

They are social beings who search for connections with each other

Meet the humans of Planet IFFR



Totes Adorbs ♥ Hurricane by Miss Revolutionary Idol Berserker

Annual Report 2018



47th International Film Festival Rotterdam

Foreword

Even a single image can have an astounding impact if chosen well and framed in the right context. This message from renowned visual artist Alfredo Jaar at the 47th edition of International Film Festival Rotterdam really hit the mark. His masterclass proved to be one of many memorable experiences this year as it moved the audience to tears. With over 500 films screened at the festival, of which 212 world or international premieres, clearly that context is key.

IFFR is committed to presenting films that radiate relevance, push boundaries and connect to an audience in meaningful ways. Visions that form an alternative to the seemingly unstoppable and repetitive flow of easy-answer-imagery we are fed on a daily basis; filmmakers who open our minds with films that inspire us; images and stories that ask questions and broaden our horizons: Cinema!

Throughout its programme, IFFR endeavours to do justice to its content, whether it's a two-minute short film or a multi-Oscar-nominated feature with live Philharmonic Orchestra score, whether part of a themed programme or a live film event with talk show spanning multiple time zones. The 47th edition of IFFR gave context and background to films by organising countless Q&As, an extensive arts programme and a series of masterclasses and debates by inspiring artists.

The revamped co-production market CineMart and a two-day conference on the state of independent film distribution highlighted the professional side of the festival. With the Hubert Bals Fund and the newly launched streaming platform IFFR Unleashed, the festival embraces its role in auteur cinema. Films cannot exist in a vacuum – their connection with the world and human experience is vital.

Last year, International Film Festival Rotterdam introduced the concept of Planet IFFR, a place where filmmakers and the public celebrate daring film culture. This year the festival zoomed in to meet the humans of Planet IFFR: colourful, creative creatures, full of contradictions and interesting

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peculiarities. They are unique in exchanging ideas, their visions develop as they grow and they use stories to shape their own reality. Meet the humans of Planet IFFR!

Bero Beyer, *festival director*
Janneke Staarink, *managing director*

They create social structures of competing, yet cooperating groups

Awards and competitions



“A film of epic dimensions taking a feminist viewpoint and featuring a strong central character. Its bold vision, created by a lyrical layering of cinematographic elements, makes this film stand out.”

The jury on Hivos Tiger Award winner *The Widowed Witch*

The prestigious Hivos Tiger Competition has been the beating heart of IFFR since 1995, bringing filmmakers international recognition.

The international competition has been streamlined since 2016 to accommodate only eight features competing for one main prize. The Hivos Tiger Award winner is granted a €40,000 cash prize to be shared between the director and producer (a first, second or third feature). A Special Jury Award worth €10,000 is awarded to an exceptional artistic achievement within the competition. The international jury was composed of British filmmaker Anthea Kennedy, Mexican producer Paula Astorga, Dutch editor Job ter Burg, German filmmaker Valeska Grisebach and South Korean filmmaker Kim Kyungmook.

To maximise exposure, each nominated film is celebrated on one full premiere day during the festival. Participating in the the Hivos Tiger competition raises the profile of emerging filmmakers and provides opportunities for new project funding through IFFR CineMart or IFFR PRO networking. In the past, it has proved to be a stepping stone for the likes of Christopher Nolan, Kleber Mendonça Filho and Kelly Reichardt.

Ammodo Tiger Short Competition
IFFR’s short-film section has no equivalent on the international film festival scene. The section culminates in the Ammodo Tiger Short Competition, where 22 films from 18 different countries compete for three equal awards, each worth €5,000. The competition was renamed in 2018, validating its new partnership with Ammodo, an organisation geared towards support of the arts and science . The jury consisted of Chinese filmmaker Ying Liang, Dutch graphic designer Mieke Gerritzen and Kenyan filmmaker Jim Chuchu, founder of The Nest Collective.

VPRO Big Screen Award
The VPRO Big Screen Award is highly coveted, with the winner guaranteed a theatrical release and a showing on national television. The eight films selected for this year’s Big Screen Competition consisted of three world, one international and four European premieres. A jury of five experience festival-goers picked the winner: *Nina* by Polish filmmaker Olga Chajdas. Of the €30,000 prize money, €15,000 goes towards the film’s theatrical release and €15,000 to the production of the filmmaker’s next project.

- Award winners**
Hivos Tiger Award
The Widowed Witch, Cai Chengjie
Special Jury Award: screenplay *The Reports on Sarah and Saleem*, written by Rami Alayan
- Ammodo Tiger Short Awards**
Mountain Plain Mountain, Araki Yu, Daniel Jacoby
Rose Gold, Sara Cwynar
With History in a Room Filled with People with Funny Names 4, Korakrit Arunanondchai
- Bright Future Award**
Azougue Nazaré, Tiago Melo
- VPRO Big Screen Award**
Nina, Olga Chajdas
- IFFR Audience Award**
The Guilty, Gustav Möller
- Hubert Bals Fund Audience Award**
The Reports on Sarah and Saleem, Muayad Alayan
- IFFR Youth Jury Award**
The Guilty, Gustav Möller
- FIPRESCI Award**
Balekempa, Ere Gowda
- NETPAC Award**
Nervous Translation, Shireen Seno
- KNF Award**
Zama, Lucrecia Martel
- Voices Short Audience Award NEW**
Joy in People, Oscar Hudson
- Found Footage Award NEW**
Newsreel 63 – The Train of Shadows, Nika Autor

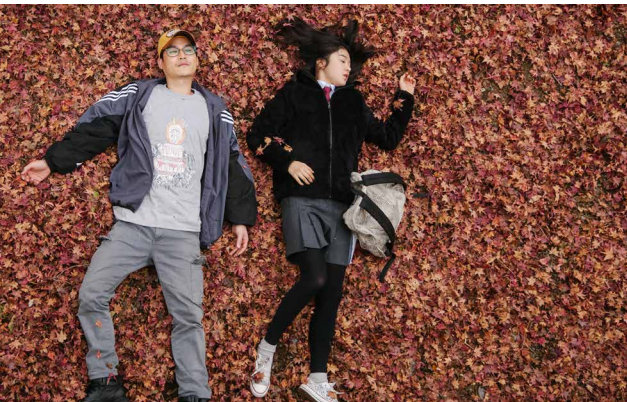


The Guilty by Gustav Möller won both the IFFR Audience Award and the IFFR Youth Jury Award

Selection for the Hivos Tiger Competition 2018



Djon África by João Miller Guerra and Filipa Reis



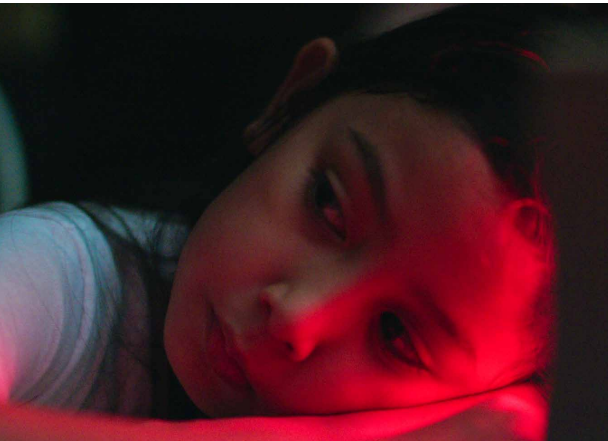
I Have a Date with Spring by Baek Seungbin

“The line-up of Tiger competition films came from the Philippines, Brazil, the United States, the Netherlands, China, Palestine, South Korea and Portugal. Yet, they were closely connected through their sheer audacity and outspokenness of theme and form, adding a truly new perspective to the cinematic landscape.”

Bero Beyer



Possessed by Metahaven and Rob Schröder



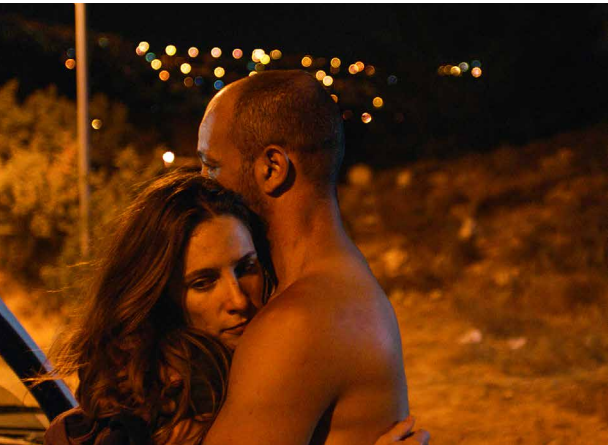
Nervous Translation by Shireen Seno



Piercing by Nicolas Pesce



The Widowed Witch by Cai Chengjie



The Reports on Sarah and Saleem by Muayad Alayan



Sultry by Marina Meliande

They create their own reality

The programme



The Florida Project by Sean Baker

IFFR's 47th edition highlighted the peculiar creatures known as the humans of 'Planet IFFR'. Rotterdam transformed into a place of adventure and exploration, where film fans and filmmakers see eye to eye.

IFFR is one of the largest audience and industry-driven film festivals in the world with over 329,000 admissions and 2,405 film professionals attending. The film programme is wide and diverse, including a number of film-industry related initiatives. Over 12 days, 267 features are screened, including 60 world premieres, and 264 short films of which 80 were world premieres.

The festival opened with the world premiere of the acclaimed Swedish film *Jimmie*, with filmmaker Jesper Ganslandt and his five-year-old son and co-star in attendance. Other notable encounters included Paul Thomas Anderson, who attended a special screening of his *Phantom Tread* with a live soundtrack by the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, and Apichatpong Weerasethakul who unveiled his *SLEEP CINEMA HOTEL*, a unique, immersive art project where visitors sleep surrounded by moving images. Satirist Armando Iannucci brought the festival to a close with his latest film *The Death of Stalin*.

IFFR divides its programme into four distinct sections: Bright Future, Voices, Deep Focus and Perspectives. Each section has its own character, sensibility and colour, allowing viewers and professionals alike to 'get' the festival at a glance.

The **Bright Future** section is dedicated to young and emerging filmmakers, often presenting their films to the international scene for the first or second time. The section encompasses IFFR's flagship competition, the Hivos Tiger Awards, a celebration of the innovative spirit of new talent, with eight nominated films from all over the world. Along with this is the Ammodo Tiger Short Competition, which presents 22 nominated short films.

Voices focuses on outstanding new features from the masters of cinema. Films on offer ranged from Oscar-winning *The Shape of Water* by Guillermo Del Toro and *The Florida Project* by Sean Baker to Alexey Fedorchenko's gripping and hard-hitting *Anna's War* and *Rotterdam*'s genre and cult productions. The Danish debut *The Guilty* by Gustav Möller received both the Audience and Youth Jury Award for its production shot entirely on one location. IFFR Live, a unique initiative streaming films live to cinemas worldwide and the VPRO Big Screen Competition, where the winning film gets a guaranteed theatrical release in the Netherlands, are also part of Voices.

Deep Focus serves up an in-depth look at filmmaking, including masterclasses and retrospectives. This year, the

Facts and figures

531	films
267	feature films (>60 minutes)
60	world premieres
35	international premieres
19	European premieres
264	short and mid-length films (<60 minutes)
80	world premieres
37	international premieres
24	European premieres



Hunter Ganslandt, star of *Jimmie*, and Bero Beyer

"It was a pleasure to see so many new ventures come to fruition. We were reminded of the relevance of an open platform in which off-beat visions can connect, or clash, in ways that lead to new trajectories and ideas."

