



EDITION VI

Wounded and bruised in its essence and in its *raison d'être*, like all Lebanese, the Beirut Art Film Festival, in this ultimate attempt at survival, wants to share in their pain, in the degradation of their daily lives; BAFF wants to participate in the expression of their humanity, their attachment to life, as seen in the extraordinary resilience of our fellow citizens, in the face of the terrible calamities that have torn our existence.

We hesitated a lot, after the chaotic 2019 edition, launched and stillborn on October 16. While acclaiming the eruption of salutary popular anger the next day, BAFF 2019 was to sink into marginality with the onset of the financial crisis, which continues to affect us on a daily basis.

The programming of this VIth edition was neither easy nor obvious. Discouraged by the many crises that hit us all, we were about to give up; two motivations led us to hang on:

- The deep feeling that Lebanon cannot die, that our compatriots, despite all the setbacks, including the collapse of the popular revolt, continue to fight; and that being there will be a contribution to their struggle; a contribution that goes beyond culture; an initiative that meets their courage, a communion with their humanity,

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- The unwavering support of our sponsors; the embassies of the United States of America, Switzerland, Spain, Belgium, the Istituto Italiano di Cultura and the Goethe Institut; who all continue to believe in our country, and in the ability of the Lebanese to recover and emerge from the abyss.

So here we are, despite the vagaries of the Covid-19 and its confinement, despite the gloom and distress surrounding the land, back with a new edition of BAFF to express a message of love, compassion and humanity. To shout a message of communion with the other; this other who is fundamentally different in his thinking, in his belief, in his aesthetics and in his vision of the world.

This belief in the Lebanese's resilience and combativeness spirit, in the ability to open up to the universal through art and cinema, is the essence of our conviction; it is our motivation.

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Despite the pandemic that is hitting the whole world, despite the closure of theaters, festivals, exhibitions and museums, filmmakers have not given up. The 2020 vintage of film production is particularly rich and innovative. Producing this VIth edition of BAFF, in the middle of the rubble of Beirut, in the heart of its August 4 disaster's most affected neighborhoods, is not only a tour de force, but the affirmation of our hope for a future of a life grounded in decency and dignity. This edition of BAFF 2020 could not have been done without the belief and the determination of the festival's sponsors-partners, who have been loyal supporters since the first hour.

In partnership with **embassies of the United States of America, Switzerland, Spain, Belgium, the Istituto Italiano di Cultura and the Goethe Institut**, the organizers of BAFF are pleased to offer Lebanese audience a selection of 20 recent documentaries on dance, visual arts, architecture, literature, music, which **will be screened in the presence at the Monnot Theater in Ashrafieh from 3 to 9 December, from 4pm to 8pm**. The selection and programming of the films will be announced

on the festival site www.beirutartfilmfestival.org

and on social medias Instagram / [@bafflb](https://www.instagram.com/@bafflb) and Facebook / [Beirut Art Film Festival](https://www.facebook.com/Beirut-Art-Film-Festival-102047701111111)

Access to the screenings is free. As the number of seats is limited,

Booking by email is mandatory: booking@bafflebanon.org

The sanitary mask will be required at the entrance and during the sessions.



Before ending this message from the organizers, we would like to express our gratitude to the two patrons who have supported BAFF throughout the last 5 years and to salute the work in humanitarian and education, so valuable and vital for Lebanon: **Robert A. Matta Foundation and Anne-Marie and Alexis Habib Foundation**.

