

SCREEN

DAY
2

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13 2026

AT CANNES FILM FESTIVAL

For full market coverage and insight go to [ScreenDaily.com](https://www.screendaily.com)

WHEN A KINGDOM FALLS, A WARRIOR RISES.

THE SWORD

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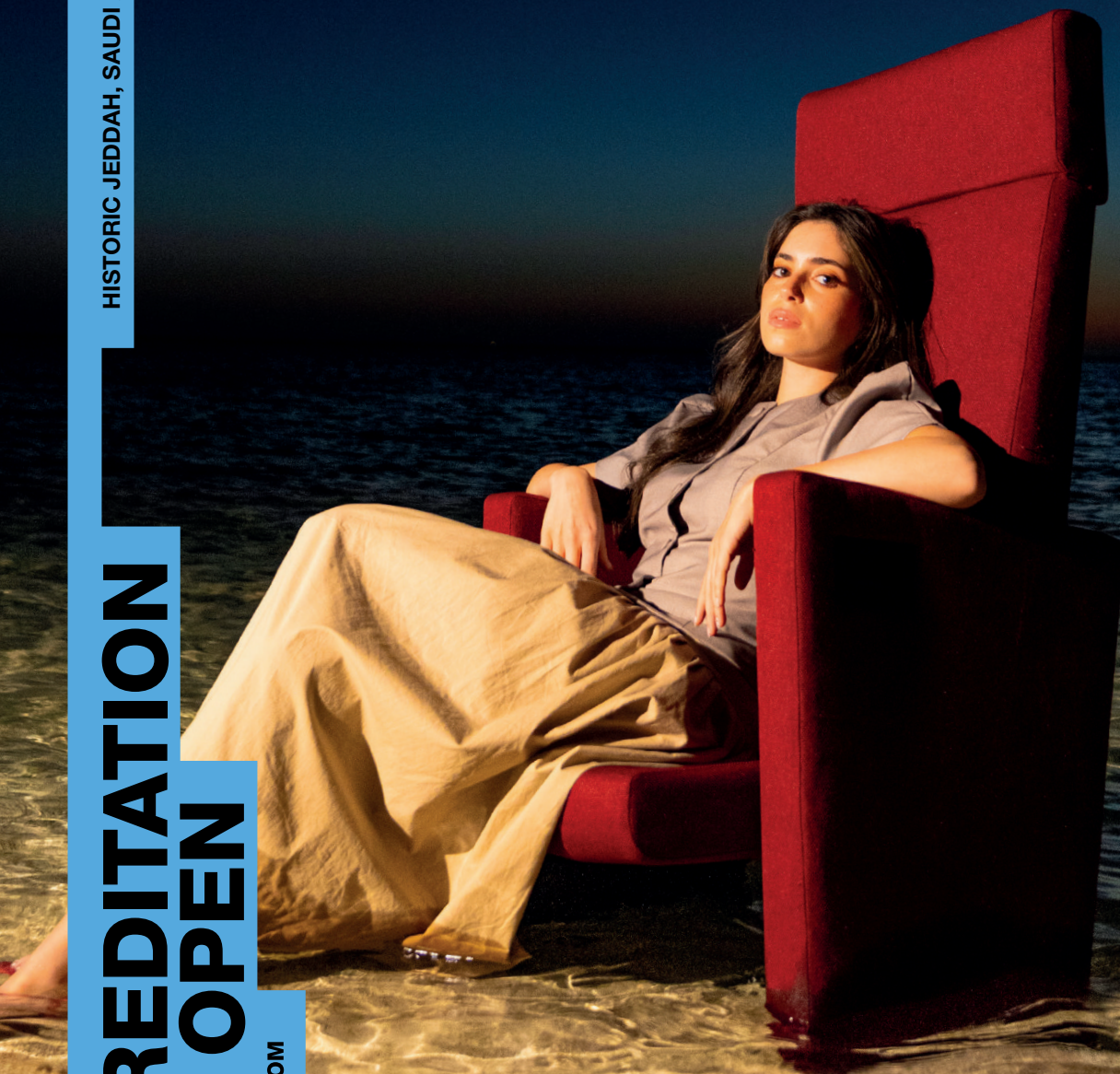
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Heart Pictures

Black Coffee

Nikkatsu in town to brew Black Coffee

BY SILVIA WONG

Japanese company Nikkatsu is in Cannes with a rare foray into Indonesian arthouse cinema.

Black Coffee, directed by Jeremias Nyangoen, stars Reza Rahadian and Sha Ine Febriyanti as a blind couple longing for a child. Inspired by a true story, the drama follows the couple who live a simple lives as coffee farmers. Set against the cultural backdrop of the Gayo Highlands in Central Aceh, it features traditional Didong art and distinctive landscapes. The cast includes Asmara Abigail, Kabri Wali and Hafidz Al Mukhtariza.

"While Indonesian cinema has already established a solid market presence, we feel many arthouse dramas from the region remain undiscovered internationally," said Emico Kawai of Nikkatsu's international sales team. The banner handled Indonesian film *Headshot* and Japan-Indonesia co-production *The Man From The Sea* by Koji Fukada.

Statham adds punch to star-driven packages

BY JEREMY KAY

An uptick in A-list fanfare on the Croisette is putting a smile on buyers' faces as star-driven sales presentations return in force.

Tuesday saw a packed session at Hotel Martinez for Filmnation's sizzle reel of *I Play Rocky*, Paul Greengrass's *The Uprising* with Andrew Garfield and Florian Zeller's thriller *Bunker*, led by Javier Bardem and Penélope Cruz.

Jason Statham jets into town for today's fancy Black Bear event at

Hotel du Cap for the action thriller *John Doe*, which reunites him with director David Ayer. And if the plot about a highly trained man with a set of supreme skills elicits a sense of déjà vu, nobody is complaining.

"He's the only reliable action star left in the independent film world," noted one source. John Friedberg's Black Bear sales slate includes Doug Liman's action thriller *Star One* with Miles Teller and Eddie Redmayne.

AGC Studios and Monarch Media have an invite-only screening today of Lauren Miller Rogen's comedy drama *Babies*, which Seth Rogen and Anna Kendrick will attend.

The question is whether the big distributors will bite. All eyes are on Danny Boyle's *Ink*, a drama about the birth of UK newspaper *The Sun*, starring Jack O'Connell, Guy Pearce and Claire Foy, which Studiocanal is screening here for US buyers.

TODAY

REVIEWS

The Electric Kiss

Pierre Salvadori's festival opener

» Page 10

FEATURES

Catalonian films thrive

The Catalan film sector is out in force on the Croisette

» Page 38

Japan hot projects

Selected Japanese films from across the festival and market

» Page 42

SCREENINGS

» Page 50



Kurt Krieger

Jury president Park Chan-wook with colleagues Chloé Zhao, Demi Moore and Laura Wandel at last night's festival opener *The Electric Kiss*, directed by Pierre Salvadori and sold here in the market by Les Films Pelléas.

Showbox shops around Special Rice Cake

South Korean stars Ra Mi-ran and Ko Kyung-pyo will reunite for *Bok-ja's Special Rice Cake Shop*, which Showbox is launching here at the market.

The comedy drama follows a shop owner and debt-ridden man who become unlikely partners when the rice cakes they create are a sensation.

It is the feature directing debut of Kim Gyung-yoon. Kim Young-min produces, whose credits include *Exhuma*, South Korea's biggest box-office film of 2024.

Ra is a prolific actress whose recent features include *Hi-Five* and *Citizen Of A Kind*, while Ko was last at Cannes in 2022 with Park Chan-wook's *Decision To Leave*. The two starred in hit TV series *Reply 1988*.

Further cast include Minnie of K-pop girl group i-dle, Park Gyeong-hye and Jang Yong-won. Now in post-production, a 2027 release is planned.

Michael Rosser

UK-Ire unpacks Sheep In The Box

Picturehouse Entertainment has acquired Hirokazu Koreeda's Competition title *Sheep In The Box* for the UK and Ireland.

The Japanese sci-fi drama, about a couple who welcome a humanoid robot into their home after the loss of their son, was

picked up from Neon, which will release in the US. Haruka Ayase and Daigo Yamamoto star.

Fuji Television Network, Gaga Corporation, Toho and AOI Pro produce. Koreeda won the Palme d'Or for *Shoplifters* in 2018.

Mona Tabbara

Knockout cast for Killa Bee

BY MONA TABBARA

UK boxer and Olympic gold medal winner Nicola Adams will make her film debut in Kenton Oxley's mixed martial arts (MMA) drama *Killa Bee*. Capture is handling international sales on the title, which will also star Gemma Arterton and Ewen Bremner and shoots later this month in the UK.

Based on a true story, the film follows Bryony 'Killa Bee' Tyrell — a nurse by day and MMA fighter by night. Oxley's UK company Knockout Productions produces with Picture Perfect and Moviehouse Entertainment.

Arterton takes over from the previously announced Daisy Ridley.

Buyers find A Place For Her across Europe

Mélisa Godet's social drama *A Place For Her* (*La Maison Des Femmes*), starring Karin Viard, has sold to a slew of buyers for Ginger & Fed.

Deals have been done for Spain (Alfa Films), Italy (Satine Film), Belgium and the Netherlands (Cinéart), Switzerland (Filmcoopi), Canada (Les Films de A à Z), Germany (Lighthouse Home Entertainment), Hungary (Mozinet) and Austria (Panda Lichtspiele Filmverleih).

A Place For Her, set in a women's shelter, has garnered 475,000 admissions in France to date and won the audience award at the 2026 Glasgow Film Festival.

Rebecca Leffler

Rediance in tune with Tian's Song Of The Birds

BY SILVIA WONG

The Blue Kite director Tian Zhuangzhuang returns to filmmaking with drama *Song Of The Birds*, which China's Rediance is introducing to buyers.

It is adapted from Ah Cheng's 1984 classic novella *The King Of Trees*. Set during China's Cultural Revolution, the period drama — Tian's first feature since 2009 — follows a group of city youths sent to the countryside to experience peasant life. Conflict arises between ideology and the inherent laws of nature when they want to cut down the ancient trees as part of the countrywide agricultural reform.

The cast includes Zhang Yu, Zhou Qi, Vanda Margraf and Yue Xiaoke. Tian said he wants to explore "the relationship



Song Of The Birds

between humanity's faith in itself, and its faith in the mysteries of the natural world".

Tian is a respected figure of China's Fifth Generation filmmakers. After years devoted to film education and production, his return to directing sees him revisit longstanding reflections on contemporary Chinese history and memory.

Among the backers are Beijing Shenbao Film & Media, Thoroughfare Cultural Media and Edko (Beijing) Films.

Rediance is also in Cannes presenting *Next Step Studio Indonesia*, an anthology film by four Indonesian and four Southeast Asian directors that will premiere in Critics' Week.

CROISSETTE CONFIDENTIAL

It isn't a film festival until international delegates face travel woes. This year, as UK airlines try to keep down fuel costs, particularly from London City airport, *Screen* has heard multiple reports of stressful repacking situations as heavy suitcases are declined at check-in, or worse, Cannes-bound passengers are booted off completely.

Although Seth Rogen and Anna Kendrick narrowly avoided this fate on Monday, some of their fellow travellers were not so lucky, and others were not reunited with their luggage until much later in the day or longer.

Tuesday saw *Screen's* editor-in-chief Matt Mueller forced to detour via Zurich before making it to Cannes in time for the traditional DDA welcome drinks for international press. Luckily, his £200 compensation voucher afforded him one coffee on his unplanned Swiss stopover.

O-Scope partners on TPC library

Oscilloscope Laboratories has struck a multi-year partnership with TPC to handle international sales, kicking off in Cannes on a slate led by 2026 Sundance entry *Union County*, starring Will Poulter and Noah Centineo.

The deal broadens the reach of O-Scope's catalogue and the distributor will look to increase its global acquisitions. *Screen* understands it holds worldwide rights to approximately 40% of its current library.

TPC (formerly Three Point Capital) will tap into its global buyer network and library distribution platform across theatrical, TV and home entertainment. Notable titles include John Cameron Mitchell's *Shortbus*, Lara Gallagher's *Clementine* with Sydney Sweeney, and Ceyda Torun's *Kedi*.

Jeremy Kay

Alfa and Palace greet Hallo Betty

BY GEOFFREY MACNAB

Spain's Alfa Pictures and Australia/New Zealand's Palace Film have acquired Pierre Monnard's *Hallo Betty* from Germany's Picture Tree.

The film is a biopic of Swiss advertising copywriter Emmi Creola, inventor of the famous Betty Bossi fictional character. Sarah Spale, Martin Vischer and Johanna Hächler star.

Picture Tree has also sold the film to Germany (Alpenrepublik) and Austria (Panda), with a theatrical release in both countries set for next month. Other territories to have taken *Hallo Betty* include Israel (Red Cape) and Quebec (AZ Films for French Canada).

Hallo Betty has racked up 150,000 admissions in Swiss cinemas to date for Ascot Elite.

Picture Tree is also talking to buyers about Bora Dagtekin's comedy *The Perfect Holiday*, now in post, which Constantin Film will release in Germany in October. It is a sequel to *The Perfect Secret*, the German adaptation of Paolo Genovese's *Perfect Strangers*. Picture Tree is also selling *The Perfect Secret*, presenting both titles to distributors as a potential joint package.

CANNES WHISPERS

Peter Jackson and Guillermo del Toro were seen enjoying a leisurely breakfast at the Majestic hotel, ahead of the New Zealand filmmaker receiving an honorary Palme d'Or at last night's opening ceremony. Del Toro was originally attached to direct *The Hobbit* films, ultimately made by Jackson. No hard feelings over pastries.

Mister Smith works out All That She Wants

BY MONA TABBARA

UK's Mister Smith Entertainment has boarded international sales and unveiled a first look for Scarlett Bermingham and Andrew Rhymer's romantic comedy *All That She Wants*, starring Annie Murphy, Cooper Raiff and Zosia Mamet.

In the wake of a nasty breakup, a woman hooks up with a charming younger man, only to realise she used to be



All That She Wants

his babysitter. *Schitt's Creek* executive producer David West Read has written the script on the film, which is in post after a shoot in Canada.

Tim Headington, Theresa Steele Page and Lauren Shelton are producers on *All That She Wants* for the US's Ley Line Entertainment, with Katie Bird Nolan and Lindsay Tapscott for Canada's Babe Nation Films. CAA handles US rights.

VENICE PRODUCTION BRIDGE



La Biennale di Venezia

Arte
Architettura
Cinema
Danza
Musica
Teatro
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Market for selected projects

VENICE
3—9.09.2026

VPB LOCATIONS MARKET

VENICE
7—8.09.2026

Connecting producers with
a curated panorama of studios,
locations, film commissions
and production incentives
worldwide.



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LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2026

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TAKE A LOOK
TO THE VENICE
PRODUCTION BRIDGE



VPB
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2026

labiennale.org
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Urban Sales jumps aboard Spacetime Chronicles

Paris-based Urban Sales has boarded Italian filmmaker Stefano Bertelli's animation *Spacetime Chronicles* ahead of its premiere at Anecny in the Contrechamps competition.

Handcrafted using paper animation, the film is about a man drifting through a liminal space between reality and dreams, guided by a cat, who embodies his conscience as he confronts fear, desire and identity.

Urban Sales has also acquired Pascal Plisson's documentary *My Tiny Little School* about children in a small classroom in the heart of the French Alps.

Rebecca Leffler

Dutch fund pumps €1.8m into Sacha Polak project

BY GEOFFREY MACNAB

Netherlands Film Fund has made its first investments under new CEO Iwana Chronis, who started in the job earlier this month.

The fund is putting \$2.1m (€1.8m) into Sacha Polak's *The Discomfort Of Evening*, an adaptation of the novel by Marieke Lucas Rijneveld that won the 2020 International Booker Prize. The film is being produced through Dutch outfit Lemming.

"It's a great story," said Chronis of the project about a 10-year-old girl living with her family on a Dutch dairy farm.

The fund is backing the film through its Cinescoop scheme, focused on bigger projects



Iwana Chronis

with potential international appeal. It is investing a similar amount in *Once Upon An Egg*, the first feature from Bafta winning UK-based Dutch director Nina Gantz. The film, pitched at this year's Cartoon Movie, is produced through Keplerfilm, A Private View and Hausboot and is a Netherlands-Belgium-Czech co-production.

Victoria Warmerdam's English-language feature ver-

sion of her 2025 Oscar-winning short *I'm Not A Robot* has also received backing.

Chronis underlined the importance of international co-production to Dutch producers, particularly with their Benelux neighbours.

"We are looking at how we can better promote films from the region and how we can collaborate in a better way between the funds," she said.

In Cannes, Dutch outfit Topkapi has co-produced Lukas Dhont's *Coward*, Sara Ishaq's Critics' Week title *The Station* is supported by IFFR's Hubert Bals Fund, and Dutch producer Ilse Hughan worked with Lisandro Alonso on *Double Freedom* in Directors' Fortnight.

Visit sells Berlin Panorama hit Mouse

BY JEREMY KAY

Altitude in the UK and Ireland and Tandem in France are among the international buyers to acquire Kelly O'Sullivan and Alex Thompson's Berlin Panorama title *Mouse* from Visit Films.

Additional deals have closed in Spain (Flamingo Films), Benelux (Cherry Pickers), Scandinavia (Angel Films), South Korea (M&M International), Indonesia (PT Falcon), Romania (Bad Unicorn), Israel (New Cinema), Japan (New Select), Switzerland (Cineworx), Eastern Europe (HBO Europe) and airlines (Aardwolf Films).

Independent Film Company and Sapan Studio have acquired US and Canadian rights to the film, starring Sophie Okonedo.

6

How Cineverse is conjuring up US audiences

"Producers want to get a nice return that's more than just the upfront guarantee," said Chris McGurk

BY JEREMY KAY

The indie genre sector took notice when US distributor Cineverse opened *Terrifier 3* at number one on \$18.9m in October 2024, after a trim \$500,000 campaign.

US super-agent Robert Newman was so impressed he got on the phone to talk about a distribution deal for *Pan's Labyrinth*, the rights to which had reverted to his client Guillermo del Toro.

"Robert loved how we acted as a guerrilla studio with such an efficient marketing spend and thought the reissue should be handled not by a studio, but an independent who would treat it with care," said Cineverse chairman and CEO Chris McGurk.

McGurk duly negotiated a 20-year licence for all North American rights to the 4K

restored version of del Toro's triple Oscar winner, which returns to the Croisette in a Cannes Classics screening 20 years after the world premiere.

The dark fantasy will open in 3D through Cineverse in association with Fathom Entertainment starting on October 9, which happens to be the Mexican director's birthday. After an exclusive 30-day theatrical release, *Pan's Labyrinth* will arrive on PVOD and DVD ("horror and fantasy collectibles do really well," said McGurk) before either an exclusive pay-1 window or a pay-1 and simultaneous release through Cineverse's channels ecosystem.

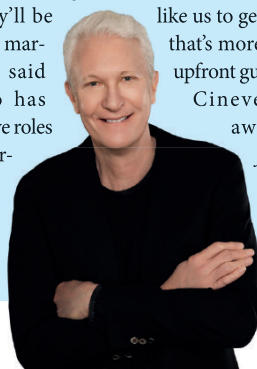
The latter is McGurk's not-so-secret weapon, allowing the company to target genre fans through its 30 streaming channels and 65



Cineverse repped rights to Pan's Labyrinth ahead of the film's 20th anniversary

podcasts. "Savvy producers know if they go through the studios they'll be behind \$30m in marketing spend," said McGurk, who has held top executive roles at Disney, Universal and MGM.

(Right) Cineverse's Chris McGurk



"They want to change the model and work with an indie like us to get a nice return that's more than just the upfront guarantee."

Cineverse is now awaiting *Terrifier* creator Damien Leone's script polish on the fourth

instalment. In the meantime, Greg McLean's latest entry in the *Wolf Creek* horror property is being lined up for March 2027.

The company also champions family properties and will release *Air Bud Returns* on January 22, 2027 after producer Robert Vince took back the rights and teamed with McGurk.

The Cineverse team is meeting financiers here to scout for potential acquisitions and explore joint acquisitions with territory buyers "to present a quality distribution alternative in foreign, as opposed to just selling the rights off, piecemeal."

"As our aspirations get bigger theatrically, we're exploring how to raise a bigger content fund so we can ramp up our slate," said McGurk.

MEETING WITH LA FABRIQUE CINÉMA de l'Institut français

FRIDAY, MAY 15 AT 3.30 PM
PRODUCERS CLUB (LÉRINS)
Pitching session and networking

This year, the 19 participants of La Fabrique Cinéma will present their 10 projects for the first time at the Producers Club (Lérins). Among them, eight are debut feature films and two are second features.

All of the projects are narrative fiction films exploring powerful themes, ranging from science fiction to drama. The session will be followed by a networking cocktail with the participants.

Order of presentation

BRAZIL

The Last Dog On Earth by Nina Kopko
Produced by Leticia Friedrich (Boulevard Filmes)

VIETNAM

The River Knows Our Names by Huân Chi Mai
Produced by Trang Thy (Mayba Productions)

NIGERIA

Till The Morning Comes by Dika Ofoma
Produced by Blessing Uzzi (Bluhouse Studios)

VENEZUELA, PERU

What We Don't Say by Maria Gracia Saavedra
Produced by Beto Benites (Cromauno Audiovisuales)

PALESTINE

Ping-Pong by Saleh Saadi
Produced by May Jabareen (Philistine Films)

KENYA

Strong Wind by Lydia Matata
Produced by Ivy Kiru (AQ Pictures)

ECUADOR

UFOs In The Tropic by Rob Mendoza
Produced by Isabel Carrasco (Cinema Verano)

MOROCCO

Laissées-pour-compte by Kenza Tazi
Produced by Ayoub El Jamal (ATA Production)

HAITI

Pays poète éternel by Samuel Suffren
The director is also the producer (KITFILMS)

TURKEY

Divine Poison by Nehir Tuna
Produced by Gökçe Işıl Tuna (Yeni Sinemacilik)

Producers Network accreditation or an on-demand invitation is required to attend the pitching session

Learn more



'I want the audience to feel it's happening to their own bodies'

With an Oscar on his mantelpiece, Arthur Harari makes his Cannes Competition debut as a director with thriller *The Unknown*

Actor and filmmaker Arthur Harari heads to Cannes with his third feature as a director, after 2016 debut *Dark Diamond* and 2021 Un Certain Regard opener *Onoda: 10,000 Nights In the Jungle* (and with a best original screenplay Oscar under his belt, shared with Justine Triet for the 2023 Palme d'Or winner *Anatomy Of A Fall*).

Based on 2024 graphic novel *Le Cas David Zimmerman*, which Harari wrote with his brother Lucas, *The Unknown* stars Niels Schneider as a photographer who wakes up in the body of a woman (Léa Seydoux) after the two spend the night together. It is produced by Paris-based Bathysphere and co-produced by Pathé, which handles sales and French distribution.

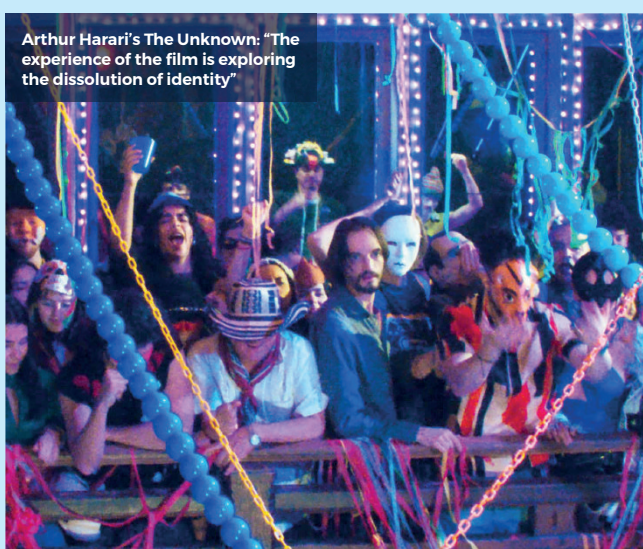
Was it challenging to adapt the graphic novel to the screen?

It was complicated. The story was my brother's idea. I was obsessed with it for years, but had to find my unique spin on it. I'd never seen a realistic body swap movie before. It's happening to these characters — that's the true nightmare.

The body swap genre is typically associated with sci-fi or horror.

What was your elevator pitch for this different approach?

The short version is that it's about a man who is fascinated by a woman and becomes this woman. The experience of the film is exploring the dissolution of identity. It's about someone quite literally chasing after himself. He wants to become who he was, but he can't. I want the film to be extremely concrete, for everyone in the cinema to say, "Okay, I understand what these characters



Arthur Harari's *The Unknown*: "The experience of the film is exploring the dissolution of identity"

are going through." I want the audience to feel it's happening to their own bodies.

Your approach is concrete but also conceptual, leaving room for interpretation. What is your take on the evolution of the characters? And — no spoilers — the ending?

The ending is different to the book in that it's more abstract. The question becomes, "What is the identity of who we see on screen?" Even I don't know. It's similar to *Anatomy Of A Fall*, when everyone asked: "Did she do it?" I like that the audience can see what's happening, but I can't give an answer.

