



The 19th edition of the Marrakech International Film Festival takes place from 11 to 19 November 2022

MARRAKECH PAYS TRIBUTE TO FOUR GREAT CINEMA PERSONALITIES FROM FOUR CONTINENTS



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Rabat, 27 October 2022. In keeping with its tradition of celebrating cinema in all its diversity, the Marrakech International Film Festival will honour four great personalities in recognition of their brilliant careers.

Iconic Scottish actor **Tilda Swinton**, renowned US filmmaker **James Gray**, Moroccan film pioneer and director **Farida Benlyazid** and Indian superstar **Ranveer Singh** will receive the Festival's Étoile d'or.

A singular Scottish performer and producer on the international cinema landscape, **Tilda Swinton** has amassed one of the most prodigious and unique filmographies of recent decades, alternating roles in demanding auteur films and Hollywood blockbusters. Faithful to the filmmakers whose paths she crosses, she has been the muse of Derek Jarman and then Luca Guadagnino, and regularly collaborates with Jim Jarmusch, Wes Anderson and Joanna Hogg. Capable of all manner of transformations, she moves easily among genres and characters, surprising and excelling in every case for over thirty years, Swinton has had an extraordinary career that makes her one of the most exciting figures of contemporary cinema.

" To be honoured by the Marrakesh film festival for which I have such admiration and affection is truly touching. To return to celebrate with my friends this exceptional forum for world cinema and the perpetual global fellowship of film love with the beautiful audience there will be a pure joy for which I am deeply grateful " declared the Scottish actor and producer.

Discovered in the 1990s with his first film, *Little Odessa*, which he directed at the age of twenty-five, **James Gray** immediately established himself as one of the most gifted filmmakers of his generation. Author of several exceptional films, among them *The Yards*, *We Own the Night* and *Two Lovers*, James Gray has carved out a place for himself on the border between independent and studio cinema. An heir to the New Hollywood movement and an erudite cinephile, Gray is the author of a naturalistic and intimate body of work, marked by filial and amorous relationships, outsider characters and existential choices.

*" Thank you to the Marrakech Film Festival for presenting me with this very special honour, the Etoile d'Or. I'm so thrilled that I also get to present my film *Armageddon Time* to filmgoers in Morocco. The film is a deeply personal one and not only reflects certain aspects of my youth but also looks ahead and portrays the enduring issues and inequities facing the world today. Thank you for recognising these themes, most of them present in all my films, and for honouring me in this way, "* said Gray in an official statement.

A true pioneer of Moroccan cinema, **Farida Benlyazid** has to her credit many accomplishments that have made her a central figure in the nation's cinema. She is the first Moroccan woman to produce a film, an accomplished screenwriter who has written several classics such as *Poupées de roseaux*, *Badis* and *Looking for My Wife's Husband*, and the director of a body of work that addresses issues of spirituality, the status of women in society and the quest for justice and truth. A free and independent artist, Benlyazid has paved the way for many Moroccan women directors who have looked to the director of *A Door to the Sky* and *Women's Wives* as an inspiration and a model.

" I thank His Majesty King Mohammed VI for creating this beautiful festival that brings together members of the Moroccan film family with those from around the world. I thank His Royal Highness Moulay Rachid—it is a great honour to receive this tribute, after having been a member of the jury for the first edition of the Festival. And I thank all the organisers of the Festival for inviting me every year. I particularly like this Festival, which promotes the first and second works of filmmakers. Over the years, I have had the pleasure of seeing wonderful films, and the selection has always been excellent. It is with great emotion that I look forward to seeing you there. "

In the space of a decade, **Ranveer Singh** has had a meteoric rise to become one of the most celebrated actors in Bollywood and a star whose popularity extends beyond the borders of his home country. In Morocco, and in Marrakech in particular, Indian cinema has many admirers and Ranveer Singh is one of its most appreciated personalities. A versatile actor, he has delivered memorable performances in *Gully Boy*, a milestone film in his career, in which he plays an apprentice rapper from a disadvantaged neighbourhood, as well as in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's productions, including *Bajirao Mastani*, in which Singh plays an eighteenth-century emperor. Singh has shaken up the codes of Indian cinema with his unparalleled communicative energy, offering a new, flamboyant model of masculinity.

" I'm deeply humbled and thrilled to be receiving a tribute which recognises my body of work along with this very, very special honour, the Etoile d'Or!

The notion that my craft has resonated in Africa is hugely gratifying! Its indicative of the fact that that my work has been able to transcend geographical and cultural borders. For a humble artiste, who wishes to bring people together through entertainment, this is greatly rewarding. I cannot wait to be in Marrakesh to soak in the love of the people and express my gratitude to them. "

TILDA SWINTON'S BIOGRAPHY

Tilda Swinton started making films with the director Derek Jarman in 1985 with *Caravaggio*.

