

# CRITICS' CHOICE VI

INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ROTTERDAM 22 JAN - 2 FEB 2020

## ON COLLECTIVITY

**THU 23 JAN 16:15 SCHOUWBURG GROTE ZAAL**  
**THE LIGHTHOUSE BY ROBERT EGGERS**

INTRODUCED BY A VIDEO ESSAY BY KEVIN B. LEE

**FRI 24 JAN 15:30 DE DOELEN PRO HUB**  
**INTERDEPENDENCIES - MAPPING THE GREY**  
**AREAS BETWEEN PRESS & INDUSTRY**

WITH CHARLES McDONALD, CHRISTOPHE MERCIER, BELINDA VAN DE GRAAF,  
WENDY IDE AND TARA JUDAH. FREE ADMISSION

**FRI 24 JAN 16:30 SCHOUWBURG GROTE ZAAL**  
**ATLANTIQUE BY MATI DIOP**

INTRODUCED BY A VIDEO ESSAY BY PATRICIA PISTERS

**SAT 25 JAN 19:30 CINERAMA 6**  
**AIR CONDITIONER BY FRADIQUE**

INTRODUCED BY A VIDEO ESSAY BY RASHA HOSNY; Q&A WITH FRADIQUE

**SUN 26 JAN 09:45 PATHÉ 2**  
**EL AÑO DEL DESCUBRIMIENTO**  
**BY LUÍS LÓPEZ CARRASCO**

INTRODUCED BY A VIDEO ESSAY BY LUCÍA SALAS / LA VIDA ÚTIL;  
Q&A WITH LUÍS LÓPEZ CARRASCO

**SUN 26 JAN 21:00 LANTARENVENSTER 3**  
**THE FEVER BY MAYA DA-RIN**

INTRODUCED BY A VIDEO ESSAY BY VÍCTOR GUIMARÃES

**MON 27 JAN 09:45 PATHÉ 2**  
**KALA AZAR BY JANIS RAFA**

INTRODUCED BY A VIDEO ESSAY BY JESSIE MCGOFF; Q&A WITH JANIS RAFA

**TUE 28 JAN 13:00 HILTON ROTTERDAM**  
**COUNTERING IMAGES**

CRITICS' CHOICE VI CLOSING SESSION WITH KEVIN B. LEE, AGUSTINA ARBETMAN,  
HAFIZ RANCAJALE AND RASHA HOSNY. FREE ADMISSION

**WED 29 JAN 12:45 OUDE LUXOR**  
**BEANPOLE BY KANTEMİR BALAGOV**

INTRODUCED BY A VIDEO ESSAY BY JOOST BROEREN-HUITENGA

**FRI 31 JAN 21:30 KINO 4**  
**PARASITE BY BONG JOON HO**

WITH AN INTRODUCTION ON THE ROLE OF FOOD IN FILM BY CULINARY JOURNALIST  
LOT PISCAER, PLUS LATE NIGHT KOREAN SNACKS AND DRINKS

**SAT 1 FEB 13:30 KINO 4**  
**REPO MAN BY ALEX COX (1984)**

INTRODUCED BY A VIDEO ESSAY BY MIKLÓS KISS AND SHANT BAYRAMIAN  
Q&A WITH ANDREA MÜLLER-SCHIRMER

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FONDS

FESTIVALISTS

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FILM FESTIVAL  
ROTTERDAM

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# CRITICS' CHOICE VI

## INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ROTTERDAM 22 JAN - 2 FEB 2020

# ON COLLECTIVITY

Curators: Jan Pieter Ekker, Dana Linssen Video essayists: Joost Broeren-Huitenga, Victor Guimarães, Rasha Hosny, Miklós Kiss, Kevin B. Lee, Jessie McGoff, Lot Piscaer, Patricia Pisters, Shant Bayramian, Lucia Salas/La vida útil Many thanks: Agustina Arbetman, Mark Baker, Bero Beyer, Jenny Canters, Antje Ehmann, Aubéry Escande, Esther de Groot, Belinda van de Graaf, Marjan ter Haar, Wendy Ide, Tara Judah, Mirjam Klootwijk, Gerben de Louw, Charles McDonald, Christophe Mercier, Nikolas Montaldi, Andrea Müller-Schirmer, Hafiz Rancajale, Chris Schouten, Marc Smit, Ronny Theeuwes, Nico van Mechelen, Lotte Smelik/Das Brot and the Kino-cooks.

[IFFR.COM/CriticsChoiceVI](http://IFFR.COM/CriticsChoiceVI) #CriticsChoiceVI

## NOTE(S) ON COLLECTIVITY

Most critics know it's a bad idea. Writing a piece together. Bouncing ideas off each other, sure. Collaborating on research, definitely. Even a joint interview – who isn't seduced by the chance to play good cop/bad cop? But *writing* together? You really, really have to have the same way with words.