Niels Schneider, who also starred in your debut film *Dark Diamond*, is unrecognisable in his role. What did his physical transformation involve?

He lost a lot of weight for the role. And we changed his hair. There wasn't much need for make-up. He

is an actor who can transform himself. Even when I see him now and he is back to the real Niels, it's unsettling. It's like he's another person.

Your trio of films as a director are all very different in terms of scale and narratives. What makes a film 'Hararian'?

They all pose questions about identity. The characters are confronted with their relationship to reality. To make a film, I need a story that comes to me and feels obligatory that I tell it and in a way that it hasn't been told before.

Does it feel different heading to Cannes for the first time with your own film in Competition?

It's all very new. In the past I was protected because when we present a film, it's often like being naked. *Onoda* was in Un Certain Regard so I felt less exposed. This is the first time I feel like I'm being thrown right into the fire. But it's out of my hands now. Whatever happens,



'It's not an intellectual film, it's an experience. It's perhaps destabilising, but certainly unique'

Arthur Harari

I can't do anything about it. It's a very particular film that offers an experience to the audience. It's not an intellectual film, it's an experience. It's perhaps destabilising, but certainly unique.

What do you hope audiences leave with?

The best films I've seen have connected me to something I couldn't explain, but they all ask the questions: "What does it mean to be alive? What does it mean to be me? What does it mean to inhabit a body and exist in the world? Is it possible to escape what defines us?"

All children have doubts. We look at our parents and wonder, "Maybe they're not my parents, maybe they've been replaced." My own daughter said to me recently, "You're not my real dad, you're a fake dad, you don't smell like my dad." We all look at reality and say, "Maybe this is not reality." Just being here, existing, it's so weird. **S**

Interview by Rebecca Leffler

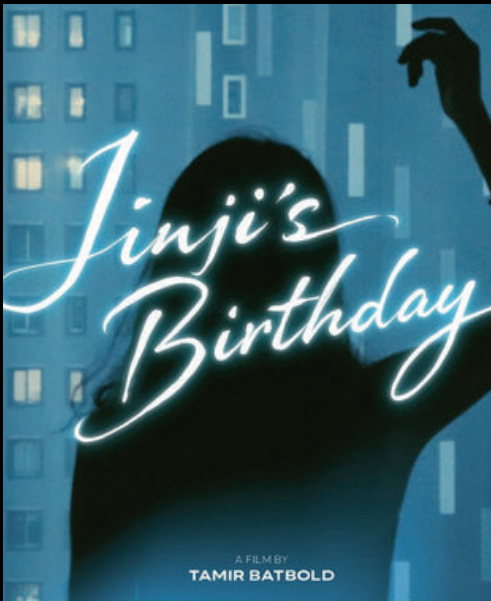
watermelon

In 1999, a 16-year-old boy tries to grow a watermelon in Mongolian Gobi desert to win over his first love's heart.

directed by Gan-Ochir Enebish, Tuvshinsaikhan Ganbayar
written by Gan-Ochir Enebish

Snowie

Turning the darkness of reality into something full of light and wonder



A FILM BY
TAMIR BATBOLD



Ministry of Culture, Sports, Tourism and Youth of Mongolia



MONGOLIAN FRAMES: PITCH SESSION

Scan the QR code to view the booklet.



THE SALT KEEPERS: A 40-YEAR JOURNEY

Hosting Organization: Ergelt Media LLC
ERGELT.MN
Supporting Organization: Mongolian Film Support Fund
MONGOLIAN NATIONAL FILM COUNCIL

In the Mirage of Yellow Dune



A FILM BY B. AMARSAIKHAN

13 MAY 2025
PALAIS STAGE



Reviews



The Electric Kiss

10

**OPENING FILM,
OUT OF COMPETITION**

Fr. 2026. 122mins

Director Pierre Salvadori

Production company
Les Films Pelléas

International sales
Playtime

Producer Philippe Martin

Screenplay
Benjamin Charbit, Benoît Graffin, Pierre Salvadori, from an original idea by Rebecca Zlotowski, Robin Campillo

Production design
Angelo Zamparutti

Editing Anne-Sophie Bion

Cinematography
Julien Poupard

Music Camille Bazbaz

Main cast Pio Marmai, Anaïs Demoustier, Gilles Lellouche, Vimala Pons

REVIEWED BY JONATHAN ROMNEY

A slyly crafted retro romcom, Cannes' opening film *The Electric Kiss* promises snap, crackle and pop — but the sparks fizzle out before it reaches its unapologetically contrived climax. Literate and certainly not without class in its nostalgic drollery, this 1920s-set bohemian Paris *jeu desprit* is the latest from Pierre Salvadori following briskly approachable numbers such as 2006 Audrey Tautou vehicle *Priceless* and 2018 comedy thriller *The Trouble With You*, starring this film's male lead Pio Marmai.

Salvadori's profile — and a cast also featuring arthouse stalwart Anaïs Demoustier (*The New Girlfriend*, *Anais In Love*) and the very audience-friendly Gilles Lellouche — should bode well for the film's May 12 local release. But a certain theatrical stiffness, politely choking the film's bolder possibilities, is likely to restrict wider appeal to outlets catering to a traditional Francophile constituency.

A boisterous opening shows a Paris fairground in the late 1920s, where heroine Suzanne (Demoustier) is performing her act as 'Venus Electrificata'. Poised between two Van de Graaff generators, her body conducts a huge charge of elec-

tricity as men queue to kiss her, eager to receive a dynamic bolt from her lips.

The world-weary Suzanne is essentially a slave of exploitative fairground boss Titus (actor and director Gustave Kervern, playing up his ogre side). While nosing around the caravan of the fair's resident medium, Suzanne is mistaken for her by a drunken visitor, painter Antoine (Marmai), who is desperate to contact his dead wife Irène. Seeing the money on offer, Suzanne impersonates her colleague, then visits Antoine's house to channel Irène once more. When art dealer Armand (Lellouche) realises that Suzanne's imposture has helped the blocked painter take up his brushes again, he pays her to continue the sessions.

Then Suzanne discovers Irène's journal, which opens up a thread of flashbacks: the dead woman (played by Vimala Pons) records how she, an artists' model, encountered aspiring dauber Armand and unlocked his talents.

As the action slips between these two women's stories, roughly a decade apart, the romantic complexities develop teasingly — although Salvadori does not quite maximise their ironic interplay. Based on an original idea by directors Rebecca Zlotowski and Robin Campillo, the film

shows undeniable complexity and mischief, echoing a vintage tradition of French comedies. But it is hampered by pedestrian execution and dominated by claustrophobically stoney dialogue, the more effusive crowd scenes tending to stand out as production numbers rather than feeling part of an organic whole.

Demoustier and Marmai clicked persuasively as an outlaw couple in *Living On Love Alone* (2010), but this reunion never quite attains full voltage. The show is stolen by Pons, a vigorously eccentric presence in films including 2013's *The Rendez-Vous Of Déjà Vu* and 2023's *Vincent Must Die*. She makes juicy work of an ostensibly clichéd role, the uncrushable free spirit, confidently radiating echoes of Jeanne Moreau in Truffaut's *Jules Et Jim*.

While never quite predictable, *The Electric Kiss* lacks the knowing brio of recent French period pastiches such as Francois Ozon's 2023 *The Crime Is Mine* or Cédric Klapisch's 2025 *Colours Of Time*. Even so, Angelo Zamparutti's vividly cluttered design cannot be faulted. And Salvadori regular Camille Bazbaz provides a jovial score — although in terms of electricity, both music and visuals are outdone by the closing credits and their use of Shocking Blue's bouncy 'Venus'.

TAIWAN

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CANNES 2026



CANNES CLASSICS

THE DULL-ICE FLOWER (RESTORATION)

by YANG Li-kuo

TAIWAN FILM AND AUDIOVISUAL INSTITUTE



IMMERSIVE COMPETITION

PLAYING WITH FIRE: AN IMMERSIVE ODYSSEY WITH YUJA WANG

by Pierre-Alain GIRAUD

VIVE ARTS, ATLAS V

TAIWAN, FRANCE, UNITED KINGDOM

TAIWAN PAVILION PALAIS - 126.02

FULL
LINEUP



TAIGCA TAIWAN
CREATIVE
CONTENT
AGENCY

Drive for perfection

Pawel Pawlikowski's Competition title *Fatherland* shot chronologically in Poland, doubling for post-war Germany, in a feat of co-ordination for the intrepid producers. Louise Tutt reports

When producer Jeanne Tremsal and director Pawel Pawlikowski first started talking about *Fatherland*, their idea was to shoot the whole film in Germany. Set in 1949, it is a kind-of road movie about German writer Thomas Mann and his daughter Erika, as they journey in a Buick through a ravaged post-war German landscape from Frankfurt in the west to Weimar in the east.

But that setting was the problem. Razed to the ground and rebuilt, the Germany of 1949 does not exist now. Too much VFX work would need to be done in post, pushing up the approximate \$11.7m (€10m) budget. Poland and its wealth of more historically representative locations offered an appealing alternative — and the opportunity to work with the highly regarded Ewa Puszczyńska of Warsaw-based Extreme Emotions, who had collaborated with Pawlikowski on 2013's *Ida* and 2018's *Cold War*.

Tremsal, a producer with director Edward Berger and Luke Rivett in Berlin-based Nine Hours, had initiated the project with Mario Gianani and Lorenzo Mieli of Italy's Our Films, as the two companies had been looking for a film on which to collaborate.

"We had two other projects we were trying to work on together," recalls Tremsal. "Then we had a wonderful evening discussing Thomas Mann and came to this idea."

Pole position

Berger passed on the notion of directing it himself, believing a non-German director would have a more interesting take on what was a very German story. The project was sent to Pawlikowski, a director "who we all loved," says Tremsal. The Polish filmmaker swiftly made the idea his own, working with writer Henk Handloegten. Germany's Sandra Hüller and Hanns Zischler signed on to star and the project shot for just



Sandra Hüller and Hanns Zischler in Pawel Pawlikowski's *Fatherland*

Agata Orzyłowska

shy of 40 days in August 2025, with a mostly Polish crew.

It was an extremely complex shoot. Pawlikowski, who started his career making documentaries, is a meticulous director, driven by authenticity, on and off screen. He prefers not to shoot on stages, with just two scenes, including one set in Los Angeles, filmed on a stage in Poland. His scouting process involved lengthy forays all over the country with his locations team, his regular director of photography Lukasz Zal and production designers Katarzyna Sobanska and Marcel Slawinski. They were in search of the perfect chapel, the just-right street.

"Pawel drove thousands and thousands of miles through Poland, which at the end we were a little bit panicked by, because we had so many different locations and all far apart," says Tremsal. "We had around 12 travel days [in the schedule]. He didn't want to do any compromises."



'We had so many different locations and all far apart'

Jeanne Tremsal, *Nine Hours*

Every location needed the intervention of the production design department, apart from a couple of scenes filmed at the original Goethe houses in Weimar — the only locations shot in Germany. "There was no location which [was just] getting in and shooting," says Puszczyńska. "We were building the set on the street to match the existing buildings."

Some scenes even took place in separate locations. "The reverse shot was sometimes in a place 300 kilometres away," recalls Tremsal.

Adding another dimension for the producers was that the film

shot mostly chronologically. "It is something every director loves," says Puszczyńska. "And it was very important [for the] cast to get into the performance, into the journey, into the trip."

For the producers, it was a gargantuan feat of co-ordination: the availability of the actors, of the locations, keeping an eye on the weather. "Also, in Germany, actors are not booked for a period, but for the day," says Tremsal. "They all work in parallel on several productions. The main cast [of *Fatherland*] are all German and pretty well-known, like August Diehl and Devid Striesow, and so were all working on many different productions."

"It's the same in Poland," says Puszczyńska. With line producer Tomasz Morawski, she had to make sure actors were in the right locations, often quite far apart from the last location, at the right time. Zischler was with the production the »

THAI HORROR MASTER RETURNS



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'It is very important there's space to breathe, to think about the project in a peaceful environment'

Ewa Puszczynska,
Extreme Emotions

entire time but Puszczynska needed to bring Hüller from her home in Germany each time and then send her back. Often the locations were far from an airport or a train station, so travel was done mostly by car.

"That was also tiring," says Puszczynska of the demanding mode of transport — albeit fitting for the film. "I worked with Sandra on *The Zone Of Interest*. I know what's important for her. She needs to go back home during shooting to be with her daughter, to have time for rest."

Making sure cast and crew were cared for that way was important to Puszczynska and Tremsal. While crew members usually have a regulation number of hours they can work in a day, with rest periods as part of their contracts, these considerations are often not built in for the director or their actors.

"When we were shooting *Ida*, I remember when Pawel didn't even have his own trailer and he was resting under a tree with a pillow," recalls Puszczynska. "Now things have changed and Pawel has his own trailer. He had a place to rest."

"It's very important there's a space to breathe, to clear your mind and to think about the project you're working on in a peaceful environment"

But such interludes of calm repose were not available to Puszczynska and Tremsal themselves. "The production never rests," says Puszczynska, matter-of-factly.

"I'm so impressed by Ewa," interjects Tremsal. "She's a one-woman show. Ewa was on set every day. But she also has different projects, because you can't survive [as a producer] with only one. You know 80% of them won't go into production so you have to always prepare several things."

"Even when you're on set, you work, you need to," she continues. "I don't like it. I would love to spend all my time on one project."



During the production in Poland of *Fatherland*, directed by Pawel Pawlikowski (pictured on location, below)



As is typical for independent European producers, both Tremsal and Puszczynska deferred all or part of their fees to get *Fatherland* made.

"I haven't taken anything yet, though there was money in the budget so one day I hope I'll take this money," says Puszczynska, who has a rule she is paid last, as her fee, both for her company and for her personally, is held in contingency. "It's probably why I don't have a villa, I don't have a car. But I like what I'm doing."

Tremsal quietly says she will negotiate better next time.

Fatherland was set up as a co-production between Germany (Nine Hours), Poland (Extreme Emotions),

Italy (Our Films) and France (Chapter 2), in collaboration with Circle One in Italy, Pawlikowski's Apocalypse Pictures and with support from Arte and Pathé. Mubi has all rights in North America, Latin America, UK-Ireland, Germany, Austria, Benelux, Italy, Spain, Turkey, Australia, New Zealand and India; The Match Factory is handling remaining sales.

Funding incentives

Tremsal was able to secure support from three German regional funds, Frankfurt-based Hessen Film, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg and Leipzig-based MDM, thanks to the German subject matter, the

'You can't survive as a producer with only one project. You have to always prepare several things'

Jeanne Tremsal

writer, the majority of the cast, the Frankfurt setting, scenes shot in Weimar, and doing part of the picture post and all of the sound post in Germany. Further sound editing and design work was carried out in Italy, allowing access to the tax credit on this spend.

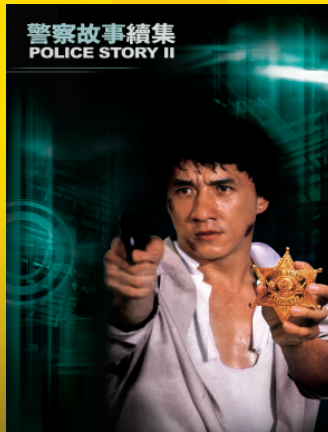
In Poland, Puszczynska says the production was supported by grants from the Polish Film Institute and the Lower Silesia fund among others, as well as the Ministry of Culture.

However, the production was unable to access Poland's 30% cash rebate as it had missed the incentive's sole annual call for entries — on January 1. The year after, the film had been made and funds are not available in retrospect. Puszczynska is now involved with a working group to make the rebate more accessible year-round.

"Can you imagine, after the New Year's Eve night, you have to get up and press the buttons?" she says. "Everybody is doing that. So this system can sometimes collapse. But we are on a good path to have it improved." **S**

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Universal language

Since its launch in 2017, Paris-based sales and production outfit Charades has forged a powerful reputation in the international marketplace, notable for its eclectic slate, collaborative approach and taking early risks on filmmakers. Rebecca Leffler reports

CHARADES BY NUMBERS

4

FOUNDERS

20

EMPLOYEES

5

NUMBER OF FILMS ON CHARADES' DEBUT SLATE IN 2017

170

NUMBER OF FILMS IN CHARADES' CATALOGUE — INCLUDING THE 2026 LINEUP

1

OSCAR WIN (*FLOW*)

37

FILMS SELECTED AT CANNES FILM FESTIVAL



Team players: Charades founders Carole Baraton, Pierre Mazars and Yohann Comte

16

At Cannes Film Festival in 2017, Carole Baraton, Yohann Comte and Pierre Mazars, a trio of veteran heads of international sales (at Wild Bunch, Gaumont and Studio-canal respectively), announced they were launching a global sales company called Charades with support from Constantin Brist's investment company Asuna. They were a team of four (including one assistant) squeezed into a tiny five-by-two-metre shoebox room in Paris's 18th arrondissement and had five films to sell at the market.

Nine years later, the trio heads back to the festival, this time with 10 titles world premiering across the official and parallel sections, the most of any sales company this year, a team of 20, a 150 square-metre

'We are three old people and surrounding us are only young people. They are the next generation of audiences'

Pierre Mazars, Charades

office in Paris and a current lineup and back catalogue of around 170 titles. In 2025, Charades had five films — *Vermiglio*, *Armand*, *Kneecap*, *Flow* and *The Glassworker* — selected to compete in the best international feature Oscar race, before *Flow* won the Academy Award for best animated feature. The company has scored four more Oscar nomina-

tions (for *I Lost My Body*, *Aftersun*, *Memoir Of A Snail* and *Mirai*), had 37 films selected in Cannes and won 12 prizes, plus dozens more at top-tier festivals including Venice, Berlin, Sundance and Annecy.

Following that 2017 debut, Charades became synonymous with quality independent fare and has consistently maintained its reputation in the international market, admired for its strong slate and its collaborative approach to the film-making process — a tight-knit team that takes early gambles on rising filmmakers and producers, and has forged strong relationships with distributors across the globe, and is willing to join forces with other sales companies on certain projects.

Throughout, the company's ethos has remained the same. "When we first came together, after years »

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WRITER & DIRECTOR
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of working at bigger companies to whom we are so grateful for shaping our careers, we said, 'Now is the right time to have fun,'" notes Mazars. "We vowed to only work on films we love."

They chose a name and logo (see right) that reflected the approach, referencing Stanley Donen's 1963 film *Charade*, starring Cary Grant and Audrey Hepburn, which mashes up genres — romantic comedy, screwball, mystery, thriller — and was set and filmed largely in Paris. "We wanted a name that was playful, elegant, friendly and French, but could be understood in other languages," says Comte.

It extends to how the company presents itself to the international industry — as a welcoming destination for directors, writers, producers, distributors, financiers and other partners from around the world. "We came together because we knew we could cover the entire world," says Baraton. "It's important for us to tell producers we are always in contact with the market. We don't always have the same taste from the get-go — we are very complementary. That's what makes our lineup so eclectic in terms of genre, but also spanning different budgets and different potential distribution models."

Baraton adds: "Our union, our trio is very important. We spend a lot of time together, we do everything together."

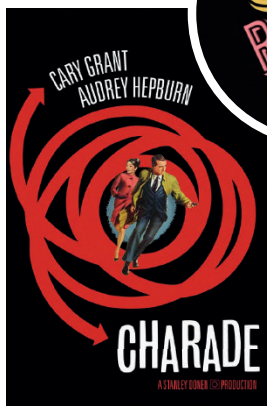
Collective voice

The team is based in Paris, but Comte is in Estonia with his daughter. Whether travelling to festivals and markets or gathering in their buzzy basement office, Comte sums up the company vibe as "very, very collective — everyone has a voice."

For Mazars, the company's success today is "less how our films have performed, and more about the people on our team who work on them. They are machines, but also do it all with enthusiasm."

He suggests the company's relaxed and flexible approach in a high-pressure industry is also a key driver of success. "Charades has always been based on a certain comfort of lifestyle for us and our teams. They are under no obligation to come to the office, they don't have set vacation days. We want each person to find their own personal balance, whatever that means."

The founders also attribute their success in backing new voices and



projects with appeal for younger demographics to the team around them. "We are three old people and surrounding us are only young people," says Mazars. "We listen to them — they are the next generation of audiences."

The company prefers to board projects at an early stage so they can be an integral part of the creative as well as the financing process. It is an approach adopted by most French sales companies today, but one that Charades has followed since its inception, born partly out of necessity.

"When we started Charades, we couldn't work with the auteurs we had worked with before,"

(Right) Charades sold Flow, which won the best animated feature Oscar



(Clockwise from top) Charades titles through the years: Sorry, Baby by Eva Victor; Coralie Fargeat's Revenge; Maura Delpero's Vermiglio; the Charades logo (inset) is inspired by Stanley Donen's 1963 film Charade

says Comte, so the company set out to forge relationships with up-and-coming filmmakers and, nine years into its existence, almost two-thirds of the catalogue consists of first and second features (including seven out of the 10 films on its Cannes slate).

One of the first titles Charades boarded as a co-producer was Coralie Fargeat's 2017 debut *Revenge*, a French-language genre film from a then-unknown female director.

"It was a big risk," says Mazars of investing into the film 60% of the money

'We find films that we love with the idea that if we personally want to see them, other people will too'

Carole Baraton, Charades

they had raised to start the company. "But we are proud of having 'discovered' her and the trajectory her career has taken since."

In 2022, the trio launched Charades Productions alongside the sales arm, initially to manage its financial co-production investments, then further expanding into equity financing for US productions such as Carlo Mirabella-Davis's *Swallow* and Zachary Wigon's *Sanctuary*. It now has a full-time in-house producer with the aim of targeting international minority co-productions like Venice 2024 prize-winner *Vermiglio* and animated hit *Night Of The Zoo-pocalypse*, and boarding projects in an executive producer capacity.

Charades co-produced Mona Fastvold's second feature *The World To Come*, and continued to nurture that relationship before handling sales on last year's Venice premiere *The Testament Of Ann Lee*, eventually acquired by Searchlight Pictures.

"The model of executive producing and equity isn't our primary goal, but it depends on the project," says Baraton. "We are flexible in terms of the way we put films together." For example, Charades invested with equity on Eva Victor's Sundance premiere *Sorry, Baby*.

"We are a sales company at heart, but more and more we are there from the beginning," adds Mazars. "Producers come to us and we try to find solutions so that their films can be made."

The trio insist their editorial strategy is instinctual and not calculated. "We find films that we love with the idea that if we personally want to see them, other people will too," says Baraton. Among the trio's "love at first sight" acquisitions was Kirill Serebrennikov's music-filled drama *Leto*, one of the earliest additions to the company's slate that was selected for Cannes Competition in 2018. That too was another risky venture for a fledgling company. "We put a big minimum guarantee into a black-and-white Russian film, but it worked," says Comte. Charades then reteamed with the director »

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Organizer: Japan Creator Support Fund, UNIJAPAN



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In partnership with: City of Cannes



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Organizer: NOMA



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Organizer: ATMOVIE GLOBAL TRACK



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Organizer: JAPANESE NIGHT Executive Committee

Invitation Only



JAPANESE FILMS IN CANNES

[In Competition]
ALL OF A SUDDEN

By HAMAGUCHI Ryusuke



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[In Competition]
Sheep in the Box

By KOREEDA Hirokazu



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[In Competition]
NAGI NOTES

By FUKADA Koji



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[Un Certain Regard]
ALL THE LOVERS IN THE NIGHT

By SODE Yukiko



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[Un Certain Regard]
TITANIC OCEAN

By Konstantina KOTZAMANI



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[Cannes Premiere]
The Samurai and the Prisoner

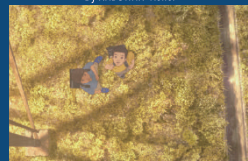
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[Directors' Fortnight]
WE ARE ALIENS

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Eri

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'We survived Covid because our lineup was eclectic enough, but it disrupted the market'

Yohann Comte, Charades

as a co-producer on his next two features, *Petrov's Flu* and *Tchaikovsky's Wife*.

Such risks continue to pay off. Charades went into profit from its first year and has remained so, with the exception of the challenging Covid years, and 2026 is poised to be its strongest financial year yet. Some 90% of its revenue comes from sales despite the fact that, according to Comte, "we are an acquisitions company looking for films 95% of the time, and just 5% of the time we are at festivals and markets actively selling films".

The company received some 950 projects over the past year alone, which it whittled down to a slate of 15. Charades has stuck to its early strategy as the industry has changed, but shifted organically to more animation and English-language projects. It is a move the company pursued with greater fervency as it emerged from the pandemic.

"We survived Covid because our lineup was eclectic enough, but it disrupted the market," says Comte. "A new distribution model emerged. Some audiences wanted to stay home, others to go to cinemas. Distributors want to bring young people to cinemas and we make films for cinemas. Festivals and distributors are looking for new voices, in particular to bring young audiences to cinemas."

Animation station

While its slate runs the genre gamut, Charades has become a force in independent animation, and Asian animation in particular. The company has worked with Japanese auteurs such as Mamoru Hosoda on *Mirai* and first-timers Yoshitoshi Shinomiya (Berlin 2026's *A New Dawn*), Kohei Kadowaki, whose *We Are Aliens* is in Directors' Fortnight, and French Vietnamese director Phuong Mai Nguyen, whose *In Waves* opens Critics' Week.

