

Press Release
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Outlook on the Special Programmes at the 32 Filmfest Dresden: Tracing the Unspeakable

More than 2,900 entries // Omer Fast tribute // Retro: Female directors in East German GDR // Focus Québec // Press conference on 24 March

From 21 to 26 April, Filmfest Dresden is again inviting film-loving audiences and interested media professionals to the state capital of Saxony for an exciting festival programme with the best short films from across the world. Via the Shortfilmdepot platform, which was used for the first time this year, the [selection committees](#) received more than 2,900 submissions to the National and International Competitions, consisting of 1,883 fiction films, 507 animated works, 216 experimental films and 299 documentaries. Yet again this year, prize money at a total value of more than €67,000 is due to be awarded in the competition sections. Festival Director Sylke Gottlebe and her team will announce the complete festival programme at the press conference on 24 March in the Schauburg festival cinema.



ELECTRIC SWAN by Konstantina Kotzamani, 2019 © Homemade Films

Special Programmes Focusing on Trauma

Beyond the competition sections, the first section titles in the special programmes have already been set, and they provide a foretaste of what is to come in the 32nd festival edition. Under the title of "Afterimages – Traces of Trauma", several programme blocks here will survey and explore the artistic adaptations and enactments of traumatic events. And keeping with tradition, this focus on trauma is also reflected in the **new festival motif**:

"In terms of the content in our programme this year, we intend to focus on the narrating and recounting of the unspeakable, as well as on showing the invisible. And we're combining all of this under the terms and concepts of trauma, traumatising and even the overcoming of trauma," Festival Director Sylke Gottlieb explains. "Our new festival motif acknowledges this thematic area visually speaking: as a splintered kaleidoscope of impressions and feelings."

The programme contributions will show and reveal traces of traumas, and generate related topics of discussion: Christoph Girardet and Matthias Müller will, for instance, utilise found footage to explore the thematic complexity of trauma in their collaborative work that now stretches back over 20 years. In this context, Filmfest Dresden is screening their multi-award winning piece *CUT* (2013), which shows the human body to be excessive and fragile at one and the same time. Furthermore, the audience favourite at the last film festival in Venice, *ELECTRIC SWAN* by Konstantina Kotzamani, is being screened in the special programmes. It subtly articulates a critique of capitalism in the guise of magic realism.



5000 FEET IS THE BEST by Omer Fast, 2011 © Commonwealth Projects

Omer Fast Tribute

Likewise the works of Omer Fast, one of the most striking film and video artists of his generation, are concerned with trauma. Filmfest Dresden is dedicating a tribute to this artist, who was born in 1972

in Jerusalem and whose works have been shown at international film festivals and critical exhibitions (such as documenta), and is screening two of his central short film works: **5000 FEET IS THE BEST** (2011) uses an enacted interview to reveal the true experiences of a drone pilot. **CONTINUITY** (2016) also explores traumatic experiences of war as it skilfully blurs the borders of documentation, artistic adaptation and horror film. Omer Fast is attending this year's festival.

Retrospective: Female Directors in East German GDR

Filmfest Dresden dedicates this year's retrospective, entitled "**Poetic. Politic. Defiant.**", to the female directors of the DEFA and the independent film of the East German GDR. While female directors had few opportunities to achieve breakthroughs in fiction film in the East German state DEFA Studios, for that they were able to accommodate their subjects and themes more easily in documentaries and animated films, and even risk experiments here. Likewise beyond the DEFA Studios, independent films were shot – using modest means such as the Super 8 camera, but free from doctrine. These female filmmakers, most of whom came from the visual arts, were concerned with transgressing borders especially and utilised the film footage as a creative interface and the human body as a way to narrate violence and trauma. In the retrospective, Filmfest Dresden is screening two programmes curated by **Cornelia Klauß** that focus on works by the female Dresden artists **Christine Schlegel**, **Marion Rasche** and **Monika Anderson**, as well as documentaries by **Helke Misselwitz**.



ALTIPLANO by Malena Szlam, 2018 © Malena Szlam

Focus Québec: Singular Plurality

Not only is the Frankfurt Book Fair highlighting Canada as its guest country this year under the motto "Singular Plurality": With its FOCUS QUÉBEC, the 32 Filmfest Dresden is continuing its venerable friendship and partnership between Saxony and the French-speaking Province of Québec in 2020. The aspiring director Miryam Charles is acting as the curator of the programme. She was

already a member of the film sound jury at the 31 FILMFEST DRESDEN and was represented with two films in various programmes.

Among others in this year's FOCUS QUÉBEC programme, Malena Szlam's multi-award winning film **ALTIPLANO** will be screened as a 35mm print. In it, indigenous land becomes the filmic setting in which centuries-old cosmologies encounter the incursions of modern raw materials extraction. This programme is being supported by SODEC (Société de développement des entreprises culturelles) and the Government Representative of Québec in Berlin; it is being realised in cooperation with partner institutions and guest curators.

Save the date: Press Conference for the 32 FILMFEST DRESDEN on 24 March at 11.00 in Filmtheater Schauburg Festival Cinema Dresden