CUT TO CINEMA

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Academia is the death of cinema. It is the very opposite of passion. Film is not the art of scholars, but of illiterates.



WERNER HERZOG

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EDITORIAL

September is an especially important month for cinema for many reasons. Alongside Venice and Toronto, several other prestigious film festivals take place around the world during this time. These festivals showcase some of the most exciting and significant films in contemporary world cinema.

For Bangladesh, there is particularly good news this year. Bangladeshi filmmaker Rubaiyat Hossain's The Difficult Bride has been selected for screening at three major festivals: Venice, TIFF and the London Film Festival. We have therefore chosen the film for our cover story in this issue. The film's cast and crew have spoken to us exclusively about the project.

Alongside this special feature, we also bring you a selection of distinctive articles and reviews. We continue our effort to connect Bangladesh's local film industry with the global cinema landscape, while also introducing our local cinema to international audiences.

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Niu Lai Turns Mockery into a Chinese Box-Office Hit
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Cover: The Difficult Bride. Photo: Khona Talkies

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UK Cinemas Weigh Ban on Meta Smart Glasses

UK cinemas are considering restrictions on Meta's AI-powered smart glasses amid growing concerns that the devices could facilitate covert filming and movie piracy. The UK Cinema Association (UKCA) is examining whether the glasses should be prohibited inside cinemas, while also weighing their potential benefits for audiences with disabilities.

The smart glasses, developed by Meta, feature tiny cameras built into their frames, allowing users to capture photographs and video without reaching for a smartphone. Although the glasses include a small indicator light designed to show when recording is taking place, concerns have emerged over how easily the light can be concealed. Reports have also noted that third-party sellers offer covers designed to block the indicator.

The technology has consequently raised privacy concerns, particularly because people may be recorded without their knowledge or consent. But cinemas have an additional worry: the potential use of the glasses to make illegal recordings of films.

Film piracy remains a major issue for the UK's creative industries. According to the UKCA, copyright infringement costs the sector at least £500 million a year. More than 90 per cent of illegal copies of newly released films are believed to originate from cinema screenings, where recordings are typically made using smartphones or other compact devices.

Cinema operators have responded by increasing surveillance and, at some major screenings, requiring audiences to leave their phones in secure pouches. Staff are also trained to identify suspected piracy. The Film Content Protection Agency recorded 121 incidents in 2025 in which cinema employees detected, disrupted and reported illegal recordings across the UK.

Smart glasses could make such activity harder to detect, as users would not need to visibly hold a recording device.

However, an outright ban could also create problems for disabled audiences. Meta's glasses can provide accessibility features, including personalised subtitles, which may assist people who are visually impaired or hard of hearing. UKCA chief executive Phil Clapp has acknowledged that accessibility is an important consideration in the debate.

Meta has defended the technology, describing its glasses as "critical new technology" for blind and low-vision users and warning that restrictions could represent a significant setback for accessibility.

Smart glasses could make cinema piracy harder to spot and easier to carry out.

No nationwide ban has yet been introduced in UK cinemas. The discussion reflects a wider European debate over how AI-powered wearable technology should be regulated. Germany's data protection authorities have already raised concerns that smart glasses could potentially fall under existing laws governing concealed recording devices.

For cinemas, the challenge will be finding a balance between protecting films and audiences' privacy while ensuring that new technology does not restrict legitimate accessibility needs.



Zaineen Chowdhury Karim and Azmeri Haque Badhon at The Difficult Bride. Photo: Khona Talkies

VENICE BREAKTHROUGH TO TIFF
THE DIFFICULT BRIDE CONTINUES GLOBAL FESTIVAL RUN

Bangladeshi filmmaker Rubaiyat Hossain's The Difficult Bride has achieved major international milestone, following its historic selection for the Orizzonti (Horizons) Competition at the 83rd Venice International Film Festival. The film has now been selected for the 51st Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), where it will have its North American premiere.

The Venice selection marked a historic moment for Bangladeshi cinema. The Difficult Bride is the first Bangladeshi feature film to be selected for an official competition section at the Venice Film Festival. It will have its world premiere in the Orizzonti Competition during the festival's 83rd edition, which runs from September 2 to 12.

Venice, founded in 1932, is the world's oldest film festival, while its Orizzonti section is dedicated to innovative filmmaking, emerging cinematic languages and distinctive artistic visions. Earlier, Bangladeshi filmmaker Ishtiaq Zico's short film 720 Degrees was selected for Orizzonti in 2010. The Difficult Bride, however, is the first Bangladeshi feature to reach the section.

Following its Venice selection, the film has now secured a place at TIFF 2026. It will be presented in the festival's Centrepiece programme, marking another significant step in its international festival journey. TIFF will run from September 10 to 20, with The Difficult Bride scheduled for three screenings: September 16 at 4:00 pm and September 17 at 10:00 pm at TIFF Lightbox Cinema 4, followed by a September 19 screening at 12:15 pm at Scotiabank Theatre, Cinema 7.

The back-to-back selections at Venice and Toronto have generated considerable anticipation around the film, with more international festival and distribution news expected in the coming weeks.

Directed and produced by Rubaiyat Hossain, The Difficult Bride is an 87-minute psychological horror film set in contemporary Dhaka. The story follows Zaineen, a young woman preparing for her wedding. As beauty rituals, family pressure and social expectations intensify, she gradually loses control over her body and encounters unsettling supernatural forces. The film explores beauty, marriage, womanhood, faith and the struggle for personal freedom.

Newcomer Zaineen Chowdhury Karim leads the cast, alongside Rikita Nandini Shimu, Sunerah Binte Kamal, Azmeri Haque Badhon, Dameer Khan, Saberi Alam, Shatabdi Wadud and Mohammed Bari. Badhon and Shimu are among the film's National Film Award-winning actresses.

The film is an international co-production involving France, Bangladesh, Portugal, Norway and Germany. French company Les Films de l'Après-Midi is the lead producer, while international sales are handled by Films Boutique. The production received support from Eurimages, France's CNC, Portugal's ICA, Fondazione Prada Film Fund, Norway's Sørfond and Germany's World Cinema Fund.

Filming was completed over 26 days between June and July 2025, with post-production carried out in Paris and Lisbon. Portuguese filmmaker Leonor Teles, winner of the Golden Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival, serves as cinematographer.

"THE DIFFICULT BRIDE MARKS A BEGINNING"

***Rubaiyat Hossain** is an acclaimed Bangladeshi filmmaker whose work explores social realities through a distinctly feminist perspective. Her films include Meherjaan, Under Construction and Made in Bangladesh, which earned international recognition and a National Film Award for Best Director. Her fourth feature, The Difficult Bride, marks another milestone as the first Bangladeshi film selected for the Orizzonti section of the Venice Film Festival. For Cut to Cinema, editor **Bidhan Rebeiro** spoke with Hossain about Venice, creative freedom and the growing international presence of Bangladeshi cinema.*

Congratulations on The Difficult Bride being selected for the 83rd Venice International Film Festival and the 51st Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). As a Bangladeshi filmmaker, what does this achievement mean to you?