The company's niche in animation happened organically before being built more intentionally. "When we first came together, animation was



Julien Lemaire



Silex Films



'Charades has a real savoir faire when it comes to animation'

Priscilla Bertin, Silex



our common denominator," says Comte, noting that Mazars sold Aardman Animations titles while at Studiocanal, Baraton did the same for Studio Ghibli titles at Wild Bunch and his own experience with Hosoda's *The Boy And The Beast*, which saw the director follow him to Charades for the company's first animated title *Mirai*.

Since then, Charades has capitalised on the genre exploding at festi-

vals, awards and the international box office.

"We were at the right place at the right time with the right shared expertise," suggests Comte. Plus, he adds: "We have never been a snobby

(Right) Kneecap

company. We wanted to make sure animation wasn't just for children," citing 2019's Oscar-nominated *I Lost My Body* and Oscar winner *Flow*.

Charades has become a go-to partner in the genre since the success of their animated titles at international awards ceremonies and festivals. Silex's Priscilla Bertin, who produced *In Waves*, tells *Screen International*: "I wanted to position the film internationally and my dream was for Charades to sell it. They were the first partner on board and understood the vision of the film.

"Among French sellers, they are seen as a dynamic company with an eclectic slate of quality films and in particular a real *savoir faire* when it comes to animation."

Another notable area of focus for the company has been English-language projects from first-time UK and Irish filmmakers that have broken out on the international scene, among them Charlotte Wells' *Aftersun*, Rich Peppiatt's *Kneecap* and Philip Barantini's *Boiling Point*.



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'We are not in competition with anyone. We treat UK films like Japanese, Spanish, German or Scandinavian films'

Carole Baraton

While Baraton says it is no secret that "English-language films travel better", she adds that the company's relationships with UK and US directors and producers have happened naturally over time, leading to "one or two projects a year". Boarding during early development is often the key, as happened on Charlotte Regan's debut feature *Scrapper*, followed by that film's lead actor Harris Dickinson making his own directing debut *Urchin*. Charades also boarded early as a co-financer on Peppiatt's Bafta-winning *Kneecap*, and joined *Aftersun* when US producer Pastel reached out to them. Their Cannes slate includes Clio Barnard's *I See Buildings Fall Like Lightning*.

Small but steady

Its first UK production was BBC Film and BFI-backed *Lynn + Lucy* from first-time filmmaker Fyzal Boulifa in 2019. Currently, Charades' UK footprint remains small, and the trio insist they are not aiming to compete with UK-based sales agents for hot projects. "There is not much competition to come in and take a huge risk on a first film based only on a script," says Mazars. "We were there gambling on these filmmakers no-one knew when no-one else was."

"There is truly no strategy behind it. If UK sales agents want to team up with us to co-sell, we would be thrilled to work with them," he says, while Baraton adds: "There are enough films produced in the UK each year that our presence is a modest one. We're not in competition with anyone. We treat UK films like Japanese, Spanish, German or Scandinavian films."

Theo Barrowclough of House Productions, producer of Regan's 2023 Sundance premiere *Scrapper*, on which Charades handled sales, cites Baraton's "unique combination of taste, charm and undeniable heft", adding: "When you're trying to take a low-budget British debut to the premium international festivals, it can sometimes — depending on the

CANNES 2026 CHARADES' FESTIVAL LINEUP



Competition

Parallel Tales

Dir Asghar Farhadi

A Man Of His Time

Dir Emmanuel Marre

Un Certain Regard

Club Kid

Dir Jordan Firstman

Everytime

Dir Sandra Wollner

Cannes Premiere

The Samurai And The Prisoner

Dir Kiyoshi Kurosawa

Special Screenings

Tangles

Dir Leah Nelson

Directors' Fortnight

I See Buildings Fall Like Lightning

Dir Clio Barnard

We Are Aliens

Dir Kohei Kadowaki

Critics' Week

In Waves

Dir Phuong Mai Nguyen

Stonewall

Dir Julien Gaspar-Oliveri

(Right) Kohei Kadowaki's *We Are Aliens*



'We were there gambling on these unknown filmmakers no-one knew when no-one else was'

Pierre Mazars

Charades still refuses to be pigeon-holed in any one space, working with different types of filmmakers, producers and distributors, whether indies, studios or even streamers, depending on the territory or project. The company may have grown in international prestige since its hard launch in Cannes nearly a decade ago but it remains grounded, keeping its slate and team at manageable sizes.

They are fully focused on the 2026 Cannes slate, knowing it is impossible to predict at this stage how the titles will be received by the market. "When we win an Oscar for a Latvian animation, we are heading into the festival knowing that we have no idea what will happen," says Comte. "There are always surprises."

That said, Charades remains committed to bringing quality fare to the global marketplace. "Good films are sold. A bad sales agent can sell a good film, but even a good sales agent can't sell a bad film," says Comte.

So where do the trio see the company nine years from now? "I would like to be alive," says Baraton, facetiously. "It's an exhausting job."

"We hope to still find films that we love — the rest doesn't matter," says Mazars. "Whether we are four or 20 people, we have the same agility. We don't have any ambition to become a bigger company in terms of size. We don't want to have 50 employees we never see. It has always been about taking pleasure in what we do."

The biggest challenge to the company's ongoing success, notes Mazars, is simply "finding the right films", particularly within the fraught geopolitical context.

It all comes back to the founding premise, says Comte. "We like films that invent their own genres. The most unique, indescribable films are the ones that are working best in theatres. Five years ago, that would have been impossible to fathom."

Baraton concludes: "Cinema is the new vinyl. Cinema is cool again." **S**

'Good films are sold. A bad sales agent can sell a good film, but even a good sales agent can't sell a bad film'

Yohann Comte

film — be helpful to have an outsider's take. In the instance of a film like *Scrapper*, that was really valuable."

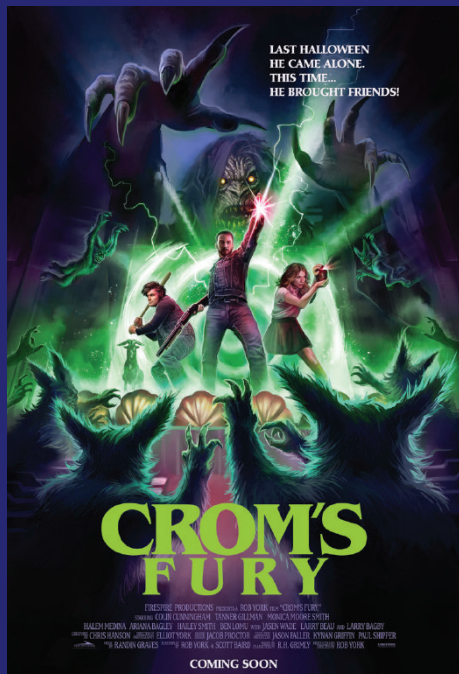
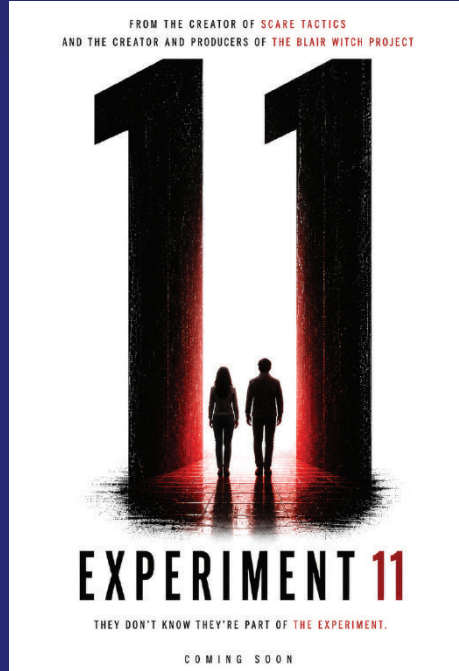
Befitting their in-house strategy, Charades is keen on collaborative sales efforts with English-language and Japanese animation projects in the US and Asian markets, as well as with major European auteurs. "We divide the commission but multiply the energy," says Comte.

Charades worked with UTA Independent Film Group on *Urchin*, which premiered last year in Un Certain Regard, and will do so again this year on Asghar Farhadi's *Parallel Tales* in Competition and Jordan Firstman's *Club Kid* in Un Certain Regard. It joined forces with New Europe on Laszlo Nemes' *Orphan*, with Anton for *Memory Of A Snail*, and with FilmNation for last year's Cannes Competition title *Alpha*. It also frequently teams up with local distributors for its Asian animation titles, such as Shochiku for Kiyoshi Kurosawa's *The Samurai And The Prisoner* (Cannes Premiere) and Asmik Ace on *A New Dawn*.

"The market is hard, so we prefer to share rather than struggle," says Mazars. Comte adds: "It is just an extension of the collective approach that defines our company."



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MARCHÉ DU FILM

ACT ONE



Director: Sophia Takal (*Always Shine, Black Christmas*)
Cast: Ella Beatty (*If I Had Legs I'd Kick You*), Ari Graynor (*The Sopranos, The Disaster Artist*), Nate Mann (*Licorice Pizza*)

An aspiring young actress, desperate for guidance and belonging, falls under the spell of a manipulative acting coach who draws her into a web of control and obsession.

104 min / USA / Dramatic Thriller

SCREENING TIMES:

TODAY | 9:00 | Olympia 9

May 15 | 17:45 | Olympia 4

SHE KEEPS ME YOUNG



Director: Doron Max Hagay
Cast: Blair Beeken (*Jury Duty Presents: Company Retreat*), Patti Harrison (*Together Together*), Kate Berlant (*Don't Worry Darling*), John Early (*Eternity*)

Michelle is floating through life until a surprising connection with a high schooler challenges her relationship with her overbearing best friend.

91 min / USA / Comedy

SCREENING TIMES:

May 14 | 12:00 | Olympia 3

May 17 | 14:00 | Olympia 6

THE HISTORY OF CONCRETE



Director: John Wilson (*How to with John Wilson*)
Exec. Producers: Josh Safdie (*Marty Supreme, If I Had Legs I'd Kick You*), Eli Bush (*Marty Supreme, Ladybird*), Ronald Bronstein (*Marty Supreme*)

After attending a workshop on how to write a Hallmark movie, filmmaker John Wilson tries to use the same formula to sell a documentary about concrete.

"An absurd triumph [...] Consistently laugh-out-loud funny, compelling and surprising." – The Guardian

"Hilarious and sneakily profound." – Indiewire

101 min / USA / Documentary

SCREENING TIMES:

TODAY | 15:45 | Olympia 4

May 16 | 11:30 | Olympia 7

THE BEST SUMMER



Director: Tamra Davis (*Billy Madison, Crossroads, Half Baked*)
Cast: Beastie Boys, Sonic Youth, Foo Fighters, Pavement, Rancid, Beck, The Amps, Bikini Kill

Immersive POV camera footage reveals electric performances, candid interviews, and intimate backstage life — an all-access view inside an era-defining moment in music.

"A precious time capsule, and a must for anyone who cares about the bands or the time." – Slate

"A loving scrapbook to youth and rock and friendship." – Consequence of Sound

84 min / USA, Australia, Indonesia, Thailand / Documentary

SCREENING TIMES:

May 16 | 18:15 | Olympia 8

May 17 | 10:00 | Olympia 6

THEIR TOWN



Director: Katie Aselton (*Magic Hour, Mack & Rita*)
Cast: Ora Duplass, Chosen Jacobs (*It, Castle Rock*), Kim Shaw (*You*), Jeffery Self (*Search Party, Spoiler Alert*), Daveed Diggs (*Blindspotting, Hamilton*)

Abby and Matt, high schoolers from opposite ends of the social spectrum but paired as leads in the school play, spend one long night roaming their town, confronting uncertain futures and unearthing surprises from their past.

"Brings to mind the relaxed rhythms of Linklater's 'Before' trilogy." – Variety

"A quiet revelation [...] Ora Duplass is extraordinary." – Screen Anarchy

80 min / USA / Drama

SCREENING TIME:

May 17 | 11:30 | Olympia 7

PERFECT



Director: Millicent Hailes

Cast: Julia Fox (*Uncut Gems*, *Presence*), Ashley Moore (*I Know What You Did Last Summer*), Micaela Wittman (*Shirley*), Lio Mehiel (*After the Hunt*, *Mutt*), Ryder McLaughlin (*Mid90s*), Kate Moennig (*The L Word*, *Ray Donovan*), Creed Bratton (*The Office*)

Drawn to a lakeside haven by a mysterious pregnant woman, a heartbroken drifter finds refuge with a group of eccentric misfits.

"Intriguing, seductive and unapologetically raw." – The Holo Files
"Moore and Fox display stunning on-screen chemistry." – Film Threat

94 min / USA / Drama, Romance

SCREENING TIMES:

TODAY | 18:15 | Olympia 6

May 17 | 13:30 | Olympia 4

MOUSE



Director: Kelly O'Sullivan (*Ghostlight*), Alex Thompson (*Saint Frances*, *Ghostlight*)

Cast: Sophie Okonedo (*Slow Horses*, *Hotel Rwanda*), Katherine Mallen Kupferer (*Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*), Chloe Coleman (*Avatar: The Way of Water*)

Callie and Minnie's relationship is suddenly upended at the start of the summer before their senior year of high school. Left rudderless without her charismatic best friend, Minnie starts to form a complicated friendship with Callie's mother.

"Hits you right in the heart." – Deadline
"Deeply felt and dappled with tender truths." – THR

120 min / USA / Drama

SCREENING TIME:

May 14 | 18:15 | Olympia 6

WOMEN AS LOVERS



Director: Koxi

Cast: Johanna Wokalek (*The Baader Meinhof Complex*), Hannah Schiller (*Fabian: Going to the Dogs*), Ben Münchow (*Like a Loser*)

Middle-aged and adrift, Brigitte is aware of the shrinking market value of her femininity, as she compares herself to Paula, a schoolgirl with an active social media presence.

"Contemporary, experimental, and hilarious." – Der Standard
"[Koxi] brings an impressive wealth of her own ideas to the table, exploring contemporary ways in which the female body is commodified." – TAZ Online

98 min / Germany, Luxembourg / Dark Comedy

JOYBUBBLES



Director: Rachel J. Morrison

Cast: Joybubbles, Steve Wozniak, Toni Engressia

A boy discovers he can control the global telephone system by whistling a magic tone. Born blind and yearning for connection, his early obsession with the telephone sparks a subculture that shapes the future of hacking and technology.

"A delightful watch." – The Playlist
"A defiance of loneliness, ableism, and trauma." – Flickering Myth

77 min / USA / Documentary

THE GYMNAST



Director: Charlotte Glynn

Cast: Ethan Embry (*Can't Hardly Wait*, *Empire Records*), Britney Wheeler, Margarita Levieva (*Spread*, *In From the Cold*), Will River (*Son of the South*)

In post-industrial Pittsburgh, a 16-year-old elite gymnast and her single father struggle to reorient their lives after a potentially career-ending injury threatens her Olympic prospects.

"A devastating portrait of ambition." – Film Verdict
"A keen intelligence, devoid of any sensationalism." – Panorama-cinéma

84 min / USA / Drama

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Follow the money

Private equity finance is playing an increasingly important role across the globe in sustaining and supporting the international independent feature film ecosystem.

Jeremy Kay speaks to several of the key US-based producer-equity players in the market about priorities, challenges and opportunities

In the coming days, Charades and UTA Independent Film Group will start sales talks on Un Certain Regard entry *Club Kid*, while nearby on the Croisette, Mister Smith Entertainment will show footage from *All That She Wants*. As Cannes gets underway, the filmmakers behind Jordan Firstman's drama about a washed-up party promoter are taking a very different approach from those backing the romantic comedy from Scarlett Bermingham and Andrew Rhymer.

Determining the right time to hire a sales agent is one of many factors

calculated by US producer-financiers when they target profitability for their latest features. For Ryan Heller, *Club Kid* producer and head of film and documentary at Topic Studios, which invested the majority of equity into the drama starring Firstman and Cara Delevingne, and partnered with co-financier and co-producer Stay Gold Features, the decision to start sales on the completed film comes from an ongoing process of "having a balance of risk that makes sense for us".

Meanwhile, Ley Line Entertainment principal and *All That She Wants* producer Theresa Steele Page opted to pre-sell her Annie Murphy



'We are not putting money into films that are going — we're making them happen'

Ryan Heller, Topic Studios

and Cooper Raiff starrer, which has wrapped production in Toronto.

Sophisticated US producer-equity players such as Topic, Ley Line and a host of established financiers deeply attuned to the ebbs and flows of the market are at the heart of so much

of the independent film world's best output — dominating market slates, winning festival awards and championing projects in need of backing.

The industry will be familiar with power players such as Black Label, FilmNation, AGC Studios, Black Bear, 30West, Fifth Season, Macro, Department M (which is said to be lining up an investment in Neon), and the Hollywood agencies' in-house sales and packaging divisions.

Yet there is a cadre of under-the-radar, albeit no less impressive, investors. Some are well-entrenched, while others are emerging as potentially significant new champions of eye-catching features. Among the »

The best of Portugal on screen



RED ROCKS

Director: Bruno Dumont
Production: Rosa Filmes, Tessalit productions,
Nightswim, Andergraun Fims
20 May - 15:00 | Croisette Theatre



A FEW THINGS HAPPENING BY A RIVER

Director: Daniel Soares
Production: O Som e a Fúria, L'Oeil Vif Productions,
Kid With a Bike
22 May - 11:00 Debussy Theater | 14:00 BAZIN Theater



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
2026 OFFICIAL SELECTION
IMMERSIVE COMPETITION

LÚCIDO

Director: Vier
Production: COLA Animation
14/17/20 May - 17:00 | Carlton Hotel



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
2026 OFFICIAL SELECTION
LA CINEF

WHERE FIREFLIES SPARKLE

Director: Clara Vieira
Production: Escola Superior de Teatro e Cinema
19 May - 14:30 | Buñuel Theatre



*see the big picture



‘Money partners tend to be naïve and get seduced by the glamour. When they lose money, they go away’

Independent source

newer producer-investors are musician Moby’s Little Walnut, Bow And Arrow founder Michael Sherman’s March 13, Unapologetic Projects (*Stop! That! Train!*) and Working Barn (*The President’s Cake*), led by Peter Richards and former Walden Media executive Naia Cucukov.

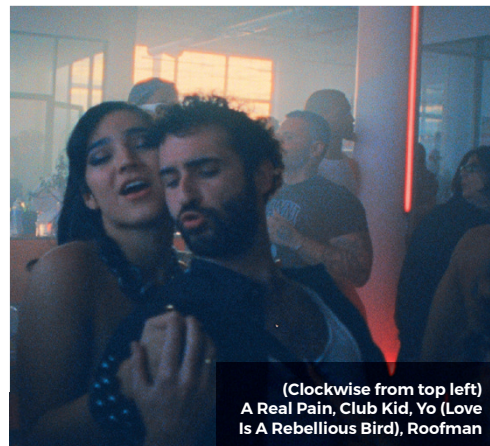
Film investors have been making promises and vanishing for decades. The trick for producers is to find the committed capital source that loves film and is realistic about the risk. “Money partners tend to be naïve and get seduced by the glamour,” says one veteran independent source. “They don’t know the business is execution-dependent and buyers are extremely picky these days. When the first or second movie flops and they lose money, they go away and the company folds. You want reliability.”

Unicorn investors

The independent business needs unicorns like Black Label’s Molly Smith, whose company has backed films including *Sicario* and *La La Land*; Megan Ellison, sister to Paramount CEO David Ellison and daughter of Oracle co-founder Larry Ellison, whose resurgent Annapurna is known for funding *Zero Dark Thirty* and *American Hustle*; and Zhang Xin, the Chinese real estate billionaire and Closer Media founder whose investments include *The History Of Sound* and *Orwell: 2+2=5*.

Investing money in the expensive and byzantine world of independent film financing is not for the faint-hearted. Recoupment is far from guaranteed and can take years. When it comes, the investor can expect to recoup fully and earn a 15%-20% premium, plus a share of the backend — although equity financiers typically sit behind lenders, sales agents, distributors, lawyers and an assortment of other fee-collectors in the so-called finance stack.

Pinky Promise launched in 2021 after founder and CEO Jessamine



(Clockwise from top left) *A Real Pain*, *Club Kid*, *Yo (Love Is A Rebellious Bird)*, *Roofman*



Burgum and president Kara Durrett met on the Georgia set of 2022 Sundance selection *Honk For Jesus. Save Your Soul*. — it was the first film financed by Burgum, the daughter of tech investor and US secretary of the interior Doug Burgum, and Durrett was producing.

Burgum, her brothers and several friends made an initial investment in the company and she corralled mostly North American institutional investors, foundations and private investors from sectors encompassing real estate, tech and farming across two funds. Pinky Promise operates a team of six female-only executives and actively produces most of the films in which it invests — whether they grow from development projects or come into the company.

Burgum acknowledges the punishing US distribution landscape can deter investors, but remains transparent and optimistic with her pool of backers. “They understand the risks of what they’re getting into,” she says. “Some-

times it’s the risks that are the opportunity.”

The first script Pinky Promise optioned and packaged was Scarlett Johansson’s directing debut and 2025 Cannes Un Certain Regard premiere *Eleanor The Great*, starring June Squibb, which they produced with Maven Screen Media and Johansson’s These Pictures. Sony Pictures Classics and Sony stablemate TriStar Pictures came on board in 2024 and handled worldwide distribution. “We did not put equity into that except for a very small piece of development that got us started,” says Durrett.

Pinky Promise’s subsequent credits include Andrea Arnold’s *Bird* and the documentary *Yo (Love Is A Rebellious Bird)* directed by Anna Fitch and Banker White, which was awarded this year’s Berlin Silver Bear for outstanding artistic contribution. “We always try to be the biggest piece, or at least equal with our partners. We never want to be a passive financier,” says Durrett. “We haven’t jumped into the pre-sales game as much as some other people have. Not that it’s not a smart game; it



‘Indie film investors understand the risks.’

Sometimes the risks are the opportunity’

Jessamine Burgum, Pinky Promise

just hasn’t been our main priority.”

International sales agents take up to a 10% commission, although the amount can vary depending on the stage of the film, its quality and the talent elements. Their expertise and connections are often invaluable in guiding a film into the world. The distinction between pre-selling and selling a completed film is critical for producer-financiers as they weigh up risk exposure and their investors’ position in the finance waterfall.

“We ended up selling *The Last Showgirl* in Cannes two years ago off a sizzle, but there was not a finished film and we got a great foreign sale on that movie,” says Durrett. “You’re looking at every movie and thinking, ‘How would it do best?’”

Burgum adds: “It’s not just about the creatives that we work with, it’s also the people on the business side.”

(Right) *Eleanor The Great* was the first script optioned and packaged by Pinky Promise



Jessamine Burgum photo: Jan Rosenstein

Mirabel Pictures

DENMARK IS FINALLY READY TO SHARE THE BACON



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When you're making a project, you're getting married for years."

Topic Studios' Heller says: "We always want to have a nimble approach that's going to allow us on the financing side to take a responsible amount of risk while seeing the right amount of upside.

"If pre-sales or an international sales component is not right for the project, we have other ways to think about these titles and adjust," he continues. "We've had a healthy mix of titles that have a foreign sales component, titles that are pure equity, titles that go to market finished, titles that we pre-sell. That's the puzzle we're in, day-in, day-out."

Taking the lead

Topic launched around 10 years ago under the First Look Media umbrella, backed by eBay founder Pierre Omidyar. "We're finding ourselves fully financing or at least being in the lead more often than not these days," says Heller. The company will fund development and has fully financed films like Jesse Eisenberg's *A Real Pain* and his upcoming untitled musical comedy at A24; recent Sundance selection *Wicker* starring Olivia Colman; and last year's Cannes Premiere title *Splitsville*. "We're not putting pieces of money into movies that are going as much as we are taking films into the company and making them happen."

Duncan Montgomery, who describes himself as "a recovering entertainment lawyer" and is a partner with Alex Orlovsky (*Lurker*, *Blue Valentine*) at High Frequency, says the company will take a range of financial positions on projects, can operate as a co-financier, and will fully finance smaller features. High Frequency manages a "cash-call fund" of seven high-net-worth North American investors, which is now in its fifth year. The company calls in the money as close as possible to production — it can be several weeks, whereas some funds hold their investors' money for five to 10 years. High Frequency itself has funds it can use to bridge gaps if needed.

On the Channing Tatum true-life caper *Roofman* from Derek Cianfrance, with whom Orlovsky has a long friendship, High Frequency acted as co-producer and co-financier, and provided a "significant" bridge loan while the filmmaker team worked to close the bond and

financing. Paramount distributed *Roofman* in North America and Glen Basner's FilmNation handled international sales.

FilmNation serves in the same capacity on Element Pictures' *Hillside Drive* (working title), a 1970s-set Lenny Abrahamson-directed drama starring Tom Burke and Eve Hewson, which has just wrapped production in Dublin.

High Frequency is a passive investor in the project. "The last thing that Lenny or [Element co-CEO] Ed Guiney or anybody needs is us to come over and tell them how to produce a film in Dublin," says Montgomery. "It's about recognising that from the outset, and saying, 'This is where we can add value.' We helped bring a little more money to fill a gap, and that was what they needed from us. We loved working with them."

