

## Press Release



### Forum 2018: In the Realm of Perfection and Elsewhere

This year, Arsenal - Institute for Film and Video Art is putting on the *Forum* as part of the Berlinale for the 48<sup>th</sup> time. The main programme consists of 44 films, 35 of which world premieres. This year's Special Screenings will be announced in a second press release.

21 years after his directorial debut *The Day a Pig Fell into the Well*, Korean director Hong Sangsoo makes a more auspicious return to the *Forum*. *Grass* is another cheerfully melancholy story about the guests at a small café whose owner loves classical music. Kim Minhee, who won the Silver Bear for Best Actress in 2017, plays a café regular who always seems to be at the table in the corner writing on her laptop. She repeatedly draws inspiration from what's happening around her, picking up the threads of the dialogue and spinning them further and sometimes even actively intervening in conversations. Is she perhaps the author of these relationship dramas in miniature, whose stories and themes mirror one another?

French director Claire Simon is equally willing to try out new experiments in her documentary works. In her new film *Premières solitudes* (*Young Solitude*), she creates a cinematographic space for open, intimate discussion together with pupils from a school in the Paris suburbs. As they talk together about their backgrounds, parents, first loves, longings and fears for the future, ten ordinary teenagers forge ever closer bonds. It's good to realise you're not alone.

For his part, Ukrainian director Sergei Loznitsa is showing a film at the Berlinale for the very first time. In *Den' Pobedy* (*Victory Day*), he observes the huge crowds that gather each year at the Soviet War Memorial in Berlin-Treptow on May 9th and records the hustle and bustle with quiet precision, as different moods come to the fore: pride, contemplation, patriotism, curiosity, the desire for recognition.

Two films from this year's programme draw on video material shot by their directors in periods of political upheaval and imbue it with new significance. At the end of the 1980s, Kristina Konrad collected opinions on the streets of Uruguay in relation to a referendum to be held on a law granting impunity to those responsible for the military dictatorship. *Unas preguntas* (*One or Two Questions*) takes a magnifying glass to the democratic process.

Around the same time, the scandal surrounding the Nazi past of former UN General Secretary and Austrian president Kurt Waldheim was making headlines worldwide. Edited together entirely from archive footage, Ruth Beckermann's *Waldheims Walzer* (*The Waldheim Waltz*) is a

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documentary essay of frightening topicality.

Julien Faraut also works with material largely shot in the 80s in *L'empire de la perfection (In the Realm of Perfection)*. Back then, tennis-obsessed director Gil de Kermadec attempted to use film as means of analysing the game. His meticulously shot footage of John McEnroe matches during the French Open forms the starting point for an ironic look at the parallels between film and the sporting world: cinema lies, sport does not.

Corneliu Porumboiu's *Fotbal infinit (Infinite Football)* takes an equally peculiar look at the world of sport, this time in provincial Romania, following a local official's attempts to bequeath the world an improved version of the beautiful game. But does everything here really just revolve around football?

Two features from the US shine a light on intellectual escapism. Ted Fendt's second feature *Classical Period* is once again shot in Philadelphia on 16mm and tells a drolly melancholy story about intellectualism and loneliness. The members of a reading group exchange cultural and literary references with such vigour that there's little room for anything else: an attempt to leave the modern world behind or merely their own solitary existences?

Ricky D'Ambrose's debut *Notes On an Appearance* may be set in Brooklyn, but unfolds in a similar milieu. Before the backdrop of the disquiet spread by the followers of a controversial philosopher, the film uses both real-life documents and smartly falsified writings to tell the story of a young man who one day disappears without warning. An eerie look at modern life with shades of dystopia.

Josephine Decker's *Madeline's Madeline* on the other hand plunges into the analogies of creativity and insanity. The young titular heroine doesn't like spending time with her mother, played by actress Miranda July, and feels far freer when with her theatre group. But where does the border lie between personality and role?

Two features from Morocco explore gender relations. *Jahilya* by Hicham Lasri (the title alludes to the pre-Islamic "time of ignorance") is a furious condemnation of the misogyny of Moroccan society and all its attendant malice.

Narjiss Nejjar's *Apatride (Stateless)* gives an account of a historical event from a female perspective, an event that still dictates the relationship between Morocco and Algeria to this day. Full of beguiling images, her feature shows how a gentle, yet determined woman attempts



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to prevail over the border between the two countries.

