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28. Oldenburg International Film Festival
15 - 19 September 2021



Oldenburg honors Laos first & only female director with the 2021 tribute

After Mattie Do already celebrated her German premiere last year with »The Long Walk«, Filmfest Oldenburg honors her this year with a tribute and presents one of the most exciting filmmakers between genre and arthouse cinema.

We are also pleased to announce the full program of the 28th Oldenburg International Film Festival. Included are more world premieres and plenty of daring independent filmmaking from around the world.

With only three feature films under her belt, Mattie Do is already making history.

Mattie Do is Laos' first, and only, female filmmaker. Born in California to refugees of the Communist Revolution, she returned to Laos in 2010 and produced her directorial debut »Chanthaly« in 2013. A mix of ghostly visions and intelligent social commentary, it was the country's first feature ever directed by a woman, and also the country's first Laotian horror film, and the first Laotian film to screen outside Southeast Asia. Before Do, Laos was not even on the map of global cinema. Chanthaly's festival success led to Mattie's selection for the Cannes' Fabrique des Cinemas du Monde, TIFF's Directors Talent Lab, Berlinale Talents, and BIFAN's Fantastic Film School.

Afterward, Mattie worked with the Ministry of Culture to create the infrastructure necessary to introduce foreign co-production to Laos, including a framework for managing the country's rigid censorship. Mattie produced Laos' first American and Japanese co-productions.

Her second feature »Dearest Sister«, only the 13th feature ever to come out of Laos, received Special Jury Mentions at Sitges and Fantasporto, and was later selected as Laos' first submission for the Best Foreign Language Film Award at the 90th Academy Awards. As a thank you for the numerous donations from the crowd-funding campaign for »Dearest Sister«, Do and screenwriter Chris Larsen made the first film, for which they are the sole copyright holder, and all of the raw material freely available to the public. In the course of this, Do invited the fans to a »Community Challenge« so that they could rework »Chanthaly« using the material.

Her 3rd feature, the sci-fi thriller »The Long Walk«, an ambitious blend of Southeast Asian realism and time travel, had its world premiere at the 2019 Venice Film Festival. In 2020, it has its German Premiere at the Oldenburg International Film Festival. And although circumstances of the pandemic did not allow the Laotian director to appear in person, she charmed audiences via live stream from her home in with her fierce intelligence and wicked charm. In 2021, »The Long Walk« was picked up in Cannes by Yellow Veil pictures and will now get an early 2022 U.S. release. She credits her husband, American screenwriter Chris Larsen, for sparking her interest in film, and as just as she has



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produced all of her films, Chris has been the screenwriter on all of them. And all of her films have cameos appearances by her well trained dogs. She has a cat. But it's feral.

The self-proclaimed »accidental filmmaker« has no background in film. She had wanted to study ballet but could never afford it. She got a degree in cosmetology school after high school to help support her family when her mother got ill. And when she finally had enough to study ballet, she used her degree as a makeup artist at Cinecittà - the Hollywood of Rome, and at the national film school, just to buy her point shoes.

When she moved to Laos with her husband to be with her father, a chance encounter with the president and vice president of Laos Art Media at a party for the Luang Prabang Film Festival would change the trajectory of her career. And the history of the Laos film industry. They were initially interested in Chris screenwriter, as the Laos film industry was floundering and needed content. And they needed directors, but as Chris couldn't speak Laos and was afraid of losing a potential job, he offered up Mattie in the heat of the moment. He got the job, and do did Mattie who, knowing nothing about film, was furious with him. »So [Chris] threw a book at me called Directing, by Michael Rabiger, and said ›Read this book and you'll be fine.« And that's exactly what I did and I made my first film, ›It's just like ballet, you'll be okay!«

As a culture, Laos people are into ghosts, and so is Mattie Do: »I love the ghost genre. I love The Others and Guillermo del Toro films. And then in ballet, ghosts play a prominent part of ballet stories too. So Chanthaly is very much rooted in ballet; it's the ballet Giselle and also the life loss of my mother. And Dearest Sister is rooted in the ballet La Bayadère. Because I think this is what I can pull from my background.«

From a ballet teacher with no interest in film, to a history making pioneer as Laos' only female filmmaker, bold and fearless, Mattie Do is shaking up the country's film industry and cementing a place as one of the most exciting new voices in Asian genre cinema.

The Oldenburg International Film Festival is honored to welcome her back to present her films in person as the 2021 recipient of the German independence Honorary Tribute Award.

Program

Exciting bold feature debuts from young indie filmmakers and world premieres dominate 2021. The program is complete.

A BRIXTON TALE, UK 2021, Darragh Carey, Bertrand Desrochers (Deutschlandpremiere)

The feature debut of the London Film School graduates had it world premiere in Slamdance. Inspired by real life: Wealthy YouTuber Leah chooses shy youth Benji as the subject of her Brixton documentary. They fall for each other, but the desire for edgy footage leads them down a violent path.



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A GLIMPSE OF HAPPINESS, FRA 2021, Raffaël Enaul (Weltpremiere)

In the debut feature of the French writer/director, the paths of two opposites cross and transform the trajectory of their destinies. Ben is a shy, depressed and suicidal young man who struggles to find happiness in his life. Jean-Pierre is a charismatic erudite and retired butcher who, since a recent diagnosis with cancer, has become a selective serial killer known as "The Butcher of Minorities". A hilarious black comedy about the absurdity of racism.