High Frequency was also a passive partial investor in Sundance 2025 hit *Sorry, Baby* and *The Last Showgirl*. "We want to do more in Europe," says Montgomery. "We've got a project that's [with] an American director shooting in Italy that

CLOSE-UP US PRIVATE EQUITY INVESTORS

Camelback Productions

Key personnel Anita Verma-Lallian, CEO
Preferred genres Elevated, character-driven stories that feel intimate but have commercial appeal
Invested in *Doin' It*, *Patel*, *Prima Facie*, *Runner*
Budgets \$1m-\$30m. Have written cheques for \$500,000 all the way up to \$6.5m
Capital source Pool of private investors

High Frequency

Key personnel Duncan Montgomery, Alex Orlovsky
Preferred genres Genre-agnostic
Invested in *Roofman*, *Lurker*, *His Three Daughters*, *Sorry, Baby*
Budgets Range to date — \$1m-\$25m
Capital source Film fund backed by seven equity investors

Ley Line

Key personnel Theresa Page
Preferred genres Humane, left-of centre, feelgood films
Invested in *Everything Everywhere All At Once*, *The Green Knight*, *Miss Juneteenth*
Budgets N/A
Capital source Co-founder and oil magnate Tim Headington

Oval-5

Key personnel Crystine Zhang, founder and CEO
Preferred genres Impactful commercial films
Invested in *Josephine*, *Gail Daughtry And The Celebrity Sex Pass*, *Bedford Park*
Budgets \$5m-\$30m
Capital source Pool of private investors

Pinky Promise

Key personnel Jessamine Burgum, CEO; Kara Durrett, president and head of film
Preferred genres Bold, inclusive storytelling
Invested in *Eleanor The Great*, *The Last Showgirl*, *Bird*
Budgets Up to \$12m
Capital source The company's two funds comprise institutional investors, foundations and private individuals

QC Entertainment

Key personnel Ray Mansfield, Sean McKittrick
Preferred genres Genre, horror, comedy, thrillers, sci-fi
Invested in *Get Out*, *BlacKkKlansman*, *It Lives Inside*, *The Casket Girls*
Budgets Will invest up to \$15m in equity per project. Can go higher through wholly owned sales company Manifest Pictures
Capital source Ted Hamm of Hamm's Beer

Topic Studios

Key personnel Ryan Heller, head of film and documentary
Preferred genres 'Smarthouse' filmmaker-driven features
Invested in *Club Kid*, *Wicker*, *Splitsville*, *A Real Pain*
Budgets Sub-\$2m to \$20m-plus
Capital source Launched under First Look Media banner backed by eBay founder Pierre Omidyar



'For us, what's so important is the filmmaker. Script is first, then director'

Duncan Montgomery, High Frequency

we've almost closed on." The company is open to investing in films not in the English language, but first the partners want to learn more about the opportunities.

"For us, what's so important is the filmmaker. Script is [first], then director — everything else is further down the road. There are so many great directors around the world that matching a director with great material and then [participating in] soft money opportunities can reduce the pressure on that big North American sale."

Montgomery adds: "There are also films where we elect to forgo pre-sales — except where they are

needed to qualify for tax credits — and/or secure a North American minimum guarantee in order to chase the upside potential. These are usually projects helmed by a director with a unique voice who we believe is going to make something unique."

For all but the most A-list projects, blockbuster pre-sales that were commonplace have by and large gone. Producers who once relied on a 20% equity plug in their finance models tell *Screen International* they might now look to equity investors to fill a 40%-50% hole in their budgets.

Camelback Productions CEO Anita Verma-Lallian has spent more than 20 years developing real estate and building AI data centres in Arizona. She launched her company in 2023 with the sex comedy *Doin' It*, fully financed through her pool of private investors. "I'm seeing the same trend where the equity plays are larger and there's less debt because it is harder to get pre-sales," she asserts. "You're having to be a lot more selective."

Verma-Lallian is nonetheless bullish about independent film »



ALL THAT WE NEVER WERE

a Romantic Drama film by Jorge Alonso

Fri May 15th – 15:45 hs – Palais F

TORMENT

a Horror Film by Olallo Rubio

Thu May 14th – 16:15 hs – Palais E



MARKET SCREENINGS

PACIFIC

A Sci-Fi / Horror film by Gonzalo "GG" Gutierrez

Thu May 14th – 12:00 hs – Lerins 3
Sat May 16th – 15:45 hs – Lerins 2



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UNDER YOUR FEET

a Fantasy / Thriller film by Cristian Bernard

Fri May 15th – 12:00 hs – Palais C

NO HIT WONDER

A Dramatic Comedy film by Florian Dietrich

Thu May 14th – 14:00 hs – Riviera 1





'We have fully financed but will probably do so less because the market has been so tricky'

Theresa Page, Ley Line

while keeping her eyes open. "Since I started, the environment's been a little challenging. We had the writers strike early on and there's been some consolidation, and AI is starting to become more of a discussion," she notes. "It's all about relationships. We're with UTA, which has been connecting us to the right people. Kumail Nanjiani just joined our board. Having those relationships has been very helpful."

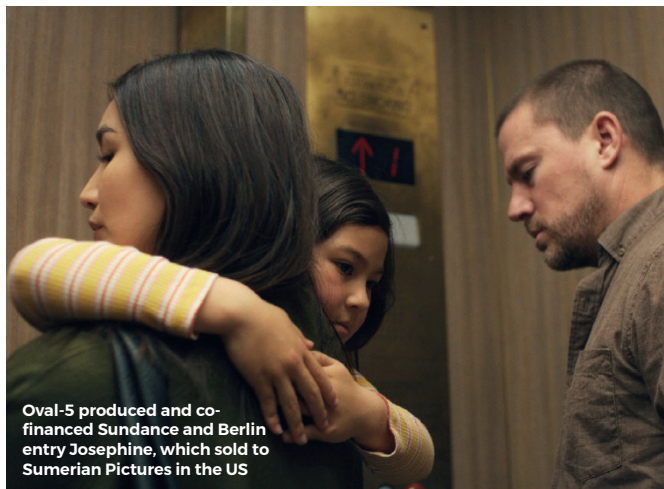
Camelback develops and options projects and is producing and co-financing the stage-play legal drama adaptation *Prima Facie*, starring Cynthia Erivo, which shot in the UK and is expected to get a festival launch later this year. Embankment Films handles sales. The co-finance pipeline includes Ravi Kapoor's crime drama *Patel*, which shot in Los Angeles in summer 2025, and upcoming thriller *Runner*, starring Owen Wilson and Alan Ritchson, co-financed with 2521 Entertainment.

"We're trying to create a diversified investment opportunity, where you invest in the fund but then the fund invests in multiple projects," says Verma-Lallian. "We have some projects where we're just debt investors and provide loans, we do a lot of equity investing, and we're doing some development and packaging."

Bespoke solutions

Ley Line's Page builds financing models on a case-by-case basis. The company fully financed one of its earliest projects, Channing Godfrey Peoples' Sundance 2020 entry *Miss Juneteenth*, and produced and was involved with A24 in the financing of the Daniels' Oscar winner *Everything Everywhere All At Once* and David Lowery's *The Green Knight*. "I do know a couple of movies that have done fantastic pre-sales," she says. "Not every project is going to get that though."

"Some of our projects are very American, so we have to wait and



Josephine Film Holdings

Oval-5 produced and co-financed Sundance and Berlin entry *Josephine*, which sold to Sumerian Pictures in the US

see how it is going to be perceived for domestic, and then a lot of times the sales follow that. I love having a US distribution deal in place."

Ley Line, backed by Texan oil magnate and co-founder Tim Headington, whose other company Tango Entertainment is now led by Neil Shah since Lia Buman departed for Paramount, leans more towards co-financing. "We have fully financed but will probably do so less and less because the market has been so tricky," says Page. "It is nice to have a partner — at least you have one other person to complain to."

The development slate includes a London-set feature from writer Maja Bodenstern called *Painted Skin*. Page is looking to shoot a project in Paris, although she does not see the company making films not in the English language or making passive investments. "I love producing," she says.

Page is currently location scouting for *Enter The House Of Hazard*, an homage to Jackie Chan-style martial arts films that Ley Line is producing and co-financing, and developing with *Everything Everywhere* fight choreographers The Marshall Club.

Ray Mansfield and Sean McKittrick of QC Entertainment target genre films, and while they have fully backed features budgeted up to \$15m, they are preparing to step up to support budgets in the \$30m-\$50m range, in collaboration with Manifest Pictures, their wholly owned sales company that launched in Janu-

(Right) QC helped finance Jordan Peele's *Get Out*



'On some projects, we're just debt

investors and provide loans. We do a lot of equity investing'

Anita Verma-Lallian, Camelback

ary and is headed by Yvette Zhuang and Zach Glueck.

Backed by Hamm's Beer scion Ted Hamm, QC Entertainment co-financed *It Lives Inside* with Neon, and has fully financed films such as documentary *Vice Is Broke* and the upcoming *The Casket Girls*. QC was committed to fully financing Jordan Peele's *Get Out* and Spike Lee's *BlackKkKlansman* after funding development, putting the finance plan together, casting and green-lighting, before Universal and Focus respectively acquired the features.

"Our focus has been on fully cash equity productions budgeted at \$15m and under," says Mans-

field. "Through our partnership with Manifest Pictures, we are evolving toward a more structured finance model in which we continue to fully finance films, while

limiting our direct equity exposure to a portion of the overall financing. In this model, we typically cap our exposure at 20%-30% of the gross budget. That approach

allows us to leverage the Manifest partnership in a disciplined way, increasing both production volume and budget capacity."

"Each film has its own personality and its own needs, and part of our job is pursuing the incentive that puts the most dollars on screen and ultimately makes the film better," notes McKittrick. "Historically, California has been a challenge for us because it has been difficult for our independent films to secure the tax credit. We received it for *Us*, but the last independent film we made in California without studio backing was *The Oath*. With California's expanded tax incentive, we are hopeful there will be more opportunities to shoot in the state."

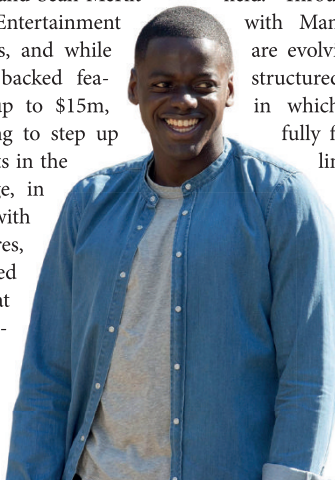
Finding the balance

Los Angeles and Toronto-based Crystine Zhang launched Oval-5 in 2022 and sold three Sundance films this year, each of which she produced, backed through her pool of mostly US and Canadian tech and real-estate investors. Oval-5 invested one-third of the budget in Beth de Araujo's Sundance and Berlin hit *Josephine*, starring Channing Tatum and Gemma Chan; fully financed and produced David Wain's *Gail Daughtry And The Celebrity Sex Pass*; and has co-financed some of the equity, and will help with China sales, on Stephanie Ahn's *Bedford Park*.

Zhang did not arrange pre-sales on any of the films. "If the budget is higher, say \$10m to \$20m, you can lean into pre-sales," she says. "Once you're under \$10m, the transaction costs start to eat into things. You may be risking less equity, but you're also pushing your equity investors further down the waterfall, so it's about finding the right balance."

"I don't have to produce every movie," says the former CEO of Shandong Film & TV. "If I believe in the team and the project, I'm more like an enabler — you don't want too many cooks in the kitchen."

She is a big believer in matching the right script with a strong team and responsible budget: "It all needs to be thoughtfully structured, including how much exposure equity investors take on each project. The goal is sustainability — to support and retain these investors for the industry as a whole, not just for any one individual. Growing the business isn't just one person's responsibility, it belongs to everyone involved." ■



Justin Lubin, Universal Pictures



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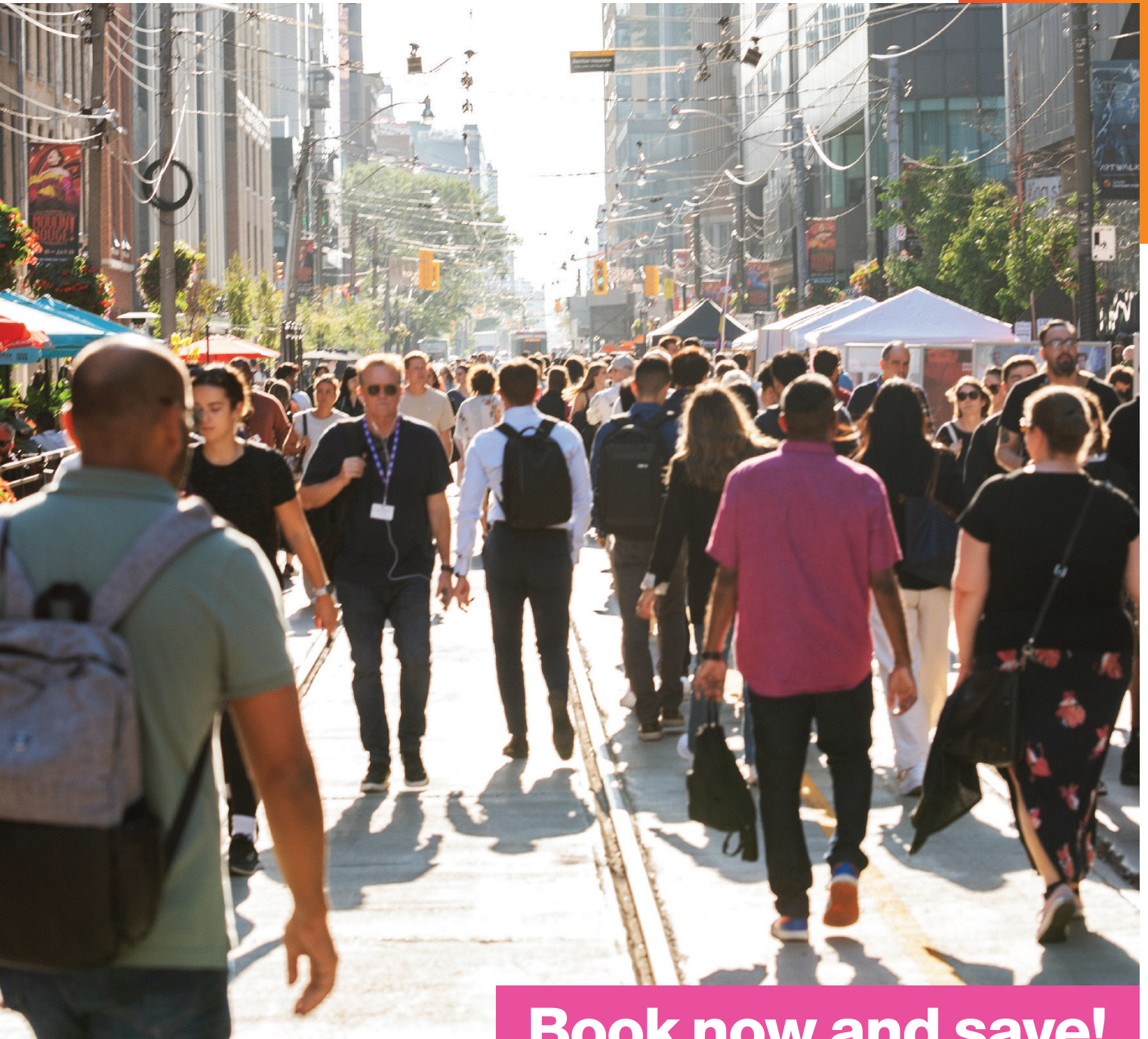
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Squaring the circle

Now in its fourth edition, Cannes Marché's Investors Circle aims to bridge the gap between private equity players and independent auteur projects. Matt Mueller reports

Launched in 2023 in response to the strangled financing landscape for European independent auteur cinema and pressure on traditional co-production models, the one-day Investors Circle summit enters its fourth edition as one of the Cannes Marché's more high-profile, and seemingly successful, post-pandemic add-ons. Over its first three editions, 29 filmmakers with "Cannes DNA" (as Marché director Guillaume Esmiol described it) pitched new films to private equity investors, seeking to attach finance to projects ranging from early stage development to those on the verge of production, in behind-closed-door sessions.

Given the highly curated nature of the event, and the filmmakers invited (Radu Jude, Ruben Östlund and Jasmila Zbanic among them), it is not a surprise that 19 of those 29 projects have already premiered at major festivals, or are about to. Two of last year's cohort, Lukas Dhont's *Coward* and Marie Kreutzer's *Gentle Monster*, will debut in this year's Cannes Competition. "While private equity has been present in the industry, it has not always aligned naturally with European arthouse cinema, especially non-English-language films," notes Alexandra Zakharchenko, the Marché's head of industry programs, who organises the Investors Circle in collaboration with Esmiol.

The pair invite 35-40 private equity financiers, high-net-worth individuals and family offices each year, prioritising investors with a track record or who have at least demonstrated interest in festival-driven, auteur-led cinema. While the Marché does not divulge who they are, it is known that Waypoint, Anonymous Content and AC Independent have taken part, as has Desmar, which invested in *Gentle Monster* last year. (Zakharchenko describes the narrowing-down process as "self-selection", whereby potential investors fall away quickly



The one-day Investors Circle brings together high-profile filmmakers and potential investors

Claire Lebeau / Marché du Film

if the Circle model does not align with their interests.)

The projects are identified through scouting, with the selection made by Esmiol, Zakharchenko and a rotating committee that this year included FilmNation Entertainment vice president of international sales Alice Laffillé. There is no budget cap but in the past two years, the range has been \$3.5m-\$11m (€3m-€9m).

Spread the word

Projects arrive at all stages of development, but the best results, according to producers who have taken part, are achieved by films with a production start date looming and most of their financing in place. In some cases, results can still be achieved even if the investors in the room do not latch on, as producer Michiel Dhont discovered last year. He and brother Lukas were already in "full pre-production" with a mid-August start date on *Coward*, and while none of the investors present boarded, another financier did reach out afterwards off the back of their Investors Circle participation and ended up investing "a significant amount".

"Money is important to this person but his interest in our project was sparked by the story we were



'What matters is whether investors continue to engage with this segment of the industry'

Alexandra Zakharchenko,
Cannes Marché

trying to tell," says Dhont. "I was a little hesitant to participate in the event at first because I'm not used to working with private financing, but now I'm so happy that we did it."

Not every producer has had a satisfactory experience. One who attended with an ambitious project from a renowned European auteur says too little time was dedicated to the actual pitching, and also noted a lack of interest from many attending financiers for non-English-language projects. "Given the A-list directors they had in the room, the event felt superficial to me," they comment. "They should spend more time beforehand sending around information about the projects and then set up structured meetings."

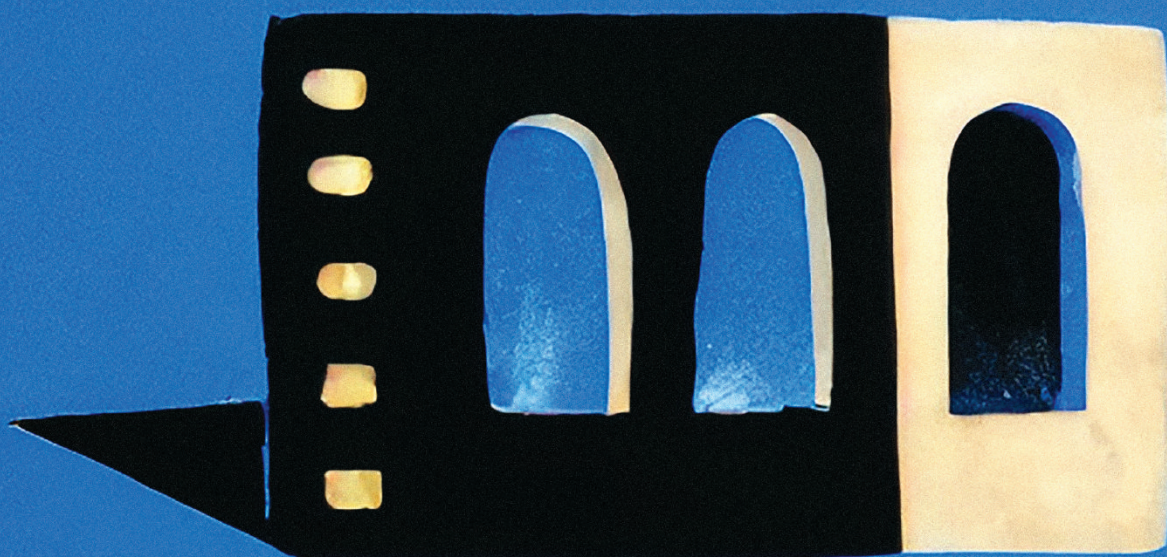
But for most, taking part ends up being a net positive experience. As noted by producer Hans Everaert, who was invited to attend in 2024 with director Teodora Ana Mihai and *Heysel 85*, visibility is the biggest advantage. "It helped create awareness around the project," he says. "No-one in the room ended up investing, but it was helpful for closing other financing. We financed the last 10%, €350,000, through different sources afterwards, and found our sales agent [Salaud Morisset]."

While participating filmmakers are announced in advance, the projects they are pitching aren't until after the Circle has taken place. The eight-strong 2026 lineup features Magnus von Horn, whose *The Girl With The Needle* played Competition in 2024, and Chile's Felipe Galvez, whose *The Settlers* premiered in 2023's Un Certain Regard.

In terms of the Marché's own measurement of success, Zakharchenko says the ambition has always been to build up independent arthouse cinema "not only as a cultural endeavour, but as a credible and structured investment opportunity".

"What matters is whether investors continue to engage with this segment of the industry over time." **S**

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A

ina Clotet's *Alive* in Critics' Week and Maria Martinez Bayona's *The End Of It* in Cannes Premiere

are leading the charge for Catalan filmmaking at Cannes, as the region showcases its thriving industry across the festival and market.

Furthermore, a cluster of international co-productions by Catalan producers premiering across official selection and beyond, and a delegation of more than 70 companies and 150 industry representatives, add to the Spanish region's robust presence.

Alive (*Viva*) is the debut feature by Catalan actress and director Clotet and is produced by Ikiru Films and Funicular Films. Clotet, who also stars, recently drew international attention with comedy series *This Is Not Sweden* (*Això No És Suècia*), winning the best performance award in Canneseries in 2024. *Alive* follows a 40-year-old woman desperately needing to feel again in the wake of a life-threatening illness.

Directed by Catalan director Martinez Bayona, *The End Of It* is one of three films co-produced by Barcelona-based Fasten Films that are premiering on the Croisette. It is produced with the UK's Elation Pictures and Norway's Eye To Eye Pictures, with the support of The Mediapro Studio US/Canada and BBC Film.

Starring Rebecca Hall, Noomi Rapace and Gael Garcia Bernal, this is the first feature by Martinez Bayona, born in Catalonia but now living in the UK. *The End Of It* is set in a near-future where death is optional and the decision of an artist to end her life stirs conflict within her family.

It is a happy return to Cannes for Fasten Films' Adria Monés, where the company's co-production *Inside The Yellow Cocoon Shell* by Pham Thien An played Directors' Fortnight in 2023 and won the Caméra d'Or for best first feature. This year Fasten Films is also attending as minority co-producers of Laïla Marrakchi's *Strawberries* in Un Certain Regard and *Rehearsals For A Revolution*, the documentary by Iranian actress and filmmaker Pegah Ahangarani, playing in Special Screenings.

"Talent, good film schools and universities and consistent public support through the Catalan film body ICEC [Institute of Cultural Companies], are among the key factors" for the region's presence on the international scene, says Monés.



Aina Clotet's *Alive* plays Critics' Week

SPOTLIGHT CATALONIA

Alive and thriving

The Catalan film sector is out in force at Cannes, building on its reputation as a dynamic international partner. Elisabet Cabeza reports



Maria Martinez Bayona's *The End Of It* plays in Cannes Premiere

ICEC invested nearly \$70m (€60m) in the region's film sector last year.

Further Catalan co-productions in Cannes selection include *Ashes* by Mexican actor/director Diego Luna, playing in Special Screenings. It is produced by La Corriente del Golfo, Animal de Luz Films, Perro Azul and Catalan outlet Inicia Films, led by Valérie Delpierre.

Bruno Dumont's *Red Rocks* is playing in Directors' Fortnight and is a co-production with Catalan filmmaker Albert Serra and Montse Triola's company Andergraun Films.

Aina Callejon's short *Me, You And The Cow* is produced by Escac Films and features in La Cinéf film school's official selection, whose jury is headed this year by Carla Simon. Elsewhere,



'Talent, good film schools and consistent

public support are key factors for the region's presence'

Adria Monés, Fasten Films

the Immersive Competition selection also includes Catalan talent with *The Black Mirror Experience*, produced by Banijay Live and Barcelona-based Univrse. It is created by the company's CEO and co-founder David Bardos and Damia Ferrandiz.

Catalonia's presence in Cannes "showcases the strength, diversity and international ambition of its audiovisual ecosystem," according to the Catalan government's minister of culture Sonia Hernandez Almodovar. "With a growing number of companies, professionals and productions on the global stage, Catalan cinema is consolidating its position as one of the most outstanding industries in Europe, driven by talent, a solid infrastructure and a clear commitment to international co-production and innovation."

