



23.–27.
SEPTEMBER
2026

FILMFEST AACHEN

PROGRAMMHEFT
FOCUS: IMMORTAL

MISSION STATEMENT

It has been a year, can you believe it? Last year, we stumbled into making a film festival after our first steps: a marathon – and we are to do it again!

Not only has the festival grown in length, in the number of screening rooms, films, and guests – we have prepared a whole – fully free – space with talks, workshops, a concert, installations, ... On top of that, together with Mariia Dvorak, I curated and organized an art exhibition at Bunker of Art, we are hosting an interdisciplinary art workshop with Mateo Navarro, started a new diy film competition, and present a whole retrospective on a filmmaker. But most importantly, we followed up with the film you have all been asking for: Hotspring SharkAttack II (German premiere). Filmfest Aachen has turned into a forum for everyone who wants to experience and participate in (film) culture. And I'm honestly just very proud of that.

There is one thing that has not changed: **this festival is only possible because of the voluntary work of us and all of our wonderful volunteers.** That means traveling to film festivals, hours and days of watching submissions, organizing funding, but also sleepless nights filling out Excel sheets or hearing again and again something would not be possible. That work is a testament to the love that goes into the selection and presentation of each and every work that is part of our program.



FILMFEST AACHEN

“To be immortal and then die,” director Jean-Luc Godard said; but for our festival, to be immortal means to take place. Last year, I said that the greatest act of resistance is simply that we are here: doing cultural work in a landscape that constantly seems to be expiring. Today, I say that we can all be immortal because we are still here – and here again. This festival will come to an end, but next year it will return again, a little like a flower that briefly blooms.

Let's finish with a quote from someone who can sum all that up much better than I can: Charli xcx.

“And I know deep down that it's here and now 'Cause nothing's gonna last forever.”

We are Filmfest Aachen, and we are here to stay. Have fun at the festival.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'N. Michels'.

Niklas Michels,
Festivaldirector

INFO & TICKETS

HOW TO FESTIVAL

From Wednesday evening until Sunday night we show a curated film program of around 45 screenings and close to 100 films at Apollo, spread out over the whole day, starting in the morning and ending with a Midnight Screening at night. Accompanied by Q&As with directors, a live podcast, loop installations and more! We cordially invite you to browse our program, and watch as many films as you like. We are a small team, each section is curated - that means organized and handpicked - by one of us.

Here's how you can take part:

- Tickets are available on the cinema venue's website (Apollo Kino) or just at the Apollo counter in person
- With our festival pass you can get a ticket for ALL screenings for 45€.
- If you have Cineville, our festival is free for you! Simply use your code or card to buy tickets
- Or simply buy single tickets for the films you want to see.

In between screenings, we invite you to explore the (free!) program in Apollo Kino4, that we named, our Room4U, as it is truly a space for you! With workshops, loop installations, retro gaming and much more. No registration needed, just walk in. After the last screening, join us for late drinks at Apollo Terrazza or Bunker of Art!



**DIGITAL PROGRAM
+ TICKET LINKS**

TEAM



NIKLAS MICHELS is a film critic and founder and director of Filmfest Aachen. His research focuses on aesthetic questions in contemporary cinema; in his 2025 TEDx Talk, he addressed unresolved issues surrounding AI generated art. He is also an expert in niche and underground cinema, having given lectures on topics such as Japanese underground film. In 2025, he was honored by the City of Aachen as a “Morgenmacher.” Beyond cultural management, he sees himself as a cultural activist, advocating for a more diverse cultural scene in Aachen.



KALPOK GUHA's interest in cinema focuses on political film, and he believes that film can be a powerful form of resistance. During his bachelor's studies at Presidency University Kolkata, he organized numerous film screenings and discussions, often centered around political themes. He has also supported the Imagine Film Festival in Amsterdam. Kalpok holds a master's degree from RWTH Aachen. At Filmfest Aachen 2026, he curated the focus section IMMORTAL.



MILENA BAUMGART is a cultural worker with a focus on independent film exhibition and film culture in NRW. After her degree in Media Studies, she worked as a Program Assistant for Film Festival Cologne and for an arthouse distributor. In 2024/25, she completed a traineeship at Berlinale in the section Shorts. Milena lives in Cologne and currently works for ArtAsyl e.V. alongside part-time studies in Cultural Management.



FYNN GRÜNWALD, 24, was born in Trier and has lived in Aachen for six years to study mechanical engineering. Alongside his studies, he has a passion for cinema and visited some major film festivals this year, including Duisburger Filmwoche and Berlinale. Fynn volunteered at the festival last year. In 2026, he joined the FFA team as a guest curator of the Werkschau section.

COMPETITION JURY

VIVIEN BUCHHORN



VIVIEN BUCHHORN is a curator and film historian. She has been director of the **Flensburger Kurzfilmtage** since 2025 and is also managing director of the association filmkorte e.V. Since 2021, she has been in charge of the 'Panorama' section for documentary and experimental films at the International **Women's Film Festival Dortmund+Cologne**. Her long-standing research into the forgotten filmmaker Sohrab Shahid Saless culminated in the **SHAHID SALESS ARCHIVE**, which has set itself the task of bringing his entire body of work back into the spotlight. Overseeing restoration projects – and thereby ensuring the renewed accessibility and dissemination of works of significance to film history, as well as their archiving – is another key focus of her curatorial work. She also devotes herself continuously to fictional material, acting as a dramaturgical consultant on screenplays in development.

TATO KOTETISHVILI



TATO KOTETISHVILI is a Georgian director and cinematographer, born in Tbilisi in 1987. He studied at the Polish National Film School in Lodz. Working between fiction and documentary, his films are shaped by natural light, non-professional performers, and close attention to lived environments. His debut feature film, **Holy Electricity**, premiered at the 77th Locarno Film Festival, where it received the **Golden Leopard** in the Filmmakers of the Present competition. The film later screened internationally, including at New Directors/New Films in New York. Alongside his filmmaking practice, he collaborates as a cinematographer with contemporary artists on moving-image works presented among others at the 59th Venice Biennale.

Holy Electricity won the International Competition of Filmfest Aachen 2025.

OECHEER JURY

ASENA CAKIR



ASENA CAKIR studied Communication Design with a focus on film at Aachen University of Applied Sciences from 2016 to 2022. During her studies, she produced her own short films and music videos, as well as contributing to projects by her fellow students. Asena has been working in dramaturgy since 2023 and has been working as a script editor since 2024.

Her bachelor's thesis film, **Goldregen**, is a half-hour chamber drama about a therapy session, which won the Oecher Award in 2025.

MATEO NAVARRO



MATEO NAVARRO is a Colombian photographer, writer and cultural journalist based in Germany. His practice explores the intersections of fashion, cinema and contemporary culture through photography, editorial storytelling and visual research. He covers international fashion weeks and film festivals, creating stories around the people, communities and movements shaping contemporary culture. His work has been featured in publications including Vogue Business, Metal Magazine, C41 Magazine, Fucking Young!, Highxstar and other international platforms.

COMPETITION

One of the core missions of our film festival is to present contemporary cinema from around the world and to offer audiences access to new and exciting voices in filmmaking. Staying true to this vision, our Competition section will feature ten films – a mix of documentaries and features – from nine different countries: Germany, India, France, Ecuador, Hong Kong, Greece, Czech Republic, Austria, Philippines.

This final selection comes after an incredibly competitive and inspiring submission process. With submissions open on FilmFreeway, we received around 700 entries from all over the world. Selecting just ten was one of the most difficult tasks we faced. The quality and diversity of the films we watched were truly impressive – but after much deliberation, we arrived at a line-up that we believe best reflects the bold, thoughtful, and visionary spirit of contemporary global cinema. While there is no set theme, the selection brings together films from very different worlds, perspectives, and cinematic approaches.

From queer animation in Paris to a Berlin street corner transformed over years; from filmmakers navigating cinema and reality to two brothers confronting grief and freedom; from coming-of-age in the Amazon to strangers from different generations meeting on the road – and much more – this year's Competition offers a diverse portrait of contemporary cinema. Every film in the section reflects a strong, unique voice. A jury will select one film to receive the first Filmfest Aachen Best Film Award, which comes with a prize of 1,000 euros.

COMPETITION

JIM QUEEN

France, 2026, 85 min, Marco Nguyen,
Nicolas Athané, French



We're opening with a bang again: After **LESBIAN SPACE PRINCESS** last year, we're continuing our little tradition – the second edition of Filmfest Aachen kicks off with queer animation from France. In **JIM QUEEN**, a mysterious epidemic sweeps through Paris's gay community, suddenly turning gay men straight. Among those

affected is gym queen and influencer Jim Parfait, who risks losing his status in the community along with his sexuality. When the only person who sticks by him is the twink Lucien (of all people!), the two set out in search of a cure. Their journey takes them through Paris's queer subcultures – a tour of their different scenes, codes, hierarchies and body ideals. And as Jim and Lucien begin to question their own prejudices, the way they see each other starts to shift as well ...