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FILMS

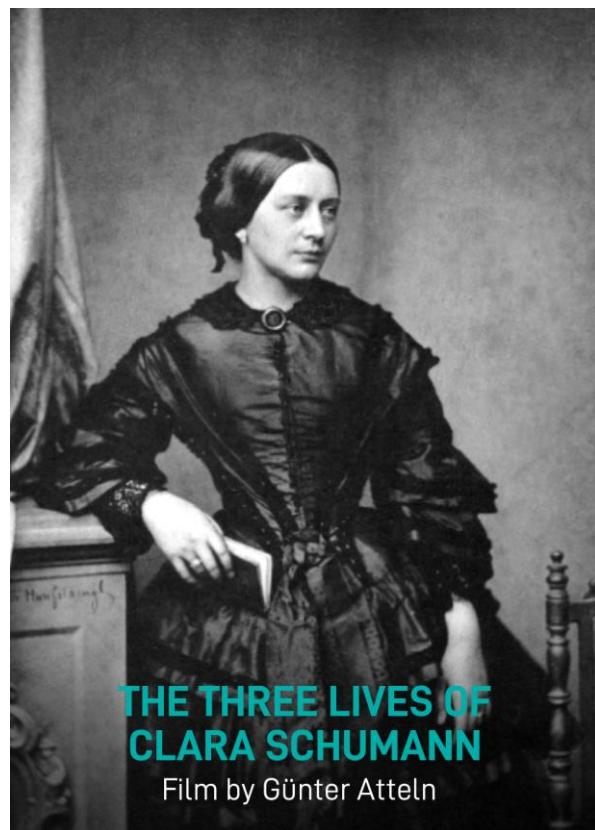
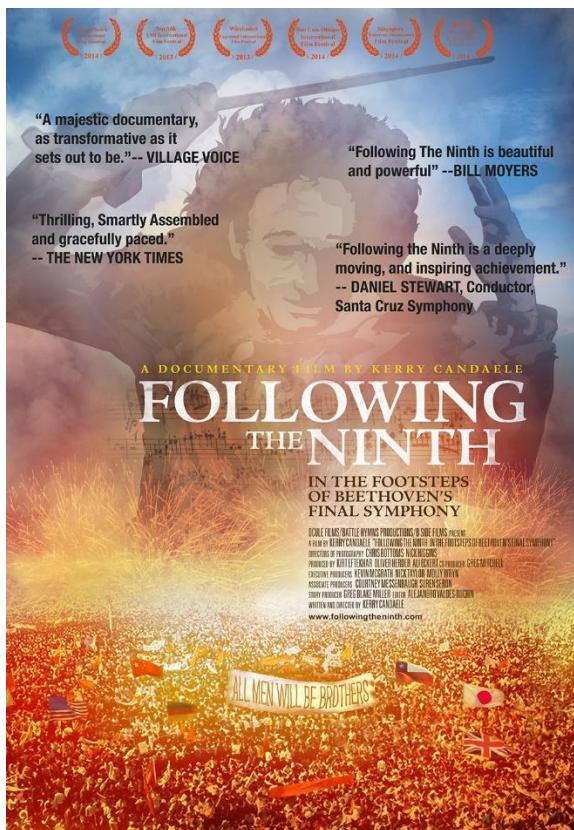
As part of the 250th anniversary of Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) birth, the festival organizers, in partnership with the **Goethe Institut**, will launch this VIth edition with a close look back on one of the many masterpieces of the composer, *Ode to Joy*, and the universality of art

- ***Beethoven's Ninth - Symphony for the World***, 90', 2020, Christian Berger,
- ***Following the Ninth***, 2013, 70', Kerry Candaële,

Two other music documentaries are scheduled during film week

- ***The Three Lives of Clara Schumann***, 2019, 56', Günter Atteln,
- ***Images of the East***, 2017, 27', Gidon Kremer and Sandro Kancheli.

Graciously offered by Accentus Music GmbH – Leipzig.