Market presence

In the market, the Catalan industry is well supported by Catalan Films, the international promotional arm of ICEC and Catalunya Film Commission, to engage with international partners through various market initiatives.

The 'Goes to Cannes' collaborative showcase with key international festivals sees Daniel Romero's *The Daughters* (*Las Hijas*), presented as part of Goes to Cannes/Tallinn Black Nights, and Alejandro Damiani and Martin Avdolov's *Cuando Yo Existía* has been selected by Goes to Cannes/Ventana Sur.

Within the Spanish selection of Cannes Docs' Docs in Progress are three feature documentaries in post-production: Neus Pages' *Un Fogal*, Jorge Caballero's *Artefactos De Guerra* and Eftymia Zymvragaki's *The Path That Walks*.

Catalan Animation will also be present at the market with Sofia Carrillo's *Insectario* in the Annecy Animation Showcase. Cesc Gay's *My Friend Eva* and Galder Gaztelu-Urrutia's *The Platform* are in Cannes Remakes. **S**

Catalan Projects selected at Marché du Film



JAPAN'S NEXT-GEN SETS NEW FRONTIERS

Japan spotlights six rising filmmakers at Cannes who are set to make their names on the world cinema stage



Akio Fujimoto
Summer Lesson

Fujimoto is best known as the director of *Lost Land*, the first-ever Rohingya-language feature, which won the Venice Horizons special jury prize and the best film award at Red Sea International Film Festival in 2025. His upcoming feature follows a Burmese boy

'My hybrid films combine the social significance of documentary with the poetic qualities of cinema'

named Aung who is relocated to Japan when his documentary-maker father goes to war. He awaits his parent's return while navigating an unfamiliar life in a foreign country.

Fujimoto describes his work as "hybrid films that combine the social significance of documentary with the poetic qualities of cinema". His 2018 debut *Passage Of Life* depicted the lives of a Burmese family in Japan. In 2021 his second feature, Japan-Vietnam co-production *Along The Sea*, followed Vietnamese technical interns.

Following a lengthy festival run, *Lost Land* was released theatrically in France and Japan in April. "This will be my first time attending Cannes," says Fujimoto. "I look forward to celebrating the history of cinema with everyone."



Yurina Kaneko
Ghost Of Plants

Kaneko, best known for 2023's *People Who Talk To Plushies Are Kind*, is coming to Cannes with *Ghost Of Plants*, a film that she says, "draws on Japanese traditions of animism while pushing toward a film that genuinely decentres the human".

'Cannes feels like the right place to reach people across languages and cultures'

The 2023 breakout saw Kaneko garner multiple newcomer awards in Japan, but she also has experience outside of her home country. *People Who Talk To Plushies Are Kind* was selected for Shanghai International Film Festival, and Kaneko attended Busan's Asian Contents & Film Market (ACFM) with upcoming project *Where All Things Drowse*.

Coming to Cannes is "a leap," says Kaneko. "A film whose protagonist is the ghost of a plant can only exist at the edges of cinema, so Cannes feels like the right place to find out whether those edges can reach people across languages and cultures."

She is seeking "partners who trust that audiences can follow a gaze that belongs to something other than a person."



Masashi Kawamura
Hidari

Animated feature *Hidari* began as a self-initiated proof-of-concept — a stop-motion samurai action film set in what Kawamura describes as a "richly original 'woodpunk' world" where everything is carved from wood and brought to life by hand.

'We want to build relationships with people who see the value of bold and original storytelling'

The filmmaker believes a combination of distinctly Japanese craft, dynamic anime-influenced action and a universal storyline gives the feature an identity that can stand out. "Having the chance to present it at Cannes feels both validating and exciting," he says.

Kawamura's goal is to "meet partners who connect with the film's creative ambition and help us bring it to the world. We want to build relationships with people who see the value of bold and original storytelling in today's market." *Hidari* has also been selected for this year's Annecy Animation Showcase at the Marché.

Kawamura has been a creative director at various global creative agencies and has worked on brand campaigns, TV programme development and music video direction.

Six rising Japanese filmmakers are here in Cannes as part of the country's Film Frontier programme, supporting young directors to develop their projects and expand into international markets.

From ghostly plants and stop-motion 'woodpunk' to quiet road movies and the immigrant experience, the delegation and their work represent a wide breadth of talent and ambition.

The programme falls under the Japan Creator Support Fund's Film & Ani-

mation Section and is operated by Unijapan.

Akio Fujimoto, Yurina Kaneko, Masashi Kawamura, Emma Kawawada, Sota Takahashi and Hiroyuki Yoshihara discuss their upcoming projects and what they hope to achieve at the Cannes market.



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Emma Kawawada
Life Is Yours

Kawawada's debut feature *My Small Land*, which premiered at the Berlinale in 2022, centred on a Kurdish family in Japan navigating identity and permanence against a shifting landscape. She comes to Cannes with *Life Is Yours*, which flips the immigrant lens by focus-

'I am eager to experience the forefront of world cinema firsthand and gain fresh inspiration'

ing on a ski resort where Japanese locals are now outpriced by overseas tourists.

"It follows an elderly Japanese woman living in an area with a significant immigrant population," she explains. "The heart of the story is the evolving relationship between two women of different nationalities, which grows into something resembling a mother-daughter bond."

Loaded Films' Eiko Mizuno-Gray and Toei's Naoya Takahashi produce. Loaded Films is the banner behind Chie Hayakawa's *Plan 75* and *Renoir*, which both played at Cannes, the latter in 2025's Competition.

It marks Kawawada's first time at the festival. "I am eager to experience the forefront of world cinema firsthand and gain fresh inspiration for my work as a director," she says.



Sota Takahashi
Bomb Beneath The Lake

"As a director, I have never been involved in fundraising before," says Takahashi. He comes to Cannes with a unique project — a satirical film set in Serbia — and says the premise is its "most distinctive feature," adding, "We plan to shoot in a region where multiple ethnic groups

'I hope Cannes will open further opportunities for filmmaking and broaden my perspective'

coexist, and we hope that not only Japan and Serbia, but also other European countries will participate in the co-production."

Takahashi studied at the Graduate School of Film and New Media at Tokyo University of the Arts. In 2023, his independently produced feature *Kami-iida Stories* was released theatrically, and his graduation film *Memory Devices* won the audience award at Pia Film Festival that same year.

He hopes that attending Cannes "will open further opportunities for my future filmmaking. I also think it will broaden my perspective on film production."

For Takahashi, the Marché also presents an opportunity to research global filmmaking trends that he can incorporate into his project.



Hiroyuki Yoshihara
Route 7

Yoshihara is the sole producer in this year's Film Frontier programme. His goal with *Route 7* is to bring further depth to the story of Zainichi — the term given to Korean residents in Japan.

Zainichi, Yoshihara explains, are "people caught between imperialism, war and ideol-

'I am hopeful about the possibilities that come from serendipitous encounters'

ogy." The film will offer a more intimate picture of this life. "On the surface, *Route 7* is a quiet family road movie," he says. After the death of grandmother Kyong-ja, her son and granddaughter embark on a journey to lay her ashes to rest, following a hand-drawn map.

With plans to shoot the latter half of the film in Europe in 2027, Yoshihara is looking for creative partners, co-producers, sales agents and festival programmers. "I'm hopeful about the possibilities that come from serendipitous encounters," he adds. "Serendipity is the true joy of life."

What makes the project unique, he says, is the combination of local texture and the sense of crossing borders. For Yoshihara, that is "exactly what international audiences are looking for in a film right now".

Perfectly formed

Japan has a bumper crop in the festival's official selection from its leading auteurs, alongside projects from renowned horror and thriller directors at the market. Matt Schley reports

Festival

All Of A Sudden

Dir Ryusuke Hamaguchi

Hamaguchi returns to Competition for the first time since 2021's *Drive My Car*, which won three awards at Cannes before going on to claim the best international feature Oscar. *All Of A Sudden* marks his first film shot outside Japan, and follows a woman who runs a struggling nursing home in France and a stage director with terminal cancer. The cast is led by Virginie Efira (*Benedetta*) and Tao Okamoto (*The Wolverine*). Produced by Cinéfrance, Office Shirous, Bitters End, Heimatfilm and Tarantula, the film is set for release in Japan on June 19 and in France on August 12.

Contact Bitters End (Asia)

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Cinéfrance International (rest of world)

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All The Lovers In The Night

Dir Yukiko Sode

Director Sode's adaptation of a 2011 novel by Mieko Kawakami centres on a freelance proofreader living in solitude whose life begins to change after meeting a high-school physics teacher. Playing in Un Certain Regard, it stars Yukino Kishii, who won best actress at the Japanese Academy Awards in 2023 for *Small, Slow But Steady*, and Tadanobu Asano, who won the best supporting actor Golden Globe in 2025 for series *Shōgun*. Sode is known for *Aristocrats*, which played at Rotterdam in 2021. Kawakami's book was the first Japanese novel to be nominated for the American National Book Critics Circle Award.

Contact Bitters End

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(Right) Bitter End/Cinéfrance's *All Of A Sudden*



mk2 Films' *Nagi Notes*



Charades' *The Samurai And The Prisoner*

Nagi Notes

Dir Koji Fukada

This drama, set in the rural Japanese town of Nagi, centres on a sculptor living in the shadow of a past love who continues to shape her art, finding welcome distraction in a visit from her former sister-in-law.

Takako Matsu and Shizuka Ishibashi lead the cast. Writer/director Fukada graduates to Competition after winning the Un Certain Regard prize in 2016 with *Harmonium* and playing in Cannes Premiere last

year with *Love On Trial*. Producers include Japan's Hassuku Labs and France's Suvivance alongside Momo Film, Star Sands, Nathan Studios and Wonderstruck. A local release is set for September 25.

Contact mk2 Films

✉intlsales@mk2.com

The Samurai And The Prisoner

Dir Kiyoshi Kurosawa

Playing in Cannes Premiere, this adaptation of Honobu Yonezawa's award-winning 2021 novel *Kokurojo* is Kurosawa's first period piece. The 16th-century story centres on samurai Murashige Araki, who must form an alliance with a prisoner after his

castle becomes the scene of mysterious crimes. The cast is led by Masahiro Motoki (*Departures*), Masaki Suda (*Cloud*) and Munetaka Aoki (*Godzilla Minus One*). Kurosawa's previous Cannes trips include 2008's *Tokyo Sonata*, 2015's *Journey To The Shore* and 2017's *Before We Vanish*, all in Un Certain Regard.

Contact Charades

✉sales@charades.eu

Sheep In The Box

Dir Hirokazu Koreeda

Koreeda, who won the Palme d'Or for *Shoplifters* in 2018, writes and directs this near-future film about a couple who take a humanoid robot into their home after the death of their son. Playing in Competition, it stars Haruka Ayase of Koreeda's *Our Little Sister* and comedian Daigo in his first lead role. Fuji Television Network, Gaga, Toho and Aoi Pro produce, and Neon has rights in the US, UK and Australia, having distributed Koreeda's 2022 feature *Broker*. Toho has set a May 29 release in Japan. Koreeda is a Cannes regular, winning awards with *Like Father, Like Son*, *Broker*, *Monster* and *Nobody Knows*.

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TOKYO FILM COMMISSION



Market

All That Exists (working title)

Dir Takahisa Zeze

Prolific filmmaker Zeze returns with this thriller about the aftermath of a kidnapping in 1991 and the mysterious life of one of its victims, now a brilliant painter. The film stars Hidetoshi Nishijima of Oscar winner *Drive My Car* and Suzu Hirose of *Our Little Sister* and *A Pale View Of Hills*. It is based on a 2023 novel by Takeshi Shiota, whose *Kiba: The Fangs Of Fiction* was adapted into a 2021 feature. The director is known for *Heaven's Story*, which won the Fipresci prize at the Berlinale in 2011, and *Fragments Of The Last Will*, which opened Tokyo in 2022. Now in post-production, a local release is scheduled for February 5, 2027.

Contact Toei

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Beasts Clutching At Straws

Dir Hideo Jojo

This thriller stars Suzuka Oji as a YouTuber who stumbles on a bag filled with ¥100m (\$630,000) in cash and a group of greedy strangers who will do anything to get their hands on it. The film is based on a 2011 novel by Keisuke Sone, which was previously adapted into a Korean film of the same name in 2020. Director Jojo is known for *Love Nonetheless* and *On The Edge Of Their Seats*, and was Tokyo's director in focus in 2023. In post-production, *Beasts* is set for a local release on September 25.

Contact Toei

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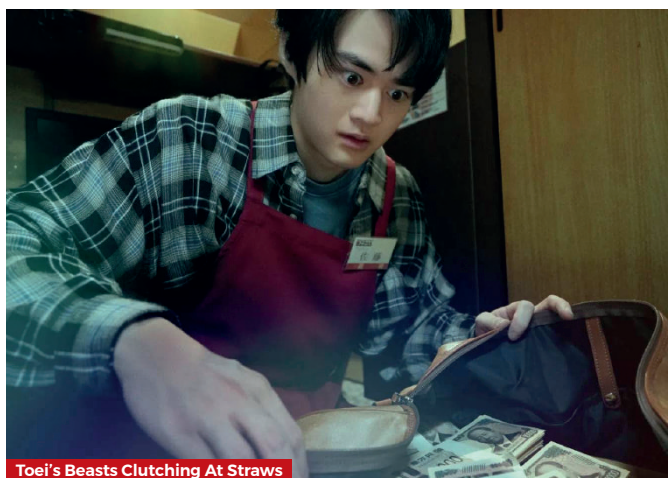
The Gate Of Murder

Dir Ko Kanai

Based on a 2003 novel from bestselling mystery author Keigo Higashino, the film is about a man who begins to wonder if his best friend is actually his worst enemy. It stars Kento Yamazaki — best known for the box-office hit *Kingdom* films and Netflix series *Alice In Borderland* — alongside Kohei Matsushita of *A Pale View Of Hills*. Director Kanai is a TV veteran known for helming series such as *Caster* and *The Travel Nurse*. Now in post-production,



Gaga's Part-Time Death Angel



Toei's Beasts Clutching At Straws



Nikkatsu's Sleeping In The Red Earth

The Gate Of Murder is set for a local release on February 19, 2027.

Contact Kadokawa

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Part-Time Death Angel

Dir Mai Sakai

Daigo Nishihata (*Doctor X: The Movie*) stars as a down-on-his-luck university student who takes a part-

time job as a death angel, helping the souls of the departed resolve their lingering regrets and move peacefully into the afterlife. Nishihata co-stars with Riko Fukumoto, known for 2022's *Even If This Love Disappears From The World Tonight*. Director Sakai helmed the *My Beautiful Man* series and film, while screenwriter Kaho Fukuda penned the 2025 hit *366 Days*. *Part-Time*

Death Angel is set to open locally this autumn on October 2.

Contact Gaga

✉intlsales@gaga.co.jp

Sana: Play With Me

(working title)

Dir Takashi Shimizu

The latest from horror maestro Shimizu (*Ju-on: The Grudge*) is the third film featuring the vengeful Sana, whose spirit haunts from beyond the grave via a cursed cassette tape. This time, her potential victims include Shota Sometani (*Suzuki=Bakudan*) and Suzuka Chinzei of popular girl group Fruits Zipper. A local release is set for July 24. The first *Sana* film played as the closing title of Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival in 2023.

Contact Shochiku

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Sleeping In The Red Earth

Dir Masakazu Kaneko

Set in 1949, the fourth feature from director Kaneko stars Kisetzu Fujiwara as a self-taught architect who goes on a quest to find the horns of a mythical mountain-dwelling beast. Fujiwara is known for his roles in *His and Sasaki In My Mind*. Co-starring is Sena Nakajima from this year's high-school drama *The Girl At The End Of The Line*. *Sleeping In The Red Earth* is completed and set for release in March 2027. Kaneko is known for fantasy dramas *River Returns* and *Ring Wandering*, which won the top prize at International Film Festival of India in 2021.

Contact Nikkatsu

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Unchained

Dir Keisuke Yoshida

This film revolves around the struggles of troubled young delinquents in Japan and the adults who strive to help them. It is based on the real-life adolescence of director Yoshida, known for *Intolerance* and *Missing*, of which the latter landed Satomi Ishihara a best actress nomination at the Japanese Academy Awards. It stars Wataru Ichinose of hit Netflix sumo wrestler drama series *Sanctuary* and Kaho of 2024 feature *Worlds Apart*. A local release is set for June 26.

Contact Nikkatsu

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DRAWING POWER

The popularity of Japanese animation is at an all-time high, with the Marché hosting industry leaders and upcoming projects to showcase what the future holds for anime

J

apanese animation has the attention of the world as one of the country's major cultural exports.

Anime is also a major presence at this year's Marché du Film, with panels at the Cannes Animation platform featuring industry leaders here to share their insight. Anecy Animation Showcase also includes two in-production anime films from exciting talent.

Japan's anime industry has emerged from its origins in low-budget, black-and-white TV shows in the early 1960s to become a juggernaut worth \$25bn and growing, especially outside its borders where anime-related revenues now surpass those of Japan itself. Overseas revenue nearly doubled to \$13.8bn (¥2.2tn) in the five years from 2020-24, revealing increasing demand for Japan's brand of animated storytelling around the world.

One factor in anime's appeal is its diversity, says Masahiko Otsuka, president and CEO of Studio Trigger, founded in 2011 and known for titles including *Promare* and *Cyberpunk: Edgerunners*. "We create things with a unique character that you cannot find anywhere else," he says. "Anime is different to animation from Hollywood or other countries, and it varies from studio to studio, so there are all kinds of different works out there."

Otsuka will be on stage on May 17 to discuss the global appeal of anime alongside Tomohiro Tokunaga, president and CEO of CoMix Wave Films, the studio known for acclaimed features *Suzume* and *Your Name*.

"Japanese animation has a long history, a deep-rooted fanbase and a huge volume of productions," says



'We create things with a unique character you can't find anywhere else'

Masahiko Otsuka, Studio Trigger

Noriko Matsumoto, co-founder and producer at Dwarf Studios, the stop-motion studio which is presenting its film *Hidari* at the Anecy Animation Showcase. "A few decades ago, anime was thought of as something only for children, but people who grew up on anime have now become adults themselves."

Further talks during Cannes Animation include a panel focused on the global strategy of Toei Animation (*One Piece*, *Dragon Ball*) and another about the increasing potential of international anime distribution featuring Eduardo Calla, chief strategy officer at BF Distribution, and Amel Lacombe, CEO of Eurozoom — Panoramime.

Anime has become a familiar presence at Cannes, with Mamoru Oshii's *Ghost In The Shell 2: Innocence* competing for the Palme d'Or in 2004 and classics like *Hakujaden* (*The White Snake Enchantress*) and Oshii's *Angel's Egg* selected for retrospectives. In 2024, Studio Ghibli, the lauded anima-

(Right) CoMix Wave Films' international hit *Suzume*



tion house behind Oscar-winning films *Spirited Away* and *The Boy And The Heron*, was awarded the first-ever collective Honorary Palme d'Or.

Increased collaborations

Anime's burgeoning presence overseas has come from a growing number of international collaborations and co-productions. In 2022, Trigger worked with Polish video-game studio CD Projekt Red to create *Cyberpunk: Edgerunners*, an anime series set in the universe of the *Cyberpunk 2077* video game, and has produced multiple shorts in partnership with Lucasfilm for the animated *Star Wars: Visions* anthology.

When it comes to working with international partners, Otsuka says: "There are certainly differences in perspective and creative approaches and, of course, cultural differences. But we share a common passion for creating great work, and that's what matters most. Even when our opinions clash and we end up debating, those discussions are fuelled by a shared desire to create something great, and that ultimately leads to mutual understanding."

Working across borders "is always a learning experience", says Matsumoto, whose credits include Netflix series *Rilakkuma And Kaoru*, and is seeking international partners for Anecy Animation Showcase film *Hidari*.

"Communication can be tough at times, but it's also interesting and full of discoveries. When you go abroad, you find people using all sorts of



'A few decades ago, anime was thought of as something only for children'

Noriko Matsumoto, producer

different methods. It's great to share not just technical know-how, but also things like the strategies producers use — all that kind of knowledge."

Fresh features

Hidari, one of two Japanese projects at the showcase, is a feature about a legendary sculptor from Japan's Edo period (1603-1868) who breathes literal life into his wooden puppets while facing down myriad foes with some intense samurai action. Matsumoto says the project came from a desire to push the boundaries of stop-motion.



Studio Trigger's
Cyberpunk: Edgerunners

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'We share a common passion for creating great work, and that's what matters most'

Masahiko Otsuka

Wasted Chef, an upcoming film from director Takayuki Hirao and studio Clap, the creative team behind 2021's *Pompo: The Cinéphile*. It is about a young chef whose cooking awakens lost memories after he finds himself in a ruined city where the concept of flavour has long been forgotten.

While anime is booming both in Japan and abroad, many of the most successful properties are from long-running franchises or based on popular manga or light novels, and while original ideas receive acclaim at festivals, they often have a tougher time gaining commercial traction.

"Not all viewers watch dozens of films a year, so there is a reluctance to take risks," says Otsuka. "But it's a two-way street. We need to be creative and give audiences a sense of novelty that makes them reach out and explore beyond their usual favourites."

Matsumoto notes *Hidari* is a sort of hybrid, an original based on real-life events during Japan's Edo period, albeit with a fantastical twist. "It's inevitable most projects are based on existing IP," she adds. "But I want to tackle the challenge of creating something new, to appreciate the value of making something from scratch."



Stop-motion film *Hidari* is being presented in the Anecny Animation Showcase

"Stop-motion animation is, in a way, a bit of a niche field. It tends to have a more artistic feel. I've always wanted to make interesting commercial projects — stop-motion that everyone can enjoy."

Matsumoto produced a five-minute pilot for the project in 2023, based on an idea conceived by filmmaker Masashi Kawamura of Japan's Whatever Co, which amassed nearly 5 million views on YouTube.

Dwarf Studios is also working on an adaptation of the manga *Sunny* by Taiyo Matsumoto, which was pitched at Cannes last year.

The second Japanese title in Anecny Animation Showcase is



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Japan is becoming a top destination for international shoots, with seasoned production staff, world-beating locations and an expanded incentive programme that gives film and TV projects increased flexibility.

The incentive, launched in 2023 following a pilot scheme, now has a two-year window, expanded from the previous one-year arrangement. This allows projects benefitting from the scheme — which offers a rebate of up to 50% on production costs — to take better advantage of the country's four distinct seasons.

Features to benefit from the rebate in recent years include Benny Safdie's sports biopic *The Smashing Machine* from A24, David Tomaszewski's *Yoroi* from Cinéfrance Studios and Hikari's Brendan Fraser-led *Rental Family* from Searchlight Pictures.

Incentive-driven TV productions include season two of Apple TV's *Monarch: Legacy Of Monsters*, the upcoming adaptation of William Gibson's *Neuromancer* from Skydance Television, Anonymous Content and Japan's Wowow, and the second season of *Drops Of God*, also from Apple TV.

Shooting in Japan for both seasons of *Drops Of God*, based on a Japanese manga about sibling rivals aiming to inherit their late father's vast wine collection, was "very positive", says the show's producer Klaus Zimmermann. "There is a high degree of professionalism and people are reliable. You know you're getting what they promised you."

Perfect partners

One key to shooting in Japan is finding local allies as co-production partners, especially because the incentive programme requires a Japanese production company to apply. While the number of bilingual industry members is on the rise, skilled interpreters are still essential.

"Everything needs to be translated, which means every conversation takes a long time," says *Rental Family* producer Eddie Vaisman. "We were lucky we had great translators and a crew that cared deeply about the movie."

Japan's domestic industry produces hundreds of films a year, meaning there is a deep pool of talent behind the camera.

"The work ethic is fantastic in Japan," says Zimmermann. "Japanese people have a detailed way to



Apple TV

Season two of Apple TV's
Drops Of God

SPOTLIGHT JAPAN

Japan blossoms

Japan is proving popular to international productions, with a 50% rebate on production costs, four distinct seasons, experienced crews and a vibrant domestic industry. Matt Schley reports



Searchlight's Rental Family benefitted from Japan's tax rebate

approach production, and they like to be very precise, very foreseeable."

Other potential allies come in the form of the national Japan Film Commission and regional commissions throughout the country, which can help productions secure locations and permits for outdoor shoots by liaising with police and local communities. Some commissions, including in Tokyo, have their own financial incentives such as scouting and shooting grants.

(Right) *The Smashing Machine*



Tokyo Film Commission was instrumental in co-ordinating with officials in the city's Kagurazaka neighbourhood, which moved its annual Halloween parade to March in order to accommodate *Rental Family's* shooting schedule.

Occasionally a whole community is willing to get involved. "One day, we showed up and a group of grandmas that live on the island made us an authentic Japanese lunch," says Vaisman of the time *Rental Family* spent filming in the rural Amakusa islands in the south of the country. "It was the best meal we'd had in weeks."

Producers emphasise adapting to Japanese production methods rather than trying to force their own style.