Bero Beyer, Festival Director



Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra rehearsing for their rendition of *the Phantom Thread* score

“For the exquisite magic of an orchestra performing the live score for a superb new film like *Phantom Thread*, so many details have to be done just right. It sets the bar for the coming years. But a delicate and unassuming Q&A with filmmakers Anthea Kennedy and Ian Wiblin after a screening of their *Four Parts of a Folding Screen* is an equally moving encounter: if we can do this, we can do anything.”

Gerwin Tamsma, programmer

section featured a special focus on the work of Polish artist Artur Żmijewski, a retrospective of the films of Argentinian filmmaker José Celestino Campusano and a Short Profile of the work of Chinese artist and filmmaker Zhou Tao. In the new art platform Frameworks, IFFR asked two renowned names in art to introduce two upcoming talents, the Acolytes, who each received a €10,000 grant to finish a single-screen artwork. Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Alfredo Jaar introduced Pathompon ‘Mont’ Tesprateep and Grada Kilomba respectively.

Perspectives is where themed programmes of social and political relevance are presented. This year’s selection covered five areas: *House on Fire* investigated the singular cinema coming from Tamil Nadu, PACT looked into pan-Africanism culminating in the six-hour talk show *Bridging the Gap*, *Curtain Call* reflected on humanity’s self-defeating obsession with progress through art exhibitions, talks and film screenings, *Maximum Overdrive* celebrated the revival of a 1990s-inspired maximalist aesthetic with the international premiere and marathon screening of the first season of *The Eyeslicer* and *A History of Shadows* looked at the many ways in which cinema can revisit and re-evaluate the past.

IFFR is an ambitious 12-day event of screenings, installations, talks and events. Experiences to challenge the senses ranged from Q&As to the Japanese group Miss Revolutionary Idol Berserker performing *Totes Adorbs ♥ Hurricane* with three kilos of confetti and thousands of glow sticks.

Music and film continued to merge at the Scopitone Café with music documentaries and surprise events. This year Robert Clem was one of the four filmmakers who entrusted his international premiere to this special venue and set-up. While at Rotterdam club WORM, short-filmmakers collaborated with VJs, DJs and musicians in four nights of live sound//vision performances.

In the same venue EarWORM made its first appearance, a programme consisting of three nights of documentaries and live music around a central theme: doom metal, electronic music and punk. The RTM day was a more local experience and a huge succes. It featured films, documentaries and shorts originating from Rotterdam, with spoken word and musical performances.



Fuck Off! - Images from Finland by Jörn Donner



Milford Graves, 27 January 2018

“Jazz legend Milford Graves in Rotterdam! After the screening of *Milford Graves Full Mantis*, the 76-year-old drummer gave a breath-taking solo concert that ended in a standing ovation and a Q&A that lasted for over two hours. A truly historical night.”

Peter van Hoof, programmer

Facts and figures

1,324	public screenings
167	press and industry screenings
31	screening rooms
37	performances and installations
62	debates, talks and lectures
1,249	Q&As (666) and introductions (583)



IFFR Live was broadcast in over 40 cinemas worldwide at the same time. Audiences could participate in the talk shows through social media.

“With his chronicling documentaries and quiet observations, Artur Żmijewski spotlights people and themes society would rather hide away. To this end, he has no qualms about pushing the boundaries of what is politically correct and offers us a non-idealised, more honest impression of society.”

Edwin Carels, programmer



Artur Żmijewski



Sean Baker discussing his new film *The Florida Project* during his Big Talk.

“One thing Rotterdam never lacks is ambition. As the first event of every calendar year for cineastes the world over, it is a vital tone-setter not only for assessing the zeitgeist but for determining what is to come next: the present continuous.”

Travis Jeppesen in *Artforum*

“He [Apichatpong Weerasethakul, red.] is deeply embedded in the art house and film festival circuit – and the Rotterdam film festival has had a pivotal impact on his career. He received financial support from the Hubert Bals Fund in 1998, and ever since then, his films have been consistently screened or have been in competition there.”

Andrew Russell in *The Conversation*



Apichatpong Weerasethakul's Big Talk, 27 January 2018



Bero Beyer (left) and Inge de Leeuw (middle) at the installation of *The Eyeslicer* by Dan Schoenbrun.

“I will never forget the extra dimension Dan Schoenbrun added to the marathon screening of his series *The Eyeslicer*: a 535-minute sensory overload. Due to a technical malfunction, his ‘smell-o-vision’ ended up being just him running around the cinema spraying scents directly into the audience.”

Inge de Leeuw, programmer



Film scholar Stefan Borsos, filmmaker Ram and programmer Olaf Möller discuss Tamil Nadu cinema as part of the theme programme *House on Fire*.

“A History of Shadows’, programmed by Gustavo Beck and Gerwin Tamsma, served as a kind of ideal festival-inside-the-festival. The most enlightening program of films at Rotterdam for this critic was without a doubt ‘House on Fire,’ a small but potent selection of films from Tamil Nadu.”

Daniel Kasman in *MUBI*

in depth Lucrecia Martel

‘Cinema enables us to view the world in the way an extraterrestrial would’



Lucrecia Martel interviewed by UK producer and former IFFR director Simon Field

UK producer and former IFFR director Simon Field interviewed Argentinian filmmaker Lucrecia Martel during a Masterclass at IFFR 2018. The pair discussed time-bending cinema, how humour and sound change perceptions and looking at the world like an alien.

Trick of the light

“Time for a magic trick”. During her encounter with Field, Lucrecia Martel asked for the lights to be dimmed. She put her mobile phone on top of a glass vase, turning on its light so it shone through to the bottom. This, she explained, represented a swimming pool. “The first really immersive experience we have as children,” she said, “is when we dive into a swimming pool. As you dive to the bottom, you find that water is a flexible space. You feel the vibrations, the presence of something.” She turned the vase on its side and the light projected into the audience. “Now, it’s a cinema theatre.”

For Martel, this concept of immersion played an essential role in finding her own style. “It came to me when I started thinking of different ways of looking at time through writing and filming. We need different tools to see, feel and listen to what surrounds us and to challenge our perception, to try and see other things.”

The use of sound and its manipulation in cinema is an important part of her work. “It’s the sound that really enables cinema to be three-dimensional. Sound changes the air, creates movements as the waves move through space and generate different levels of pressure onto the spectator. This means that the element in which the spectators are immersed, is sound. If you close your eyes, you still hear the sound of the film. Sound enables us to submerge the spectators.”

Martel’s new film *Zama* (2017), based on Antonio di Benedetto’s 1956 novel of the same name, is a prime example of how she uses sound to create a sense of time and place. When Field asked her about the strange noises that permeate the story, “a sort of falling tone”, Martel answered, “it’s a Shepard tone, the auditory illusion of a downfall, recognisable as a superposition of sine waves separated by octaves. It’s often used in science-fiction films. I think we’re willing to take more liberties when we represent the future – when it comes to sounds for instance. But when we film the past, we tend to limit ourselves. That’s why I found it interesting to use the Shepard tone for a film that is set in the past. It was important to have the same kind of freedom, to keep our horizons open. It enabled us to create a possible universe of the past.”



Zama, IFFR 2018

“We need different tools to see, feel and listen to what surrounds us and to challenge our perception, to try and see other things.”

Lucrecia Martel

Martel argues that this strategy also carries a political motivation. “If you look at Latin American history,” she says, “the theft of land is hardly ever mentioned. If we were to stick to that version of the past, we would be telling a story full of lies. History tends to hide away the disasters that have taken place through time. So taking ownership of time in this way was a very political decision.”

Costumbrismo

Martel is keen to distance herself from the Argentinian cinematic tradition and move away from film based on, what she sees as, ‘costumbrismo’. This interpretation of local everyday life portrayed in many 19th-century Hispanic scenes does not represent her views of the past. “I felt that this type of cinema, focusing on customs and realism, was not loyal to the truth. I didn’t want to follow the same path, so I decided to denaturalise the spectator’s position towards the film with zombie-like, uncanny images.”

With such serious subject matter Martel often uses humour to challenge our perceptions. “I’d like to point out that the titles of my first three films – *La ciénaga* (*The Swamp*), *La niña santa* (*The Holy Girl*), *La mujer sin cabeza* (*The Headless Woman*) – are like titles of horror flicks or B movies”, Martel said. “I hope this enables people to see a certain sense of humour in them. Especially my first films carry a lot of intellectual weight, but when I’m writing them, I think of them as comedies. If you’re patient enough to rewatch them, you will notice their humorous elements.”



La niña santa, IFFR 2005

Changing our vision

To Martel, cinema is ultimately about seeing the world anew. “When I think of the narrative model of popular television series, I notice that they go back to a stage that we’ve already moved away from in cinema. Cinema has reached a philosophical and narrative complexity you don’t see in series. It enables us to look at the world as unbiased as an extraterrestrial being would, if he were to come down to earth for the first time. In this way it challenges us, makes us alien to

life on earth and forces us to change our vision. We need to keep doing this, otherwise we end up blind. That’s what we fight for – not going blind.”

Watch the entire conversation with Lucrecia Martel at IFFR.com/Martel.

Earlier films

In her conversation with Field, Martel revisited the films leading up to *Zama*. She described *La ciénaga* (2000) as being most closely connected to her new film. “It’s about the Argentinian bourgeois hanging onto things that can’t ultimately be sustained”, and in a broader sense, about “taking your life into your own hands, taking control, which shows an obvious link to *Zama*.”

La niña santa (2004) comes from a place closer to Martel’s personal life and is inspired by a traumatic childhood experience that led to existential doubts in later life. “When I was 11, I was playing by myself in my grandmother’s home when I heard a sound coming towards me. It was coming from a wall. A deep sound, as if someone was approaching me. I started screaming: Grandma, Grandma, it’s the devil! But suddenly I thought: it’s God! So I said: Grandma, God is here! Afterwards, I felt traumatised. The experience ultimately made me leave the Catholic Church. At some point, I was very devout, but I noticed that these supernatural aspects of God or the devil are the same in the end. *La niña santa* is based on this idea.”

La mujer sin cabeza (2008) is partly based on one of Martel’s childhood experiences as well. “When I was five years old, we fell down a cliff in our car. In the first days following such a traumatic event, one is left feeling helpless. Your relation to words and things is fragile and you yourself feel fragile. I based the main character on this state of shock.”



Zama, IFFR 2018

“History tends to hide away the disasters that have taken place. So taking ownership of time was a very political decision.”

Lucrecia Martel, Sunday 28 January 2018

They are unique in exchanging ideas

IFFR PRO



Tall Enough by Barry Jenkins, Official Selection IFFR 2017

Through talent development, co-production and funding, IFFR PRO helps generate the films of tomorrow.

CineMart

CineMart was the first platform of its kind to offer filmmakers the opportunity to present their ideas and search for project backers. The structure of CineMart was renewed for its 2018 edition. Among other things, it questioned the relevance of driving projects towards a distribution set-up that is not necessarily relevant while technologies and audience expectations are constantly evolving.