It is a great joy and an honor to present The Difficult Bride at La Biennale this year. What makes this moment especially meaningful is that it comes during a remarkable period for Bangladeshi cinema. Over the past year, we have seen films from Bangladesh receiving important recognition at festivals such as Karlovy Vary, Shanghai, and Rotterdam. To me, that says something much bigger than the success of a single film. It shows that a new generation of voices is emerging, and the international film community is beginning to take notice.

People often mention that The Difficult Bride is the first Bangladeshi film selected for Venice's official competition. While I appreciate the historical significance, I don't dwell too much on being "the first." Bangladesh is a young nation, so naturally there will be many firsts. I prefer to think of this not as an ending, but as the beginning of many more Bangladeshi films finding their place at the world's major festivals.

Your filmmaking journey has involved both critical acclaim and public controversy. Yet you have continued making films with determination. What inspires you to keep going?

I'm a very private person, and my inner circle is extremely small. I spend a great deal of time alone, often in nature, so I don't live my life in constant conversation with the outside world. Of course criticism can hurt—I'm human. When my first film was released, I was subjected to extremely vulgar and personal attacks, and that was painful. But my parents, especially my father, stood firmly by me. My family has always supported me, and growing up I was given the confidence to be myself. That has stayed with me.

I've also never been a people pleaser. Making a film demands years of emotional, physical, and spiritual commitment. If I'm going to dedicate that much of myself to something, it has to be a story that I genuinely believe in, not one shaped by other people's expectations. Cinema, for me, is an act of creative freedom. It comes from within, and I feel an obligation to remain honest to that voice. Perhaps I'm also a little stubborn—but that stubbornness has allowed me to keep making the films I truly want to make.

What kind of cinematic language do you prefer in your films? Do you follow a particular narrative style, or does your approach change depending on the genre and the story?

For me, the content always defines the form. I don't begin with a fixed cinematic language and then apply it to every project. Instead, I try to find the form that best serves the story.

For example, Made in Bangladesh was inspired by real lives and real experiences, so it demanded a socially realist approach. I also wanted it to be accessible to a broad audience, especially garment workers across Bangladesh, who could recognize themselves in the film. The Difficult Bride, on the other hand, is a deeply psychological story. It called for a more fluid, intuitive, and formally adventurous cinematic language that could express inner states rather than external reality. Each film teaches me how it wants to be made, and I try to listen to that.



Rubaiyat Hossain. Photo: Golden Globes

In recent years, Bangladeshi films have been appearing regularly at major international festivals. Do you see this as the beginning of a new wave in Bangladesh cinema? Why or why not?

I think new wave is a very big term. I don't think we have what is called a new wave. But like I mentioned before, Bangladesh is a very young country. Our political history has been deeply conflicted, and there has been a lot of, you know, breaks in our culture, our national identity, as we became Bangladesh today. So I think that I wouldn't consider it a new wave, but if you think about it, the times of Tareque Masud, Morshedul Islam, and after that Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, those days, there were just one single name, very few filmmakers. Even when I started off, there was not a lot of Bangladeshi filmmaker in the international circuit.

But I think in the recent time, the numbers have grown. Our younger generations are making films. Digital medium has also made films much more accessible. And we are seeing more and more Bangladeshi films being made. What is significant to me is that despite the fact that we don't have any proper film school in Bangladesh, despite of any proper support from the government or the private sector, these filmmakers managed to make films that go to world-class festivals, that show something about their tenacity and our desire to make movies. For Made in Bangladesh and The Difficult Bride, the entire financing was raised by public grants from Europe. And the fact that European public money is being spent to make Bangladeshi films shows that our contents are interesting, our contents are competitive, and they deserve to be seen all over the world.

Screening Schedule of The Difficult Bride at the 83rd Venice International Film Festival

Date : 05/09/2026
Cinema hall : SALA CASINO
Time : 19.00
Access : Press, Industry

Date : 05/09/2026
Cinema hall : SALA VOLPI
Time : 22.00
Access : Press, Industry

OFFICIAL SCREENING followed by Q&A
Date : 06/09/2026
Cinema hall : SALA DARSENA
Time : 14.15
Access : Public – All pass holders

Date : 07/09/2026
Cinema hall : SALA ASTRA 2
Time : 16.30
Access : Public – All pass holders

Date : 07/09/2026
Cinema hall : SALA ASTRA 1
Time : 17.00
Access : Public – All pass holders



A poster of The Difficult Bride. Photo: Khona Talkies

How challenging is it to enter the international film arena without the support of multinational producers or co-production partners? What advice would you give to young Bangladeshi filmmakers who aspire to reach international audiences?

It depends on what we mean by the "international arena." If we're talking about international film festivals, then yes, it is absolutely possible to reach them without multinational co-producers. Films like Rehana Maryam Noor reached Cannes with very limited foreign support, and Mostofa Sarwar Farooki built an international reputation while producing most of his films within Bangladesh. There isn't a single path to making internationally recognized cinema.

The European co-production model is simply the one that has worked for me. It begins by participating in international script labs, co-production markets, and development programs. These are highly competitive, but if you're selected, they provide an opportunity to develop your project, meet producers, and build long-term creative partnerships. That is the approach we took with Made in Bangladesh, The Difficult Bride, and the films we are currently producing.

For The Difficult Bride, we raised public funding from Norway, France, Germany, and Portugal. Those grants require producers from the respective countries, so international partnerships become essential. My advice to young filmmakers is to understand that there are many financing models. Find the one that suits your work, keep developing your craft, and don't be discouraged by limited resources. Strong stories and persistence can open doors that initially seem impossible.

From Assistant Director to Lead Performer

Zaineen Chowdhury Karim on The Difficult Bride

***Zaineen Chowdhury Karim** talked with Cut to Cinema about her experience of making Rubaiyat Hossain's The Difficult Bride, from joining the project as an assistant director to eventually stepping into the lead role. Here, we present a mosaic of her thoughts on the film, its feminist vision, her preparation as a performer, the collaborative process, and its historic journey to Venice and TIFF.*

Feminist Vision

I think The Difficult Bride is an incredibly special project. It has been very close to my heart ever since I first encountered the script. As a feminist filmmaker, Rubaiyat Hossain's storytelling is deeply innovative in the way that it centers women's experiences and allows their interiority to drive the story. I'm very proud to be part of a project that powerfully deconstructs the conventions of gender performance, both narratively and structurally.

