

VENICE REVIEW DAILY

**VENICE
IMMERSIVE**

**BUGS, BIRDS
AND BOOKS**

VERDICT: David Attenborough and Neil Gaiman are two of the star players in this year’s Venice Immersive lineup.

Max Borg, September 4, 2023

Every year, in addition to its conventional selection of motion pictures, the Venice Film Festival also provides an overview of what’s going on in the world of virtual and augmented reality, via the programming of the Venice Immersive sidebar (formerly Venice VR).

Situated on the Lazzaretto Vecchio island, a two-minute boat ride from the Lido, the selection consists of a main competition, a “Best Of” pro-

Continues next page



David Attenborough

COMPETITION

PRISCILLA



Sabrina Lantos/A24

VERDICT: The gilded cage that was Priscilla Presley’s life with Elvis makes a perfect match for Sofia Coppola’s empathetic vision.

Alonso Duralde, September 4, 2023

In the same way that Elvis Presley’s flash, charisma, bombast, and vulgar excess made him the perfect subject for Baz Luhrmann, the life of his wife Priscilla — who left her father’s home

as a teenager and went directly into the gilded cage of Graceland — ideally matches the aesthetic of Sofia Coppola who, over the course of her career, has brought an empathetic eye to the lives of ensconced women.

From her first major screen credit (co-writer of Francis Coppola’s *Life Without Zoe*, about a young girl living a very *Eloise*-like existence within the confines

Full review, [click here](#)

GERMAN FILMS IN VENICE



**THE THEORY
OF EVERYTHING**

by *Timm Kröger*



**HOLLYWOOD
GATE**

by *Ibrahim Nash'at*



Venice Film Festival

COMPETITION

EVIL DOES NOT EXIST

VERDICT: Starkly opposing views of nature collide in Ryusuke Hamaguchi's 'Evil Does Not Exist' which, despite its portentous title, is simplicity itself and in a minor key after 'Drive My Car'.

Deborah Young, September 4, 2023

After the narrative brilliance and moral complexity of Drive My Car, winner of the Academy Award for best international feature film in 2022, auteur Ryusuke Hamaguchi takes a step back to admire the landscape of his native Japan in an apparently simple story about environmental conservation and humankind's relationship to nature.

Evil Does Not Exist (Aku wa Sonzai Shinai) feels something like an

interlude between big films and may disappoint or puzzle fans of his previous work with its deliberate camerawork, slow pace and ordinary characters who live close to the land in a forested area close to Tokyo. What is exceptional is that the last five minutes change everything, revealing the subtle meaning Hamaguchi has been circling around up to then, and this final scene is guaranteed to furnish lively dinner conversation as viewers try to puzzle out its ambiguities. Not to spoil the surprise, but like Drive My Car, the writer-director seems happy to let individual film-goers finish the story for themselves.

Evil was originally conceived

[Full review, click here](#)

Immersive continued from page 1
gram, and other themed offerings. And while it generally caters to a more arthouse crowd (in so far as that term applies to these installations and experiences), the 2023 lineup also has a few items with a decidedly mainstream appeal. One of these, Wallace & Gromit in 'The Grand Getaway', has been covered separately. The other two we'll deal with in this dispatch.

A global icon thanks to his BBC programs and, more recently, Netflix Originals, British naturalist David Attenborough was perhaps – pardon the pun – a natural for a VR approach to his work. Conquest of the Skies, a 25-minute film directed by Lewis Ball and produced by Alchemy Immersive and Meta Quest in association with Atlantic Productions, ZOO VFX and 1.618 Digital, is a look at the evolution of flying creatures, from insects to birds via reptiles, with stunning nature footage captured up close alternating with CGI that was used to recreate more ancient species based on the most recent paleontological discoveries. All of this is conveyed, of course, in Attenborough's authoritative yet kindly tone of voice, cementing his status as natural science's jolly old grandpa.

Given the quality of the footage associated with his regular television and streaming work, it makes

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OUT OF COMPETITION

THE CAINE MUTINY COURT-MARTIAL

VERDICT: William Friedkin’s final film sadly lacks the vibrancy and the claustrophobia of his previous stage-to-screen adaptations.

