

28
Oct



LEIDEN
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL

7
Nov

Annual
Report
2021

Not Going.

7.8 billion people won't visit the
Leiden International Film Festival.

Are you?

www.liff.nl

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Leiden International Film Festival

After last year's online screenings and events the Leiden International Film Festival was excited to welcome her visitors and guests to the screenings in the theatres this year. The 16th edition of LIFF brought back our tried and tested competitions. There was a great selection of original and authentic films in our American Independent Competition. You could discover new international talents in our First Feature Competition and have a mind-blowingly weird experience with the innovative and strange films in our BONKERS! Competition. As always, we are thankful that these wonderful storytellers are able to share their unique and different perspective with us and our audience.

In addition to our competitions, we had everything you could possibly want during a film festival, and more. A broad range of panorama screenings, international shorts, a screening in a museum and cinematic beer & wine tastings. We had the Nicolas Cage marathon with all the films he made this year and we also introduced a select number of special screenings, called Limited Edition, where all kinds of artists created unique experiences that were tailor made for each of these films. There is one addition that I also want to highlight. As you know, LIFF always wants to celebrate today's best storytellers. Increasingly, we don't just see these storytellers on the big screen, but hear them on podcasts as well. So, this year, we were proud to add podcasts to our program.

Not only our screenings were hot topic this year. A changing of the guards was also central this edition. After 16 years, Alexander Mouret, the first festival director and one of the founders of LIFF, gave his last LIFF speech during the opening night. He leaves LIFF the way he loves it: a festival that is able to create a unique combination of quality and fun and is never afraid of trying new things. Not only do these qualities make LIFF special, Alexander was instrumental in implementing these qualities and shaping the unique way in which we program our festival.

In honor of his legacy we introduced a new award with the highly ambitious and practically impossible aim to embody the perfect LIFF film. This is an award that celebrates excellence and filmmakers who dare to take risks. The future winners also must be driven by genuine interest and not be hindered by pretenses or lack of knowledge. This award is called the Alexander Mouret Award. The winner of the very first Alexander Mouret Award was *Ich Bin Dein Mensch* by Maria Schröder.

Last but not least the theme of our campaign was 'Not Going'. We did the math and out of the 7.8 billion people on the planet, most of them won't go to the Leiden International Film Festival. But every year, around forty thousand people do. Statistically speaking that could mean that most of our audience is more likely to be struck by lightning twice than to go to LIFF. So against all odds, the audience did go to the festival, and we could not have been happier about it.

Ratna Lachmansingh

Program LIFF

Facts & Figures

3 out of 6 feature film awards are won by women
7 out of 12 Competition films are directed by women



31000
visits in 2021



21%
first-time visitors



5000
education visits



Ich bin dein mensch
Maria Schröder



LEIDEN INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL 2021
Alexander Mouret Award



LIFF Award Winners Competitions

LIFF Audience
Winner

▼
Maixabel

American Indie
Competition

▼
Mass

First Feature
Competition

▼
**Death of a
Virgin, and the
Sin of Not Living**

Bonkers!
Competition

▼
**Beyond the
Infinite Two
Minutes**

Alexander
Mouret Award

▼
**Ich Bin
Dein Mensch**

Youth Jury
Award

▼
Ninjababy

Alexander Mouret Award

This year we introduced a brand new award at the festival, the Alexander Mouret Award. Founded as a tribute to parting director and founder of the festival Alexander Mouret, the award has the highly ambitious and practically impossible aim to embody the perfect 'Alexander Mouret' film. It is an award that celebrates excellence and filmmakers who dare to take risks. The future winner must be driven by genuine interest and not be hindered by pretenses or lack of knowledge.

Each year the programming team of the festival will award one of the films this prestigious honor, already on par with other iconic awards such as the Oscars or Razzies.

LIFF competitions

A diverse selection

Our three competitions are a perfect representation of what LIFF stands for as a festival. The American Indie Competition shows how LIFF provides a platform for independent makers that are often unfairly overlooked by both festivals and distributors. The quality and success of our First Feature Competition proves that LIFF increasingly showcases upcoming talent. Our BONKERS! competition, finally, shows that there will always be a place at LIFF for the weird, the playful, the edgy and the slightly risky.

American Indie Competition

AMERICAN TALENT ON THE DUTCH SCREEN

While the days where LIFF only had one competition are long gone now, the relevance of the American Indie Competition is unchallenged. The independent American film industry remains the perfect breeding ground for talent and creativity, but too many of its films tend to fall through the cracks because distributors don't want to buy them. Plus, the general public mostly becomes familiar with directors only once they've been adopted by Hollywood.

At the time of writing there are still only two out of the nine films from the American Indie Competition with a planned release, so for now, the rest of them will only have had a Dutch screening at LIFF in the Netherlands. 'For now', because just like every year, LIFF remains of interest for distributors in 2021, and every year some of them end up buying films once LIFF is over. This year's American Indie Competition winner, *Mass*, seems to be one of the lucky ones currently being sought after by distributors. This proves the American Indie Competition's unwavering relevancy and importance, not just for audiences and filmmakers, but the Dutch film industry at large.



I Carry You With Me

Heidi Ewing



Jockey

Clint Bentley



Mass

Fran Kranz

First Feature Competition

PROMISING INTERNATIONAL NEWCOMERS

After its successful introduction in 2019, the First Feature Competition has quickly turned into a festival staple. Unsurprising, considering how providing a platform for upcoming talent has always been one of the core values of LIFF. With an exceptionally strong selection of no less than 13 films, this year's First Feature Competition featured only 3 films that are currently seeing a theatrical release, and 12 out of 13 films had their Dutch theatre premiere at our festival.

The program was even more varied than last year's program, featuring films from New Zealand to Malta, and ranging from French animation to Lebanese coming-of-age and from drama to existential absurdism. By now our audience has really become familiar with this competition, and continues to be impressed by it. No less than 11 out of 13 films scored 3.7 out of 5 or higher in their audience rating.

The First Feature Competition also proved the perfect vehicle for asking participating directors to attend our festival. The creators of *Death of a Virgin*, *Apples*, and *The Penultimate* were more than eager to visit Leiden. With the exception of the director of *Apples*, who tested positive for Covid, our festival was greatly appreciated by all of them, and their visits could all take place safely. By providing a platform to bring their debut to the screen, we've formed a bond with these filmmakers that we hope will greatly benefit both them and us, and we really hope to see them again in the future.



Aloners

Hong Sung-eun



La Traversée

Florence Miailhe



Death of a Virgin or the Sin of Not Living

George Peter Barbari



Gagarine

Fanny Liatard, Jérémy Trouilh



Beyond the Infinite Two Minutes
Junta Yamaguchi



Werewolves Within
Josh Ruben

Bonkers!

MIND-BLOWING, HILARIOUS, BIZARRE OR SHOCKING... THAT'S BONKERS!

LIFF has always stood out because of its playful character, where there has always been, and continues to be, room not just for quality films from all over the world, but for ideas that are more idiosyncratic, strange or one-of-a-kind as well. Screening E.T. with famous Dutch astronaut Andre Kuipers as a guest speaker, watching jungle movies in the tropical greenhouse of the Hortus Botanicus, setting up a pop-up film museum with exhibitions dedicated to Steven Seagal and Nicolas Cage: LIFF has always proved that all kinds of film deserve our attention, but that sometimes film festivals take themselves too seriously to really see the value of these films and ideas.

The BONKERS! program has more than hit the mark right from the start. There has never been a shortage of 'bonkers' films at LIFF, but by putting them all together into one program, it has developed into a program that visitors either try to fully complete, or actively avoid. The ten films in the program this year were a colourful collection of original, risky, often hard-to-put-a-label-on films from all over the world, always leaving room for discussion.