From AD to Actor

I actually started out as an assistant director on the project, and during pre-production I was mostly working in the writing room. That gave me the opportunity to read multiple versions of the script and watch the story evolve into what it is today. I think that familiarity with the text and its conceptual foundations became a huge strength when I eventually stepped into the role. I also rehearsed extensively with my co-artist, Reekita Nondine Shimu. I always had a lot of questions for the director, and Rubaiyat and I spoke at length about her experiences and the ideas that informed the film. I also spent time engaging with the films and scholarly writing that shaped the creation of this story.



Zaineen Chowdhury Karim.
Photo: Sheikh Mehedi Morshed/ Daily Star

Character Building

Beyond that, I interviewed friends about their own experiences of being brides in Bangladesh and even spent time in beauty salons, familiarizing myself with some of the rituals and practices surrounding bridal culture. I relied heavily on the cast and crew throughout the process and received an immense amount of valuable feedback from them about acting as a craft. Rubaiyat is an incredibly collaborative director. She always creates space for her artists to bring their own ideas to the process. Performance is an inherently vulnerable thing, but I always felt very safe on set. I felt that I had the freedom to ask questions, experiment, try new things, and ultimately find my own way into the character.





Historic Moment

Of course, I'm incredibly excited for both Venice and TIFF. This is a historic moment for our film and for Bangladeshi cinema, and I'm very proud to be a part of it. I'm especially happy that a woman-led, woman-directed film is receiving this kind of international recognition, and I hope our success can make more room for feminist cinema in Bangladesh.

Joyful Journey

All of this is very new to me, so I don't know exactly what to expect from the festivals. More than anything, I'm just very happy to be along for the ride. I'm looking forward to seeing the film with an international audience, meeting other artists, and, most of all, making memories with our team.



Zaineen Chowdhury Karim, actor of The Difficult Bride. Photo: ZC Karim

REVIEW

A Country That Was Once Home

Fatherland

Axel Timo Purr

In Fatherland, Paweł Pawlikowski turns Thomas Mann's return to post-war Germany into a haunting meditation on exile, memory and the complicated gravity of fathers.

Some subjects seem to resist every attempt to give them form. Thomas Mann is certainly one of them. Not only because of his work, but because of the almost unmanageable world surrounding it: family, exile, politics, sexuality, literature and German history. Any attempt to tell this story risks becoming either an encyclopedia or a cabinet of anecdotes.

Colm Tóibín's novel ‚The Magician' occasionally suffered from precisely this problem. A writer usually defined by omission and restraint, Tóibín seemed almost overwhelmed by the abundance of material. Family, emigration, politics, homoerotic desire, the Nobel Prize, children, wars, friendships: the novel wanted to encompass everything. At times, biography threatened to become chronology.



Fatherland (2026). Photo: IMDB

In Fatherland, Paweł Pawlikowski – who won the Best Director award at Cannes for the film – responds with an almost opposite movement. He tells us very little. Or, more precisely: he tells us only a few days.

In 1949, Thomas Mann travels through a devastated post-war Germany to deliver speeches in Frankfurt and Weimar on the 200th anniversary of Goethe's birth. Pawlikowski has him accompanied by his daughter Erika. Between the public appearances lie roads, hotels, encounters, silences – and the news of Klaus Mann's suicide.

Pawlikowski needs little more.

Rather than adapting ‚The Magician', Fatherland feels like an ascetic extraction from it. The black-and-white cinematography reduces the world to light and shadow, the mise-en-scène to a few rooms, movements and glances. Hanns Zischler's Thomas Mann speaks sparingly and watches carefully. Sandra Hüller's Erika is at once daughter, secretary, ally, protector and moral counterpart. An extraordinary intimacy develops between them, less articulated than sensed.

Historically, this concentration comes at a price. Erika did not accompany her father on his 1949 journey through divided Germany; Thomas travelled with his wife Katia. Pawlikowski relocates Katia to America and places Erika at the emotional centre instead. Yet this is less a casual inaccuracy than a deliberate dramaturgical intervention. By removing the wife, the film transforms the journey into an almost two-person chamber piece.

Erika becomes a kind of proxy for the entire Mann family. Her proximity to Thomas, her grief for Klaus and her own experience of exile allow Pawlikowski to condense relationships he has no interest in explaining at length. History is rearranged to serve emotional truth.

This is also where Fatherland reveals its greatest strength: Pawlikowski has an extraordinary confidence in what remains unsaid. He does not explain where he can observe. He trusts faces to convey what dialogue might diminish.

Where Thomas withdraws, Erika reacts. Where he represents, she remembers. Where he turns historical responsibility into carefully constructed sentences, she carries the familial cost of that composure.

Again and again, Pawlikowski creates images of severe beauty: a black Buick travelling along damaged German roads, faces behind windows, ruins and empty landscapes, and between them two people who are simultaneously returning home and discovering that home no longer exists.

The journey has something ghostly about it. Thomas and Erika move through a country that was once Heimat and now resembles a crime scene. The Germans receive their world-famous returning writer with a peculiar mixture of admiration, appropriation and repression. The émigré is to become a German poet again, preferably without anyone dwelling too long on why he had to leave Germany in the first place.

The title Fatherland consequently develops a productive ambiguity. It refers to the destroyed country to which Mann returns, but also to the paternal realm in which his.



Pawel Pawlikowski won Best Screenplay for FATHERLAND in Cannes 2026.
Photo: Jean-Louis Hupe

Thanks to a superb ensemble, this produces moments of remarkable cinematic intensity: the almost wordless communication between father and daughter during a press conference, or the final sequence in a half-destroyed church, accompanied by organ music.

Zischler's Thomas Mann is a triumph of restraint. He does not play a literary titan but an ageing man who has learned to hide emotion behind discipline, irony and public form. Even his rigid posture suggests how completely he has fashioned himself into a representative figure: Nobel laureate, German conscience, great writer – a man who, even in private, can barely stop performing Thomas Mann.

Hüller, meanwhile, gives Erika a mixture of loyalty, impatience, vulnerability and biting irony that prevents her from becoming merely her father's companion. Her face is the film's more mobile emotional landscape.

children struggle for recognition, proximity and freedom. Political and private authority mirror one another: Germany wants its famous son back, while Thomas himself has never entirely released his children from the gravitational pull of his own greatness

Because Pawlikowski observes rather than illustrates, the journey gradually acquires the quality of a dream. His Germany is not so much reconstructed as remembered.

There are moments when this radical economy becomes problematic. Gaps work best when we can at least sense what is missing, and Fatherland occasionally demands considerable biographical knowledge. Figures appear and disappear; names, relationships and old wounds flash briefly without fully unfolding.