Alonso Duralde, September 3, 2023

While the recent obituaries for director William Friedkin largely praised his masterpieces *The Exorcist* and *The French Connection*, the filmmaker also triumphed in adapting stage material to the big screen. And rather than try to “open up” properties like *The Boys in the Band* or *Bug*, to name a few, Friedkin instead leaned into the claustrophobia, the spatially-enforced intimacy that could bring characters closer together or wear away at their sanity.

It’s disappointing to report, then, that his final film lacks the verve



Venice Film Festival

and the urgency of his other stage adaptations. *The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial*, based on Herman Wouk’s play, is a fairly standard people-in-a-room-talking drama that’s terminally stagebound and rarely compelling. Neither Michael Grady’s cinematography nor Darrin Navarro’s editing serves to make these proceedings any more inter-

esting than the latter half of any given *Law & Order* episode.

Friedkin’s one twist on the material is to update the setting from the 1940s to the present, and the results are a mixed bag: While it allows a US Navy tribunal to include women and people of color among the participants, the era

[Full review, click here](#)

Jay Weissberg

MEET THE TFV CRITICS AT VENICE FILM FESTIVAL



THE FILM **VERDICT**

Jay Weissberg, SENIOR CRITIC, is a native New Yorker who lives in Rome. A film historian and critic, he began writing for *Variety* in 2003. His work on contemporary cinema has appeared in international publications and he’s contributed essays in numerous festival and retrospective catalogues, with a particular focus on Arab and Romanian film. He was appointed director of the Giornate del Cinema Muto/Pordenone Silent Film Festival in 2015, writes widely about silent film, and is a co-curator of the Ottoman Film Project. A frequent participant of festival juries, he often takes part in panel discussions on the current state of cinema and film criticism, regularly moderates Masterclasses with filmmakers, and has mentored programs for young film critics worldwide. His discussion on Romanian cinema appears as an extra on Criterion’s Blu-ray/DVD release of Cristian Mungiu’s *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days*. He also has a blog, “The Silent Cat,” which delves into forgotten stories of the silent film era.



ORIZZONTI

HESITATION WOUND

VERDICT: Selman Nacar's second feature again examines the gray areas between the law, personal morality, duty and desire.

Boyd van Hoeij, September 4, 2023

Turkish director Selman Nacar's second feature, *Hesitation Wound* (Tereddüt çizgisi), gives a clearer picture of what kind of cinema interests this young director, who graduated from law school before graduating from film school. Like his debut, *Between Two Dawns*, his new film again examines moral conundrums from several angles, exploring the gray areas between the law and "the right thing to do" and what people actually do. Here, the story centres on a day in the life of a public prosecutor in a provincial town, played with steely



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determination by Tülin Özen (from Kaplanoglu's *Bal*), who faces difficult decision in both her professional and private lives, as an important court case comes to a close and she's afraid her client will get a lifetime sentence for something he didn't do.

She's being asked simultaneous-

ly to give up on her hospitalised mother, who is technically brain dead and who expressed an interest in donating her organs. Doing the right thing in either case is more complex than it might at first seem. After having *Between Two Dawns* premiere in San Sebastian, *Hesitation Wound* bowed in Venice as part of the Orizzonti lineup and is sold internationally by Magnolia.

Nacar, who also wrote the screenplay solo, immediately plunges the audience into the thick of things as Canan (Tülin Özen) and her sister, Belgin (Gülçin Kültür Sahin), talk about the condition of her mother in the hospital before she speeds off to the courthouse for the closing arguments of the case of her client Musa (Ogulcan Arman Uslu), who is suspected of first-degree

[Full review, click here](#)