Vengeance is Mine, All Others Pay Cash
Edwin

LIFF: a broad perspective

Panorama

The Panorama program consists of a mix of films from across the world with an exclusive Dutch screening at LIFF, combined with a selection of early premieres of the world's best directors. While Covid-19 certainly left its mark on the amount of larger early premieres available last year, this year, LIFF could once again be a place where audiences not only get the chance to see unique screenings, but see the best films of next fall and spring, first. This year, we were proud to present exclusive Dutch premieres of, among others:

Spencer, King Richard, Last Night in Soho, Ich Bin Dein Mensch, The Eyes of Tammy Faye, The Many Saints of Newark, The Souvenir Part II, Les Olympiades, Madres Paralelas

As a festival, we're proud to be able to be the first stage for these and of course many other films in the Panorama program. Among these films is *Maixabel*, whose chances of having a Dutch theatrical release have significantly increased by winning the audience award.



King Richard
Reinaldo Marcus Green



Maixabel
Iciar Bollain



Sun Children
Majid Majidi



Ballad of a White Cow
Maryam Moghaddam, Behtash Sanaeeha



Ninjababy
Yngvild Sve Flikke



Lamb
Valdimar Johannsson

Nordic Watching

With no less than ten films, LIFF's Nordic Watching program has never been as big as it was this year. Each year, the program highlights the incredible diversity and quality of Scandinavian cinema, but this year, the variety was exceptionally high. From a small de-tour via the American porn industry to a migrant drama, and from a horror drama about a half-man-half-lamb, to a sports story based on true events, there was truly something for everybody. And the films in the competition remain unabatedly popular.

In Focus: Russia

This year, LIFF added a Russian program to its varied selection, a program aimed at familiarizing the public with Russian culture, stories and creators. Besides screening films, we had a Russian film expert present at the festival with the objective of inspiring the public about the effect of film and the film makers' artistic ideas. With this, we hoped to create an exchange of cultures and thought and, with that, hopefully, a mutual understanding.

The special focus on Russian cinema is particularly poignant since festival director Alexander Mouret, who has a Russian background, will be leaving LIFF after this edition. And with two exclusive Dutch premieres and one breath-taking Russian co-production, LIFF was truly able to present the crème de la crème of last year's Russian cinema. *A Man From Podolsk*, based on the very well-received Russian play, made an especially profound impression. Not just because the film won't be screening anywhere else in the Netherlands, but also because LIFF was able to present an exclusive collaboration with Otto Boele, dean of Russian studies at Leiden University, who specializes in Russian cinema and curated a LIFF-exclusive introductory program preceding the film.

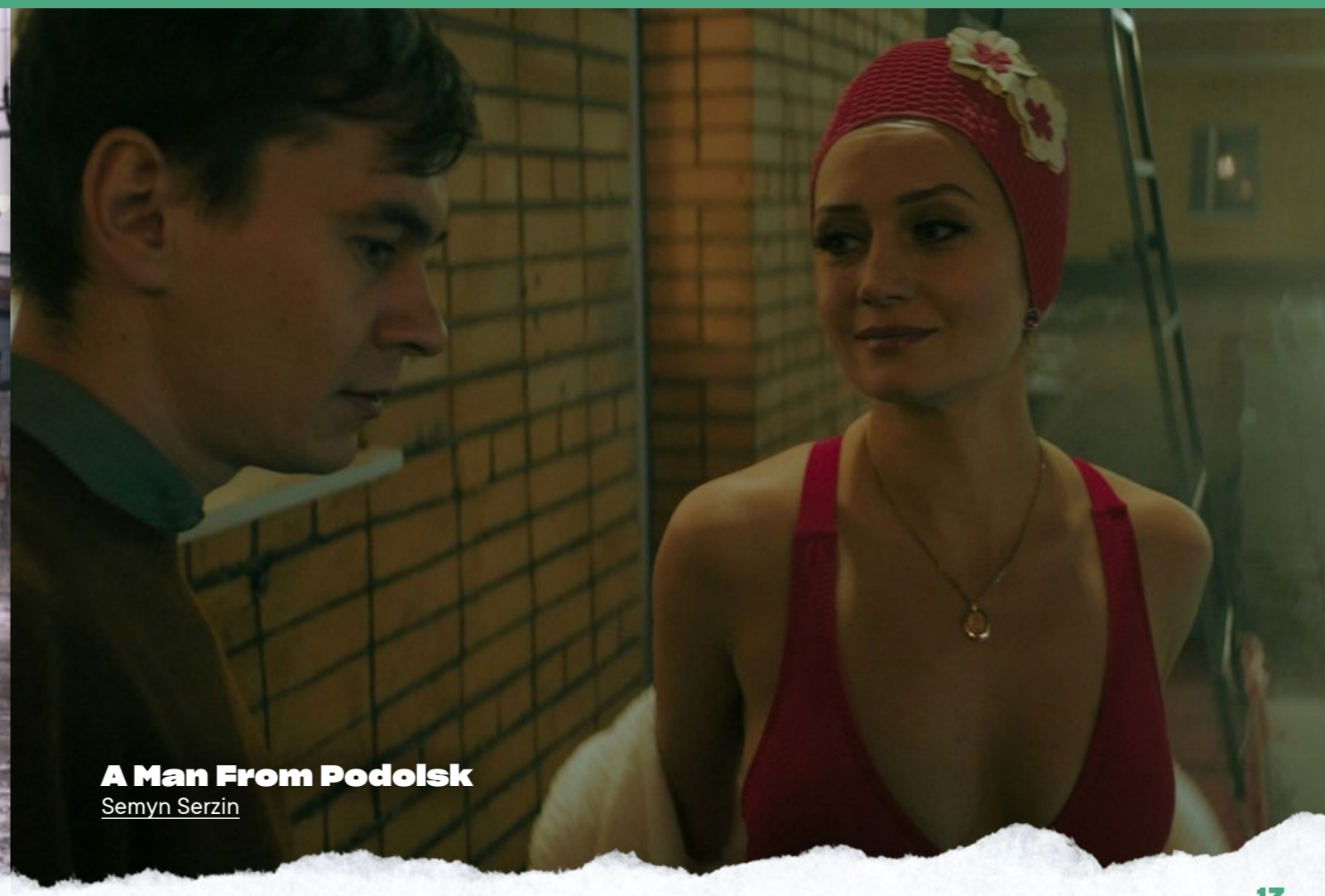
Through this exchange, and by placing the film in a certain context, the films truly come to live in the minds of our audience. Such a dialogue not only adds educational value, but it also ensures a richer film experience, thus connecting Dutch film audiences to the Russian maestros.

“The special focus on Russian cinema is particularly poignant since festival director Alexander Mouret, who has a Russian background, will be leaving LIFF after this edition.”

The Russian program program has allowed LIFF to be a Dutch platform for talented film makers. Creators who use personal, daring stories to share their vision on life and the world at large. These one-of-a-kind visions result in creative, provocative and refreshing stories that we love to share with our audience. LIFF hopes to be a platform for these kinds of talents for many years to come, because without festival buzz in the beginning of their careers, it's nearly impossible for filmmakers to take any further steps.



Petrov's Flu
Kirill Serebrennikov



A Man From Podolsk
Semyn Serzin

Shorts Selection

Pronck Shorts Selection

Pronck Shorts Selection is back after a successful first year. As a young, rebellious brewery, Pronck still has a lot of affinity with new filmmakers with clearly individual voices. This year, the program consisted of six short films, where every film told the story of the message it wanted to portray with passion, in a unique, outspoken way. The jury consisted of several feature length LIFF programmers, and one Pronck brewer.

This year's winner turned out to be *Leylak* by Scott Aharoni and Dennis Latos. This short film tells the story of Yusuf, a Turkish grave digger in Queens, New York, who is struggling to tell his young daughter Renk about the death of his wife. While *Leylak* deals with the consequences of covid, it is ultimately a film about the relationship between a father and his daughter. Communication is one of the most important pillars during these times, and *Leylak* perfectly conveys this message.



Leylak
Dennis Latos



Wall 4
Lucas Camps

BONKERS! Short Selection

For the third year in a row we had the BONKERS! Shorts, screened for the first time in a new venue dubbed the BONKERS! Bunker. Our intent was to select shorts that would spark a strong reaction from each viewer. It turned out that no less than four of the shorts that fit that description were made in the Netherlands. This resulted in an elaborate debate program after the screenings, where apart from the regular Q&A's, discussions arose about the current state of 'weird' film in the Netherlands, as well as possible ways to not just make head-turning films, but bring them to the cinemas as well.

