



BERLIN CRITICS' WEEK 2021 – THE FILM PROGRAM

Images of a fantasy body and an exploration of the image itself as a body. Filmmaking on the margins of society and impressions of the end of life. Games of form that play with strategy and permeability. And supporting roles that become leading roles. The film selection of the Berlin Critics' Week 2021 is complete and will be available to the public virtually throughout Germany from February 27 to March 7. Debates on the programs will take place online every day from March 1 to 7 and will be broadcast live. The film selection will be available for international members of the press and film professionals. Details on our accreditation system will follow soon.



At the Berlin Critics' Week we seek to confront films with each other and find unexpected insights while watching and discussing them. The program **"Lost & Found"** pits one of the most established Palestinian filmmakers against two upcoming voices of Indian cinema. In **"Horse Tail,"** **Manoj Leoneel Jahson** and **Shyam Sunder** design a body that makes no sense — that should not, need not make sense: A man wakes up with a horse's tail. The film mixes everything from psychoanalytics to mathematics as the hero searches for an explanation, defying not only logic itself, but also the logic of what supposedly defines Indian cinema. In **"An Unusual Summer,"** the images themselves form a body of evidence which is examined by **Kamal Aljafari** in a quest for sensations and tensions. A low-resolution surveillance camera, which the director's late father installed on the wall of their house in 2006, films fragile and imperfect everyday impressions of the Arab neighborhood of Ramla in Israel, a city mainly inhabited by a Jewish population. **"An Unusual Summer"** is an investigation of a different kind and a nonfiction thriller that ventures with pleasure into the experimental.

For the second festival cooperation of this year's Berlin Critics' Week we are joined by the **Mumbai Film Festival** and the **Courtisane Festival** from Belgium, whose orientations we will explore in a program titled **"See Through"**. We will discuss curatorial philosophies and programmatic ideas, and consider if cinema can ever be summarized. With **"Watch Over Me"** by **Farida Pacha**, the Mumbai Film Festival emphasizes the relevance of political documentary filmmaking and presents a work that makes the examination of human rights in India inseparable from the act of seeing. The director and her cinematographer accompany representatives of a free palliative care service on their visits to the sick, filming seriously ill people, some of whom have limited ability to respond to the presence of a camera. Pacha's ethics of extreme proximity encounters the Courtisane program, which touches upon systemic issues that cannot be directly depicted. With the three Tunisian works **"Foyer"** (directed by **Ismail Bahri**), **"Oumon"** (directed by **Fairuz Ghammam** and **El Moïz Ghammam**), and **"This Day Won't Last"** (directed by **Mouaad el Salem**), the program explores how, in spite of the restriction of their freedom, filmmakers tirelessly invent visual means to make political conditions tangible. The wind becomes an editor, four walls fan out into a world, and the future is queer!

Because streamlined conversation formats have become the norm at film festivals, the Berlin Critics' Week champions the idea of questioning the tropes of discussion through playfully performative formats. In 2020, we began testing what happens when film critics debate a program without the directors' intervention and react to films without holding back. "**Red Post on Escher Street**," the new film by **Sion Sono**, should provide sufficient incentive for such a "**Critics' Debate**": In the film, the Japanese provocateur settles accounts with his country's independent film scene and demands once and for all that all supporting actors and actresses finally be placed at the center of cinema. We will let our guests explore what this demand has to do with **Olivier Godin's** new short film "**Dracula Sex Tape**" and its absurd humor. Olivier Godin amazed us with his film "Waiting for April" when he was a guest at the Critics' Week in 2018, and he continues to demonstrate that he is one of the most imaginative voices of contemporary comedy filmmaking.

Nicolás Pereda is one of the best-known representatives of recent Mexican cinema. His 12 feature-length films to date have screened at almost every major festival in the world, while the director, who is just in his thirties, has been the subject of some 30 retrospectives at various institutions and events. With his new film "**Fauna**," Pereda creates a dense atmosphere of paranoia and whimsy and lets mediated fictions meet Mexican realities. No less ambiguous is the Cambodian short film "**Sunrise in My Mind**," **Danech San's** second work as a director. In 2015, she joined the production collective Anti-Archive, which aims to address how the younger generation of Cambodian filmmakers can position themselves in relation to the past and history through cinema. In recent years, several of the group's works have made it to major international festivals. Under the title "**Playact**," we will take these two films as a starting point to debate strategic cinema, cinematic ruptures, human representation in film, and the dream of the perfect illusion.

Members of the selection committee

In appointing its selection committee, the Critics' Week follows the principle of rotation. This year, Artistic Director Dennis Vetter was joined by Senem Aytaç, Devika Girish, Lucía Salas and Giovanni Marchini Camia for the film selection. Due to the changing situation of the film and festival landscape, this year submissions were considered alongside researched films.