The film premiered as a Midnight Screening at Cannes 2026. Before **JIM QUEEN** hits German cinemas, we're showing it exclusively in Aachen ahead of its theatrical release on September 23. Afterwards, join us for a drink as we celebrate the opening of Filmfest Aachen!

WED / 23.9.

20 UHR

OmeU

KINO 1

Nunkui lives in a Shuar community. Whilst her aunt teaches her songs and the secrets of farming, the vast Amazon rainforest in which they live is being handed over to transnational mining companies, and forced evictions are beginning in the region. Her prophetic dreams and the figure of her grandfather, an elderly Shuar chief, shape her journey into adolescence and her understanding of her place in the world.

The first thing that strikes you, apart from the beautiful imagery in Nunkui's 'picture forest', is the delicately whispered soundscape. Amidst huts, trees and rivers, the everyday soundscape blends into a cinematic experience.

NUNKUI

Ecuador, 2026, 91 min, Verenice Benítez,
Spanish



THU / 24.9.

20:30 UHR

OmeU

KINO 1

COMPETITION

WHISPERS IN MAY

Hong Kong, 2025, 93 min, Dongnan Chen, Nuosu



Three days of walking through the Liangshan Mountains in search of a skirt for a rite of passage ceremony. Qihuo and her friends set out on their own,

moving through a landscape that feels vast and harsh, but strangely protective. The mountains, the elderly, traditions; there is a sense of being guarded, but not watched. Days stretch out and small detours become important. This portrait of girlhood captures a familiar point in time and hits like a déjà-vu: the freedom to roam, the resilience that goes almost unnoticed, the sense of a future already taking shape while childhood is still lingering on. Bleakness and beauty of the landscapes, boredom and play side by side. The rhythm of days spent outside, when the world is enormous and time moves differently.

FRI / 25.9.

17:30 UHR

OmeU

KINO 1

WITH Q&A; IN PRESENCE OF ALEXANDER CONRADS

Somewhere in that bittersweet space between the end of a relationship and the moment you actually manage to let go, Sophie and Jojo have been stuck for a while. Right in the middle of Ehrenfeld. Still together – well, not really, but who can afford to live alone in a city like Cologne? Certainly not a photographer and an actor (seemingly) forever trying for their big break. Why are films about trying to make it through big-city-life so rare in German cinema? And why have we missed them this much? More films like Together Apart, please: lightly and precisely written to its characters, we feel like we've known them for a while.

ZUSAMMEN IST MAN WENIGER GETRENNT

Germany, 2025, 94 min, Alexander Conrads, German



FRI / 25.9.

17:30 UHR

OmeU

KINO 1

COMPETITION

THE UNCERTAINTY PRINCIPLE

India, 2026, 121 min, Don Palathara, Malayalam



Working in film can be uncertain and exhausting; sometimes, working in art and culture blurs the boundaries between reality and film. Set in Kochi, Don Palathara's *Ekadeshm* (*The Uncertainty Principle*) follows a group of young people trying

to build lives in independent cinema while navigating uncertain careers, fragile relationships, and the compromises of everyday life. As an aspiring filmmaker begins making a film inspired by the people around him, the boundaries between lived experience and cinematic fiction gradually begin to blur.

Shot in a *cinéma vérité* style, the film stays close to its characters, capturing the everyday rhythms, frustrations, and uncertainties of their lives. *Ekadeshm* explores the duality between cinema and reality, and how the act of making a film can itself alter the lives being filmed

FRI / 25.9.

20 UHR

OmeU

KINO 1

A songwriter once famous, isolating herself in her apartment; A party held to celebrate her 40th birthday: *They Come Out Of Margo* is a tender horror flick and yearningly abstract story. Most attempts to categorise this unconventional film will fall flat.

Greek director and musician Alexandros Voulgaris brings us an intimate, yet expressively powerful study of an artist having to enter daily life. In flickering images and stop-motion jumpscars, which become a unique style, Voulgaris creates a space which houses both experience and narrative.

THEY COME OUT OF MARGO

Greece, 2025, 91 min, Alexandros Voulgaris, Greek



SAT / 26.9.

12:30 UHR

OmeU

KINO 1

GERMAN PREMIERE

COMPETITION

BETTER GO MAD IN THE WILD

Czech Republic, Slovakia, 2026, 85 min,
Miro Remo, Czech



A talking cow and two identical twins on a remote farm somewhere in the Czech woods. *Better Go Mad in the Wild* strips away the certainties of civilization – and

what remains? A small patch of the world with room for a surprising amount of freedom: childlike, absurd, immense. Franta and Ondra tend to their animals, argue, smoke and philosophize in their farmyard utopia. At times, humans and animals seem closer here than the brothers themselves. Miro Remo captures this world in beautiful, breathing shots. And somewhere amid all this eccentricity, some rather big questions emerge: what binds us to one another, how we grow old, and what, in the end, remains of a life. Existential almost in passing. Winner of the Crystal Globe at Karlovy Vary.

SAT / 26.9.

18 UHR

0meU

KIND 1

Different people, different generations, different social classes, different backgrounds. On the road between Vienna and Salzburg, *London* brings them together for a brief moment. Like a late-night radio show, the car becomes a place where strangers can open up and share stories and fragments of their lives. Their differences begin to blur through their conversations, ranging from Orson Welles to a Marxist interpretation of *Avatar* to personal stories and memories. People come, people go, and each leaves behind a small impression of themselves. The film becomes an impressionistic collage of souls and stories, in which human connection becomes possible for a moment — precisely because everyone knows it's only for a moment.

LONDON

Austria, 2026, 122 min, Sebastian Brameshuber, German



SAT / 26.9.

20 UHR

0meU

KIND 1

COMPETITION

I GREW AN INCH WHEN MY FATHER DIED

Philippines, 2026, 72 min,
P. R. Monencillo Patindol, Cebuano



After their father is murdered, two brothers are left suspended between grief, trauma and an uncertain future. The film's unique visual texture emerges through desaturated colour, abrupt shifts in compositional scale, and a striking

interplay of static and handheld camera-work. Its images seem to float between states of mind, where memory, imagination and reality quietly overlap. Refusing definitive moral statements, the film instead allows its characters and their relationships to remain unresolved. The older brother finds an unexpected sense of freedom in reconnecting with his father's killer's son, while the younger, largely mute after witnessing the murder, retreats into solitude and the mysterious presence of a giant tree. As time passes and the landscape itself changes, the film remains suspended between past and future, loss and liberation, leaving its

SUN / 27.9.

13:30 UHR

OmeU

KINO 1

A street corner in Berlin-Moabit is changing: an aging supermarket is turning into a building site, then a new building. Shelves are being stocked, walls knocked down, breaks taken and money counted. The people working here bring the place to life and then see it fade away. For five years, Paul Sonntag has been observing this change and repeatedly captures striking images of the transformation. Different versions of the same place overlap, creating a portrait of urban transformation. With a calm, humorous and sensitive eye, the film captures everyday places, showing how landmarks in the urban landscape disappear and new places emerge, whilst continually uncovering parallels and continuities.