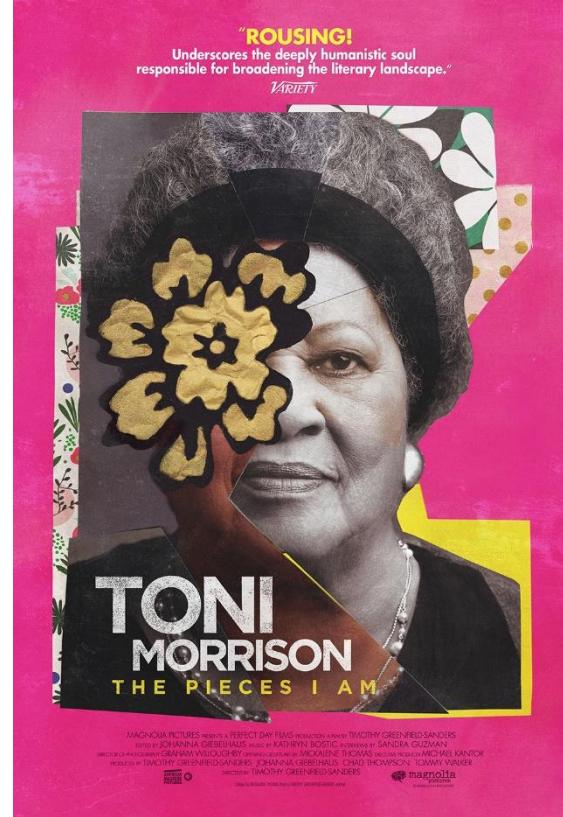
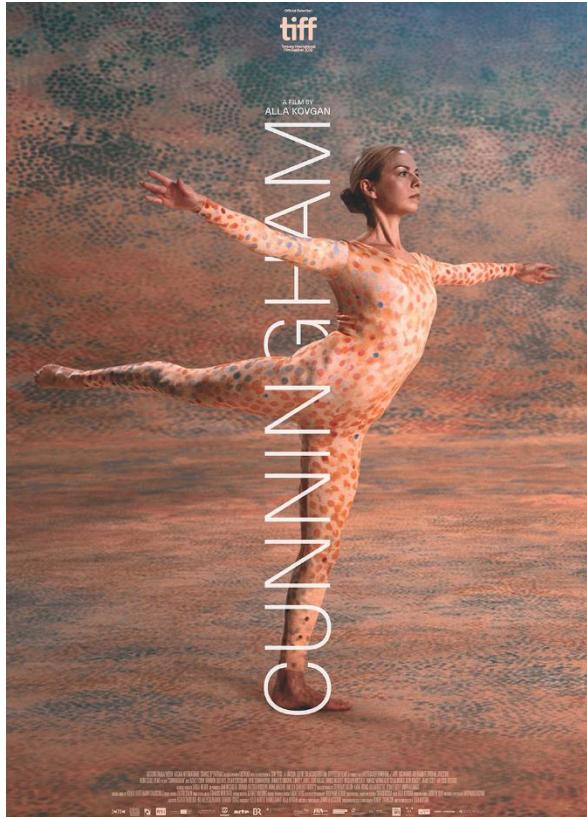


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In partnership with the **Embassy of the United States of America**, the festival organizers present the documentaries

- **Once Were Brothers. Robbie Roberson & the Band**, 2019, 110', Daniel Roher,
- **Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am**, 120', 2019, Timothy Greenfield-Sanders,
- **Cunningham**, 93', 2019, Alla Kovgan,
- **The Apollo**, 102', 2019, Roger Ross Williams,
- **Uprooted – The Journey of Jazz Dance**, 94', 2019, Khadifa Wong,
- **Rothko: Pictures Must Be Miraculous**, 2019, 53', Eric Slade.

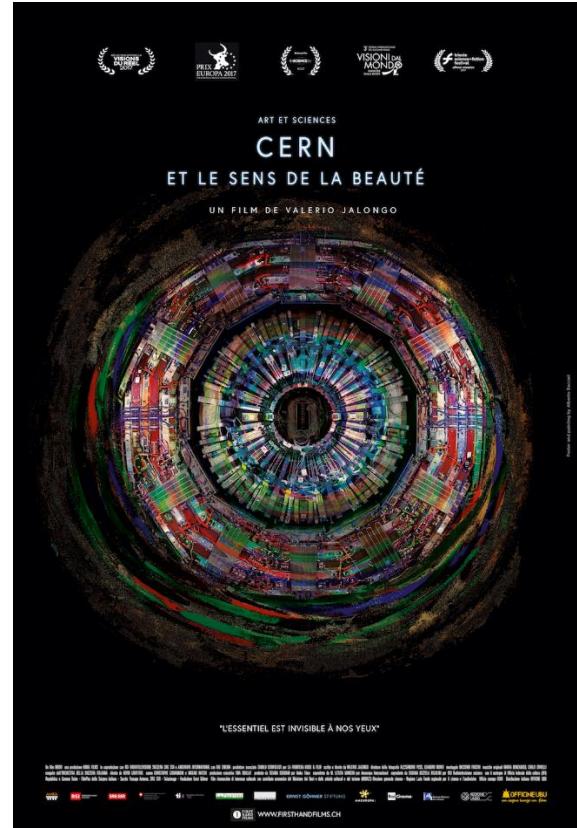
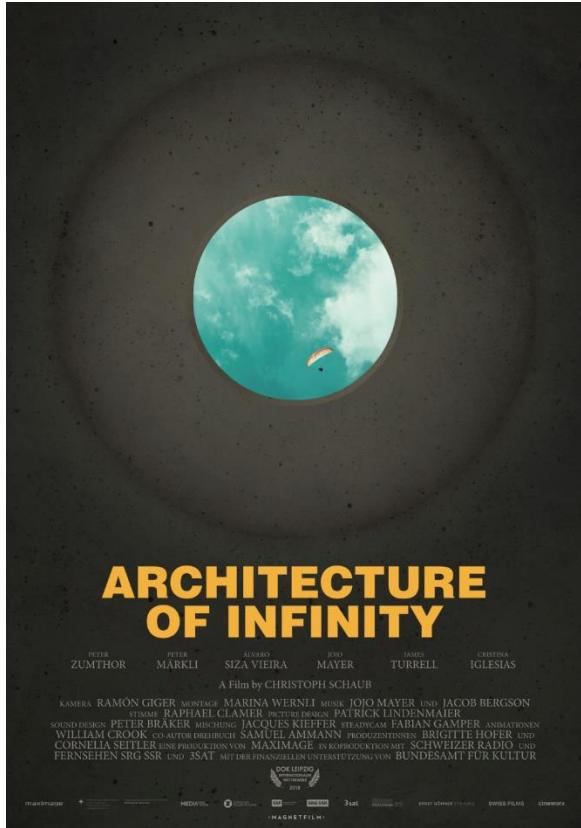


