



**The 20th Edition of the Marrakech International Film Festival
November 24th to December 2nd, 2023**

10 CELEBRATED NAMES OF WORLD CINEMA TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MARRAKECH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL'S IN CONVERSATION WITH... PROGRAMME

Rabat- November 7, 2023. A flagship programme of the Marrakech International Film Festival, the In Conversation With... series gives audiences the chance to meet some of the biggest names in cinema from around the world.

Ten leading figures from the world of cinema from five continents are expected in Marrakech this year to take part in the In Conversation With... programme. In front of Festival audiences, actors, directors, screenwriters, and producers are invited to share their vision and professional practice, all mixed in with tasty anecdotes and impromptu conversations.

The conversations are sure to be rich and exciting, with this year's guests, who include : charismatic Australian actor and director **Simon Baker**; talented Moroccan director **Faouzi Bensaïdi**, to whom the Festival pays tribute this year; free-spirited and audacious French director **Bertrand Bonello**; Willem Dafoe, the US actor with a legendary filmography; influential Indian filmmaker and producer **Anurag Kashyap**; singular Japanese director **Naomi Kawase**; magnetic Danish actor **Mads Mikkelsen**, who will receive the Festival's Étoile d'or; intense Danish-American actor and director **Viggo Mortensen**; chameleonic Scottish actor **Tilda Swinton**; and multi-award-winning, widely respected Russian director and screenwriter **Andrey Zvyagintsev**.

For further information, please visit
www.marrakech-festival.com

BIOGRAPHIES

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SIMON BAKER

Actor, director – Australia

Actor and director Simon Baker is known to audiences around the world for his performances in film and television. His film credits include Curtis Hanson's Academy Award-winning *L.A. Confidential* (1997), David Frankel's *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006), and J. C. Chandor's *Margin Call* (2011). He won international acclaim in the television series *The Mentalist* (2008–2015), which earned him Best Actor nominations from the Screen Actors Guild, the Emmy Awards, and the Golden Globe Awards. *Breath* (2018), Baker's directorial debut, won the award for Best Director from the Australian Directors Guild, and Baker also won the Best Supporting Actor prize. In 2020, Baker starred in Stephen Johnson's *High Ground*, which had its premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival. Baker was then seen starring alongside Julia Savage in award-winning Australian artist Del Kathryn Barton's *Blaze* (2022), which had its premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival. Baker is seen in the leading role of Ivan Sen's *Limbo* (2023), which also premiered in competition in Berlin, and went on to screen at the Toronto International Film Festival. Baker was invited to join the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in 2012. In 2013, he was honoured with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for his contribution to the entertainment industry.

© Gilles Pensart



FAOUZI BENSAÏDI

Director, screenwriter, actor – Morocco

A theatre and film director, screenwriter, and actor, Faouzi Bensaïdi directed his first multi-award-winning short film, *The Cliff*, in 1997. He then co-wrote *Far* with André Téchiné. In 2000, Bensaïdi directed two short films: *Le Mur*, which was presented at the Directors' Fortnight at the Festival de Cannes, and *The Rain Line*, which won an award at the Venice International Film Festival. His first feature-length film, *A Thousand Months* (2003), received two awards when it was screened in the Un Certain Regard section at Cannes. His following films were also selected for prestigious festivals: *WWW – What a Wonderful World* (2006) played at Venice; *Death for Sale* (2011) won the Art Cinema Award at the Berlin International Film Festival; and *Volubilis* (2017) was selected for Venice Days and won seven awards at the Tangier National Film Festival. Together with *Art for the World*, Bensaïdi contributed two short films to omnibus films that focus on climate change: *A Sunny Day* as part of *Interdependence* (2019); and *Why did you leave the horse alone?* for *Interactions* (2022), a film about connections between humans and animals. For *Summer Days* (2022), he adapted Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, setting the film in contemporary Morocco. *Deserts* (2023), his latest feature film, was selected for the Directors' Fortnight at Cannes. He has also appeared onscreen in films by Bertrand Bonello, Nadir Moknèche, Daoud Aoulad Sayad, and Jacques Audiard.