NOTHING REMAINS NOTHING DISAPPEARS

Germany, 2026, 79 min, Paul Sonntag, German



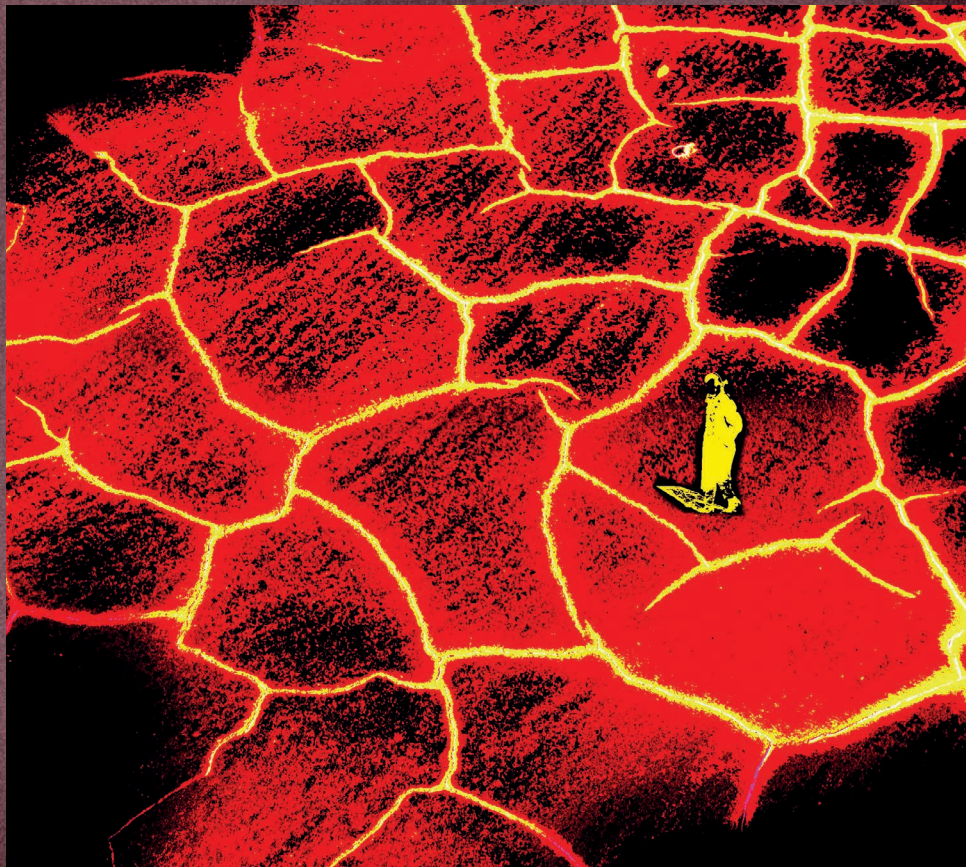
SUN / 27.9.

15:30 UHR

OmeU

KINO 1

FOCUS: (IM)MORTAL



FILMSTILL: SERMON TO THE VOID (2025)

“And because I love this life, I know I shall love death as well.”

Tagore's words refuse the easy opposition between life and death. Death is not simply the end of life, nor its opposite, but part of its movement, departure, transformation, return. To love life, then, is also to confront its mortality. We often think of immortality as the opposite of death. But what does it mean to be mortal? Is it only the death of the body? A person can die and remain alive in memory. A civilisation can disappear and survive in its myths. A homeland can be lost and continue to exist in imagination. A machine can become obsolete and still carry the memory of an entire world.

Perhaps immortality is not the refusal of death, but the refusal to disappear.

**“I have no expectation of immortality, no claims;
the meaning of this mortal life is to long for you.” — Jatismar, Kabir Suman**

The song is called Jatismar — one who remembers a previous life. Something ends, yet something continues. Love itself becomes a form of rebirth.

And cinema has always been a way of making things remain. André Bazin called cinema “objectivity in time.” Every image preserves something that has already passed. A face that no longer exists can move again. A voice that has fallen silent can speak again. A landscape can remain long after the world that contained it has changed. We live with what has disappeared: with our dead, our memories, our ancestors, our lost worlds.

The works gathered in the Focus Section Immortal at Filmfest Aachen explore what survives after death: bodies, memories, love, myths, civilizations, objects, ghosts and images. From worlds destroyed and rebuilt, to forgotten motherlands, ancestral memories, obsolete machines and bodies that outlive the people within them, these films ask what remains when everything else is gone. They do not promise eternal life. They confront mortality. They search for what refuses to disappear.

Across these works, immortality is not eternity. It is continuation. It is the trace that remains after disappearance. It is the return of what was thought to be lost.

This is not a celebration of immortality. It is a refusal to disappear.

Curated by Kalpok Guha

(IM)MORTAL

ON THE SILVER GLOBE

Poland, 1988, 165 min, Andrzej Żuławski,
Polish



On the Silver Globe is an immortal film in itself, with a long history of controversy behind it. Shooting was halted several times, and in 1977, the Polish authorities

ordered production to stop and the existing footage to be destroyed. Yet much of the footage survived, and over a decade later, Żuławski completed the film using narration and other devices. It was finally presented at the Cannes Film Festival in 1988.

A feverish, hallucinatory vision of humanity's future, the film follows astronauts who establish a new civilization on a distant planet, where history slowly transforms into myth and religion becomes a tool of power. Visceral, chaotic and uncompromising, it remains one of the most iconic science-fiction films ever made.

THU / 24.9.

19 UHR

0meU

KIND 2

Through a cyclical concept of time, Lemohang Jeremiah Mosese explores how the history of colonialism continues to shape his homeland, Lesotho. Through hauntingly beautiful cinematography and a dense, poetic voice-over, the film moves between memory, history, and visions of the future. Mosese expresses a deep love and longing for his homeland, while confronting the violence and psychological scars left by colonialism. The landscape often feels hollow, almost ghostlike, yet beneath this darkness there remains a sense of hope and possibility. The film's dreamlike imagery connects the personal with the political, showing how colonial violence can become internalized and turn inward. At the same time, Mosese looks towards ancestral knowledge and cultural memory as a way

ANCESTRAL VISIONS OF FUTURE

Lesotho, 2026, 82 min, Lemohang Jeremiah Mosese, English



of imagining a different future, one that is more connected to history, community, and ways of understanding the world that colonialism attempted to erase.

FRI / 25.9.

13 UHR

0meU

KIND 3

(IM)MORTAL

UCHRONIA

Greece, 2026, 97 min, Fil Ieropoulos, English



Last year, we showed *Avant-Drag!* (2024) by Fil Ieropoulos. His new film, *Uchronia* (2026), is a psychedelic docu-essay inspired by Arthur Rimbaud's famous work *A Season in Hell*, a text that became an important reference for later avant-gar-

de and Surrealist artists.

The film proposes that restaging uchronias requires:

Inviting ghosts for a coffee.

Putting history in a blender.

Unlearning the archive.

Uchronia reimagines the past through the ghosts of revolutionaries, activists and thinkers, bringing together figures and ideas that conventional histories have separated, erased or domesticated. Moving restlessly between times, identities and political struggles, the film turns history into something unstable, haunted and alive, refusing the comfort of a history already written, settled and safely behind us. Here, history does not remain in the past; it comes alive to confront and evaluate our present.

FRI / 25.9.

15:30 UHR

0meU

KINO 3

The credits of the film name three principal figures

God Killing Himself.

Mother Earth.

Son of Earth — Flesh on Bone

God kills himself, and from his remains

Mother Earth rises. She gives birth to

Son of Earth — Flesh on Bone. We arrive

at perhaps the most primordial form of

the cycle. God dies. The Earth is born.

Life emerges from death, and life moves

again towards destruction. Creation

and annihilation are not opposites

but part of the same process. Death

becomes the beginning of another life;

life carries within itself the certainty of

another death. The film strips existence

down to this elemental cycle, where the

boundaries between birth, death and

rebirth almost disappear.

BEGOTTEN

USA, 1989, 72 min., E. Elias Merhige, No Spoken Language



FRI / 25.9.

19:30 UHR

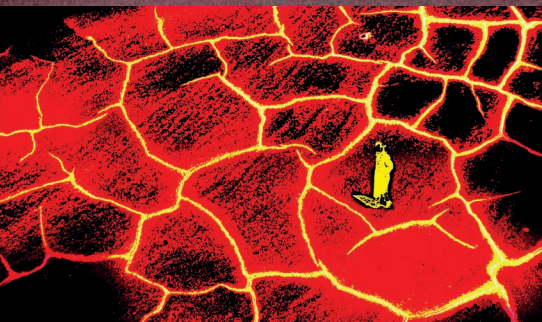
KINO 2

GERMAN PREMIERE

(IM)MORTAL

SERMON TO THE VOID

Azerbaijan, 2025, 112 min., Hilal Baydarov, Azerbaijani



The final entry in Hilal Baydarov's Sermon trilogy, inspired by the poetry of Mahammad Fuzuli, Sermon to the Void

follows Shah Ismail as he moves through a world already marked by destruction, searching for water. Death is inevitable, and yet every moment is still lived. Even while waiting for death, life creates its own rhythm, melody and poetry. The film becomes a visual immersion, with its beautiful imagery and dreamlike landscapes creating a world between life and death. It does not try to escape the fact of mortality. Instead, it confronts it. If death is inevitable, perhaps the question is not how to avoid it, but how to live fully with the knowledge that it awaits us.

SAT / 26.9.

15 UHR

0meU

KINO 3

GERMAN PREMIERE

Jenin, a Palestinian city of nearly 50,000 people, has endured repeated Israeli military assaults in recent years. In 2010, a German NGO led by filmmaker Marcus Vetter arrived with German government funding to restore the city's abandoned cinema, presenting the project as cultural solidarity. Alex Bakri worked on the film documenting the reconstruction, which became Cinema Jenin (2012), celebrating the European-led effort to "save" Palestinian culture—an expression of the white-saviour complex. But within two years of footage was another film.

