense of delicate perception is infectious. *Here* is a film flush with everyday pleasures: balmy nights and sunny days, leafy trees, the sounds of birds, summer rain. It's also about how these things tend to make you feel: relaxed, nostalgic, even romantic.

There are other reasons to cherish it. Devos' plot devices (a busted car, heavy rainfall, chance encounters) are almost the stuff of romantic comedy but he offsets their comforting familiarity with flashes of surrealism and a pleasantly meandering mise-en-scène that allows ample space for the imagination to take over. Devos' films can feel overly studied, slick to the point of being contrived, yet with each passing work he edges closer to something truly great. *Here* is his finest yet, an almost-perfect little film. - *The Film Stage*

Bas Devos (born Zoersel, Belgium, 1983), studied at the LUCA School of Arts. He made multiple short films before directing his first feature *Violet* (14), which won the Jury Prize of the Berlinale Generation strand. His second and third films - *Ghost Tropic* (19) and *Hellhole* (19) - played at many international festivals. *Here* (23) is his latest and fourth film.

Winner – Best Film, Encounters Section, Berlin International Film Festival 2023

Winner – Best International Film, Galway Film Fleadh 2023

How To Have Sex

United Kingdom, Greece 2023

91 mins DCP Colour

Director: Molly Manning Walker

Producers: Emily Leo, Ivana

Mackinnon, Konstantinos Kontovrakis

Screenplay: Molly Manning Walker

Cinematography: Nicolas Camicioni

Editing: Fin Oates

Sound: Alistair Bolt, James Trusson,
Kevin Robertson

Music: James Jacob

Cast: Mia McKenna-Bruce, Lara Peake,
Samuel Bottomley, Daisy Jelley



Sixteen-year-old Tara and her two best friends arrive at a Greek party town ready to let their hair down. They scope out the scene and quickly make friends with a group of suitors across the hall. Convenient because Tara's friends decided that it's time for her to lose her virginity. But while Tara is indeed down for some summer fun, her boundaries keep getting trampled on by those closest to her.

Winner of the Cannes' 2023 *Un Certain Regard* Prize, Molly Manning Walker makes waves with this devastating feature debut that interrogates the lines of consent with sobering clarity. Deceptively overt and intentional with its hypersexualized stylistic choices, the filmmaker creates a veil of youthful abandon that in turn highlights the smallest of reservations. She weaves a complex character arc, slowly but surely breaking away from the neon-tinted party delights, until the ruckus dissolves into a deafening silence in the wake of physical and emotional transgressions; it's especially astute in identifying the deeper wounding coming from the inner circle.

- *Vancouver International Film Festival 2023*

"Full-on energy, likable performances and uncompromisingly daft jokes turbocharge this debut feature ... [with] an intriguingly sympathetic, complex and even mysterious performance from McKenna-Bruce." – *The Guardian*

Winner – Un Certain Regard Prize , Cannes Film Festival 2023

Molly Manning Walker (born London, 1993) is a graduate of England's National Film and Television School. A cinematographer, writer, and director, her work includes the short films *The Forgotten C* (20) and *Good Thanks, You?* (20). She was cinematographer on Charlotte Reagan's recent Sundance hit *Scrapper*. *How To Have Sex* (23) is her feature directorial debut.

Lies We Tell

Ireland 2023

89 mins DCP Colour

Director: Lisa Mulcahy

Producer: Ruth Carter

Screenplay: Elisabeth Gooch

Cinematography: Eleanor Bowman

Editing: Weronika Kaminska

Music: Aza Hand

Cast: Agnes O'Casey, David Wilmot,
Chris Walley, Holly Sturton

Lisa Mulcahy is an award winning Irish feature film and television director. Her first feature film *Situations Vacant*, a comedy shot in Dublin, was released nationwide in Ireland in 2009. She followed that up with the award winning second feature film *The Legend of Longwood* (15). *Lies We Tell* (23) is her latest film.



In *Lies We Tell*, director Lisa Mulcahy, working with writer Elisabeth Gooch, puts a feminist top-spin on the Victorian 'locked-up lady' genre exemplified by Sheridan Le Fanu's source novel 'Uncle Silas'. A singular performance by young talent Agnes O'Casey in the lead role gives this pretty period piece a serrated edge.