© Carole Bethuel



BERTRAND BONELLO

Director, screenwriter – France

Bertrand Bonello was born in 1968. His first feature film, *Something Organic* (1998), was presented at the Berlin International Film Festival in the Panorama section. *The Pornographer* (2001) was presented in La Semaine de la Critique at the Festival de Cannes, where it won the FIPRESCI Prize. His next several films were shown at Cannes: *Tiresia* (2003) was in the Official Competition; *On War* (2008) was in the Directors' Fortnight; *House of Tolerance* (2011) in the Official Competition and was nominated for eight César Awards; and *Saint Laurent* (2014), also in the Official Competition, represented France at the Academy Awards, and was nominated for ten Césars. After *Nocturama* (2016), *Zombi Child* (2019) was shown in the Directors' Fortnight and *Coma* (2022) was presented in competition at the Berlinale, where it won the FIPRESCI Prize. His latest film, *The Beast* (2023), premiered in Competition at the Venice International Film Festival.

© Brad Trent



WILLEM DAFOE

Actor – USA

Having made more than one hundred films over the course of his legendary career, Willem Dafoe is respected throughout the world for bringing versatility, boldness, and daring to some of the most iconic films of our time. His artistic curiosity in exploring the human condition leads him to projects all over the world, including Hollywood films and independent cinema. Dafoe's work has been recognised with four Academy Award nominations: three for Best Actor in a Supporting Role, for Oliver Stone's *Platoon* (1986), E. Elias Merhige's *Shadow of the Vampire* (2000), and Sean Baker's *The Florida Project* (2017), and one for Best Leading Actor for Julian Schnabel's *At Eternity's Gate* (2018). He has also received two Los Angeles Film Critics Association Awards, a New York Film Critics Circle Award, a National Board of Review Award, an Independent Spirit Award, and the Volpi Cup from the Venice International Film Festival, as well as an Honorary Golden Bear for Lifetime Achievement from the Berlin International Film Festival. Dafoe is one of the founding members of the Wooster Group, a New York-based experimental theatre collective. He created and performed in all of the group's work from 1977 through 2005. Since then, he has performed for and collaborated with Richard Foreman, Robert Wilson, and Romeo Castellucci. His most recent projects include Yórgos Lánthimos's *Poor Things* (2023) and a third collaboration with director Robert Eggers in *Nosferatu*, slated for release in 2024.

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ANURAG KASHYAP

Director, producer, screenwriter, actor – India

Born in 1972, Anurag Kashyap is an Indian director, producer, screenwriter, and actor known for his work in Hindi cinema. He is the recipient of several accolades, including four Filmfare Awards. For his contribution to cinema, the Government of France made him a Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters in 2013, the year India was the featured country at the Festival de Cannes to commemorate one hundred years of Indian cinema. Kashyap is the acclaimed director of *Gangs of Wasseypur* (2012), *Ugly* (2013), *Psycho Raman* (2016), *Dev.D* (2009), and *Black Friday* (2007), and was one of the directors of Netflix's first Indian series, *Sacred Games* (2018–2019). His most recent film, *Kennedy* (2023), had its premiere in the Official Selection of the Festival de Cannes.

© Leslie Kee



NAOMI KAWASE

Director, screenwriter – Japan

Naomi Kawase continues to make films based in Nara City, the town where she was born and raised. Her works, made through a consistent reality, go beyond the boundaries of documentary and fiction, and have received many awards from film festivals around the world, including two prizes from the Festival de Cannes: the *Caméra d'Or* for her debut film, *Suzaku* (1997), and the *Grand Prix* for *The Mourning Forest* (2007). Her recent films include *Still the Water* (2014), *Radiance* (2017), *Vision* (2018) and *True Mothers* (2020). While broadening spaces for expression in the world, in her own hometown, she started the Nara International Film Festival in 2010, and devotes her energy to cultivating the next generation of filmmakers. Serving as the director of the official film of the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics, a producer and senior advisor for Expo 2025 in Osaka-Kansai, Japan; a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador and writing essays. In 2022, she was awarded the *Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* by the French Government. In her private life, she is a mother of a child who grows vegetables and rice. Kawase produces a wide variety of work, regardless of genre.

