



Press release

Villa Medici Film Festival unveils the selection of films in competition

For the first edition of the Festival, which runs from **Wednesday 15 to Sunday 19 September 2021** in Rome, **fourteen films** will be presented in international competition. These productions, of all lengths and genres and from all 5 continents, include 7 world and international premieres and 5 Italian premieres.

A mix of genres and worlds, from filmmakers who are familiar with festival circuits to young artists fresh out of art school, from self-taught artists to international figures of contemporary art world and an anonymous collective, the selection invites us to explore a variety of cinematic gestures. The questions raised by these works could be « What can cinema do? How to represent the contemporary with images and sounds? ». Made between 2020 and 2021, in the midst of political and health crises, the films navigate between the intimate and the politics, from individual to collective History.

From a self-produced Ghanaian first feature film, ***Amansa Tiafi*** by Kofi Oforu-Yeboah, a blend of Blaxploitation *woman revenge movie* and quasi-pamphleteering political satire in the mode of Italian comedy, to ***Between the Heavens and Me*** by the great New York-based Chilean artist Alfredo Jaar, capturing the world's dread in the isolation of lockdown; to the eagerly awaited new film by one of Italy's most inventive filmmakers, Michelangelo Frammartino, who offers with ***Il Buco*** a powerful archaeological allegory on the violation of the earth by modernity, to ***Inside the Red Brick Wall***, a chilling testimony of police repression in Hong Kong by a collective of necessarily anonymous filmmakers.

Politics is also adorned with a hallucinatory mysticism typical of South American baroque with ***El Gran Movimiento***, the second feature film by Bolivian filmmaker prodigy Kiro Russo, who films La Paz and the under-proletariat of miners with an astounding magical realism, and the dreamlike short film by Grace Passô, a famous Brazilian playwright and actress, who testifies with ***República*** to the Brazilian nightmare in the true sense.

The porosity of the boundaries between the real and the virtual is at the heart of the work of many contemporary artists. With ***Petit ami parfait***, the duo Kaori Kinoshita and Alain della Negra continues its exploration of characters whose lives and actions merge into an entirely digital world, while the French artist Jonathan Pêpe offers a disturbing reflection on death in the 21st century with ***Graveyard Connexion***, and the British artist Ed Fornieles delivers a hypnotic monologue through the uninterrupted flow of images that overwhelm us with ***Associations***.

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The young artists Madison Bycroft, an Australian based in Marseille, and Amie Barouh, born in 1993 in Tokyo, work on the two extremes of performative staging: a sophisticated theatrical device questioning the notion of gender in the case of the former (**The Fouled Compass**) and the artist's uncompromising immersion into the Roms milieu in Paris in the case of the latter (**The Lost dog**).

History is also a major object of reflection in contemporary cinema. With **Lèw La Tèt Dann Fénwar**, Reunionese director Érika Étangsalé interweaves in 16mm and Super8, in colour and black and white, Reunionese myths and the French government's migration policy in the 1960s and 1970s, bearing witness through the story of her father to the visible and invisible wounds of the island's colonial history. Pascale Bodet, for her part, continues with **Vas-tu renoncer ?** her invention of a burlesque and poignant fantasy through the characters of the painter Édouard and the poet Charles, who will perhaps remind the spectator of their famous namesakes.

Finally, for the first time in Italy, we present **The Works and Days**, a sum film shot over 5 seasons and lasting 8 hours, winner of the Encounters section at the Berlinale, the second feature-length film by Swedish photographer Anders Edström and Oxford-based American filmmaker C.W. Winter, an extraordinary meditation on the way in which the limited time of a life and the cyclical time of life coexist for human beings and their ghosts.

The screenings of the films in competition will be followed by discussions with the filmmakers present at Villa Medici and will be completed by a parallel programme (**FOCUS**) to discover art films out-of-competition, masterclasses and performances. Every evening, festival-goers will gather in the Piazzale (Villa Medici's main courtyard) for open-air screenings of recent films that will bring together all audiences.

The Jury, composed of **Teresa Castro**, **Mati Diop** and **Béla Tarr**, will announce the winners in the evening of **Saturday 18 September**. Two prizes will be awarded: the Villa Medici Prize for best film and the Jury Prize. These prizes will also offer filmmakers the opportunity to take up a writing residency at Villa Medici.

International competition line-up:

AMANSA TIAFI (PUBLIC TOILET AFRICA) by Kofi Oforu-Yeboah (2021, Ghana, 95')

Italian premiere

Ama returns to the city, where she was gifted to a white art collector as a child, to reclaim her stolen childhood with the support of an ex-lover.

ASSOCIATIONS by Ed Fornieles (2021, United Kingdom, 39')

World premiere

The filmmaker's subconscious is mapped out in a chain of seemingly never-ending images, as we hear the filmmaker allowing his mind to wander in a trance-like state where memories, thoughts and feelings rise and pass away.

