



73rd IFFMH: Opening gala features ›Sharp Corner‹ with director Jason Buxton and producer Paul Barkin attending

Press release – Mannheim, 8 November 2024

The International Film Festival Mannheim-Heidelberg kicked off its 73rd edition yesterday evening in the fully renovated film theatre 10 of the Cineplex Mannheim, which was filled to capacity. At the opening ceremony, remarks were delivered by festival director Sascha Keilholz, Heidelberg’s deputy mayor for arts and culture Martina Pfister, Mannheim’s deputy mayor for arts and culture Thorsten Riehle, State Secretary Arne Braun and Carl Bergengruen, managing director of the Medien- und Filmgesellschaft Baden-Württemberg. The attendees included numerous representatives of the arts, government and the business community from the metropolitan area and the state of Baden-Württemberg, as well as guests of the festival from around Germany and abroad. Festival director Sascha Keilholz made an appeal to uphold a robust democracy with the help of the cinematic arts, and promised to deliver a “programme that will come out fighting” for this. In this context, he also highlighted the numerous events held in cooperation with organisations from both cities which focus on the arts. Some of these events had already taken place in the preparatory phase, while most are waiting to be discovered during the 73rd edition of the festival.



At the opening of the 73rd International Film Festival Mannheim-Heidelberg (from left to right): Ewa Wojciechowska (Head of Cultural Office of Mannheim), Carl Bergengruen (Managing Director MFG Baden-Württemberg), Sascha Keilholz (Festival Director), Martina Pfister (Cultural Mayor of Heidelberg), Paul Barkin (Producer of the opening film), Jason Buxton (Director of the opening film), Katharina Kram (Host), Arne Braun (State Secretary for Culture of Baden-Württemberg), Thorsten Riehle (Cultural Mayor of Mannheim) | (c) Sönke Dannemann



The opening film was the psychological drama ›Sharp Corner‹ by Canadian director Jason Buxton, who arrived in Mannheim along with his producer Paul Barkin for the German premiere of this, Buxton's second feature film. In ›Sharp Corner‹, Buxton delivers a highly suspenseful reinterpretation of the home invasion subgenre about a man going through a midlife crisis, given an Oscar-worthy performance by Ben Foster. This allusive drama, peppered with references to Hitchcock and a dose of black humour, also presents itself as a psychological profile of a white Western middle-class man going through a personal crisis, as a traumatic experience gradually turns a family man's dream of owning his own home into a nightmare. Director Buxton brilliantly shows how easy it is to lose one's way and even one's sanity.

Until 17 November, the main programme will offer an opportunity to indulge in 71 films from over 40 countries, including 29 German premieres. Moreover, a large number of guest filmmakers from abroad will once again talk to audiences after the screenings. The partnering cinemas in Mannheim are the Atlantis, the Cineplex and the Cinema Quadrat. In Heidelberg, they are the Gloria, the Karlstorbahnhof featuring an extra cinema in the main hall just for the festival, and the Luxor. Catering, parties and performances in the festival lounges in the Stadthaus N1 and the Karlstorbahnhof make these inviting places to hang out and have a good time. This year, the IFFMH is offering a solidarity pricing system for the first time, which has been well taken up by the audience.



Cinematic highlights and guests from abroad

The international ON THE RISE competition is once again presenting 16 excellent first and second films by talented up-and-coming directors. This time, the geographical scope ranges from China, India, Iran, Georgia, Romania, the United Kingdom, France, Morocco, Brazil and the Dominican Republic to the United States, the source of three of the films in competition. The films in this section tell of dysfunctional families, the plight of women in patriarchal societies, the lives of migrants and queer individuals, and youthful lack of direction – but also of love and solidarity, of new beginnings and the ability of self-empowerment to bring about fundamental change. Two lead actresses in competition films have been nominated for the festival's new Young Actors Award. In the unusual Corsican father-daughter story ›The Kingdom‹, Ghjuvanna Benedetti plays the child of the head of an underground organisation, who must learn to assert herself. In the neo-noir thriller ›Gazer‹, Ariella Mastroianni plays a young woman who suffers from a rare disease and becomes involved in a treacherous deal. Both actresses will be at the festival to introduce their films.

The PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES section reveals the new in the established, presenting the third or later feature film by outstanding directors. In ›Salve Maria‹, Spanish director Mar Coll deals with the phenomenon of regretting motherhood, skilfully balancing elements of thriller, drama and comedy. The lead actress Laura Weissmahr has also been nominated for the Young Actors Award and will be attending the festival.