Gooch has taken liberties with the text, which pays off in some respects even if it muddies other aspects of the narrative. The decision to excise the whole first third of the novel makes for a brisk 89-minute film, for sure. Now Maude (O'Casey) is solely depicted as being both alone and a loner, and the story becomes less about her being passed from parent to guardian and home to house in the late 19th century than a bluntly independent woman using her wits to triumph in increasingly dangerous circumstances.

It's the war of wits between Maude and her Uncle Silas which gives the film its sharpness. Dangerous one-upmanship and an escalation in the stakes result in some genuinely arresting drama, but there's not much suspense and certainly no country house horror here, despite the decidedly Gothic settings. It could be argued that Maude and Silas are cut from the same cloth, in fact, making her a more ambiguous heroine than we're used to. She's certainly both clever and rude from the get-go, shrugging off the concerns of the trustees of her late father's sprawling estate and agreeing to the guardianship of her Uncle Silas, who arrives at 'Knowl' with a rickety reputation, a laudanum habit and an entourage: Madame, the supposed French governess, alongside Maude's two cousins.

Shot on location in Ireland, *Lies We Tell* has, perhaps appropriately, a lushly-green look as Maude flees her clean-lined Georgian surroundings for respite in the forest, always clad in stiff, high-necked black taffeta and a richly commanding demeanour for one so young. It may be a lower-budget production, but it doesn't betray that. In a crowded market for a period piece like this, O'Casey, great-granddaughter of Irish literary giant Sean has the space to make her mark. – *Screen International*

Mami Wata

Nigeria, France, United Kingdom 2023

107 mins DCP Black & White

Director: C.J. Obasi

Producer: Oge Obasi

Screenplay: C.J. Obasi

Cinematography: Lilis Soares

Editing: Nathan Delannoy

Sound: Samy Bardet

Music: Tunde Jegede

Cast: Evelyne Ily, Usomaka Aniunoh, Emeka Amakeze, Kelechi Udegbe, Rita Edochie



In the oceanside village of Iyi, the reverend Mama Efe (Rita Edochie) acts as an intermediary between the people and the all-powerful water deity Mami Wata. But when a young boy is lost to a virus, Efe's devoted daughter Zinwe (Usomaka Aniunoh) and skeptical protégé Prisca (Evelyne Ily Juhen) warn Efe about unrest amongst the villagers. With the sudden arrival of a mysterious rebel deserter named Jasper (Emeka Amakeze), a conflict erupts, leading to a violent clash of ideologies and a crisis of faith for the people of Iyi.

C.J. "Fiery" Obasi's potent modern fable deploys vivid monochromatic black-and-white cinematography, rich sound design, and a hypnotic score in a folk-futuristic style both earthy and otherworldly. Obasi depicts a pitched battle between opportunistic militants promising technological progress and a matriarchal spiritual order living in a fragile harmony with the ocean. *Mami Wata* transports us to a place that seems both suspended in time and perhaps running out of time, as the threats of modern life wash up on its shores. – *Sundance Film Festival 2023*

**Winner – World Cinema Dramatic Special Jury Award:
Cinematography, Sundance Film Festival 2023**

C.J. Obasi (born Owerri, Nigeria) earned a degree in Computer Science from the University of Nigeria, before turning to filmmaking. His debut *Ojuju* (14) – a zero budget zombie film - premiered at the Africa International Film Festival, where it won the award for Best Nigerian Film. His second feature *O-Town* (15) screened at international festivals. *Mami Wata* (23) is his third and newest film.

On the Adamant

(*Sur l'Adamant*)

France, Japan 2022

109 mins DCP Colour

Director: Nicolas Philibert

Producers: Céline Loiseau, Gilles Sacuto, Miléna Poylo

Cinematography: Nicolas Philibert

Editing: Janusz Baranek, Nicolas Philibert

Sound: François Abdelnour

Nicolas Philibert (born Nancy, France 1951) studied philosophy, before turning to film and becoming an assistant director, notably for René Allio, Alain Tanner and Claude Goretta. In 1978 he co-directed his first documentary feature, *His Master's Voice*, with Gérard Mordillat, in which a dozen bosses of leading industrial groups talk about control, hierarchy and power, gradually sketching out the image of a future world ruled by the financial sector. From 1985 to 1987, he shot various mountaineering and sports adventure films for television, then started directing documentary features. In 2001, he directed *To Be and To Have* (*Etre et avoir*), about daily life in a "single class" school in a mountain village, which brought him international acclaim and success. *On The Adamant* is his most recent film and earned him the top prize at the 2023 Berlin International Film Festival.