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In partnership with the **Embassy of Switzerland**, the festival presents the documentaries

- ***Cern and the Sense of Beauty***, 2018, 75', Valerio Jalongo,
- ***Renoir et la petite fille au ruban bleu***, 52', 2019, directed by Nicolas Lévy-Beff,
- ***Architecture of Infinity***, 2018, 86', Christoph Schaub.



In partnership with the **Istituto Italiano di Cultura**, and on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the painter Raphael (1483-1520), the festival organizers present the world premiere of the documentary on the retrospective exhibition dedicated to the Italian master at the Quirinal Museum in Rome

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- **Raphael Revealed**, 2020, 88', Phil Grabsky/EOS,

And for the first time since its creation, BAFF offers a non-documentary film on a tormented period in the life of Michelangelo, a rich and contrasting portrait of the Italian master

- **Il Peccato / Sin**, 2020, 134', Andrei Konchalovsky.

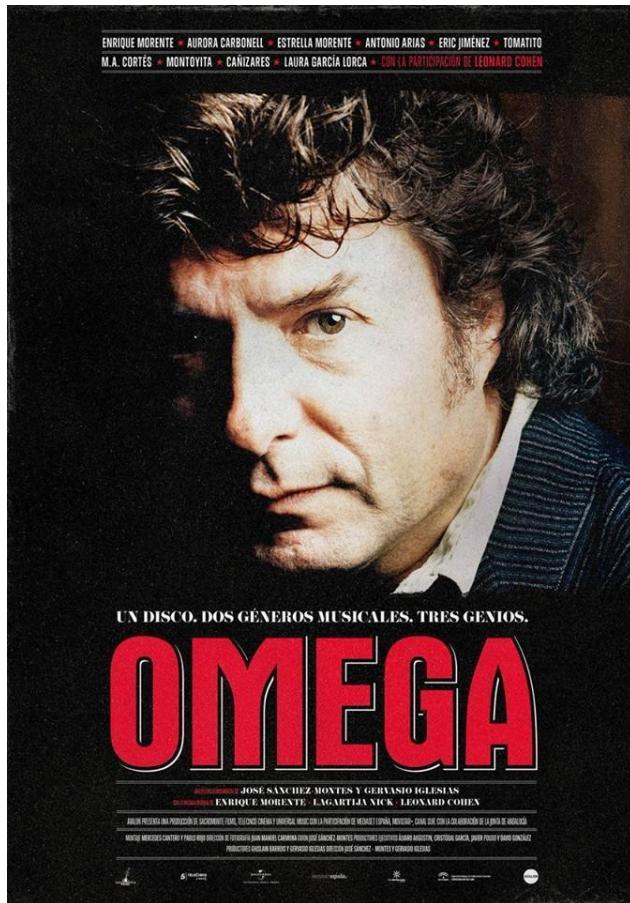


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When Leonardo Cohen, Federico García Lorca, rock and flamenco come together, the result is unusual. In partnership with the **Embassy of Spain**, the festival is pleased to screen the documentary

- ***Omega***, 2016, 83', José Sanchez-Montes.