Also attending will be Mahsa Rostami, the lead actress in ›The Seed of the Sacred Fig‹, a political parable capable of tremendous impact by the renowned Iranian director Mohammad Rasoulof – and this year's German candidate for the Oscars!

Sook-Yin Lee's ›Paying for It‹ is an adaptation of Chester Brown's autobiographical graphic novel of the same title – a hilarious story about relationships involving romance, paid sex work and the emancipation of love. Sook-Yin Lee, Chester Brown and the actress and author Andrea Werhun will be at the IFFMH. In the tradition of David Fincher's ›Zodiac‹, celebrated Belgian director Fabrice Du Welz tells the story of the disappearance of two girls and the investigation into this criminal case in ›Maldoror‹. Noted actor Sergi Lopéz will be coming to the festival. Also highly suspenseful is ›Death Will Come‹, the latest film by Christoph Hochhäusler. This acclaimed German director will be attending the German premiere of his film alongside producer Bettina Brokemper, the subject of the IFFMH Homage in 2021, lead actress Sophie Verbeeck and lead actor Louis-Do de Lencquesaing as well as screenwriter Ulrich Peltzer.

In the FILMSCAPES section, the IFFMH presents the full breadth of its repertoire, which extends to documentaries and animated films. Here, the festival is looking forward to a reunion with Spanish director Albert Serra, who will present his latest film, ›Afternoons of Solitude‹ – a graceful yet unsparing portrait of torrero Andrés Roca Rey which recently earned him the top award in San Sebastián. Up-and-coming German director Willy Hans is also returning to the IFFMH. His film ›Der Fleck‹, which he developed at the IFFMH's Cutting Edge Talent Camp, had its world premiere in Locarno.



Two films from the United States will also be screened with guests in attendance. Director India Donaldson explores the modern clash of the generations in her superbly filmed debut work, ›Good One‹, which had its world premiere at Sundance. Actor Danny McCarthy will be our guest. Two amateur teams must also face the inevitable in ›Eephus‹. As a school is to be built on their baseball pitch, they meet there for one last game that they wish would never end. This wonderfully warm-hearted film is extraordinary fun not only for baseball fans! The festival will welcome director Carson Lund and actor Nate Fisher.

Other highlights among this year's films include ›Nightbitch‹, the latest work by Hollywood director Marielle Heller, with Amy Adams in a spectacular leading role. Frustrated by motherhood, she breaks free and goes off into the night, apparently in the form of a dog. Jesse Eisenberg, by contrast, directs himself in his second film, ›A Real Pain‹, alongside Kieran Culkin and embarks on a comical and touching search for family memories in Poland. And in ›Emilia Pérez‹, Jacques Audiard delivers an epochal masterpiece with a star-studded cast – in the French candidate for the Oscars.

The YOUNG FILM FESTIVAL not only screens films for children and young people from all over the world; this year it's also welcoming its very first patron, KiKa presenter and author Clarissa Corrêa da Silva. Clari will be at the grand Family Day in the Stadthaus on 10 November. As a final highlight, festival visitors young and old can look forward to Alex Rühle giving a reading from his book "Zippel macht Zirkus" at the Karlsruhbahnhof on 17 November.

The festival will also be welcoming distinguished international guests as part of the RETROSPECTIVE, which this year is dedicated to the theme of "Bodies in Film" and will present a total of 13 works made between 1928 and 2011. The renowned director Catherine Breillat will be accompanied by the two lead actresses in her film ›Fat Girl‹ (2001). On 16 November, a panel discussion will be held in the Festival Lounge at the Karlsruhbahnhof in Heidelberg, featuring the artist and author Moshtari Hilal, who wrote the highly acclaimed book "Hässlichkeit", and the actor Samuel Koch.

The 73rd IFFMH runs from 7 to 17 November 2024.

The complete schedule is found at [iffmh.de/programme](https://www.iffmh.de/programme)

Tickets are available online on the pages describing the films as well as via the [Ticket Shop](#) and at the ticket desks.

Images

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About the IFFMH

With "New Film Experience" as its credo, the IFFMH has been venturing new, interdisciplinary perspectives on and through the art of film since 1952. This makes it the longest-running film festival in Germany after the Berlinale, and it



continues to be a major platform for cultural, social and political dialogue. With each subsequent edition, the IFFMH, as a festival for the public in cinemas, invites festivalgoers to discover the rising stars of the international film scene as well as to follow the careers of established filmmakers and to become more familiar with film in the context of other art forms. The 73rd IFFMH will be held from 7 to 17 November 2024.

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The festival would like to thank its sponsors and partners.

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