'People are reliable — you know you're getting what they promised you'

Klaus Zimmermann, producer, *Drops Of God*

"You can do it the European or American way, but it will be tougher and have a high cost," says Zimmermann. "We found a middle ground. What is very important is to keep the communication open and to listen to each other."

Vaisman adds: "We have made films all over the world, and this felt like a very different type of experience."

One such contrast was the lack of signed location agreements, meaning it was important to have a backup plan in case the owner of a location reneged with little notice.

"It's not better or worse, but different. You have to learn to evolve within that way of filmmaking and how communication works," says Vaisman.

"Many American producers have a mindset that most problems can be solved with money," notes *Rental Family* producer Julia Lebedev. "But money doesn't solve everything there. In Japan, it's more about respect and honouring what you said is going to happen."

"Sometimes the answer is no, and money is not going to change the answer, because it's not the top priority for people for certain things." **S**

DISCOVER JAPANESE NEW DIRECTORS



Under the stairs
(Drama/15min/2023)



August in blue
(Drama/4min/2023)



Cathedral of Junk
(Documentary/12min/2023)



Haruka Ono

Haruka Ono studied film studies at Waseda University and worked at a production company in Tokyo. She is currently pursuing a Master's degree in directing at ENSAV, a French national film school, while developing projects across fiction and documentary.



Henry Ehara

Henry Ehara (b. 1996) is a Japanese-American filmmaker and screenwriter working across Japan, France, and the Netherlands. His short film August in Blue was officially selected for the Tokyo International Film Festival. He studied filmmaking under Nobuhiro Suwa at Tokyo University of the Arts.



Takuma Tsugawa

A film director from Japan based in Austin, Texas. With experience in film and television production across Japan and international co-productions, he is currently pursuing an MFA at UT Austin, working across narrative and documentary filmmaking.



Japan Creator Support Fund

Using supplementary funds from the Agency for Cultural Affairs, the Japan Creator Support Fund was established within the Japan Arts Council to implement initiatives aimed at nurturing creators and artists and enhancing the value of cultural institutions.



Film Nexus-SEED program

Hosting training program in partnership with the Short Film Corner (SFC) and Rendez-vous Industry, both operated by "Cinéma de Demain," the Cannes Film Festival's section dedicated to supporting emerging filmmakers. Activities include participation in a tailored workshop for three emerging directors and the registration of their films in a "video library" exclusively for industry professionals.



Visual Industry Promotion Organization



MARCHE DU FILM
FESTIVAL DE CANNES



JAPAN
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
2023



Check on Short Film Corner:
Video Library Lounge (May 17-20)
It's also available online
(May 12-23 for SFC participants and
short film industry professionals)

HAPPY HOUR: Monday, May 18th at 4pm
Join us at the booth @Palais 14.01

Organized by Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan, Japan Arts Council and VIPO
Contact: Visual Industry Promotion Organization (VIPO) creatorfund_secretariat@vipo.or.jp

Screenings

Screening times are correct at the time of press but subject to alteration

FESTIVAL SCREENINGS

08:45

IN WAVES

See box, right

09:00

THE ELECTRIC KISS

(France) 122mins. Playtime. Dir: Pierre Salvadori. Cast: Pio Marmai, Anaïs Demoustier, Gilles Lellouche.

Paris, 1928. A young painter in vogue, Antoine Balestro, has been unable to paint since his wife died, to the despair of his gallery owner, Armand. One drunken evening, Antoine tries to contact his wife through a psychic, but is actually speaking with Suzanne, a humble carnival worker who has sneaked in to steal food. Suzanne proves to be a gifted fraudster and soon, aided by Armand, stages fake séances. Little by little, Antoine regains his inspiration, but the situation grows increasingly complicated as Suzanne falls in love with the man she is manipulating.

Opening Film

Lumiere Festival ticketing website

10:00

BUTTERFLY JAM

(France) 102mins. Goodfellas. Dir: Kantemir Balagov. Cast: Barry Keoghan, Riley Keough.

Sixteen-year-old Pyteh splits his time between the wrestling mat and his family's struggling Circassian diner in Newark. A single impulsive decision by his hustling father changes the course of his life, shaping a tale of pride, legacy and masculinity.

Directors' Fortnight

Theatre Croisette

11:00

THE ELECTRIC KISS

(France) 122mins. Playtime. Dir: Pierre Salvadori. Cast: Pio Marmai, Anaïs Demoustier, Gilles Lellouche.

Opening Film

Agnès Varda Festival ticketing website

11:30

DUA

(France, Switzerland, Kosovo) 101mins. The Party Film Sales. Dir: Blerta Basholli. Cast: Pinea Matoshi, Arben Bajraktaraj, Fiona Abdullahu.

Pristina, Kosovo, late 1990s. As war looms and ethnic tensions escalate, 13-year-old



FESTIVAL

08:45

IN WAVES

(France) 91mins. Charades. Dir: Phuong Mai Nguyen. Cast: Yeni Alvarez, Lyna Khoudri, Paul Kircher. In Los Angeles, AJ, a shy teenager, meets Kristen. She lives for surfing; he loves skateboarding and drawing. They fall madly in love, and a happy future seems within reach. But everything changes when Kristen faces a sudden illness. Together, they face adversity, driven by the strength of their love, their friends, and their newly shared passion for surfing and the ocean.

Critics' Week

Miramir

Dua struggles to find her place among her peers and within her changing body. After an incident shakes her community, she becomes a target herself and bonds with a fearless girl, Maki, who draws her toward an unexpected form of resistance. Between the daily violence and the growing threat of exile, there is little room for quiet awakenings.

Critics' Week

Miramir

TILAI

(Burkina Faso, France, UK, Switzerland, Germany). Cannes Classics. Dir: Idrissa Ouedraogo.

After two years of absence, Saga returns to his village. His fiancée, Nogma, has become his father's second wife.

Cannes Classics

Bunuel Festival ticketing website

14:00

I CAN'T SLEEP

(France) 110mins. Dir: Claire Denis. Cast: Yekaterina Golubeva.

A serial killer terrorises Paris at night, but

that doesn't stop Daïga and Théo from meeting up, and falling in love. Followed by a conversation with Claire Denis.

Directors' Fortnight

Theatre Croisette

INTO THE OGRE'S JAWS

(France) 86mins. Redience. Dir: Mahsa Karampour. Cast: Mahsa Karampour, Siavash Karampour. Siavash is driving a car; his sister Mahsa is filming him. They are on a road, somewhere in the US. The film takes the form of a free and graceful documentary road movie, unfolding between Iran and the US, between childhood, memory and the present.

ACID

Palais C

14:45

IN WAVES

(France) 91mins. Charades. Dir: Phuong Mai Nguyen. Cast: Yeni Alvarez, Lyna Khoudri, Paul Kircher.

Critics' Week

Miramir

15:00

NAGI NOTES

(Japan) 108mins. mk2 Films. Dir: Koji Fukada. Cast: Shizuka Ishibashi, Takako Matsu, Kenichi Matsuyama.

Yoriko, an artist living in rural Nagi, is haunted by a former love affair she cannot bear to mourn. When Yuri, a recently separated architect, travels from Tokyo to visit her friend and former sister-in-law, both women find themselves at a crossroads, each searching for ways to let go of the past and define their identity. Yuri's brief escape from the city settles into a quiet confrontation of loss and probing for the two women in bucolic Nagi.

Competition

Lumiere Festival ticketing website, press allowed

15:15

NAGI NOTES

(Japan) 108mins. mk2 Films. Dir: Koji Fukada. Cast: Shizuka Ishibashi, Takako Matsu, Kenichi Matsuyama.

Competition

Bazin Press

THE MATCH

(Argentina) 91mins. Goodfellas. Dir: Juan Cabral, Santiago Franco. Cast: Gary Lineker, Jorge Valdano, Peter Shilton. Tells the story of the iconic match between Argentina and England, played at the Azteca Stadium during the 1986 football World Cup. Using rare archival footage such as Maradona's controversial 'Hand of God', the film reconstructs that event as a living memory but also as the culmination of more than 200 years of tension, encounters and conflict between the two nations.

Cannes Premiere

Debussy Festival ticketing website, press allowed

15:30

MOONLIGHTING

(UK) 97mins. Dir: Jerzy Skolimowski. Cast: Jeremy Irons, Eugene Lipinski, Jiri Stanislav.

Nowak leads Polish workers to London and, as the only English speaker, controls them. When a military takeover occurs back home, their situation becomes far more difficult.

Cannes Classics

Agnès Varda Festival ticketing website

15:45

ASHES

(Mexico) 98mins. Luxbox. Dir: Diego Luna. Cast: Sergio Bautista, Anna Diaz, Irene Escolar.

Lucila, 21, moves to Spain with her brother to reunite with their mother who left eight years ago. Facing discrimination and family duties, she struggles to find independence while dealing with her past wounds.

Special Screening

Bunuel Festival ticketing website

17:15

A WOMAN'S LIFE

(France, Belgium) 98mins. Be For Films. Dir: Charline Bourgeois-Tacquet. Cast: Léa Drucker, Mélanie Thierry, Charles Berling, Laurent Capelluto, Marie-Christine Barrault.

Gabrielle, 55, gives herself to her work, body and soul. As a surgeon and head

東宝スタジオ



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of the hospital department, she is constantly on the move, stretched thin by the weight of responsibility. There is little time left for her private life: a loving husband and a mother who depends on her care. Yet this is the life she wanted, the life she chose. When a novelist comes to observe her at work for a book, her balance begins to shift. How far is she willing to go to shake what she has built?

Competition
Debussy Press

17:30

DUA

(France, Switzerland, Kosovo) 101mins. The Party Film Sales. Dir: Blerta Basholli. Cast: Pinea Matoshi, Arben Bajraktaraj, Fiona Abdullah.

Pristina, Kosovo, late 1990s. As war looms and ethnic tensions escalate, 13-year-old Dua struggles to find her place among her peers and within her changing body. After an incident shakes her community, she becomes a target herself and bonds with a fearless girl, Maki, who draws her toward an unexpected form of resistance. Between the daily violence and the growing threat of exile, there is little room for quiet awakenings.

Critics' Week
Miramar

18:30

A WOMAN'S LIFE

See box, right

A WOMAN'S LIFE

(France, Belgium) 98mins. Be For Films. Dir: Charline Bourgeois-Tacquet. Cast: Léa Drucker, Mélanie Thierry, Charles Berling, Laurent Capelluto, Marie-Christine Barrault.

Competition
Bazin Press

BUTTERFLY JAM

(France) 102mins. Goodfellas. Dir: Kantemir Balagov. Cast: Barry Keoghan, Riley Keough. *Sixteen-year-old Pyteh splits his time between the wrestling mat and his family's struggling Circassian diner in Newark. A single impulsive decision by his hustling father changes the course of his life, shaping a tale of pride, legacy and masculinity.*

Directors' Fortnight
Theatre Croisette

18:45

GROUNDSWELL

(US) 94mins. Festival De Cannes. Dir: Josh Tickell, Rebecca Tickell. Cast: Woody Harrelson, Demi Moore, Prince William of Wales.

Across five continents, the film encounters farmers, scientists and indigenous leaders reshaping humanity's relationship to land.

Special Screening
Agnes Varda Festival ticketing website



FESTIVAL

18:30

A WOMAN'S LIFE

(France, Belgium) 98mins. Be For Films. Dir: Charline Bourgeois-Tacquet. Cast: Léa Drucker, Mélanie Thierry, Charles Berling, Laurent Capelluto, Marie-Christine Barrault. *Gabrielle, 55, gives herself to her work, body and soul. As a surgeon and head of the hospital department, she is constantly on the move, stretched thin by the weight of responsibility. There is little time left for her private life: a loving husband and a mother who depends on her care. Yet this is the life she wanted, the life she chose. When a novelist comes to observe her at work for a book, her balance begins to shift. How far is she willing to go to shake what she has built?*

Competition
Lumiere Festival ticketing website

19:00

FAREWELL MY CONCUBINE

(China) 171mins. Dir: Chen Kaige. Cast: Leslie Cheung, Zhang Fengyi, Gong Li.

Two men who work for Peking Opera during a turbulent era become famous and take on the stage names Cheng and Duan. Their kinship is threatened when Duan meets a courtesan named Juxian.

Cannes Classics
Bunuel

19:15

TEENAGE SEX AND DEATH AT CAMP MIASMA

(US, Canada) 106mins. The Match Factory. Dir: Jane Schoenbrun. Cast: Hannah Einbinder, Gillian Anderson, Patrick Fischler.

After years of slapdash sequels, the Camp Miasma franchise is handed over to an enthusiastic young director. But when she visits the original's star, a now-reclusive actress shrouded in mystery, the two women fall into a blood-soaked world of desire, fear and delirium.

Un Certain Regard
Debussy Festival ticketing website, press allowed

20:00

UNDER A BAD STAR

(France) 125mins. Urban Sales. Dirs: Lola Cambourieu, Yann Berlier. Cast: Noémie Édé-Decugis, Hugo Carton, Anouk Berlier-Cambourieu, Jean-Baptiste Durand. *In the middle of a heatwave in a suburban neighborhood in the south of France, Alex once again berates Kiki for messing up. Yet Kiki is dying to please him. It's the end-of-year party at the local sports club. Birds are falling from their nests, wildfires are raging and Kiki remains under the spell of her 'bad star'.*

ACID
Cinéma Les Arcades 1 Festival ticketing website

20:30

UNDER A BAD STAR

(France) 125mins. Urban Sales. Dirs: Lola Cambourieu, Yann Berlier. Cast: Noémie Édé-Decugis, Hugo Carton, Anouk Berlier-Cambourieu, Jean-Baptiste Durand.

ACID
Cinéma Les Arcades 2

21:00

IN WAVES

(France) 91mins. Charades. Dir: Phuong Mai Nguyen. Cast: Yeni Alvarez, Lyna Khoudri, Paul Kircher.

In Los Angeles, AJ, a shy teenager, meets Kristen. She lives for surfing; he loves skateboarding and drawing. They fall madly in love, and a happy future seems within reach. But everything changes when Kristen faces a sudden illness. Together, they face adversity, driven by the strength of their love, their friends, and their newly shared passion for surfing and the ocean.

Critics' Week
Miramar

21:30

FORSAKEN

(France) 100mins. Studio TF1. Dir: Vincent Garenq. Cast: Emmanuelle Bercot, Nedjim Bouizzoul, Emma Boumali. *A few years after the tragic Charlie Hebdo attack, Samuel Paty, a teacher*

in a multicultural middle school on the outskirts of Paris, uses controversial cartoons to teach freedom of expression. Before displaying the caricatures of the Prophet, he gives students the option to leave the classroom. Several choose to leave. But when a troubled girl falsely claims she was singled out and expelled for objecting, though she was absent that day, her outraged father's viral reaction video ignites a firestorm. A local Islamist activist amplifies the outrage, while an 18-year-old Chechen jihadist follows the online trail to the school gates. Samuel becomes a hunted man, unaware that a fatwa against him is forming. As tensions escalate and silence spreads, an ordinary lesson turns into a fatal spiral.

Out of Competition
Lumiere Festival ticketing website

TOP GUN

(US) 110mins. 1986. Dir: Tony Scott. Cast: Tom Cruise, Kelly McGillis, Val Kilmer, Tom Skerritt.

The Top Gun Naval Fighter Weapons School is where the best of the best train to refine their elite flying skills. When hotshot fighter pilot Maverick is sent to the school, his reckless attitude puts him at odds with the other pilots, especially the cool and collected Iceman.

Cinema de la Plage

21:45

BUTTERFLY JAM

(France) 102mins. Goodfellas. Dir: Kantemir Balagov. Cast: Barry Keoghan, Riley Keough.

Directors' Fortnight
Theatre Croisette

23:45

THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS

(USA) 106mins. Universal Pictures Content Group. Dir: Rob Cohen. Cast: Vin Diesel, Paul Walker, Michelle Rodriguez.

A Los Angeles police officer must decide where his loyalty lies when he becomes enamored with the street racing world he has been sent undercover to destroy.

Cannes Classics
Lumiere Festival ticketing website, press allowed >>



20 YEARS

Tomorrow

WORLD PREMIERE MARKET SCREENING

Thursday • May 14 @ 11:30am, PALAIS B



LAST DIVE

Where disability becomes an ability in the deep blue sea.

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Adventure / 85 min. / Malaysia / 2026

Once a rising star, Faiz's football career ends after a hit-and-run. Seeking a fresh start on Pulau Lang Tengah, he meets Amelia, a terminally ill scuba instructor. Their lives take a dangerous turn when they uncover coral poachers. During a confrontation, Amelia is trapped underwater. Faiz rushes to save her, racing against fading oxygen. He must transform into a hero to save Amelia and the ocean that gave him a second chance.

Directed by Dr. Wendy Wong

Cast: Aniq Durar (Hero Remaja, Sekali Lagi Cinta Kembali), Shiqin Kamal, Amerul Affendi, Fify Azmi

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MARKET SCREENINGS

09:00

ACT ONE

See box, right

MATA

(France) 99mins. Indie Sales. Dir: Rachel Lang. Cast: Eyé Häidara, Joséphine Japy, Mélanie Laurent, Raphaël Personnaz. *Wounded while on a clandestine operation in Niger, French secret agent Mata loses track of her colleague Antoine, captured on the spot. Upon her return, she volunteers for a counter-espionage mission in the Alps, with the intuition that this new assignment might somehow be connected to her traumatic mission in Africa. Haunted by Antoine's captivity and convinced that her managers are hiding information from her, Mata embarks on a race against time, outside any official framework, at the risk of losing everything.*

Palais H

MY DUCHESS

(UK) 95mins. Embankment Films. Dir: Mike Newell. Cast: Joan Collins, Isabella Rossellini, Buom Tihngang. *A scandalous romance between an American socialite and British royalty leads to a historic abdication, but decades later, the Duchess of Windsor faces unexpected challenges in her twilight years.*

Lerins Cinema Club

OH, THIS UNSPEAKABLE VOID

(Germany) 137mins. Beta Cinema. Dir: Simon Verhoeven. Cast: Bruno Alexander, Senta Berger, Michael Wittenborn.

At the age of 20, Joachim is unexpectedly accepted into a renowned acting school in Munich and moves into a villa with his grandparents, Inge and Hermann. Between the bizarre challenges of acting school and the eccentric, mostly alcohol-fuelled rituals of his grandparents, Joachim tries to find his place in the world — without knowing what role he actually plays in it.

Lerins 2

PIPERPLAY PROMO REEL

120mins. Piperplay.
Palais #J Online

THE HELPERS

(Canada) 75mins. Inspire Film Company. Dir: Tom Scott. Cast: Tim Buxton, Rachel Carter, Amal Clooney. *The greatest tragedies inspire the greatest acts of sacrifice. Across 15 countries and five war zones, medics, journalists, humanitarians, former refugees and ordinary people risk their lives every day to help hopeless situations around the world.*

Riviera #2 Online



MARKET

09:00

ACT ONE

(US) 104mins. Visit Films. Dir: Sophia Takal. Cast: Ella Beatty, Ari Graynor, Nate Mann. *An aspiring young actress, desperate for guidance and belonging, falls under the spell of a manipulative acting coach who draws her into a web of control and obsession.*

Olympia 9

YOUNG WASHINGTON

(US) 120mins. Angel Studios. Dir: Jon Erwin. Cast: Andy Serkis, Ben Kingsley, Mary-Louise Parker. *Before he led a nation, George Washington was a young soldier thrown into a global conflict. With alliances crumbling and war closing in, he must choose who to trust and confront the leader he's becoming.*

Palais #F Online

09:30

A GIRL UNKNOWN

(France, China) 125mins. Pyramide International. Dir: Zou Jing. Cast: Li Gengxi. *A Chinese girl is passed between three families from the age of six to 18, receiving each time a new name and identity. As she searches for belonging and the possibility of love, she has to navigate between the weight of her past and the uncertainty of her future — until she finds her own way.*

Lerins #3 Online

ASHES

(Mexico) 98mins. Luxbox. Dir: Diego Luna. Cast: Sergio Bautista, Anna Diaz, Irene Escolar. *Lucila, 21, moves to Spain with her brother to reunite with their mother who left eight years ago. Facing discrimination and family duties, she struggles to find independence while dealing with her past wounds.*

Palais K

LOVE DIVINE

(Italy) 120mins. Vision Distribution. Dir: Francesco Lagi. Cast: Anna Bellato, Enrico Borello, Benedetta Cimatti, Chiara Ferrara, Corrado Fortuna, Vinicio Marchioni, Isabella Ragonese, Vanessa Scalera, Francesco Colella, Leonardo Maddalena, Elia Nuzzolo. *A choral journey into romantic relationships, exploring the emotional destinies of interconnected lives. With an ironic, light tone tinged with bitterness, it portrays a humanity caught in the chaos of love. Each character is a knot in an intricate weave shaped by the capricious God of Love, while Ovid, the eternal poet, guides us from ancient Rome to the present.*

Riviera 1

MARIE-MADELEINE

(France, Haiti) 104mins. Pyramide International. Dir: Gessica Généus. Cast: Gessica Généus, Béonard Monteau, Edouard Baptiste, Melissa Mildort. *In Jacmel, on Haiti's southern coast, the sea, the churches and the spirits shape daily life. Marie-Madeleine makes her living as a prostitute and spends her nights defying the rules of those who claim to save souls. When her path crosses Joseph's, a young believer involved in an evangelical community, a relationship blossoms between two opposites.*

Lerins 3

MONKEY QUEST

(Japan) 92mins. Charades. Dir: David N. Weiss. *In a world close to the future, brothers and sisters go on a mission to find their missing parents.*

Arcades 1

PRINCESS STELLA

(Czech Republic) 118mins. Princ Films. Dir: Miloslav Šmíd-majer. Cast: Miroslav Táborský, Jiri Vyoralék, Jan Koleník. *Princess Stella wakes up in a different body every day. Her 18th birthday is a week away, and if she isn't cured from this disease by then, she will keep waking up in a different body for the rest of her life.*

Palais #C Online

THE BEARDED GIRL

(Canada) 101mins. Princ Films. Dir: Jody Wilson. Cast: Anwen O'Driscoll, Jessica Paré, Skylar Radzion. *On the brink of inheriting the position of The Bearded Woman, matriarchal leader to an outcast community of circus performers, a young woman defies her overbearing mother and runs away instead.*

Palais E

THE LAST DAY

(US) 99mins. Westend Films. Dir: Rachel Rose. Cast: Alicia Vikander, Wagner Moura, Victoria Pedretti. *Inspired by Virginia Woolf's 'Mrs. Dalloway', the film unfolds over a single summer day in New York, where the lives of two mothers briefly entwine. Julia, a writer and mother, is unsettled by creative stagnation, unprocessed grief, and the approach of her daughter's adolescence. An unexpected encounter with Taylor — a labour and delivery nurse in the middle of a crisis — pushes Julia to reconsider the life she has built, and whether she can rediscover herself within it.*

Olympia 6

VITA MIA

(Italy) 125mins. Beta Cinema. Dir: Edoardo Winspeare. Cast: Dominique Sanda, Celeste Casciaro, Antonino 'Ninni' Bruschetta, Ignazio Oliva, Karolina Porcari, Johanna Orsini. *Didi, an elderly aristocrat, has chosen to retire in a small village in Apulia. Living with Parkinson's disease, she relies on Vita, a strong-willed woman from a modest background, for daily support. What begins as a practical arrangement evolves into a profound connection, as mutual respect helps them bridge the gap between their worlds.*

Riviera #1 Online

10:30

LUCIO FONTANA. THE FINAL CUT

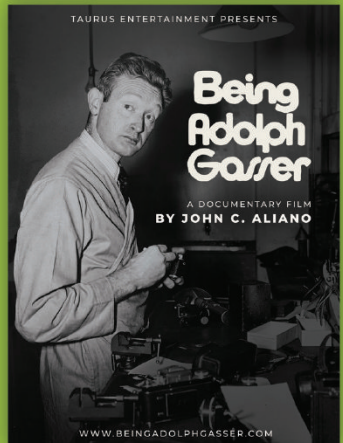
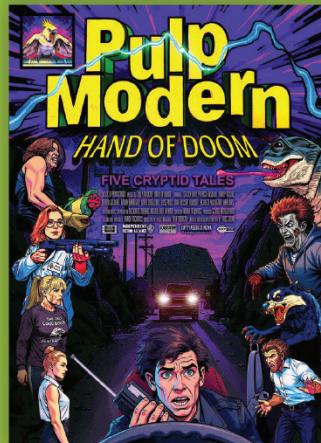
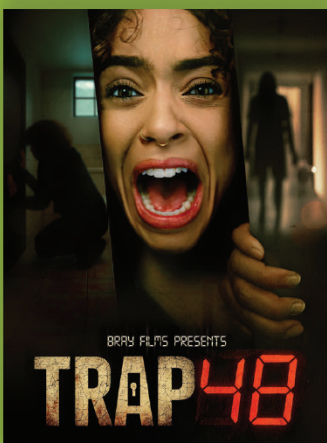
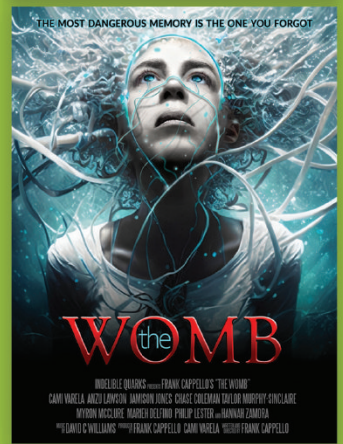
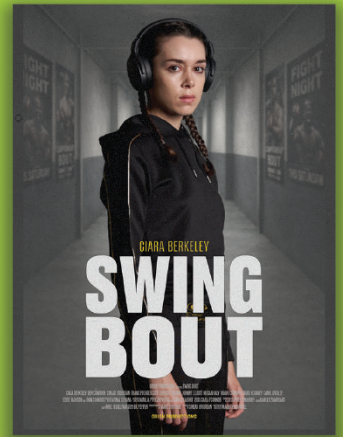
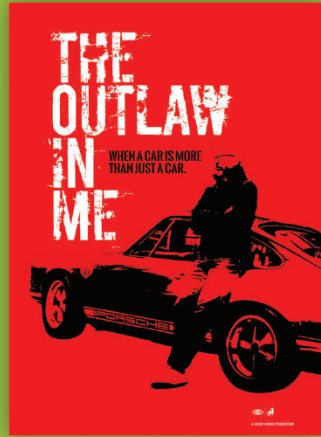
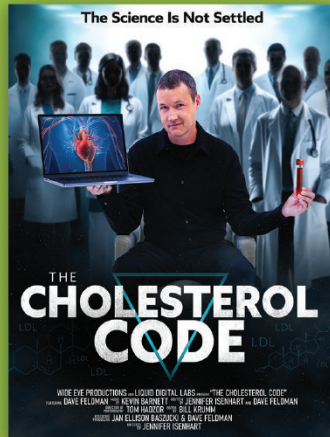
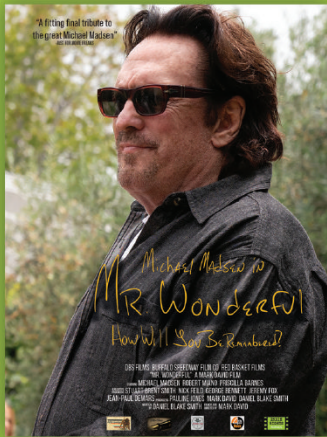
(Italy) 90mins. Nexo Studios. Dir: Andrea Bettinetti.

