

PRESS RELEASE
17 January 2019



Foretaste of the 31 Filmfest Dresden: Transformations and Upheavals in the Special Programmes

Focus on Cuba // Invectivity in Short Film // Tribute to Derek Jarman
// Christian Borchert Retrospective

Until the 31st edition of Filmfest Dresden flickers across the silver screens from 9 to 14 April 2019 and lures film-loving audiences and interested media professionals to the capital of Saxony, the members of the selection committees still have quite a lot to do. After viewing the more than 2,200 films submitted this year from 102 production countries, they are now completing their selections and compiling the International and National Competition programmes, in which prize money totalling €67,000 is waiting to be awarded. The final festival programme will be presented on 5 March at the related press conference.

Filmfest Dresden is already proving a foretaste here of several of this year's **special programmes**. During the festival week, these programmes supplement the competition sections with screenings focusing on thematic areas and countries, in addition to retrospectives and short film specials for children and youths.

"This year we chose the moth as our festival motif, because its life is marked by upheavals and transformations, just like the content in many of the films in this year's programme," Festival Director Sylke Gottlebe explains. "And we're hoping that by casting our eyes on the latest film productions from Cuba, as well as screening tributes to the short film oeuvres from Derek Jarman and Christian Borchert, we will provide inspirations on both socio-political and artistic levels."



CAPITAL CUBA by Johann Lurf (2015) / Photo: sixpack Film

Focus on Cuba – The Legacy of the Revolution

60 years after the revolution, Cuba finds itself in a tense situation between isolation and opening up – and that both politically and culturally. In the face of the current political transformations in Cuban politics, a "Nouvelle Vague" of filmmakers is now struggling for recognition and visibility. The 31st Filmfest Dresden is presenting the latest short film works that deal with changes and upheavals to ossified structures and identities, as well as with cultural, political and sexual self-determination. Questions related to democracy and human rights policies represent the focal aspect of these works, which will be discussed in events with the filmmakers attending the festival and other experts parallel to the screenings. Likewise in the special programme, we are looking back on and scrutinising this island state's revolutionary past and culture of remembrance.

The works being screened include Johann Lurf's experimental study **CAPITAL CUBA** (2015), which explores the relationship between the sea, the city and its residents at various places in the Bay of Havana. The everyday life of the Cubans in 1963 is documented by the French filmmaker Agnès Varda in her short film **SALUT LES CUBAINS**.

Discourse on EUROPE: Invectivity – The Era of Rage

With its "Discourse on EUROPE: Invectivity – The Era of Rage" programme, the 31st Filmfest Dresden is devoting a section to a further social phenomenon undergoing constant change. We are screening films here that explore the dynamics and constellations involved in insulting, humiliating, degrading and discriminating, together with related discussion rounds intended to reveal their potential for manipulation. In cooperation with the special research project from the Technical University Dresden entitled "Invectivity, Constellations

and Dynamics of Degradation", Filmfest Dresden is probing the issue of the power and function of film for (democratic) society.



SEBASTIAN WRAP (1975) by Derek Jarman / Photo: LUMA Foundation

Tribute: Derek Jarman – A Cinema of Small Gestures

The Briton Derek Jarman (1942-1994), one of the most versatile and provocative artists in the late 20th century, also symbolises departures and radical changes. He developed a formal poetic language in his filmic oeuvre based on painting and theatre, which permitted him to transport his (socio)-political messages and challenges against homophobia and the neoliberal policies of the Thatcher government. Although Jarman is known for his feature films (THE TEMPEST, CARAVAGGIO, EDWARD II), which transformed the Scottish actress Tilda Swinton into an international star, as well as for his music videos (such as for "Pet Shop Boys"), he was also devoted to short film, which he described as a "cinema of small gestures". On the 25th anniversary of the artist's death, the 31st Filmfest Dresden is presenting a selection of rarely screened avant-garde and experimental films from him, including **SLOANE SQUARE: A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN** (1974-76) and **SEBASTIAN WRAP** (1975).

Furthermore as part of its inclusion initiative ("barrier-free cinema"), Filmfest Dresden is screening Jarman's last long film **BLUE** (1993), which creates awareness for the subject of inclusion through its experimental exploration of the director's blindness due to illness.

Retrospective: Christian Borchert

The social upheavals in (East and West) German-German history are being explored by the 31st Filmfest Dresden in a retrospective on Christian Borchert (1942-2000), one of the most important photographers in East German GDR and the post-reunification era. Born in Dresden and mainly active in Berlin and his home city, due to his serial working and narrative forms, his idiosyncratic archival practices and his quasi archaeological handling of visual media such as film and television, he has assumed an outstanding yet too seldom appreciated position in German photography of the 20th century. In cooperation with the Saxon State Library – Dresden State and University Library (SLUB) and the State Art Collections Dresden (SKD), a selection of Borchert's filmic works are being presented at Filmfest Dresden, curated by Dr. Bertram Kaschek and Dr. Claus Löser.

The film programme is intended to give a foretaste of the photo exhibition "Christian Borchert – Tectonics of Remembrance", which can be seen from 26 October 2019 in the Collection of Copper Engravings (Kupferstich-Kabinett) (Residence Castle, 3rd floor) of the State Art Collections Dresden (SKD).

Save the date: Press conference for the 31st FILMFEST DRESDEN on 5 March at 11.00, Filmtheater Schauburg Dresden cinema.

www.filmfest-dresden.de

END OF PRESS RELEASE

Press Contact:

((((NOISE)))

FILM PR

Dagny Kleber | Mirjam Wiekenkamp
filmfestdresden@noisefilmpr.com
+49 (0) 171-4024803 (D. Kleber)
+49 (0) 176 - 28771839 (D. Wiekenkamp)