

THE FILM

VERDICT

LOCARNO REVIEW DAILY

day  
6

## CONCORSO INTERNAZIONALE



## ESSENTIAL TRUTHS OF THE LAKE

**VERDICT:** Lav Diaz returns to Locarno with A-list collaborators John Lloyd Cruz and Shaina Magdayao in 'Essential Truths of the Lake', a fiery noir-inflected takedown of the culture of criminal impunity shaping contemporary Philippine society.

Clarence Tsui, August 6, 2023

With *Essential Truths of the Lake*, Lav Diaz continues his Sisyphus-like *j'accuse* against the long litany of tyrants who have poisoned the contemporary Philippine body politic with their rabble-rousing speeches and paramilitary hit squads. Boasting a powerful performance from John Lloyd Cruz as a cop who loses his mind as he struggles to unearth the truth behind the disappearance of a social

activist (Shaina Magdayao), the film mixes its soul-destroying narrative with DP Larry Manda's beautiful imagery – including, perhaps for the first time for the famously austere Diaz, a slow-motion shot of a discharging gun.

At the beginning of *Essential Truths of the Lake*, two high-ranking police officers meet clandestinely on the rooftop of a

[Continues next page](#)

## The Legacy of Marco Solari




The President of the Locarno Film Festival for 23 years, Marco Solari makes a graceful bow as he steps offstage.

Max Borg, August 6, 2023

*After 23 years, the President of the Locarno Film Festival is stepping down. He looks back on his tenure with The Film Verdict.*

When TFV arrives for the scheduled interview with Marco Solari, he's just getting off the phone with another journalist, answering a question in flawless Bärndütsch (the Bernese variant of the Swiss-German High Alemannic dialect) with only the mildest trace of an Italian accent. The soon-to-be former President of the Locarno Film Festival is, in fact, a veritable embodiment of Switzerland as a cultural melting pot.

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## ESSENTIAL TRUTHS OF THE LAKE *(Continued)*



suburban villa to ponder the problems in their line of work, in a society where state-sanctioned extra-judicial murders have become the rhythm of everyday life. One asks: “What ails the Philippine National Police?” The other pauses and says: “Political. Cultural. Sociological. Ideological, or even spiritual.”

That’s exactly how Diaz seeks to unpack the violent state of the Philippine nation in his latest, three-hour opus. Armed with the seemingly generic devices of a disheveled cop and a very cold case, Diaz reveals – through a mix of talky expositions, static landscapes and delirious nightmares – the many ways in which a society buckles as corruption, cynicism and outright violence is tolerated and eventually integrated into the social fabric.

Admittedly, that’s what Diaz has been doing the past ten years, as he left behind the mythical and allegorical nature of his earlier work to condemn the specific autocrats who have cast his country asunder.

[Full Review](#)

## MARCO SOLARI *(Continued)*



Born in the Swiss capital to a Ticinese father and a Bernese mother, he studied at the University of Geneva and has worked all over the country. When the Ticino government approached him in 2000 to take on the job of President, he was one of the top executives at Ringier, one of the major Swiss publishing groups, in Zurich. Choosing to relocate to Ticino once more was, by Solari’s own admission, a hard decision, as he had to give up power and salary. And now, 23 years later, leaving that post is an even harder one.

“The team really is like a family,” he explains. “The festival, which is a magnificent cultural event, has always been very fortunate in having extraordinary people who keep it going. I think it has something to do with the Locarno region. My predecessor, Raimondo Rezzonico, the things he did for the festival! He truly

earned his ‘Presidentissimo’ nickname.” Rezzonico served as President from 1981 to 1999, and his original successor was Giuseppe Buffi, who sadly passed away before the beginning of the 2000 edition. “He’s a star that went out way too early,” says Solari.

Before joining the team, he’d been an avid festival goer since 1972, when he first made Ticino his home as head of the tourism board. “I got to know the various artistic directors: Moritz De Hadeln, Jean-Pierre Brossard, David Streiff, and Marco Müller, of course, who left the same year I became President.” During his tenure, Solari has appointed six artistic directors: Irene Bignardi (2001-2005), Frédéric Maire (2006-2009), Olivier Père (2010-2012), Carlo Chatrian (2013-2018), Lili Hinstin (2019-2020) and Giona A. Nazzaro (2021-present).

[For Full Article, Click here](#)

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## VERDICT SHORT

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### ALL THE FIRES

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**VERDICT:** 'All the Fires', a sensitive and realistic coming-of-age Mexican film, premieres in Locarno.