The carefully observant documentaries of Nicolas Philibert, which include his 2002 hit, *To Be and To Have*, often focus on either a single character or location — the latter usually a French public institution — exploring them with painstaking detail and plenty of compassion.

For his eleventh feature, *On The Adamant*, the 72-year-old filmmaker spent months aboard a barge anchored on the Seine in Paris, chronicling a mental health care facility that caters specifically to its patients' creative needs. What emerges is not only a depiction of psychiatric treatment administered with plenty of warmth and enthusiasm, but a portrait of several individuals who, despite their noticeable disabilities, are capable of producing original and moving works of art.

Philibert, who typically serves as his own cameraman, points his lens at the Centre de jour l'Adamant, a floating psychiatric facility in central Paris where patients go to participate in activities such as cooking, drawing, painting, borrowing books and making music, as well as completing basic tasks like running the cash register. This being France, the Centre also has its very own café, as well as a ciné-club where movies by Federico Fellini, Abbas Kiarostami and Woody Allen are screened and discussed.

The film begins with a man belting out the 1979 French rock hit "La bombe humaine" by the band Telephone, in a performance that speaks to both the passions of the Centre's patients and the fact that, more often than not, their mental handicaps hide their true creativity from the public eye. "You hold the human bomb in your hand/The trigger is right next to your heart," the song goes, and it's a fitting introduction to a place where talents are nurtured, cultivated and then unleashed.

"Art therapy" is perhaps an overused term, but in *On The Adamant* it actually seems to work. Not because the patients are necessarily cured, but because art helps them not only to live with their handicaps, but to harness them for creation. With plenty of subtlety, because Philibert never overstates things, the film unveils the creativity inherent in all individuals, including those with severe enough problems to require professional care. — *The Hollywood Reporter*

Winner – Golden Bear for Best Film, Berlin International Film Festival 2023

Smoke Sauna Sisterhood

Estonia, France, Iceland 2023

89 mins DCP Colour

Director: Anna Hints

Producer: Marianne Ostrat

Screenplay: Anna Hints

Cinematography: Ants Tammik

Editing: Hendrik Mägar, Tushar Prakash, Qutaiba Barhamji, Martin Männik, Anna Hints

Sound: Huldar Freyr Arnarson

Music: Edvard Egilsson, EETER



In the hot and intimate setting of the southern Estonian smoke sauna where Anna Hints' film takes us, women share traditional rituals and their secrets. It's a place where the heat of steam rising from rocks in the intimacy of a rural wooden hut is matched by the warmth and intensity of the camaraderie between the women who sit inside it. This is a place of cleansing, not just of the body but so much more as this non-intrusive but immersive film gradually reveals.

We will learn at the end that this tradition is on a UNESCO list of the "Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity". "Intangible" is the perfect word for what happens in the sauna, which is as much about the people as it is the place, though the two are in perfect harmony with one another.

Hints avoids direct explanations in favour of immersing us in the experience. We see wintry preparations, involving the cutting of a hole in the ice, where the women will take a dip, or the gathering of birch leaves, which will be bundled up to help beat out the toxins. Inside the sauna, recollections of trauma mingle with observations on life and traditional singing and chants. The seasons change through the course of the film further adding to the sense of the traditional and enduring.

The purely physical is present. Women's bodies of different shapes and sizes sitting side by side as intimate conversations play out. Ants Tammik's camera is up close and personal but also discreet. Anonymity is largely retained, with the camera focusing on individual parts of the body rather than faces, as the sweat and stories roll out. Hints is also striving for something altogether less corporeal. The atmosphere of this place allows for the inconsequentialities of life to mix with past trauma with no judgement.

Beyond the meditative quality of what is being said, the film is visually artistic, which coupled with its intimate access and the trust the participants evidently have in Hints is no doubt why it picked up a Special Jury Award for Directing at Sundance. There's artistry not just in the way that the women's bodies are captured or in that face of history almost emerging from the steam but in the manner the light catches the water they pour, so it cascades like sparks. This small wooden hut in the middle of the forest may be physically confining but it offers a world of emotional freedom to those who enter it. – *Eye For Film*

Anna Hints (born Tartu, Estonia, 1982) is a writer, director and composer. She began her filmmaking career making shorts, including *Free World* (12), which won the Tallin Black Nights Film Festival's Sleepwalkers Grand Prize; *Manifest of Hope* (14); *Ice* (18) and *Homme saabub paradiis* (21). *Smoke Sauna Sisterhood* (23), her feature debut, won the Sundance Film Festival's Cinema Documentary directing award.