A portrait of a 20th-century master who >>



INDIE RIGHTS MOVIES

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redefined space and matter, transforming the way we see art and creation itself. This is the first documentary on Lucio Fontana, offering an unprecedented, multi-dimensional portrait of the revolutionary Italian-Argentine.

Online #4

11:00

PORTE BAGAGE

(Netherlands) 100mins. MMM Film Sales. Dir: Abdelkarim El-Fassi. Cast: Sahil Amar Aissa, Mahjoub Benmoussa, Kaltout Boufangacha.

Noor (30) cares for her stubborn father Musa (76), who suffers from dementia. When offered her dream job as a chef in Paris, she faces a choice between career and family. After the death of a close friend, Musa expresses his wish to return to Morocco. Initially sceptical, Noor starts to see this as a way out, helping her father remigrate while finally pursuing her own dreams of independence. Despite her brother Farid's resistance, she convinces her siblings to join a road trip, where they confront their past and uncertain future.

Online #1

11:30

ABANDONED

(UK) 81mins. WTFilms. Dir: Joby Stephens. Cast: Grace Gallagher, Cameron Wight.

Jess and Adam break into an abandoned building to save their failing YouTube channel. As the explorers push further, they discover this lost place deep in the English countryside that used to be a scientific institute. Now they are trapped in the compound, with the horrific results of experiments still lurking in the dark.

Palais H

CHE GUEVARA: THE LAST COMPANIONS

(France) 98mins. Lucky Number. Dir: Christophe Reveille. Cast: Benigno, Régis Debray, El Negro Efrain Quicanas. After Cuba's 1959 revolution, three fighters joined Che Guevara's uprising. Following the 1967 Bolivia battle and Che's death, they travelled 2,400km pursued by 4,000 troops. Sixty years on, survivors share this tale of endurance.

Olympia 4

FIVE YEARS, FOUR MONTHS

(Colombia) 83mins. Patra Spanou Film. Dir: Juan Miguel Gelacio, Esteban Hoyos García.

Martha (45), a mother who lost trace of her son in the Colombian armed conflict, receives the news that no bone match was found in the last exhumation in which she had taken part. Having exhausted the institutional options, she turns to a group of women, where she meets Sandra, who tells her a rumour: "In a remote village in the plains, you can ask a dead person for a favour." The two set out on a journey in search of answers.

Palais F

FOREST HIGH

(Belgium) 102mins. Rai Cinema. Dir: Manon Couba. Cast: Anne Coesens, Arthur Marbaix, Aurélie Petit. In the northern Alps, Anne, Hélène and Suzanne take turns tending a mountain hut. Through the seasons, hikers come and go. Stories bloom and fade, leaving each of them facing the silence. The film observes women who have chosen to withdraw from the world below over the course of a guardianship. Each carries within her a secret, a wound, put to the test by this chosen solitude.

Olympia 5

GAMER GIRLS

(Hong Kong, China) 102mins. Reel Suspects. Dir: Sophie Yang, Veronica Bassetto. Cast: Ng Wing Sze, Jeannie Ng (Kan Yan 9896), CY Chan, Sabrina Cheung, Alma Kwok, Angela Yuen. Dollhouse, a successful all-girl esports team, has disbanded. But passion for competitive gaming is not easy to shake off. Regrouped, they return as Gamer Girls. Summer, Raven, Kaki, Lilith and Miko transform a local restaurant into a gaming venue and invite other teams to join. But just when things are rolling, a few weeks before the Hong Kong esports team selections, the gaming authority suspends everyone's accounts. Now, the Gamer Girls must face the gaming authority and find a way to restore all Hong Kong players' accounts just a few weeks before team selections.

Online #2

I UNDERSTAND YOUR DISPLEASURE

(Germany) 93mins. Films Boutique. Dir: Kilian Armando Friedrich. Cast: Sadibou Diabang, Nada Kosturin, Werner Posselt. Heike (59) works at a cleaning company, where every day she has to handle her team's struggles. When a powerful subcontractor threatens to withdraw his support if she does not provide more work for his team, Heike faces a difficult choice. To comply, she must sacrifice one of her own employees. As the pressure closes in, Heike must decide how far she is willing to go to meet the job's ruthless demands.

Palais B

MATTER OF TIME

(US) 103mins. Pinnacle Peak Pictures. Dir: Jeremy Snead. Cast: Myles Erlick, Patrick Britton, Quinn Angell, Gordon Barns, Jamie Alexander, Ali Astin, Sean Astin. Charlie Fleck, a 29-year-old aspiring videogame designer, is handed the opportunity of a lifetime with a time-stopping device given to him by his friend, eccentric toy shop owner Gibbs.

Palais J

ON OUR OWN

(Italy, Romania) 95mins. True Colours Glorious Films Srl. Dir: Tudor Cristian Jurgiu. Cast: Denisa Vraja, Vlad Furtună, Mara Diaconu Ducica, Sofia Vasiliu, Dominique Toma.

Left alone after her parents leave to work abroad, teenager Flavia seeks connection

and stability by caring for two runaway siblings. Her fragile attempt to build a surrogate family collapses, exposing her generation's conflicted relationship with intimacy and family.

Riviera 2

SOMEONE'S DAUGHTER

(Canada) 102mins. Filmoption International. Dir: Wiebke Von Carolsfeld. Cast: Pascale Bussièrès, François Arnaud, Peter Outerbridge. Kidnapped and abandoned in the remote wilderness with a former client who stood accused of rape, a defence lawyer has to resist becoming judge, jury and executioner.

Palais D

STILL AFLOAT

(Spain) 88mins. Latido Films. Dir: Gonzaga Manso. Cast: Saturnino García. José Antonio, almost 90 and showing early signs of Alzheimer's, spends his days surrounded by his family in Galicia, though he often feels overlooked by his children and grandchildren. He tells them he's going for a walk in the woods, but in reality, he's looking for Mindo, an old friend and retired fisherman, to head out to sea. Aboard their small boat, they embark on the last great adventure of their lives.

Lerins #2 Online

THE HARVESTER

(Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Spain) 100mins. Latido Films. Dir: David Pérez Sañudo. Cast: Antonio De La Torre, Patricia López Arnaiz. Northern Spain, 1870s. As the country bleeds from its wars, a serial killer leaves behind the tortured and strangled bodies of women on the outskirts of the village. The sister of one of the victims searches for him relentlessly, determined to seek justice, unaware that the killer is also desperately searching for his missing son in a ruined country.

Arcades 3

THE KEEPER OF THE CAMPHOR TREE

(Japan) 114mins. Charades. Dir: Tomohiko Ito. Cast: Yūki Amami, Akira Kamiya, Takehito Koyasu. In Tokyo, left on his own after the loss of his mother and jobless, a series of bad decisions and misfortune lands young Reito in prison. Left with nothing, he has lost all hope for the future. But everything changes when a lawyer representing a powerful family empire offers him a way out — on one condition: he must take on a mysterious role as the Keeper of the Camphor Tree.

Olympia 9

THE MAN IN MY HEAD

(Mexico) 92mins. Film Factory Entertainment. Dir: Pitipol Ybarra. Cast: Erick Elias, Jezini, Mariana Treviño. Karla, an independent 40-year-old creative, is fed up with dating apps, work nonsense and romantic disappointment. After quitting her toxic job, her life takes a strange turn when Halley's Comet passes over Mexico City: she wakes up with a

stubborn, sarcastic man's voice trapped in her head. Forced to coexist, Karla and the voice clash as she rebuilds her life. What begins as a nightmare becomes a journey of self-acceptance, empathy and redefining love on her own terms.

Lerins 2

THE MELTDOWN

(US, Mexico, Spain, Chile) 100mins. Les Films Du Losange. Dir: Manuela Martelli. Cast: Maya O'Rourke, Maia Rae Domagala, Saskia Rosendahl, Jakub Gierszal, Paulina Urrutia, Mauricio Pešutić.

Chile, 1992. Staying at her grandparents' remote hotel near an Andean ski resort, Inés (9) befriends Hanna (15), a German skier. When Hanna vanishes without a trace, the search for her exposes hidden truths.

Olympia 7

THE RETREAT

(UK) 90mins. Princ Films. Dir: Schuman Hoque. Cast: Natalya Tsvetkova, Marc Danbury, Stephen Casey. Karina wins a scholarship to an exclusive writing retreat on a remote English island. As she learns the true purpose of the retreat — to recruit people with remote viewing abilities against their will — Karina must use her newfound talents to escape and outwit the Foundation's other 'far seers'.

Palais #8 Online

WOMEN ON TRIAL

(France) 105mins. Gaumont. Dir: Lauriane Escaffre, Yvo Muller. Cast: Charlotte Gainsbourg, Cécile De France, Grégory Gadebois.

1972. A trial shakes France as young Marie-Claire is prosecuted for having an illegal abortion with the help of her mother and two other defendants. In a courtroom governed by men, the verdict seems inevitable: prison for them, while the rapist goes unpunished. Their last hope lies with Gisèle Halimi, a lawyer known for confronting the system that condemns victims and lets perpetrators walk free. Against all odds, Gisèle will change their fate and transform the condition of women forever.

Arcades 1

12:00

5 MORE MINUTES

(Spain) Filmax (Castelao Pictures). Dir: Javier Ruiz Caldera. Cast: Javier Cámara, Belén Cuesta, Berto Romero.

Tells the story of a couple at breaking point, who decide to spend a weekend away at an isolated house in the countryside. There, they meet the boss of the real estate agency who shows them around the house and gives them the keys. But before he leaves them alone, the most extraordinary thing happens: the whole world enters into a time loop and the last five minutes are repeated over and over again, as if the needle were skipping on a record player.

Palais C

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A MIGHTY ADVENTURE

(Taiwan) 77mins. Golden Network Asia. Dir: Toe Yuen.

When a brave grasshopper, a spirited butterfly and an endlessly curious spider are swept from their forest home into a towering city, everything feels bigger — and more dangerous. Lost among water towers, rushing sewers and unpredictable robot cleaners, the unlikely trio must work together and rely on what makes each of them unique, as they dodge hazards and uncover hidden wonders in the most unexpected places.

Lerins 1

GOD FORGIVES EVERYONE

(Italy) 114mins. Piperplay. Dir: Pierfrancesco Diliberto. Cast: Pierfrancesco Diliberto (Aka Pif), Giusy Buscemi, Francesco Scianna, Carlos Hipólito, Maurizio Marchetti, Domenico Centamore.

Arturo is a lonely, gluttonous, and disillusioned Sicilian real estate agent. His life lights up when, thanks to his one true passion — Sicilian pastries — he meets his soulmate. Flora is perfect: she is beautiful, funny, kind, and brilliant... and she's also a pastry chef. But there is an insurmountable obstacle between them: God. Flora is, above all, a fervent Catholic. Arturo, on the other hand, drifted away from God when he was just a child. But in order not to lose the woman of his life, he is willing to pretend he is still a believer. Helping Arturo fulfill his dream of love will be an exceptional friend: Pope Francis.

Lerins #3 Online

JUST AFTER DAWN

(France) 100mins. Futurikon. Dir: Olivier Boillot. Cast: Charlie Anson, Bertrand-Xavier Corbi, Mehmet Kurtulus.

After returning from the Atlas Lunar Mission, the astronauts discover an Earth where humanity has vanished without a trace. Isolated and alone, they face an unfathomable mystery — one that defies reason... and threatens their very survival.

Palais I

MISS YOU, LOVE YOU

(US) 120mins. Architect. Dir: Jim Rash. Cast: Allison Janney, Bonnie Hunt, Andrew Rannells.

A widow plans her husband's funeral. An estranged son sends an assistant instead of coming himself. The widow grieves with a stranger.

Palais G

ON EDGE

(Italy) 96mins. Intramovies. Dir: Davide Angiuli. Cast: Giulio Beranek, Malich Cissé, Ema Andrea, Anita Lorusso, Romina De Giglio, Lucia Zotti.

In the rough outskirts of a southern Italian city, a young man caring for his ailing grandmother is drawn into a series of robberies with an outlaw bound by an ancient code. Between loyalty, loss and the longing for family, he must decide who he is — and how far he'll go not to be alone.

Olympia 6

SOLA MEDIA PROMO REEL

110mins. Sola Media.

Olympia #3 Online

THE NIGHT DRIVER

(US) VMI Worldwide. Dir: Jeremy Weiss. Cast: Josh Lucas, Alyssa Milano. *Mid-90s: Hurdis, a travelling salesman, survives a run-in with a psychotic killer during his trip home from across the country. Hurdis continues his journey home but soon discovers he is being stalked relentlessly by the killer and framed for murder.*

Palais E

13:00

THE PLAYMAKER MUNICH PROMO REEL

110mins. The Playmaker Munich (a brand of B.A. Produktion).

Lerins #4 Online

TULIPOP — MAGICAL SEASONS

(Norway) 75mins. Toonz Media Group. Dir: Selina Wagner.

Welcome to Tulipop — a magical island where the seasons shift and every day holds a new adventure.

Lerins Cinema Club

13:30

ADULT SUPERVISION

(Sweden) 108mins. Heretic. Dir: Alex Schulman. Cast: Gustaf Skarsgård, Fares Fares, Linus Wahlgren.

When three middle-aged fathers chaperone their teenage daughters on a rowdy school trip to a remote archipelago island, tensions quickly escalate into something sinister and their grip on the situation begins to slip. As they are pulled into conflicts that stir dark memories from their own pasts, the boundaries between play and dangerous power struggles dissolve — and victims and perpetrators become impossible to tell apart.

Lerins 2

ANSWR

90mins. Radiant Films International. Dir: Stephen Kay.

Follows a grieving young man who retreats to a remote weather station in search of solitude, until he begins testing an experimental AI chatbot.

Palais H

BETWEEN DREAMS AND HOPE

(Iran) 106mins. True Colours Glorious Films Srl. Dir: Farnoosh Samadi. Cast: Reza Amouzad, Sadaf Asgari, Fereshteh Hosseini.

Azad (a trans man) and Nora are two young lovers fighting between tradition and modernity in their society and family, which creates great problems for them, but despite all the hardships, they have dreams, hope and love for life.

Riviera 2

BY ANY MEANS

(US) 115mins. North.Five.Six.. Dir: Elegance Bratton. Cast: Yahya Abdul-

Mateen II, Mark Wahlberg, Giancarlo Esposito.

A notorious mafia hitman and a young black FBI agent team up to investigate the murders of civil rights leaders in 1966 Mississippi.

Olympia 7

EL SETT

(Egypt) 155mins. Arab Cinema Center. Dir: Marwan Hamed. Cast: Mona Zaki, Muhammad Farrag, Ahmad Khaled Saleh. *Umm Kalthoum, the greatest Egyptian singer the world has ever known, takes to the stage one final time for her most important performance yet, one with the potential to heal a nation broken by the shadow of a great defeat.*

Palais F

THE EMPTY NESTERS

(Germany) 90mins. Picture Tree International. Dir: Sönke Wortmann. Cast: Sebastian Bezzel, Anna Schudt, Kya-Celina Barucki, Philip Müller, Judith Bohle, Thomas Loibl, Nilam Farooq. *Hannes has everything he thought he wanted: a loving family, a comfortable home, and a life built on routine. But when his daughter decides to move out and his wife decides to move on, his carefully balanced world begins to fall apart.*

Suddenly left behind, Hannes is forced out of his comfort zone and into a new phase of life he never saw coming. As he struggles to redefine himself as a father, a partner and a man, he discovers that letting go might be the only way to move forward.

Riviera #2 Online

INTERIOR APARTMENT DAY

(Dominican Republic) 91mins. Reel Suspects. Dir: Israel Cárdenas, Laura Amelia Guzmán. Cast: Maïa Otero Guzmán, Juliano Kunert.

Omar and Nini are a young couple in bloom, sharing a small apartment in Santo Domingo where they make love and tend to their blind cat, Luna. When their paths as freelancers begin to sour and financial uncertainty exposes deep resentments, a new job opportunity for Nini offers a potential lifeline. They chase whatever can give a spark to their relationship, but in the harsh light of adulthood, they realise that there's no such thing as a fresh start.

Online #6

LOVE ON A TIGHTROPE

(Spain) 115mins. Deep Communication Roots Sl. Dir: Arima León. Cast: Adriana Ugarte, Tania Santana, Antonia San Juan. *1968. The global star of the Circo Price, Pinito del Oro, is preparing for her final performance. But before retiring, she wants to write her memoirs. She finds the perfect biographer in the Canarian poet Natalia Sosa. Their connection is so magnetic that a deep bond forms between them, raising suspicions — until the project falls apart. Yet their friendship endures for decades through letters that overcome the obstacles of the time. What those pages hold will finally come to light.*

Palais D

SCRUGGS

(US) 115mins. Kassab Pictures. Dir: Zachary Ruda. Cast: Calvin Kasabb. *A spoiled real estate mogul discovers the true meaning of the holiday season in a hilarious magical adventure.*

Palais J

SIX MONTHS IN A PINK AND BLUE BUILDING

(Mexico, Denmark, Brazil) 104mins. Luxbox. Dir: Bruno Santamaría Razo. Cast: Jade Reyes, Sofia Espinosa, Lázaro Gabino, Eduardo Gómez, Valeria Vanegas, Anuar Vera, Teresa Sánchez, Valentina Cohen, Nara Carreira, Demick Lopes. *Mexico City, early 90s. The day Bruno turns 11, his growing feelings for his best friend Vladimir clash with the sudden announcement that his father has HIV. Like in salsa songs, his family tries to sing and dance their pain away. Thirty years later, Bruno reimagines the memory of what he could not quite perceive as a child.*

Olympia 9

THE LAST RESORT

(Philippines) 107mins. Voltage Pictures. Dir: Donald Petrie. Cast: Sam Neill, Daisy Ridley, Alden Ehrenreich. *A career-focused woman travels to the Philippines to evaluate a potential resort site. Amid stunning landscapes and friendly locals, she unexpectedly finds herself drawn to the country's beauty and a charismatic pilot named Ben.*

Olympia 5

THE LAST SUPPER

(Morocco) 120mins. Pinnacle Peak Pictures. Dir: Mauro Borrelli. Cast: Jamie Ward, James Faulkner, Nathalie Rapti Gomez, Robert Knepper, James Oliver Wheatley. *In the days leading to betrayal, a gathering of disciples unravels into a web of secrets and hidden motives. As tensions simmer beneath the surface, trust is tested and loyalty is questioned. The Last Supper becomes a night where nothing is as it seems and every glance hides a deeper truth.*

Palais #B Online

YESTERDAY THE EYE DIDN'T SLEEP

(Lebanon, Belgium, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Qatar) 100mins. Salaud Morisset. Dir: Rakan Mayasi. Cast: Rim Al Mawla, Jawaher Al Mawla, Yasser Al Mawla. *In a Bedouin village on the Lebanon-Syria border, a burned truck sets off a hunt for Gamra, blamed for burning her lover's car. As her cousin searches for her, he accidentally kills a man from a rival clan, sparking a blood feud. His sisters are traded for peace. Will their sacrifice end the violence or ignite a war across the village?*

Arcades 3 Priority badges only

ZONERS

(Romania) 120mins. Pinnacle Peak Pictures. Dir: Stephan Zlotescu. Cast: Carla Andrei, Kim Bonifay, Bogdan Farcas.

A desperate young woman is forced to >>

Être dehors. Notre façon d'être.



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Palais B

14:00

BACHELORETTE NIGHTMARE

(France) 110mins. OCG Plus (Uzbekistan). Dir: Mustafa Özgün. Cast: Michel Biel, Zachary Roozen, Liya Bolotova. *During a bachelorette getaway in Cannes, bride Lilia — who never truly belonged to her friend group — dies under mysterious circumstances. Her death unearths old betrayals, suppressed jealousy, and a secret affair between her friend and fiancé. The arrival of Lilia's father — an American diplomat and covert intelligence chief — turns a personal tragedy into a dangerous game that threatens not only their friendships but the balance of international power.*

Palais G

CONGO BOY

(France, Central African Republic, Italy, Democratic Republic Of The Congo) 110mins. The Party Film Sales. Dir: Rafiki Fariala. Cast: Bradley Fiomona, Dieufera Sana, Hubert Ngbolo. *Bangui, Central African Republic. 17-year-old Robert dreams of a career in*

music, but civil war is tearing the country apart. When both his parents are thrown into prison, he is left to look after his four younger siblings on his own, juggling daily life, odd jobs, school exams and concert stages, determined to follow his dream.

Palais I

DEATH HAS NO MASTER

(Venezuela, Italy, Canada, Luxembourg, Spain, Mexico) 105mins. Lucky Number. Dir: Jorge Thielen Armand. Cast: Asia Argento, Jorge Thielen Hedderich, Jericó Montilla. *When the heiress to a colonial cacao plantation in Venezuela comes from abroad to claim her inheritance, she is forced to confront the land's current occupants as well as its dark, violent legacy.*

Olympia 8

GIRL IN THE CLOUDS

(France, Belgium) 90mins. SC Films International. Dir: Philippe Riche. Cast: Jamel Debbouze, Louane Emera, Grégoire Ludig. *A 12-year-old girl is entrusted with a magical pen that can grant any wish it writes. Partnered by her talking guinea pig, she embarks upon a dangerous adventure to save the planet from environmental destruction.*

Palais K

GRACE PERIOD

(US) 115mins. Voltage Pictures. Dir: Peter Facinelli. Cast: Seth Green, Ashley Greene, Rhys Darby. *When Willa finds out her biological clock is ticking, she scrambles to freeze her eggs just as the perfect guy unexpectedly falls into her life and into the chaos.*

Olympia 6

INSIDE GIRL

(France) 90mins. Other Angle Pictures. Dir: Ahmed Sylla. Cast: Michele Laroque, Kaaris. *When a bumbling police officer is assigned a highly sensitive undercover mission, he doesn't expect to have to disguise himself as a woman to get close to a fearsome gang of female warriors led by the formidable 'Uncle'. Maxime dreamed of becoming an undercover agent... Lupita is about to make his dream come true.*

Olympia 3

INTO THE JAWS OF THE OGRE

(France) 86mins. Rediance. Dir: Mahsa Karampour. Cast: Mahsa Karampour, Siavash Karampour.

Palais C Press allowed

IP MAN: KUNG FU LEGEND

(China) 98mins. All Rights Entertainment (France). Dir: Liming Li.

British merchants and Chinese triads have joined forces. This move draws fierce opposition from Ip Man, who is standing up for the workers. Framed for murder, he is sent to prison. Within the prison walls, the triads set multiple deadly traps. Can Ip Man overcome these trials, escape the danger and clear his name?