This is particularly noticeable with Klaus Mann. August Diehl gives him a nervous vulnerability suggesting an entire damaged life, yet the film sometimes reduces him to a constellation of familiar biographical markers: homosexuality, drugs, exile, conflict with his father, self-destruction. His suicide is meant to become the emotional centre of the journey, but because Klaus has existed more as a phantom than a fully realised person, the resulting grief can remain strangely abstract.

Here lies the film's central paradox. Where Tóibín leaves too few gaps, Pawlikowski occasionally leaves too many. One is threatened by the abundance of material, the other by the severity of his selection.

Yet this severity is ultimately what makes Fatherland so distinctive.

Pawlikowski is less interested in historical reconstruction than in memory itself – and memory is never complete. It consists of fragments, glances, half-heard conversations, places and images that can no longer be assembled into a seamless whole. Seen this way, the black-and-white cinematography is not nostalgic but epistemological. It reduces the world not to impoverish it, but to sharpen its contours.

Fatherland therefore refuses the comforting completeness of the conventional biopic. Some characters remain sketches, some conflicts suggestions, and some historical liberties demand more from the viewer than the film is willing to explain. But Pawlikowski's confidence in images, silence and the intelligence of his actors is exhilarating.

And the film stays with you.

Long after its images have disappeared, its silences continue to resonate: the devastated roads, the hotel rooms, Erika's watchful face, Thomas Mann's rigid body, the strange spectacle of an exile being welcomed back by the country that drove him away. Pawlikowski finds that narrow space between history and memory where people are defined less by facts than by glances, absences and unspoken guilt.

Not every gap becomes meaning. But in Fatherland, remarkably many do.

Writer: Film critic, Germany

BUZZ

Pawlikowski Champions Shorter Films at Sarajevo Masterclass

Polish filmmaker Paweł Pawlikowski has defended the value of concise filmmaking, saying he tries to eliminate unnecessary scenes and focus on moments and images that can communicate without excessive explanation. Speaking at a masterclass at the Sarajevo Film Festival, the Fatherland director said he has an "urge to avoid the pointless" at a time when many Hollywood films are becoming increasingly long.

Fatherland, which opened this year's Sarajevo Film Festival after premiering in Competition at Cannes earlier this year, runs for just 82 minutes and earned Pawlikowski the Best Director award at Cannes. It is the third part of a loosely connected trilogy that includes Ida (2015), also 82 minutes, and Cold War (2018), which runs 88 minutes.

Pawlikowski said he prefers films built around strong moments, striking images and simple stories rather than exposition. "I try to avoid boring scenes," he explained, adding that he wants landscapes and visual details to carry meanings that do not always require dialogue.

Set during the Cold War, Fatherland follows writer Thomas Mann, played by Hanns Zischler, and his daughter, portrayed by Sandra Hüller, as they travel through a Germany devastated by the Second World War. Pawlikowski called Hüller a "genius," though he admitted that his spontaneous approach to lighting, framing and staging initially unsettled the actress.



Pawel Pawlikowski on the set of 'Fatherland'. Photo: Agata GRZYBOWSKA

The filmmaker also recalled his early career making documentaries for the BBC before moving into fiction. His experience there shaped his preference for films with "the texture of reality," eventually leading to features such as Last Resort and My Summer of Love.

Fatherland is being released by Mubi in several territories, including the UK and Ireland, North America and Germany. The Sarajevo Film Festival concluded on August 21.

TIFF 2026
A Richer Canvas of World Cinema

The 51st Toronto International Film Festival is set to bring another formidable gathering of international cinema to the Canadian city, with some of the most acclaimed filmmakers working today represented across its carefully curated programmes. Among the major titles are Pedro Almodóvar's Bitter Christmas, Cristian Mungiu's Fjord, Danny Boyle's Ink, Hirokazu Kore-eda's Look Back, Lee Chang-dong's Possible Love, Mike Leigh's Tender Loving Care, Ryûsuke Hamaguchi's All of a Sudden and Andrey Zvyagintsev's Minotaur. The selection also includes new works by Rodrigo Sorogoyen, Jesse Eisenberg, Takashi Miike, Yeon Sang-ho, Lukas Dhont and Arthur Harari, underlining TIFF's strength as a platform for both established masters and distinctive contemporary voices.

The 51st edition of the Toronto International Film Festival, presented by Rogers, will run from September 10 to 20, with its full Official Selection reaching 293 titles. The lineup spans nearly 30 countries and brings together world premieres, international premieres, North American premieres and Canadian premieres across its Gala and Special Presentations programmes.



'A Talent for Murder (2026) Photo: IMDb

The final programming announcement added 11 more films, including Stéphane Brizé's A Good Little Soldier, Werner Herzog's Bucking Fastard, Nanni Moretti's It Will Happen Tonight, Małgorzata Szumowska and Michał Englert's The Idiot(s), Bahman Ghobadi's Trees are Watching and Martin McDonagh's Wild Horse Nine. The range is striking, moving freely between auteur cinema, mainstream filmmaking, documentaries and films from emerging voices.

TIFF's Gala and Special Presentations programmes remain among the festival's major attractions, combining high-profile premieres and star-studded red carpets with a selection designed to reflect the diversity of contemporary filmmaking. This year's roster includes



'Onwards and Sideways'. Photo: BBC/Hilltop Screen

filmmakers from across Europe, Asia, Africa, North America and Latin America, giving Toronto another opportunity to function as a meeting point between different cinematic traditions.

The festival will also introduce an important new development this year with the inaugural edition of TIFF: The Market, taking place from September 10 to 16 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre during the first week of the festival. The initiative is expected to strengthen TIFF's role not only as a major public film festival but also as an international industry gathering.

The festival's closing-night film will be Yan Lanouette Turgeon's Villeneuve: The Rise of a Legend, a biographical sports drama about the early career of Canadian racing icon Gilles Villeneuve, screening on September 19.

With 293 titles, a formidable list of internationally recognised directors, a strong collection of premieres and the launch of TIFF: The Market, the 51st TIFF is shaping up as a particularly rich edition. As the festival opens on September 10, Toronto once again looks ready to offer audiences a broad and carefully assembled portrait of where world cinema stands today.



Anthony Ippolito stars as Sylvester Stallone in Amazon MGM Studios' 'I Play Rocky'. Photo: Claire Folger/Amazon MGM Studios

ARTICLE

The Child Is Grown, the Dream Is Gone

Growing Up with Spider-Man

Md Rabbi Islam



The child is grown, the dream is gone- the line is from Pink Floyd's "Comfortably Numb," on The Wall. I have been thinking about it since watching Spider-Man: Brand New Day, because Spider-Man has become one of the ways I measure time. I remember part of my childhood through a red-and-blue suit moving across a computer screen.