Bakri encountered Hussein Darby, a projectionist with over 40 years of experience and a deep passion for cinema and its technology. Yet the man who knew the theatre best was repeatedly patronised and treated like an apprentice by the Europeans supposedly there to save it.

Habibi Hussein turns the camera back on the "helpers," exposing the colonial hierarchy:

HABIBI HUSSEIN

Palestine, 2025, 93 min, Alex Bakri, Arabic



Europeans decide; Palestinians receive. Hussein's knowledge, labour and love for cinema become acts of cultural reclamation. Cinema Jenin is gone. Hussein's story remains.

SAT / 26.9.

20 UHR

0meU

KINO 3

(IM)MORTAL

THOSE WHO DO NOT DROWN

India, 2021, 64 min., Naeem Mohaiemen,
Bengali/Bangla



In *Those Who Do Not Drown*, Naeem Mohaiemen follows a man moving through an abandoned hospital, recalling the final months of his wife's life. The film moves between memory and the present, where fragments of the past return through images, gestures and repetition. What remains is memory. Death does not completely erase a person; something continues through remembrance, through the stories, gestures and images carried by those who remain. The film turns the hospital into a space where the past continues to exist alongside the present.

SUN / 27.9.

10:30 UHR

0meU

KINO 1

Faceless, directed by Manu Luksch, approaches the question from another direction. The film is a science-fiction story constructed from real CCTV footage that Luksch obtained of herself from London's surveillance cameras. In its dystopian world, faces are erased and surveillance becomes an all-encompassing system of control. Here, the body can remain visible while the person within it becomes increasingly absent. What is left when memory and identity disappear? Is a body enough to preserve a person, or is existence something more than physical presence?

Together, the films separate the survival of the body from the survival of the self. One asks how a person persists through memory; the other asks what remains when identity itself is stripped away.

FACELESS

Austria, 2007, 50 min., Manu Luksch, English



(IM)MORTAL

THE LONELIEST MAN IN TOWN

Austria, 2026, 86 min., Tizza Covi, Rainer Frimmel, German



SUN / 27.9.

18 UHR

DV

KINO 3

Memory becomes attached to another kind of object. Al Cook remains inside a house saturated with the traces of a life lived there. Without memory, what does an object mean? Can a house, a machine, a record, or any material thing continue to carry the existence of someone who has disappeared? The objects around Al seem to preserve fragments of a life, turning the house into something more than a home, a living archive of memory. Yet when the house is threatened with demolition, these objects and memories are also placed at risk.

Perhaps memory is what gives objects their ghosts. And perhaps, when everything else disappears, it is through these objects that a life continues to speak.

Curator's Note: Immortal brings together films that refuse to see death as an ending. These works ask what survives when bodies disappear, places are destroyed, histories are forgotten, and worlds come to an end. Immortality here is not eternity, but continuation — through memory, images, objects, myths, and those who remain.

In *On the Silver Globe*, a film nearly destroyed by the state survives through fragments. *Ancestral Visions of the Future* turns towards ancestral memory, carrying the traces of a homeland shaped by colonial violence into visions of another future. In *Habibi Hussein*, a vanished cinema survives through the memory and labour of the man who knew it best. *Begotten* returns to the primordial cycle in which death becomes creation, and creation returns to death. *Those Who Do Not Drown* finds continuation through memory, while *Faceless* asks what remains when identity itself disappears. *The Loneliest Man in Town* preserves a life through the objects left behind, and *Uchronia* brings history back as a ghost, refusing to remain buried.

These are films about what remains: memories, images, places, bodies, stories, ghosts. Not an escape from death, but a refusal to disappear.

ABSEITS: EXPIRING



FILMSTILL: THE SUNSET SPECIAL

“Abseits” is supposed to not only show “off-road” cinema, but also understand spaces outside of the cinema as part of the festival. We transform the theme into different spaces, with literature readings, podcast recordings, or short films.

This year's topic is expiration. The section neither seeks to merely find topics related to that term nor an aesthetic, but rather to create a feeling: leaving the cinema in uncertainty, a narrowness in the airways that – in the end – is the result of our reality. To expire means – to me – to fall out of use, to inherit a loss of access to what was once desired. Something that is expiring is commonly only for the trash – eventually. Yes, what a mouldy term. An empty object liberated from its meaning, lurking perversion, a placeholder. Subscriptions, browser tokens, job offers, stationary phones, or old childhood toys exist as our daily reminders that context is time-framed.

While curating these films, I thought of Agnès Varda's film *The Gleaners and I* (2000), in which she wanders through the world, collecting stories of people and their relationship with everything that can be gleaned: collected – trash, things on the floor, holding on to them – and thus unexpiring them. When Immortal means to look into a potentially never ending future, to expire is a look into the past. That is what this section is: Films i picked up, collected, my homage to a past, but today.

Curated by Niklas Michels

ABSEITS: EXPIRING

LIGHTPILLAR

China, 2026, 90 min, Zao Xu,
Mandarin



**Presented alongside the reading:
'Über/Wuchern' (Mirjam Kay Mashkour,
Sanjina Kashikar)**

What looks like a snow-covered village
full of ruins is, in reality, a film set; a

collection of backdrops belonging to
an old film production company, which
have to be cleared of snow every day.
For a pittance, the caretakers prepare
them for clients that never show up. But
suddenly, the film's animation bursts
into real images – live action – and a
virtual world emerges, offering a ray of
hope where there was once only snow.

To expire means to linger in the past,
whether by force or by choice, and this
applies just as much to places. Light-
pillar's setting is a Sisyphean labour, a
daily routine dedicated to upholding an
empty promise. A mapping of escapism
and its missteps.

FRI / 25.9.

17:30 UHR

OmeU

KINO 2

**Presented alongside with short film
Schwanensee (2025), 7 min, by Stella Traub**

In search of a subject to inspire her,
director Sophie Bédard Marcotte begins
filming her neighbour Gabriel – himself an
theatre director. At first sporadically, over
days, months, then years and through a
pandemic, test footage turns into long-term
observations in which art and love become
increasingly intertwined; in which Gabriel,
whilst searching for the right ideas for his
theatrical adaptation of Sisyphus, becomes
Sisyphus himself; and in which the process
of their relationship and creative work is
captured in warm yet distinct images.

To expire means changing our relationship
with things. Film projects become romantic
relationships, plays become a cosy spot

I LOST SIGHT OF THE LANDSCAPE

Canada, 2025, 85 min, Sophie Bédard Marcotte,
French



in the living room during lockdown, and
premises are overtaken by their own
obsolescence. Some things are allowed to
run out; perhaps they even should.

FRI / 25.9.

20 UHR

OmeU

KINO 3

ABSEITS: EXPIRING

FILMFARSI

Iran, 2019, 84 min, Ehsan Khoshbakht,
several languages



Genre, trash and B-movies disappeared from Iran following the 1979 Islamic Revolution. During this time, the de facto film archive, the Kino Rex, was completely destroyed by fire following an act of arson. Director Ehsan Khoshbakht trans-

forms over 1,000 'ghost films' – which could not be released due to the new regulations introduced after 1979 – into a mosaic of past possibilities. In Filmfarsi, the tragedy of this lost media becomes a walk-in space of memories that were never made.

To expire means to disappear or to be unable to be released – irrevocably, and hardly anything represents this as much as film in its very materiality. Whether through censorship or destruction. And Khoshbakht's protest against the past lies in his obsession with finding answers in it.

SAT / 26.9.

13 UHR

0meU

KINO 2

The air is cool, thin; 9 to 5, or preferably 9 to 6, or for as long as it takes to get the job done. Human Resource tells the story of working with talent – and of its exploitation, because: the film is about human resources management at a competitive Thai company, where people are treated as expendable as ink in printers. Whilst other aspects of life, such as family, try to intrude on the daily work routine, Human Resource offers an incredibly precise analysis of the logic of evaluation in wage labour.

To expire means to burn out. And it is precisely this gut feeling that you take away from this film: an unsettling, oppressive, almost dehumanising view of these characters, who are not all that different from us.

HUMAN RESOURCE

Thailand, 2025, 121 min,
Nawapol Thamrongrattanarit, Thai



SAT / 26.9.

