

# NIFFF



NEUCHÂTEL  
INTERNATIONAL  
FANTASTIC FILM FESTIVAL

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## NIFFF 2024: BEHOLD! THE PROGRAM FOR OUR 23RD EDITION

The Neuchâtel International Fantastic Film Festival (NIFFF, July 5-13) unveiled the full line-up for its 23rd edition this morning. The diverse 2024 program is made up of 124 works from all 5 continents, with a total of 46 countries represented - a whole range of cinematic visions that paint the portrait of a multifaceted, ever-evolving genre.

### FROM THE INTIMATE TO THE SPECTACULAR

The varied, engaged NIFFF 2024 selection includes films of various sub-genres from many countries, with nearly half of those in the International Competition directed by women or non-binary filmmakers (including **Veronika Franz**, **Camila Beltrán**, **Shalini Ushadevi**, and **Jane Schoenbrun**). Never had fantasy played such a key role in exploring the cultural and political revolutions that are redefining society, and the selected films lean into it to craft feminist and/or environmentalist narratives that navigate intimacy as well as spectacle. More and more cinematic possibilities emerge, pushing the boundaries of what can be done on screen and allowing artists to bring their unique visions to life. The festival carries on with its mission to seek out new voices by showing a high number of directorial debuts or sophomore efforts, supported by new works from established artists such as **Bruno Dumont** and **Ti West**. In addition, the NIFFF continues to explore the boundless riches of the genre's history with the **EAT THE RICH** retrospective. Last but not least, the festival is happy to finally pay homage to one of its icons and our 2024 guest of honor: **Asia Argento**.

The 2024 edition will kick off on Friday, July 5th, with the Swiss premiere of **Emma Benestan's** coming-of-age **ANIMALE** (FR, 2024), which is part of the International Competition, in the presence of its director and its lead actress **Oulaya Amamra**. The festival will conclude on Saturday, July 13th, with the international premiere of supernatural thriller **LONGLEGS** from **Oz Perkins** (US/CA, 2024), starring **Nicolas Cage** and **Maika Monroe**. Our official selection includes **12 world premieres**, **4 international premieres**, **4 European premieres**, and **52 Swiss premieres**. The International Jury is composed of **Saul Pandelakis** (FR), **Ishan Shukla** (IN), **Annick Mahnert** (CH), **João Pedro Rodrigues** (PT), and **Kourtney Roy** (CA). They will announce the winner of the prestigious H.R. Giger "Narcisse" award (CHF 10,000 from the **City of Neuchâtel**) during the Closing Ceremony. The best Swiss short film will be given its own H.R. Giger "Narcisse" award (CHF 10,000 from **SSA** and **SUISSIMAGE**).

## INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

The **INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION** highlights the astounding diversity of subjects and aesthetics adopted by filmmakers in their many imagined worlds: witness the stunning vision of **Yannis Veslemes** in the psychedelic **SHE LOVED BLOSSOMS MORE**, and discover the disturbing, sensory coming-of-age **MI BESTIA** from **Camila Beltrán**. **I SAW THE TV GLOW** is another tale of emancipation that takes a queer and melancholic approach and confirms **Jane Schoenbrun**'s unique talent. Several beloved filmmakers are also making their return to the festival this year: **Veronika Franz** and her feminist tale **DES TEUFELS BAD** (codirected with **Severin Fiala**), **Ulaa Salim** and his romantic sci-fi saga **ETERNAL**, **Tilman Singer** and his take on Bavarian horror **CUCKOO**, as well as **Shalini Ushadevi** and her gripping intimate sci-fi film **ENNENNUM**. **Ti West** concludes his bloody X trilogy set in 80s Los Angeles with **MAXXXINE**, and **Bruno Dumont** makes a sensational return with **L'EMPIRE**, his very own quirky, boondocks version of STAR WARS! Other highly anticipated titles include the horror drama **HANDLING THE UNDEAD**, adapted from a novel by John A. Lindqvist, as well as **Jérémy Clapin**'s sophomore feature **PENDANT CE TEMPS SUR TERRE**, a mix of live-action and animation.

INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION		
<b>ANIMALE</b> Emma Benestan FR, 2024, 97' <i>International Premiere</i>	<b>CUCKOO</b> Tilman Singer DE/US, 2024, 102' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>	<b>DES TEUFELS BAD</b> Veronika Franz, Severin Fiala AT/DE, 2024, 121' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>
<b>ENNENNUM</b> Shalini Ushadevi IN, 2023, 89' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>	<b>ETERNAL</b> Ulaa Salim NO/IS/DK, 2023, 99' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>	<b>HANDLING THE UNDEAD</b> Thea Hvistendahl NO/SE/GR, 2024, 97' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>
<b>I SAW THE TV GLOW</b> Jane Schoenbrun US, 2024, 100' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>	<b>L'EMPIRE</b> Bruno Dumont FR, 2024, 110' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>	<b>MAXXXINE</b> Ti West US/UK, 2024, 103' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>
<b>MI BESTIA</b> Camila Beltrán FR/CO, 2024, 76' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>	<b>ODDITY</b> Damian Mc Carthy IE, 2024, 98' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>	<b>PENDANT CE TEMPS SUR TERRE</b> Jérémy Clapin FR, 2024, 89' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>
<b>SHE LOVED BLOSSOMS MORE</b> Yannis Veslemes GR/FR/NZ, 2024, 86' <i>European Premiere</i>	<b>THINGS WILL BE DIFFERENT</b> Michael Felker US, 2024, 102' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>	

## ASIAN COMPETITION

All thrill-seekers will find things to look forward to in the **ASIAN COMPETITION** with a most varied program. Prepare for hard-hitting, hotly anticipated actioners with **TWILIGHT OF THE WARRIORS: WALLED-IN** (**Soi Cheang**) and **BURSTING POINT** (**Dante Lam**'s return to Hong Kong cinema!), and for comedies like the madcap **BREAKING AND RE-ENTERING** (**Leo Wang**), or the completely nutty **FLY ME TO SAITAMA 2: FROM BIWA LAKE WITH LOVE** (**Hideki Takeuchi**) - a sequel to a beloved hit from NIFFF 2019. The supernatural is front and center with the Korean box office megahit (over 11 million tickets sold) horror flick **EXHUMA** (**Jang Jae-hyun**), and with **THE CURSED LAND** (**Panu Aree, Kong Rithee**), an exploration of ghost stories and immigration in Thailand. To round things up, we have two animated films showcasing widely different worlds: **SCHIRKOA: IN LIES WE TRUST**, an incredible dystopian tale directed by **Ishan Shukla** using the Unreal engine and featuring an all-star voice cast (**Asia Argento, Golshifteh Farahani, Gaspard Noé**, and others), as well as **PIG THAT SURVIVED FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE** (**Hur Bum-wook**), a dizzyingly dark plea for environmental change.

<b>ASIAN COMPETITION</b>			
<b>BREAKING AND RE-ENTERING</b> Wang Leo TW, 2024, 109' <i>International Premiere</i>	<b>BURSTING POINT</b> Waihon Tong, Dante Lam CN, 2023, 138' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>	<b>EXHUMA</b> Jang Jae-hyun KR, 2024, 134' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>	<b>FLY ME TO THE SAITAMA: FROM BIWA LAKE WITH LOVE</b> Hideki Takeuchi JP, 2023, 116' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>
<b>PIG THAT SURVIVED FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE</b> Hur Bum-wook KR, 2024, 101' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>	<b>RESPATI</b> Sidharta Tata IN, 2024, 112' <i>European Premiere</i>	<b>SCHIRKOA: IN LIES WE TRUST</b> Ishan Shukla IN/FR/DE, 2024, 103' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>	<b>THE CURSED LAND</b> Panu Aree, Kong Ritthdee TH, 2024, 128' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>
<b>TOXIC DAUGHTER</b> Naito Eisuke JP, 2023, 106' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>	<b>TWILIGHT OF THE WARRIORS: WALLED IN</b> Soi Cheang HK/CN, 2024, 126' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>		

### THIRD KIND

The **THIRD KIND** category walks the line between genres and includes three films from women that redefine contemporary feminism. In **JAKT**, Sarah Gyllenstierna takes us on a strangely hypnotic hunting trip that explores the limits of masculinity. Caroline Lindy's **YOUR MONSTER** subverts the tropes of romantic comedies to unexpectedly crowd-pleasing results. In **LOVE LIES BLEEDING**, Kristen Stewart falls head over heels for a bodybuilder. Together, the two women take on patriarchy in this intense, uncompromising thriller set in the 80s from director Rose Glass. Established French duo Alexandre Bustillo and Julien Maury are back with **LE MANGEUR D'ÂMES**, a gloomy take on the boogeyman starring Sandrine Bonnaire, while Alain Guiraudie's **MISÉRICORDE** turns out to be a fascinatingly perverse story of redemption. Other must-see gems include the atmospheric thriller **GAZER** (Ryan J. Sloan) shot in 16 mm, the coming-of-age tale **EAT THE NIGHT** (Caroline Poggi and Jonathan Vinel), the Luxemburgish revenge western **THE LAST ASHES** (Loïc Tanson), and the comedy **LES PISTOLETS EN PLASTIQUE** (Jean-Christophe Meurisse), a scrutinizing look at our fascination for true crime stories.