In partnership with the **Embassy of Belgium**, and out of love for Lebanon, the Belgian director, Françoise Levie, offers the BAFF audience a deep reflection on obscurantism and freedom

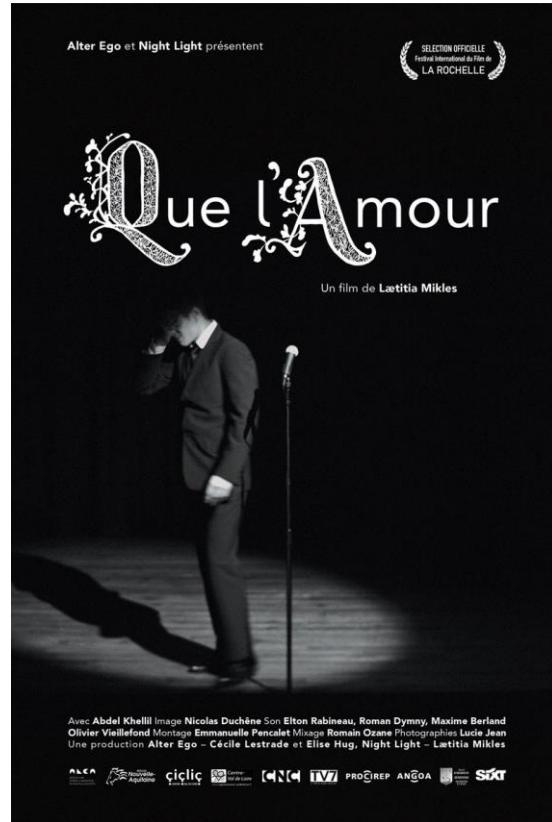
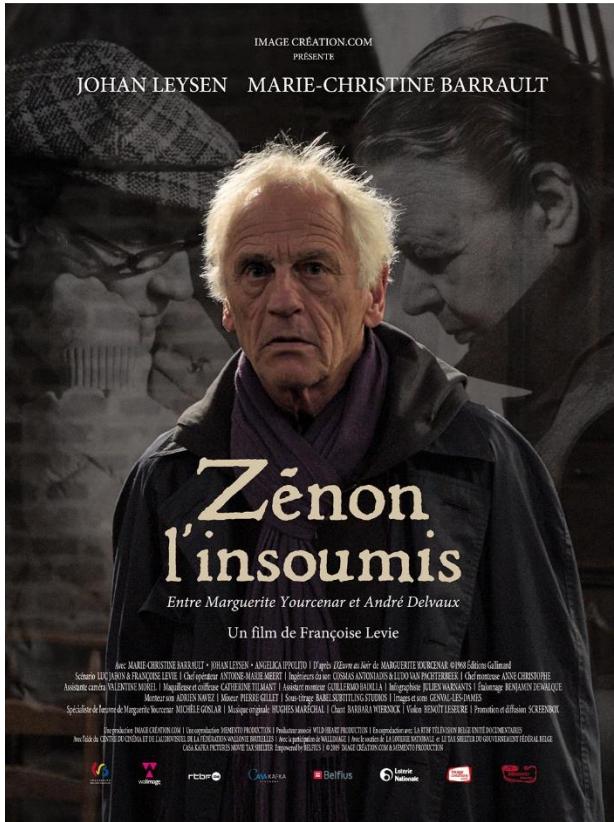
- ***Zénon l'insoumis***, 2019, 80', Françoise Levie,

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Love lays in the life of this young Algerian migrant when he discovers the songs of Jacques Brel

- *Que l'amour*, 2019, 79', Laetitia Mikles.



Beirut, Love & Women.

Beirut, Tuesday, August 4, 6:07 p.m.; she was sitting at home with her husband, the Dutch Ambassador to Lebanon; Hedwig Waltmans-Molier was fatally injured in the blast. On her hospital bed, before passing away, she donated her organs to two Lebanese patients. The gift of self for the love of one's neighbor. No tribute, no masterpiece can honor such a lesson of love. The festival organizers wish to keep alive the memory of this exceptional woman and her act of

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love, by associating Johannes Vermeer's masterpiece, The Girl with the Pearl Earring (c.1665, Mauritshuis Museum, The Hague) with Hedwig Waltmans-Molier's smile

- ***Girl with a Pearl Earring and Other Treasures from the Mauritshuis***, 2016, 91', David Bickerstaff/EOS. Graciously offered by Exhibition on Screen et Seventh Art in memoriam Hedwig Waltmans-Molier.



On August 4, a large explosion shook Beirut. All human life disappeared. There's a woman in the city. A city, a letter, a woman inspire the Lebanese director Nicolas Khoury who shoots this short artistic film with the support of the **Embassy of the United States of America** and the **Alice Mogabgab Gallery**

- ***Une ville et une femme***, 2020, 13', Nicolas Khoury.