As the winner of the BONKERS! Shorts Competition, the public selected *Wall #4*, a short by Lucas Camps, who attended LIFF as director for the fourth time. In *Wall#4*, a film theatre audience reacts loudly to a scene in the movie they're watching, but things take a turn when the actors in the film start talking back. Commenters during the Q&A, praised the film for its technical precision, the way every shot was a work of art and the strong editing.



Six completely different shorts with a shared theme: a focus on empathy.

LIFF Competition Shorts

Finally, we introduced a brand-new shorts program at the sixteenth edition of LIFF: the LIFF Competition Shorts, a program that focusses on the international character of the festival. Six completely different shorts with a shared theme: a focus on empathy, and the way we interact with each other - or should interact with each other.

The freshly selected, brand-new LIFF Youth Jury, selected as its winner *Ava From My Class* by Youmin Kang, a short film about a theatre lesson for children around eight years old. The main character is a girl that hides a silent love for her classmate Ava. The jury picked this film for the subtle way it deals with falling in love. The actions of the main character were both typically child-like and very universal. The Youth Jury further described the film as 'subtle but powerful' and 'a credible way to convey young love'.

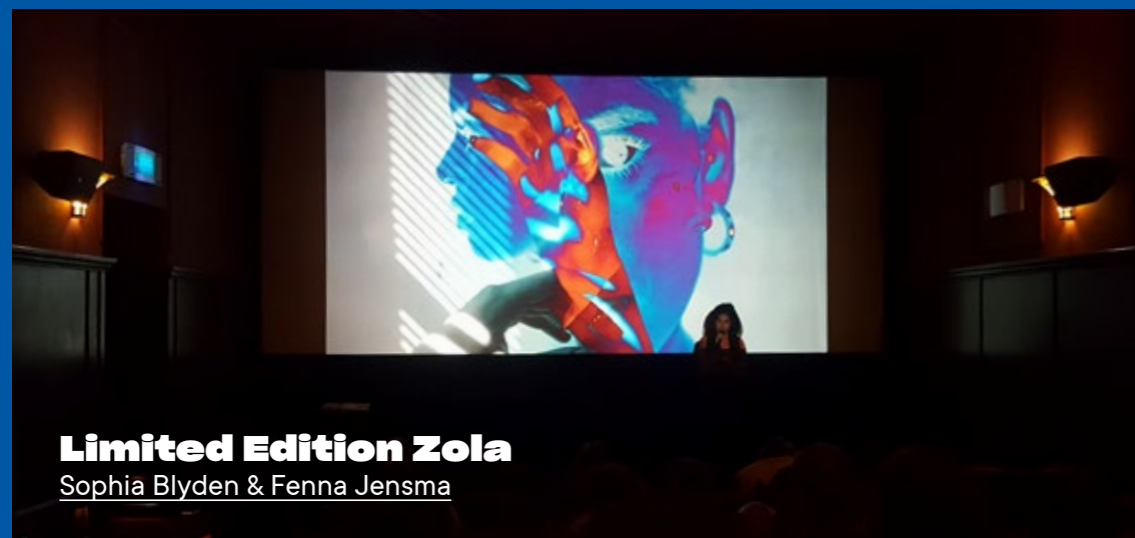
LIFF Experience

LIFF Limited Edition

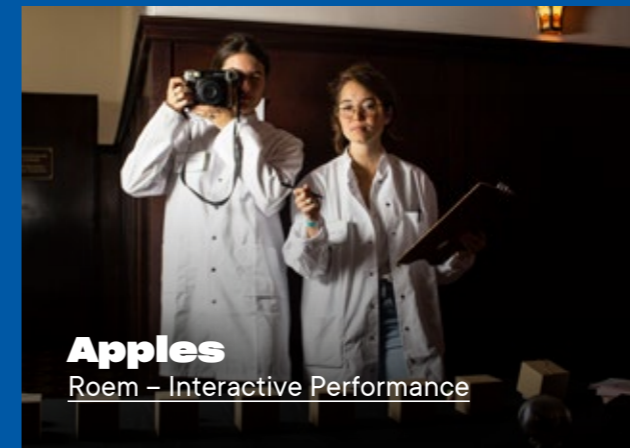
With LIFF Limited Edition we realised two of our most long-standing ambitions. First, to be more of a breeding ground for creativity and art, especially at the individual level of the artist. And second, to create more unique moments that can only be experienced at our festival.

For this pilot, we connected talented young creators to see the new film selected for LIFF. Each person or group got the opportunity to see the new film well in advance of the festival, and create something connected to one of the screenings of that film during the festival. This resulted in several special Limited Edition screenings where the audience didn't know which artist was connected to which film and what was about to happen until the very start of the film.

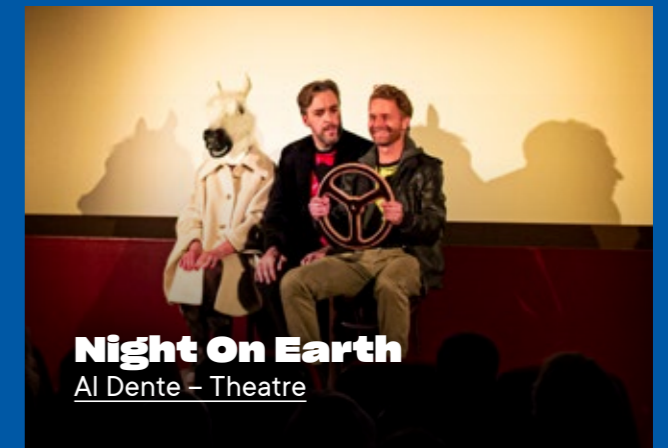
For this first edition, we wanted to look for the creativity close to home, and work with local, Leiden-based artists and partners as much as possible. The most important collaboration emerged with artist collective ROEM, a group of artists and creatives from several different disciplines, who eventually took on four of our Limited Edition experiences. We also worked together with theatre company Al Dente, and were connected to comic Dolf Jansen through the Leids Cabaret Festival. Some collaborations that started out as a Limited Edition also grew into bigger, stand-alone special events at the festival, such as our collaboration with EYES WIDE SHUT for Sisters With Transistors, and Peel Slowly and See for Karen Dalton: In My Own Time.



Limited Edition Zola
Sophia Blyden & Fenna Jensma



Apples
Roem – Interactive Performance



Night On Earth
Al Dente – Theatre



Ninjababy
Dolf Jansen – Cabaret



Tigrar
Marlon Penn – Performance/Monologue

“In terms of coolness, LIFF is definitely the number one festival we’ve been”

Director George Peter Barbari
(Death of a Virgin and the Sin of Not Living)

Responses to Limited Edition were overwhelmingly positive, both from visitors and the performers themselves as well as the directors present at the Limited Edition screenings of their own films.

The creative freedom given to the artists, combined with a unique film as a creative starting point were seen as enormously stimulating, and the special cultural cross-pollinations that emerged were exactly what we set out to achieve with this program. The festival thus got the chance to function as a platform for a very diverse range of talented creatives and artists from disciplines outside of the world of film, and there is no doubt that the Limited Edition program will return next year.

LIFF Talks

As is evident from the First Feature Competition, LIFF has the ambition to be a platform for beginning creators. This ambition was a line we wanted to continue in different areas of our festival. We believe that the context provided by a podcast can offer new insights into the films at our festival. We dabbled in creating in-depth content in the form of what we called 'LIFF Talks' for the first time in 2020. This year, we expanded LIFF Talks by setting up an actual podcast studio. The idea behind the LIFF Podcast was threefold: to serve as platform for young creators, to make our own, in-depth festival content, and to carve out a space for established film podcasts.

