

Vienna Shorts is going on an online expedition in 2020

International Short Film Festival publishes program of the 17th edition – Online festival pass available for 9 euros – Portraits of Périot, Pavlátová and Renoldner – Opening on orf.at and FM4 – Trailer celebrates "first digital spring"

With a renewed program structure and an ample variety of programs, the international short film festival Vienna Shorts is entering its "first truly digital spring", as the production text of this year's trailer promises. The one-minute film entitled **Spring Break** was created by the Austrian artists' collective *Total Refusal* and will be shown throughout Austria from May 21 – one week before the festival opens on May 28. The 17th edition of the festival, 98 percent of which will be online, will show around 280 films in 56 programs.

Away from the big screens, the festival still celebrates the moving image up to 30 minutes in length. Among the filmmakers* in the line-up are some well-known names from the industry such as *Jonathan Glazer* (UK), *Peter Strickland* (UK), *Randa Maroufi* (FR), *Jan Soldat* (DE) or the young Austrian *Kurdwin Ayub*, who is represented with two works, and from the (film) art scene such as *John Smith* (UK), *Anouk de Clercq* (BE), *Bjørn Melhus* (DE), *Sonja Feldmeier* (CH), *Kevin Jerome Everson* (US) as well as the two Austrian figureheads *Sigi A. Fruhauf* and *Billy Roisz*.

This year's festival opening will be celebrated on May 28 at 8 pm with socially distanced short speeches as well as a one-hour film program and will be streamed simultaneously on the Festival Hub and ORF.at. Immediately afterwards, the first film programs will be activated on the streaming platform, and together with FM4 we invite you to a festive closing of the day with international music video highlights.

Access to all features is provided by the festival pass, which offers the contents of an entire festival for 9 Euros, the price of a single cinema ticket, and is available from today, Wednesday, at <https://viennashorts.filmchief.com/hub/>. All films are presented in curated programmes of 60 to 100 minutes, arranged thematically or by competition, and three-quarters of them can be seen in Austria for the first time.

TRAILER BY TOTAL REFUSAL & NEW PROGRAM STRUCTURE

In its trailer for the festival, the artists' collective *Total Refusal* (Robin Klengel, Leonhard Müllner, Michael Stumpf) takes up the situation of the pandemic-induced shift away from public and towards virtual space. In **Spring Break**, digital grasses and flowers proliferate, while blooming meadows were inaccessible in closed-off parks in the spring of 2020, according to the collective. "Digital space is not shady and inaccessible in this 'first truly digital spring', but safe and clean as an alternative to the outside world. But in the backdrop of the billowing sea of tulips, there's already a fire.

Like a golden thread, the trailer of *Total Refusal* (this year also represented in the competition with **How To Disappear**) will run through the entire festival program, which this year was restructured to ensure a better overview of the extensive offer:

As of this year, the program is divided into five rough lines:

- The **SELECTION** contains the officially selected films of the two national and two international competition categories.



- With the **EXPEDITIONS** we pursue the objective of creating a dialog among the films and programs, exploring historical facets or geographical edges, and taking a closer look at great filmmakers and artists.
- Our **EXPANSION** line accommodates the immediate event character of each festival, placing a focus on live formats that transcend the movie screen.
- **INTERACTION** is dedicated to educational programs and professional exchange.
- Our **ATTRACTIONS** celebrate the kind of festive events (opening and award galas, receptions, and parties) that provide a ceremonial and relaxed frame for our festival.

SELECTION FEATURES 96 FILMS, SELECTED FROM OVER 5,000 SUBMISSIONS

The official SELECTION comprises 96 films selected from over 5,000 submissions for the four competitions: The international competition includes 57 films from 27 countries, divided between the two sections Fiction & Documentary (FIDO) and Animation Avantgarde (AA). Women are responsible for 46 percent of these films. For the two national competitions, 39 films were selected, divided between the Austrian Competition (ÖW) and the Austrian Music Video Prize (MUVI). Women directed 49 percent of the films.