“The upshot was a scaled-back and reshaped event (16 projects in total) emphasising the creative and professional development of the selected projects. Each received mentor support from an industry expert both prior to and during the festival” says Marit van den Elshout, Head of IFFR PRO, CineMart & the Hubert Bals Fund. Based on analysis of previous activity among CineMart professionals, all interested parties (whether potential co-producers, funders or sales agents) were able to request up to five meetings with projects of their choice, with more slots available in situ in Rotterdam. “A major realignment was the adoption of public introductions to the projects during the Spotlight event,” adds Van den Elshout. This took the form of informal discussions between project representatives and their mentors about the *raison d’être* and development of each project, and ambitions for its future trajectory. “The trend has changed and people really want to have these events where they can get a wider perspective on what the projects are all about and subsequently use our networking events to get the ball rolling,” added Van den Elshout.

CineMart also presents several awards to promising projects. The winners of 2018: Kaweh Modiri’s *Dutch feature Mitra* (Eurimages Co-Production Development Award, €20,000); Gastón Solnicki’s *Argentine feature Electrocute* (Filmmore Post-Production Award, €7,500); Hlynur Pálmason’s *A White, White Day* (ARTE International Prize, €6,000); Luck Razanajaona’s *Disco Afrika* (Wouter Barendrecht Award, €5000, for a director under 35).

CineMart continued to be involved in the Virtual Reality sector in 2018 with the IFFR PRO x VR Days programme featuring four projects, two case studies and a keynote speech by Astrid Kahmke of the VR Creators Lab. Coordinator Jolinde den Haas commented: “VR is the future of storytelling, so we started this partnership with VR Days Europe to connect their technical world with our world of storytelling and narrative cinema.”

Talent development was again in the ascendant at IFFR 2018, courtesy of Rotterdam Lab, BoostNL and the Young Critics



Young Critics programme

IFFR 2018 Young Critics programme, dedicated to developing the appreciation levels and writing skills of new critics outside the Netherlands, introduced five highly promising journalists: Beáta-Hajnalka Berecki (Romania), Fahmim Ferdo (Bangladesh), Héctor Oyarzún Galaz (Chile), Paige Lim (Singapore) and Wilfred Okiche (Nigeria).

programme for journalists looking to forge careers in the film world.

Rotterdam Lab

59 emerging producers from 28 countries participated in IFFR’s Rotterdam Lab, an intensive five-day workshop. Among them were inductees Dutch producer Loes Komen of N279 Entertainment and Manuela Blandón from Colombian outfit M Cinema. “I heard about 10 projects and 10 different finance structures and have made 60 new friends, so my network has expanded enormously over the past five days,” said Komen, winner of a Student Oscar in 2017.

Colombian Blandón secured her Lab slot after her inspiring pitch at the Bogotá Audiovisual Market for the project *The Last Paisa Man*. “I want to create connections and make this first movie happen. Rotterdam Lab is a very good place to start learning more about the industry, post-production, sales, distribution and pitching.”

A year after attending Rotterdam Lab, fledgling Danish producer Julie Friis Walenciak was back at IFFR with the world premiere of *The Return*, directed by Malene Choi Jensen.

BoostNL

Three BoostNL alumni arrived at Rotterdam with films in the official IFFR selection. Gustavo Pizzi’s *Loveling* was selected for Voices while Marina Meliande and Muayad Alayan were in the Hivos Tiger Competition with *Sultry* and *The Reports on Sara and Saleem* respectively, the latter picking up a Hivos Tiger

Award. “The structure of the BoostNL programme is perfect because it gives you double the chance of market participation (CineMart and Holland Film Meeting (HFM), the international and professional arm of the Netherlands Film Festival) and gave us the great opportunity to be advised and guided by top industry experts,” said winning director Alayan.

Seven new Dutch and international projects were presented at BoostNL 2018. Chinese director Zhengfan Yang, who featured his project *The Stranger*, commented: “Boost doesn’t just create meetings between people, it creates relationships.”

Film distribution

The IFFR 2018 Reality Check conference, a two-day professional event focused on film distribution, delivered a timely critique of the international distribution sector in the face of game changers (Netflix/Amazon) and seismic geo-political change (Brexit). Key issues were how producers and their product must adapt to new distribution models which, in turn, are designed to reflect consumer demand and evolving consumption habits.

The conference opened with Doc & Film’s Daniel Elstner keynote speech that she believes in a productive and economically sound future for the industry. “Culture will always survive, but it will only survive if there are enough of us believing in it and keeping it going.”

IFFR’s Melissa van der Schoor - digital content manager - presented the online distribution platform IFFR Unleashed within the curation panel. Subjects subsequently covered were European policy-making within the field of distribution, the emergence of event cinema and how to address diversity and empower storytellers from under-represented communities.

Running parallel to the debates was a series of workshops, tasked with finding solutions to ongoing stagnation within the international distribution sector.

Moderator Wendy Mitchell (*Screen International*) commented after the petitions were made: “It was amazing to hear 12 very concrete ideas that people can go away with today and which can start affecting businesses and change the way we work.” Beyer added: “What we hoped for has happened: an abundance of great ideas emerged and people discussed things openly and in a multitude of ways.”

Talks and Masterclasses

The IFFR 2018 Talks and Masterclasses programme offered some 40 presentations, debates and discussions designed to enthuse, inform and disorientate. Filmmakers and non-filmmakers were asked to consider how their artistic visions dovetail, or diverge.

Luminaries such as Charlotte Rampling, Paul Schrader, Jan Svankmajer, Armando Iannucci, Sean Baker, Lucrecia Martel

and Apichatpong Weerasethakul discussed their new works within their cinematic, socio-economic and cultural contexts. Artistic polymath Alfredo Jaar was there not only to discuss his highly critical and polemical works but to introduce the equally controversial Portuguese interdisciplinary artist Grada Kilomba whose work draws on memory, trauma, race, gender and “the decolonisation of knowledge and narrative.” During the opening interview, iconic actress Charlotte Rampling explained that her base instinct is to defy convention, to willingly go against the grain. “That’s my nature. I understand why people would want to see films that are easier, where you don’t really have to try too hard and won’t be challenged. And that’s fine. But there’s a place for the kinds of films we’re making as well. That’s why this festival is so great.”

At the beginning of his masterclass, Paul Schrader (screenwriter of *Taxi Driver*) recalled his recent experiences on *Dying of the Light*, a film which was taken away from him in post-production. “The first mistake was obvious... I got involved with people who didn’t respect me – or in fact didn’t really respect the movies. This happens a lot, more often than you would think. Because directors by nature are alpha creatures. You assume you just say, “Give me the chair, give me the whip. I’ll go into the lion’s cage. I’ll have all those lions sitting upright. That’s your personality. That’s why you are a director. Well, sometimes the lions win. And in this case, they did.”

IFFR PRO Days

55% of the film industry professionals attending the IFFR PRO Days have attended over three times, demonstrating a strong tie with the festival.*

60% of them rated the programme of IFFR PRO Days an 8 or higher out of 10.*

*Source: online user survey sent to all 2,400 participating film-industry guests.

2,395 film professionals

1,796 IFFR PRO
332 filmmakers
267 journalists
(of whom 192 international)



Programmer Tessa Boerman (left) in conversation with Dr. Rhea L. Combs (middle) and John Goff (right) from the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. Several gems from the museum's film archive were screened within IFFR's theme programme PACT.

“Although we initiated Masterclasses in previous editions, 2018 was a breakthrough in accommodating the voice of makers. We plan to expand on this edition and build a must-go-to platform for film lovers and authors alike.”

Vanja Kaludjercic, IFFR Talks & Masterclass programmer

They are unique in using languages

Press and publicity



Journalists listening to the press presentation on IFFR Unleashed on 29 January 2018

Journalists, film critics and reporters from around the world all complement the Humans of Planet IFFR.

The international relevance of IFFR is reflected in the vast geographical spread of the visiting press. This year, international journalists far outnumbered their Dutch colleagues by 192 to 75. Forty different countries were represented in Rotterdam with Brazil, Colombia, Estonia, Nigeria, Peru, Qatar and Singapore being newcomers to this year's list.

The festival's unconventional programming inspired exceptional stories. The various thematic programmes, unique events such as *SLEEP CINEMA HOTEL* and the extensive Masterclasses and Talks programme garnered significant attention. Unsurprisingly, extensive coverage was given to names like Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Charlotte Rampling, Sean Baker, Jan Švankmajer, Armando Iannucci and Paul Schrader. IFFR 2018 also saw a breakthrough in the art and culture media. The abundant short-film programme and initiatives within IFFR's Art Directions were featured in publications like *Frieze*, *ArtAgenda*, *ArtForum*, *This is Tomorrow* and *The White Review*.

Once again, media partner Screen published four festival dailies during IFFR's run with over 80 articles, news stories and reviews. In the run-up to the festival's opening night, Screen covered IFFR's competitions and detailed the reformed structure of CineMart.

In 2018, trade publications *Variety* and *The Hollywood Reporter* doubled their reporters, generating film reviews of Tiger nominees and premieres such as Alexey Fedorchenko's *Anna's War*, Jan Švankmajer's *Insect* and Tiago Melo's *Azougue Nazaré*. The relationship between the festival and European trade publication Cineuropa strengthened. It focused heavily on IFFR PRO matters, leading to 11 announcements before, and 27 articles and videos during the festival. Other renowned cinematic publications covering the festival included *Sight & Sound*, *MUBI*, *Film Comment*, *Fandor*, *ScreenAnarchy*, *Senses of Cinema*, *Caiman*, *Critic.de*, *Cinema Scope*, *Ekran*, *Filmmatique*, *Flix* and *Filmmaker Magazine*.

International news outlets were also prominent with the *BBC*, *Le monde* and *The Guardian* returning to Rotterdam. Other newspapers and press agencies present included *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *South China Morning Post*, *De Morgen*, *The Evening Standard*, *Der Standard*, *Vedomosti*, *FOCUS Knack*, *ERT*, and *TV Channel Russia*. Making their IFFR debut were *Meduza* from Russia, the Egyptian newspaper *Al Dostor*, Turkish newspaper *Posta*, *The Phnom Penh Post* from Cambodia and Brazilian newspapers *O Globo* and *Valor Economico*, Czech television and Australia's *ABC Radio National*.

IFFR remains one of the major Dutch cultural events and enjoys

a strong national appeal. In January 2018 alone, over 200 print stories and more than 750 online editorials featured the festival. The estimated value of the total amount of free publicity in the Netherlands alone surpassed €7 million.

On 29 January, IFFR organised a press conference to launch its new streaming platform **IFFR Unleashed**, mobilising 51 journalists, mostly from the international press. Over 40 editorials were written on IFFR Unleashed, the majority within two days of the event, in media outlets such as *The Guardian*, *Vogue* and *The Hollywood Reporter*. Read page 46 for more on IFFR Unleashed.



Collaboration IFFR and NS

The Dutch national railway system NS and IFFR collaborate since 2017; commuters are invited to enjoy IFFR short films during their journey between major Dutch cities and Rotterdam. The 'Train Experience' is conducted during the film festival period.

