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52nd International Film Festival Rotterdam

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Reality Check 2023: Festivals Forward

IFFR Pro symposium to ask: where are film festivals heading?

International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) announces the theme of its annual industry-focused symposium Reality Check, which returns during IFFR 2023 to ask: what is the future of film festivals? Taking place on Sunday 29 January, film festival and market professionals will be provided with a space to discuss how festivals can best organise themselves and collaborate with each other amid a shifting industry landscape. The closed symposium will be followed the next day by the central IFFR Pro Dialogue, open to all industry, press and student accredited guests at the festival.

The aim of the Reality Check symposium will be to propose a way forward for the film festival sector, exploring how to unify and organise professional standards in order to create a deeper and more strategic collaboration between festivals. The symposium takes place on Sunday January 29, 2023 and will be an invite-only closed event.

Festival director Vanja Kaludjeric: “IFFR 2023 marks my first full and on-site edition as festival director. Although this is certainly cause for celebration, we cannot escape the challenges of the past two years amid the difficulties of the pandemic. This begs the question, do we simply cross our fingers and hope things return to how they were, or can we organise and work together for a sustainable future for our sector? This will be the central theme of this year’s industry conference during IFFR, which I’m tremendously happy to welcome back at IFFR 2023.”

Reality Check steering committee (Esther Bannenberg, Rosa Bosch, Giovanna Fulvi, Mike Goodridge, Carl Spence and IFFR): “The genesis of this event happened during the pandemic as we were watching the operation and role of film festivals disrupted to the core. We issued a questionnaire to leading film festivals worldwide, entitled “Quo Vadis Film Festivals” for which we received over 40 replies from festivals of all sizes. We look forward to a day of interrogating the provocative results of the questionnaire as we assess the post-Covid status of the film culture called film festivals.”



Reality Check 2023

Steering committee

The group of long-serving industry experts steering the conference are international producer and sales agent Rosa Bosch, who is also a former deputy director of the London Film Festival; Giovanna Fulvi, who is senior programmer at TIFF and Rome among other festivals; Mike Goodridge, the London-based producer who has worked with festivals including Macao and Sarajevo; and former director of the Seattle International Film Festival Carl Spence who is currently festival co-director and chief curator of the Orcas Island Film Festival and the artistic director of the Sonoma International Film Festival along with consulting roles with the companies FilmFreeway and Eventive. Industry consultant Esther Bannenberg also serves on the committee.

Reality Check was launched at IFFR 2018 as the festival's platform to reflect on and discuss current issues in the film industry. Previous topics include distribution, development, new media and storytelling, and funding.

IFFR Pro 2023

Reality Check forms part of the IFFR Pro industry programme at the festival's 52nd edition. The following day on Monday 30 January, the central IFFR Pro Dialogue will take place in the afternoon open to all general industry guests, press and student badge holders. Results of Reality Check will be shared, followed by a session in collaboration with ACE Producers on international co-productions, exploring how power dynamics shape creative control.

Monday's Pro Dialogue complements the full programme of discussions, workshops and roundtables taking place throughout the festival in IFFR's Pro Hub: the meeting place for the whole film community at the festival.

The festival's co-production market CineMart presents 25 projects in development for its 40th edition, as well as work-in-progress screenings of former CineMart and Hubert Bals Fund-backed projects. IFFR's Talent initiatives for 2023 include Rotterdam Lab which, alongside the more than 70 emerging producers attending as part of the new cohort, welcomes select alumni from the two previous online editions. Creative Producer Indaba welcomes 15 producers from, or working with, the African continent, and eight feature projects take part in BoostNL.



International Film Festival Rotterdam