Stolen

Ireland 2023

106 mins DCP Colour

Director: Margo Harkin

Producers: Martha O'Neill, Margo Harkin

Cinematography: Colm Hogan

Editing: John Murphy, Patrick Hodgins

Music: Deirdre Gribbins

Margo Harkin (born Derry, 1951) graduated in Fine Art from the Ulster College of Art and Design in 1974 and worked as a teacher, tutor and community artist before joining Field Day Theatre Company in 1980 as an Assistant Stage Manager and later as a Theatre Designer. In 1984 she started working in film as co-founder of the Channel 4 Workshop *Derry Film & Video*. In 1990 she co-wrote and directed her first drama, *Hush-a-Bye Baby*, which won The Ecumenical Jury Award at the Locarno Film Festival, the first of several international awards. She formed Besom Productions Ltd. in 1992, which has been behind many award-winning documentaries including *12 Days in July* (97), Joel Conroy's *Waveriders* (08) and *Bloody Sunday-A Derry Diary* (10). *Stolen* (23) is her latest documentary.



The horrors of the Irish Mother and Baby Homes have been vividly conveyed in both drama (*Philomena*) and documentary (*The Missing Children* etc). Familiarity does nothing to blunt the power and emotional charge of *Stolen*. Previously entitled *Limbo*, Margo Harkin's heartbreaker of a documentary gives a voice to those silenced for far too long. An elegant layering of chapter and verse testimony underpins a wide-ranging portrait balancing individual suffering with an understanding of the bigger societal issues. Essential viewing in Ireland, *Stolen* should provoke outrage in audiences far and wide.

Harkin sets the scene by asserting her love for Ireland but also recognising it as a country with "dark secrets" buried beneath its "waterlogged surfaces". Mournful shots of bleak rural settings punctuate the narrative, adding to the melancholy air. The first individual we encounter is Michael O'Donovan, a gardener at Sean Ross Abbey Mother and Baby Home in Tipperary from 1988 to 1991. He recalls the discovery of lots of small bones and a policy of planting trees that felt like a deliberate act of concealment. His many unanswered questions lay out the themes of a film which confronts shame, guilt, collusion and cover-up.

We move on to the site of the Bon Secours Mother and Baby Home that operated at Tuam between 1925 and 1961. Subsidence exposed a children's graveyard on a site that is now a playground, adding to the sense that the horrors of the past are seeping to the surface. Historian Catherine Corliss is interviewed about her tireless, ground-breaking research into Tuam and the 796 babies and children who died there.

Stolen provides a litany of facts, noting the 9,000 babies believed to have died in the homes run by religious orders between 1922 and 1998. We are told of the policies of adoption, fostering and trafficking babies once they were separated from their birth mothers. Harkin interviews journalists, historians, politicians and campaigners, weaving together archive footage and photos all to provide an understanding of the context in which these events were allowed to happen. – *Screen International*

Taste of Things, The

(*La Passion de Dodin
Bouffant*)

France 2023

134 mins DCP Colour

Director: Trần Anh Hùng

Producer: Olivier Delbosc

Screenplay: Trần Anh Hùng

Cinematography: Jonathan Ricquebourg

Editing: Mario Battistel

Sound: Francois Waledisch, Paul Heymans, Thomas Gauder

Cast: Juliette Binoche, Benoît Magimel, Bonnie Chagneau-Ravoire, Patrick D'Assunção

Trần Anh Hùng (born Da Nang, Vietnam, 1962) was educated in France after emigrating there at the end of the Vietnam war, when he was 12. His first film, *The Scent of Green Papaya* (93) explored the relationship between a cook and the master who falls in love with her. The film won the Camera d'Or at Cannes and established Tran on the art-house circuit. *Cyclo* in 1995 won the Golden Lion at Venice, and his other films include *The Vertical Ray of the Sun* (00) and the adaptation of Haruki Murakami's novel *Norwegian Wood* (10). His latest film, *The Taste of Things*, premiered under the title *The Pot-au-feu* in competition at Cannes earlier this year, where it won the Best Director prize.