20 UHR

0meU

KINO 2

ABSEITS: EXPIRING

DER TOTE WINKEL DER WAHRNEHMUNG

Austria, 2025, 79 min, Michael Gülzow, German



Presented with „The B-Side Of the Landscape“ (2026) - Philipp Hartmann (Germany Premiere)

“The following film is in no way intended to promote conspiracy theories. There are

Gloomy parking spaces, a football match – a power plant in the background. Nothing feels urban; the city and the countryside are almost indistinguishable. Stagnation takes the place of a coming-of-age. Toxic depicts the Lithuanian hinterland, from which everyone is trying to escape: the fear of social decline, body dysmorphia that doesn't stop at the body but is capable of eating away at one's entire sense of self. Saulė Bliuvaite's Film is a drama about class dysmorphia and body capital.

To expire means to be trapped in one's own reality, to look through the grids of reality at fantasies, to turn around and find oneself once again facing a reality that is so bleak it becomes almost black and white. Sometimes we lose things in the past; sometimes we never had them in the first place. This is precisely what Toxic shows: in its inter-

no lizard people seeking to subjugate humanity through covert hybridisation.” Director Gülzows opens with these words. What follows is a mockumentary in a DIY aesthetic, about the pitfalls of conspiracy theories, which becomes evidence in the protagonists' conversion.

To expire means feeling a sense of nostalgia for old aesthetics. It can also mean losing one's mind, seeing ghosts round every corner and, in the worst case, without even realising it.

SUN / 27.9.

12.30 UHR

OmeU

KINO 2

TOXIC

Lithuania, 2024, 99 min, Saulė Bliuvaite, Lithuanian



weaving of 'model', 'body' and 'capital', it merges three words into one: Toxic is a poisonous film.

SUN / 27.9.

15 UHR

OmeU

KINO 2

ABSEITS: EXPIRING

ANDY WARHOL'S: FLESH FOR FRANKENSTEIN

USA, 1973, 95 min, Paul Morrissey, English, 3D



Presented with an introductory talk on analogue 3D technology + short film program of journey through the history of 3D

No fewer than two aspects of the section's theme can be found in the 1970s version of Frankenstein, presented by Andy Warhol. Firstly, the stitching together and reanimation, the undead and perhaps even the indestructible – a core aesthetic and arguably one of the first associations that spring to mind

when thinking of 'expiring' and expiry dates. However, it is even more exciting to screen this film in 3D! After all, back then it was, of course, not our digital technology, but one of many analogue processes for creating the third dimension, which have been lost over time.

We are therefore all the more delighted to present this film in collaboration with the 3D Festival in Mannheim and to provide a comprehensive introduction to the history and technology of 3D film before the screening.

SUN / 27.9.

17 UHR

OV

KINO 1

+ INTRODUCTORY TALK



ABSEITS: EXPIRING

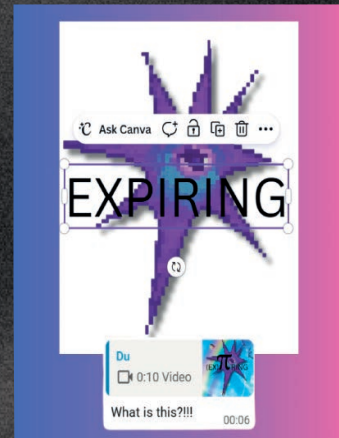
EXHIBITION: EXPIRING: THINGS THAT LOST MEANING



The B-Side of the Landscape, Philipp Hartmann,
German Premiere

To expire means to fall out of use, to inherit a loss of access to what was once desired. Something that is expiring is commonly only for the trash. Subscriptions, browser tokens, job offers, stationary phones, or old childhood toys exist as our daily reminder that context is time-framed. It is this normative uneasiness that makes this mouldy term the focus of our exhibition. We showcase the art of things with supposedly no relation to us anymore, existing as a nucleus by themselves; things that have lost their meaning. Images in your phone gallery that you can't even remember anymore, a gift card no longer valid, that one message you never replied to or a school poster rotting in the shelf. objects with no previous claim of being art – to exhibit and unexpire them.

Expiring: Things That Lost Meaning,
an exhibition of the Abseits Section of
Filmfest Aachen, The Base e.V., part of
Aachener Kunstroute, hosted in Bunker
of Art,



bad work in progress poster we
never used



Bug Blues - Nikolay Petrov

Eleven artists display what it means
to expire: a walk through nostalgia,
memory, and those fragments we
leave behind. An homage to a past,
through video, painting, sculpture,
photography, collage, installation,
and items of the past.

ABSEITS: EXPIRING

EXHIBITION: EXPIRING: THINGS THAT LOST MEANING



Scenes at the beach, Balbora

Artists featured in the exhibition:

Balbora, Hanna Dreisow, Lucas Dülligen, Souad R. Elsayed, Nicolas Gebbe, Philipp Hartmann, Iulia, Oono, Nikolay Petrov, Don Possen, Jana Vohwinken

Vernissage by Mirjam Kay Mashkour & Sanjina Kashikar

Exhibition from 23.9. to 27.9.

23-24.09. Mi-Do: 18-21 Uhr

25.09. Freitag: 18-22 Uhr

26.09. Sa: 11-22 Uhr

27.09. So: 11-20 Uhr

Vernissage Thursday 24.9. 17:00 Uhr

Finissage Sunday. 27.09. 17:00 Uhr

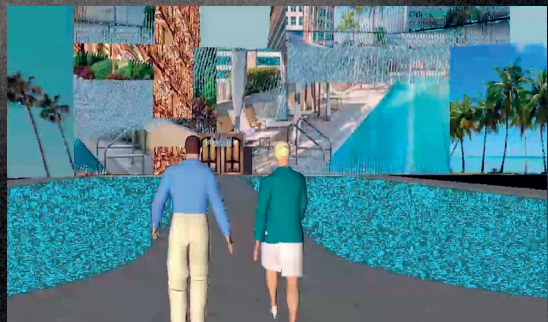
curated by Niklas Michels & Mariia Dvorak
Free entry

Separated into different rooms and themes, our exhibition realises what we mean with ABSEITS. In an old bunker and inbetween flickering vhs tvs, we curated expired landscapes, glitchy media, simulated bugs that write poetry and our personal relation with things that we gathered, that are collecting dust, both in memory and reality.

NEW LOCATION

+ FREE ENTRY

+ AACHENER KUNSTROUTE



The Sunset Special - Nicolas Gebbe

23-27.09

BOA

OV

FREE

SHORTS PROGRAM: RESTRICTED MOVEMENT

To step outside of language is impossible, as Jacques Derrida famously put it. To step outside a system, unthinkable then? Across these four films, movement takes shape within structures already in place. A family dances through the architecture of their home, women claim an hour at the **Super Afghan Gym**, photographs form a continuous **shot reverse shot** between observer and observed (who is who?), while staying at a party becomes a matter of interpretation.

Bodies and actions are choreographed, observed, restricted and put on record, until meaning seems to emerge between what happens and how it is catalogued. As if everything would make more sense once properly documented, deciphered, taken apart. Look more closely, though, and the systems themselves begin to appear strange, sometimes outright absurd. And within that absurdity, there is a surprising amount of joy. When in doubt: lift some weights, share some food, have a laugh.

RESTRICTED MOVEMENT



THE APPLE DOESN'T FALL ...

China, 2026, 19 Min, Dean Wei, Chinese

A family moves through the choreography of their everyday, shaped by the architecture of their rooms. Their hypnotic, virtuous and strangely familiar dance picks up all the unspoken words that are bouncing off the walls (literally).

SUPER AFGHAN GYM

Germany, 2026, 14 min, Shahrbanoo Sadat, Dari

For one hour at lunchtime, a gym in downtown Kabul belongs to women. Behind closed doors, they exercise, talk, joke and compare notes on bodies, family matters and everyday life. Shahrbanoo Sadat (No Good Men) captures their strength, but most of all their humor.



YOU SAY THAT YOU'RE STAYING AT THE PARTY BECAUSE YOU'RE HAVING FUN

China, 2026, 19 Min, Dean Wei, Chinese

A courtroom, recollections of sexual assault, and the lingering feeling of being caught in an institutional frame, where words weigh a ton and the smallest gestures are put on record. A gripping work that deciphers, almost clinically yet with a sensitive eye for its protagonist, the mechanics of justice and morality. And those of language.



SHOT REVERSE SHOT

Romania, 2026, 22 min, Radu Jude & Adrian Cioflâncă, Romanian, English

From 1985 to 1987, American journalist Edward Serotta travelled around Romania, photographing the harsh realities and Jewish life in the communist country. The Securitate secret police followed him – and took photographs of him taking photographs. Forty years later, the film brings the two sets of images together, revealing the absurd and sometimes comic mechanics of surveillance.



SAT / 26.9.