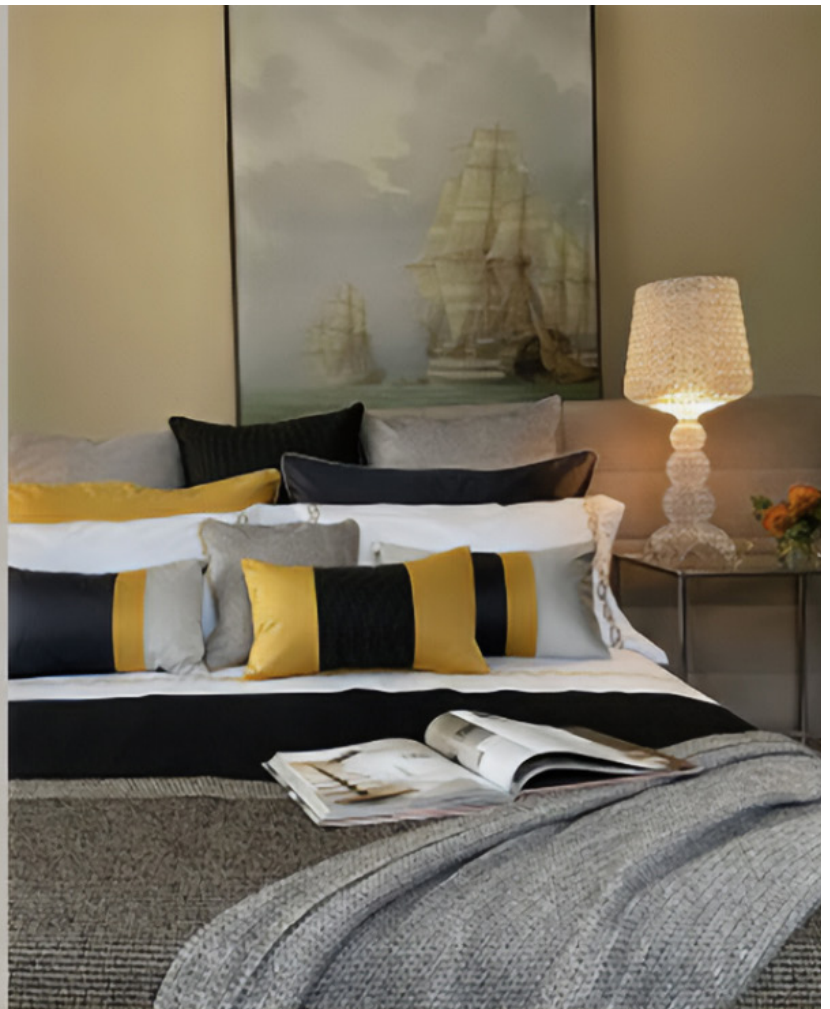
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ORIZZONTI

EL PARAISO

VERDICT: An engrossing tale of Oedipal codependence set among Rome’s drug dealers, with brilliant acting that overcomes sentimentality.

Patricia Boero, September 4, 2023

El Paraiso premieres in the Orizzonti section at the Venice Film Festival and is directed by Enrico Maria Artale, the Italian director of successful Italian TV series like Django and Romulus.

His first feature film, Il terzo tempo (The Third Half), premiered in Orizzonti in 2013, where it received the Opera Prima Premio Pasinetti. In El Paraiso, Artala creates a claustrophobic atmosphere where the



Werner PR

viewer feels as trapped as a hapless son, whose dominant mother controls his every move and sabotages any chance of escape.

As in Joshua Marston’s Maria Full of Grace (Sundance 2004), El Paraiso reminds us how disposable the “mules” are, the people who

smuggle contraband drugs across borders in their intestinal tract. Here the mule is Ines (Maria del Rosario), a young Colombian who expels the ingested cocaine ovules once she arrives in Rome. This upsets the dysfunctional family dy-

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VENICE FAST FACTS
Biennale celebrates 80 years

2010



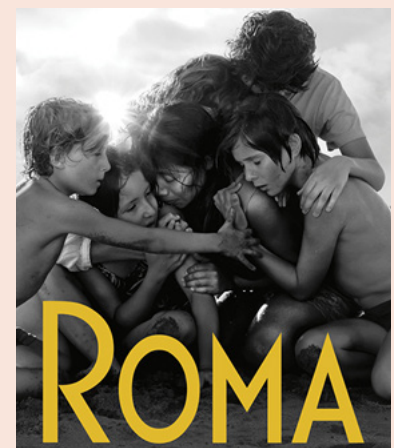
The Festival opened with Darren Aronofsky’s *Black Swan*; the opening screening was attended by President Giorgio Napolitano.

2012



Biennale College Cinema was launched, a higher education training workshop for the development and production of micro-budget audio-visual works, and the establishment of the Venice Film Market

2018



Roma by Alfonso Cuarón won the Golden Lion and became the first ever movie produced by a streaming service, Netflix, to be awarded in a major film festival.