All films in the SELECTION compete for prize money of around 20,000 euros, residencies in the MuseumsQuartier and places on the longlist for the Academy Awards®, the European Film Award, the British film prize BAFTA and the Austrian Film Award. The four juries are made up of representatives of major festivals such as Locarno, Venice or Vancouver as well as artists, filmmakers and journalists. They will award the prizes on June 2 during the online award ceremony.

EXPEDITION: PORTRAITS, PANDEMIC & AUDIENCE FAVORITES

This year's EXPEDITIONS includes three portraits, programs on the themes of fairness and the pandemic as well as the audience's favorite films and genre gems of the year.

The portraits offer guided expeditions into the work of individual artists: The great works of the French filmmaker **Jean-Gabriel Périot**, who celebrates success in the field of committed found-footage cinema ("A German Youth") with a radical spirit of resistance and both political and artistic ambition, will be honoured in two programs this year.

A second portrait is dedicated to the Czech artist **Michaela Pavlátová**, who applies her spontaneous and expressive drawing style as an illustrator and animation filmmaker and whose works have already been awarded an Oscar nomination, a Cristal d'Annecy, a Golden Bear and the Grand Prize of the Hiroshima International Animation Festival.

In the field of animated (short) film, **Thomas Renoldner** is a name that no one in Austria can ignore: On the occasion of his 60th birthday, the third portrait is dedicated to this passionate advocate of experimentation, fighter against clichés and always curiously provocative spirit, as well as a long-standing member of the Vienna Shorts programming team.

In the **Focus: Fair Enough?** we deal with questions of in/equality, in/justice, un/social working conditions as well as un/sustainable modes of production and thus topics that (must) necessarily arise and be discussed especially in times of crisis. How fair is "fair enough"? Film festivals must also ask themselves these questions



- and especially in a year in which Vienna Shorts has been certified as an eco-event and has imposed compliance guidelines on itself, this discussion should also be reflected in the program.

Seven programs have been brought together on the **Topic: Co vadis, Pandemic?**, which in various ways deal with the developments of the past weeks and months: the phases of isolation, the absence of the cinema, the escape into the digital world and the longing for closeness.

Last but not least, in the subcategory **Favorites**, the audience embarks on an expedition with old and new festival highlights of the past months. And in addition to the tried and tested trash film program *Très Chic* and the horror short films *Nightmares*, the **Late Night** will also feature music for the first time: a dazzling musical programme will be launched under the title *Dancing Screen*, while international music videos entitled *Streams Are My Reality* on FM4 invite the audience to a virtual escape into tonal (dis)harmonies.

EXPANSION: LIVE PERFORMANCE ONLINE, CONCERT AT PORGY & BESS

The EXPANSION line takes into account the immediate nature of a festival and focuses on live formats (audiovisual performances, film concerts, virtual reality) that go beyond the cinema screen. Even though this year's program has been greatly reduced due to the health situation, we are pleased to present two special program items:

Robin Klengel and Leonhard Müllner – two thirds of the Total Refusal collective – won the festival's Austrian Competition in 2018 with their film **Operation Jane Walk**, a virtual city tour through an online shooter game. On the Friday of the festival they will contribute a live performance based on the film to the Online Edition, with two specially invited guests.

We are also very happy to be present in the analogue with an exclusive concert by the band **MELA**. Following the screening for the Austrian Music Video Award, Simon Bauer and Marius Grimminger, who are in this year's competition with the music video *Crystalline*, will perform live in the legendary Viennese concert location **Porgy & Bess** as well as via stream directly in the (living) rooms.

Details about the sections INTERACTION and ATTRACTION will be announced next week. "Until then, however, there will be enough time to browse through the program in detail and get a festival pass", as the festival directors Doris Bauer and Daniel Ebner suggest. "We can see that the interest is great from the impressive number of accreditations. We are therefore very much looking forward to the 17th edition of the festival!"

--

You can find press stills in the download area on our website.

www.viennashorts.com