15:30 UHR

OmeU

KINO 2

OECHEER COMPETITION

One of the main goals of Filmfest Aachen is to strengthen the city's cinema culture and to help shape its evolving film landscape. Local filmmakers and film students play a vital role in this mission. With film studies offered at FH Aachen, it is impossible to imagine developing Aachen's cinematic culture without their contribution. Out of this idea emerged the Oecher Competition - a competition dedicated to showcasing recent films connected to Aachen on the big screen, making the city's cinematic voices more visible. This year, the Oecher Competition brings together four blocks, featuring two short film programmes and two feature films.

Each film approaches Aachen and its surroundings from a different perspective: from self-reflection and questions of identity, to the political history of the city, the search for what home can mean, and the tensions that emerge between people in intimate encounters. Together, these films explore the many ways in which cinema can look at the city, its people, and the relationships that shape our lives.

OECHEER COMPETITION

BLOCK I: I LOOK INTO THE MIRROR



I AM CHOSEN

Germany, 2026, 5 min, Vinsley, English

BLUEPRINT

Germany, 2025, 16 min, Lina Westphal, Ronja Böhme, English

TUMPENGAN

Germany, 2025, 13 min, Azmi Hoffmann, Indonesian/English/German

The first Block of the Oecher Competition, combines a gaze back at themselves. Collected here are films that not only question the viewers assumptions, but formulate a process of self-observation in the protagonists themselves. If a hellish drug-trip through the inferno, postmaternal crisis in daily life, a costume of hair, queer identity as a performance.

ANDRO

Georgia, 2025, 27 min, Dominik Gasser, Georgian

HAIR(MONY)

Germany, 2026, 2 min, Tim Große, Yeling Xi, No Dialogue

THU / 24.9.

15:30 UHR

OmeU

KINO 1

Visual Screams explores the provocative life and legacy of Klaus Paier (1945–2009), a visionary pioneer of German street art.

While studying physics at RWTH Aachen, Paier discovered building walls as the ultimate medium for his political activism. He used his „Visual Screams“ to challenge the status quo on issues ranging from fascism and nuclear power to homophobia and social injustice. By doing so, he radically reclaimed public space as a vital arena for political participation.

The film moves beyond Aachen to his later years in Cologne.

BLOCK II: OPTISCHE SCHREIE

Germany, 2025, Lovorka Peric-Hassler, German



SAT / 26.9.

11 UHR

OmeU

KINO 2

OECHER COMPETITION

BLOCK III: (RE)THINKING HOME

The third block of the Aachen Competition, portrays not home, but our relationship with it. These are films that show us, that home is more than a place, but a network of things, the always same alarm clock in the morning, homesickness when crossing borders, the sorrow one even carries with them into a bar. What combines these three short films is a sensibility, a radical search, and openness to rethink what home can be for us.

SUNSET IN PARIS, AUGUST 25, 8:48 PM

Germany, 2026, 5 min, Vinsley, English



FATHERS

Germany, 2026, 16 min, Michael J. Hilli, English

RADU

Germany, 2026, 35 min, Felix Wildner, German

SUN / 26.9.

15 UHR

OmeU

KINO 1

BLOCK IV: DIRTY TALKS

Germany, 2026, 75 min, Markus Scherm, German

In black and white, and initially obscured by the subject matter, the opening moments of Dirty Talks present us with a staged scenario – an intense encounter between a family and a bound man known only as 'Hase'.

Whilst each step sheds more light on the darkness, not everything is as it seems in this debut chamber drama produced in Aachen.



SUN / 27.9.

15:30 UHR

OmeU

KINO 1

DIY SHORTS COMPETITION

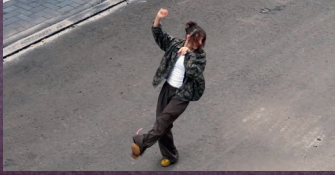
DIY shorts are not only a new thing, a new competition that we are doing – it is a gap we are trying to close. That being the medium of films and, by proxy, film festivals can seem like unclimbable mountains. To make a film is hard; to be then also presented at a festival? Even harder. DIY stands for „do it yourself,“ and we of course know that many of our selected films are not DIY per se but the hard work of many individuals. Anyway, to go out, grab a camera, and just try out something that might turn into cinema is precisely what we wanted to encourage. As diverse as this premise sounds is our selection; we see bodies spiraling, dropping, flying, or even reflected back to us in digital space. We are more than proud to present this selection, that – to a big part – was created for our call and festival. Thank everyone that contributed it to it!

That said, the premiere at FFA26 is not the end: The selected films will be presented in a loop installation in Room4U and reappear in the young talent program of our partner schrit_tmacher, as well as in the cinema hub CineSud in Heerlen. Two minutes that cross borders, bring people together, and not only move our bodies!

DIY SHORTS

DAILY MOVEMENT

Germany, 2026, <2 min, Valentina Hiseni



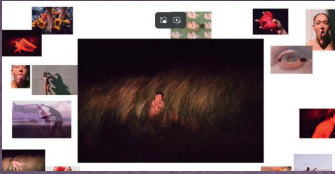
FLY ALONG

Germany, 2026, <2 min, Grigorij Rozko



WE CHOOSE TO BLOOM

Netherlands, 2026, <2 min, Bo Jacobs & Meis Belle Wahr



FLOW

Germany, 2026, <2 min, Jithu Zaajev



METANOIA

Germany, 2026, <2 min, Marta Plucinska, Sophie Unland



SNOVA

Germany, 2026, <2 min, Henrik Bobb



SWIM SISTERS

Netherlands, 2025, <2 min, Lien Pisters



WAS WÄRE ÜBRIG?

Germany, 2026, <2 min, Vivienne Kraus



DROP

Germany, 2026, <2 min, Jakob Wehner



SPIRALING OUT

Germany, 2026, <2 min, Maximilian Heinze



WERKSCHAU: WEGGEFÄHRTEN

The figures in Michael Chauvistré's films appear like companions along the way as one watches. And the impression is not misleading: The filmmaker is still in contact with some of his protagonists to this day.

What connects his work is a sensitivity to the curious stories of everyday life. From the first election after the end of the GDR in a village in Mecklenburg to a student Santa Claus agency in Berlin and the flamboyant owner of a legendary Munich restaurant: We are always close to the people and families who are at the centre of his films.

With short and feature-length films from all phases of his work – from his beginnings in the 1980s to the present day – as well as films by Jürgen Böttcher and Christoph Schuch, we explore the work of the Aachen filmmaker, his inspirations and the themes that repeatedly occupy him.

WERKSCHAU

SCHAU MICH NICHT SO BÖSE AN

Germany, 1997, 66 min, Michael Chauvistré,
German



Have you ever booked a Father Christmas? Back in 1997, this was one of the services offered by the student employment agency TUSMA in Berlin. Schau mich nicht so böse an follows the stu-

dents on their rounds through Berlin on Christmas Eve. Time and again, we become part – if only for a few moments – of the festive family rituals, the recited poems and the reminders to be tidier and more respectful.

The whole thing takes on a certain humour when you watch Father Christmases and angels smoking or cycling their way from one present-giving to the next. Unfortunately, the Father Christmas agency ceased trading in 2005.

THU / 24.9.

18 UHR

OV

KINO 1

A railway embankment, fields to the left and right, a wood in the background. Then, on the right-hand side, a small brick house flashes past. These are the final images of **Unter einem Dach**. This unassuming place vanishes as quickly as it appeared. But Gabriele Kotte pauses and looks beyond the façade. She portrays a family living on the edge of the railway line, on the edge of poverty, and repeatedly on the edge of their ability to cope with what has happened: the father has raped his daughter. The film approaches the mother and daughter with sensitivity and tenderness, telling the story of how this family—bound together in a strange way—stays united. The result is a film that is at once raw and, despite everything, tender, photographed and edited by Michael Chauvistré.

UNTER EINEM DACH

Germany, 1995, 53 min, Gabriele Kotte,
German



FRI / 25.9.

14:30 UHR

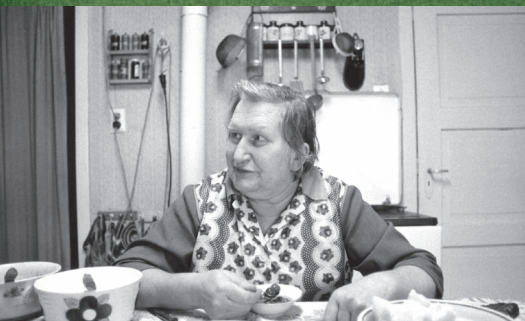
OV

KINO 2

WERKSCHAU

MAL SEHEN WAS DRAUS WIRD

Germany, 1999, 67 min, Michael Chauvistré,
German



Presented alongside with Stars (1963), 18 min, by Jürgen Böttcher

With the Werkschau: Weggefahren, our aim was not only to screen the filmmaker's own films, but also to explore his sources of inspiration and influences. Mi-

chael Chauvistré found his way into documentary filmmaking partly through the films of Jürgen Böttcher. Inspired by the work of one of the GDR's most significant documentary filmmakers, he went on to make, amongst others, *Mal sehen, was draus wird* (1990), in which Chauvistré follows the Sack couple in the Mecklenburg region during the period surrounding the first free elections in the GDR and observes their everyday lives.