Her second film was Peter Wollen's *Friendship's Death*. She and Jarman made seven more films together, including *The Last of England*, *The Garden*, *War Requiem*, *Edward II* (for which she won the Best Actress award at the 1991 Venice International Film Festival) and *Wittgenstein*, before Jarman's death in 1994. She gained wider international recognition in 1992 with her portrayal of Orlando, based on the novel by Virginia Woolf under the direction of Sally Potter.

She has established rewarding ongoing filmmaking relationships with Jim Jarmusch - including *Only Lovers Left Alive* and *The Dead Don't Die*, Joel and Ethan Coen, Lynne Ramsay (*We Need to Talk About Kevin*), Luca Guadagnino (*I Am Love*, *A Bigger Splash*, *Suspiria*), Joanna Hogg (*The Souvenir Parts 1 and 2*) and Bong Joon Ho (*Snowpiercer* and *Okja*).

Tilda also worked with the Hungarian master Béla Tarr (*The Man from London*), and has featured in the critically acclaimed comedy *Trainwreck* by Amy Schumer directed by Judd Apatow. In 2020 she made *The Human Voice* with Pedro Almodóvar.

She received both the BAFTA and Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress of 2008 for Tony Gilroy's *Michael Clayton*. In 2020, she was the recipient of both a BFI Fellowship and a Leon d'Oro at the Venice film festival for her lifetime's work. In 2022, she received the AMPAS Visionary award along with Julia Roberts, Sir Steve McQueen and Miky Lee.

In 2021, Tilda shot George Miller's *Three Thousand Years Of Longing* in Australia opposite Idris Elba, reunited with Wes Anderson for the fifth time for *Asteroid City* and Joanna Hogg for a third time on *The Eternal Daughter*. She recently shot with Julio Torres on his *Untitled Feature Comedy* with A24 and David Fincher on *The Killer* for Netflix.

JAMES GRAY'S BIOGRAPHY

JAMES GRAY (Writer/Director/Producer) made his directorial debut in 1994 at the age of 25 with *Little Odessa*, a widely acclaimed film which received the Critics Award at the Deauville Film Festival as well as the Silver Lion at the Venice Film Festival. That same year, he received nominations from the Independent Spirit Awards for Best First Feature and Best First Screenplay.

In 2000, Gray wrote and directed *The Yards*, his second feature and his first with Joaquin Phoenix, who would become a frequent collaborator, going on to star in his next three films. The cast also included Mark Wahlberg, Charlize Theron, Faye Dunaway, Ellen Burstyn and James Caan. The drama premiered In Competition at the Cannes Film Festival in 2000.

Gray's New York crime drama *We Own The Night* (2007) starred Mark Wahlberg, Joaquin Phoenix, Eva Mendes and Robert Duvall. The film received a César nomination in 2008 for Best Foreign Film and screened In Competition at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival.

His fourth feature, *Two Lovers* (2008), received nominations at the Independent Spirit Awards for Best Director and Best Female Lead. The Brooklyn-set drama starred Joaquin Phoenix opposite Gwyneth Paltrow, Vinessa Shaw and Isabella Rossellini. The film premiered In Competition at the 2008 Cannes Film Festival and went on to receive a César nomination for Best Foreign Film in 2009.

In May 2013, *The Immigrant*, which starred frequent collaborator Joaquin Phoenix, Marion Cotillard and Jeremy Renner, became his fourth film to premiere In Competition at the Cannes Film Festival. The film, which was released by The Weinstein Company in May 2014, went on to garner numerous awards including Best Actress (Marion Cotillard) and Best Cinematography (Darius Khondji) prizes from the New York Film Critics Circle.

Gray's film *The Lost City Of Z* was based on the best-selling novel by David Grann and starred Charlie Hunnam, Sienna Miller, Robert Pattinson and Tom Holland. It had its world premiere as the closing night selection of the 2016 New York Film Festival and was released in theaters by Amazon Studios/Bleecker Street in April 2017.

Gray's film *Ad Astra*, which he also co-wrote and produced, starred Brad Pitt and was released in theaters in September 2019 after its Venice Film Festival premiere.

His latest project, *Armageddon Time* - which he again wrote, directed and produced - stars Anthony Hopkins, Anne Hathaway and Jeremy Strong and will be released this fall by Focus Features.

Born in New York City, Gray grew up in Queens and attended the University of Southern California School of Cinema-Television. He now resides with his family in Los Angeles.

FARIDA BENLYAZID'S BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1948 in Tangier, Farida Benlyazid is a Moroccan director, producer, screenwriter, writer and journalist. In 1970, she went to Paris to study literature and cinema at the University of Vincennes, then at the École Supérieure d'Études Cinématographiques. She did several film internships in the capital between 1976 and 1978 before founding her first production company, Kamar Films. As the first female Moroccan producer, she produced Jillali Ferhati's *A Breach in the Wall*, which was selected for the Semaine de la Critique at the Festival de Cannes in 1978. With this experience, she created her own production company, Tingitania, in 1990 and produced or co-produced her films until 2006.