Senem Aytaç has been a writer and an editorial board member of ALTYAZI Cinema Magazine since 2004 and worked as a senior editor between 2006-2017. She is now the Project Coordinator and Vice President of Altyazı Cinema Association, which she is one of the founders. Right now, she is coordinating 'Altyazı Fasikül' project which primarily focuses on improving free film culture in Turkey. She also writes on film and gives film seminars.

Devika Girish is a New York–based writer, editor, and programmer. She is the Assistant Editor of Film Comment magazine and Film at Lincoln Center and a Talks programmer for the New York Film Festival. She is also a contributor to the New York Times, Sight & Sound, Reverse Shot, Criterion, Village Voice, and other publications. Her work has been recognized with a 2018 National Arts and Entertainment Journalism Award and a 2019 Southern California Journalism Award, among other honors.

Lucía Salas is an Argentinian film critic, programmer, and filmmaker based somewhere in Spain. Her work navigates cinema, past and present, and it can be found mostly in La vida útil where she is one of the editors, We Can't Go Home Again where she is the co-host, and Vitrine Filmes as a curator. She is an alumnus of the Image and Sound Design program at UBA, has an MA in Aesthetics and Politics from CalArts, and is a Ph.D. candidate at the Communications program at UPF.

Giovanni Marchini Camia is a Berlin-based critic, publisher and programmer. He is the co-founder of Fireflies Press, an independent publishing house specialising in contemporary cinema, and a member of the selection committee of the Locarno Film Festival. His writing has appeared in publications including Film Comment, Sight & Sound, The Guardian, BOMB, Filmmaker, Cinema Scope and Cineaste.

All programs of the Berlin Critics' Week 2021

Debate: FACING TRACES

THE SKY IS RED

Dir.: Francina Carbonell, CHI 2020, 73 min., Spanish OwEs – German Premiere

LETTER FROM YOUR FAR-OFF COUNTRY

Dir.: Suneil Sanzgiri, USA/IND 2020, 17 min., Hindi/Urdu OwEs – German Premiere

Debate: BEYOND RECOGNITION

FIRST IN FIRST OUT

Dir.: Zacharias Zitouni, GER/ALB, 26 min., German OwEs

INTIMATE DISTANCES

Dir.: Phillip Warnell, GBR/USA 2020, 61 min., English OV – German Premiere

Debate: PLAYACT

SUNRISE IN MY MIND

Dir.: Danech San, CAM 2020, 14 min., Khmer OwEs – European Premiere

FAUNA

Dir.: Nicolás Pereda, MEX/CAN 2020, 70 min., Spanish OwEs

Debate: CRITICS' DEBATE

DRACULA SEX TAPE

Dir.: Olivier Godin, CAN 2021, 5 min., French OwEs – World Premiere

RED POST ON ESCHER STREET (ESCHER DORI NO AKAI POSUTO)

Dir.: Sion Sono, JP 2020, 147 min., Japanese OwEs – German Premiere

Debate: SEE THROUGH

SHORT FILM PROGRAM

FOYER

Dir.: Ismaïl Bahri, FRA/TUN 2016, 32 min., Arabic/French OwEs

OUMOUN

Dir.: Fairuz Ghammam, El Moïz Ghammam, BEL/TUN 2017, 14 min.,
Arabic OwEs

THIS DAY WON'T LAST

Dir.: Mouaad el Salem, BEL/TUN 2020, 25 min., Arabic OwEs

WATCH OVER ME

Dir.: Farida Pacha, GER/SUI/IND 2020, 92 min., Hindi/Malayalam, OwEs –
German Premiere

Debate: LOST & FOUND

AN UNUSUAL SUMMER

Dir.: Kamal Aljafari, GER/PLE 2020, 80 min., Arabic OwEs – German Premiere

HORSE TAIL (KUTHIRAI VAL)

Dir.: Manoj Leonel Jahson, Shyam Sunder, IND 2020, 125 min., Tamil OwEs –
International Premiere

Debate: TALKING STYLE

FREIZEIT OR: THE OPPOSITE OF DOING NOTHING (FREIZEIT ODER: DAS
GEGENTEIL VON NICHTSTUN)

Dir.: Caroline Pitzen, GER 2021, 71 min., German OwEs – World Premiere

A MUSEUM SLEEPS (UN MUSÉE DORT)

Dir.: Camille de Chenay, FRA 2020, 71 min., French OwEs – International
Premiere

[This announcement on wochederkritik.de](#)

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The Berlin Critics' Week is an event organised by the German Film Critics Association, supported by the Hauptstadtkulturfonds, the Stiftung Kulturwerk of the VG Bild-Kunst and the Rudolf Augstein Stiftung.



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