It would be more than appropriate to refer to the electrifying directorial debut *An Elephant Sitting Still* as a new hope for Chinese cinema. But its 29-year-old director Ho Bo, who had previously made a name for himself with two novels, took his own life soon after the film was completed. This visually stunning work links together the biographies of a range of different protagonists in virtuoso fashion, narrating the course of one single, tension-filled day from dawn until dusk, painting a portrait of a society marked by selfishness in the process.

### The films of the 48<sup>th</sup> Forum:

*14 Apples* von Midi Z, Taiwan / Myanmar - WP  
*Afrique, la pensée en mouvement Part I* by Jean-Pierre Bekolo, Senegal - IP  
*Aggregat (Aggregate)* by Marie Wilke, Germany - WP  
*Amiko* by Yoko Yamanaka, Japan - IP  
*Apatride (Stateless)* by Narjiss Nejjar, Morocco / France / Qatar- WP  
*Aufbruch (Departure)* by Ludwig Wüst, Austria - WP  
*La cama (The Bed)* by Mónica Lairana, Argentina / Germany / Netherlands / Brazil - WP  
*La casa lobo (The Wolf House)* by Joaquín Cociña, Cristóbal León, Chile - WP  
*Casanovagen (Casanova Gene)* by Luise Donschen, Germany - WP  
*Classical Period* by Ted Fendt, USA - WP  
*Con el viento (Facing the Wind)* by Meritxell Colell Aparicio, Spain / France / Argentina - WP  
*Los débiles (The Weak Ones)* by Raúl Rico, Eduardo Giralt Brun, Mexico - WP  
*Den' Pobedy (Victory Day)* by Sergei Loznitsa, Germany - WP  
*Die Tomorrow* by Nawapol Thamrongrattanarit, Thailand - IP  
*Djamilia (Jamila)* by Aminatou Echard, France - WP  
*Drvo (The Tree)* by André Gil Mata, Portugal - WP  
*L'empire de la perfection (In the Realm of Perfection)* by Julien Faraut, France - WP  
*An Elephant Sitting Still* by Hu Bo, People's Republic of China - WP  
*Fotbal infinit (Infinite Football)* by Corneliu Porumboiu, Romania - WP  
*Grass* by Hong Sangsoo, Republic of Korea - WP  
*The Green Fog* by Guy Maddin, Evan Johnson, Galen Johnson, USA / Canada  
+ *Accidence* by Guy Maddin, Evan Johnson, Galen Johnson, Canada - WP



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***Interchange*** by Brian M. Cassidy, Melanie Shatzky, Canada - WP  
***Jahilya*** by Hicham Lasri, Morocco / France - WP  
***Kaotični život Nade Kadić (The Chaotic Life of Nada Kadić)*** by Marta Hernaiz, Mexico / Bosnia and Herzegovina - WP  
***Last Child*** by Shin Dong-seok, Republic of Korea - IP  
***Madeline's Madeline*** by Josephine Decker, USA - IP  
***Maki'la*** by Machérie Ekwa Bahango, Democratic Republic of the Congo / France - WP  
***Mariphasa*** by Sandro Aguilar, Portugal - WP  
***Minatomachi (Inland Sea)*** by Kazuhiro Soda, Japan/USA - WP  
***Notes On an Appearance*** by Ricky D'Ambrose, USA - WP  
***Old Love*** by Park Kiyong, Republic of Korea - IP  
***Our House*** by Yui Kiyohara, Japan - IP  
***Our Madness*** by João Viana, Mozambique / Guinea-Bissau / Qatar / Portugal / France - WP  
***Premières armes (First Stripes)*** by Jean-François Caissy, Canada - WP  
***Premières solitudes (Young Solitude)*** by Claire Simon, France - WP  
***SPK Komplex (SPK Complex)*** by Gerd Kroske, Germany - WP  
***Syn (The Son)*** by Alexander Abaturrov, France / Russian Federation - WP  
***Teatro de guerra (Theatre of War)*** by Lola Arias, Argentina / Spain - WP  
***Tuzdan kaide (The Pillar of Salt)*** by Burak Çevik, Turkey - WP  
***Unas preguntas (One or Two Questions)*** by Kristina Konrad, Germany / Uruguay - WP  
***Waldheims Walzer (The Waldheim Waltz)*** by Ruth Beckermann, Austria - WP  
***Wieża. Jasny dzień. (Tower. A Bright Day.)*** by Jagoda Szalc, Poland - IP  
***Wild Relatives*** by Jumana Manna, Germany / Lebanon / Norway - WP  
***Yours in Sisterhood*** by Irene Lusztig, USA - WP

Press Office  
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