To really turn the LIFF Podcast into a success, we decided to work together with Maxi Radio, an online radio station that aims to be a platform for young cultural creators in and around Leiden. This allowed us to not only introduce our LIFF audiences to Maxi Radio, but make use of the station's broad audio-visual expertise at the same time. Together with Maxi Radio we recorded interviews with the Youth Jury, our volunteers, and the attending directors during the festival.

Since this collaboration provided us with the right equipment, technical know-how and expertise, we were able to offer up our podcast studio to other young podcast creators as well. In the months running up to the festival, everyone who wanted to could apply and send in an idea for a podcast. By doing this, we tried to provide a platform not just for beginning podcast creators, but for ordinary people with a beautiful story - but no experience in the world of podcasting - as well. Multiple beginning podcast makers responded, among them Martin van Teylingen and Sander Fase, who recorded a special episode of



Podcast



Jonas Kaerup Hjort, the director of *The Penultimate*

their podcast *Terugspoelen (Rewind)* at LIFF, where they discussed supposedly outdated film fragments with festival crew member Floor. The people of OST Radio, Maxi Radio's film score program, recorded their own episode in our studio as well.

We also reached out to established podcasts, both before and during the festival, to collaborate. Festival director Ratna Lachmansingh recorded an episode with Miss Podcast (NPO1), and programmer Cedric Muyres set down with the people of 'Duimpje Worstelen' and the Cineville Podcast. This allowed us to connect the pre-existing reach of these podcasts to LIFF, and it allowed our LIFF audience to get familiar with podcasts engaging with context surrounding film and discussions about film.

LIFF was featured as a guest in several established podcasts and connected with new, talented creators that recorded their podcast in de LIFF Podcast Studio. As such, the LIFF Podcast program is off to a great start, and we hope to let it grow into an even bigger platform for unique stories and context surrounding film in the following years. In order to accomplish this, we will continue to reach out to existing creators that will allow us to take further steps in the right direction by sharing their expertise, while remaining open and accessible to beginning podcast creators and their stories. We also hope to integrate the podcasts within the rest of our program, mainly through visibility in our program schedule and on our website, so that it will allow audiences to easily find their way to in-depth content in the form of the LIFF Podcast.

So Much More

At a festival, anything can happen and everything is always happening at once. The unique atmosphere, the program, the décor, the sort of visitors, they all come together in that one moment. This is what turns festivals into events that people look forward to and wait for for a long time, so that they can be completely emerged in to the world of the festival during the short period during which it takes place.

The Leiden International Film Festival is one of those festivals. A place where, for 11 days, visitors can marvel at the great selection of early premieres and exclusive screenings that are not available anywhere else in the Netherlands, as well as special film events, film-themed wine and beer tastings, collaborations with local museums and other cultural institutions, the general atmosphere of the city, and of course, much, much more.

So it's safe to say LIFF offers more than just film. We love reaching out to other cultural institutions to bring film to the audience in combination with a different discipline. In association with In Science, Rijksmuseum and Stadsgehoorzaal, we were able to put out a beautiful, diverse side program.

Science & Cinema

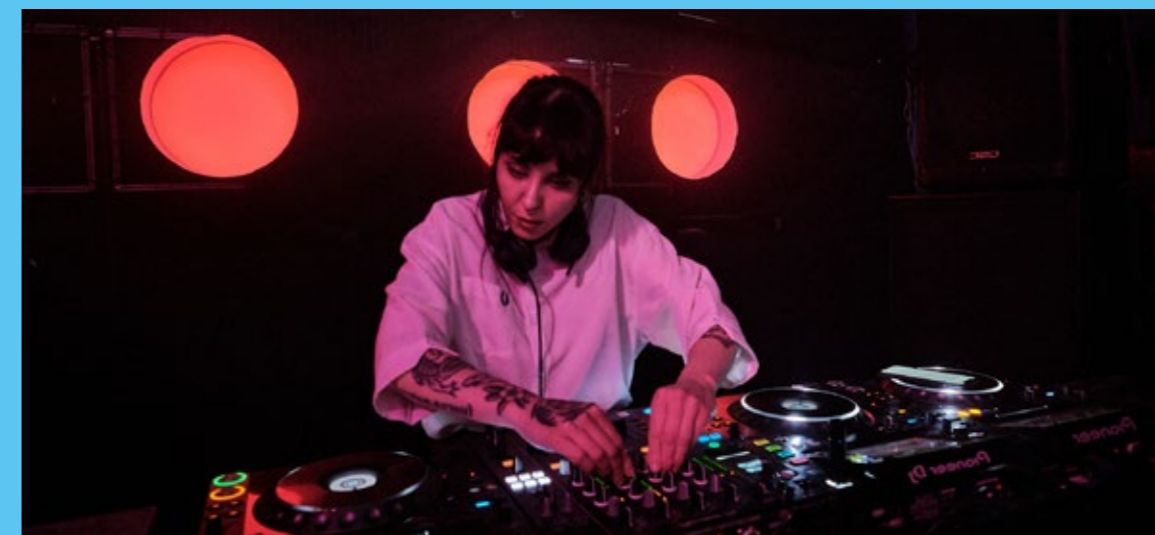
This year's Science&Cinema program turned out somewhat smaller than we'd hoped, partly due to the fact that our collaborations with both de Volkskrant (A Moment of Science Please!) and the cancelled event 'Nacht van Ontdekkingen', were eventually discontinued. Luckily, we were still able to partner up with Nijmegen-based Filmfestival InScience, and together we came up with a unique side program for Ich Bin Dein Mensch. Both LIFF and InScience are of the opinion that film festivals can and should enrich as well as enforce each other, and would rather aim for an active collaboration than engage in useless competition. By developing one cooperative program screening at both festivals, we were able to underline both of our festivals' unique identity and place within the festival landscape, benefitting everyone.

In order to shape our Science&Cinema, we decided to get the help of our friends at the Visions Team Robotics of TU Delft. This resulted in a completely unique program: an interaction between professor David Abbink and Het Werkende Mensenkor (The Working Man's Choir), an opera choir led by musical theatre director Isabel Schröder. A TED-talk combined with a music performance, this was an introduction that visitors will not soon forget.

Music & Movies

Music has been an important part of our festival for years, and this year was no exception. As shown above, music lovers were able to enjoy our EYES WIDE SHUT and Peel Slowly and See specials, both originally meant as LIFF Limited Editions that turned into stand-alone music specials.

EYES WIDE SHUT presented: *Sisters with Transistors*, a film about the often overlooked female pioneers of electronic music. They also curated a special, matching live show with DJ sets after the film featuring a diverse range of musicians and artists, creating a seamless movie to music festival experience.



Peel Slowly and See, a Leiden-based music festival aimed mainly at unknown, exciting new acts, presented a music documentary about almost-forgotten-about female musician Karen Dalton. *Karen Dalton: In My Own Time* is a beautiful, intimate portrait that had its Dutch premiere on our special music-themed Disco Thursday.

We owe another unique premiere to Remy van Kesteren, who accompanied the stunning animated film *the Red Turtle* with live music. With the consent of Dudok de With, Remy has created a unique, brand-new soundtrack for the film, that was originally supposed to have its premiere at LIFF last year, and luckily could finally take place this year. Because with its mix of live harp music and gorgeous film animations, this event turned out to be one of the highlights of the festival.

Amidst these new partnerships and premieres, Funked Up was a familiar face within our festival program. Each year, this night of dancing turns out to be a great match for LIFF, and with a film soundtrack quiz as part of the evening's Silent Disco, the link with film was even more pronounced this year. The perfect opportunity to move those feet after a long day of film-watching.

Guest Curators

Rijksmuseum van Oudheden

This year our longstanding partnership with Rijksmuseum van Oudheden continued with a special screening of *Black Panther*. The film was selected to fit the museum's upcoming exhibition 'We Were Kings', and had a special introduction by Egyptologist and curator Daniel Soliman, which made sure the audience saw this 2018 blockbuster from a new perspective and also in a location they'd never experienced before.



