

30th Oldenburg International Film Festival

13. - 17. September 2023



The 30th Oldenburg International Film Festival presents Closing Night Gala and more Highlights

The festival marks a special Closing Night Gala with the world premiere of "Uppercut." Torsten Ruether's film is the American remake of his German indie drama "Leberhaken," which opened at the International Film Festival Oldenburg two years ago. Starring Ving Rhames and Luise Großmann. Other highlights have been announced.

After its world premiere in Oldenburg in 2021, the film caught the attention of international producers. Torsten Ruether gathered a distinguished group of co-producers for an American remake, including three-time Oscar winner Jim Rygiel. He cast Ving Rhames in the lead role, enriching the film with one of his most powerful and moving screen performances - a former boxer, whose shattered dreams lead him to coach a rundown boxing gym as a disillusioned coach. However, on a late summer night, a knock on his door will reawaken his soul.

Uppercut, USA/Germany 2023, Torsten Ruether (World Premiere)

More Highlights:

The Wait, Spain 2023, F. Javier Gutiérrez (World Premiere)

After the success of his debut film "Before the Fall," Javier Gutiérrez followed Hollywood's call and directed the third part of the horror saga "The Ring," which grossed \$83 million at the box office. Nevertheless, the film was considered a disaster, and Gutiérrez returned to Spain, disappointed by the voracity of the dream factory. "The Wait" is a film like a primal force, a tough family drama with breathtaking Cinemascope images and a story that slowly descends into a nightmare from which there is no awakening. Europe has regained one of its greatest talents.

Beautiful Friend, USA 2023, Truman Kewley (World Premiere)

In 1965, William Wyler directed "The Collector," a film that delved into a main character devoid of any identification potential for the audience. Terence Stamp portrayed the man who abducts a woman in pursuit of love. The film garnered three Oscar nominations, despite defying all conventions of Hollywood cinema. Over 50 years later, Truman Kewley has crafted a deeply unsettling shocker based on a similar scenario, drawing its brooding menace in a manner reminiscent of a young Gaspar Noé. Utilizing Found Footage style, combined with a skin-crawling first-person monologue, it culminates in a debut that is nothing short of sensational and daringly audacious.

Passenger C, USA 2023, Cassian Elwes (International Premiere)

The true story of Cassian Elwes, a successful film producer and Hollywood agent, who gets involved in an incident with an aggressive passenger on a night flight from New York to LA. His encounter with this man changes his life, redefining his inner compass. Cassian Elwes has enabled some of the great independent films in recent years. "Dallas Buyers Club" was a global hit and won Oscars. Now, with his directorial debut, he creates a thrilling balance - an emotional drama with intense moments and excellent performances, as well as an exciting and very personal behind-the-scenes look at the dream factory. Co-producer Veronica Ferres shows great empathy for strong independent cinema.

Whenever I'm Alone With You, France 2023, Guillaume Campanacci/Vedrana Egon (World Premiere)

From the filmmaking duo Guillaume Campanacci & Vesper Egon comes a romantic comedy inspired by French New Wave, starring not only the filmmakers onscreen but also Guillaume's entire family - including his 96-year-old grandma. In the beautiful South of France, Guillaume is a suicidal Frenchman. Vesper is a ballerina from Sarajevo, slowly dying in a loveless relationship. She is determined to make him love again, but Guillaume's former fiancée shows up at his doorstep, pregnant with his child. With nods to Jean Luc Godard mixed with Cinéma Vérité and Magic Realism, it is a bold and audacious cinema delight.

Little Girl Blue, France 2023, Mona Achache (International Premiere)

"There is nothing that could happen that would stop me from being a part of this film," a powerful statement from Oscar-winning Marion Cotillard. On March 1, 2016, Carole Achache committed suicide, leaving no farewell letter but 25 crates filled with thousands of photos, letters, and recordings. These are discovered by her daughter Mona Achache - buried secrets that make her death even more mysterious. In this personal docudrama, Mona acts onscreen as herself and enlists Marion Cotillard, who steps into the role of her mother. Through the power of film and the beauty of embodiment, she resurrects her mother to retrace her journey and uncover who she truly was.

Robot Dreams, Spain/France 2023, Pablo Berger (German Premiere)

Based on the graphic novel by American author Sara Varon, ROBOT DREAMS tells the story of Dog and Robot in 1980s New York. A tale of friendship, its significance, and its fragility. A love letter to the Big Apple. Dog lives in Manhattan and is tired of being alone. One day, he decides to build a robot companion. Their friendship blossoms until, in the rhythm of 1980s New York, they become inseparable. One summer evening, full of grief, Dog leaves Robot on the beach in Coney Island. Will they ever meet again? The films of Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, and Harold Lloyd were must-see events for the Robot Dreams crew, and their animation masterpiece is already considered a hot Oscar contender.