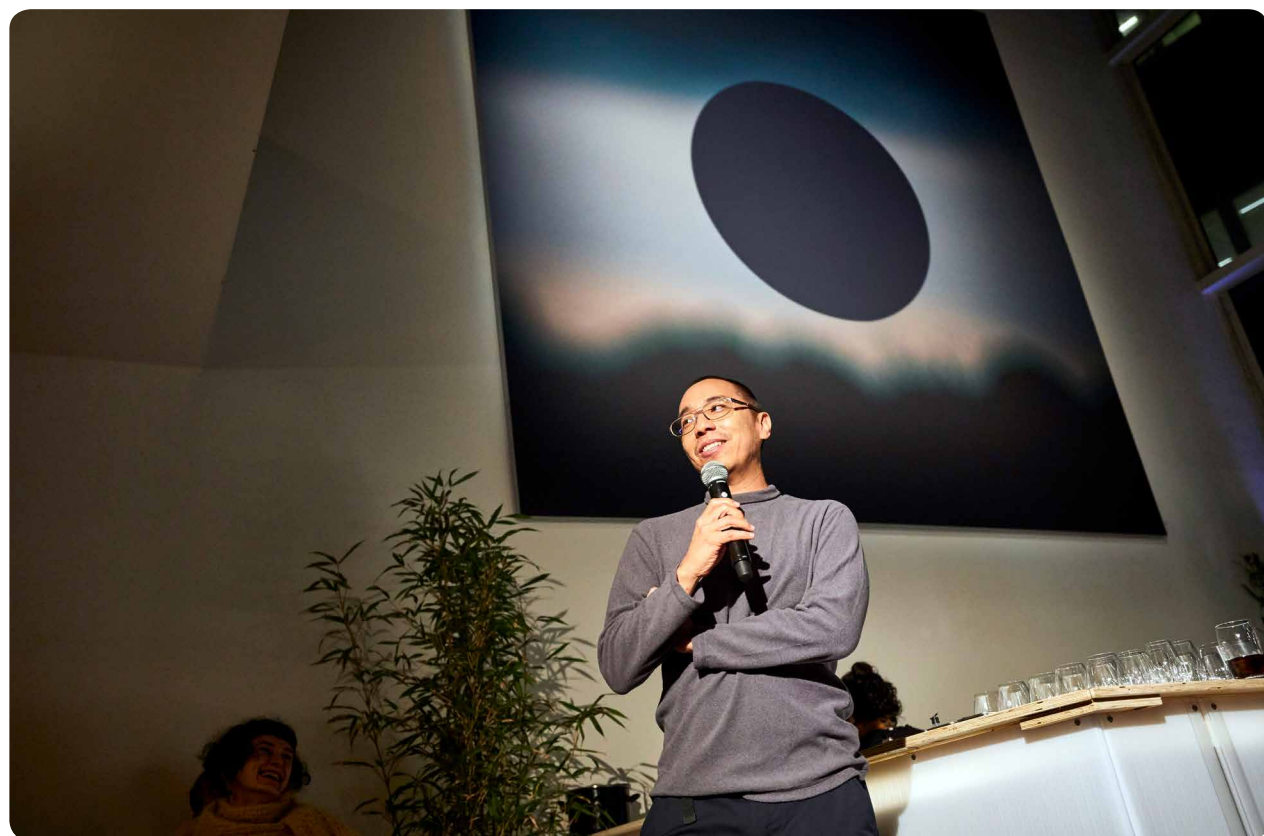
Issue: 1 joint press release
Recipients: 20 media outlets and agencies
Coverage: 130 editorials (52 online, 78 in print)
Value: €160,000 sales-equivalent space

Critics' Choice

In the cinema lifecycle of creation, presentation and appreciation the role of the critic is vital. In their follow-up to last years Critics' Choice film journalists Dana Linsen and Jan-Pieter Ekker explored through various means how this can be made visible and be expanded. The Return of the Critic was made tangible as well as reflected upon through videoessays, special Q&As, a small talkshow, an installation exploring democratised film critique and industry-oriented discussions.

in depth Apichatpong Weerasethakul

‘Individuals produce the best cinema in their own minds’



Apichatpong Weerasethakul at the opening of SLEEP CINEMA HOTEL on 25 January 2018

Apichatpong Weerasethakul has become a solid part of the ‘Rotterdam family’ with IFFR programming and funding many of his films through the Hubert Bals Fund. In 2018, Weerasethakul chose Rotterdam to host his immersive cinematic experience *SLEEP CINEMA HOTEL*, a truly memorable one-off treat.

Apichatpong Weerasethakul shot his first short film *Bullet* in 1993. Although he uses different media platforms, every project sprouts from the same seed. “I develop my work through living and observing my reaction to the world. I keep a journal where I write down my dreams and many other thoughts. Ultimately, it all comes together from those notes.” But he really sees his films come to life in post-production. “In the end it changes a lot from the script, but I always make sure that the heart and the spirit remain the same.” His stories often deal in unconventional ways with dreams, history, nature, collective memory, sexuality and borders – both literally and figuratively.

Deep sleep

Themes of sleeping and dreaming are deeply interwoven in Weerasethakul’s body of work. That’s why Thailand’s leading auteur attended this year’s IFFR with *SLEEP CINEMA HOTEL*: “For me, sleep is the ultimate and universal experience we all have on a daily basis: a fluid state, moving from consciousness to unconsciousness – or somewhere in between.”

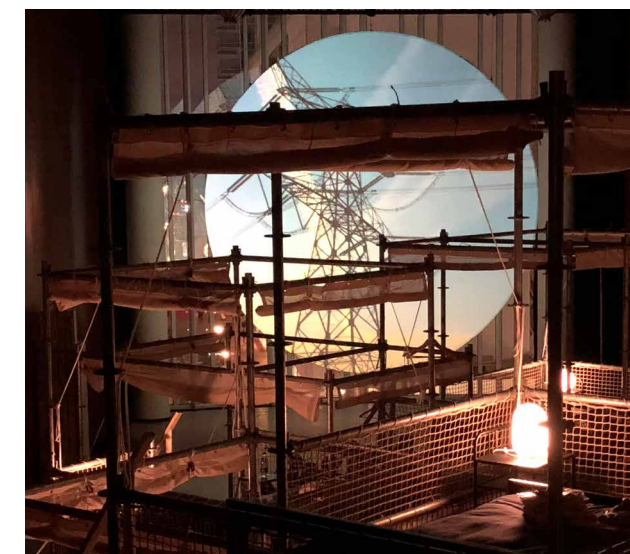
“Sleeping while visiting a film festival is a phenomenon in its own right. During the night, the images you saw and the people you met during the day are processed by the brain into a deeper experience,” says Weerasethakul. He experimented with capturing these fluctuating states using himself as subject. “I started recording myself when I had just woken up and was fascinated observing my own body go through day and night as I contemplated my own breathing and thinking processes. When dreaming, your body is disconnected from reality and at the same time sleep is a place where nobody can control you. So I see sleep as a form of resistance: a liberating act. Weerasethakul’s boyfriend also became involved in the process with the director recording him sleeping. “It’s all about love and trust, because when you sleep you really have no protection. I now realise I was waiting for him to wake up. Would he sense the spirit of the camera?”

“Sleep is like a transformation,” concludes Weerasethakul. As you’re about to drift away, you embark on a journey through a pattern of thought that has a unique, personal rhythm. You might wake up having some new ideas, some new positivity even. When you sleep you go through different cycles, each



SLEEP CINEMA HOTEL

Located in a huge art deco meeting room of the WTC Rotterdam, *SLEEP CINEMA HOTEL* was neither a film nor an installation. It was an immersive cinematic pop-up hotel – bathrooms, beds and breakfast included – providing a communal sleeping space with moving images shown non-stop on a circular projection screen. Weerasethakul: “Programmer Edwin Carels and his colleagues at IFFR traced down this unique, boat-like location. Since the ongoing stream of images was shot by different people, guests travelled through the eyes and perspectives of others, which were in turn interpreted by their own dreamy consciousness. Sleeping while visiting a film festival is quite an interesting phenomenon in its own right: during the night, the images you saw and the people you met during the day are processed by the brain into a deeper experience.”





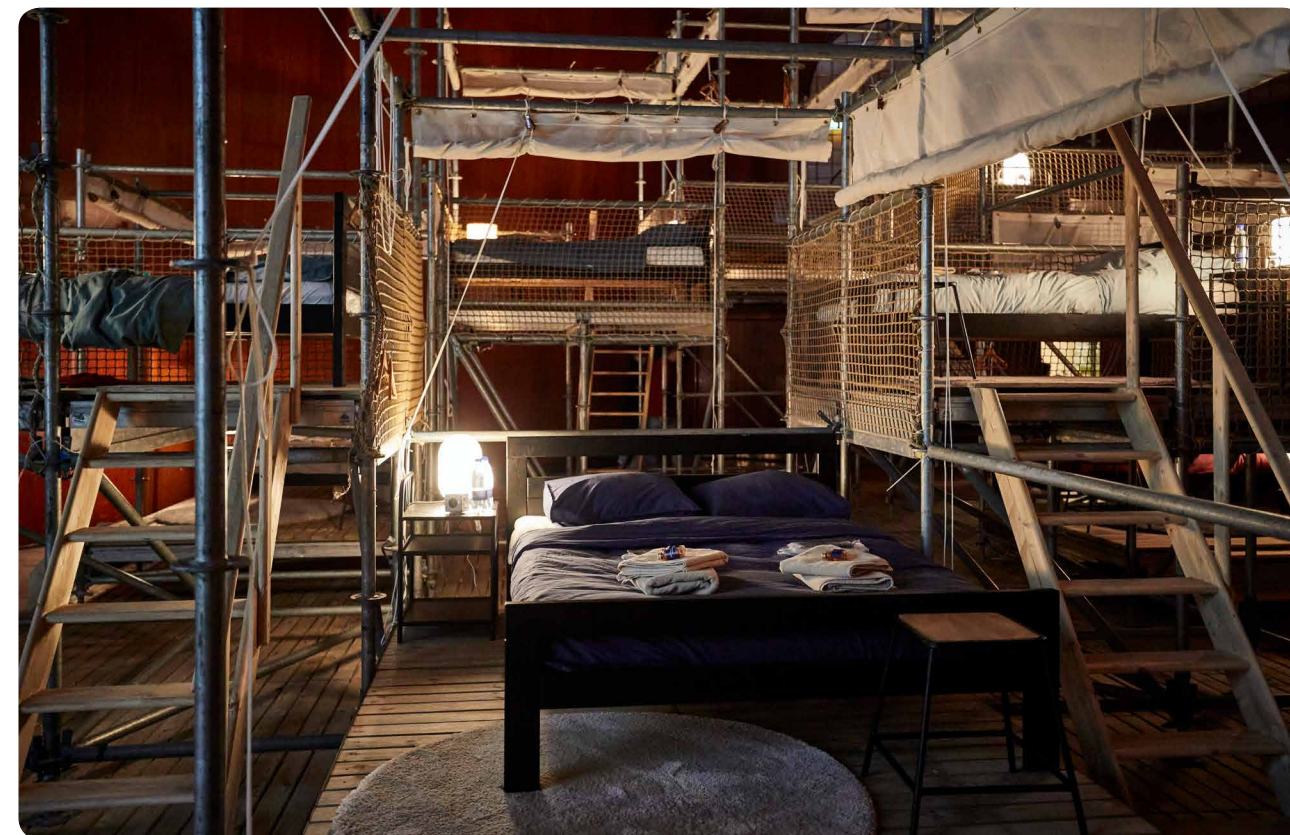
Frameworks:
Apichatpong Weerasethakul presents
Pathompon 'Mont' Tesprateep (right)

At this year's festival, Apichatpong Weerasethakul introduced the talented Thai artist Pathompon 'Mont' Tesprateep to a wider audience as part of IFFR's and its Acolytes grant set-up. Weerasethakul emphasised Tesprateep's unique style and the way his art confronts fears: "For us in Thailand, it's interesting to see the young generation trying to talk about politics while at the same time existing under a military junta, and while their friends are being taken to military camps and subjected to something called 'attitude adjustment', i.e. psychological torture. This creates a climate of fear, especially for people who work in media. So what can we do? Pathompon 'Mont' Tesprateep and his generation are trying to figure that out. He is from a military family, so he confronts that fear in uniform, while also confronting his own guilt. I think that's really admirable. He is in a unique position."

situation, when a military junta took over Thailand. I've always been interested in the issue of borders: the border between pleasure and pain, light and darkness, fiction and reality, going from one state to the other – or, let's say, the border between Thailand and Burma, and shift this physical border between countries to a more psychological one," says Weerasethakul. "Like other filmmakers I try to find a way to confront it, but there's a fine line – if you cross it, the police and soldiers can come and visit your house. I'm not an activist and Thailand is a very pleasant country to live in, but it's impossible to talk explicitly about politics or express your displeasure with the dictator."