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SYNOPSIS

Rothko, Pictures Must Be Miraculous, 2019, 53', Eric Slade. English

Celebrated painter Mark Rothko is considered one of the most renowned figures of the Abstract Expressionism. He transformed the world of art beginning in the 1940s. For decades, Rothko struggled to find his unique voice, snubbed by galleries and museums, and barely subsisting on occasional sales and a day job as an art teacher. In 1948, Rothko discovered the style that would make him one of the world's most acclaimed artists.

Once Were Brothers. Robbie Robertson & the Band, 2019, 110', Daniel Roher. English

Once Were Brothers, Robbie Robertson & the Band is a confessional, cautionary, and sometimes humorous, tale of one of the most enduring groups in the history of popular music. The film blends rare archival footage and interviews with many of Robertson's friends and collaborators, including Bruce Springsteen, Eric Clapton, Van Morrison, Scorsese, Taj Mahal, Peter Gabriel, David Geen and Ronnie Hawkins.

Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am, 120', 2019, Timothy Greenfield-Sanders. English

An artful and intimate meditation on the life and works of the legendary storyteller and Nobel prize-winner. From her childhood in the steel town of Lorain, Ohio, to '70s-era book tours with Muhammad Ali, from the front lines with Angela Davis to her own riverfront writing room — Toni Morrison leads an assembly of her peers, critics and colleagues on an exploration of race, America, history and the human condition as seen through the prism of her own literature. Inspired to write because no one took a "little black girl" seriously, Morrison reflects on her lifelong deconstruction of the master narrative. Woven together with a rich collection of art, history, literature and personality, the film includes discussions about her many critically

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acclaimed works, including novels *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula* and *Song of Solomon*, her role as an editor of iconic African-American literature and her time teaching at Princeton University.

Cunningham, 93', 2019, Alla Kovgan. English with English subtitles.

Cunningham is about legendary American choreographer Merce Cunningham. The film follows Merce's artistic evolution over three decades of risk and discovery (1944–1972), from his early years as a struggling dancer in New York City to his emergence as one of the most visionary choreographers in the world. Misunderstood and rejected by the dance world of his time, Merce persevered against all odds and developed a new dance technique and a new way of thinking about making dance performances in collaboration with composer John Cage and visual artist Robert Rauschenberg.

Cern and the Sense of Beauty, 2018, 75', Valerio Jalongo. V.O. with English subtitles

Following the discovery of the Higgs boson, CERN has confirmed its reputation as a place where human knowledge confronts the mystery of our existence at the highest possible level: we will be putting to CERN's scientists and physicists the great questions faced in the past by philosophers and mystics – about the universe, our origins, our destiny. Of these men and women of science, some have faith in God, some believe only in the laws of physics and in mathematical formulae. But almost all recognize that, in order to understand the elusive nature of matter and the cosmos, they must cultivate their sixth sense: the sense of beauty.

Renoir et la petite fille au ruban bleu, 52', 2019, Nicolas Lévy-Beff. French

Renoir et la petite fille au ruban bleu is a masterpiece by Auguste Renoir, unanimously recognized throughout the world, now owned by the Emil Bührle Collection (Zurich). Though currently priceless and universally admired, the painting's recognition has come a long way. The

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film follows the tumultuous journey of this painting whose fate is intimately linked to that of its model, Irène Cahen d'Anvers. A fate sadly connected to the darkest hours of Europe in the first half of the XXth century.

Architecture of Infinity, 2018, 86', Christoph Schaub. V.O. with English subtitles.

Temporality and age are inherent in every object and creature and, depending on one's outlook, may transcend to infinity. How can this be imagined? What goes beyond it? The filmmaker Christoph Schaub starts his personal journey through time and space in his childhood, when his fascination with sacred buildings began – and his wonder at beginnings and ends. Schaub explores, together with the architects Peter Zumthor, Peter Märkli and Álvaro Siza Vieira, the artists James Turrell and Cristina Iglesias and drummer virtuoso Jojo Mayer, the magic of sacred spaces, defined here as far more than church buildings. Who owns spirituality? The film follows "spiritual life" in architecture and the fine arts, but also in nature, and literally lifts it over and above the limits of thinking. A slightly floating camera immerses us in somnambulistic images, takes us on a sensual and sensing journey through vast spaces, and guides our eye towards the infinity of the starry sky and the depths of the ocean. Past and present, primeval times and light years, it's all there.