Nevertheless, one of the most famous texts in the history of film is a collective text. In 1970, the team behind French film magazine Cahiers du Cinéma wrote a communal review of John Ford's *Young Mr. Lincoln*. Not so much a review actually. More like a meta text; a statement of principles concerning the text they were writing. It couldn't have been a standard review anyway – even if such a thing ever existed – as it addressed a film from 1939. So more of a re-reading. The text is more famous for its content (its systematic analysis; its Marxist reading) than the method used to write it. Today, however, this method could open up some interesting perspectives on film criticism: what exactly is the collective creation of meaning and opinion?

For the sixth edition since (The Return of the) Critics' Choice at International Film Festival Rotterdam in 2015, we are picking up on the festival theme 'Collectives'. A film festival could be seen as a collective creation and a collective viewing experience. You watch some alone, but everything together.

A film can also be seen as the result of a collective creative process. The filmmakers' collectives presenting their work at IFFR are doing so often as a response to hierarchical thinking and as a counterweight to Western, dominant, patriarchal, colonial production methods.

'Collectivity' is an exciting but complex concept, also for film criticism. A large swathe of the history of film criticism consists of defining film as an art form amidst the other arts, and in relation to mass entertainment. In Europe, the second wave of emancipation in film criticism accompanied – not entirely coincidentally – the rise of the very same Cahiers du Cinéma which introduced the auteur theory. Film as a highly personal form of expression.

Reasons aplenty therefore to further investigate in Critics' Choice VI On Collectivity the concept of collectivity through films, video essays and debates. How is the auteur theory holding up against ideas of collective creation? And how does film criticism – focused on individual opinions – relate to the collective viewing experience? In times of review aggregates and social media, does film criticism tend towards consensus and the collective forming of opinions? Are non-conformist voices still valued? A hive mind is a beautiful thing – when it comes to pooling knowledge. But everyone seeing, thinking and believing the same is a terrifying prospect indeed.

At the same time: is there such a thing as a collective visual arsenal filmmakers can draw on? A collective visual subconscious, which enables us to understand one another's visual language, worldwide? What then are the problems surrounding collectivism, as demonstrated by history and which are returning in the form of political populism? Do filter bubbles in the media and identity politics, which increasingly reduce us to little islands, compel us to part with this concept – or is it time for a re-evaluation? For new forms of sharing, solidarity and togetherness?

If we've experienced anything during the past editions of Critics' Choice, it's that a form of collective thinking always arises in this thin silver thread running through the broader tapestry of the IFFR programme. Whether in themes such as #WhoseCinema, #SustainableCinema or #Absence, the video essays, discussions, debates and events always make up a collective response to the issues of what these things really mean: copyright and intellectual property, a sustainable way of thinking about film, or the absence of voices and histories.

During the two Talks we have organised for Critics' Choice VI On Collectivity, we will in particular be carrying on experiments with these ways of collective thinking. Together with IFFR Pro, we will also explore Interdependencies: Mapping the Grey Areas between Press & Industry.

Ever since the first edition of (The Return of the) Critics' Choice in 2015, Kevin B. Lee's video essays have been a major, inspirational part of the programme. In 2016/17, Lee had a residency in the Harun Farocki Institute in Berlin. The three films he made about this period – *Harun Farocki: The Counter-Image, Lexicon and Presented* – have been selected this year for the Regained programme and Critics' Choice VI On Collectivity.

During the closing session of Critics' Choice, we will be talking to Lee and other guests about the ways in which Farocki's visual analyses can be a source of inspiration for critics, curators and image-makers in 2020. How can critical thinking in this particular day and age give a different visual perspective on the way film and audio-visual media represent the world? Instead of a traditional debate, Critics' Choice curators Jan Pieter Ekker and Dana Linssen will go in search, with the audience and speakers (including filmmaker/curator Agustina Arbetman, film critic/programmer Rasha Hosny and artist/curator Hafiz Rancajale), of a means of communal thinking. During the session, the three short films will be shown again in full.

Jan Pieter Ekker & Dana Linssen – curators



THU 23 JAN 16:15 SCOUWBURG GROTE ZAAL

### THE LIGHTHOUSE BY ROBERT EGGERS

Robert Pattinson and Willem Dafoe shine as lighthouse keepers in this 19th-century maritime nightmare by Robert Eggers. They drink away the mind-numbing time, resulting in sexually charged tension, violent outbursts and supernatural hallucinations.

INTRODUCED BY A VIDEO ESSAY BY KEVIN B. LEE



FRI 24 JAN 15:30 DE DOELEN PRO HUB

### INTERDEPENDENCIES - MAPPING THE GREY AREAS BETWEEN PRESS & INDUSTRY

IFFR Pro Panel about independent film criticism in a framework where festivals, studios and distributors on the one hand and critics on the other become more and more interdependent. With publicist Charles McDonald, international distribution consultant Christophe Mercier, film journalists Belinda van de Graaf, Wendy Ide and programmer/critic Tara Judah. Free admission.