The King of Algiers, France 2023, Elias Belkeddar (International Premiere)

In the debut feature of French filmmaker Elias Belkeddar, César Award-winner Reda Kateb stars as Omar "The Strawberry" - a gangster on the run, trying to lie low for the rest of his life in Algiers

to escape his sentence of 20 years in prison by the French authorities. Luckily, his longtime best friend Roger (played by fellow César Award winner Benoît Magimel) has always been there for him in good times and bad – and these are bad times for the naturally flamboyant hustler. The runaway duo seems to have a blast onscreen. Wild, irreverent, and surprisingly sweet – it is a love story about friendship – and the importance of the simple things in life: like pastry.

The Wunderkind, Germany 2023, Thomas Stiller (World Premiere)

After a prisoner's murder, Leitmayr (Udo Wachtveitl) and Batic (Miroslav Nemec) investigate behind prison walls. Directed and written by Thomas Stiller, the crime drama relocates its office to the prison. Power struggles and corruption complicate the investigation between rival inmate groups. When model prisoner Scholz (Carlo Ljubek) becomes a target, his prodigy son Ferdinand (Phileas Heyblom) is suddenly in imminent danger. Writer/Director Thomas Stiller delivers yet another gripping prison drama.

Allmen and the Secret of the Koi, Germany 2023, Sinje Köhler (World Premiere)

Under the director of Sinje Köhler, Heino Ferch stars as self-proclaimed detective Johann Friedrich von Allmen in an irreverent and colorful crime caper. The Swiss bon vivant's vacation plans with his crazy-rich girlfriend Jojo (Andrea Osvárt) take an unexpected turn when a ruthless film producer (Uwe Kockisch) forces Allmen to find a missing, invaluable koi fish. Murder and blackmailing follow while Jojo is trapped in chaos. With a top-notch cast, breathtaking locations, and a gripping plot, Allmen's latest case presents an invigorating departure from traditional crime narratives.

The Nothingness Club, Portugal 2023, Edgar Pêra (German Premiere)

A surreal look at the world and the life of Portuguese modernist writer Fernando Pessoa, who wrote under about 75 different "heteronyms": fully developed fictional characters with their own distinct stories, literary styles, and philosophies of life. Filmmaker Edgar Pêra, known for "Magnetic Pathways," immerses Pessoa's many literary personas in a noir world of smoky bars and femme fatales, where the greatest threat comes from the increasingly violent and deranged Álvaro de Campos (one of Pessoa's most famous pen names). A cinematic tour de force that must be experienced, even without trying to understand it.

The Belgian Wave, Belgium 2023, Jérôme Vandewattyne (World Premiere)

After delivering one of the wildest band films of all time with "Spit'n'Split," Belgium's enfant terrible Jerome Vandewattyne proves himself once again as a master of paranoid cinema. "The Belgian Wave" explores one of the most spectacular phenomena in recent Belgian history – a series of unexplained UFO sightings in the late 1980s that stirred up the country. A feast for the last true punk rocker of auteur cinema, who turns the material into a psychedelic hunt for the truth, which should actually be easy to find if one would simply accept the impossible.

Trailer:

A homage to Francis Ford Coppola's "Apocalypse Now," playfully transferring Marlon Brando's

famous "The Horror" monologue to the work and daily life of preparing a film festival. The question of the definition of freedom and the change of perspective in the evaluation of methods are raised. A journey into the heart of darkness - of a film festival! Directed by Torsten Neumann and Deborah Kara Unger, with cinematography and editing by Matthias Sachal. The production of the trailer was supported by Iyuno, TrickWilk, Eightyfour Cinematography, and Bäckerei Janssen and is hitting the screens of selected cinemas nationwide on Thursday, the 17th of August.

The trailer is now available at <https://www.filmfest-oldenburg.de/en/about/trailer-archive/>.

Pre-sale:

Ticket pre-sale starts on Tuesday, August 29, 2023, on the Filmfest website at <https://www.filmfest-oldenburg.de> and at the Festival Center at Markt 18. Season tickets can also be purchased there. Starting August 29, tickets can also be purchased through our new digital program booklet. Other presale locations are: Tourism Information, Lange Straße 3/Kulturetage, Bahnhofstraße 11, as well as all ADticket sales outlets and the ticket hotline (069) 902839 86*.

We are available for further questions.

Your International Film Festival Oldenburg

Press Office Filmfest Oldenburg

Katrin Brinkmann/Clara Haus

presse@filmfest-oldenburg.de // +49 (0) 441 / 21706549