Thirty years after his first feature *The Scent of Green Papaya* — a film that, among other riches, lived up to the fragrant promise of its title in its lush scenes of culinary preparation — French-Vietnamese director Hùng has returned to the cinematic kitchen for a slab of outright gastronomic spectacle on the level of *Babette's Feast* or *Like Water for Chocolate*, only more so. Food is the subject, the objective and the driving motor of this scantily plotted but utterly captivating love story set almost entirely within the confines of a French gourmet chateau in the late 19th century; to clarify the term “love story,” its two human principals are in love with each other, but perhaps in love with food a bit more. At the very least, they struggle to separate the two.

Conflict is minimal, surprises nil. Instead, *The Taste of Things* holds its audience entirely on the pleasures of beauty, vicarious indulgence and, eventually, the human care inherent in haute cuisine, all to obviously mouthwatering but less expectedly moving effect.

The pace is luxuriantly slow but methodical, akin to slow-cooking a boeuf bourguignon, and quickened by the gradual rewards of process: the calming satisfaction that comes from watching supremely skilled people at work. Said people in this case are Dodin (Magimel), a celebrated gourmet living on an idyllic estate in France's Loire Valley, and Eugenie (Binoche), his cook and collaborator of over 20 years. He devises the dishes, while she executes them to perfection, with the assistance of mousy kitchen hand Violette. Theirs is a deeply intuitive partnership, demonstrated upfront in a jaw-dropping introductory cooking sequence that runs nearly 40 minutes.

Adapting a 1924 novel by French epicure Marcel Rouff, Hùng's screenplay is pared to the bone in terms of character and backstory: We learn little about the principals' lives outside the kitchen, nor about the economic and practical specifics that enable them to live so deliciously. Dodin and Eugenie's soul connection is so particular and so obsessive that the film can afford to zero in on it rather than zoom out. This is filmmaking at once profuse and serenely contained.

- *Variety*

Winner – Best Director, Cannes Film Festival 2023

Tótem

Mexico, Denmark, France 2023

95 mins DCP Colour

Director: Lila Avilés

Producers: Tatiana Graullera, Lila Avilés, Louise Rioussé

Screenplay: Lila Avilés

Cinematography: Diego Tenorio

Editing: Omar Guzmán

Sound: Guido Berenblum

Music: Thomas Becka

Cast: Naíma Sentíes, Monserrat Marañón, Marisol Gasé, Saori Gurza, Teresita Sánchez, Mateo García Elizondo

Lila Avilés (born Mexico City, 1982) is a film director, screenwriter and producer. She got her start in theatre before moving into film directing. In 2018 she founded the production company Limerencia Films. In that same year she received widespread recognition for her first feature, *The Chambermaid*, which screened at more than eighty festivals around the world and was also selected to represent Mexico at the Oscars in 2020. *Tótem*, her second feature film, competed at the 2023 Berlin Festival, where it landed the Ecumenical Jury Award.



You might already be familiar with the widespread superstition that if you hold your breath and make a wish while driving through a tunnel, and manage to make it through the other side without breathing out, that wish will come true. Lila Avilés' lyrical new film opens with this very scene as a seven-year old girl, Sol, is sitting in the backseat of her mother Lucía's car surrounded by a bundle of balloons. The assumption that they could be headed to another child's birthday party quickly dissipates when Lucía asks Sol what she had wished for, to which she responds with, "I wish that daddy will not die".

It soon becomes apparent that the fête in question is to celebrate her father, Tona's birthday. The film unfolds as Sol arrives at her grandfather's home, where preparations are taking place for the surprise party, whilst Tona's advanced stage of illness keeps him confined, bed-ridden and voluntarily isolated in the darkness of his bedchambers so as to spare his family, particularly his daughter, the sight of his deteriorating physical condition. Diego Tenorio's cinematography is exquisite, his lens carefully delineating the interiors of a large residence that appears to be home to a seemingly tight-knit family made up of grandfather Roberto, his daughters Nuria, Alejandra and Ester and their own children of varying ages who wander in and out of the picture.

Each character within this sprawling multigenerational cast feels incredibly fleshed out, lived in, and true to life, and Avilés elegantly shifts the focus from one family member to the other. The trust between her and the cast feels palpable and grounded by her intuitive direction, especially in the case of the young Naíma Sentíes, whose inquisitive character anchors the entire ensemble as she wanders around the home.