I first watched Sam Raimi's Spider-Man around 2007. The details surrounding that day have blurred; the image has not. Tobey Maguire's Peter Parker was bitten by a radioactive spider and discovered that his ordinary body could suddenly do impossible things. He could climb walls and swing above New York as though gravity were merely a suggestion. The film had been released in 2002, but I was too young to know that I was watching a film already five years old. To me, Peter Parker's transformation was happening for the first time. What I felt was not simple admiration. I believed that something similar might happen to me.



Spider-Man: Brand New Day. Photo: Marvel

This is awkward to admit as an adult, but awkwardness is often what remains when we look directly at childhood. I did not think of Spider-Man only as a fictional character. I thought of him as evidence that an ordinary boy's real life might not have begun yet. Perhaps a spider would bite me. Perhaps I would wake up stronger. Perhaps school, homework and the repetitive business of ordinary life were only the opening scenes before the important part arrived. I copied the web-shooting gesture and looked at harmless spiders with an interest they probably did not deserve. Somewhere inside me, the transformation was still pending.

I am tempted to write that every South Asian child wanted to be Spider-Man at least once. It feels true, but it is impossible to prove. South Asia contains young people with vastly different languages, classes, cultures and childhoods; one cannot turn them into a single nostalgic child merely because the sentence sounds good. Still, the fantasy was recognisable. A cheap mask, a red shirt, a staircase pretending to be a skyscraper—very little was required. We supplied the rest ourselves.

The mask was part of the reason. Spider-Man disappears almost completely inside it. A child does not have to share Peter Parker's face, accent or address to imagine wearing the suit. For a boy watching in Dhaka, Karachi, Mumbai, Kathmandu or Colombo, the distance between his own life and New York can briefly collapse. The person under the mask might be anyone. He might be us.

Yet the mask alone does not explain why Spider-Man stays with people after childhood. Peter Parker first appeared in Amazing Fantasy No. 15 in 1962, in a story written by Stan Lee and drawn by Steve Ditko. From the beginning, he was a socially awkward teenager whose powers arrived alongside anger, guilt and responsibility. Raimi's 2002 film preserved that emotional structure: Peter becomes extraordinary, but his life does not become easier. Children notice the powers first. Adults notice the price.

Peter is always trying to live several lives at once: student, nephew, friend, worker and hero. Whenever he succeeds in one role, he seems to fail in another. This is not uniquely South Asian, but it can feel familiar here. A peer-reviewed 2021 study involving 38 undergraduates from seven Bangladeshi universities identified academics, family, employment and economic conditions among the important factors affecting participants' mental health. The researchers explicitly avoided making broad causal claims, and such a small study cannot represent an entire generation. Even so, the pressures described by its participants are recognisable.

Spider-Man 2 gave those pressures a superhero costume. The 2004 film follows Peter as he struggles to balance college with his life as a crime-fighter. He is exhausted, late, broke and unable to satisfy everyone. His powers begin to fail while the rest of his life collapses. When I watched it as a child, I waited for him to fight Doctor Octopus. Watching it later, Peter missing classes, losing his job and disappointing the people around him felt almost as frightening. To a child, Peter's problems are interruptions between action scenes. To a university student, they look suspiciously like burnout.

The actors changed as I changed. Andrew Garfield became Peter Parker in The Amazing Spider-Man in 2012. Tom Holland later brought Peter back to school in Spider-Man: Homecoming before No Way Home pushed him towards a far lonelier existence in 2021. These dates can be read as ordinary franchise history. To me, they are also a private calendar. Each Spider-Man belongs to a different version of my life.

This is why No Way Home affected audiences beyond the pleasure of seeing familiar actors return. It was carefully engineered nostalgia; studios understand the commercial value of memory. But calling it "fan service" and stopping there misses something. Tobey Maguire, Andrew Garfield and Tom Holland carried three periods of the audience's life into one film. The child, the teenager and the young adult were briefly allowed to stand beside one another.

The attachment is visible in South Asia's film market too, although India should never be treated as shorthand for the whole region. No Way Home earned approximately $36.9 million in India. Sony later released Across the Spider-Verse there in English and nine Indian languages, including Bengali, while the film featured Pavitr Prabhakar—Spider-Man India. Marvel identifies Pavitr as a character created by Jeevan Kang, Suresh Seetharaman and Sharad Devarajan. These facts do not prove the existence of one uniform South Asian response. They do show a large, multilingual audience for whom Spider-Man has become more than a distant American import.

Now there is Spider-Man: Brand New Day. The film released on July 31, 2026, with Tom Holland returning and Destin Daniel Cretton directing. Its official premise begins with Peter living alone in New York and fighting crime full-time in a world that no longer remembers his name. Four years have passed since No Way Home, and Peter is now an adult who has removed himself from the lives of the people he loves.

I watch this Peter while approaching my university graduation. The timing feels almost cruel. In 2007, I watched Spider-Man and thought my extraordinary life was waiting somewhere ahead. In 2026, I understand that no radioactive spider is coming. I will not wake up able to climb walls. I will not swing between buildings. The world has not secretly selected me for a destiny that will rescue me from being ordinary.

When I say the dream is gone, I mean exactly that. I do not mean that I have stopped hoping, planning or wanting things from life. I mean the sincere dream of the child in front of the computer, the child who believed he might really become Spider-Man one day.

It would be easy to rescue the sadness by saying that the dream merely changed, or that adulthood taught me to become another kind of superhero. There may be some truth in that, but it is not the truth I am trying to tell. Some dreams do not mature. They end.



Tom Holland & Zendaya At 'Spider-Man: Brand New Day' Premiere Tour. Photo : Pablo Cuadra / Getty Images

Graduation is supposed to feel like arrival, but it often feels like a familiar structure being removed. Classes finish. Friends begin moving in different directions. Questions about work, money and responsibility stop being distant adult questions. The child who waited for superpowers becomes a man who must make decisions without them.

"The child is grown, the dream is gone." What remains is the memory of having believed. Spider-Man can no longer convince me that I might become him. He does something sadder now: he brings me close to the boy who once thought it was possible. For two hours, the distance between a computer screen in 2007 and a cinema screen in 2026 becomes visible. I can see how much time has passed, and how quietly it passed. The child has grown. The dream is gone. Spider-Man remains and perhaps that is why seeing him still hurts.

Writer: Sub-editor, Cut To Cinema

ARTICLE

Light, Symmetry, and Obsession in Stanley Kubrick's Films

Mohammad Tasawar Islam



Stanley Kubrick during the filming of Barry Lyndon (1975). Photo: MUBI

Stanley Kubrick would have turned 98 this year (July 26), yet his visual choices remain strikingly contemporary. The first film I ever studied closely was The Shining, as my photography mentor suggested that I deep-dive into this film back in 2019, essentially to understand composition and the play of light.