Lerins 3

KNIGHT ON WHEELS

(Brazil) 75mins. Cinema Do Brasil. Dir: Leonardo Costa, Gabriel Meloni. Cast: Tristan Aronovich, Thiago Carvãlhonts, Renata Bozzy. *When forced to follow a controversial plan, a disillusioned criminal starts to question his actions and discovers a fortune teller who can interfere in his destiny through tarot cards.*

Palais E

LA LUZ

120mins. Latido Films. Dir: Fernando Franco. Cast: Itziar Aizpuru, Ramón Barea, Luis Callejo. *A parish priest is ready to leave the clergy and start anew. But when his past threatens to surface, he must face the consequences, beginning a journey that leads him to challenge the institution that protected him.*

Riviera 1



MARY STUART MASTERSON NICOLA PELTZ BECKHAM JAZZY DE LISSER

PRETTY UGLY

TODAY

MAY 13TH 3:45PM PALAIS H

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY **ERICA DUNTON** PRODUCED BY **ERICA DUNTON & WILL MCCANCE**
 EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS **JAZZY DE LISSER & NICOLA PELTZ BECKHAM**
 WORLDSALES: THE FILM SALES COMPANY **ANDREW HERWITZ**, PRESIDENT
 ANDREW.HERWITZ@FILMSALESCORP.COM

THE JOURNEY TO GYEONG-JU

(South Korea) 110mins. Lotte Entertainment. Dir: Mi-Jo Kim. *When the man responsible for their youngest daughter's death is suddenly released from prison, a grieving mother and her three daughters embark on a revenge-fueled road trip to Gyeong-ju.*
Lerins 1

15:00**GUNMAN**

(Argentina) 80mins. MMM Film Sales. Dir: Cris Tapia Marchiori. Cast: Sergio Podeley, Julieta Díaz, Ramiro Blas. *Caught between a drug cartel out for his blood and a community determined to reclaim its neighbourhood, hitman Galgo fights to live through a pitiless night. Gatillero delivers a propulsive saga of crime and redemption, presented in one continuous shot.*
Online #1

15:45**2 DEGREES SOUTH OF THE EQUATOR**

(Brazil) 100mins. VDF Connection. Dir: Joaquim Haickel, Coi Belluzzo. *Eulália, a young woman hardened by life, travels to Maranhão to search for her biological father with only a name and an old photograph. There, she meets Tiquira, a cheerful tour guide who promises to help her. Falling madly in love with her, he secretly delays the search to spend more time together. As the vibrant local culture softens Eulália's harsh worldview, the inevitable revelation of Tiquira's lie threatens to destroy their budding and unlikely romance.*
Palais D

22 LENGTHS

(Germany) 102mins. Beta Cinema. Dir: Mia Maariel Meyer. Cast: Luis Pintsch, Zoë Baier, Jannis Niewöhner, Laura Tonke, Luna Wedler. *Based on a bestselling novel: a tender film about love, loss, and the unbreakable bond between two sisters.*
Palais #H Online

DANTE

(Spain) 89mins. Film Factory Entertainment. Dir: Hugo Ruiz. Cast: Vicente Romero, Asier Etxeandía, Enrique Arce, Chino Darin, Ester Exposito. *Eduardo, a paramedic who drives an ambulance on the night shift, responds to an emergency call. A figure from the city's underworld, Mario, is on the brink of death when Eduardo arrives at his home. Just before his life slips away, he leaves Eduardo caught in a situation where, with every passing second, he gets one step closer to not making it through the night alive.*
Palais #D Online

FOSTER

(US) 100mins. Top Film Distribution. Dir: Timothy Woodward Jr. Cast: James

Franco, Natalie Burn, Ron Perlman. *A recovering addict's quiet life shatters when another addict leaves her son with him. Now hunted by his ex-crime boss Brooks, Don must protect the boy while confronting his past and the mother's dangerous choices.*
Palais J

FULL PHIL

(France) Studiocanal (Fr). Dir: Quentin Dupieux. Cast: Woody Harrelson, Charlotte Le Bon, Nassim Lyes, Emma Mackey, Kristen Stewart. *Philip Doom, a wealthy American business magnate, tries to reconnect with his daughter Madeleine during an opulent trip to Paris. In a happy cuisine, a 1950s horror film and an invasive hotel employee soon threaten to disrupt the smooth running of their stay.*
Arcades 1 Priority badges only

IN WAVES

(France) 91mins. Charades. Dir: Phuong Mai Nguyen. Cast: Yeni Alvarez, Lyna Khoudri, Paul Kircher. *In Los Angeles, AJ, a shy teenager, meets Kristen. She lives for surfing; he loves skateboarding and drawing. They fall madly in love, and a happy future seems within reach. But everything changes when Kristen faces a sudden illness. Together, they face adversity, driven by the strength of their love, their friends, and their newly shared passion for surfing and the ocean.*
Olympia 9

JUST AN ILLUSION

(France) 114mins. Gaumont. Dir: Olivier Nakache, Eric Toledano. Cast: Simon Torreton, Alexis Rosenstiehl, Camille Cottin, Louis Garrel, Pierre Lottin. *1985. Vincent, almost 13, lives in the suburbs of Paris with his middle-class family, caught between an older brother who brushes him off and parents who never stop arguing. No longer a kid but not yet an adult, Vincent fumbles through life's big questions: identity, friendship, family, first crushes... and why adults never seem to have figured things out either.*
Arcades 3

LATE BLOOMERS

(Italy) 92mins. Piperplay. Dir: Antonio Albanese. Cast: Antonio Albanese, Giuseppe Battiston, Nicola Rignanese. *Beppe, Umberto and Gigi wait for Toni, Umberto's son, to be discharged from prison. A night at the pub celebrating the release awaits this dysfunctional bunch of buddies: a failed musician, a shy plumber and mama's boy, a petty criminal and a desperate disinherited who just overdid it with tranquilisers. But something is about to happen. After a night of heavy drinking in the village bar, the car they are travelling home in hits something — or rather, someone. They flee and hide in Umberto's house, triggering a spiral of absurd choices, clashes and bizarre encounters. As the night drags on, chaos*

escalates until an unthinkable solution arrives at dawn.
Riviera 2

PRETTY UGLY

(US) 87mins. The Film Sales Company. Dir: Erica Dunton. Cast: Nicola Peltz Beckham, Mary Stuart Masterson, Michelle Gomez. *When a cosmetology student in small-town America crosses paths on social media with a beautiful and prolific influencer from her home town, an obsession-driven relationship spirals into a sexually charged, high-stakes crime mystery marked by manipulation, betrayal, and bursts of graphic violence — ultimately altering both women's lives forever.*
Palais H

SHANGHAI WONTON

(China) 108mins. China Film Co-Production Corporation. Dir: Tiange Wu. *Wang, a retired engineer in Shanghai, cooks wontons every Saturday, waiting for his son to come home. With his son's marriage still undecided, he goes to the blind date corner and unexpectedly meets a group of parents just like him.*
Palais B

THE GOLDEN AGE

(France, Italy) 112mins. Films Boutique. Dir: Béranger Thouin. Cast: Souheila Yacoub, Vassili Schneider, Yile Yara Vianello. *Born at the turn of the century in a village butcher's shop, Jeanne Lavour dreams of becoming a countess. Inspired by the fearless Céleste and guided by her love for Guillaume de Barante, Jeanne's journey carries her from the vibrant Paris of the Golden Twenties through the turmoil of two world wars. As her life intertwines with the great upheavals of the 20th century, she rises as a fiercely free woman, determined to never let anyone else define who she is meant to be.*
Olympia 7

THE GREATER GOOD

(Italy) 102mins. Piperplay. Dir: Rocco Papaleo. Cast: Rocco Papaleo, Claudia Pandolfi, Teresa Saponangelo, Vanessa Scalera, Andrea Fuorto, Rosanna Sparapano, Livia Ferri. *A hike to a Bosnian pine becomes a shared journey of body and soul. People haunted by their past set out to rediscover faith, identity and redemption. Along the trail, amid humorous obstacles, they learn that freedom isn't just a destination but a commitment to care for one another, even when it means risk and sacrifice. In nature's heart, they choose the greater good, confront their demons and open the path to a new life.*
Lerins #2 Online

THE HISTORY OF CONCRETE

(US) 101mins. Visit Films. Dir: John Wilson. Cast: John Wilson. *Following the finale of his TV series,*

filmmaker John Wilson looks to the bedrock of his beloved New York City for inspiration and structure. Concrete, the world's most widely used building material, appears as an ever-present life force, and John sets out to make the definitive documentary on the matter.
Olympia 4

THEIR TOWN

(US) 80mins. Visit Films. Dir: Katie Aseton. Cast: Ora Duplass, Chosen Jacobs, Will Parker, Kim Shaw, Jeffery Self. *Abby and Matt, high-schoolers from opposite ends of the social spectrum but paired as leads in the school play, spend one long night roaming their town, confronting uncertain futures and unearthing surprises from their past.*
Olympia #4 Online

TRUSTNORDISK PROMO REEL

110mins. Trustnordisk.
Olympia #1 Online

VESNA

(Lithuania, France, Estonia) 93mins. The Bureau Sales. Dir: Rostislav Kirpičenko. Cast: Daumantas Ciunis, Vjačeslav Lukjanov. *In occupied Ukraine, the Russians are prohibiting the burial of executed Ukrainian civilians. Andriy, a 35-year-old priest, sees his church turned into a morgue. Forced to store the bodies of executed civilians there before they disappear into mass graves, he resists in secret: he identifies the dead, returns them to their families, and gives them a dignified burial. But winter freezes the ground, and the threat grows. How will he continue to resist?*
Lerins 2

16:15**500 MILES**

(Ireland, UK) 102mins. Beta Cinema. Dir: Morgan Matthews. Cast: Bill Nighy, Maisie Williams, Roman Griffin Davis. *At the crack of dawn, Finn and his younger brother Charlie run away from home, to avoid getting split up by their separating parents. They're trying to reach the wild west coast of Ireland, home of their beloved and eccentric grandad, John, who they haven't been allowed to see since all the fighting began. On their 500-mile journey across land and sea, they must survive on their smarts, charm and the kindness of strangers — especially a free-spirited street musician, Kait, who is escaping troubles of her own.*
Palais I

ARCADIA SKY: TOUCHING THE SKY

(US) 80mins. Electrolift Creative. Dir: Matthew Taylor. Cast: Mark Dutton, Kevin Grigorenko, Hannah Hood.
Palais C

FLESH & FUEL

(France, Poland) 90mins. Pyramide International. Dir: Pierre Le Gall. Cast: Alexis Manenti, Julian Świeżewski. *Etienne is a truck driver. Addicted to*

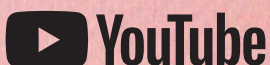
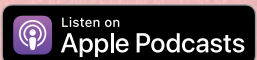


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the road, he reduces his emotional life to anonymous and fleeting encounters in parking lots. When he meets Bartosz, a Polish truck driver, his solitary routine is turned upside down.
Olympia 6

LAST CALL

(Greece) 91mins. Picture Tree International. Dir: Sherif Francis. Cast: Orfeas Avgoustidis, Maria Nafpliotou, Yorgos Benos.
A desperate fugitive, armed with a live grenade, breaks into an apartment in downtown Athens and demands to go live on air. A young journalist along with ruthless media execs and a divided police force are thrown into a deadly game of negotiation, manipulation and survival, while the nation watches in real time.
Palais E

MARVELOUS MORNINGS

(France) 86mins. Loco Films. Dir: Avril Besson. Cast: India Hair, Raya Martigny, Eric Cantona.
With a box of old records in her trunk, Charlie drives south to deliver them to a mysterious former disco dancer. She doesn't yet know those vinyls will revive her mother's steps, or that her Mediterranean getaway will lead her to Marina, a charming waitress dreaming of freedom beyond the little town's pizzeria.
Olympia 8

MELATI

(Indonesia) 107mins. SC Films International. Dir: Mike Wiluan. Cast: Alexandra Gottardo, Dwi Sasono.
Melati runs an inn for lost and weary travellers who seek its sanctuary for the night. Little do they know, the inn is cursed and they will die by the morning. Within its walls, Melati has learned to harness the dark curse by feeding it the remains of the dead travellers. In return, the curse gives her eternal life and special powers to bring back the dead.
Palais K

MERRY CHRISTMAS AUBREY FLINT

(UK) Westend Films. Dir: Jack Spring. Cast: Adjoa Andoh, John Bradley, Sophia Di Martino, Richard E Grant, Celia Imrie, Adrian Rawlins, Kiell Smith-Bynoe.
Aubrey Flint, a reclusive model soldier painter with a lifelong hatred of Christmas, is sentenced to community service at Willow Lodge, a retirement home on the brink of closure. Reluctantly roped into assisting with a chaotic production of 'A Christmas Carol', Aubrey clashes with its colourful cast of residents, including a chain-smoking ex-diva and a quietly wise model-shop owner. But as rehearsals unfold, friendships form and ghosts of Aubrey's own past begin to surface. When the show is threatened and a close friend is lost, Aubrey must choose between retreating into solitude or risking everything to save the home and rediscovering the warmth he thought he'd lost forever.
Olympia 3

PIRATE MO EXCLUSIVE NEW SCENES

110mins. The Playmaker Munich (a brand of B.A. Produktion). Dir: Florian Westermann.
Exclusive scenes from 'Pirate Mo'.
Lerins 1

RUNNER

(Spain) 96mins. Latido Films. Dir: Laura García Alonso. Cast: Marina Salas, Alex Brendemühl, Alba Sàez.
Cris dedicates herself to athletics. While preparing for the 800m race at the national championships, she suffers a severe psychotic break brought on by mounting pressure. As recovery unfolds, Cris keeps her eyes fixed on the track, holding on to the dream that has always defined her.
Lerins #1 Online

TRISTES TROPIQUES

(South Korea) 108mins. Finecut. Dir: Hoon-Jung Park.
A group of young assassins trained by the rainforest's absolute ruler, known as 'Master' and affiliated with the organisation 'Tristes Tropiques', struggle with mutual distrust as they vow to exact bloody revenge.
Lerins 3

YUGLY

(France) 40mins. Octopolis. Dir: Jeremie Degruson, Yanis Belaid.
Palais G

17:00**BLOODY TENNIS**

(Germany) 94mins. The Playmaker Munich (a brand of B.A. Produktion). Dir: Nikias Chryssos. Cast: Lily Taieb, Juliana Vieira Guerra, Zlatko Burić, Tracy Gotoas, Sandra Guldborg Kampff, Elina Löwensohn, Vincent Romeo, Helena Zengel, Lucie Zhang.
Sophie joins a prestigious tennis academy where the brutality of competitive sports is taken to its extreme and only the hungriest survive.
Lerins Cinema Club

17:45**BEN'IMANA**

(Rwanda, Gabon, France, Norway) 100mins. mk2 Films. Dir: Marie-Clémentine Dusabejamba. Cast: Clémentine U. Nyirinkindi, Kesia Kelly Nishimwe, Arivere Kagoyire.
Rwanda, 2012. After the genocide of the Tutsis, people's courts were set up to bring justice and reconciliation. Veneranda, a survivor, is convinced of the need for these trials. Despite the pressures, discussion sessions take place between victims and families of executioners. But when she learns of her daughter's pregnancy, she has to face the dark parts of her past.
Olympia 4

CARLO ACUTIS. THE MILLENNIAL SAINT

(Italy) 90mins. Nexo Studios. Dir: Luca Palmaso.
Portrait of Carlo Acutis, a 15-year-old

man who, in 2025, became the first 'millennial' saint of the Catholic Church.
Arcades 3

HERSHEY

(US) 120mins. Angel Studios. Dir: Mark Waters. Cast: Alexandra Daddario, Francesca Faridany, Dina Spiby-Waters.
The origin story of Milton and Kitty Hershey, who, when confronted by tragedy, determine to leave their amassed chocolate fortune in the hands of children.
Palais B

I'LL BE GONE IN JUNE

(US, Germany, Switzerland) 122mins. Luxbox. Dir: Katharina Rivilis. Cast: Naomi Cosma, David Flores, Bianca Dumais, Rebecca Schulz.
In 2001, Franny, a 16-year-old exchange student from Germany, arrives in the sleepy desert town of Las Cruces, New Mexico. Far from home, Franny struggles through awkward school days, stifling heat and restless nights until she meets Elliott, a boy whose quiet sadness mirrors her own. As America reels from 9/11, something resonates within Franny and an unexpected tenderness begins to bloom.
Olympia 5

MIMICS

(US) 93mins. Pinnacle Peak Pictures. Dir: Kristoffer Polaha. Cast: Kristoffer Polaha, Moriah, Stephen Tobolowsky.
When a struggling impressionist and a contract for fame take centre stage, the battle for a good man's soul takes the spotlight.
Riviera 2

NO REST FOR THE WICKED

(Denmark) 103mins. Charades. Dir: Kasper Kalle. Cast: Egor Venned, Pilou Asbaek, Sofia Nolsoe Mikkelsen.
Follows a fisherman who falls in love with a rugged whaler on the Faroe Islands.
Olympia 9

ZERO AD

(US) 120mins. Angel Studios. Dir: Alejandro Monteverde. Cast: Deva Cassel, Sam Worthington, Ben Mendelsohn, Gael García Bernal, Jim Caviezel.
A young Joseph and Mary protect her child Jesus from a murderous King Herod.
Palais #B Online

18:15**A STORY ABOUT FIRE**

(China) 85mins. China Film Co-Production Corporation. Dir: Wenyu Li. Cast: Chunlei Kang, Haoyu Yang, Bei Yile.
Tells the story of a monkey raised by humans who went to a sacred mountain to look for fire and, after going through numerous dangers and hardships, transforms from a monkey into a human.
Palais C

GABIN

(France) 105mins. Lightdox. Dir: Maxence Voiseux.
In northern France, Gabin, the youngest

of the Jourdel family, finds himself destined to take over his father's butcher's shop. Torn between family loyalty and a desire to break free, his dreams lie elsewhere: to train a contest cow, to become a dog breeder, and to save his mother's farm from financial ruin.
Spanning a decade, the film immerses us in this young boy's world, following his journey from age eight to 18.
Lerins 1 Priority badges only

PERFECT

(US) 94mins. Visit Films. Dir: Millicent Hailes. Cast: Julia Fox, Ashley Moore, Micaela Wittman, Lio Mehiel, Ryder McLaughlin, Kate Moennig, Creed Bratton.
Drawn to a lakeside haven by a mysterious pregnant woman, a heartbroken drifter finds refuge with a group of eccentric misfits.
Olympia 6

20:00**HINTER**

(US) 103mins. Sostis Productions. Dir: Britt Falardeau. Cast: Russell Hodgkinson, Rod Glenn, Andy Hernandez.
A deaf American backpacker finds himself stranded in the depths of Germany's Black Forest, hunted by something unknown. He encounters a guarded German farmer who speaks no English, and must discern whether this stranger is a lifeline or a threat.
Olympia 4

IT'S OK

118mins. China Film Co-Production Corporation. Dir: Lina Yang.
Daughter Xu Ke wants to have surgery during the vacation, while her mother Hu Chunrong also plans to run away from home to escape the long-standing problems in her marriage. As the two resolve to face their predicaments, they find forgiveness for each other's fragility.
Palais F

UNDER A BAD STAR

(France) 125mins. Urban Sales. Dir: Lola Cambourieu, Yann Berlier. Cast: Noémie Édé-Decugis, Hugo Carton.
South of France, nowadays. A heatwave bears down on a suburban neighbourhood. Birds fall from their nests, a fire starts. During 24 hours at the family's house, a minor disagreement spirals into a succession of unsettling outbursts. Through her daughter's eyes, Kiki will be held in grip, caught between breaking away and falling back into a toxic pattern from which she cannot seem to escape.
Arcades 1 Festival ticketing website

20:30**UNDER A BAD STAR**

(France) 125mins. Urban Sales. Dir: Lola Cambourieu, Yann Berlier. Cast: Noémie Édé-Decugis, Hugo Carton.
Arcades 2 Festival ticketing website

SCREEN

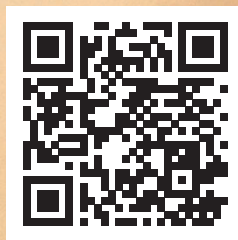
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Jury grid

★★★★ Excellent ★★★ Good ★★ Average ★ Poor ☒ Bad

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NAGI NOTES (Japan) Koji Fukada	Yoriko, an artist living in rural Nagi, is haunted by an old love. When her former sister-in-law visits from Tokyo, the two women search for ways to let go of the past.												
A WOMAN'S LIFE (Fr) Charline Bourgeois-Tacquet	Léa Drucker stars as a surgeon struggling to balance hospital duties and her private life, who is stirred up by the novelist observing her as research for a book.												
FATHERLAND (Pol) Pawel Pawlikowski	Pawlikowski's film centres on Nobel Prize-winning writer Thomas Mann (Hanns Zischler) and his daughter Erika (Sandra Hüller) as they embark on an emotional road trip across a Germany in ruins.												
PARALLEL TALES (Iran) Asghar Farhadi	A famous author (Isabelle Huppert) seeks inspiration by spying on her neighbours. She finds her own life turned upside down after hiring the mysterious Adam (Adam Bessa) as an assistant.												
ALL OF A SUDDEN (Japan) Ryusuke Hamaguchi	A woman running a nursing home in Paris is transformed after an encounter with a terminally ill Japanese playwright, in Hamaguchi's French-language debut. Virginie Efira and Tao Okamoto star.												
GENTLE MONSTER (Austria) Marie Kreutzer	A renowned pianist relocates with her family to the countryside, where she uncovers a life-shattering truth that forces her to confront the complexities of love, trust and deception.												
SHEEP IN THE BOX (Japan) Hirokazu Koreeda	Set in the near future, Koreeda's latest follows a couple who take an infant humanoid robot into their home following the passing of their son.												
THE BELOVED (Sp) Rodrigo Sorogoyen	An acclaimed film director (Javier Bardem) offers his daughter (Victoria Luengo) a role under the pretext of helping her stalled acting career, before old wounds are reopened.												
PAPER TIGER (US) James Gray	Two brothers pursuing the American Dream put their family in danger by tangling with the Russian mafia. Scarlett Johansson, Miles Teller and Adam Driver star.												
MOULIN (Hun-Fr) Laszlo Nemes	Nemes' latest tells the story of Jean Moulin (Gilles Lellouche), who is dropped into Nazi-occupied France to help bring the Resistance groups together for Charles de Gaulle.												
ANOTHER DAY (GARANCE) (Fr) Jeanne Herry	A struggling actress (Adele Exarchopoulos) living in a small Paris apartment grapples with alcohol addiction and her sister's illness, while facing a difficult journey of self-renewal.												
HOPE (S Kor) Na Hong-jin	A police chief in a remote South Korean village is alerted after reports of a tiger sighting, but residents find themselves in a fight for survival against something they have never seen before.												
THE UNKNOWN (Fr) Arthur Harari	Léa Seydoux and Niels Schneider headline the story of a man who wakes up in the body of an unknown woman after they spend the night together.												
FJORD (Rom) Cristian Mungiu	A devout Romanian-Norwegian couple resettles in a village and become close to their neighbours, but questions are asked when their young child shows up at school with bruises.												
MINOTAUR (Rus) Andrey Zvyagintsev	In a small Russian town in 2022, the year of the invasion of Ukraine, a high-powered executive's meticulous existence unravels when professional crises, global chaos and marital betrayal converge.												
BITTER CHRISTMAS (Sp) Pedro Almodovar	Almodovar's latest self-reflective work sees a troubled filmmaker draw inspiration from the grief of one of his closest collaborators. Leonardo Sbaraglia, Aitana Sanchez-Gijon and Barbara Lennie star.												
A MAN OF HIS TIME (Fr) Emmanuel Marre	Henri Marre (Swann Arlaud) arrives in Vichy in September 1940, estranged from his family and carrying copies of his political manuscript, hoping to save France — and himself — from downfall.												
THE MAN I LOVE (US) Ira Sachs	In Sachs' drama set during the Aids crisis in late 1980s New York, Rami Malek stars as Jimmy George, an actor facing his own mortality who takes on what might be his final role.												
LA BOLA NEGRA (Sp) Javier Ambrossi, Javier Calvo	This adaptation of an unfinished work by Federico Garcia Lorca explores queer desire through the intertwined stories of three men in Spain, set in 1932, 1937 and 2017.												
COWARD (Belg) Lukas Dhont	Pierre (Emmanuel Macchia) is a young Belgian soldier ready to prove himself on the First World War battlefields. Behind the frontlines he meets Francis (Valentin Campagne), who is looking to boost morale.												
THE DREAMED ADVENTURE (Ger) Valeska Grisebach	In a border town in southeast Bulgaria, a woman becomes involved in an illegal trade to help out a man with whom she shares a special bond.												
THE BIRTHDAY PARTY (Fr) Lea Mysius	Two households in a remote French hamlet plan a surprise birthday party, but the evening is disrupted by a nightmarish home invasion. Hafsia Herzi and Monica Bellucci star.												

SCREEN INTERNATIONAL

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RULES OF ATTRACTION)*

PARADISE LOST

MARTIN WEISZ

*(THE HILLS HAVE EYES II,
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SPACE NATION

The Majestic Hotel, Cannes | RENDEZVOUS ROOM

Saturday, May 16th | 3:00pm - 5:00pm

Opening Doors: 3:00pm

Slate Presentation: 3:15pm - 4:15pm

Meet the Directors & Team: 4:15pm

Event Concludes: 5:00pm

EXCLUSIVE BUYER PRESENTATION

SCAN THE QR CODE TO RSVP