In a country where censorship is a serious issue, Weerasethakul manages to work outside the strict Thai studio system and has garnered acclaim around the world. He won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival in 2010 with *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*, and has presented his work at Biennials all over the world as well as the Tate Modern in London. Weerasethakul explains that there's only a niche group of people in his own country who can relate to his work. "We don't have festivals like IFFR to learn from. The culture of the moving image in Thailand is growing in leaps and bounds. You have things like YouTube now and the learning curve is moving from DVD to downloading. There's not really a firmly rooted cinema tradition in Thailand, but for me film has no nationality anyway."

Watch the entire conversation with Apichatpong Weerasethakul at IFFR.com/Weerasethakul.



"For me, sleep is the ultimate and universal experience: a fluid state, moving from consciousness to unconsciousness - or somewhere in between."

Apichatpong Weerasethakul

of them about 90 minutes: the length of a feature film. That's why cinema is very closely connected to the act of sleeping. In cinema we try to mimic dreams, to get lost in a different, uncontrollable narrative. Still, I always believe that we, as individuals, produce the best cinema in our minds."

Border control

Although not overtly political, Weerasethakul does touch on the current Thai situation in his work. In *Cemetery of Splendour* (2015), soldiers are struck by a mysterious sleeping sickness. "For me, this film represented the height of a difficult political

They organise themselves into purposeful groups

The Hubert Bals Fund



Brothers Muayad and Rami Alayan, director and producer of *The Reports on Sarah and Saleem*

“The HBF supported us, both strategically and financially, in all stages of making the film. A wonderfully nurturing journey.”

Muayad Alayan, director of *The Reports on Sarah and Saleem*, HBF 2016 and 2018

Since its inception in 1988, the Hubert Bals Fund (HBF) has contributed to around 1,200 film projects. The fund fosters new talent from areas where freedom of expression and film infrastructure are lacking.

The HBF has always been a pioneer in providing financial support to films by innovative filmmakers from around the world with a special focus on Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and parts of Eastern Europe. The fund provides various grants that are vital in helping these filmmakers to realise their projects. Funding schemes are allocated in several stages of completion, from the script and project development stage to post-production. The positive connections IFFR PRO creates between funding (HBF), mentoring (BoostNL), co-production (CineMart) and the festival (IFFR) is underlined by the success of HBF-backed films in Rotterdam and abroad.

HBF reshaped

Keeping the fund relevant requires it to constantly evolve and adapt. The HBF has recently undergone changes involving a renewed and extended partnership with the Netherlands Film Fund (NFF), the implementation of new guidelines and deadlines, a commitment to increase Benelux distribution, and a new team consisting of Marit van den Elshout, Fay Breeman and Jeske van der Slikke. The fund is also no longer limited to supporting films from the DAC-listed countries only (Development Co-operation Directorate). From now on, countries ranking low on the World Free Press index are also eligible for support. The Script and Project Development category has two additional subcategories tied to IFFR's programme sections Bright Future and Voices, aimed at filmmakers with their first or second feature and more established filmmakers.

The selection process

In 2017/2018, the HBF received 683 applications. Of these, 34 were eventually granted support by the selection committee (see Selected Projects, page 31), comprising industry as well as IFFR programmers and staff members. Core selection criteria are the artistic quality of the project and financial viability. The committees meet several times committees meeting several times over a period of three months before making a selection. Almost three-quarters of the projects receiving support were debut or second projects. The fund allocated a total of €492,500 to project contributions and to the Hubert Bals Fund Audience Award, which is awarded to the HBF-supported film with the highest audience rating. Please note that NFF+HBF (total contribution €200,000) is financed entirely by the Netherlands Film Fund, and not included in this amount.

Of the 683 applications received in 2017/2018, 36% came from Asia, 32% from Latin America, 6% from Africa, 15% from the Middle East and North Africa, 7% from Eastern Europe and 3% from the Caucasus region.

Harvest

Since the HBF supports many projects through their early stages, completion times can vary. On average, a project supported for development takes between two to six years to finalise. Projects supported for production through the NFF+HBF and HBF+Europe schemes are usually finished within one to three years. The HBF Harvest, the collection of finished projects presented at this year's edition of IFFR, consisted of seven films in 2018. Three of them competed for a Hivos Tiger Award: *Nervous Translation*, *Sultry* and *The Reports on Sarah and Saleem*. The latter was awarded both the Hivos Tiger Competition's Special Jury Prize for its script and the HBF Audience Award. *Nervous Translation* won the NETPAC Award for best Asian film.

Critical and commercial success

The reputation of the Hubert Bals Fund extends far beyond IFFR. Each year, various HBF-backed titles premiere and receive awards or critical acclaim at major film festivals. Last year, Cannes selected three of 'our' films: *A Man of Integrity* by Mohammad Rasoulof (which won the Un Certain Regard Prize), *Beauty and the Dogs* by Kaouther Ben Hania and *I Am Not a Witch* by Rungano Nyoni. *Oblivion Verses* by Alireza Khatami, won the FIPRESCI Prize in Venice and was also selected for Busan and Toronto. Four HBF-supported films were selected for the Berlinale 2018: *The Seen and Unseen* by Kamila Andini, *La omisión* by Sebastián Schjaer, *Hard Paint* by Marcio Reolon and Filipe Matzembacher (winner of the Teddy Award for Best Feature Film) and *La cama* by Mónica Lairana.



I Am Not A Witch by Rungano Nyoni

“The HBF was my very first YES!”

Rungano Nyoni, director of *I Am Not a Witch*, HBF 2014 and 2016, IFFR 2018.

HBF Harvest: shown at IFFR 2018

- *Nervous Translation*, Shireen Seno, Philippines.
- *The Reports on Sarah and Saleem*, Muayad Alayan, Palestine/Netherlands/Germany/Mexico.
- *Sultry*, Marina Meliande, Brazil.
- *Tiempo compartido*, Sebastian Hofmann, Mexico/Netherlands. European Premiere
- *I Am Not A Witch*, Rungano Nyoni, United Kingdom/France/Germany/Zambia.
- *A Man of Integrity*, Mohammad Rasoulof, Iran.
- *Los versos del olvido*, Alireza Khatami, France/Germany/Netherlands/Chile.

IFFR-supported films at Cannes 2018

- *The Load* by Ognjen Glavonic (Quinzaine), HBF 2012, HBF 2016, BoostNL 2013
- *Rafiki* by Wanuri Kahiu (Un Certain Regard), NFF+HBF 2016
- *Girls of the Sun* by Eva Husson (Competition), CineMart 2017
- *Birds of Passage* by Cristina Gallego and Ciro Guerra (Quinzaine), CineMart 2016

Several of the films will have theatrical releases in the Netherlands in 2018. Rungano Nyoni’s *I Am Not a Witch* was purchased by Dutch film distributor September Film, Mohammad Rasoulof’s *A Man of Integrity* and Kaouther Ben Hania’s *Beauty and the Dogs* by Cinéart, John Trengove’s *The Wound* by Arti Film and Muayad Alayan’s *The Reports on Sarah and Saleem* by MOOOV.

Networking

The traditional dinner for HBF guests was expanded for IFFR 2018. Producers, sales agents and distributors from IFFR PRO Days and Tiger Film Mecenaat members (who contribute financially to the Hubert Bals Fund) were also invited. It’s hoped the increased range and experience of guests will bolster networking opportunities.

BoostNL

BoostNL is a collaborative project between IFFR, CineMart & HBF and the Netherlands Film Festival/Holland Film Meeting. A number of projects are offered a tailor-made training programme starting at the Holland Film Meeting in Utrecht in September and ending at IFFR in Rotterdam



The Reports on Sarah and Saleem by Muayad Alayan

“For producers interested in co-producing internationally, HBF is really important. Without their support it would have been impossible to make this film.”

Hanneke Niens, producer of *The Reports on Sarah and Saleem*, HBF 2016 and 2018

in January. Four HBF-supported projects were involved in BoostNL: *La cama* by Monica Lairana (Argentina), *Baby* by Marcelo Caetano (Brazil), *Nasir* by Arun Karthick (India) and *The Stranger* by Zhengfan Yang (China).

Finances

The Hubert Bals Fund (HBF) is supported by Creative Europe MEDIA, Hivos, Stichting Dioraphite, Lions Club Rotterdam L’Esprit Du Temps, the Tiger Film Mecenaat and the Netherlands Film Fund. The latter has also contributed to Script and Project Development through the NFF+HBF Co-Development Scheme for the first time this year. This extended collaboration with the Netherlands Film Fund and contributions from private donors (through our Tiger Film Mecenaat) have had a positive impact on the funds finances and are proving a reliable source of income. Our ambition is to grow HBF’s support base through the Tiger Film Mecenaat and the newly launched initiative IFFR Tigress: a network entirely geared towards the support and promotion of female filmmakers.

“A year ago I had no money to work and no producer, just a story. Now I have local producers, a co-producer and a completed screenplay. Above all, HBF’s support gave me the determination to pursue what I believe in.”

