



## **73rd IFFMH to honour Lynne Ramsay with the GRAND IFFMH AWARD and Agnieszka Holland in a HOMAGE**

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As in previous years, the Mannheim-Heidelberg International Film Festival will be honouring two distinguished special guests. Scottish filmmaker Lynne Ramsay will receive the GRAND IFFMH AWARD, while the festival will dedicate a HOMAGE to Polish director Agnieszka Holland. By conferring these honours, the festival will be recognising two of the most eminent female directors of our time for their work in cinema.

Festival director Dr Sascha Keilholz: “This year we are honouring two female directors whose exceptionalism manifests itself in films that explore limits. In Agnieszka Holland’s case, these are political borders and geographical boundaries. Unsparingly, she confronts us with the catastrophic consequences of war and displacement. Her films tell of perpetrators and victims, of historical iniquity, as seen in ›Europa Europa‹ (1990), but also of present-day abominations, as seen in ›Green Border‹ (2023). Many of her films link the past to the present, helping us to learn from critical moments in history. Agnieszka Holland is a chronicler and a rebel.

Lynne Ramsay, for her part, is synonymous with resistance to class structures. She lends visibility to marginalised groups and elevates them from the fringes of society to the big screen. She dives into extraordinarily traumatising situations and brings the inconceivable to the surface. What we see in her films, the present, is always an echo of a traumatic past and a hint at future events. An almost irresolvable ambiguity runs through all her films. They fill us with unease, yet still – or precisely because of this – lead us into temptation. Both directors exemplify a cinematic oeuvre that we cannot and do not wish to ignore.”

### **GRAND IFFMH AWARD for Lynne Ramsay**

The GRAND IFFMH AWARD is the IFFMH’s way of honouring contemporary filmmakers for their individual formative vision of cinema. Following Guillaume Nicloux (2021), Alice Winocour (2022) and Nicolas Winding Refn (2023), Lynne Ramsay will receive the 10,000-euro award this year.



Lynne Ramsay © Brigitte Lacombe

Lynne Ramsay, born in 1969, grew up in Glasgow, Scotland, and studied cinematography and directing at the prestigious National Film and Television School in Beaconsfield near London. ›Small Deaths‹, her graduation film, was screened at the Cannes Film Festival in 1996 and promptly received the Jury Prize. In 1999, she directed her first feature film, ›Ratcatcher‹, as hard-hitting as it is warm-hearted, which earned her the BAFTA Award. The film portrays a twelve-year-old boy growing up under harsh economic conditions in a working-class neighbourhood in Glasgow in the 1970s. Ramsay's next film, three years later, was ›Morvern Callar‹, starring Samantha Morton and Kathleen McDermott. For this, Morton was honoured with the British Independent Film Award and McDermott with the BAFTA Award. Ramsay's third feature film, ›We Need to Talk About Kevin‹ (2011), also features a brilliant leading actress: Tilda Swinton received the European Film Award for her portrayal of the mother of a sociopathic child. Ramsay's neo-noir thriller, ›A Beautiful Day‹ (2017), a reinterpretation of the classic ›Taxi Driver‹ (1976), featured another iconic actor for whom the collaboration paid off: Joaquin Phoenix was voted best actor at the Cannes Film Festival for his role as a traumatised hitman. Ramsay and Phoenix recently completed ›Polaris‹ together, and for her latest project, ›Die, My Love‹, also due to be released in cinemas next year, Ramsay cast Jennifer Lawrence and Robert Pattinson.

Childhood, loss, remembrance, death, complex emotional territory, guilt and bereavement: these are the extreme situations that traumatise the characters in Lynne Ramsay's films and leave them unable to find peace. The protagonist in ›Ratcatcher‹ is complicit in the drowning of another boy. ›Morvern Callar‹ is about a young woman who does not report her boyfriend's suicide to the police. ›We Need to Talk About Kevin‹ tells the story of a mother (Tilda Swinton) who must come to terms with the sociopathic behaviour of her son and with her own perceived failure in preventing it. The scars of a hitman named Joe (Joaquin Phoenix) in ›A Beautiful Day‹ attest to his own traumas. Ramsay depicts all of



this without pathos, allowing room for interpretation instead. She often uses an indirect narrative style that relies on allusions and omissions to transport the viewer into the world of her restless characters.