ALIEN ON STAGE, UK 2020, Danielle Kummer, Lucy Harvey (Deutschlandpremiere)

In one of the funniest documentaries in years, an amateur dramatics group led by Dorset Bus Drivers, spent a year creating a serious stage adaptation of the sci-fi horror film "Alien". Their village-hall show is a crushing flop, but fate gives them the chance to perform it one more time – for one night only. An out of this world delight!

ALS SUSAN SONTAG IM PUBLIKUM SAß, GER 2021, Rolf Peter Kahl (Weltpremiere)

RP Kahl and co-writer Saralisa Volm deftly weave together the layers of time in this playful and smart documentary about the militant beginnings of feminism and their reverberations in the here and now. Norman Mailer's legendary meeting with the spearhead of the feminist movement in New York's Townhall in the early 1970s is reworked and questioned in the here and now of the »MeToo era.«

COME TO HARM, ISL 2021, Ásgeir Sigurðsson, Anton Karl Kristensen (Europapremiere)

When his mother relapses, 19-year-old Oliver is forced to go look for his younger brother in the world of crime throughout the night. The filmmaking duo from Iceland started making films together as childhood friends. Ásgeir Sigurðsson wrote and also stars as Oliver in this stunning debut feature from both.

DER MENSCHLICHE FAKTOR, GER/ITA/DNK 2021, Ronny Trocker

Sabine Timoteo and Mark Waschke as a dysfunctional couple who confuse prosperity with well-being and having nothing to say to each other with understanding each other. One small incident, experienced differently by all, is enough to tell a thoroughly exciting and fascinating film. The film will be released nationwide early next year by Farbfilmverleih.

HYDROMETTA, CAN 2021, Christopher Walters (Weltpremiere)

New York, 2020: While in quarantine on a remote mountaintop, a journalist discovers that he is not alone. Stunningly captured in Rotoscope, and filmed with an iPhone and no crew during months in quarantine, Walters also stars as 'W' in his diary of a pandemic, and of roads less traveled.

MI LUBITA, MON AMOUR, FRA 2021, Noémie Merlant (Deutschlandpremiere)

The directorial debut of France's rising screen star has its world premiere in Cannes Selection. Inspired by real life, it also stars Noémie who first attended Oldenburg in 2011 to present her onscreen feature debut and received her first acting award in Oldenburg in 2016 for "Twisting Fate" for which she won the Seymour Cassel Award – Best Actress.

MONTE VERITÀ, CHE/AUT/GER 2021, Stefan Jäger

The award-winning Swiss filmmaker draws from real life in this powerful portrait which premiered in Locarno. Maresi Riegner stars as Hanna, a young woman wants to escape the bourgeois corset and her husband Anton, who sexually harasses her. She goes into therapy with Otto Gross and follows him to Monte Verità, where she discovers the fascination of photography. And more.

MR. SUZUKI – A MAN IN GOD'S COUNTRY, JPN 2020, Omoi Sasaki (Europapremiere)

With humor, joy, and sorrow, the Japanese filmmaker portrays stories of people on the losing side of society. His 2013 "Meteorite + Impotence" was nominated for a Palm d'Or - Best Short. For his third feature, he presents a dystopian sci-fi tale in which a middle-aged living "god" meets a middle-aged woman. An extraordinary portrait of a man whose human rights were stripped away at birth in an imaginary society that is terrifyingly real. A poignant, powerful, cautionary tale – and inspiration.

STREETWISE, CHN 2021, Na Jiazuo, (Deutschlandpremiere)

In the debut feature of Chinese writer/director, NA Jiazuo, outcasts wander the streets aimlessly in the forgotten corners of the city. Inspired by real life, it had its world premiere in Cannes Un Certain Regard. Breathtaking and unforgettable.

THE AMUSEMENT PARK, USA 1975, George A. Romero (Deutschlandpremiere)

Filmed for a Lutheran charity in 1973 but never released, this 60-minute public service announcement to sensitize ageism screened at several festivals and events through years but it went largely unseen otherwise. A print was re-discovered in 2017 and sent to Romero about three weeks before he passed away. It received a 4K digital restoration, commissioned by the George A. Romero Foundation and premiered at MoMA.

THE SPINE OF NIGHT, USA 2021, Philip Gelatt, Morgan Galen King (Internationale Premiere)

The Spine of Night is an ultra-violent fantasy that follows a group of heroes from different eras and cultures who band together in order to save humanity from a sinister dark magic. This hand-rotoscoped epic is inspired by the cult classic works of artists like Ralph Bakshi and Frank Franzetta; and the fantasy genre as it was in the 1970s: boundary-pushing, politically progressive, and utterly fearless.



WE'RE ALL GOING TO THE WORLD'S FAIR, USA 2021, Jane Schoenbrun (Europapremiere)

In her debut feature, which had its world premiere in Sundance, a shy, isolated teenage girl becomes immersed in an online role-playing game. Starring Anna Cobb in a stunning feature debut) and inspired by the directors own experience, it is a film about fantasy and intimacy and identity play in the digital realm. It is impossible to know if someone is telling the truth or trolling you online.

Photos and more information about these films are available at <https://filmfest-oldenburg.de/en/press/press-material-films/>

For further material and questions feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,
Oldenburg International Film Festival

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ACCREDITATION

As of now until the 09 September 2021 you can apply for an accreditation for the 28th edition of the Oldenburg International Film Festival.

To get to the accreditation form please visit our homepage via <https://filmfest-oldenburg.de/en/industry/accreditation/>.

Please remember to send us a portrait via e-mail to presse@filmfest-oldenburg.de.

You can get the documents at the festival center in the CORE Oldenburg (Heiligengeiststraße 6-8, 26121 Oldenburg) as of the 13 September 2021.