Raphael Revealed, 2020, 88', Phil Grabsky/EOS. English with English sub. **World Premiere**.

Marking the 500th anniversary of Raphael's death, the greatest exhibition ever held of his works took place in Rome. Exhibition on Screen was granted exclusive access to this once-in-a-lifetime show. With over two hundred masterpieces, including paintings and drawings – over a hundred of which have been brought together for the first time – this major exhibition celebrates the life and work of Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino.

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With unprecedented loans from the Louvre, Uffizi, National Gallery of Art, the Prado Museum and more, the exhibition and this film provide an unprecedented opportunity to see the breadth of Raphael's skill, creativity and ingenuity.

***Following the Ninth*, 2013, 70', Kerry Candaele. English**

Following the Ninth is a documentary film about the global impact of Ludwig van Beethoven's final symphony. Written in 1824, near the end of Beethoven's life, the Ninth Symphony was composed by a man who was sick, alienated from almost everyone, and completely deaf. Despite the love he missed, Beethoven created an anthem of joy dedicated to human kind.

Celebrated to this day for its ability to heal, repair, and bring people together over great divides, the Ninth has become an anthem of liberation and hope that has inspired many around the world: from Tiananmen Square and Berlin Wall in 1989, from Chilean opposition to Japan earthquake and tsunami of 2011, the film takes us into the power of the Ninth and how this symphony contributes to change the world.

***Beethoven's Ninth - Symphony for the World*, 90', 2020, Christian Berger. V.O with English sub.**

To this day, Beethoven's Symphony No.9 is one of the most popular pieces of classical music in the world. But what is it about this global hit? The film charts the success of the symphony around the globe and encounters passionate amateur musicians and musical personalities. Watch as Greek conductor Teodor Currentzis works on Beethoven's Ninth with his ensemble, MusicAeterna. Follow Chinese composer and Oscar winner Tan Dun as he creates a new composition inspired by the great Beethoven symphony. Experience the Orchestre Symphonique Kimbanguiste in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as they play the Ninth. Visit a favela in Brazil, where Beethoven's music helps people get off the streets. Be amazed as a choir of 10,000 in Japan sings the final chorus of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with great enthusiasm. Learn how

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Paul Whittaker helps make Beethoven accessible for deaf people. And find out how British DJ Gabriel Prokofiev performs a symphonic remix of Beethoven's Ninth.

The Three Lives of Clara Schumann, 2019, 56', Günter Atteln. V.O with English sub.

The film sets out to trace the life of Clara Schumann born on September 13, 1819, in Leipzig, a spouse, a mother and an artist who, despite the significant hurdles of her time, became a superstar. Throughout Europe, she was celebrated as a pianist and received many honors. Her husband, the composer Robert Schumann, often had the feeling that he had to struggle for recognition. When he accompanied Clara on a concert tour to Russia, he was supposedly asked: "And you? What do you do? Do you also have something to do with music?"

Zénon l'insoumis, 2019, 80', Françoise Levie, French

Zenon is the hero of Marguerite Yourcenar's 1968 novel, *L'œuvre au Noir* (Translated into English by Grace Frick as *The Abyss*). Twenty years later in an adaptation for cinema by the Belgian cinema father, André Delvaux, it became the basis for a Gian Maria Volonté film.

Why create a documentary film about it today? Yourcenar's Zenon is a product of the Renaissance. He is a philosopher, physician, alchemist, inventor. In embracing the fundamental problems of the XVI the century, notably the thirst for power and wealth, social unrest and religious obscurantism, he raises such questions for our own era. Françoise Levie embraces this fictional character as a way of facing our uncertain times, freeing us from dogma and restoring our free will.

This documentary film employs several levels of narration. At one level is the comedian, Johan Leysen, who wants to produce a play about the principal character of *L'œuvre au Noir*. The inspiration for this is the sizable correspondence exchanged between Marguerite Yourcenar and the Belgian director, André Delvaux who had adapted the last part of *L'œuvre au Noir* for a film

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starring the Italian actor Gianmaria Volonté. At another level is Marie Christine Barrault, French actress, who, reading extracts from *L'œuvre au Noir* in Yourcenars' House, Petite Plaisance, in Maine, in effect acts as a guide for Johan Leysen in his research.

***Que l'amour*, 2019, 79'**, Laetitia Mikles, French

One day, Abdel felt in love with Jacques Brel's songs and changed his life.