Stadsgehoorzaal

Our partnership with Stadsgehoorzaal and the Leidse Schouwburg means we work together to program film-themed theatre shows. This year, that meant we were able to present the following shows: *Rocky Horror Show, 1984* and *Mart & Movies*. *Rocky Horror Show*, the worldwide classic, took you on a crazy ride through a night of music and incredible adventure. *1985* brought together the New European Ensemble film, literature, documentary and music, and created a lively, engaging show about technology, privacy and freedom. In *Mart & Movies*, Mart Hillen told the audience about his passion for films and the music made for them. During his show, he played his version of the soundtracks to classics such as *Titanic*, *Mission Impossible* and *Bohemian Rhapsody*.

Eyes Wide Shut & Maxi Radio

Leiden-based initiatives EYES WIDE SHUT, Maxi Radio and the Leiden International Film Festival join forces this year! The event started with the second screening in the Netherlands of one of the most inspiring music documentaries of the past years, *Sisters with Transistors* by Lisa Rovner. Afterwards, we took off with a live show and DJ-sets, by a carefully curated line-up of extraordinary musicians and artists.

Leiden in LIFF

Due to the proximity of both Nederlands Filmfestival and IDFA on the film festival calendar, LIFF usually doesn't program regular Dutch films or documentaries. It's important for every film festival to play its own part and have its own, distinctive place in the festival world, and that's why we continue to be a very internationally oriented festival, with films from all over the globe. But apart from this international character, the city of Leiden is also a major part of our festival identity. It's our home base, and as said, we always try to incorporate the city in our festival as much as possible. Partly by collaborating with local partners, partly by using the city as a stage and screen films at museums, music venues, and other locations, but also mainly by reserving an important spot at our festival for films and documentaries made in Leiden.

This year, three such documentaries had their world premiere at LIFF: *LCKV 100 jaar: Waarom gaan we toch ieder jaar weer mee?*, *Het kind of de rekening?* And *Wakkere Wegwerpers: De strijd tegen het bedrijfsleven*.

We celebrated the 100-year anniversary of LCKV with a unique documentary in a packed Trianon, making it one of the most attended films at the festival.

Het Kind of de Rekening? Is a haunting documentary about the youth care system in Leiden. The presence of those involved in the documentary and the informative panel discussion following the film made this a very valuable addition to our festival.

Merijn Tinga, more famously known as the Plastic Soup Surfer, and filmmaker Victor Bots created a unique documentary picturing the fight against the packaging corporate industry. This screening included a panel discussion as well.

Three very unique, very successful local premieres, and we hope to remain a platform for local talent and local themes in the future.



“How good is it that we got a chance again to host films from all over the world in the biggest cultural and artistic event of our city?”

Navid – Volunteer

Theme Room

To help enforce the growing ambitions of both LIFF and Bioscopen Leiden, and prepare our festival for the new film theatres that are currently under construction in Leiden, we decided last year to add one film room at LIDO to our current, fixed locations (Kijkhuis and Trianon).

This year, we truly maximised the creative opportunities of this location by turning it into the Theme Room, taking on different identities throughout the festival, each including its own décor and programming. This allowed visitors at LIDO to completely emerge themselves in that special LIFF feeling too.

To help enforce the growing ambitions of both LIFF and Bioscopen Leiden we decided last year to add one film room.

During the first weekend, the room served as the BONKERS! Bunker, where visitors could emerge themselves in our BONKERS! Program with the Nicolas Cage Marathon, featuring all three films made by Nicolas Cage in 2021 (a reprise of the marathon Cage himself curated at LIFF a few years ago) as icing on the cake.

During the second half of the festival, the venue went by the name of, among others, 'Disco Thursday', 'Zoo Saturday', and 'Scandinavian Söndag', giving our visitors the opportunity to experience a completely new festival every single time. It's very well possible that LIDO will continue to have a themed program in the years to come, or at least until we are able to move into the new film theatres.

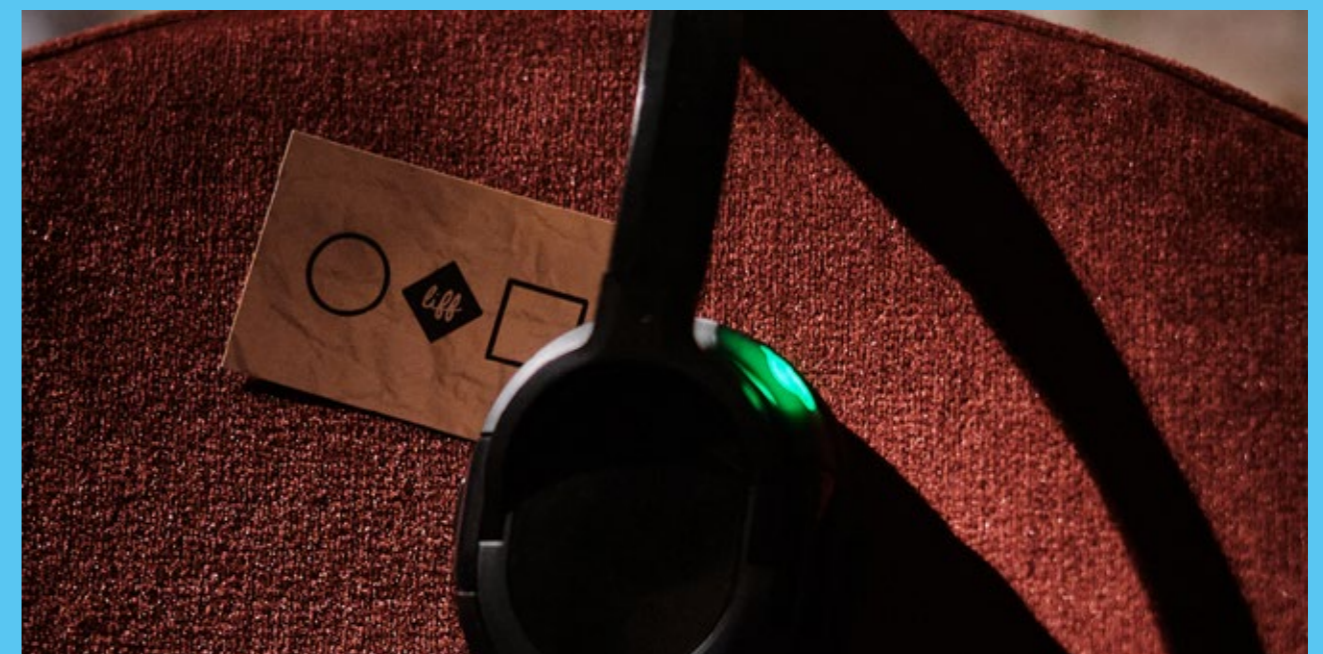


Secret Cinema

We've often programmed sneak previews at our festival before. This year, we took it a step further by not only keeping the film a secret, but the location as well. So: three Secret Cinema nights on one secret location.

To add to the sense of mystery, Secret Cinema tickets could not be reserved on our regular website, but only through QR codes on special business cards. These business cards were scattered all over the festival and the city. The concept proved a big hit: all three nights sold out within days.

The secret location, revealed on the day of the screening, was the old LVC building. This used to be one of the most famous night clubs in Leiden, but has now been empty and closed to the public for years. This made the evening extra special for the people from Leiden that still remembered the place from when they were younger.



Voor Niemand Wat Wils & Filmquiz

For years, Nils Bierman and Hans Lardee have been organizing two very special evenings at LIFF: Voor Niemand Wat Wils and the Filmquiz. During Voor Niemand Wat Wils (Something For No One), they present a selection of film fragments in the style of Jan Doense's famous Nacht van de Wansmaak (The Night of Bad Taste). Both specials have always had a strong core of loyal visitors, but have been growing steadily in the last few years, and in 2021, both events sold out.



LIFF Pronckstukken: Film-Themed Beer Tasting

After the success of the film-themed wine tasting at LIFF, a film-themed beer tasting seemed the next logical step. The idea for LIFF Pronckstukken emerged when we started looking for the perfect taste for our special LIFF beer together with Pronck Brewery. Each beer tasted like a different film, and we wanted to share that feeling with everyone. We took the audience at the beer tasting on a journey into the world of the programmers at LIFF and the brewers at Pronck, and the film fragments, stories and beers were another great success.