The award ceremony will be held on 9 November at Stadthaus N1 in Mannheim and will be followed by a screening of the film ›A Beautiful Day‹ (2017). In addition, ›Ratcatcher‹ (1999) and ›We Need to Talk About Kevin‹ (2011) will be given another screening at the 73rd IFFMH. Lynne Ramsay will discuss her work in a master class open to anyone interested in attending, in the Festival Lounge at Karlsruhbahnhof on 10 November.

### **HOMAGE to Agnieszka Holland**

The IFFMH's HOMAGE pays tribute to leading figures in the international film industry. Previous guests of honour have included legendary director Claude Lelouch (2021), Belgian cinematographer Benoît Debie (2022) and, last year, French cinematographer Agnès Godard. This year, the festival is honouring Polish director Agnieszka Holland, a chronicler of contemporary European history and one of the most significant voices in political cinema.



Agnieszka Holland © EFA



Agnieszka Holland was born in Warsaw in 1948. The trauma of the Second World War and life under Stalinism are interwoven with her family history. Holland's Catholic mother belonged to the resistance during the war and her Jewish father's parents were murdered in the ghetto. Greatly fascinated by Czech cinema as a young woman, Holland studied film directing at the Prague Film University. Her experience of being arrested for demonstrating during the Prague Spring resulted in powerlessness, revolution and resistance becoming central themes in her work.

Holland has repeatedly dealt with the crimes of fascist and communist regimes, directing three films about the Holocaust: ›Angry Harvest‹ (1985), starring Armin Müller-Stahl, which earned her an Oscar nomination; ›In Darkness‹ (2011); and in between, ›Europa Europa‹ (1990), in which the horrors of war are shown through the eyes of a 14-year-old boy. In 1981, martial law was declared in Poland, forcing the director into exile in France. In a film studio in Paris, however, she had contemporary Warsaw reconstructed for her film ›To Kill a Priest‹ (1988), about the murder of Solidarność supporter Jerzy Popiełuszko at the hands of Polish authorities. This first of three works starring actor Ed Harris is a passionate appeal for freedom and at the same time a hard-hitting portrait of the circumstances under which it is lost. In 1993, the film made it over to the United States. Holland filmed an adaptation of the children's book ›The Secret Garden‹ (1993), produced by Francis Ford Coppola and starring an English and American cast, then directed ›Total Eclipse‹ (1995), starring a young Leonardo DiCaprio. The most significant work among her later films could not be more contemporary, however. ›Green Border‹ (2023) is a reckoning with Polish and European refugee policy. This film was celebrated in Venice and reaped seven awards before being subjected to a brutally denigrating campaign by the highest authorities, who even compared it to fascist propaganda.

At the HOMAGE at the 73rd IFFMH, three key works from Holland's oeuvre are waiting to be rediscovered on the big screen: ›Green Border‹ (2023), ›Olivier, Olivier‹ (1992) and ›Europa Europa‹ (1990). In a master class at Cinema Quadrat on 14 November, Holland will discuss her visions of cinema, explain why the perspective of young people is so important in her films and, last but not least, share her view of current events and the state that Europe is in.

## Images

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## About the IFFMH

With "New Film Experience" as its credo, the IFFMH has been venturing new, interdisciplinary perspectives on and through the art of film since 1952. This



makes it the longest-running film festival in Germany after the Berlinale, and it continues to be a major platform for cultural, social and political dialogue. With each subsequent edition, the IFFMH, as a festival for the public in cinemas, invites festivalgoers to discover the rising stars of the international film scene as well as to follow the careers of established filmmakers and to become more familiar with film in the context of other art forms. The 73rd IFFMH will be held from 7 to 17 November 2024. The complete schedule will be available on 17 October.

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