ORIZZONTI



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EL PARAÍSO

CINEVERDICT: Una absorbente historia de codependencia edípica ambientada entre los traficantes de droga de Roma, “El Paraíso” cuenta con brillantes actuaciones que superan el sentimentalismo.

Patricia Boero, September 4, 2023

El Paraíso se estrena en la sección Orizzonti del Festival de Venecia y está dirigida por Enrico Maria Artale, director italiano de exitosas series de televisión italianas como Django y Romulus.

Su primer largometraje, Il terzo tempo (El tercer tiempo), se estrenó en Orizzonti en 2013, donde recibió el Premio Opera Prima Pasinetti. En El Paraíso, Artale crea una atmósfera claustrofóbica en la que el espectador se siente tan atrapado como el hijo desventurado, cuya madre dominante controla todos sus movimientos y sabotea cualquier posibilidad de escapar.

Como en María, llena eres de gracia (Sundance 2004), de Joshua Marston, El Paraíso nos recuerda lo desechables que son las “mulas”, las personas que pasan drogas de contrabando a través de las fronteras en su tracto intestinal. Aquí la mula es Inés (María del Rosario), una joven colombiana que expulsa los óvulos de cocaína ingeridos una vez llegada a Roma. Esto trastorna la dinámica familiar disfuncional, pero Artale realiza una inteligente inversión de papeles, y un hombre acaba introduciendo de contrabando las cenizas de su madre en Colombia. Podría leerse como una aguda sátira de

[Full review, click here](#)



Grad Sarajevo
City of Sarajevo



Ministarstvo kulture i sporta
Kantona Sarajevo

Location Flashback

Plaza Vittorio Emanuele III - Pandino, Lombardy

Call Me By Your Name (2017)



In this scene, Elio Perlman (Timothée Chalamet) accepts a cigarette from a fresh pack Oliver (Armie Hammer) picks up at a small shop during a bike trip into town to pick up some of his research material.

Sony Pictures Classics acquired distribution rights to *Call Me by Your Name* before its premiere at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival on January 22, 2017. The film began a limited release in the United States on November 24, 2017, and went on general release on January 19, 2018. The film garnered a number of accolades, including many for its screenplay, direction, acting, and music. It received four nominations at the 90th Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Actor for 22-year-old Chalamet (the third-youngest nominee in the category), and winning for Best Adapted Screenplay. The screenplay also won at the 23rd Critics' Choice Awards, 71st British Academy Film Awards, and the 70th Writers Guild of America Awards.

Development of the film had begun in 2007 when producers Peter Spears and Howard Rosenman optioned the rights to Aciman's novel. Ivory had been chosen to co-direct with Guadagnino, but stepped down in 2016. Guadagnino had joined the project as a location scout, and eventually became sole director and co-producer.

Piazza Vittorio Emanuele III is the main town square in Pandino, Italy, and the site of a monument erected to commemorate the Italian soldiers from the region who did not return from battle in the 1st World War. The monument was first proposed in 1921 and the War Memorial was dedicated in 1928.



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MILC METAVERSE FINDS ITS HOME WITH THE OLDENBURG FILM FESTIVAL

“THE METAVERSE IS NOTHING MORE THAN THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE REAL WORLD INTO A 3-DIMENSIONAL INTERACTIVE VIRTUAL WORLD.”

Renowned for its innovation, for its 30th anniversary this year, the Oldenburg Film Festival has partnered with the MILC Platform and The Film Verdict to take its first virtual steps into the Metaverse. Users can immerse themselves in virtual Oldenburg and its rich history, attend panel discussions and discover a curated collection of films from the festival. Unveiled this September at metaverse.milc.global.



Before the Venice Film Festival began, The Film Verdict had a unique opportunity to have a quick chat with two men, who at the outset couldn't seem more different, but yet share the same passion and vision: Hendrik Hay, founder and CEO of MILC (Welt der Wunder) and Torsten Neumann, head of the Oldenburg Film Festival.

