

Press Release



Forum 2016: Making Experience Tangible

The 46th Berlinale *Forum* will show a total of 44 films in its main programme, of which 34 are world premieres and nine international premieres. This year's Special Screenings will be announced in an additional press release.

One regional focus of this year's programme is the Arab region. Films shot by often young directors from an area that stretches between Egypt and Saudi Arabia explore both the past and present of their homelands.

In *A Magical Substance Flows into Me*, artist Jumana Manna sets out in search of the musical diversity of the Palestinian region. Tamer El Said's feature *Akher ayam el madina (In the Last Days of the City)* sends his alter-ego Khalid through the director's home city of Cairo, which is in a state of uproar. Maher Abi Samra's documentary *Makhdoumin (A Maid for Each)* grapples with the employment of maids from the Global South in middle-class Lebanese households, a practice at once omnipresent and kept largely under wraps. *Barakah yoqabil Barakah (Barakah Meets Barakah)* by Mahmoud Sabbagh is a remarkably candid Saudi Arabian love story which uses stabs of acerbic humour as a counterweight to the difficulties the couple face.

Yet war makes its presence felt here too. In *Manazil bela abwab (Houses without Doors)*, Syrian-Armenian director Avo Kaprealian filmed the clashes on the streets of Aleppo from the window of his housing block over several years, linking together his portrait of the mainly Armenian neighbourhood with fiction and documentary images of the genocide carried out on the Armenians.

Civil wars, forced migration and the repercussions of exploitative working conditions are equally pressing issues in other regions, where filmmakers employ a wide range of cinematic forms to explore these subjects.

The documentary *Ta'ang* by Chinese director Wang Bing shows everyday life in a largely unknown conflict. While sections of the Ta'ang minority fight for independence against the Burmese army on the border with China, women and children seek refuge in provisional tents dotted around the valleys of the region.

Close by, before the backdrop of the armed struggle between the Burmese army and the Kachin Independence Army, director Midi Z follows his brother into the titular city of jade in *Fei cui zhi cheng (City of Jade)*. With the mining companies having fled the skirmishes, young men now

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take advantage of the power vacuum to seek their fortune there, with opium on hand to make the risky work that bit more bearable.

What makes people turn to such dangerous work as mining? *Eldorado XXI* by Portuguese director Salomé Lamas asks the very same question. The Peruvian town of La Rinconada is located at an altitude of 5.100 metres on the edge of a gold mine, a dystopian world that scarcely seems possible in the 21st century. A formally radical montage of images and sound documents conveys the scale of both the mining landscape and the physical effort it demands.

Philip Scheffner's *Havarie* also conducts a formal experiment, this time one that grapples with the experience of forced migration and how it can be made tangible. A three-minute video clip of a tiny dinghy floating in the Mediterranean recorded by an Irish tourist on a cruise ship is extended to feature-length. With the coastguard's radio broadcasts, the accounts of those possibly on the boat and the hobby filmmaker each leaving their mark on the voiceover, the documentary challenges the standard representations of crisis situations.

A second film by Scheffner revolves around the representation of those who often don't get a say in the process. The German director passes the camera on to Roma Colorado Velcu, who uses it to document his family's new life in Berlin: *And-Ek Ghes...* is the portrait of a fresh start, staged by Velcu with a healthy dose of wit and self-deprecation.

Andrea Bussmann and Nicolás Pereda's *Tales of Two Who Dreamt* is set in a housing block in Toronto and pivots too on representation and self-representation. Here, another Roma family rehearses the stories of their past for the upcoming hearing on their residency status. Yet the occurrences in the housing block are also spun into legends, whereby the boundaries between reality and fiction and the documented and the performed no longer apply.

The full range of current Mexican cinema is on display in this year's programme with two additional films from the country. Joaquín del Paso's utopian feature *Maquinaria Panamericana* (*Panamerican Machinery*) is the portrait of a factory on the edge of Mexico City in which productivity and progress are foreign concepts. When the boss of the small company dies and the staff realise he's been paying their wages from his own pocket for years, they are forced to take drastic measures.

One woman lands in a prison run by the drug cartels, while another loses her daughter: over images of a journey through Mexico, director Tatiana Huezo's *Tempestad* connects two testimonies into a storm-riven account



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of a country in the grip of organised crime.

American independent cinema is represented in this year's programme with a total of three films. Robert Greene's *Kate Plays Christine* has Kate Lyn Sheil slip into the role of news anchor Christine Chubbuck, who shot herself live on television in 1974. Research, interviews, wigs and contact lenses, reconstructions: just when is it that acting begins?

In *Fantastic* by Offer Egozy, a telegram from a missing painter brings together an ambitious sheriff, a former lover and two old acquaintances. A film noir suffused with film history comes progressively into focus, whereby tension is generated by atmosphere rather than plot.

Ted Fendt's *Short Stay* is the only film to be screened at the 46th *Forum* on 35mm. Mike still lives with his mother and spends his time drifting through the New Jersey suburbs. When a job and an apartment in Philadelphia fall into his lap, it seems like a new start. You can change your context, but you can't change yourself.