BETWEEN THE HEAVENS AND ME by Alfredo Jaar (2020, United States, 25')

World premiere

Between the Heavens and Me is an intimate diary filmed under lockdown in the first months of Covid-19 in New York.

EL GRAN MOVIMIENTO by Kiro Russo (2021, Bolivia, France, Qatar, Switzerland, 85')

Roman premiere

After a seven-day walk with his companions, young Elder arrives in La Paz seeking to be reinstated in his work at the mine. The big city is overwhelming, and Elder begins to feel sick.

GRAVEYARD CONNEXION by Jonathan Pêpe (2020, France, 11')

Italian premiere

It is said that in five years' time, Facebook will have more dead than alive. Are data centres destined to become memorials, storing the residual files of the dead?

IL BUCO by Michelangelo Frammartino (2021, Italy, France, Germany, 93')

Roman premiere

August 1961: young speleologists explore Europe's deepest cave in the untouched Calabrian hinterland: the Bifurto Abyss.

INSIDE THE RED BRICK WALL by the collective Hong Kong Documentary Filmmakers (2020, Hong Kong, 88')

Italian premiere

November 2019: the Fight For Freedom Movement in Hong Kong took up the Polytechnic University as their base. With the police blocking all exit routes, the Polytechnic University was placed under siege.

LÈV LA TÈT DANN FÉNWAR by Érika Étangsalé (2021, France, 51')

International premiere

Jean-René is a retired workman who has lived in Mâcon, France, since emigrating from Reunion Island at the age of 17. Today, for the first time ever, the quiet man recounts his story to his daughter.

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***THE LOST DOG* by Amie Barouh (2021, France, 13'48)**

World premiere

A dog is lost in the Gare du Nord district. He passes from hand to hand discovering the contradictions of the neighborhood.

***PETIT AMI PARFAIT* by Kaori Kinoshita and Alain Della Negra (2021, France, 88')**

World premiere

In Japan, three adults fall under the spell of Rinko, a high school girl in the video game LovePlus. This virtual idyll leads them for a whole weekend in the old seaside city of Atami.

***REPÚBLICA* by Grace Passô (2020, Brazil, 15'30)**

Italian premiere

The pandemic brandishes the extent of the necro-politics operating in the country and its society goes through a crisis of ethics amidst a government, as an expression of colonialist power.

***THE FOULED COMPASS* by Madison Bycroft (2020, Australia, France, 24')**

World premiere

Taking its name from an Adrienne Rich's 1973 poem, the film takes floating as its point of departure and a methodology of disorientation and a practice of pleasure.

***THE WORKS AND DAYS (of Tayoko Shiojiri in the Shiotani Basin)* by C.W. Winter and Anders Edström (2020, United States, Sweden, Japan, United Kingdom, 480')**

Italian premiere

The film is a geographic description of the work and non-work of a farmer: a portrait, over five seasons, of a family, a terrain, a sound space, and of duration itself.

***VAS-TU RENONCER ?* by Pascale Bodet (2021, France, 72')**

International premiere

Paris, first third of the 21st century. Édouard is a painter, Charles a poet. They are friends, but discouragement lurks in the face of adversity. Gulcan, a stranger, appears from nowhere. An idea comes to him.

IMAGES

Selection of images (available for download [at this link](#))

The Festival's Organizing Committee

The Organizing Committee is composed of **Arthur Godard-Saulgeot, Lili Hinstin, Laurent Perreau, Sam Stourdzé, Véronique Terrier Hermann.**

The Festival's Selection Committee

Olivia Cooper-Hadjian is the selection coordinator at the Cinéma du Réel festival in Paris. She co-programs the "Essais" section of the Tënk platform. She is also a critic and member of the editorial board of *Cahiers du cinéma*.

Hou Hanru is a prolific author and curator established in Rome, Paris and San Francisco. He is currently the Artistic Director of MAXXI (National Museum of the Arts of the 21st Century), Rome, Italy.

Lili Hinstin is a programmer and artistic director. Responsible for cinema at the Villa Medici between 2005 and 2009, she becomes deputy artistic director of Cinéma du Réel in 2010 and until 2013. Lili Hinstin then took over the artistic direction at the Belfort Film Festival (2013 - 2018), then at the Locarno International Festival (2018 - 2020).

Evelyne Jouanno is an exhibition curator and researcher in contemporary art based in Rome, Paris and San Francisco. Her work focuses on the place of art as an apparatus of institutional restructuring and social transformation.

About the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici

Founded in 1666 by Louis XIV, the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici is a French establishment located, since 1803, in the Villa Medici, a 16th-century villa surrounded by a seventeen-acre park, on Mount Pincio, in the heart of Rome.

A national public institution under the authority of the Ministry of Culture, the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici fulfils three complementary missions: to welcome high-level artists, creators and art historians in residence for one-year stays or shorter; to set up a cultural and artistic programme that includes all fields of the arts and creation and is aimed at a broad audience; to conserve, restore, study, and make its architectural and landscape heritage, as well as its art collections, known to the public.

The French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici is directed by [Sam Stourdzé](#).

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