Kubrick's visual journey began at thirteen, when his father handed him a Graflex camera. By sixteen, he had sold his first photograph to Look magazine: a news vendor appearing grief-stricken, surrounded by headlines announcing President Franklin D. Roosevelt's death. At seventeen, he joined Look as an apprentice photographer and later became one of its youngest staff photographers, capturing boxers, subway commuters, and street life across New York. His 1949 photo essay on middleweight boxer Walter Cartier became the basis for his debut short documentary, Day of the Fight. Working for Look taught Kubrick narrative sequencing through stills, practical problem-solving under ambient light, and complete experimentation through composition.

In Stanley Kubrick: A Life in Pictures, Steven Spielberg observes that while most artists approach a blank canvas with small, delicate pencil strokes, Kubrick conceived his films in large, primary-colored brushstrokes; bold, almost obvious concepts. In Paths of Glory, Spielberg notes, every sequence hammers its point home, yet within each sequence the filmmaking remains delicate, subtle, almost gentle.

Whenever I think about Stanley Kubrick's work, one particular scene comes to mind: the Grady sisters sequence. The encounter with the Grady sisters in The Shining is a masterclass in spatial terror. Following young Danny on his tricycle, the camera glides at eye level, tracking the rhythmic shift from loud hardwood to silent geometric carpet. Kubrick completely rejects traditional dark horror tropes; the hallway is vast, pristine, and bathed in bright, even light.

As Danny turns the corner, two young girls in matching blue dresses stand dead center at the far vanishing point of a perfectly symmetrical frame. They speak in flat unison: "Come and play with us, Danny. Forever... and ever... and ever." Kubrick instantly interrupts this quiet geometry with harsh flash cuts of the same corridor drenched in blood and the girls slain on the floor. When Danny uncovers his eyes, the hallway is empty again. The terror relies heavily on strict visual balance, central perspective, and the cold stillness of the frame. It always felt as though every single sequence was designed to give the ultimate experience.

Before Kubrick ever picked up a motion-picture camera, he spent years mastering the still photograph, and the rigorous discipline of the viewfinder never left his filmography. Nearly a century after his birth, what endures is not merely his body of work, but an uncompromising way of seeing.

Kubrick's mastery lay in his conviction that meaning should exist within the physical boundaries of the frame rather than rely on dialogue. In Dr. Strangelove, the cavernous War Room, a set so strikingly convincing that US President Ronald Reagan reportedly asked to see it upon entering office, used light and architecture to mirror political madness. In A Clockwork Orange, the Korova Milk Bar weaponized furniture into visual ideology, while the Overlook Hotel's hypnotic carpets in The Shining actively drove the narrative's psychological collapse.

Speaking on his philosophy, Kubrick noted that realistic drama should be a progression of moods and feelings, with explicit meaning emerging only later.

Kubrick approached cinematographic challenges by completely reimagining the craft. To shoot several of Barry Lyndon's night interior scenes by candlelight, he tracked down three ultra-fast Zeiss Planar 50mm f/0.7 lenses originally developed for NASA's Apollo program. He had them custom-modified to fit his Mitchell BNC camera, pulling off what many deemed impossible. On set, Kubrick carried his own light meter, at times taking readings personally. His photographic circle was equally telling: he hired legendary crime photographer Arthur "Weegee" Fellig as the set photographer for Dr. Strangelove, and Weegee's presence on set reportedly influenced Peter Sellers's accent for the manic title character.

Before Kubrick ever picked up a motion-picture camera, he mastered the still photograph. The discipline of the viewfinder never left his filmography.



Stanley Kubrick on the set of 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968). Photo: IMDb.

No medium exists in isolation, a reality every artist understands. Kubrick's vision was constantly fed by adjacent passions. His youth as a chess hustler in Washington Square Park taught him discipline, patience, and the ability to anticipate consequences several moves ahead. His teenage study of jazz drumming instilled an acute sense of rhythmic timing, evident in how seamlessly his cuts sync to classical scores. Meanwhile, his deep study of eighteenth-century painters like Gainsborough and Hogarth transformed Barry Lyndon into a moving art gallery. For Kubrick, these were not disparate hobbies; they were tools designed to sharpen his primary craft.

Kubrick leaves a precise lesson for storytellers: master one discipline so deeply that every other tool bends to its logic. Whether manufacturing artificial illusions or capturing genuine light, force the technical medium to create convincing spatial truth. Trust the physical composition to communicate emotion without relying on verbal explanation.

Whenever I see a Kubrick film, I return to that bright, symmetrical corridor in The Shining and think about the thirteen-year-old boy holding his first Graflex in the Bronx. Stanley Kubrick proved that when you master the camera, you have an unlimited capacity to reconstruct a reality that the world may never have witnessed before.

Writer: Photographer and visual artist

ARTICLE

The Restless Cinema of Alejandro Iñárritu

Kabbo Kabir

"To make a film is easy; to make a good film is war. To make a very good film is a miracle."

Over the past three decades, Alejandro González Iñárritu has established himself as one of modern cinema's most visionary storytellers, creating films that transcend geographical and cultural boundaries while exploring universal themes of love, grief, guilt, redemption and survival.

Born in Mexico City on August 15, 1963, Alejandro G. Iñárritu didn't grow up following the traditional route into filmmaking. Before directing movies, he worked in many sectors that broadened his understanding of people and cultures. As a young man, he worked on cargo ships, traveling across the Atlantic and visiting different continents. These journeys would later influence his storytelling style. Iñárritu also worked as a radio host. That likely sharpened his sense of rhythm, emotion and communication. During this period, he became acquainted with Guillermo Arriaga, the Mexican writer who would later write the screenplays for Iñárritu's so-called Death Trilogy. Later, he moved into advertising, directing commercials that showcased his visual creativity and storytelling abilities. This period helped him develop the cinematic language that would define his later films.

Iñárritu's feature-film directing career began relatively late compared with many famous directors. From his early success in Mexico to becoming one of Hollywood's most celebrated directors, Iñárritu has consistently refused to follow conventional filmmaking formulas. Instead, he has crafted deeply personal stories that combine emotional intensity with technical innovation. For many people, he is the director behind Birdman or The Revenant, the filmmaker who won back-to-back Academy Awards for Best Director. But reducing his career to awards misses the point. Long before Hollywood recognized him, Iñárritu had already shown that he was interested in something much bigger than trophies. His influence extends beyond awards and box-office success; he has inspired filmmakers to embrace bold storytelling and artistic risk.

Written by Guillermo Arriaga and directed by Iñárritu, the first film of the so-called Death Trilogy, Amores Perros (2000), tells three interconnected stories linked by a tragic car accident in Mexico City. Its nonlinear narrative, emotional complexity and realistic portrayal of urban life immediately set it apart. It didn't feel like a carefully polished debut from a newcomer. It felt alive. What stands out is the honesty with which it looks at love, betrayal, ambition, violence and survival. Gustavo Santaolalla's score and Rodrigo Prieto's harrowing cinematography convey Mexico City's brutality.