Veni Vido Vino

By now, Veni Vido Vino has become a tradition at LIFF, and for this third edition our festival's programming team worked together with British wine expert Nick Ollivere to connect unique film fragments to unique wines that go together in one way or another. Both the film fragments and the wines are introduced during the evening, creating a unique mix that once again yielded positive feedback from our visitors.



All Year Round

Summer Friends

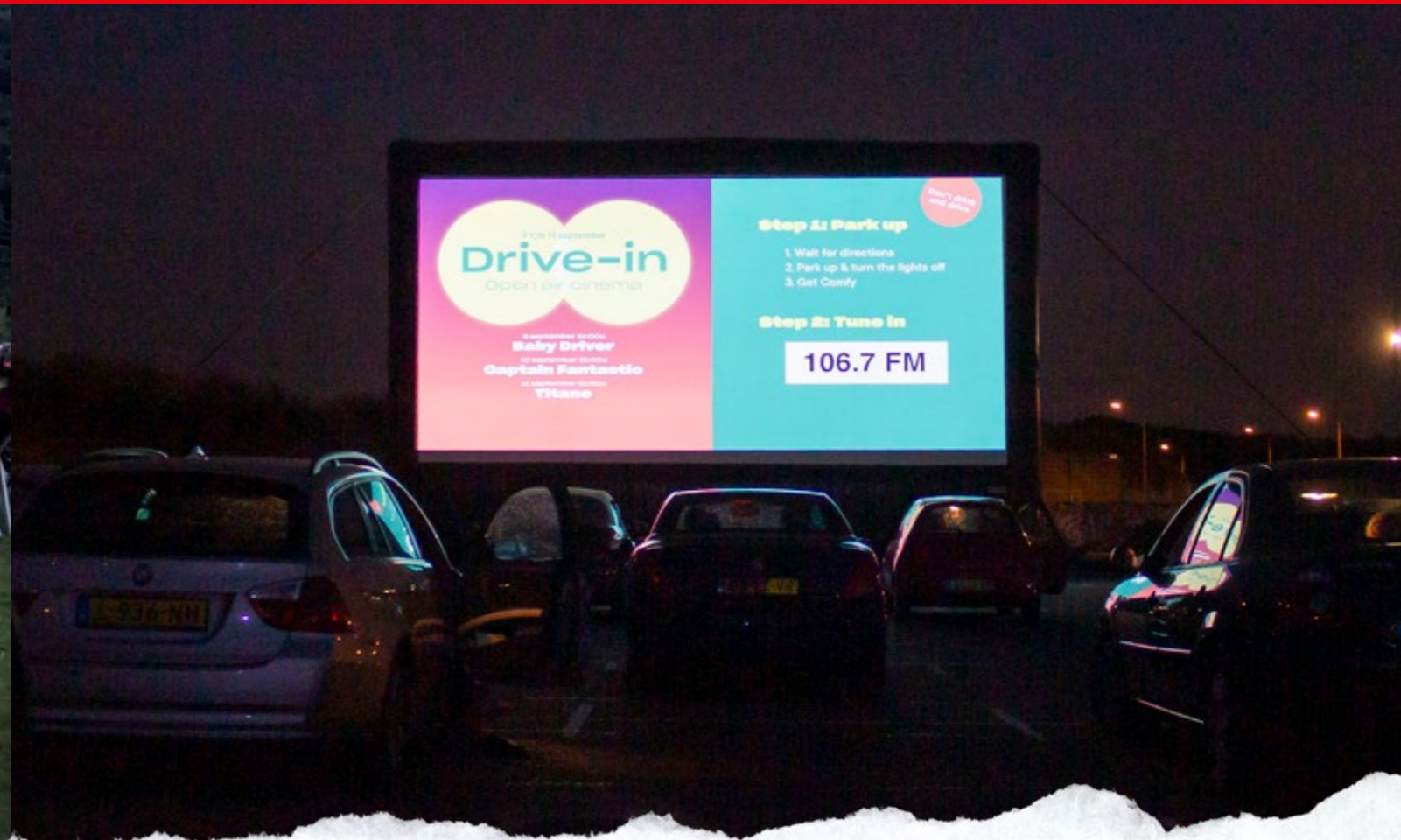
Due to covid restrictions, the Summer Special, an open-air cinema experience at the historical Pieterskerkpein in Leiden, could not take place this year. Because we still think it's important to maintain a connection to our visitors and the city of Leiden throughout the year, we opted to organize pop-up film screenings at six different unique, historical locations: Dazed and Confused and Summer 1993 at pop-up location De Buurt, Rushmore and Gladiator at an amphitheatre in front of Stedelijk Gymnasium Leiden (high school), Get Out and Night of the Living Dead at the Begraafplaats Groenesteeg (cemetery), The Favourite and Knives Out at Oud Poelgeest Castle, Romeo + Juliet and Call Me By Your Name at De Tuin van de Smid, the stunning, romantic surroundings of Polderpark Cronesteyn in Leiden and, finally, Maradona and Next Goal Wins at football club UVS, also in Leiden.

These locations were transformed into small-scale, intimate open-air film theatres. The idea behind the screenings was to use these locations as a stage and thus attract as large of an audience as possible. The different locations now have a place in the imagination of the people of Leiden. And of course, LIFF Summer Cinema is the perfect opportunity for LIFF to what we love most: screening unique films at unique locations.



Drive-in

For three days, from 9 to 11 September, we were able to introduce ourselves outside the Leiden outside during the LIFF Drive-in at Katwijk aan Zee. With *Baby Driver*, *Captain Fantastic* and *Titane*, we curated a diverse program, with films ranging from mainstream to arthouse, and screening *Titane* meant we even had a film at our Drive-in that was not only still showing in theatres, but even won a Palm d'Ore in Cannes. The concept encourages people in the area and anyone else who is interested to familiarise themselves with LIFF in a low-key way, by simply staying in their car, and more than once we hear people say they'll 'definitely be back for the festival in October!' from their car windows. The big movie screen in the Dutch dunes is impossible to miss, making it a great advert and showpiece for LIFF and definitely a keeper in terms of brand visualisation. We also want to keep working together with the municipality of Katwijk in order to curate more events like this in the future, at former airbase Valkenburg, for example.



LIFF Youth

Youth Jury

LIFF wants to be a place where young people between the age of 12-24 can discover their love for film too. By more actively getting these young people involved with the festival, LIFF becomes a place where young people can discover their hidden talents and make their voices be heard.

This year, LIFF did this by working together with young people to put together a Youth Jury program. The most important part of this program was the fact that it was developed by and for young people. Young people's perspectives are immensely meaningful and can lead to new and refreshing insights for LIFF. As a new addition to LIFF's educational department, this project took place under supervision by LIFF, the Jongeren Ambassadeurs and Scholieren Festival and its aims were twofold: on the one hand, to offer an environment where these energetic, curious young people could be challenged to get out of their comfort zone and explore. On the other hand, to give LIFF the chance to engage these young people and create a program for them.

Young people's perspectives are immensely meaningful and can lead to new and refreshing insights for LIFF.

Pivotal in the formation of this pilot were Jasmijn, Freija and Joshua, three very eager young people who took on this project with both hands. The three laid the foundation for the Youth Jury and the program surrounding it. They were brought along during all aspects of putting together a film festival: organisation, marketing, programming, production and finances. They also got the opportunity to talk to crew members of LIFF and other festivals such as Film By the Sea, Noordelijk Film Festival and Internationaal Film Festival Gorinchem, who were already familiar with youth juries. All three of them made the conscious decision not to be a part of the Youth Jury themselves, and instead focus on putting together and accompanying the Youth Jury and making sure everything ran smoothly.

The participating young people not only got the chance to get to know LIFF and other festivals as organizations, they also got to find out what they're good at, what they like, and put something together something real and tangible. LIFF wants to be a safe testing ground, where young people can grow, evolve and discover their strengths.

