Berlinale Panorama 2017: The Wound Selected to Open Panoramaâ??s Main Programme

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

In the *Panorama* section, the first eleven films from a programme featuring a total of approximately 50 productions have been invited to be screened at the Berlinale, around a third of them for *Panorama Dokumente*. Two prominent themes have already emerged among the films selected to date: a fresh historically reflective approach to the history of black people in North America, South America and Africa (*I Am Not Your Negro*, *Vazante*, *The Wound*), and â??Europa Europaâ?•, which explores how progressive forces might best defend themselves in light of a zeitgeist that makes it seem as if yesterday never went away (*PolÃtica, manual de instrucciones*, *Combat au bout de la nuit*).

Further extraordinarily sensitive and artistic works have been invited, and festivalgoers can expect a high degree of formal and thematic diversity from the complete programme â?? also as regards rare countries of origin such as Bhutan or Kyrgyzstan.



James Baldwin in *I Am Not Your Negro* by Raoul Peck

In Focus: Reclaiming Black History

Vazante
Brazil / Portugal
By Daniela Thomas
With Adriano Carvalho, Luana Nastas, Juliana Carneiro da Cunha, Sandra Corveloni, Roberto Audio
World premiere
Daniela Thomas, co-director of many joint productions with Walter Salles, presents her solo directorial debut. Brazil was the last country to officially abolish slavery in its historical form, in 1888. This filmâ??s story (co-authored by Beto Amaral) is set in 1821, one year before the South American nation gained its independence from Portugal. The wealth that is extracted from the country comes in the form of gemstones from the mines of Minas Gerais. The precious jewels are excavated from the belly of the mountain by slaves; still absent today is any significant memorial to the suffering they endured. Although this era represents the foundation upon which todayâ??s Brazil was built, its culture has yet to recover from the monstrosity of these events.

I Am Not Your Negro
France / USA / Belgium / Switzerland
By Raoul Peck
Narrated by Samuel L. Jackson
European premiere
Raoul Peck is also an esteemed guest at the Berlinale. With *I Am Not Your Negro*, he has embarked on a long overdue reflection on the life of the great African-American writer James Baldwin and his political struggle against racism, whose roots go back to slavery. The black point of view, a black historiography are not yet anchored in mainstream consciousness. History is always written by the victors, and black people were never among them, neither Africans nor African-Americans. In James Baldwin, a powerfully eloquent intellectual took to the stage and set marks that are as invigoratingly crucial to reckon with today as they were 50 years ago. With *I Am Not Your Negro* and *The Young Karl Marx* in *Berlinale Special*, Raoul Peck is represented twice in this yearâ??s festival programme.

The Wound
South Africa / Germany / Netherlands / France
By John Trengove
With Nakhane TourÃ©, Bongile Mantsai, Niza Jay Ncoyini
European premiere
The opening film for this yearâ??s *Panorama* main programme comes from South Africa. The fabrication of masculinity has long been a consistent theme in *Panorama*. Here we are permitted to witness the initiation rites of an African tribe inhabiting the territory of the South African Republic. Tradition and modernity collide when an urbanised businessman from Johannesburg resolves to expose his 17-year-old son to the circumcision ceremony of his old tribe. Producer Elias Ribeiro previously delighted festival audiences in *Panorama* 2015 with *Necktie Youth*.

Europa Europa

***PolÃtica, manual de instrucciones* (*Politics, Instructions Manual*)**
Spain
By Fernando LeÃ³n de Aranoa
European premiere
Feature film director Fernando LeÃ³n de Aranoa, a repeat guest at *Panorama*, enables us to take an in-depth look at the situation on the ground in Spain. The media noise concerning Syria, Trump and other earth-shaking events clouds the recognition of the foundation of our future: European politics. We think back to those heady days in West Germany as the Green Party was founded: Podemos was born of similar circumstances and can no longer be contained on the fringe, even as the dark forces of old regroup for an attack thanks to an unprocessed fascist past. A situation of repressed history, one which ticks away like a time bomb in many countries around the globe. This frightening zeitgeist requires the brave intervention of those who donâ??t want to be forced back behind the goal lines of recent history.

***Combat au bout de la nuit* (*Fighting Through the Night*)**
Canada
By Sylvain Lâ??EspÃ©rance
International premiere
This nearly five-hour-long documentary essay takes us directly to the heart of Europeâ??s misery: to Athens. In the Greek parliament building, innumerable articles are adopted to an audience of empty seats. The harbour landscape rolls past us, with its endless rows of administrative buildings, which will soon fall into the hands of financiers from other continents. Then we find ourselves right in the middle of an occupation of the tax office by its cleaning personnel â?? a long-term observation that plays out over the course of 286 days and provides space for empathetic encounters with marginalised individuals caught up in the crisis. The vacuum left behind by technocratic policies is filled by new fascists, who feign gestures of care for the forgotten â?? a scenario repeated in all of the nations of Europe and beyond its borders.

Casting JonBenet
USA
By Kitty Green
International premiere
Produced by James Schamus and Scott Macaulay, this film is a highly intelligent attempt to revisit the facts surrounding the unsolved violent death of six-year-old â??beauty queenâ?• JonBenet Ramsey.

What was conceived as a celebration of the American dream family became a nightmare 20 years ago for the ever so omnipotent petty bourgeoisie.

Honeygiver Among the Dogs
Bhutan
By Dechen Roder
With Jamyang Jamtsho Wangchuk, Sonam Tashi Choden
European premiere
This debut feature from director Dechen Roder, who already presented a short film at the Berlinale in 2015, is a veritable Buddhist film noir. Atmospherically dense cinema, dynamically charged between tension and serenity, faith and morality.

Centaur
Kyrgyzstan / France / Germany / Netherlands
By Aktan Arym Kubat
With Nuraly Tursunkojoev, Zarema Asanalieva, Aktan Arym Kubat
World premiere
With a voice that speaks as if from another century and with the popular appeal of a fairy tale, this film tells the saga of the metaphysical bond between horse and humankind and how the former ended up becoming wings for the latter.

Pendular
Brazil / Argentina / France
By Julia Murat
With Raquel Karro, Rodrigo Bolzan
World premiere
Young director Julia Murat is a real discovery. Here she examines the relationship between a dance artist and a sculptor using the means of their particular art forms. A philosophical, original gender treatment of young bohemians poised on the verge of middle age.

***Ri Chang Dui Hua* (*Small Talk*)**
Taiwan
By Hui-chen Huang
International premiere
A family story of a very special kind, produced by Hou Hsiao-hsien. The mother earns a living as a spirit guide for the deceased at their funerals: she was never at home, always out and about with her girlfriends instead. The daughter now goes to great lengths to attempt to understand her mother. A cosmos opens before us, one which manages to be of universal cultural significance and extremely intimate at the same time.

Untitled
Austria / Germany
By Michael Glawogger, Monika Willi
World premiere
â??This film is intended to show an image of the world that can only be created when one does not pursue any subject, or make any value judgement or follow any objective. When one lets oneâ??s self be carried along by nothing more than oneâ??s own curiosity and intuition.â?• â?? Director Michael

Glawogger passed away in 2014 during shooting for a movie. Monika Willi has realised a fascinating film with material that was shot during a journey of four months and 19 days through the Balkan states, Italy, and Northwest and Western Africa â?? a journey undertaken in order to observe, to listen and to experience, with attentive eyes, bold and raw.

(Source: Berlinale Press Office)

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