We are therefore screening this film alongside Jürgen Böttcher's *Stars* (1963), in which we gain an insight into the work and camaraderie of a women's brigade in the quality control department for incandescent filaments at the Berlin light bulb factory.

SAT / 26.9.

12:30 UHR

OV

KINO 3

Presented alongside with short film Amore (1990), 6 min, by Michael Chauvistré

Rinaldo Talamonti makes the world his stage. Whether as the owner of the cult restaurant Buon Gusto in Munich, as the master of his home in Italy, or as an actor in 1970s sex films.

In *Der Traum des Vaters*, Michael Chauvistré and Miriam Pucitta paint a gripping portrait of an Italian family spanning three generations, caught between Germany and Italy. This intimate portrait powerfully conveys how the sons of the family are influenced by their fathers' wishes and visions, and how they rebel against these conventions.

We are screening *Der Traum des Vaters* alongside the 1990 short feature

DER TRAUM DES VATERS

Germany, 2006, 56 min, Michael Chauvistré,
German



film *Amore*, which tells the story of a ménage à trois with a rather unhappy ending.

SAT / 26.9.

15 UHR

OV

KINO 2

WERKSCHAU

BARBARA UND FENJA + EINE ZUFÄLLIGE BEGEGNUNG (1989)

1993 and 1989, 36 Min. and 25 Min, Michael Chau-
vistré, German



SUN / 27.9.

10:30 UHR

OV

KIND 3

Who's the best person to copy your notes from? Do you want to have children one day? Can you imagine a life with a man? **Barbara and Fenja**, two students in Rostock, spend their days together and complement each other as friends. Time and again, the conversation turns to love, men and the future, but everything remains vague for now.

In **Eine zufällige Begegnung**, however, nothing is to remain vague. Bianca no longer wants to be alone; she is dreading her thirtieth birthday. So she stages a chance encounter to meet the man she believes is 'the one'.

Klein Hundorf is a rural commune, a village community, a place for fellowship and togetherness – or something in between; the residents aren't entirely sure themselves. In any case, it is a place of ideas, experiments and stories. In a collage of observations, interviews and looks back, using his own thirty-year-old 16mm footage, Michael Chauvistré gathers impressions of the Klein Hundorf project.

The film explores attraction and separation, concepts of free love and the constraints of competitive thinking, the freedom of the commune and the encroachment of bourgeois values. We are screening **Glück allein macht auch nicht wahnsinnig Weise**, alongside **Stichpunkt Herz** (1993) by Christoph Schuch, in which Michael Chauvistré plays a pop singer who lives out his own concept of free love.

GLÜCK ALLEIN MACHT AUCH NICHT WAHNSIN- NIG WEISE

Germany, 2026, 68 min, Michael Chauvistré,
German



Presented alongside with short film
Stichpunkt Herz (1993), 10 min, by
Christoph Schuch

SUN / 27.9.

15:30 UHR

OV

KIND 3

MIDNIGHT

A Filmfestival can be exhausting... 1.. 2.. 3.. 4.. or even 5 films a day. Let's lean back and enjoy some gruesome or just plain silly cinema around midnight! Each festival night, a Midnight Screening closes the day. Cinema can be fun – even more so in the dark. Emerging from the American underground and exploitation scene of the 1960s–70s, the "midnight screening" became a countercultural movement. Art house cinemas started showing films too controversial, too weird, too violent for the mainstream or your typical daytime slot. A whole subculture was born – and it still lingers, even if it feels kinda faded in Germany. Let's go down the rabbit hole! B-movies, cult, classics, horror, phantasms... Take the leap – come if you dare!

MIDNIGHT

GHOST IN THE CELL

Indonesia, 2026, 106 min, Joko Anwar, Indonesian



What if prison, but curse? Joko Anwar's horror films have emerged from the genre's murky depths to become absolute hidden gems. Whilst his 'Satan's Slave' series draws on virtually every

cliché, it cranks the intensity up a notch: with an unusual level of brutality and an almost encyclopaedic understanding of the subject matter, his Indonesian horror films have quite rightly become audience favourites.

In **Ghost in the Cell**, he blends grotesque kill-cam choreography, dark humour and suspense for the first time to create a film that changes its tone in almost every scene. Every kill outdoes the last. Yes, this film is great fun – and in the end, there's even a moral to it.

THU / 24.9.

22:30 UHR

0meU

KINO 3

A recently institutionalized woman has bizarre experiences after moving into a supposedly haunted country farmhouse and fears she may be losing her sanity once again. But what's hunting her, might actually be a vampire? Yes, a festival can not have a focus on immortality, without atleast featuring one vampire... but is it one?

This 1970s flick, is greatly underappreciated, dreamlike, uncanny, and weirdly yearning Horror.

LET'S SCARE JESSICA TO DEATH

USA, 1971, 89 min, John D. Hancock, English



FRI / 25.9.

22 UHR

OV

KINO 2

MIDNIGHT

KINKI

Japan, 2025, 103 min, Koji Shiraishi, Japanese



What if horror but found footage? Both found-footage horror and the more recent 'analogue horror' subgenre can sometimes produce the most terrifying films. Whilst *The Blair Witch Project* – and to some extent *Paranormal Activity* – so-

wed the seeds of doubt – 'Are we really watching found footage here?' or, to put it simply: 'Is this real?' – yet more recent films such as *[REC]* (2007, Jaume Balagueró & Paco Plaza) do away with this pretence and make full use of the 'shaky camera' genre.

This is also true of the film *KINKI*, based on a graphic novel. A film that, after a long time, brings such terror back to cinemas ... In doing so, it makes use of the serial nature of digital spaces and the clip-like structure of video cassettes, effectively telling a long series of short horror films, within which lies a worthy homage to the J-horror classics.

FRI / 25.9.

22:30 UHR

OmU

KINO 3

HOTSPRING SHARKATTACK II

Japan, 2026, 88 min, Morito Inoue, Japanese

What if hotspring, but shark? Yes, it is true.

After *HOTSPRING SHARKATTACK* at Filmfest Aachen 2025, are you ready for the GERMANY Premiere of *HOTSPRING SHARKATTACK II*?

No further words needed.



SAT / 26.9.

22:30 UHR

OmU

KINO 3

SPECIAL SCREENINGS

This year, our Special Screenings bring together three German films that we saw at film festivals, fell in love with, and really wanted to bring to an Aachen audience. The films have had their cinema releases, but have not yet been shown in Aachen. And we are convinced they belong on the big screen once again!

These are young, independent films by emerging filmmakers Ali Tamim (Noah), Jelena Ilic (Eine Krankheit wie ein Gedicht) and Lotta Schwerk (Ninja Motherf*cking Destruction), carried by amazing performances and characters that stay with us. The films moved us in very different ways: through the anger at police brutality and the realities of racism, the complicated and ambivalent love for a father, and a friendship unfolding over the years, through change, growing up and a queer coming-out.

We are especially happy to have guests joining us for all three screenings! Actress Merle von Mach, the anti-racism office of GSP (RWTH), and director Jelena Ilic will join us for talks afterwards. An invitation to stay with the films a little longer, share thoughts and questions, and see where the conversation takes us.

SPECIALS

EINE KRANKHEIT WIE EIN GEDICHT

Germany, 2026, 81 min, Jelena Ilić, German



**In the presence of director Jelena Ilić,
followed by Q&A**

"Drug-induced, chronic schizoaffective psychosis of the manic type, polytox type, not morphine type" - that is my father's diagnosis.

In other words, he goes through the same cycle over and over again. Psychoses tear him away from reality; hospital stays bring him back, followed by depressive shame. During these psychoses, he is unpredictable and openly acts out his violence, even against the people around him. To me, however, he is not just a

perpetrator whose actions I deeply condemn, but also a person I love and an artist I admire. He has captured the world of his psychoses in photographs, paintings, and sculptures. Our relationship also finds expression in art: in a collaborative comic book whose pages we take turns filling with drawings. He is fighting against himself, against his illness, and against a system. And I am by his side.

Winner of the Audience Award at the **Max Ophüls Award & the International Women's Film Festival Dortmund|Cologne**

A deeply personal and moving work, in which Ilić finds her own cinematic language for a relationship that defies easy answers. It's openness, clarity and remarkable thoughtfulness stayed with us after the film ended.

