



Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

Film Fest Gent: War in Times of Art

Ghent, 28.09.2026 [ENA]

From war and uncertainty to personal struggles and artistic freedom, the 53rd Film Fest Gent explores what cinema can mean in difficult times. From 7 to 18 October, Ghent welcomes more than 100 feature films, 40 shorts, 23 documentaries and two VR projects from 49 countries.

The festival opens with Coward by Belgian director Lukas Dhont, set during the First World War. Behind the trenches, young soldiers try to escape the brutality of war through theatre and music. The closing film, Le Faux Soir by Michaël R. Roskam, looks at another form of resistance. It tells the true story of Belgian resistance fighters who produced a fake edition of the Nazi-controlled newspaper Le Soir in 1943. Together, the opening and closing films frame art, imagination and storytelling as ways of resisting reality.

The festival's International Competition brings 12 films into the spotlight, with an international jury awarding the Grand Prix for Best Film and the Georges Delerue Award for Best Soundtrack or Sound Design. Music has traditionally been central to the competition, which was created in 1985 to explore the relationship between music and cinema. Beyond the competition, Gala & Specials and the Official Selection offer premieres and discoveries from established directors and emerging filmmakers. The programme includes new work by Danny Boyle, Werner Herzog, Ryusuke Hamaguchi, James Gray and Martin McDonagh.

Small personal stories are just as important as major historical events. The programme explores divorce, gender transition, infidelity, family relationships and childhood memories against backgrounds shaped by conflict and social change. The Classics programme turns to French master Éric Rohmer, whose films transform seemingly ordinary questions of love, loyalty, temptation, jealousy and doubt into complex portraits of human behaviour. His three major cycles, Six Moral Tales, Comedies and Proverbs and Tales of the Four Seasons, offer an opportunity to rediscover one of the most distinctive voices of the French Nouvelle Vague.

The festival also shines a light on filmmakers working outside conventional production models. Argentine collective El Pampero Cine has spent more than two decades making films known for their freedom, unpredictability and collaborative approach. A second focus is on American queer filmmaker Barbara Hammer, a pioneering figure whose experimental films placed lesbian desire and women's experiences at the centre of her work. Her retrospective shows how cinema can challenge established visual languages

Redaktioneller Programmdienst: European News Agency

Annette-Kolb-Str. 16
D-85055 Ingolstadt
Telefon: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.660
Telefax: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.661
Email: contact@european-news-agency.com
Internet: european-news-agency.com

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while making previously underrepresented experiences visible.

Film music again receives a major place in the programme. The Film Music Days, from 8 to 10 October, bring composers and film professionals together for talks, workshops and masterclasses. Guests include Trevor Jones and Hildur Guðnadóttir, while Volker Bertelmann and Edward Berger are among the creative guests. On 10 October, the World Soundtrack Awards celebrate international film music at De Bijloke, with Brussels Philharmonic conducted by Dirk Brossé. Trevor Jones will receive a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Music and cinema also meet in Videodroom, the annual collaboration between Film Fest Gent and arts centre VIERNULVIER. Cult films are given new live soundtracks, creating unexpected encounters between old images and contemporary music. Young audiences are included too: Kidsproof Sunday on 11 October offers five family-friendly films, while the Film Fest Café provides a meeting place for visitors and free daily talks with filmmakers, actors and composers.

Film Fest Gent combines international cinema, classics, documentaries, experimental work, film music and family programming across twelve days in Ghent. Its 2026 programme ultimately makes a broader case for art: not simply as entertainment, but as a way to question reality, preserve memory, create connections and imagine alternatives in uncertain times. The full programme and tickets are available through the official festival website: <https://www.filmfestival.be/en/>

Practical information

Film Fest Ghent, 7–18 October 2026.

Film Music Days, 8–10 October 2026.

World Soundtrack Awards, 10 October 2026, De Bijloke, Ghent.

Bericht online lesen:

https://crimenewsandmore.en-a.de/kunst_kultur_und_musik/film_fest_gent_war_in_times_of_art-94474/

Redaktion und Verantwortlichkeit:

V.i.S.d.P. und gem. § 6 MDSStV: Sonny Plasschaert

**Redaktioneller Programmdienst:
European News Agency**

Annette-Kolb-Str. 16
D-85055 Ingolstadt
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