

Press Release



Forum 2015: Looking Forward, Looking Back

The 45th Berlinale *Forum* will show a total of 43 films in its main programme, of which 31 are world premieres and 10 international premieres. This year's programme will be opened by what is probably Canadian director Guy Maddin's most rampant and anarchic film to date. *The Forbidden Room* comes across like an apparently chaotic, yet always significant eroto-claustrophobic nightmare that never seems to want to end. Its countless fantastic plotlines are inspired by real, imaginary and photographic memories of films from the silent era now lost, to which the half-damaged nitrate print aesthetic also pays fabulous homage.

Reflections upon classic motifs from film, art and literary history, which often radically re-interpret them in the process, form one common thread running through the 2015 *Forum* programme. The Chinese production *K* by Emyr ap Richard and Darhad Erdenibulag thus tries its hand at Kafka's novel fragment "The Castle" and transposes the land surveyor's struggle against opaque bureaucratic structures into the Inner Mongolia of the present.

For his part, French director Rabah Ameur-Zäimeche interprets the Bible in bracingly topical fashion. Shot before the bewitchingly beautiful backdrop of the Algerian desert, *Histoire de Judas (The Story of Judas)* doesn't just remove the wedge others have driven between Jesus and Judas, its sensual, austere account of the last days of Christ also prunes down the story to human size, defying any attempts to create religious divisions.

Jem Cohen's most recent film *Counting* tips its hat to the work of Chris Marker and takes a personal, essayistic stroll through different metropolises of our world in 15 chapters: New York, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Istanbul, Porto, with cats somehow everywhere you look.

Many of this year's films concern existential crises, finding one's bearings or looking for self-assurance. This applies to the subject of migration, for example, such as in the Danish-Serbian found footage film *Flotel Europa* by Vladimir Tomic or Silvina Landsmann's documentary *Hotline*, which explores the suffering of African refugees stranded in Israel. Yet the same themes equally appear in the seemingly idyllic world of self-satisfied Western societies.

The German film *Hedi Schneider steckt fest (Hedi Schneider is Stuck)* by director Sonja Heiss shows particular daring by tackling a serious subject with an unerring grasp of comedy. A model family's happy world falls to pieces from one day to the next when the carefree Hedi, played by Laura

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Tonke, suddenly starts suffering panic attacks. Without warning, the happiness the protagonists once took for granted is now tantalisingly out of their reach, rendering their world both fragile and uncertain.

Nina, the protagonist of Sacha Polak's *Zurich*, also goes off the rails in the aftermath of a shocking event. The young woman goes to ground in the anonymous world of motorways and service stations, restless and constantly on the move to avoid ever having to look back. The director is so close to her movements that a sense of true intimacy emerges, allowing the viewer to almost take part in the grieving process.

The two best friends in Alex Ross Perry's new film *Queen of Earth*, Catherine (Elisabeth Moss) and Virginia (Katherine Waterston), have also reached a turning point. Last year, Virginia wasn't doing well, while it's Catherine that's suffering this time round. The lakeside cabin owned by Virginia's parents seems the perfect place for a week of mutual wound licking. It won't be an easy ride.

Ella Manzheeva's *Chaiki (The Gulls)* is set in a small town in the Republic of Kalmykia on the shores of the Caspian Sea, telling the story of a young woman incapable of escaping her own tiny little world. When her husband, who makes his living from illegal fishing, doesn't return from a risky boat trip, it offers Elza the opportunity to move beyond familiar territory. In this debut film, the director stages landscapes, living rooms, corridors and streets as points of visual entry into Elza's inner life.

A similar approach can also be employed within the realm of the documentary, as Joaquim Pinto and Nuno Leonel demonstrate in *Rabo de Peixe (Fish Tail)*. Edited together from unique footage shot between 1999 and 2001 on the Azores, this tender film creates a portrait of the local fishermen there, the work they still do by hand and a life that only still exists in these images. The intoxicating shots of the sea, boats, black beaches and white houses equally allude to states of mind.

One key geographical focus of the 2015 *Forum* programme is formed by new Latin American cinema. Films from Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Mexico grapple with institutional, political and family violence and show people looking for individual answers to social upheavals.

Marcelo Pedroso's visually and aurally stunning avant-garde satire *Brasil S/A (Brazilian Dream)* draws on experimental editing techniques of a political bent to channel images both surreal and documentary from the Brazil of the last decades to create an ecstatic cinematic experience. In Marcio Reolon und Filipe Matzembacher's directorial debut *Beira-Mar*



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(*Seashore*), a young man travels to his family's seaside house in order to deal with a delicate inheritance matter, accompanied by an old friend. This gentle Brazilian film tells of a long winter weekend, awakening sexuality and new intimacy. Chilean director Dominga Sotomayor's *Mar*, which was shot in Argentina, also creates a complex picture of society which surfaces only piece by piece from the story of a young couple whose holiday calm is disturbed by an unexpected arrival.