Arun Karthick, director of *Nasir*, HBF 2017

Selected projects HBF 2018

HBF Script and Project Development: Bright Future

- *Baby* by Marcelo Caetano (Brazil)
- *Estate* by John Trengove (South Africa) | supported via NFF+HBF co-development scheme
- *Feathers of a Father* by Omar Elzohairy (Egypt/France) | supported via NFF+HBF co-development scheme
- *My Dear Valentín* by Jazmín López (Argentina)
- *Nasir* by Arun Karthick (India)
- *La niña del rayo* by Luz Olivares Capelle (Argentina/Austria)
- *Regretfully at Dawn* by Sivaroj Kongsakul (Thailand)
- *The Stranger* by Yang Zhengfan (China)
- *Anatomy of Time* by Jakrawal Nilthamrong (Thailand) | supported via NFF+HBF co-development scheme
- *Cu Li Never Cries* by Lan Pham Ngoc (Vietnam/Germany)
- *El rostro de la medusa* by Melisa Liebenenthal (Argentina)
- *La jauría* by Andrés Ramírez Pulido (Colombia) | supported via NFF+HBF co-development scheme
- *Naked Sky* by Dea Kulumbegashvili (Georgia) | supported via NFF+HBF co-development scheme
- *Ningdu* by Lei Lei (Hong Kong) | supported via NFF+HBF co-development scheme
- *The French Teacher* by Ricardo Alves Jr. (Brazil) | supported via NFF+HBF co-development scheme
- *The Whole-Timers* by Pooja Gurung, Bibhusan Basnet (Nepal/France) | supported via NFF+HBF co-development scheme
- *Yashar* by Elvin Adigozel (Azerbaijan/France)

HBF Script and Project Development: Voices

- *Hymns* by Babak Jalali (Mexico) | supported via NFF+HBF co-development scheme
- *Raja* by Deepak Rauniyar (Nepal) | supported via NFF+HBF co-development scheme
- *Sleepwalk* by Ricardo Silva (Mexico/USA)
- *Érami: El monte que es el mundo* by Paz Encina (Paraguay)
- *Zero One One* by Mohamad Malas (Syria)

- *Stonewalling* by Huang Ji (China) | supported via NFF+HBF co-development scheme
- *La práctica* by Martín Rejtman (Argentina/Chile/Germany) | supported via NFF+HBF co-development scheme

HBF+Europe: Minority Co-production

- *Clara Sola* by Nathalie Álvarez Mézens (Colombia/Sweden/Denmark)
- *Flatland* by Jenna Cato Bass (South Africa/Germany)
- *Memory House* by João Paulo Miranda Maria (Brazil/France)
- *The Reports on Sarah and Saleem* by Muayad Alayan (Palestine/Germany/Norway/France/Netherlands: KeyFilm)

HBF+Europe Distribution

- *The Wound* by John Trengove (South Africa/Germany/Netherlands: OAK Motion Pictures/France) for distribution in Brazil, Norway and the United Kingdom.
- *Los decentes* by Lukas Valenta Rinner (Argentina/Austria) for distribution in Latvia, Argentina, Germany and Austria.

NFF+HBF Co-production Scheme

- *Almost in Love* by Leonardo Brzezicki (Argentina/Brazil/Chile/Netherlands: Keplerfilm)
- *The Reports on Sarah and Saleem* by Muayad Alayan (Palestine/Germany/Norway/France/Netherlands: KeyFilm)
- *A Land Imagined* by Yeo Siew Hua (Singapore/Netherlands: Volya Films)
- *Sick, Sick, Sick* by Alice Furtado (Brazil/Netherlands: BALDR Film)



Sultry by Marina Meliande

They continue caring for their offsprings long after they are born

Education



Rotterdam children enjoying the IFFR shorts programme.

In 2018, IFFR offered an extensive range of educational activities to encourage more children and young people to get involved in the festival experience and make it as inclusive as possible.

IFFR aims to give quality cinema and film education a place in school curricula and in the lives of all young people in Rotterdam. Through IFFR’s ties with city’s educational institutions and cultural partners the festival reached 20,453 children and young people, a growth of 21% compared to last year. Programmes on offer included a special screening of short films for around 100 young patients (and their families) from the Sophia MC children’s hospital. The programme also featured special guests and Q&A with the film director *Heijplaters*. Additionally, there was a free short-film programme for primary schools designed to support cultural awareness. The festival also has a dedicated screening programme for secondary and intermediate vocational education (MBO). As well as tailoring film selections to the curriculum, IFFR has also developed tailor-made educational materials to support the screenings.

The festival’s links with Erasmus University Rotterdam paved the way for film quizzes and teacher workshops. While students further benefited from IFFR’s partnerships with Willem de Kooning Academy the Dutch Film and Television Academy with a series of festival masterclasses, screenings, talks and opportunities to network.

The IFFR Youth Jury, consisting of young people from Rotterdam, also got the chance to reward their favourite festival offering, with their award for best film going to *The Guilty* by Gustav Möller.



“We find it fun and important to acquaint our pupils with big events in their own city like IFFR and to introduce them to alternative cinema.”

L. de Vos, teacher OBS De Pijler



IFFR Youth Jury 2018

Facts and figures

20,453	visits (+21%)
8,675	primary education
5,059	secondary education
6,418	students
301	teachers

They recognise themselves in mirrors

Support and partnerships



The launch of Tigris on 3 February 2018 (see page 36).

IFFR comes together through an extensive network of partnerships. We would like to thank our main partners: BankGiro Loterij, Hivos, United Foundation, vfonds and Volkskrant for their contribution.

The success of the 2018 edition was made possible thanks to loyal sponsors, private donors, new contributors and an innovative way of bringing together a varied group of organisations. De Volkskrant has proved invaluable in promoting the festival programme with its distribution of our IFFR Programme Supplement and its comprehensive coverage of events. The 'Volkskrant Day', with screenings of audience favourites, provided more seats and screens than ever before in its history. vfonds, the fund for Peace, Freedom and Veteran Care, is a new and welcome addition. As one of the main partners, vfonds creates a platform for dialogue, freedom, tolerance and openness that finds strong resonance with IFFR.

Our partnerships are based on implementing shared objectives. Thanks to the substantial support of Fonds21 and Rotterdam Festivals, IFFR succeeds in connecting a wide and varied audience with the festival. Our successful educational programme is made possible with the help of Stichting Bevordering van Volkskracht and Stichting Elise Mathilde Fonds. And RabobankRotterdamFonds support allowed IFFR Young Selectors, a group of young film enthusiasts, to create their own film programme.

Ammodo, new partner for Tiger Short Competition

Combining art and film is one of the most important aspects of the festival. This connection is made especially apparent in IFFR's short film programme. The short films are often experimental in nature, merge disciplines and feature formats ranging from 35mm to 3D and Virtual Reality. This makes our new Tiger Short Competition partnership with Ammodo, an organisation supporting art and science, all the more exciting considering its experimental and interdisciplinary approach.

The Rotterdam connection

Every IFFR edition can count on the help of numerous local partners. This year, Zadkine students ran the food and drink stands in the festival centre 'de Doelen', last year's extremely popular exclusive IFFR shopping bag by Rotterdam artist Susan Bijl made a comeback with three new designs, and the local sock brand Alfredo Gonzales created special Tiger Socks which sold out long before the end of the festival.

For 14 years, the Tiger Business Lounge (TBL) has been IFFR's quintessential networking spot for Rotterdam entrepreneurs. One of this year's TBL highlights was a special dinner event for members and guests followed by a short film programme.



The Tiger Film Mecenaat

"Films open our eyes and make us realise that freedom and democracy are not to be taken for granted. Together with our partners and friends we strive to make a difference."

Cees de Veer, board member vfonds

Funding streams

IFFR receives structural subsidies from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science as well as the Rotterdam City Council (28% of the budget). Aside from these structural funding streams, IFFR is supported by the European Union via Creative Europe MEDIA and receives funding from companies, funds and private donors, at both national and international levels. The festival's self-generated income amounts to 57% of the budget.



“By supporting the Tiger Short Competition we wish to support the cross-pollination of film and art, and give extra visibility to an interdisciplinary approach to images.”

Juliette de Wijkerslooth, director Ammodo

Lilianne Ploumen, the former Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, gave a Tiger Speech emphasising the importance of the broad cultural scope presented by IFFR in the face of the constant stream of information from today’s media. Rotterdam Mayor Ahmed Aboutaleb, ambassador of the TBL, shared his view on the festival’s importance for the city during his annual speech. The evening was a great prologue to the following 10 festival days, during which TBL members had the opportunity to organise their own events for their company and relations.

Tiger Film Mecenaat: IFFR's major donors

The Tiger Film Mecenaat is vital to the festival, enabling IFFR to invest in emerging film talent through the Hubert Bals Fund. There are several schemes and levels of involvement. The Van Beek-Donner Foundation is one such example, offering a Fellowship of €10,000 to stimulate a single filmmaker’s project. This financial impulse works as a catalyst for the further development of the project – and with an 80% success rate, it makes a real difference to a filmmaker’s career.

In addition, the Lions Club Rotterdam organised a fundraising event for filmmakers in search for funding. Since relaunching the Tiger Film Mecenaat in 2017, the donations have quadrupled: an increase that enabled us to support four extra film projects.

Launches

During its 47th edition, IFFR launched two new initiatives in support of independent film. The Next Film Patrons are a group of young film enthusiasts eager to join a vibrant network and curious to learn more about supporting cinema via IFFR. The first to sign up for an NFP membership was BAFTA-winning Animation Director Nina Ganz who held an animated conversation with initiator Lotte Hemme during the kick-off event.

This festival edition also saw the birth of Tigress: a new component of the already thriving Tiger Film Mecenaat network, aiming to give specific support to female film talent. Although IFFR makes a conscious effort to represent the female voice in its programme, male artists still outnumber the women. The Tigress network aims to increase the number of female filmmakers worldwide by connecting private donors and investors to specific projects by women and by contributing financially in the post-production phase.



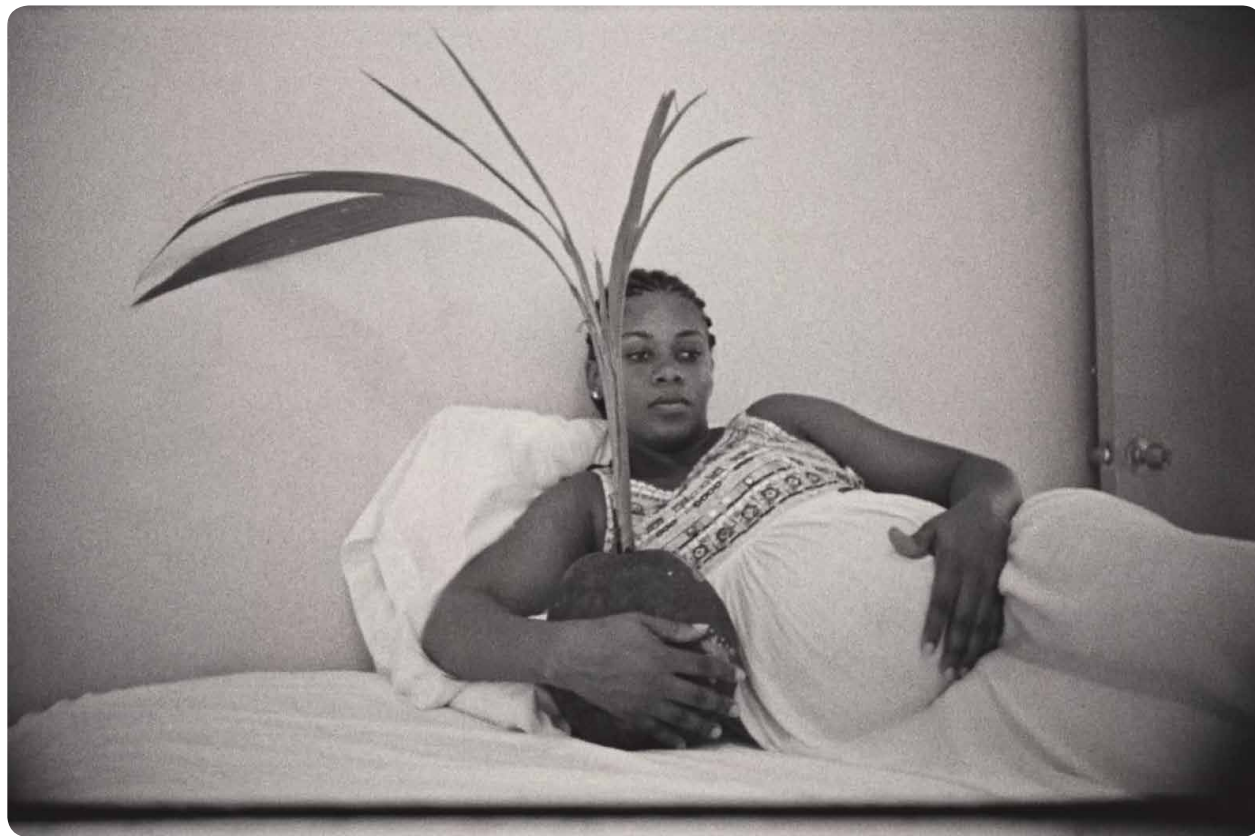
Tiger Business Lounge dinner with mayor of Rotterdam Ahmed Aboutaleb and Janneke Staarink

“We, as humans of this planet, must keep telling our stories to one another and more importantly, we have to keep trying to understand one another.”

