



Press release
7 January, 2020, Nyon

Claire Denis is “Maître du Réel 2020”: a tribute to one of the most iconic contemporary filmmakers

Visions du Réel International Film Festival Nyon will pay tribute to Claire Denis by awarding her the Prix Raiffeisen Maître du Réel in its next edition (24 April – 2 May 2020). A major, uncompromising and adventurous filmmaker, Claire Denis will give on 28 April a Masterclass open to the public and co-hosted by the ECAL – Lausanne University of Art and Design, which is once again partner to this invitation. The Festival will present a selection of both documentary and fictional films, whilst the Cinémathèque suisse, another essential partner in this tribute, will organise a retrospective of her work.



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One of the most iconic figures of contemporary filmmaking, Claire Denis having spent her childhood in several African countries, comes to France as a teenager. Only then does she discover cinema, the high-school cine-club, and finally arthouse cinema at the French Cinematheque. She studies literature and economics, works for Niger's school television, and then registers at the Institute for Advanced Cinematographic Studies (IDHEC) in Paris. She directs various short films and becomes assistant director, working notably with Jacques Rivette (who will become the subject in 1990 of a documentary by Denis called *Jacques Rivette, Le Veilleur*), Dušan Makavejev, Roberto Enrico and Costa-Gavras. In 1983 she works with Wim Wenders on *Paris, Texas* and then on *Wings of Desire*. After having assisted in 1986 Jim Jarmusch (whom she had met through musician John Lurie) on *Down by Law*, she directs in 1988 her first film, *Chocolat*, which is immediately selected at the Cannes Film Festival and nominated for the César awards. It is also the first time she collaborates with Agnès Godard, whom she met at La Fémis and who will become director of photography for all her films. About thirty films will follow, including six documentaries and no fewer than 17 feature

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films, such as *Nénette et Boni* for which she is awarded the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival in 1996 and the emblematic *Beau Travail*, also presented at the Venice Film Festival in 1999, as well as the striking *Trouble Every Day* with Béatrice Dalle and Vincent Gallo, screened in 2001 at Cannes Film Festival. Her last work, *High Life*, as controversial as it was critically acclaimed, started its festival career in San Sebastian, Toronto and New York (2018), starring Robert Pattinson and Juliette Binoche – who had already performed in several earlier films of Denis.

Beyond the documentaries that she has directed, Claire Denis, in her fictional or even her science-fiction works, maintains in a personal and delicate manner, a recurring relationship to “the real”. By allowing the necessary space to account for the voids and the hollows, in order to render what the acting or the staging are unable to express in the tempo of the editing, or in the exploration of bodies and desire, her fiction swells with the substance of reality. Using a tangible fact as a starting point: a news item, a personal experience, the body of an actor— in this case, by appropriating the image of the latter also outside the films – Claire Denis weaves cinematographic objects that are both modern and adventurous, joyously hesitating between formal austerity and euphoric sensuality.

Further information regarding events connected to the presence of Claire Denis will be available in March 2020.

- Maître du Réel Evening, Monday, 27 April
- Claire Denis Masterclass, Tuesday, 28 April
- Filmography: www.visionsdureel.ch/festival/maitre-du-reel-2020
- Cinémathèque suisse : www.cinematheque.ch

51st edition of Visions du Réel: 24 April—2 May 2020
Full program and tickets online starting 26 March 2020

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