



## Press Release

### *Generation* 2019: Hell-bent Women - On Both Sides of the Camera

#### A Preview of the First Programme Selections

In the run-up to the 42<sup>nd</sup> edition of *Generation*, so far 16 feature-length films from a total of 17 production and co-production countries have been invited to screen in the section's two competitions, *Kplus* and *14plus*.

Consistent with past editions, the initial *Generation* selection reflects a great diversity of cinematic imagery and form. Young individuals can be witnessed searching for lives of meaning and self-determination while facing down uncertain future prospects in a world that often appears to have gone off the rails. Striking is the wide range of female perspectives on display - expressing solidarity with the less powerful, defiant, rebellious and hell-bent on their aims: At the heart of the selection are girls and young women fighting to gain control of their own destinies, against all odds and external opposition.

"These are brave films from courageous filmmakers, with their fingers on the pulse of the time and an acute feel for the social, cultural and political developments of our present moment. Both their female and their male protagonists challenge and are challenged by rigid traditional structures, thereby subverting classic, gender-specific expectations and communicating the urgent need for more contemporary role models, not only for a young audience," comments section head Maryanne Redpath regarding the first round of invitations.

The full programme for *Generation* will be announced in mid-January.

#### *Generation 14plus*

##### *Beol-sae (House of Hummingbird)*

Republic of Korea

by Bo-ra Kim

European premiere - Debut film

She roams the neighbourhood with her best friend, attempts to fall in love, is sent to the hospital with an unclear diagnosis. Untethered from the wider world, 14-year-old Eunhee floats through Seoul. With its drifting images that never elicit boredom, director Bo-ra Kim's feature film debut finds time and space for life's big subjects, telling a story of the immediate twists and turns of a young existence with great intimacy and sensitivity.

##### *The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open*

Canada / Norway

by Elle-Máíjá Tailfeathers, Kathleen Hepburn

World premiere

An intense encounter between two indigenous women on the streets of Vancouver plays out over the course of a single afternoon and accompanying evening. With great empathy for their protagonists, directors Elle-Máíjá Tailfeathers and Kathleen Hepburn develop a cinematic meditation on violence against women, racism and sisterhood, paced in real time.

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### ***Bulbul Can Sing***

India

by Rima Das

European premiere

As in *Village Rockstars* (2017), Indian filmmaker Rima Das proceeds to her home region in northeastern India in her latest, independently produced work. The poetic snapshots of life out in the country and in the classroom collectively paint a portrait of a trio of friends: Bulbul, Bonny and Sumu. Threatened by the traditions of their patriarchal village community, their youthful light-heartedness is put to a hard test.

### ***Goldie***

USA

by Sam de Jong

World premiere

Goldie, played here by polarising US-American model and up-and-coming acting talent Slick Woods, is already a full-blown star in the eyes of her little sisters. Alas, when her mother is imprisoned, Goldie's first priority for the time being becomes the fight to keep child welfare services from tearing her and her siblings apart from one another. With a list of co-producers that includes VICE, this film by Sam de Jong (*Prins*, 2015 opening film for *Generation 14plus*) relates a heartfelt tale of ambition and the unshakable nature of youthful faith in one's ideals and ideas.

### ***Guo chun tian (The Crossing)***

People's Republic of China

by Bai Xue

European premiere - Debut film

Bai Xue's first feature-length film takes us to the transit zone between the border cities of Hong Kong and Shenzhen. Peipei is one of the many individuals who don't feel at home on either side of the divide. With the promises of modernity in sight and smuggled goods in her backpack, she braves the risky crossing point, which aside from representing a political boundary for the 16-year-old also marks her first step towards an unaccustomed sense of autonomy.

### ***Hölmö nuori sydän (Stupid Young Heart)***

Finland / Netherlands / Sweden

by Selma Vilhunen

European premiere

Surrounded by an uncompromising band of rabid right-wingers, wispy Lenni is convinced that he has transformed the fear that drives him, that of an uncertain and thus threatening future, into strength. For Lenni is on his way to becoming a dad - his girlfriend Kiira is pregnant. Shot in naturalistic images, close to the young protagonists, the story pursues a downward trajectory.

### ***Knives and Skin***

USA

by Jennifer Reeder

World premiere

Following her short films *Blood Below the Skin* (*Berlinale Shorts* 2015) and



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*Crystal Lake (Generation 14plus 2016)* writer and director Jennifer Reeder is appearing at the Berlinale for the first time with a feature-length film. In surreal images, ruptured by bitter-ironic moments, Reeder's *Knives and Skin* reveals the dark abyss that opens before the inhabitants of a small US-American town when a young student disappears. The result is a mysterious, unconventional narrative that makes one thing clear: a no is a no.