There is a rich, transfixing level of detail within *Tótem's* natural symbolism – it's tactile and never heavy-handed. The film's intimate visual storytelling and technical prowess are further bolstered by an impressive sound design and sharp editing, both guided by the principle of "show, don't tell" and culminating in an extra-sensory experience. And although unequivocally underpinned by profound sadness and impending loss, a tender spirit of warmth and levity permeates the screen, sustaining a buoyancy that keeps the film from sinking into mawkish waters. – *Little White Lies*

Typist Artist Pirate King

United Kingdom 2022

107 mins DCP Colour

Director: Carol Morley

Producers: Cairo Cannon, Ameenah Ayub Allen

Screenplay: Carol Morley

Cinematography: Agnès Godard

Editing: Alex Mackie

Music: Carly Paradis

Cast: Monica Dolan, Kelly McDonald, Gina McKee

Carol Morley (born Manchester, 1966) was educated in fine art and film at Central St. Martin's College of Arts in London. She came to prominence with her documentary *The Alcohol Years* (00), a BAFTA nominated, Grierson Awarded film, which masqueraded as an autobiography but was as much about the people in it as Morley herself. In 2010, she made her first narrative feature film *Edge* on a micro budget, and followed it a year later with the acclaimed feature documentary *Dreams of a Life* (11). Her other films include *The Falling* (14), *Out of Blue* (18) and *Typist Artist Pirate King* (22).



With natural sympathy and warmth, film-maker Carol Morley has created this likable, generous, imaginative response to the work of the neglected English artist Audrey Amiss, played here with beady-eyed gusto by Monica Dolan. And if the movie finally has a bit of a soft centre, then this is partly because of Morley's refusal to fetishise the supposedly transfigurative pain of mental illness.

Sunderland-born Amiss trained as a painter at the Royal Academy in the 1950s, had a breakdown and was in and out of institutions for the rest of her life, finally taking a secretarial job but restlessly creating unsold and unseen art, in the form of raw impressionistic sketches of her daily existence and an autofictional collage-journal of found objects, to which she added stream-of-consciousness diary entries, a continuously updated real-time manuscript record of a hidden life. It is held in an archive at the Wellcome Collection in London, which Morley was the first to examine. She discovered Amiss's passport with its scribbled entry under Occupation: "Typist Artist Pirate King".

Dolan plays Amiss in a chaotic London flat, twitching and flinching with a kind of hypervigilant defiant unhappiness, always suspecting conspiracies against her, brooding over the past. Kelly Macdonald plays an imaginary social worker Sandra who comes once a fortnight to endure a nonstop barrage of abuse from Amiss. Cantankerous and impossible and entirely ungrateful, Amiss demands that Sandra drive her to a "local" art gallery advertised in the paper where she is sure she can finally get exhibited. Against her better judgment, Sandra agrees, with Audrey revealing no address but airily assuring Sandra that she will give directions. It is only after they have been on the road awhile that Audrey reveals she means "local" in the sense of local to where was born: they are driving to Sunderland for a great reckoning with her childhood and her sister Dorothy (Gina McKee). Sandra has no choice but to agree and to add insult to injury, Audrey nicknames her Sandra Panza.

Without Dolan's boisterous performance, and without the intelligent sensitivity of Macdonald to counterbalance it, this might have been less than the sum of its parts. The casting works with the writing and the black comic and tragicomic nature of their ordeal is often hilarious. – *The Guardian*

So what did you think?

	REPLIES	A	B	C	D	E	REACTION METER
Anatomy of a Fall							
Driving Madeleine							
Elaha							
Evil Does Not Exist							
Fallen Leaves							
Girl							
Here							
How to Have Sex							
Lies We Tell							
Mami Wata							
On The Adamant							
Smoke Sauna Sisterhood							
Stolen							
The Taste of Things							
Tôtem							
Typist Artist Pirate King							

A : Excellent / B : Very Good / C : Good / D : Fair / E : Poor

2019: System Crasher

2018: The Man Who Wanted to Fly

2017: Loveless

2016: The Olive Tree

2015: Tangerines

2014: Eastern Boys

2013: The Broken Circle Breakdown

2012: The Hunt

2011: Honey (Bal)

2010: This Other Eden

2009: Klass

2008: Emma's Bliss

2007: The Lives of Others

2006: Fateless

2005: The Consequences of Love

2004: The Story of the Weeping Camel

2003: Secretary

2002: No Man's Land