Lilianne Ploumen, taken from her Tiger Speech

They give names to periods of time, like days, weeks, months and years

More than a festival



Black Mother by Khalik Allah, winner of the Yellow Robin Award 2018

Twelve days is never enough to fulfil our mission to bring daring, quality cinema to adventurous audiences.

Curaçao International Film Festival Rotterdam

Organising a festival of IFFR's scope is always a year-round effort. In recent years IFFR has also expanded its activities beyond the festival. The IFFR spin-off, Curaçao International Film Festival Rotterdam celebrated its seventh edition this year, from 11 to 15 April in Willemstad. CIFFR included highlights from the most recent edition of IFFR with the addition of new work by filmmakers from the region. Filmmaker Khalik Allah won the Yellow Robin Award 2018 for his film *Black Mother*.

IFFR KINO

IFFR KINO events feature a monthly screening in the birthplace of IFFR almost fifty years ago. Every first Wednesday of the month, IFFR fans can experience a dedicated screening and networking opportunities. IFFR KINO's second year comprises cult classics and underground films from IFFR's archives. Highlights were sold-out screenings of *Tokyo Drifter*, a tribute to the late Suzuki Seijun, many of whose films were shown at IFFR during his lifetime, a David Lynch double bill and Harmony Korine's *Gummo*, marking the first-ever 35mm presentation in the KINO venue.

MASH-UP!

The boundary between film and art is never so slight as it is during the MASH-UP! events. For the fourth edition of MASH-UP!, IFFR and Kunsthall Rotterdam featured the advance premiere of Ruben Ostlund's Golden Palm winner *The Square* in the Kunsthall's main hall. Post screening the audience roamed the exhibition spaces until midnight and indulged in the work of Belgian surrealist Paul Delvaux. Participants were also invited to move their feet on the dance floor to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Kunsthall, an icon of modern architecture designed by world-famous architect Rem Koolhaas

IFFR Gemist and Preview Tour

Throughout the year, IFFR visited various theatres and art houses in the Netherlands. As part of IFFR Gemist, audiences get the chance to see three IFFR favourites without a Dutch distributor. The IFFR Preview Tour, across 36 cinemas, also offered advance screenings of Warwick Thornton's *Sweet Country* ahead of the festival.

Travelling Cinema

IFFR Travelling Cinema is one of the ways in which the festival aims to bring artistic, independent cinema to wider audiences. IFFR Travelling Cinema works with organisations including Leesaal Rotterdam West, HipHopHuis, Pleinbioscoop Rotterdam, Sophia Kinderziekenhuis and the Amsterdam-based

Bijlmerbajes Bios. Screenings ranged from Fassbinder's 1973 classic *Angst essen Seele auf*, modern hiphop classics like *Style Wars* and *Walkmen* to more recent IFFR successes like *The Idol* and *Moonlight*. Al fresco screenings are also on the agenda, with animated masterpiece *The Red Turtle* having a summer's night open-air screening on the Afrikaanderplein in Rotterdam.

Local initiatives

Other local initiatives included a special evening called IFFR Feyenoord Fever, involving football tricks, images from the archives and the documentary *The Other Side of the Heart Is White*, which premiered at IFFR 2014 and the IFFR Young Selectors, four Rotterdam youngsters who curated their own film evenings during the year. IFFR also showed its presence at the Into the Great Wide Open festival and IFFR @ De Balie in Amsterdam during which *Der Hauptmann* was screened following an introduction by famous sociologist Abram de Swaan. IFFR also collaborated with various Dutch film festivals and EYE Filmmuseum during the Day of the Short Film on 21 December, the shortest day of the year.



Der Hauptmann by Robert Schwentke

"IFFR's new focus gives us the opportunity to collaborate with many different partners and showcase films and their makers throughout the year."

Ronny Theeuwes, special events

Finance and figures

From stable financial footing, IFFR has been able to increase both income from ticket sales and from new partnerships. In doing so, IFFR continues to realise and expand its ambitions.

The total IFFR budget in 2018 amounted to €9.25 million. IFFR is supported on a multiple-year basis by local and national government. These structural subsidies from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Rotterdam municipality amount to 28% of the budget.

IFFR covers the largest part of its costs (57%) through self-generated income: from visitors (tickets, food and drinks, advertisements, etcetera), professionals (accreditation fees), sponsorships and contributions from private funds and individuals. Income from ticket sales has increased by 5% due to the renewed Masterclasses and Talks programme and successful events like the screening of *Phantom Thread* in collaboration with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra.

The remaining income comes from public funds and institutions, such as several project-based contributions by the European Union.

Once again, IFFR has established new partnerships. In 2018 vfonds became one of the main sponsors, next to BankGiroLoterij, Hivos, United Foundation and *de Volkskrant*. The festival has also realised specific programmes with the help of new and existing partnerships. Examples are the Ammodo Tiger Short Competition with financial support from Ammodo, the performance *Totes Adorbs ♥ Hurricane* with project funding by the Rotterdam municipality, and the installations *Silent Room* and *The Origin of Creepers* made possible by a contribution from Rotterdam Festivals.

Thanks to the support of Stichting Droom en Daad, IFFR has been able to increase the visibility of its activities through a renewed website and the launch of a festival app. With this support IFFR also established a new arts grant Frameworks, launched its Masterclasses and Talks programme and created its very own streaming platform IFFR Unleashed, which is registered as a private limited company (bv).

Facts and figures

Admissions **329,000**

IFFR.com

Unique visitors **+15%**
Visits **+24%**
App downloads **NEW 9972**

Social media

Instagram likes **+30%**
Facebook likes **+7%**
Twitter followers **+10%**

Tiger Alert **28,116** subscribers **+11%**

Youtube **4,920,000** views **+46%**

Visitor evaluation of IFFR 2018 **8.8/10**

Net promoter score **55.4**

Digital innovations

This year IFFR launched an app to enhance visitors' digital experience of the festival. Tools featured included in-app ticket purchasing and access to the festival programme, locations and calendar. Push notifications and targeted messages were also generated. For instance, visitors who showed interest in a certain film were sent notifications of videos or blogs about the specific director. On an immersive level, guests in the vicinity of *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* were invited to step in and visit the premises. We recorded 7,629 active users. Of all the push notifications, 43 per cent were opened, demonstrating the strong engagement between IFFR and its audience. By comparison, the industry average for push notifications opened is 12 per cent.

IFFR revamped its web presence through IFFR.com. Changes addressed a better customer journey, clearer navigability across the site and seamless integration of the film-professional services for all communities.

Human resources



What makes Planet IFFR stay on its course? Humans. The combined efforts of various highly specialised life-forms generate one of the biggest multi-day festivals in the Netherlands.

implementing a reporting system to ensure the safety of IFFR visitors, employees and guests. The code of conduct was also shared with industry guests prior to the festival. An internal counsellor was appointed to serve as confidential contact point for employee grievances.

In 2018, 220 people worked on a contract basis, 117 freelancers joined the effort, 75 individuals were on the payroll and 14 interns enjoyed their first insider festival experience. Additionally, the festival's success very much relies on the enthusiastic input of 900 volunteers.

Last year, IFFR changed its personnel department into a human resources department: a name switch that represents a more strategic approach to human capital. An organisation chart was established to determine whether the departmental structure enables IFFR's growth ambitions. The organisation also took a proactive approach towards the MeToo movement by establishing a code of conduct and

in depth Jan Švankmajer

‘I wanted my final feature to premiere in Rotterdam’



Jan Švankmajer in the Natural History Museum Rotterdam

The great Czech surrealist Jan Švankmajer honoured the festival with the world premiere of his last feature-length film, *Insect*. In Rotterdam, he discussed his films, his methods and his long-standing relationship with IFFR.

Jan Švankmajer (1934) is one of the great Rotterdam directors who has helped define the festival. The Czech, former Czechoslovak, filmmaker has seen all of his features (including *Alice*, 1987; *Surviving Life*, 2010) and many of his short films screened at IFFR. This year he granted the festival the world premiere of his final feature. *Insect*, a typically surrealist Švankmajer mix of stop-motion animation and stylised live action, focuses on the filming of amateur theatre rehearsals of the 1922 Czech satirical play *Pictures from the Insects' Life*, and proved a festival highlight.

Festival connection

Švankmajer's long standing relationship with the festival has proved fruitful for his films and relationships. "IFFR was one of the first to open the world up to my work. All my features were screened in Rotterdam, starting with *Alice*, and *Lunacy* had its world premiere here. And of course, let's not forget the famous Chinese restaurant Tai Wu, so much appreciated by the festival guests! That's another reason for wanting my last feature to have its world premiere here."

Rotterdam was also where he first met former *Monty Python*-animator and director Terry Gilliam (Brazil, 1985), who has been heavily influenced by his work and the American animation masters the Quay Brothers (*The Cabinet of Jan Švankmajer*, 1984; *In Absentia*, 2000). When Švankmajer and the Quay Brothers both visited the festival in 2006, plans were made for a joint interview. The Quays, however, refused, because Švankmajer was the 'king' and they were only 'mice'. Švankmajer disagrees: "I think everybody has gurus when they're young. That's only natural. But they don't depend on me. They make very different, and interesting films." Both the Quay's and Gilliam also helped with crowdfunding for *Insect*.

Crowdfunding

Švankmajer needed private financing to finish *Insect* and funding is also the reason behind it being his last feature-length production. He explained his frustrations during his IFFR Big Talk: "In my filmography, there are always gaps of five to six years between features. Not because I'm lazy or uninspired or unable to finish a script, it just takes that long to find funding. And if you add five or six years to my age now, you reach a completely unrealistic figure."

