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50th International Film Festival Rotterdam

1 – 7 February | 2 – 6 June 2021

Rotterdam, 16 June 2021

IFFR closes extended 50th edition

Anniversary edition shaped by restrictions, perseverance and innovation

International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) closes its 50th anniversary edition. Adapting to the changing circumstances, from 1 to 7 February the festival presented its competition programmes online on IFFR.com. From 2 to 6 June IFFR offered a hybrid festival, with premieres, film programmes and in-depth conversations online, and welcomed the first returning audiences to Rotterdam cinemas, which had been closed for over half a year. Presented in a new programme structure, IFFR 2021 included a total of 120 feature films, 44 of which were world premieres, next to 74 short and mid-length works. The 51st edition of IFFR will take place from 26 January to 6 February 2022.

The 50th edition made extensive use of an online format to uphold and advance the festival's mission: connecting audiences and filmmakers. Across the entire edition, IFFR hosted 131 Q&As, 153 pre-recorded introductions and produced 155 pre-recorded interviews with filmmakers available online. The IFFR Talks programme brought discussions with filmmakers to audiences worldwide from February to June, featuring names including Mads Mikkelsen, Benoît Jacquot, Charlotte Gainsbourg, Kelly Reichardt, Mona Fastvold, Lemohang Jeremiah Mosese and Dominik Graf. A record number of 536 accredited press attended the festival online, from 61 territories. The IFFR Pro Days, including CineMart and the Rotterdam Lab, were hosted online and in total 2,004 industry guests from 100 territories attended the edition.

Several programme elements were impossible to realise under the circumstances of the past year. The limited possibility for physical attendance by audiences, filmmakers and guests in Rotterdam due to restrictions meant that a number of 50th edition plans that relied on their presence – from performances and installations to thematic programmes – had to be postponed or re-adjusted.

Festival director Vanja Kaludjercic: “In this extraordinary year, we took the many challenges we were faced with head-on by trying out new formats and taking great risks to ensure the best opportunities for our filmmakers, audiences and industry guests. In a year like this, there is no greater reward than making the festival happen. I'm incredibly proud that through hard work and perseverance, we created a unique festival experience both online and offline through a smaller but by no means less impactful programme. We will take on the learnings from this year, which undoubtedly will shape the future of IFFR.”



A film programme across two chapters

IFFR 2021 presented two distinct film line-ups for each festival chapter, various 50th jubilee programmes and numerous awards. The festival opened with Danish comedy **Riders of Justice** by Anders Thomas Jensen, and closed with Japanese animation **Poupelle of Chimney Town** by Hirota Yusuke. Across the entire edition 66 territories were represented in the film programme. In February, IFFR provided a platform for international film talent with a focus on the festival's competitions – including the Tiger Competition, Big Screen Competition and Ammodo Tiger Short Competition. 16 titles, all of which world or international premieres, screened in the Tiger Competition. **Pebbles** by Vinothraj P.S. won the Tiger Award during the Awards Ceremony.

In June, the festival took place in a hybrid format both online and in cinemas in Rotterdam, where it premiered the new programme section Harbour, alongside Bright Future, Cinema Regained, Short & Mid-length, Art Directions and IFFR Classics. After the Srebrenica drama **Quo vadis, Aida?** by Jasmila Žbanić won the BankGiro Loterij Audience Award in February, football documentary **Mi chiamo Francesco Totti** by Alex Infascelli was voted the winner in June.

With the festival's close, the final title of the IFFR Unleashed: 50/50 collection is now available on demand. Cuban short **Terranova** by Alejandro Pérez Serrano and Alejandro Alonso Estrella completes the festival retrospective of 50 films from 50 editions. The film had its world premiere at IFFR 2021 in February where it won an Ammodo Tiger Short Award.



The 50th edition in Rotterdam

IFFR ensured a strong presence in Rotterdam throughout its 50th edition. February's **Tiger on the Loose** project, designed in collaboration with Studio VollaersZwart, installed an interactive augmented reality experience across Rotterdam. In June, **The Werner – Guerilla Cinema** created together with Atelier van Lieshout toured throughout the city, screening portraits of local residents.