Sergio Castro San Martín's *La mujer de barro* (*The Mud Woman*) from Chile accompanies the taciturn Maria to a previous place of work where she was once the victim of a violent act. When the story threatens to repeat itself, she takes her fate into her own hands. *Violencia* (*Violence*), Jorge Forero's directional debut, consists of three strikingly shot individual episodes. A prisoner chained up in the jungle, a teenager looking for work and a high-ranking officer in a militia: one day, three men, three locations, all connected by the sheer ubiquity of violence in Colombia. Mexican director Joshua Gil's *La maldad* (*Evilness*) tells the story of an old man who still has big plans. His unwavering resolve takes him to the big city, where the demands for political change grow ever louder.

This year's Special Screenings will be announced in an additional press release.

The films of the 45th Forum:

Abaabi ba boda boda (*The Boda Boda Thieves*) by Yes! That's Us,
Uganda / South Africa / Kenya / Germany - WP

Al-wadi (*The Valley*) by Ghassan Salhab, Lebanon / France / Germany
/ Qatar / United Arab Emirates

Balikbayan #1 (*Memories of Overdevelopment Redux*) by Kidlat Tahimik,
The Philippines - WP

Beira-Mar (*Seashore*) by Filipe Matzembacher, Marcio Reolon, Brazil - WP

Ben Zaken by Efrat Corem, Israel - IP

Brasil S/A (*Brazilian Dream*) by Marcelo Pedroso, Brazil - IP

Ce gigantesque retournement de la terre (*This Gigantic Furrowing of the Ground*) by Claire Angelini, France - WP

Chaiki (*The Gulls*) by Ella Manzheeva, Russian Federation - WP

Cheol won gi haeng (*End of Winter*) by Kim Dae-hwan, Republic of Korea
- IP

Counting by Jem Cohen, USA - WP

Dari Marusan by Izumi Takahashi, Japan - IP

The Days Run Away Like Wild Horses Over the Hills by Marcin Malaszczyk,
Germany / Poland / USA - WP

Le dos rouge (*Portrait of the Artist*) by Antoine Barraud, France - IP



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Exotica, Erotica, Etc. by Evangelia Kranioti, France - WP
Flotel Europa by Vladimir Tomic, Denmark / Serbia - WP
The Forbidden Room by Guy Maddin, Evan Johnson, Canada
Freie Zeiten (After Work) by Janina Herhoffer, Germany - WP
Futaba kara toku hanarete dainibu (Nuclear Nation II) by Atsushi Funahashi, Japan - IP
Der Geldkomplex (The Money Complex) by Juan Rodríguez, Spain - WP
Il gesto delle mani (Hand Gestures) by Francesco Clerici, Italy - WP
H. by Rania Attieh, Daniel Garcia, Argentina / USA - IP
Hedi Schneider steckt fest (Hedi Schneider is Stuck) by Sonja Heiss, Germany / Norway - WP
Histoire de Judas (The Story of Judas) by Rabah Ameer-Zaïmeche, France - WP
Hotline by Silvina Landsmann, Israel / France - WP
K by Emyr ap Richard, Darhad Erdenibulag, People's Republic of China / United Kingdom - WP
Koza by Ivan Ostrochovský, Slovakia / Czech Republic - WP
Madare ghalb atomi (Atom Heart Mother) by Ali Ahmadzadeh, Iran - WP
La maldad (Evilness) by Joshua Gil, Mexico - WP
Mar by Dominga Sotomayor, Chile / Argentina - IP
Mizu no koe o kiku (The Voice of Water) by Masashi Yamamoto, Japan - IP
La mujer de barro (The Mud Woman) by Sergio Castro San Martín, Chile / Argentina - WP
Nefesim kesilene kadar (Until I Lose My Breath) by Emine Emel Balcı, Turkey / Germany - WP
La nuit et l'enfant (The Night and the Kid) by David Yon, France / Qatar - WP
Queen of Earth by Alex Ross Perry, USA - WP
Rabo de Peixe (Fish Tail) by Joaquim Pinto, Nuno Leonel, Portugal - WP
La sirène de Faso Fani (The Siren of Faso Fani) by Michel K. Zongo, Burkina Faso / France / Germany / Qatar - WP
Sueñan los androides (Androids Dream) by Ion de Sosa, Spain / Germany - IP
Superwelt (Superworld) by Karl Markovics, Austria - WP
Thamaniat wa ushrun laylan wa bayt min al-sheir (Twenty-Eight Nights and A Poem) by Akram Zaatar, Lebanon / France - WP
Über die Jahre (Over the Years) by Nikolaus Geyrhalter, Austria - WP
Viaggio nella dopo-storia (Journey into Post-History) by Vincent Dieutre, France - WP
Violencia (Violence) by Jorge Forero, Colombia / Mexico - WP
Zurich by Sacha Polak, The Netherlands / Germany / Belgium - WP

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