*Lucy Virgen, August 6, 2023*

In *All the Fires*, first-time director Mauricio Calderón Rico rises to the challenge of making a sensitive coming of age film with LGBTQ+ interest and a personal style.

cinematographic stage adolescents pass through on their way to adulthood. Alas, Hollywood style has permeated local ways, transforming teenagers into elven beings – with not a pimple in sight – who manage their conflicts (all solvable) with a minimum of yelling and a good dose of romance. *All the Fires* is the Mexican answer to this glamorized teenage universe.

Bruno (Sebastian Rojano), the protagonist, is a teenager who lives with his young widowed mother Inés (Ximena Ayala). He's rather quiet and solitary, sometimes malicious, with a rather non-descript appearance. His adolescent rebellion is channeled into a fascination –which has not yet become a mania– for fire. He is seduced by flames: how to cause them, video them, share them on the Internet. But he is not interested in their effects, as an arsonist would be. He also feels pressured to define his gender identity in an environment in which LGBTQ+ is repudiated or at least silenced. The attempt of a kiss by his best friend Ian (Ari López) and the presence of Gerardo (Héctor Illanes), a man interested in his mother, trigger him to escape the city and go find Daniela (Natalia Quiroz), an admirer of his videos.

[Full Review](#)

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## VERDICT SHORT

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### TODOS LOS INCENDIOS

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**CINEVERDICT:** Cine Verdict: 'Todos los incendios', un película coming of age mexicana, sensible y realista se estrena en competencia en Locarno.

*Lucy Virgen, August 6, 2023*

En 'Todos los incendios' Mauricio Calderón cumple con el reto de hacer una película coming of age -sensible con interés LGBTQ+ y con un estilo personal.

Todos los países del mundo tienen sus películas *coming of age*, con el tema de esa oscura, conflictiva y muy cinematográfica etapa por la que los adolescentes transitan en su camino a la adultez. Por desgracia el *Hollywood Style* ha permeado los formatos locales transformando a los adolescentes en seres élficos – sin acné a la vista- que resuelven sus conflictos -todos solucionables- con mínimo de gritos, y buenas dosis de romance. Todos los incendios, es la respuesta mexicana a este universo adolescente glamorizado.

Bruno (Sebastián Rojano) el protagonista es un adolescente que vive con su Inés su joven madre viuda (Ximena Ayala); es más bien callado y solitario, algunas veces malicioso, nada que lo distinga en su aspecto. Su rebeldía adolescente se canaliza en una fascinación -que aún no se convierte en manía- por el fuego. Es seducido por pequeños incendios, como causarlos, filmarlos y compartirlos en Internet, pero no por sus efectos, como lo sería un pirómano. Se siente además presionado por definir su identidad de género en un ambiente en el que lo LGBTQ+ es repudiado o al menos silenciado. Un intento de beso de Ian (Ari López) su mejor amigo y la presencia Gerardo Héctor Illanes un hombre interesado en su

[Full Review](#)

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## CONCORSO INTERNAZIONALE



### NIGHT SHIFT

**CINEVERDICT:** The beguiling *Night Shift* follows two individuals as they meander around venerated institutions after dark, crafting an entrancing portrait of liminal existences.

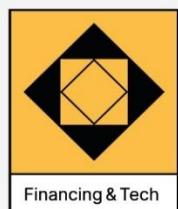
*Ben Nicholson, August 6, 2023*

Kayije Kagame and Hugo Radi's *Night Shift* is a quietly enthralling inhabitation of eerily marginal spaces.

Set backstage La Comédie Française in Paris and after hours at the Muséum d'histoire naturelle in Geneva, the film follows two individuals as they navigate the fringes of these establishments. On one hand, an actor (Gaël Kamilindi) prowls behind the scenes at the theatre, waiting – perhaps – for an opportunity to take centre stage. On the other, a female security guard (Kagame) does her rounds at the natural history museum, which seems to take on a life of its own beyond the gaze of its daytime visitors. Without a word of dialogue, these two very different experiences of space diverge and coalesce in a seductive ballet.

Filmmakers Kagame and Radi have worked together before. The former, who will be a familiar presence to some audiences, having been roundly lauded for her performance in Alice Diop's *Saint Omer* (2022), appeared in Radi's 2022 short, *Initial*. Radi was also one of several collaborators on Kagame's 2022 performance piece – also called *Night Shift* – at the Fondation Cartier in Paris. That work serves as a clear blueprint for the second section of the film, in which Kagame wanders the nocturnal avenues of a museum. The building may be unoccupied by other people, but it is by turns flooded by the hum of rainforest life and filled with music, the sway of which Kagame's guard is powerless to resist.