Alejandro G. Iñárritu. Photo: The Hollywood Reporter

This immediately attracted international attention. Premiering at Cannes Critics' Week, the film won widespread acclaim and earned an Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Language Film. More importantly, it announced the arrival of a remarkable new cinematic voice.

Following this success, Iñárritu expanded his reach into international filmmaking. In 21 Grams (2003), he once again masterfully explores themes of life, death and love through another fragmented, non-chronological narrative. At first it feels disorienting, but slowly everything begins to connect. It reflects the emotional state of the characters themselves. That ability is one of his greatest strengths. Every creative decision serves the emotional experience. Nothing feels random. The film featured acclaimed performances by Sean Penn, Naomi Watts and Benicio del Toro, demonstrating his ability to direct world-class actors while maintaining emotional authenticity.

In 2006, his third feature and the final chapter of his so-called Death Trilogy, Babel, became widely considered one of the defining films about globalization. The film explored communication, misunderstanding, cultural differences and shared humanity on a global scale. What makes Babel so powerful isn't simply that it travels across continents; it's the realization that grief sounds the same in every language, and it feels surprisingly intimate. The film won the Best Director Award at the Cannes Film Festival, the Golden Globe for Best Motion Picture – Drama and received seven Academy Award nominations, further establishing Iñárritu as one of the world's leading filmmakers.

Sadly, Babel marked the end of Iñárritu and Arriaga's collaboration. If Babel explored humanity on a global scale, Biutiful (2010) turned inward. It marked a change of direction, abandoning the fragmented structure of his earlier films for a largely linear story. Set in the streets of Barcelona, the film is about a father facing death while trying to protect his children and confronting his own mortality. There are moments of heartbreak throughout, but it isn't only about poverty, hunger and suffering. It's also a hymn to life, love and family. Unlike many films about death, Biutiful is not interested in easy sentimentality. Javier Bardem gives one of the most emotionally devastating performances of modern cinema, portraying a man weighed down by guilt yet driven by unconditional love.

His later career reached even greater heights, beginning what became his peak Hollywood phase, when he directed Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance) (2014), a daring satire about fame, creativity and artistic relevance. It was unlike anything he had made before. Sharp, funny, surreal and technically astonishing, the film follows Riggan Thomson, a fading Hollywood actor desperate to reclaim artistic respect by directing a Broadway play. The film's famous "one-shot" illusion, created through seamless editing and extraordinary camera work, pulls viewers into the protagonist's mind, blurring reality and imagination. It became one of its defining features and captivated audiences and critics alike. That changed the public conversation around his career. It won four Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Original Screenplay and Best Cinematography.

Only a year later, he achieved another remarkable milestone with his first epic survival drama, The Revenant (2015), shot in freezing locations. A deep, immersive cinematic experience, it tells a tale of revenge and survival while creating a visceral and aesthetic contrast between beauty and violence. This is Iñárritu's most visually stunning film. He created images that feel almost spiritual. Natural landscapes become part of the story itself, captured with raw realism and natural light. Cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki took on one of his biggest challenges yet by shooting in freezing conditions and using almost entirely natural light. The film earned Leonardo DiCaprio his long-awaited Academy Award for Best Actor, while Iñárritu became only the third director in Oscar history to win consecutive Academy Awards for Best Director, placing him among the most accomplished directors in film history.

After reaching such extraordinary success, he chose not to repeat himself. Instead, he spent years developing Bardo, False Chronicle of a Handful of Truths (2022), which may be his most personal film yet. Dreamlike, surreal and deliberately unconventional, the film explores memory, identity, immigration, family and artistic legacy. It may be his most divisive work, but it also reveals an artist who continues to take creative risks instead of seeking easy approval.

Iñárritu's upcoming film Digger is scheduled for theatrical release on October 2, 2026.

One of the defining characteristics of Iñárritu's cinema is its exploration of human suffering. His characters frequently experience loss, guilt, broken relationships and emotional isolation, from the intertwined tragedies of 21 Grams and Babel to the physical and spiritual struggle of The Revenant and the psychological pain of Birdman. He portrays redemption as a gradual journey shaped by acceptance and emotional growth, avoiding simple resolutions. This realism makes his stories emotionally powerful and deeply relatable. Another recurring theme is interconnectedness, showing how one person's decisions can profoundly affect the lives of others.

Sound also plays an important role in his films. Rather than relying excessively on dialogue, he often allows silence, ambient sounds and carefully selected music to communicate emotion. Narrative structure is another hallmark of his work. He frequently relies on nonlinear storytelling and deeply emotional performances to heighten the powerful impact. Through his collaborations with Guillermo Arriaga, Emmanuel Lubezki and other major collaborators, he has developed a bold visual style where technique always serves depth. His films are masterclasses in visual storytelling, using long takes, fluid camera work and immersive sound not for style alone but to deepen impact. His unpredictability ensures that every film feels like a new artistic exploration.

Finally, some good news: Iñárritu's upcoming film Digger is scheduled for theatrical release on October 2, 2026, marking his return to the big screen after several years and bringing an exciting collaboration with Tom Cruise. Interestingly, Cruise has been a longtime admirer of his work, especially since his powerful debut film Amores Perros. Digger promises to be another fascinating chapter in Iñárritu's remarkable career.

Writer: Student and filmmaker



Niu Lai Turns Mockery into a Chinese Box-Office Hit

Photo: Dalian Jingyuan Culture Film and Television Media - screenshot

A Chinese animated film mocked for its crude visuals and "disaster-level" production has become one of the summer's most unlikely box-office stories, even finding itself in competition with Christopher Nolan's The Odyssey in China.

Directed by Xin Yumeng, Niu Lai ("Here Comes the Cow") was initially met with ridicule after its 5 August release. Audiences and critics took aim at its stiff animation, awkward voice performances, rudimentary visual effects and unconventional story, which follows a newborn calf as it grows up and encounters love, loss and sacrifice.

The film's early box-office performance appeared to justify the criticism. According to Chinese ticketing platform Maoyan, Niu Lai earned only around 10,000 yuan in its first 10 days, with some individual days bringing in barely 200 yuan. But social media mockery soon changed its fortunes. Clips, memes and sarcastic recommendations began circulating widely online, turning the film into a viral curiosity. Viewers started going to cinemas partly to experience what some described as one of the strangest animated films of the year. Others embraced its rough, handmade aesthetic, presenting it as an alternative to increasingly polished studio animation and the flood of algorithm-driven AI-generated content online.