THU / 24.9.

18 UHR

0meU

KINO 3

+ TALK WITH DIRECTOR JELENA ILIĆ

Jelena Ilić is a director, writer and photographer from Cologne. She works in both documentary-essay and fictional genres. Her work lies at the intersection of personal experience, social observation and poetic condensation. Jelena Ilić studied at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne until 2021.



SPECIALS

NOAH

Germany, 2025, 80min, Ali Tamim, German



Noah dies after an encounter with the police. His death echoes through a Berlin night: in his mother, who tries to reach him at the hospital and is turned away again and again; in his friends, who carry

their grief and anger through the city; and in the police officers, whose night increasingly spins out of control. **Noah** is about structural racism and police violence, but Ali Tamim refuses the forms we might expect such a story to take. Perspectives shift, images tilt, reality becomes heightened, anger suddenly turns absurd. It is emotional and political, but also wild, playful and full of ideas. A film that keeps taking its own form apart and putting it back together: **destroy and rebuild.**

Screening organised in partnership with Amnesty International Aachen.

FRI / 25.9.

17 UHR

0meU

KINO 2

Shot independently over eight years, **Ninja Motherf*cking Destruction** is the portrait of a friendship and all the ways it changes over time. At 18, Leonie and Marlene are inseparable. Then come relationships, different ideas of how to live, university, the city, work – their closeness shifts, and eventually they lose sight of each other. Leonie falls in love with Naomi, becomes increasingly isolated and, after the relationship ends, leaves Berlin to work in agriculture. Years later, she realizes someone is missing from her life. A queer coming-of-age about friendship, love and the paths that come between them, enigmatic, immediate and carried by remarkable performances.

SUN / 27.9.

17 UHR

0meU

KINO 2

NINJA MOTHERF*CKING DESTRUCTION

Germany, 2025, 79 min, Lotta Schwerk, German



+ TALK WITH ACTRESS
MERLE VON MACH

ROOM4U PROGRAM

ROOM4U is Filmfest Aachen's space for music, conversations, experiments, games and encounters — a place to take a break from the cinema and stay a little longer. All ROOM4U events are free entry and donation-based.



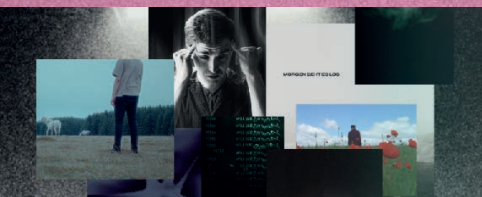
VINYL & COFFEE

Each festival day, before our films start, come join us at Apollo Kino for some coffee and some vinyls; is there a better start into the day?

PRE PROGRAM ONLY

PLAYBACK: RETRO GAMING

Together with AixEsports // Need a break from watching movies? Bring a buddy, come sit down with us and compete for the crown in the retro classic Mario Kart Double Dash.



PEAT IN CONCERT

Peat, a child of the internet, shaped by online rap and lost in eerie corners of the digital world

THU / 24.9. 20 UHR

CUTS LIVE PODCAST (FILMFARSI)

discussing the film and exploring what aspects of expiration, lost media, films that return and those that dont

SAT / 26.9. 14:30 UHR



ROOM4U



FIXING THE RARE: BREEDER A

Germany, 2026, 14 Min, Jiha Jeon, 1-channel video installation

+ Opening / Artist talk with Jiha Jeon

A hybrid film following the struggles of a fictional breeder devoted to the pursuit of the ultimate goldfish.

THU / 24.9. 16 UHR

FRI / 25.9. 19 UHR

FREE PLAY // FREIES SPIEL

A selection of short, idiosyncratic, experimental and gripping works that caught our attention during this year's selection. Free entry.

FRI / 25.9. 17 UHR



DIY SHORTS (LOOP)

After their premiere (Saturday, 17.30) the diy shorts are shown as a loop installation. Free entry.

SAT / 26.9. 18:30 UHR

SUN / 27.9. 17:30 UHR

WORKSHOP: HOW TO WRITE A STORY? (+ SCREENING OF GOLDFEGEN)

Hosted by Asena Cakir, winner of Oecher Competition 2025. Plus rescreening of her winning short film "Goldregen."

FRI / 25.9. 18 UHR



WORKSHOP TATO KOTETISHVILI (+ SCREENING OF HOLY ELECTRICITY)

Hosted by Tato Koteteshvili, director and winner of International Competition 2025. Plus screening of his winning film Holy Electricity.

SAT / 26.9. 16 UHR



TIMETABLE

All ROOM4U events are free entry and donation-based.

OECHE

WERKSCHAU

	WED, 23.09.				THU, 24.09				FRI, 25.09.	
	Kino 1	Kino 2	Kino 3	Room4U	Kino 1	Kino 2	Kino 3	Room4U	Kino 1	Kino 2
10:30										
11:00										
11:30										
12:00										
12:30										
13:00										
13:30										
14:00										
14:30								14:00 Vinyl & Coffee		
15:00									15:00 Whispers in May	14:30 Unter Einem Dach
15:30					15:30 Oecher 1: Shorts					
16:00										
16:30										
17:00										
17:30								16:00 Fixing the Rare: Breeder A (Loop)	17:30 Zusammen ist man weniger getrennt (+ Director talk)	17:00 Noah (+ Film Talk)
18:00					18:00 Schau Mich Nicht So Böse An		18:00 Eine Krankheit wie ein Gedicht (+ Director talk)			
18:30										
19:00						19:00 On the Silver Globe				
19:30										
20:00	20:00 OPENING JIM QUEEN									19:30 Begotten
20:30								20:00 Peat in Concert	20:00 The Uncertainty Principle	
21:00					20:30 Nunkui					
21:30										
22:00										
22:30							22:30 Ghost in the Cell			22:00 Let's Scare Jessica to Death
23:00										
23:30										

COMPETITION

SPECIAL
SCREENINGSABSEITS:
EXPIRING

SHORTS

FOCUS:
(IM)MORTAL

ROOM4U

MIDNIGHT
SCREENINGS

DIY SHORTS

		SAT, 26.09.				SUN, 27.09.				
Saal 3	Room4U	Kino 1	Kino 2	Saal 3	Room4U	Kino 1	Kino 2	Saal 3	Room4U	
						10:30 Those Who Do Not Drown (+Faceless)		10:30 Eine Zufällige Begegnung (+Short)	10:30 Vinyl & Coffee	10:30
			11:00 Oecher II Optische Schreie							11:00
	11:00 Vinyl & Coffee				11:00 Vinyl & Coffee					11:30
				12:30 Mal Sehen Was Draus Wird						12:00
		12:30 They Come out of Margo					12:30 Im Toten Winkel der Wahrnehmung (+ Short)			12:30
13:00 Ancestral Visions of Future			13:00 Filmfarsi			13:30 I grew an inch when my father died		13:00 Oecher IV Dirty Talks	12:30 Playback: Retro-Games	13:00
										13:30
	14:00 Workshop: How To Write A Story w/ Asnea Cakir				14:30 Cuts Live Podcast (Filmfarsi)					14:00
										14:30
15:30 Uchronia		15:00 Oecher III: Shorts	15:30 Shorts: Restricted Movement	15:00 Sermon to the Void		15:30 Nothing Remains, Nothing Disappears	15:00 Toxic			15:00
								15:30 Glück allein + Stichpunkt Herz	15:30 Open Mic	15:30
					16:00 Workshop: Holy Electricity w/ Tato Kotetishvili					16:00
	17:00 Shorts Loop Free Play		17:30 Der Traum des Vaters + Amore	17:30 DIY Shorts		17:00 3D Film: Flesh For Frankenstein	17:00 Ninja Mother- f*cking Destruction (+Talk)			16:30
17:30 Light Pillar + Reading		18:00 Better go Mad in the Wild						18:00 Loniest Man in Town	17:30 DIY Shorts (Loop)	17:00
										17:30
	19:00 Fixing the Rare: Breeder A (Loop)									18:00
20:00 Lost Sight of The Landscape (+ Short)		20:00 London	20:00 Human Resource	20:30 Habibi Hussein	19:30 DIY Shorts (Loop)					18:30
										19:00
										19:30
										20:00
								20:00 CLOSING		20:30
										21:00
										21:30
										22:00
22:30 Kinki				22:30 HotSpring Shark Attack II					22:30 KARAOKE!	22:30
										23:00
										23:30

FILMFEST AACHEN

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Co-Curator

Kalpok Guha

Vice Director

Milena Baumgart

Guest Curation Werkschau Section

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FOERDERER &PARTNER

Mit Unterstützung der

stadt aachen



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