© Greg William



MADS MIKKELSEN

Actor - Denmark

Mads Mikkelsen trained at the Aarhus Theatre Drama School and had his breakthrough in Nicolas Winding Refn's debut film, *Pusher* (1996). Their collaboration continued with *Bleeder* (1999), *Pusher II: With Blood on My Hands* (2004), and *Valhalla Rising* (2009). In 2011, Mikkelsen received the European Film Award for his contribution to world cinema. He has had prominent roles in Danish films including *Men and Chicken* (2015) and the Academy Award-nominated *A Royal Affair* (2012). He received the European Film Award for the Oscar-winning *Another Round* (2020), his second foray into the universe of Thomas Vinterberg, following his searing performance in *The Hunt* (2013), for which he won the Best Actor prize at the Festival de Cannes. More recently, Mikkelsen has starred in *Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny* (2023), *Arctic* (2019), *Doctor Strange* (2016), *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* (2016), and *Casino Royale* (2006), as well as playing the title role in the celebrated series *Hannibal* (2013–2015).

© DR



VIGGO MORTENSEN

Actor, director, screenwriter - USA, Denmark

Viggo Mortensen has won over audiences and critics alike with his innate talent and ability to transcend the boundaries of cinema. With a string of Golden Globe and Academy Award nominations for Best Actor, he has moved with ease between films of a variety of genres, from epic fantasy to intimate realism, from poignant dramas to war stories, from comic adventures to gripping thrillers. With a career full of memorable performances, Mortensen has distinguished himself for his versatility and ability to delve deep into the psychology of his characters. In 2020, he moved behind the camera to make *Falling*, his feature directorial debut. True to his desire to offer films with strong themes, he is preparing to unveil his second feature, *The Dead Don't Hurt*, in 2024.



TILDA SWINTON

Performer, screenwriter, producer – Scotland

Tilda Swinton started her work in cinema with Derek Jarman in 1985 with *Caravaggio*. They made seven more films together, including *The Last of England* (1987), *Edward II* (1991), for which she was named Best Actress at the Venice International Film Festival, and *Wittgenstein* (1993). Swinton has established ongoing relationships with numerous renowned directors, appearing in Jim Jarmusch's *Only Lovers Left Alive* (2013) and *The Dead Don't Die* (2019); Luca Guadagnino's *I Am Love* (2009), *A Bigger Splash* (2015), and *Suspiria* (2018); Joanna Hogg's *The Souvenir Parts 1 and 2* (2019, 2021) and *The Eternal Daughter* (2022); and Bong Joon Ho's *Snowpiercer* (2013) and *Okja* (2017). She has also appeared in Lynne Ramsay's *We Need to Talk about Kevin* (2011) and Hungarian master Béla Tarr's *The Man from London* (2007). In 2020, Swinton received a BFI Fellowship as well as a Gold Lion from the Venice International Film Festival for her lifetime's work. More recently, she appeared in George Miller's *Three Thousand Years of Longing* (2022), Wes Anderson's *Asteroid City* (2023), and David Fincher's *The Killer* (2023), which was screened in competition in Venice.



ANDREÏ ZVYAGINTSEV

Director, screenwriter – Russia

Born in 1964, Andrey Zvyagintsev attended the Novosibirsk State Theatre Institute and graduated from the acting faculty of the Russian Institute of Theatre Arts in Moscow. In the following years, Zvyagintsev made several stage, film, and television appearances as an actor. In 2003, he made his directorial debut with *The Return*, which won the Golden Lion and the Lion of the Future at the Venice International Film Festival. His second film, *The Banishment* (2007), competed for the Palme d'Or at the Festival de Cannes, where actor Konstantin Lavronenko was named Best Actor, a first for a Russian artist. In 2011, Zvyagintsev's *Elena* won the Special Jury Prize in the Un Certain Regard section at Cannes. *Leviathan* (2014), which Zvyagintsev co-wrote with Oleg Negin, screened in competition in Cannes, where it won the Best Screenplay Award; the film went on to win the Golden Globe for Best Foreign-Language Film – the first Russian feature to win that prize since 1969. *Loveless* (2017) won the Jury Prize in Cannes and was nominated for Best Foreign Language Film at the Academy Awards. It also received the César Award for Best Foreign Film, another first for Russian cinema. In 2018, he returned to Cannes, serving as a juror. Zvyagintsev is a member of both the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and the European Film Academy.