FRI 24 JAN 16:30 SCOUWBURG GROTE ZAAL

### ATLANTIQUE BY MATI DIOP

In Dakar, two young lovers have a star-crossed relationship. Souleiman is a construction worker who needs to leave the country for a better future, while Ada is another man's bride-to-be. Fate may bring them together in this beautiful darkly romantic tale, where realism can definitely be magical.

INTRODUCED BY A VIDEO ESSAY BY PATRÍCIA PÍSTERS



SAT 25 JAN 19:30 CÍNERAMA 6

### AIR CONDITIONER BY FRADIQUE

Air conditioners mysteriously start falling from buildings in the Angolan capital. The search for a working unit forms the starting point for a pleasantly free film representing the city's heartbeat. A great jazzy soundtrack, a rap and the chaotic hum of the city guide us through its streets and buildings.

INTRODUCED BY A VIDEO ESSAY BY RASHA HOSNY  
Q&A WITH FRADIQUE



SUN 26 JAN 09:45 PATHÉ 2

### EL AÑO DEL DESCUBRIMIENTO

BY LUIS LÓPEZ CARRASCO

An almost forgotten piece of social history is revived in a bar in Cartagena, through the stories of strikers who took part and discussions among young people about class consciousness, the economic crisis and the role of unions.

INTRODUCED BY A VIDEO ESSAY BY LUCÍA SALAS / LA VIDA ÚTIL  
Q&A WITH LUIS LÓPEZ CARRASCO



SUN 26 JAN 21:00 LANTARENVENSTER 3

### THE FEVER BY MAYA DA-RIN

Middle-aged native widower Justino's life is disrupted when his daughter tells him she wants to go study in Brasilia. This hypnotic fiction feature by Brazilian director Maya Da-Rin won the international film critics' award in Locarno, where lead actor Regis Myrupu also won Best Actor.

INTRODUCED BY A VIDEO ESSAY BY VÍCTOR GUIMARÃES



MON 27 JAN 09:45 PATHÉ 2

### KALA AZAR BY JANIS RAFA

A young couple employed by a pet crematorium finds fulfilment in respectfully removing cadavers. Their love blossoms in an environment where the boundaries between human and animal are fading. Until they run over a dog, and their relationship loses its way.

INTRODUCED BY A VIDEO ESSAY BY JESSIE MCGOFF  
Q&A WITH JANIS RAFA



TUE 28 JAN 13:00 HILTON ROTTERDAM

### CRITICS' CHOICE VI: COUNTERING IMAGES

During this closing session of Critics' Choice, curators Dana Linssen and Jan Pieter Ekker will talk to Kevin B. Lee and guests like Agustina Arbetman, Hafiz Rancajale and Rasha Hosny about the ways in which Harun Farocki's visual analyses can be a source of inspiration for critics, curators and image-makers. The three short films Lee made during his residency in the Harun Farocki Institute in Berlin will be shown as well. Free admission.



WED 29 JAN 12:45 OUDE LUXOR

### BEANPOLE BY KANTEMİR BALAGOV

In his visually overwhelming second film, mega-talent Kantemir Balagov reveals the war traumas of two women who fought in the Red Army. In a Leningrad ravaged by the siege, young women Iya and Masha pick up the pieces of their devastated lives in the autumn of 1945.

INTRODUCED BY A VIDEO ESSAY BY JOOST BROEREN-HUITENGA



FRI 31 JAN 21:30 KINO 4

### PARASITE BY BONG JOON HO

Inspired by their love of classic cinema, Bong Joon Ho and his cinematographer Kyung-pyo Hong made a black-and-white version of *Parasite*, their 2019 Palme d'Or winner that recently was nominated for six Academy Awards, including best film and best director.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION ON THE ROLE OF FOOD IN FILM BY CULINARY JOURNALIST LOT PISCAER, PLUS LATE NIGHT KOREAN SNACKS AND DRINKS



SAT 1/2 13:30 KINO 4

### REPO MAN BY ALEX COX (1984)

While nihilistic punk Otto is being trained as a 'repo man' (repossessing cars) in Los Angeles, he gets hold of a stunning Chevrolet Malibu '64 – with supernatural powers. Ultimate cult film gives an incisive criticism of the Reagan era, with an unparalleled punk soundtrack and superb performances by Emilio Estevez and Harry Dean Stanton.

INTRODUCED BY A VIDEO ESSAY BY MIKLÓS KISS AND SHANT BAYRAMIAN  
Q&A WITH ANDREA MÜLLER-SCHIRMER