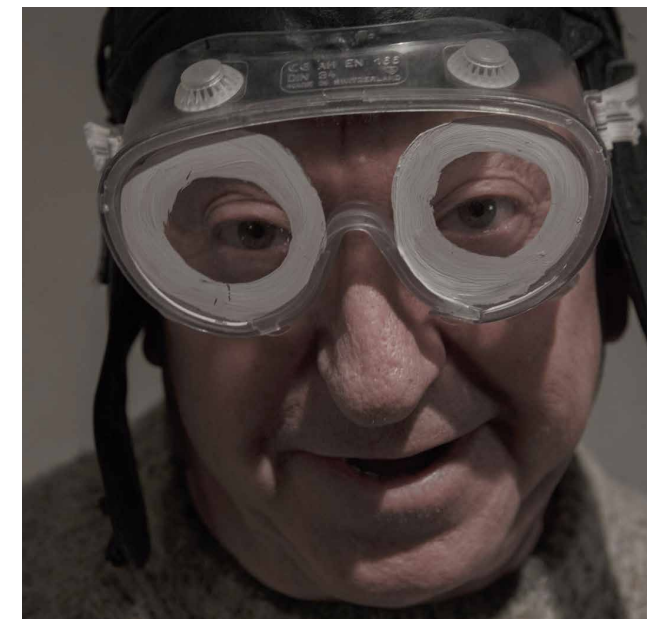
The director will still be active on other projects. "I will continue working on short films or collage drawings, objects or anything.

I have finished more than 20 objects since I made *Insect*. In terms of the creative process, I don't really see any difference. I approach each of them in exactly the same way."

Interpretations of the past

Švankmajer's ideas, his studio and even his cameras come from another era. That is why his objects, like his sets, look used and worn. "I like old objects. Things that have been touched by many hands." This predilection initially shocked *Insect*'s actress Kamila Magálová, who accompanied him at the Big Talk. "Mr Švankmajer's studio, where we shot the film, is an old, dilapidated and disused cinema, 25 kilometres outside Prague," she explained. Švankmajer jokingly protested: "Okay, the cameras are from the 1930s to 1950s, but they are perfectly functional. We have full lighting equipment, we have the editing table. This is practically Hollywood!"

Even the idea for his latest film dates back to the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia. "I don't actually like the Čapek brothers", he smiles, "but in 1972, a state film-company director, appointed after the Soviet occupation of our country, wanted me to do a puppet animation of the Čapeks' *Pictures from the Insects' Life*. Which is nonsense, because that play is a parable, which likens people to insects. It should be done with actors. I refused, but unconsciously, I started thinking about it. I ended up writing a treatment, where the characters were in fact represented by live actors, not puppets. This treatment was promptly rejected." He jokes: "That's the great advantage of spending your most productive years under censorship. That way, in your old age, you have a stockpile of shelved ideas you can return to." And he isn't afraid of international audiences struggling with ideas originating in communist Czechoslovakia. Back in 2006, he told us: "That is the advantage of what I call the imaginative film, which uses metaphors, analogies and



Insect



Jan Švankmajer's Big Talk, 28 January 2018

“Eyes are the window to the soul and the mouth expresses aggressivity. I could do without a nose.”

Jan Švankmajer

metamorphoses – its meaning is always ambiguous. One visitor even asked me if *Lunacy* was about the war in Iraq! Another thought *Otěsánek* was about Israel, because of a scene where a character has to lock himself in his house or leave the place forever. It is the gift of the imaginative film to allow such widely different interpretations.”

Puppets and dreams

The idea of the imaginative film also extends to his approach to the actors. He explains his methods as treating them like puppets. He wants them to act in a stylised way, as if guided by strings, while he films them with short takes and minimal camera movements, “like in animation”.

That surrealist approach isn’t always easy, explained Kamila Magálová. “When they approached me to work with Mr Švankmajer, I didn’t even ask to see the script, I immediately said yes. But I’m trained in the Stanislavski method, which is based on portraying emotions on stage by completely personifying with the character and fully inhabiting the role.” And that’s not what Švankmajer is looking for. He claims, half-jokingly, that he casts actors on their eyes and mouth. “Eyes are obviously the window to the soul, and the mouth expresses aggressivity. These are two very telling features. The nose is not as important; I could do without a nose.”

In the Big Talk he added: “In my kind of films, actors, costumes, props, objects can all carry meaning and are, in this sense, equal. Plus, characters also have a symbolic level. So a psychological performance would in fact be absurd.” In his films objects are often as alive and important as people. It’s a dreamscape which is also strongly rooted in the real world with its setting and use of worn-out objects and materials. It is essentially surrealist: spookily weird, subverting rules, and at the same time disturbingly recognisable.

“Of course, dreams play a significant role for any surrealist”, affirms Švankmajer. But his own dreams take a darker turn. “I always dream of persecution. That is my recurring dream. I grew up in wartime and in my dreams, I kept being persecuted by German soldiers. And I would have to escape through this maze of courtyards and gardens outside our house.” Luckily, he says with a smile, “here in Rotterdam, I have not had a dream of persecution.”

Watch the entire conversation with Jan Švankmajer at IFFR.com/Svankmajer.



Insect

“The gift of the imaginative film is that it allows for such widely different interpretations.”

Jan Švankmajer

in depth IFFR Unleashed

‘Not your everyday films, every day’



Digital content manager Melissa van der Schoor and managing director Janneke Staarink.

In the middle of its 47th edition, the festival launched its own streaming service IFFR Unleashed. Janneke Staarink and Melissa van der Schoor discuss their ambitions for this uniquely director-centered platform.

Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither was IFFR Unleashed. The recently launched streaming platform was in beta trial during the 2017 festival and builds on years of experience in the world of distribution, dating back to the VHS era.

Janneke Staarink, managing director of IFFR: "As pioneering as it is, it's important to realise that IFFR Unleashed is not a distribution service that was cooked up overnight. Nor is it a totally new activity. On the contrary, we have a long history of distributing festival titles in various forms. In the 1990s, we distributed Hubert Bals Fund films on 35mm copies through national theatres and in 1998 we founded our own home entertainment label – first releasing on video tape, later on DVD. In 2005 IFFR started a service in collaboration with major European internet and telecommunications services called Tiger Online, where viewers could watch selected films digitally. In many ways you could say this was premature, but it shows our pioneering spirit – in those days, Netflix was still distributing rental DVDs by mail. It also demonstrates our continuous mission to look forward, to find new ways to connect filmmakers with their audience and to present and promote 'our' films."

Melissa van der Schoor, digital content manager: "In recent years we've put a lot of work into our YouTube channel, where we programmed a new short film every week, and we started releasing festival films on iTunes and Google Play. All these efforts were one big learning experience. YouTube was terrific for acquiring millions of views and subscribers and raising visibility for participating filmmakers; however, without advertisements there was no financial gain. iTunes and Google Play allowed filmmakers to earn more money, but we stumbled upon technical issues and other limitations regarding content, policy and presentation."

Janneke: "There was only one conclusion: if we didn't want to be restricted by others, if we wanted to enjoy our freedom and occupy an online presence that was closely tied to our physical festival, we had to build our own service. That was the only way to stay in control. It was also a necessity if we wanted to let filmmakers share the anticipated revenues as much as possible. Last year, we ran a trial platform; based on the extensive user feedback, we were confident enough to take the next step in

this journey: the launch of IFFR Unleashed. The service features a subscription-based model in the Benelux, and you can rent an individual film from anywhere in the world, knowing that 50 per cent of the income goes directly to the filmmaker. The remaining half is reinvested in developing and supporting the platform."

The world is changing, and the world of cinema is changing with it. As the recent conflict between Netflix and Cannes demonstrates, traditional and new media are not always on the same page, leading sometimes to fierce debates. What role can IFFR play to blend these worlds into a perfect marriage? Janneke: "IFFR Unleashed makes IFFR stronger, because the films that are available will always screen at the first festival. For us, the cinema experience is the most important. Consequently, the streaming service doesn't cannibalise our festival, but works as an expansion. You have to see IFFR Unleashed as a service – to our filmmakers, who want to reach a wider audience and control where and how their films are made available, but also to our audience. After all, many of the films touring the festival scene are never distributed in the Benelux, or in the world for that matter. Also, it's not humanly possible to see all 500 films featured during the 12 days of the festival. Thanks to IFFR Unleashed we can finally give a positive answer to everyone who contact us after each edition asking for the opportunity to see specific films they may have missed. They'll be able to experience the festival adventure again from their own homes."

Melissa: "Besides showing festival films, we really hope that IFFR Unleashed will offer the typical festival atmosphere as well, which we try to establish by adding bonus content like Q&As and Masterclasses and encouraging a sense of community among our subscribers and users."

The future is bright for this new initiative with an ever-expanding library and a viewing base of 69 different countries after just a few months. For now, the focus lies on making the service sustainable and possibly expanding the subscription model to countries outside the Benelux.

Does IFFR have any specific regions or ambitions to announce right now? Janneke Staarink, laughing: "All I can say is: stay tuned!"

IFFR Unleashed offers year-round online access to International Film Festival Rotterdam. The streaming service provides a hand-picked and curated selection of IFFR films, highlighting art-house wonders, audience favorites and masterclasses by filmmakers. For more information (or to watch a film): **IFFRUnleashed.com**

What we stand for



Filmmaker Peyman Ghilambor (*Windspiel*) and crew.

IFFR has always shown the kind of cinema that exists outside of the mainstream.

IFFR aims for equal representation on the silver screen, supporting filmmakers and artists of all cultures. Our film selection as well as initiatives like the Hubert Bals Fund contribute to a society that promotes social justice.

We make a conscious effort to diversify its programme and reach. We try to connect to citizens of all origins by organising free educational programmes, and special neighbourhood screenings in Rotterdam and Amsterdam. We inspire young adults to take on the role of programmers and target non-traditional audiences in our Young Film Selectors initiative. And we strive to break down gender imbalance by showcasing the work of female directors (all films in this edition's IFFR Live programme were made by female filmmakers) and the launch of the Tigress network (see page 36).

“IFFR underscores the relevance and vibrancy of auteur cinema. Filmmakers from all around the world astonish us with visions that are as powerful as can be, addressing a variety of human themes and pushing the boundaries of the cinematic form. We look forward to seeing you at IFFR’s 48th edition from 23 January through 3 February 2019.”

Bero Beyer



Colofon

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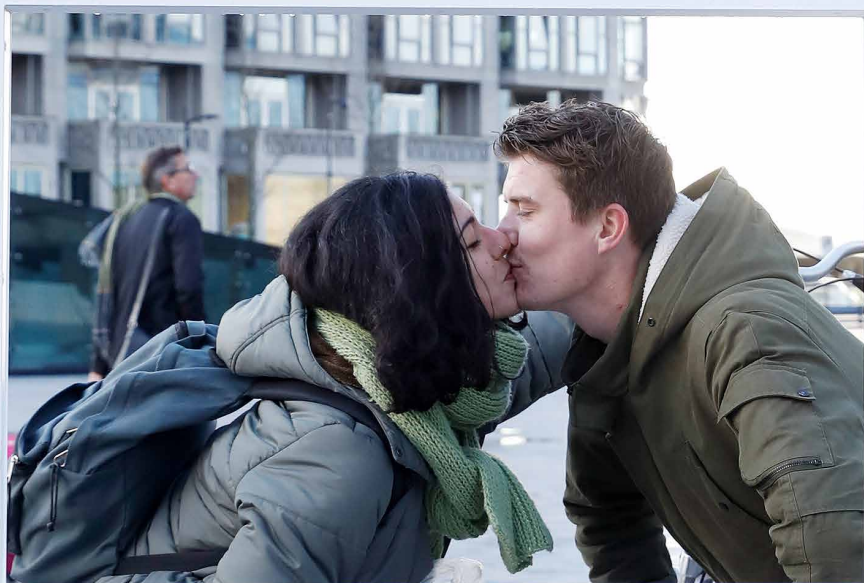
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They are unique in exchanging ideas

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