<b>THIRD KIND</b>		
<b>ARCADIA</b> Yorgos Zois GR/BG/US, 2024, 99' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>	<b>EAT THE NIGHT</b> Caroline Poggi Jonathan Vinel FR, 2024, 106' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>	<b>GAZER</b> Ryan J. Sloan US, 2024, 114' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>
<b>ISLA ALIEN</b> Cristóbal Valenzuela Berríos CL/IT, 2023, 87' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>	<b>JAKT</b> Sarah Gyllenstierna SE, 2024, 100' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>	<b>LE MANGEUR D'ÂMES</b> Alexandre Bustillo, Julien Maury FR, 2024, 108' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>
<b>LES PISTOLETS EN PLASTIQUE</b> Jean-Christophe Meurisse FR, 2024, 95' <i>International Premiere</i>	<b>LOS TONOS MAYORES</b> Ingrid Pokropek AR/ES, 2023, 101' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>	<b>LOVE LIES BLEEDING</b> Rose Glass UK/US, 2024, 104' <i>Romandie premiere</i>
<b>MISÉRICORDE</b> Alain Guiraudie FR/ES/PT, 2024, 102' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>	<b>THE LAST ASHES</b> Loïc Tanson LU, 2023, 125' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>	<b>YOUR MONSTER</b> Caroline Lindy US, 2024, 98' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>

## ULTRA MOVIES

The **ULTRA MOVIES** category is all about extreme, radical cinema. This year, it includes two films not for the faint of heart: **KILL** (Nikhil Nagesh Bhat), a blood-soaked Indian actioner that stands out from the Bollywood mainstream, and **SAYARA** (Can Evrenol), a Turkish, feminist revenge flick that delivers delectable ultra violence. The atmospheric, insanely gory **IN A VIOLENT NATURE** (Chris Nash) offers a fresh take on the slasher genre. Dutch filmmakers **Steffen Haars** and **Flip Van der Kuil** of **NEW KIDS** fame are back at the NIFFF with **KRAZY HOUSE**, an acerbic satire of the American way of life that subverts the 90s sitcom recipe, featuring unhinged performances from **Alicia Silverstone** and **Nick Frost**. Finally, not to be missed are **THE PARAGON** (Michael Duignan), a metaphysical New Zealand comedy, and **CHOKÉ** (Nagao Gen), an unusual Japanese post-apocalyptic story filmed in stunning black and white.

ULTRA MOVIES		
<b>AZRAEL</b> Evan Louis Katz EE/US, 2024, 85' <i>European Premiere</i>	<b>BLOOD STAR</b> Lawrence Jacomelli UK/US, 2024, 97' <i>World Premiere</i>	<b>CHOKÉ</b> Nagao Gen JP, 2023, 108' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>
<b>IMMACULATE</b> Michael Mohan US/IT, 2024, 89' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>	<b>IN A VIOLENT NATURE</b> Chris Nash CA, 2024, 94'	<b>KILL</b> Nikhil Nagesh Bhat IN/US, 2023, 115' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>
<b>KRAZY HOUSE</b> Steffen Haars, Flip Van der Kuil NL, 2024, 90' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>	<b>KRYPTIC</b> Kourtney Roy CA/UK, 2024, 96' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>	<b>SAYARA</b> Can Evrenol TR, 2024, 90' <i>International Premiere</i>
<b>THE PARAGON</b> Michael Duignan NZ, 2023, 83' <i>Swiss Premiere</i>		

## SWISS CREATION AND NEW SECTION

The unmissable Swiss short films competition is of course back, this time with a new section called **AMAZING SCHOOLS** which features the best that Swiss film schools have to offer. The **AMAZING SWITZERLAND** category includes **MILCHZÄHNE**, an anxiety-inducing and puzzling post-apocalyptic film from **Sophia Bösch**. And for those who cannot wait, don't forget the festival's fantastic picks on **PLAY SUISSE**, for instance with **TIDES** (Tim Fehlbaum), the 2021 winner of two major prizes: Best Production Design and RTS Audience Award.

## SPECIAL PROGRAMS

The NIFFF is giving a carte blanche to **Moon**, the Swiss participant of Drag Race France season 2. The Geneva-based artist will present 3 very different films that were pivotal in making them a genre lover: **SPLASH** (Ron Howard, 1984), **SPECIES** (Roger Donaldson, 1995), and **YOU WON'T BE ALONE** (Goran Stolevski, 2022). One piece of advice to all classic films enthusiasts: do not miss the carte blanche of our guest of honor, **Asia Argento**! Finally, the **FOREVER YOUNG** focus will explore themes related to ageism, and the **EAT THE RICH** retrospective will focus on how elites are portrayed in genre cinema through about twenty films and a public roundtable discussion.

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