In Paris, she first directed a short documentary, *Identités de femmes*, about North African immigrants in the Paris region. She then wrote the screenplay for *Araïs min kassab / Poupées de roseau* (Jillali Ferhati, 1981), which was selected for the Directors' Fortnight in Cannes in 1982. It was in Morocco that Farida Benlyazid wanted to make films and continue writing, so she eventually settled in Tangier.

After working as a scriptwriter for several Moroccan directors, including Mohamed Abderrahman Tazi, for whom she wrote *Badis* (1989) and, later, *Looking for My Wife's Husband* (1995), she began directing the feature film, *Bâb es-sama' maftûh / A Door to the Sky* (1988). In it, she depicts a woman's spirituality that is far removed from orthodox (male) religious dictates on the one hand and from feminist watchwords on the other. The film, which was selected for many international festivals, has had an intercontinental career and is discussed to this day.

She then made a short documentary in Mali, *Aminata Traoré, une femme du Sahel* (1993), about the eponymous anti-globalisation activist.

Based on a popular tale, Benlyazid's second feature film was *Keïd Ensa / Women's Wiles* (1999). Her next films and television movies took her to Casablanca (*Dar elbeïda, yâ dar elbeïda / Casablanca, Casablanca*, 2002) before she returned to Tangier to adapt a novel by Angel Vasquez, *La Vida Perra de Juanita de Tanger / The Wretched Life of Juanita Narboni* (2006), which describes Tangier from the 1940s to the 1990s and 2000s through the peregrinations and continuous soliloquy of a heroine who is out of step with her own city.

Since that feature, apart from a fictional television film on slavery for 2M (*Ster ma strer Allah / Family Secret*, 2010), Benlyazid has directed documentaries that take her to the four corners of the country: *Casaneyda* (2007) ; *Houdoudouhoudoud / Frontieras* (2013), a docu-drama ; and a series of documentaries financed by the Meziane Foundation, which has the museum-like function of conserving Moroccan cultural heritage: *Tamy Tazi, Creations Over Time* (2013); a series of ten documentaries on Amazigh dances and music in remote villages of the Atlas Mountains and the desert (2014–2015); and *Amazigh Wedding in the Anergui Valley* (2016).

After writing the script of a biopic, *Fatema: La Sultane inoubliable* (2022) for director Mohamed Abderrahman Tazi, she embarked on a documentary project on Fatema Mernissi for which she wrote the script, *Sur les pas de Fatema*.

RANVEER SINGH'S BIOGRAPHY

A true phenomenon who has had a meteoric rise, Ranveer Singh has shaken up Bollywood and is now one of India's most celebrated actors.

A self-made man and a complete outsider, Singh has become one of the most popular icons among youth on the subcontinent, and is a celebrity far beyond its borders.

He is the youngest star to have attracted more than three billion viewers in cinemas with the blockbuster *Padmaavat*.

This talented actor refuses to be pigeonholed, whether in his choice of roles, his eccentric clothing choices or his hilarious sense of humour.

Singh has always dreamed of becoming a film star; ever since he was a child he has wanted to play the quintessential Indian film hero. After a difficult start, he made a name for himself with his first role, in *Band Baaja Baaraat*, a huge success that launched his career.

A showman par excellence, Singh has demonstrated his acting skills in a wide range of roles and a variety of genres. With such versatility, he is a surprise in each of his roles—examples include the lovable Bittu in *Band Baaja Baarat*, the exalted thief with a big heart in *Lootera*, or the fiery criminal in *Gunday*.

He became one of Sanjay Leela Bhansali's favourite performers—and that visionary filmmaker directed him in three successive films: *Goliyon Ki Rasleela Ram-Leela*, *Bajirao Mastani* and the magnificent *Padmaavat*, in which Singh revamped the role of the antagonist in contemporary Indian films, thereby building the anti-hero Khilji, a now-unforgettable big-screen character.

Singh has further cemented himself as one of the most gifted actors of his generation thanks to roles in *Simmba* and *Gully Boy*. Within a dozen years, he became a much sought-after actor, working with directors including the Khan family, Karan Johar, Rohit Shetty and Aditya Chopra.

In Kabir Khan's '83—a film that replays India's victory in the 1983 Cricket World Cup—Singh portrays the legendary Kapil Dev, the captain of the Indian team.

In 2018, *Padmaavat* and *Simmba* were resounding commercial successes; the industry banks on Ranveer, who single-handedly attracts five billion moviegoers every year.

An artist who is not afraid to take risks, Singh's upcoming films include Johar's *Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahaani* and Shetty's *Cirkus*.

Recently, Singh embarked on a new venture he is passionate about: InkInc, a music label dedicated to developing and building emerging artists.