

NIFFF



NEUCHÂTEL
INTERNATIONAL
FANTASTIC FILM FESTIVAL

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NIFFF 2023: WHAT'S ON THE NIFFF EXTENDED PROGRAMME?

The Neuchâtel International Fantastic Film Festival (NIFFF, 30 June - 8 July) presents its professional and specialised NIFFF Extended programme which includes a series of freely accessible conferences with world-renowned guests. This year, our audience will be able to explore the secrets of stop motion and animation (PINOCCHIO'S PUPPETS + ANIMATION FOR GROWNUPS) and to dive into the fascinating world of author and artist Charles Burns, who will also be on the International Jury of this 22nd edition. Swiss artists will be a key part of the programme, with particular attention given to augmented comics (BANDE DÉFLIÉE) and some of the most recent genre film productions from Switzerland like MAD HEIDI (Johannes Hartmann and Sandro Klopstein, 2022) and ELECTRIC CHILD (Simon Jaquemet, 2024).

IMAGING THE FUTURE - DIGITAL CREATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGY

Imaging the Future is a series of talks about the links between audiovisual productions and technological innovations. Since 2004, it highlights the latest developments in terms of digital creation.

Richard Pickersgill (Mackinnon & Saunders), head puppet supervisor for **GUILLERMO DEL TORO'S PINOCCHIO** (2022), will reveal his secrets on stop motion creation, where meticulous handwork meets painstaking and breathtaking techniques. As animation is progressively understood as medium in and of itself rather than as a genre exclusively aimed at children, **Tibor Bánóczki** and **Sarolta Szabó**, co-directors of Hungarian feature **WHITE PLASTIC SKY** (2023), and Swiss producer and director **Anja Kofmel** (**CHRIS THE SWISS**, 2018), will also partake in a roundtable dedicated to the notion of animation for adults.

Taking place for the second year in a row is our **AHEAD OF THE GAME** conference, during which Swiss and international game developers compare and contrast their visions of game design. **Marie Marquet** (co-founder and creative director, Splashteam) and **Gabriel Sonderegger** (co-founder, Sunnyside Games) will talk about their latest creations (**TINYFIN** and **NOCTURNAL**), and more specifically about the animation aspect.

Simon Jaquemet, director of **CHRIEG** (2014), **DER UNSCHULDIGE** (2018), and **ELECTRIC CHILD** (2024), will introduce his new concept of a decentralised cinema studio, **electric.film**, which encompasses new and innovative approaches to development, financing, distribution, and audience engagement for a fairer and more transparent film industry. We'll be going behind the scenes of **MAD HEIDI** (2022), which includes no less than 185 visual effects, presented by the film's VFX supervisor **Chris Blaser**. The film will also be screened as part of the **AMAZING SWITZERLAND** section. Leading the conference will be VFX supervisor **Stuart Bullen**, who worked on the dazzling **GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL.3** (James Gunn, 2023).

The **RISE OF THE ROBOT ARTISTS** roundtable will bring together **Johan Rochel** (co-director at Ethix and researcher at EPFL) and **Nathalie Dietschy** (assistant professor in art history at the University of Lausanne), as they tackle the artistic, legal, and ethical challenges of AI-generated images.

Finally, Japanese director **Katsuhito Ishii** will give a conference on his rich and genre-mixing filmography.

NEW WORLDS OF FANTASY

New Worlds of Fantasy offers roundtables, conferences, and book-signing sessions with renowned Swiss and international writers, comic book artists, filmmakers, and researchers.

Charles Burns is an illustrator and author of graphic novels renowned for eliciting laughs as much as he does fear, including his unmissable **BLACK HOLE** (1995-2005). He will discuss his work and his recurring themes, namely alienation, peer pressure, and the anxiety that comes with puberty. His unique graphic style brings to life strange and gripping stories with a dark edge, set in a troubling version of 50s-70s America.

Swiss comics will also be prominently featured at two events organized in collaboration with **Pro Helvetia**. We'll be exploring the digital creations of **Pierre Schilling**, **Yannis la Macchia** and **Aude Barrio**, in an event combining performed readings and discussions, and Martin Panchaud will be bringing us a fresh perspective with his highly graphic re-reading of **STAR WARS IV: A NEW HOPE**.

Last but not least, **Josiane Balasko**, our guest of honour and President of the International Jury, will give a conference on her literary works and her passion for genre fiction. This discussion will be held by **Anne Laure Gannac** of **Vertigo**, RTS La Première's cultural radio show.

OTHER CONFERENCES NOT TO BE MISSED

Design will make an entrance at **NIFFF Extended**, in collaboration with the Museum of Contemporary Design and Applied Arts (**mudac**) and one of its curators, **Scott Longfellow**. He will suggest avenues for reflection on the way science fiction and design intertwine and influence each other during the **DESIGN ET FICTION : IMAGINER LE FUTUR, C'EST LE CONCEVOIR** conference. Finally, the **FEMALE TROUBLE** retrospective, dedicated to the representation of female archetypes in genre cinema, will extend through a roundtable involving several guests, including **Mónica García Massagué**, Sitges festival general director and initiator of the **WOMAN IN FAN** programme, **Carlota Pereda**, director of **PIGGY** (ES, 2022) as well as **Anna Bogutskaya**, author, critic and host of **THE FINAL GIRLS** podcast.

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