### ***We Are Little Zombies***

Japan

by Makoto Nagahisa

European premiere - Debut film

Their parents have died. They're supposed to be sad and grieving, but all they feel right now is emptiness. All that remains of their worldly possessions is a handheld gaming console, an old electric bass and a charred wok. Well, it's enough to start a legendary band. A kaleidoscope of pop-cultural inventiveness, Makoto Nagahisa's feature-length debut follows four average 13½-year-old Japanese kids on a journey through their turbulent inner lives.

### ***Generation Kplus***

#### ***Anbessa***

USA / Italy

by Mo Scarpelli

World premiere - Documental form

Asalif and his mother defy Ethiopia's omnipresent modern housing development culture, by continuing to live a life characterised by proximity to nature and rootedness in community. The boy counters the ruptures in his accustomed surroundings and the threat posed by the hyena that haunts his neighbourhood by reinventing himself as a hero: as Anbessa, the lion. In this imaginative documental study, Mo Scarpelli (*Berlinale Talents Alumna 2018*) focuses her attention on social realities and the dreams of her 10-year-old protagonist.

#### ***Baracoa***

Switzerland / USA / Spain

by Pablo Briones and The Moving Picture Boys

World premiere - Documental form

Summer is long and hot in the tiny Cuban village. 9-year-old Leonel and his 13-year-old friend Antuán are fighting boredom as best they can by catching tadpoles and argue about hairstyles, while the sea calls and a move to Havana is on the horizon. Set against a backdrop of societal change and using lyrical and shimmering imagery, *Baracoa* guides us to the heart of the private universe of a childhood friendship. In the end, Leonel himself speaks his mind, adding his own picture to the mix: his view of life, of the world at large, of friendship and of filmmaking.

#### ***Daniel fait face (Daniel)***

France

by Marine Atlan

International premiere - Debut film



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Spooky stuff is afoot in a French school. All of a sudden, 10-year-old Daniel finds himself alone with Marthe - their encounter is both tender and troubling, and it seems to take place in a sort of vacuum. In Marine Atlan's dream-like feature film debut, children dance tango timelessly, recite poems and do the drill for an imaginary terrorist attack.

### *Di yi ci de li bie (A First Farewell)*

People's Republic of China

by Wang Lina

European premiere - Debut film

Isa lives with his family in a Uighur village community out in China's vast North-western expanse, between cotton fields and desert. His mother's illness and his best friend's bad grades make life hard for the boy. In her sensitive feature film debut, the director brings us a story full of goodbyes, set against the spectacular backdrop of her own homeland.

### *Kinder*

Germany

by Nina Wesemann

World premiere - Documental Form

The local S-Bahn train whooshes through Berlin and past the lives of Emine, Marie, Christian and Arthur. Their paths will likely never cross, yet they have something in common: they're all big city kids. For an entire year, Nina Wesemann documented the everyday lives of her young subjects. The resulting intimate portrait reveals the youngsters' sensitive emotional world and captures their diverse moods and the atmosphere of their urban environment.

### *Lotte ja kadunud lohed (Lotte and the Lost Dragons)*

Estonia / Latvia

by Janno Põldma, Heiki Ernits

International premiere

In this third instalment of their *Lotte* series (*Generation Kplus* 2007 and 2012) Janno Põldma and Heiki Ernits send curious puppy girl Lotte off on a madcap search for a fire-breathing dragon, accompanied this time by her baby sister Rooski. The result is a colourful, vibrant animated film that serves up more than its share of absurd surprises and encounters with a host of loveable, quirky characters.

### *Mijn bijzonder rare week met Tess (My Extraordinary Summer with Tess)*

Netherlands / Germany

by Steven Wouterlood

World premiere - Debut film

As the youngest of the family, Sam is haunted by the notion that someday he could become the last remaining survivor, all alone. On a family vacation at the beach, he meets the unconventional Tess, who carries her own secrets around with her and shows him how the present moment can win out over memories and anxiety about what's yet to come. Based on the young people's book of the same title by prize-winning author Anna Woltz, Steven Wouterlood's debut film tackles dark subject matter with a light touch.



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### *Une colonie (A Colony)*

Canada

by Geneviève Dulude-De Celles

International premiere - Debut film

Running the tricky gauntlet of school life and first house parties, 12-year-old Mylia is having a tough time figuring out where she fits in. That is, until she gets to know her idiosyncratic schoolmate Jimmy. The boy from the neighbouring Abenaki reservation encourages her to cross externally defined boundaries. With a keen feel for the finer nuances of social relationships, Geneviève Dulude-De Celles' feature-film debut traces the blossoming of a friendship and the path to forming an authentic personal identity.

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