[Full Review](#)



## Spanish Screenings XXL September 26-28

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## Locarno Pro industry awards & Heritage Online Restoration Contest winners 2023

Locarno Pro, the industry event of the Locarno Film Festival, has announced the winning projects for its work-in-progress section First Look on UK films and Alliance 4 Development, the co-development program for film projects from Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland, along with the winner of the very first Heritage Online Restoration Contest.



Director Cécile Embleton from *Mother Vera*, winner Creativity Media First Look Award 2023, receives her award. © Locarno Film Festival



The winners of the Alliance 4 Development awards © Locarno Film Festival



Still from *Mulher de verdade* (1954), winner Heritage Online Restoration Contest 2023

### FIRST LOOK

#### Creativity Media First Look Award

##### *Mother Vera*

by Cécile Embleton and Alys Tomlinson, produced by Laura Shacham (She Makes Productions)

Jury statement: "From the opening moments of this film, we were immediately drawn to the strikingly photographed stark portrait of a fascinating nun in Belarus who makes a journey to France. We congratulate filmmakers Cécile Embleton and Alys Tomlinson and wish them the best with this new film, *Mother Vera*."

#### Jannuzzi Smith Award

##### *No Ifs Or Buts*

by Sarah Lewis, produced by Sarah Lewis (Felt Culture), co-produced by DoBeDo

#### Le Film Français Award

##### *No Ifs Or Buts*

by Sarah Lewis, produced by Sarah Lewis (Felt Culture), co-produced by DoBeDo

### ALLIANCE

#### 4 DEVELOPMENT

##### Alphapanda

##### Market Breakout Award

##### *Pas Ta Maman*

by Michèle Flury, produced by Felix Schreiber from Sommerhaus Filmproduktion (Germany)

Jury statement: "The Alphapanda Market Breakout Award goes to a film that will certainly move audiences just like it has moved us, a brutal yet playful tale, that uses contrasting genres to explore a current and important topic, abuse against women and what it means to be sexualised, victimised, and to fight back. We were very touched by the pitch and can't wait to see this film on a big screen."

Script consultancy residency at DreamAgo, offered by the Valais

##### Film Commission

##### *La P'tite (The Young One)*

directed by Despina Athanassiadis, produced by Quentin Daniel (Wombat Films, France)

#### MIDPOINT Consulting Award

*WHO/Man* directed by Lorenz Merz, produced by Michela Pini (8horses, Switzerland)

#### Ticino Film Commission Residence Award

##### *Objet a*

by Ann Oren, produced by Kristof Gerega, Sophie Ahrens and Fabian Altenried (Schuldenberg Films, Germany)

### HERITAGE ONLINE RESTORATION CONTEST

##### *Mulher de verdade* (1954)

by Alberto Cavalcanti

The 12th edition of First Look presented six UK works-in-progress to an audience of sales agents, buyers, programmers and representatives from post-production support funds, thanks to a partnership with British Film Institute (BFI), using funds from the National Lottery.

Alliance 4 Development is possible thanks to partnerships with CNC (Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée), France; FFA (Filmförderungsanstalt), Germany; DGCA-MiC (Direzione Generale Cinema e Audiovisivo del Ministero della Cultura), Italy; Austria; the Federal Office of Culture (FOC) / MEDIA Desk Suisse, Switzerland

For more, [click here](#)



# Locarno Events for August 7th



15:30 • Davide Campari Lounge  
 Conversation with Edoardo Leo and Piera Detassis

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17:00 • BaseCamp pop up @ Istituto Sant'Eugenio  
 Identity / Identities • A Performative Talk Curated by Open Doors



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# Location flashback

## Verzasca Dam, Gordola, Ticino, Switzerland

### *GoldenEye (1995)*



The Contra Dam, commonly known as the Verzasca Dam and the Locarno Dam, is an arch dam on the Verzasca River in the Val Verzasca of Ticino, Switzerland. The dam creates Lago di Vogorno 2 kilometers upstream of Lake Maggiore. It supports the 105 MW Verzasca hydroelectric power station.

In this scene, James Bond (Pierce Brosnan) does a full swan dive as he bungee jumps into a secret Soviet chemical weapons facility where fellow “00” MI6 Agent, Alec Trevelyan (Sean Bean) is waiting so they can blow up the place.

The film was released after a six-year hiatus in the series caused by legal disputes, during which Timothy Dalton’s contract for the role of James Bond expired and he was replaced by Brosnan. M was also recast, with actress Judi Dench becoming the first woman to portray the character, replacing Robert Brown.

The film accumulated a worldwide gross of over US\$350 million, considerably better than Dalton’s films, without taking inflation into account. It received positive reviews, with critics viewing Brosnan as a definite improvement over his predecessor. It also received award nominations for Best Special Visual Effects and Best Sound from the British Academy of Film and Television Arts.



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