Audience members and Tiger Competition winners recounted festival experiences in **IFFR Plays Back** ◀◀, while **Picture This** presented a series of thematic clips in tribute to 50 years of festival photography. **IFFR 100** exhibited 50 past campaign posters alongside 50 future poster designs by Willem de Kooning Academy students, projected onto the Pathé cinema on Schouwburgplein in February and displayed in the iconic Dudok Rotterdam café and 75B studio in June. On Thursday 17 June at 'de Doelen', the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra will perform a musical accompaniment to animation films produced by Rotterdam-based students and school children for the invite-only **Animatie Variaties**.

Managing director Marjan van der Haar: “It was a race against the clock to get permission to open as a mandatory testing event and welcome audiences in cinemas again for the first three days of our festival in June. For the last two days we reopened together with national cinemas. We are still in the midst of analysing the results, but by comparing the day-by-day numbers, we can already see that mandatory testing is a significant hurdle for audiences returning to cinemas and this is not a viable long-term option for the cultural sector. It’s been rewarding to see the way our audiences and filmmakers engaged with our programme. I am inspired by our team who rose to the challenge of presenting IFFR in a new way, and our partners who continuously supported us.”

50th edition facts and figures - from February to June

February and June programme

- 120 feature films (44 world premieres, 15 international premieres, 9 European premieres)
- 74 short & mid-length films (8 world premieres, 2 international premieres)
- 9 IFFR Talks
- 439 Live Q&As, introductions & pre-recorded interviews ('Afterthoughts')
- 16 Tiger Competition titles (14 world premieres, 2 international premieres)
- 14 Big Screen Competition titles (11 world premieres, 2 international premieres, 1 European premiere)
- 22 Ammodo Tiger Short Competition titles (13 world premieres, 8 international premieres, 1 European premiere)
- 2 BankGiro Loterij Audience Awards
- 7 Art Directions items (The Werner – Guerilla Cinema, Picture This, IFFR 100 and 4 virtual reality installations)
- 5 50th Specials (Tiger on the Loose, IFFR Plays Back ◀◀, IFFR Classics, IFFR Unleashed 50/50, Vive le cinéma!)

50th edition audience engagement

The 50th edition figures cover audience engagement from 1 March 2020 until 10 June 2021.

- 270,898 total visits – based on a survey sent to 10,777 ticket holders, with 3,489 respondents, IFFR calculated a 1.7 per-household multiplier for online visits
- Online festival attendance amounts to 92.3% across IFFR 50th, while physical festival attendance reached 7.7%
- An increase in audience representation across the Netherlands: 36% of audiences in 2021 were based outside of the North and South Holland provinces (this increased from 21% in 2020)
- 18,831,356 YouTube views between 1 March 2020 and 10 June 2021
- 12,998 interactions with the **Tiger on the Loose** augmented reality art installations
- 3,496 interactions with **The Werner – Guerilla Cinema**, including 932 physical visits

Education

The 50th edition figures cover education statistics from 1 March 2020 until 10 June 2021.

- 20,140 visits (both online and physical) by school children, students and teachers
- 72% of lessons and workshops took place physically in cinemas and schools, while 28% were online, in line with changing health regulations throughout the year and during the festival

Press

The 50th edition press figures cover press accreditations for both February and June 2021.

- 536 journalists (95 Netherlands-based journalists and 441 international journalists)
- A substantial increase in international press accreditations (from 247 in 2020, to 441 in 2021)
- 61 countries represented in total

IFFR Pro Days (1 to 5 February 2021)

The 50th edition IFFR Pro figures cover participating guests between September 2020 and June 2021, including IFFR Pro Days (1 to 5 February 2021).

- 2,004 guests from the film industry, including:
- *166 participating filmmakers*
- *754 CineMart guests, a 10% increase from IFFR 2020*
- 100 countries represented, a 13.6% increase from IFFR 2020
- 4,492 visits to IFFR Pro activities, including online panels and Reality Checks sessions
- 951 CineMart one-on-one meetings facilitated

A remarkable anniversary edition

Watch the recap video here

IFFR 2022

The 51st edition of IFFR will take place from 26 January to 6 February 2022.



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