

Media Release | Winners and Festival Closing | 10 November 2024

28th Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur: Political Resistance and Self-Empowerment

The 28th Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur offered audiences a week of discoveries representing a broad range of Swiss and global short filmmaking: from recent Egyptian shorts to Focus programmes inspired by art history, alternative pornography, the late-night programme *Murder Is a Sport*, and, of course, the competitions. The Grand Prize of the International Competition goes to the experimental French fiction film «Genealogy of Violence» (France 2024) by Mohamed Bourouissa; the winner of the Swiss Competition is Mona Jelić's documentary «2mm»; and the ZKB Audience Award goes to Nebojša Slijepčević for «The Man Who Could Not Remain Silent» (Bulgaria, Slovenia, France, Croatia 2024). The 29th Kurzfilmtage will be held from 4 to 9 November 2025.

«Genealogy of Violence» (France 2024) shows an arbitrary, racially motivated police check and «skilfully conveys a possibility for agency – especially through the activation of imagination» according to the jury's statement on this year's Grand Prize. «Maman Danse» (Switzerland 2024) by Mégane Brügger wins the Prix George for the Best Documentary Form: «This film guides us through a quiet, powerful journey of healing, where a daughter accompanies her mother in facing the violence and traumas of the past», in the words of the jury. In the Swiss Competition, the winner is «2mm» by Mona Jelić, a «concise, visually engaging, and well-executed experimental documentary» about a planned lithium mine in Serbia, which shows the dark side of green energy ambitions.

The full jury statements and a list of all award winners are available [here](#).

«Films become a ritual, a therapy»

Due to their brevity, short films focus on the essential. The award-winning films reflect uncertainty as well as resistance in the face of the political, social, and technological upheavals of our time. Climate issues, AI, and social change are global concerns: «Reality has become complex. And these complex feelings and observations inscribe themselves in the films. The films that currently affect us are serious films. They become a ritual, a therapy», said Egyptian producer Sawsan Yusuf in a Q&A.

After the Focus programmes, Egyptian guests discussed the precarious conditions and censorship in their country, but also the new digital possibilities that are inspiring contemporary Egyptian short film production. Filmmaker Ghazzal Abdullah revealed where to watch independent films in Cairo and how the city of 22 million people has changed since «Cairo As Seen by Chahine» from 1991, one of the first socio-critical Egyptian shorts. In view of the crowds seen in Youssef Chahine's film, the discussions offered some very practical answers, too: for example, the filmmakers in attendance were able to explain to the audience how to manage an outdoor shoot in the streets of Cairo.

The Swiss Film School Day and the Person in Focus: Vytautas Katkus proved especially popular with students, whereas the Main Focus: Beyond the Frame appealed to an intergenerational audience. The art-historical introductions to the paintings in the Oskar Reinhart Collection «Am Römerholz», which inspired the themes of the six Focus programmes, opened up new perspectives on certain contemporary discourses that have perhaps always been around.

Numerous film fans and international guests were introduced to the internationally renowned museum for the first time thanks to this thematic focus.

Highlights and audience favourites

The Swiss and International Competitions were once again big audience favourites this year, with high attendance at most screenings. Other very well attended or sold out screenings included the Focus programmes He's Got the Look and I Want To Break Free from the Main Focus: Beyond the Frame; 22 Million and Who You Are to Me from the Country in Focus: Egypt; and Züri Shorts, Hot Shorts, and Like Me, Love Me, Fuck Me, as well as the late-night programmes Murder Is a Sport and What the Porn! Cinemas were also full during the sold-out Master Class with the Person in Focus: Vytautas Katkus and during the Best-of screening on closing night. Watching films together, the entertaining late-night and family programmes, the concerts and parties as well as the many enthusiastic filmmakers ensured a general lightness and a very good festival atmosphere.

All in all, the 28th festival edition was very much in the tradition of Kurzfilmtage: viewers were curious about the curated programmes, while Swiss and international filmmakers eagerly participated in our numerous industry events. Artistic Director John Canciani is especially pleased that audiences were also open to unconventional films: «In my introductions to the Focus programmes, I always remind people that you don't have to understand everything immediately. In our current times, we are not so much interested in reproducing established opinions or existing media images, but rather in fostering dialogue and figuring out collectively what we just watched. It seems like viewers share our goal – they very much went with the flow of the films and, more than ever, they often stayed for the Q&As and participated in the lively discussions».

The upshot

«This year, Kurzfilmtage focused on further developing our programme structure and audience engagement. Shorter programmes in the competitions allowed for more time for the Q&As, on the one hand, and for denser primetime programming, on the other. For the Swiss Competition, we had new lunchtime time slots and more screenings with German subtitles. These adjustments were very well received by the audience», says new Managing Director Rudi Gehring, who is very satisfied with the 28th festival edition. Kurzfilmtage recorded a total of approximately 17,000 admissions. This is in line with last year's success, which is remarkable, given that Kurzfilmtage have also been affected by the difficult situation in cultural funding and were forced to make cuts in various areas.

Information for Media Professionals

Access to films: to request a login for viewing films, please contact media@kurzfilmtage.ch

Film stills and festival photos

Portraits and film stills of the award winners and impressions of the 28th festival edition are available on [Flickr](#).

For questions about this media release

Philine Erni, +41 79 127 52 12, media@kurzfilmtage.ch