



## 72nd IFFMH: The 2023 Guests of Honour – HOMAGE to Agnès Godard, GRAND IFFMH AWARD for Nicolas Winding Refn

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As in previous years, this year's edition of the International Film Festival Mannheim-Heidelberg is dedicated not only to talent scouting, but also to the greats of contemporary film history. At the 72nd IFFMH, the Danish director and screenwriter Nicolas Winding Refn and the French cinematographer Agnès Godard will be honoured as two of the most eminent filmmakers of our time.

### HOMAGE to Agnès Godard

In the HOMAGE, the IFFMH honours leading international figures in the film industry, most recently legendary director Claude Lelouch and Belgian cinematographer Benoît Debie. This year, the homage is dedicated to his French colleague **Agnès Godard**.

Festival director Sascha Keilholz says: "Agnès Godard's camerawork renders human bodies as living landscapes, thus giving us a cinema of observation, identification and interaction. Her work cannot be defined as having a single style: at times highly stylised, as in her collaboration with Claire Denis, and at other times filmed with a handheld camera in a radical vérité style, as in ›The Dreamlife of Angels‹ (1998) by Erick Zonca, Godard's work has always broken new ground and had a decisive influence on contemporary French cinema. But not only that: Godard's work is always forward-looking. One of her most notable current collaborations is with director Ursula Meier, most recently on ›The Line‹ (2022), a film that also reflects the shift from analogue footage to digital images."

Godard, born in Dun-sur-Auron, France, in 1951, attended the prestigious Institut des Hautes Etudes Cinématographiques in Paris in the 1970s. She then became an assistant camera operator in the 1980s – including for Henri Alekan, with whom Wenders shot ›The State of Things‹ in spring 1981. Godard then assisted Robby Müller on ›Paris, Texas‹ (1984) and Alekan again on ›Wings of Desire‹ (1987). Since 1990, Godard has been a cinematographer for such filmmakers as Agnès Varda, Wim Wenders, Peter Greenaway, Noémie Lvovsky, Catherine Corsini, Tonie Marshall, Ursula Meier, André Téchiné, Peter Handke, Claude Berry, Emmanuele Crialesi, Fabrice Gobert, Sébastien Lifschitz and Emmanuelle Bercot.

The working relationship between Godard and director Claire Denis proved to be highly productive: the serial killer film ›I Can't Sleep‹ (1994) and the sibling drama ›Nénette and Boni‹ (1996), both steeped in bold, contrasting blues and reds,



were the first of nine films they've made together. Godard was awarded the César for best cinematography for ›Beau travail‹ (1999), an internationally acclaimed portrait of a foreign legionnaire, which was recently named one of the ten best films of all time by the film magazine Sight & Sound. This was followed by the vampire film ›Trouble Every Day‹ (2001) and the poetically romantic dramas ›Friday Night‹ (2002), ›The Intruder‹ (2004) and ›35 Shots of Rum‹ (2008) made in collaboration with Denis.

Godard made some of her most significant films with homosexual directors. These include more recent films such as ›Salvation Army‹ (2013) by the openly gay Moroccan director Abdellah Taïa, who lives in exile in Paris. The theme of the human body, which is central to her work, takes on a very special meaning here. For the HOMAGE, the 72nd IFFMH has selected three works from Godard's oeuvre and shows with ›Beau travail‹ (1999) by Claire Denis, ›L'arrière pays‹ (1998) by Jacques Nolot and ›Wild Side‹ (2004) by Sébastien Lifshitz how diverse and yet unmistakable her style is.

## Grand IFFMH Award for Nicolas Winding Refn

With the GRAND IFFMH AWARD, the film festival honours the most impressive, influential and innovative filmmakers of our time. After Guillaume Nicloux (2021) and Alice Winocour (2022), **Nicolas Winding Refn** will receive the award, which is endowed with 10,000 euros, this year.

Festival director Sascha Keilholz says: "More than twenty years ago, Nicolas Winding Refn brought his second film, ›Bleeder‹, to the IFFMH. At that time, no one could have predicted that he would go on to have such a brilliant international career. In the meantime, he has not only established himself in Hollywood, but has also made three of the defining films of the early 21st century: ›Drive‹, ›Only God Forgives‹ and ›The Neon Demon‹. Refn's fondness for experimenting with cinematography, his independent vision of cinema, is remarkable. His imagery overwhelms us and amazes us in equal measure, again and again."

Born in 1970 to a cinematographer and a film director and editor, Refn emigrated from Denmark to the United States at the age of eight. He attended the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York. His later Hollywood breakthrough was preceded by a career in Europe. In the first part of his ›Pusher‹ trilogy (1996, 2004, 2005), he directed Kim Bodnia and the young Mads Mikkelsen. This was followed by the arthouse hits ›Bronson‹ (2009) with Tom Hardy in the title role and ›Valhalla Rising‹ (2009), a cross between a Viking tale and an art film, starring Mikkelsen.



Refn's films are characterised by strong contrasts, initially in the form of dark, grainy images and later in a flashy, piercing neon-noir aesthetic. His characters are often nameless archetypes who have a problematic relationship with the rest of the world. Their protracted silence is an eloquent expression of this. In addition to Mads Mikkelsen, Refn has worked with some of the pre-eminent actors of our time. He directed Ryan Gosling as a young stuntman and getaway car driver who falls in love with his neighbour (Carey Mulligan) in the gangster film ›Drive‹ (2011). At Cannes he received the award for best director. In ›Only God Forgives‹ (2013), Refn continued his collaboration with Gosling in a radical way. Refn's horror thriller ›The Neon Demon‹ (2016) starred Elle Fanning, Jena Malone, Christina Hendricks and Keanu Reeves.

Most recently, Nicolas Winding Refn turned to the series format in ›Too Old to Die Young‹ and finally returned to Denmark in ›Copenhagen Cowboy‹ – but with a new aesthetic. This time, the hero is a woman.

At the 72nd IFFMH, ›Pusher‹, ›Drive‹ and ›Only God Forgives‹ can be seen once more.

## Images

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[https://www.iffmh.de/partners-and-press/press-material/index\\_eng.html](https://www.iffmh.de/partners-and-press/press-material/index_eng.html)

## 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 72nd IFFMH will be held from 16 to 26 November 2023. The complete festival schedule will be announced on 27 October. Advance ticket sales start on 6 November.



## Media inquiries

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