Abdel is like those tormented heroes from Scorsese's films, who endure, dream, fall and rise. And then, as in all black movies, there is this magical moment when the hero meets love. For Abdel, love is a song. Hearing Brel for the first time was a shock to him. From the Périgord to Algiers, he goes for a singing tour... Laetitia Mikles.

***Omega*, 2016, 83'**, José Sanchez-Montes. Spanish with English sub.

When Leonardo Cohen, Federico García Lorca, rock and flamenco come together, the result is unusual. Omega is a documentary about the eponymous album that fused songs and poetry of the late Leonard Cohen and Federico García Lorca with the voice of flamenco giant Enrique Morente. The pioneering album, a collaboration between Morente and Spanish post-punk band Lagartija Nick, was released 20 years ago.

***Images of the East*, 2017, 27'**, Accentus films, music Gidon Kremer & Kremerata Baltica.

I sympathize with all the suffering in the Middle East and I want the world to be better. I know that what I can do with my violin or with my music is just a drop in the ocean, but I would feel ashamed not to deliver this drop if I can do it. Gidon Kremer.

Syrian sculptor Nizar Ali Badr has been capturing the story of refugees from his country, using pebbles from his local beach. His art has become the inspiration for a unique film — the concept

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of Latvian violinist Gidon Kremer, who asked Georgian animator Sandro Kancheli to bring the stone figures to life along with his music.

Girl with a Pearl Earring, 2016, 91', David Bickerstaff/EOS, English with French subtitles.

Tribute to Hedwig Waltmans-Molier.

After two years on a blockbuster world tour, the *Girl with a Pearl Earring* has returned home to the much-loved Mauritshuis Gallery in The Hague. With huge queues lining up for a glimpse of her enigmatic beauty and nearly 1.2 million visitors at its stop in Japan, the enduring appeal of this masterpiece is indisputable.

The beautifully filmed documentary goes in pursuit of the many unresolved riddles surrounding the extraordinary painting and its mysterious creator Vermeer. Who was this girl? Why and how was it painted? Why is it so revered?

Une ville et une femme, 2020, 13', Nicolas Khoury. French with English subtitles.

On August 4, 2020, a large explosion shakes Beirut. All human life disappears. There's a woman in the city.

Uprooted – The Journey of Jazz Dance, 94', 2019, Khadifa Wong. English

The story of jazz dance is a complex one as it goes to the very heart of humanity. It is a story of triumph over adversity, oppression and privilege as well as a celebration. Because ultimately, what all people have in common is rhythm and a basic human need to get down. The film aims to not only educate people about jazz dance's lineage and history, but also to inspire the dancer of tomorrow to keep this art form alive.

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Il Peccato / Sin, 2020, 134', Andrei Konchalovsky. Drama. V.O. with English subtitles.

Andrei Konchalovsky's *IL PECCATO (SIN)* follows Michelangelo through the agonies and ecstasy of his own creative genius, as two rival noble factions compete for his loyalty.

Florence, early XVI century. Although widely considered a genius by his contemporaries, Michelangelo Buonarroti (Alberto Testone) is reduced to poverty and depleted by his struggle to finish the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. When his commissioner and head of the Della Rovere nobility Pope Julius II dies, Michelangelo becomes obsessed with sourcing the finest marble to complete his tomb. The artist's loyalty is tested when Leo X, of the rival Medici family, ascends to the papacy and charges him with a lucrative new commission – the façade of the San Lorenzo basilica. Forced to lie to maintain favour with both families, Michelangelo is progressively tormented by suspicion and hallucinations, leading him to ruthlessly examine his own moral and artistic failings. Written and directed by Andrei Konchalovsky, *IL PECCATO (SIN)* is a gripping reflection on the agony and ecstasy of individual greatness, and the profound humanity behind the legend of the Renaissance.

The Apollo, 102', 2019, Roger Ross Williams. English.

Apollo Theater on 125th Street in Harlem is more than just a theater. It's the birthplace and home of countless great African-American performers: James "Mister Apollo" Brown, Ella Fitzgerald, Ray Charles, Prince, Richard Pryor—the list goes on and on. It was in this safe haven that Billie Holiday dared to sing "Strange Fruit" live, and where African-American culture could be freely celebrated. That much is clear from the hyperkinetic edits with lots of never-before-seen footage—including the first-ever shows by "Little" Stevie Wonder and Lauryn Hill—and anecdotes galore in interviews with all the people who were there.

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