The new film by French director Guillaume Nicloux sends Gérard Depardieu into the woods as a solitary hunter. In *The End*, this stout protagonist loses first his dog and then his way. A summer stroll soon morphs into a fantastical excursion from which there is no escape.

A search also anchors Eugène Green's eloquent *Le Fils de Joseph*, a further French production showing at this year's *Forum*. Vincent grew up with his mother and now wants to find out the identity of his father. His investigations lead him to the God-like figure of the Parisian literary world, a Machiavellian scoundrel played by Mathieu Amalric.

Baden Baden is the directorial debut by Rachel Lang. After a job turns sour, Ana, who is in her mid-twenties, returns to Strasbourg to be close to her beloved grandmother and best friend. While juggling a hopeless affair, a self-set task and a farewell, she looks for her place in the world.

Bence Fliegauf, who showed his debut film *Rengeteg* at the *Forum* 13 years ago, returns to the programme with his new feature *Liliom Ósvény* (*Lily Lane*). The relationship between Rebeka and her young son Danny is inextricably linked to stories and fantasy: the account of a childhood in which time and space flow together and little separates divorce, death and reunion.

Austrian director Nikolaus Geyrhalter has also already shown several films at the *Forum*. His fantastical *Homo sapiens* depicts a disquieting scenario whereby the world made by people is slowly won back by nature: it is



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science fiction and documentary in equal measure, equal parts contemporary and post-apocalyptic.

The films of the 46th *Forum*:

Akher ayam el madina (In the Last Days of the City) by Tamer El Said, Egypt / Germany / United Arab Emirates / United Kingdom - WP

And-Ek Ghes... by Colorado Velcu, Philip Scheffner, Germany - WP

Aru michi (A Road) by Daichi Sugimoto, Japan - IP

Baden Baden by Rachel Lang, Belgium / France - IP

Barakah yoqabil Barakah (Barakah Meets Barakah) by Mahmoud Sabbagh, Saudi Arabia - WP

Bein gderot (Between Fences) by Avi Mograbi, Israel / France - WP

Deadweight by Axel Koenzen, Germany / Finland - WP

Dubina dva (Depth Two) by Ognjen Glavonić, Serbia / France - WP

Eldorado XXI by Salomé Lamas, Portugal / France - WP

Elixir by Daniil Zinchenko, Russian Federation - IP

The End by Guillaume Nicloux, France - WP

Fantastic by Offer Egozy, USA - WP

Fei cui zhi cheng (City of Jade) by Midi Z, Taiwan / Myanmar - WP

Le Fils de Joseph by Eugène Green, France / Belgium - WP

Die Geträumten (The Dreamed Ones) by Ruth Beckermann, Austria - WP

Havarie by Philip Scheffner, Germany - WP

火Hee by Kaori Momoi, Japan - WP

Homo sapiens by Nikolaus Geyrhalter, Austria - WP

How Heavy This Hammer by Kazik Radwanski, Canada - IP



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Illegitim (Illegitimate) by Adrian Sitaru, Rumania / Poland / France - WP

Inertia by Idan Hagucl, Israel - IP

Kate Plays Christine by Robert Greene, USA - IP

Landstück (Piece of Land) by Volker Koepp, Germany - WP

Lao Shi (Old Stone) by Johnny Ma, People's Republic of China / Canada - WP

Liliom Ösvény (Lily Lane) by Bence Fliegaufl, Hungary - WP

A Magical Substance Flows into Me by Jumana Manna, Palestinian Territories / Germany / United Kingdom - WP

Makhdoumin (A Maid for Each) by Maher Abi Samra, Lebanon / France / Norway / United Arab Emirates - WP

Manazil bela abwab (Houses without Doors) by Avo Kaprealian, Syria / Lebanon - WP

Maquinaria Panamericana (Panamerican Machinery) by Joaquín del Paso, Mexico / Poland - WP

Nikdy nejsme sami (We Are Never Alone) by Petr Vaclav, Czech Republic / France - WP

P.S. Jerusalem by Danae Elon, Canada - EP

Posto avançado do progresso (An Outpost of Progress) by Hugo Vieira da Silva, Portugal - WP

The Revolution Won't Be Televised by Rama Thiaw, Senegal - WP

Rio Corgo by Maya Kosa, Sergio da Costa, Switzerland / Portugal - IP

Les Sauteurs (Those Who Jump) by Moritz Siebert, Estephan Wagner, Abou Bakar Sidibé, Denmark - WP

Short Stay by Ted Fendt, USA - WP

Ta'ang by Wang Bing, Hong Kong, China / France - WP



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Tales of Two Who Dreamt by Andrea Bussmann, Nicolás Pereda, Canada / Mexico - WP

Tempestad by Tatiana Huezo, Mexico - WP

Toz bezi (Dust Cloth) by Ahu Öztürk, Turkey / Germany - IP

Triviša by Frank Hui, Vicky Wong, Jevons Au, Hong Kong, China - WP

Vlažnost (Humidity) by Nikola Ljuca, Serbia / The Netherlands / Greece - WP

Yarden (The Yard) by Måns Månsson, Sweden / Germany - IP

Zhī fán yè mào (Life after Life) by Zhang Hanyi, People's Republic of China - WP

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