Composition Jury

In order to recruit jury candidates, our jury crew set up a marketing campaign using social media, flyers and word of mouth. The call got an overwhelming response. In the end, the jury consisted of 9 young people from the ages 18 to 24: a diverse group both in terms of education and personality.

Before the Youth Jury could watch and review the films at the festival, they were prepared with a series of lectures, including one by Peter Verstraten, Film and Literature Studies professor at Leiden University, who told them all about judging films using your own review framework. There was also a lecture on misinformation in the media, given by Omar Cardentey, Deputy Public Affairs Officer at the American embassy in The Hague. Here, our Youth Jury learned a lot about all the different ways you can watch a movie, how to distil its different themes, and how to analyse every unique perspective of the film's creators.

During the festival, the Youth Jury watched the following films: *Boiling Point*, *Ich Bin Dein Mensch*, *John and the Hole*, *La Traversee*, *Mass* and *Ninjababy*. They picked one film from each program, making it a very diverse selection, with as its one unifying element that they could all trigger a discussion about both themes and cinematography. The members of the Youth Jury could really see themselves in the characters of all these films, making the films very suitable for young people even though not all of them were made with young people in mind. The winner of the Youth Jury selection is *Ninjababy*. The jury described the film as defying stereotypes, hilarious, and above all: sweet. And while the jury did not specifically let it be a part of their decision, they also thought it to be very suitable for young people.

We consider this pilot to be a great success: it laid the foundation for the Youth Jury and the base for something we will definitely expand upon next year.



Education

Our educational department is active throughout the year and is an important part of our festival.

Now more than ever, young people live in an increasingly image-dominated world, and by actively teaching them about the moving image, media literacy and film (history), they will be made more aware of what image culture is, and how it works. And not just that: young people are the film festival audience of the future, and through guest lectures, workshops, festival visits or self-organized film festivals in the form of the Scholieren Film-festival initiative, we allow young people to get in touch with the film festival phenomenon and to learn what makes a festival so special, and different from a regular film going experience. To excite and to inform are thus the most important pillars of our educational department.

During LIFF

While most of the work done by our educational department takes place outside of LIFF, it remains an important part of the festival itself as well. This year, multiple high schools from Leiden, Oegstgeest, Wassenaar and Amersfoort visited our festival, and students from MBO Zadkine in Rotterdam stopped by for a screening accompanied by a workshop together with head of programming Nick Hortensius.



Throughout The Year

Throughout the year we have an educational platform that consists of guest lectures, workshops, screenings and lecture series. In the past year, 11 high schools in the Leiden area made use of LIFF's educational selection. That selection ranged from guest lectures on film, film language and media literacy for Culture and Art Studies or Social Studies, to workshops on the making of documentaries, promo film, fiction film, stop-motion film and a 'remake' workshop, where groups of students had to enact and re-interpret famous film scenes. By providing these lessons and workshops, we reached around 1750 high school students in total. There are also several educational projects that LIFF collaborates with for our educational selection, such as BplusC, Kuntshot and Cultuursjop. Finally, each year LIFF curates a room during Stukafest, the festival organised by students and taking place in college students' houses.

Student Film Screenings Throughout The Year

For years now, we have invited local high schools to come to LIFF during the festival, but we love working together with schools to organise screenings outside of the festival as well. Partly through the Scholieren Filmfestival initiative, but also based on specific requests from the school in the form of a certain film or selection of short film surrounding a certain theme. We also offer short, introductory lessons preceding the screening and, if desired, further information and assignments, and we actively carve out a space for film, visual language and media literacy in the schools' curriculum.



“Every year I make sure I have time off from work during the entire festival, so I can go see as many films as possible. Perhaps that’s what I missed most about last year: sitting in a packed movie theatre.”

Joshua – Visitor

PR & Publicity

Leiden International Film Festival has always presented itself as a highly approachable festival that's clearly all about enjoyment and fun. We believe in the power of a diverse program, where serious arthouse can exist alongside fluffy comedies and witty programming, and our marketing campaign always makes room for humour.

Since we were forced to cut short last year's festival due to Covid restrictions, and we still haven't returned to 'the old normal' as a society this year, we decided that, this year, as a festival, we should let our marketing campaign shine a light on all the people not attending LIFF. Each year, we continue to be baffled and humbled by how far people are willing to travel to attend our festival, but still, the large majority of the people on earth do not attend LIFF. With our campaign, we looked at all the different reasons people might have for that and played with that idea in order to entice people to not stay at home, but rather to attend the festival.

Our one-of-a-kind campaigns are a striking difference between us and other film festivals in the Netherlands. We do that while also offering a wide range of films and events. In the chapter on programming, you were able to read about programs such as the Nicolas Cage marathon, consisting of the three films Nicolas Cage made this year. Or the theme room, featuring a new, playful theme every day, fitting each type of film (Disco Thursday, Zoo Saturday, etcetera). Our visitors know by now that our power lies in the combination of true quality and playful packaging.

Reach

In 2021, LIFF was able to welcome a total of 31,000 visitors at our activities, with a striking 21% of visitors who had never been to the festival before. New visitors indicated they heard about the festival through advertising such as posters and flyers (37%), friends and family (31%), or newspapers, television and radio (9%).

The festival is able to attract young people and this is something we saw this year as well. 31% is below the age of 45, with a large group indicating they are students. 48% of people falls into the 45-65 category, and 21% is over 65.



Target Audience

Pre-Covid LIFF had been close to its maximum capacity for a few years. Especially during the weekends, it's often so busy that our most important venues can hardly handle the crowds. Looking at the future we are therefore excited to welcome the two new film theatres, that will enable us to grow more, and curate a broader program. Until then, we will focus on spreading out visitors as much as possible. Part of this strategy is starting our film schedule earlier, paying extra attention in publicity expressions to films screening during the week, and scheduling longer breaks in between films during peak hours in order to better facilitate a quick flow of people. This year, all these points were extra important, since we did not want to create unnecessary jams and busy crowds outside of the venues.

This meant we had to make some choices regarding our publicity and advertising strategy. Nearly all of our paid promotion this year focussed on serving two target audiences:

1. **The local/regional visitor who has been coming to LIFF for years.**

These permanent visitors are still our biggest ambassadors, and will in a few years be the most important reason why we will be able to fill two new film theatres. After all, 31% of new customers indicate to have visited us because of recommendation's by friends or family – regional fans that bring new people to LIFF every year. Our unique 'Not Going' campaign, visible around the city in the form of flags, bus shelter ads and posters, also elicited many positive responses, that seem to be connected to the 37% of new customers that was introduced to the festival via physical advertising.

2. **Film lovers nationwide**

Our promotional materials could be found in nearly every arthouse cinema in the urban agglomeration or major city in the Netherlands, as well many other cultural locations. LIFF also featured in a lot of national media outlets (Titty Mag, NPO Radio 1), magazines and podcasts specifically aimed at film lovers (de Filmkrant, VPRO Cinema). Our goal: reaching one-off visitors from far away – visitors that will help stimulate brand awareness in their private circles. This target audience perfectly fits into our long-term strategy: because they live further away, these visitors usually don't stay for more than one day, and don't create as much as a burden on our theatre capacity in the short term. But they do continue to create a more powerful brand awareness for LIFF each year. If, in a few years, our capacity will have doubled because of the new film theatres, these one-off visitors – and their acquaintances – will already know us by name.

Marketing & Communication

Like most other cultural institutions and companies, we've noticed a decrease in the engagement through Facebook in the last few years. We've therefore adopted a strategy to move the centre of gravity of our social media activities to Instagram, while at same time trying to make sure as many online followers as possible subscribe to our newsletter, in order to become less dependent on social media algorithms. This is a strategy that works. Of all the people that bought a ticket for the festival, 39% indicated that the newsletter had pointed out the festival to them. 31% indicated to have come to LIFF via social media. Two years ago, this was still the other way around, and we expect this shift to continue in the coming years.

Next year, we therefore hope to further invest in personal newsletters, adjustable to the wishes and viewing behaviour of the individual, in order to be even more successful in bringing people into contact with our programs.