A drawing poster promoting Niu Lai on display with other movie posters at a cinema in Beijing -18 August 2026. Photo: AP

That attention has translated into a remarkable turnaround. The film's box office has climbed to 17.1 million yuan, with recent figures showing a sharp surge in earnings. It has now entered the top 10 highest-grossing animated films in China in 2026 and is unexpectedly being compared with The Odyssey, which opened in the country on 14 August.

The film's unusual production story has added to its appeal. Xin Yumeng and Sun Lifang, reportedly a mother-and-son filmmaking team, spent five years making Niu Lai. They were involved in several aspects of the production, including writing and voice performances, giving the film a distinctly personal and homemade character.

As demand grew, cinemas began adding screenings, further fuelling the phenomenon.

Yet not everyone has welcomed its success. Some critics argue that the film's popularity rewards poor production standards and could take screening space away from more accomplished films.

State-owned Beijing News warned that cinemas could risk losing audiences' trust by continuing to increase screenings of films it considers below standard, urging exhibitors to maintain their role as "gatekeepers" for quality cinema.

Whether audiences are laughing at Niu Lai or genuinely embracing its eccentric charm, the film has achieved something few expected. A production that began as an object of online ridicule has transformed viral attention into box-office revenue, proving once again that in the age of social media, even a film's worst reputation can become its biggest selling point.



San Sebastian to Close With Le Faux Soir

'Le Faux Soir' Courtesy of San Sebastian Film Festival

Belgian filmmaker Michaël R. Roskam will return to the San Sebastián Film Festival with Le Faux Soir, which has been selected as the closing film of the 74th edition's Official Selection. The film will screen out of competition and receive its European premiere at the Spanish festival, following its world premiere at Toronto International Film Festival 2026.

Set in Nazi-occupied Belgium in 1943, Le Faux Soir revisits a remarkable episode of the Belgian resistance, when a group of fighters used the country's press as a weapon against the occupiers. After the Nazis turned the influential newspaper Le Soir into a vehicle for propaganda, the resistance devised an audacious plan to publish a fake edition mocking the German regime.

The film is based on Marie Istas' book Le "Faux" Soir, 9 novembre 1943. Arieh Worthalter, Mélanie Thierry, Karim Leklou, Mara Taquin, Bouli Lanners, Julien Frison and François Damiens lead the cast. The Belgian-French co-production explores an operation often described by historians as one of the earliest examples of a media hack.

Roskam is no stranger to San Sebastián. His 2014 crime drama The Drop, starring Tom Hardy, Noomi Rapace and James Gandolfini, won the festival's Jury Prize for Best Screenplay.

A former journalist at the Dutch-language newspaper De Morgen, Roskam made his feature debut with Bullhead (2011). He later directed the first three episodes of the acclaimed miniseries Black Bird, which earned Emmy and Golden Globe nominations.

San Sebastián recently announced Fatih Akin's Ghost Song as its opening film. The 74th edition will run from September 18 to 26, 2026.

Naomi Watts to Receive Zurich's Golden Eye

Two-time Oscar nominee Naomi Watts will receive the Golden Eye Award at the 2026 Zurich Film Festival for her performance in Ben Shirinian's The Housewife. The actress will collect the honor in person on September 26 and participate in a masterclass during the festival.

Set in 1960s New York and inspired by a true story, The Housewife follows a young New York Times journalist, played by Tye Sheridan, who investigates a man he believes is a former Nazi officer secretly living in Queens, portrayed by Luke Evans. His investigation takes an unexpected turn after he becomes acquainted with the suspect's sophisticated and mysterious wife, played by Watts. The film will have its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival before screening in Zurich.

Zurich Film Festival CEO Christian Jungen praised Watts for her ability to combine glamour with darker, more complex character work. He highlighted her performance in The Housewife, describing the actress's portrayal as one of the most striking of her career.

Watts first gained widespread recognition with David Lynch's Mulholland Drive. She subsequently earned Academy Award nominations for Best Actress for Alejandro González Iñárritu's 21 Grams in 2004 and J.A. Bayona's The Impossible in 2013. She also received an Emmy nomination for her performance as Babe Paley in the second season of Ryan Murphy's Feud.

Watts joins a distinguished list of Golden Eye recipients, including Kristen Stewart, Jude Law, Benedict Cumberbatch and Dakota Johnson.

The 2026 Zurich Film Festival will take place from September 24 to October 4.





'You Don't Belong Here'. Photo: Fantascope Films

Locarno 2026
'You Don't Belong Here' Wins Golden Leopard

Romanian filmmaker Florin Şerban's You Don't Belong Here (Nu E Locul Tau Aici) has won the Golden Leopard at the 79th Locarno Film Festival. The jury praised the film's writing, distinctive vision and cinematic language. Hong Sangsoo took Best Director for Nowhere to Lay My Eyes, while Monica Bellucci won a performance award for Ketticè.

In the Filmmakers of the Present competition, Alessandra Sanguinetti's The Illusion of an Everlasting Summer received the Golden Leopard as well as the Best First Feature award.

Petra Volpe's prison drama Frank & Louis won the UBS Audience Award. Other prizes went to Beatrice Gibson for At Night and Mohanad Yaqubi for Revolutionaries Never Die.

Meanwhile, the festival's industry strand, Locarno Pro, hit a record, crossing the 2,000 industry registration mark for the first time. This year's 2,140 industry accreditations were up 10 percent from last year's 1,940. Professionals from nearly 100 countries participated.



BKFM to Open with the Unforgettable Queen Concert Film

Freddie Mercury of Queen. photo: of Sony Music

A fully restored 4K version of the historic concert film, Queen Budapest, documenting the band's iconic 1986 performance in Budapest will be premiered as the opening film of the Budapest Classics Film Marathon (BKFM). Commissioned by Sony Music Vision, the restoration was carried out by the National Film Institute Hungary's Film Archive and Film Lab with Peter Jackson's Park Road. National Film Institute Hungary presents its annual festival of restored classics, the 9th BKFM from 15 to 20 September at popular venues across Budapest. The unique event celebrating restored film heritage highlights a variety of themes including the 70th anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution.

Tell the name of the FILM

GUESSING GAME



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF HERZOG

1. Where was Werner Herzog born? (1 Point)
2. What was Herzog's breakthrough film? (2 Point)
3. Which actor was Herzog's famous collaborator? (3 Point)
4. What is Herzog's 2026 new film? (4 Point)
5. Which film did Herzog make about Antarctica? (5 Point)



Werner Herzog with his Golden Lion award at the 2025 Venice Film Festival

11-15	06-10	01-05	00
Gold Medal	Silver Medal	Bronze Medal	Wooden Spoon

Test Your Knowledge Answers
1. Germany
2. Aguirre
3. Kinski
4. Bucking Fastard
5. Encounters

Guessing Game Answer
Zendaya in Dune: Part Three. Photo: Warner Bros./Courtesy Everett Collection

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