TFV: Torsten, you head up one of the most independent film festivals dealing with edgy and new filmmakers, as well as established filmmakers from around the world, and Hendrik, you are a born, at heart entrepreneur who owned and ran television stations and now focuses on a vision that includes using micro-licensing utility tokens that allows content owners to have their work be accessible to a global market. The question is,

how is that the two of you are sitting down together with TFV for an interview?

Torsten: It seems like we do have a lot in common, and I would say it is mainly our love and passion for the things we're doing that brings us together. Because it is not that common to find people who share the same ethics in their work, it feels very good to share a common goal with Hendrik, as he is a passionate man who keeps pursuing his dreams and fighting for ideas. I share those ideas. And how do we find the same idea of putting new media and edgy indie filmmaking together? Well, Hendrik's vision is not designed to marginalize the old media, but only to introduce something that can put things back in balance - with regard to the field of interest I am dealing with, this seems to be the

most important issue: the art of cinema is threatened by the ongoing development. Artistic variety has always been the most important detail to keep art and culture alive; what happens in the film industry is actually the opposite. It feels good to have people like Hendrik out there ready to stand strong.

TFV: Hendrik, you are in many ways a visionary. Last year you produced the first Short Film Festival, ALPHA on the Metaverse, in collaboration with The Film Verdict Inc. What was the feedback and how do you measure "success" on such a new platform?

Hendrik: Thank you! The Alpha Film Festival was one of the first festivals in the Metaverse.

*Continues **next page***

Metaverse *continued*

It was designed to show other festivals the possibilities of a virtual world. We were very impressed with the communication around the event. With around 450 million article impressions, we can assume that this first attempt did not go unnoticed. We were approached not only by other film festivals, such as the Oldenburg Film Festival, but also by other events. The fashion and music industries in particular are working with us on really interesting concepts.

TFV: But Torsten, by and large, you are a “film guy,” how quickly did you embrace the idea of running Metaverse, a parallel festival universe, at the same time as the Oldenburg Film Festival? And how do you think your audience and sponsors will think of it?

Torsten: Of course, every new step into an unknown territory should be considered with care. The Metaverse seems to oppose our goals to keep cinema as a real life experience where people share the same experiences at the same time. But if you look closer, this common experience loaded with emotions rather than algorithms is actually what Hendrik is working on – in a world that will go further into a digital existence, he is bringing real people and real emotions into this other world. His visions go even beyond, because this allows us to think of a new marketplace that is not ruled by only a few

corporations, and that marketplace will definitely open up for everything even if we put it right beside the real life Festival, we can show the ways of benefitting from one another instead of the opposite. I expect the sponsors to appreciate our collaboration for the same reasons. We are known for taking risks, exploring new ground and surprising our audiences, so strengthening our profile should hopefully also find the support of our partners and sponsors.



Hendrik: The Oldenburg Film Festival presents itself as an innovator. It will attract a new target group and gain importance as a brand in the metaverse scene. We have rebuilt parts of the old town of Oldenburg, as well as the old opera house where the film festival takes place. In this digital object there are a lot of interactive elements integrated on several levels that the user can click on. There is a lot of exciting content behind this. The user can also watch live events in the main hall, which are produced in Oldenburg and then streamed into the MILC Metaverse.

TFV: Hendrik, is this model that is being developed adaptable for other film festivals? Is it a possible turn-key platform for other festivals to consider? What is the

advantage for film festivals to consider developing a Metaverse based festival?

Hendrik: The metaverse is nothing more than the transformation of the real world into a 3-dimensional interactive virtual world. Yes, it is a young industry, but there is no doubt that in the future every real event will have a digital twin in the metaverse. Real events today are limited to their physical visitors; their digital twins can invite anyone

in the world and expand their audience massively.

Film festivals in particular have the opportunity to move from local to global. It no longer matters where you are, only that you offer great content and interactive experienc-

es to your audience. Yes, the metaverse is still technically a bit limited, but this will change very fast as development moves on. Those who innovate today and start to climb the learning curve will steal today's relevance from all those who are still waiting.

TFV: Torsten, Some skeptics and critics may ask, “what’s the point or need for a Metaverse film festival?” In essence, why are you collaborating with Hendrik?

If there is one man who can prove that all the concerns of those critics are pointless, I think it is Hendrik

Full Article, [click here](#)

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