On social media, the focus has shifted from Facebook to Instagram. On there, we experimented with the new Reels function, went live a few times, giving people the opportunity to enjoy our festival from a distance, and did a few Instagram takeovers in partnership with other big accounts. The Reels, especially, got a lot of views, with an average of 700 extra accounts reached compared to a regular Instagram post. We did notice an increase in the amount of work it takes to really make use of all the different social media channels, especially seeing LIFF's limited online team. For next year, we therefore hope to expand our online team with several photographers and videographers, as well as people who are able to edit and design at the office.

LIFF in the Media

Many national and regional media outlets paid attention to LIFF's programming this year, including leading film media. What follows is a selection of the media that wrote about LIFF this year:

- National:** NPO Radio 1, Titty Mag, Telegraaf, Dagjeweg
- Regional:** AD, Leidsch Dagblad, Sleutelstad, Unity TV en FM, Omroep West, LeidsCement, Mare, In de buurt
- Film media:** De Filmkrant, Cine, Holland Film Nieuws, FilmTotaal.nl, MovieInsiders, VPRO Cinema, Downtime Chronicles, TV Krant
- Podcasts:** Miss Podcast, Cineville Podcast, Terugspoelen podcast, Duimpjeworstelen podcast, Maxi Radio, OST-Radio



We are the Leiden International Film Festival and we think that some old white men are kind of okay.

Sure, Federico Fellini hasn't made a decent film in over thirty years and Stanley Kubrick only managed to win one measly Oscar, for Best Effects. But at least they tried. We're trying as well. This is our 16th attempt at an international film festival, and our third attempt at a craft beer. The festival is great. The beer is fine. A bit like some old white directors we know and love.



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LIFF Friends & Partners

LIFF places a lot of value on the collaboration with our (cultural) partners, from inside as well as outside the film sector and the Leiden area. Our numerous partnerships, in terms of both business and content, ensures a more in-depth, diverse program while at the same time widening our network and really carving out a space for LIFF within the film sector and the cultural work field. We are immensely grateful to every single one of our partners for making the festival possible!

LIFF Friends & Donors

Each year, the dedicated support of our LIFF Friends and donors contributes to the creation of a varied, playful program and the reach of our festival.

Local Companies

The effort of local companies is of immense value for LIFF's visibility in Leiden. Think, for instance, of restaurant partners offering LIFF menus, or the successful partnership with our friends at Pronk brewery, who developed a special 'Director's Cut' beer for us and helped organize both LIFF Pronckstukken and the Pronck Shorts Selection.

We expect to continue these partnership in 2022 and are actively looking for new partners to strengthen and broaden both our program and our reach.

Finance

As always, LIFF aims for a well-balanced mix of financing, where own income, subsidy, funding, and sponsoring can contribute as equally as possible to the total income. This helps prevent the festival being too dependent on one form of income. The financial risk is limited and the continuity of the festival can be optimally guaranteed. The festival also strives for enduring connections to a wide variety of parties in and outside of the area. LIFF is actively working towards connecting sponsors and other partners to the festival.

With that being said, LIFF is an audience based festival, meaning a relatively substantial part of the annual income is generated by ticket sales. This year, we noticed that both the number of visitors and the revenue were not at the level they were at in 2019. This expected decrease was caused by the cancellation of large-scale summer events, the rise of Covid infections during the fall, and the hesitance of visitors to come to events such as LIFF. We expect to keep rebuilding during the years to come, to strengthen our foundation and work towards improving and re-adjusting the number of visitors until we're back to where we were.

The festival will continue its established, careful income policy of recent years, where we budget by making realistic, somewhat cautious prognoses.

Support takes place through different forms of sponsoring through the LIFF Business Club, brand activation and barter deals. In terms of sponsoring, there is a broad range of partners connected to the festival. These different partners ensure wide support for LIFF in the area and makes sure the festival is not too dependent on one specific party.

The support of both small and large, local as well as (inter)national companies, partners, funds, the City of Leiden, visitors and volunteers once again helped make LIFF 2021 a truly amazing experience!



Organization

Team

LIFF acts on a passion for everything film-related, and the directors, together with the core team, make sure that everything we put out is in line with our mission and vision. We do this while paying attention to our financial capacity and artistic integrity, but with an open-minded attitude and 'tasting ground mentality' as well, so we'll never stop trying new things.

LIFF tries to create fertile ground for the organization to blossom and where everyone can discover and fine-tune their own talents. This requires an open, safe organizational culture, where everyone is allowed and encouraged to both be themselves and step out of their comfort zone. This is why we operate on a base of honesty, durability and transparency, where fair pay, guidance, development, and physical and mental health play an important role.

LIFF has a permanent 'core team' committed to the festival throughout the year. Alexander Mouret, festival director, and Ratna Lachmansingh, managing director, are part of the core team, further made up of head of programming Nick Hortensius, head of publicity and marketing Evert de Vries, production coordinator Daan van den Bergh and publicity and marketing coordinator Annika Provily. The composition of the core team will be altered after the 16th edition. There also exists a flexible outer layer of freelance professionals and LIFF lovers of all ages, professions and educational backgrounds, helping LIFF during peak periods. The core team consists of 6 people, who were supported, this year, by 2 interns, 35 crew members, and around 150 volunteers.

During the festival, 150 volunteers with a wide range of functions and positions make sure the festival runs as smoothly as possible. The team is further divided into several departments, all led by one of the core team members and the directors.

The core team is supported by young students or recent graduates looking for an internship or work experience at the film festival, as well as retirees looking to make a valuable cultural contribution, coming to LIFF with unmeasurable amount of knowledge and experience. LIFF gives young people the opportunity to gain work experience and gives people of all ages a chance to discover new talents and be a part of a driven and enthusiastic team.

During the past few years, we've been working hard to formalize organisational processes, job descriptions, function profiles, responsibilities and authorizations. This has resulted in a clearer image of what to expect from each other, as well as a foundation to fall back on.



This year, in order to adhere to the Cultural Governance Code, Fair Practice Code and Cultural Diversity Code, we have made a brief inventory of what we as an organization comply with and where we still have to make changes. We re-evaluate our progress every six months.

Within LIFF, there is a variation based on disciplinary background, educational background, gender, religion, taste and age. What binds us is our love for LIFF, film and the willingness to put together something awesome with motivated people. Our different backgrounds result in perspectives that contribute to problem solving, create unique points of view and, sometimes, laying bare our individual blind spots. LIFF acts on a passion for film and everything film-related. This passion seeps through into everything we put out and everything our audience sees.

With that being said, we will keep working on a festival that is accessible to every member of our organization and has an open, hospitable attitude towards a curious, wide audience.



Sponsors

Funds & partners



Scheltema Leiden, Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leidse Schouwburg - Stadsgehoorzaal, PLNT, Fast Administratiekantoor, Ebuero communicatie, Kellerfilm, Leiden Parking, Bureau Gijs, Leiden Shorts, Boutique Hotel d'Oude Morsch, Studio Ameria, Meneer Jansen, City Hall, In den Bierbengel, De FF, Bar Lokaal, Easy Fiets and ALV.

Distributors & Sales Agents

Arthood Entertainment, Athena films, Beta Cinema, Charades, Cherry Pickers, Cinéart, De Filmfreak, Film Constellation, Film Factory Entertainment S.L, Filmbankmedia, Films Boutique, FSF, Gusto Entertainment, Heretic, Imagine Films, Independent Film, Indie Sales, Intramovies, Just Entertainment, Kinology, Le petit bureau, LevelK, Lumière Publishing, M-Line Distribution, Memento Films International, Monodo Films, Neighborhood Watch Productions Inc, New Europe Film Sales, Paradiso films, Park Circus, Protagonist Pictures, Pyramide International, September Films, Splendid Film, The Festival Agency, The Match Factory, The Searchers, Third Window Films, Tollywood Co, TVCO, Universal Pictures International, Walt Disney Company, Warner Bros, Wild Bunch, WWE.

Colophon

Written by the LIFF team and designed by Bureau Grotesk.



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