

Edinburgh International Film Festival 2023 draws to a close with the flame of independent cinema burning bright



6th September 2023

- This year's Festival included 94 events in total
- 75 cinema screenings, 10 outdoor screenings and 5 discussion events
- 3 talent development events, 2 online film programmes and a film quiz
- A total in-person attendance of 10,277
- 71% of cinema screenings sold out with an overall cinema occupancy of 82%

Hosted by Edinburgh International Festival, Edinburgh International Film Festival returned this year as a six-day festival from 18 – 23 August with a bold and tightly curated programme of 24 new feature films, 5 retrospective titles, 5 short film programmes alongside an outdoor screening weekend at Old College Quad at The University of Edinburgh which included 7 further features.

Edinburgh International Film Festival (EIFF) set out this year to keep the flame of independent cinema burning bright in the city and audiences and filmmakers have responded with love, support and attendance. With a total of 75 cinema screenings across partnering venues Vue Edinburgh Omni Centre and Everyman Edinburgh, 71% of cinema screenings sold out with an overall cinema occupancy of 82%.

While a weekend of outdoor screenings saw a variety of audiences attend the dreamy surroundings of the Old College Quad at The University of Edinburgh for a mix of new film previews, family-friendly titles, artists' films and a live soundtracks to a classic.

With a compact programme of films, this EIFF edition concentrated on depth of engagement, with discussion events such as Encounters panels mixing guest filmmakers with writers, artists and performers, a Sunday Salon conversation between Ira Sachs and Brandon Taylor, and the launch of The Lynda Myles Project, providing audiences with space to be a part of an ongoing conversation that places dialogue at the centre of the Festival and positions cinema in conversation with other artforms.

Feedback from industry guests attending the Festival has involved praise for EIFF as a place to gather, share ideas and champion the spirit of independent cinema with well-attended events such as Talent Assemble, delivered in partnership with BBC Film, BBC Scotland and MG Alba, showing that EIFF continues to be a cherished place at the forefront of building filmmaking relationships. While a collaboration with Curate-It and a series of Critical Writing Commissions have enabled the Festival to support two emerging film curators and nine writers based in Scotland, broadening the voices and perspectives engaging with the Festival.

The Festival kicked off on 18 August with *Silent Roar*, a film that places Scottish culture at the heart of a wave of new independent filmmaking whilst Closing Night film Fremont capped off an international selection that included work from celebrated arthouse directors Kelly Reichardt, Ira Sachs, Cauleen Smith, and Christian Petzold, and showcased work from Argentina, Brazil, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Japan, South Korea, and the United States.

Every film screening was introduced by a member of the programme team, and BSL interpretation was offered at all screenings that were presented with Descriptive Subtitles. The Festival welcomed over 75 guests to present their films.

Filmmakers and actors attending the festival included: Johnny Barrington, Theo Barrowclough, Louise Brealey, Hope Dickson Leach, Jeanie Finlay, Sam H. Freeman, Ella Glendining, Bette Gordon, Wendy Griffin, Rodger Griffiths, David Hayman, Mark Herbert, Paul Higgins, Ella Lily Hyland, Babak Jalali, Ian Jefferies, Fran Rubel Kuzui, Huw Lemmey, Karoline Lyngbye, Lorn Macdonald, Devashish Makhija, Louis McCartney, Shane Meadows, Ng Choon Ping, Julia Parks, Henry Pettigrew, Daniel Portman, Janis Pugh, Charlotte Regan, Calum Ross, Ira Sachs, Annabel Scholey, Thomas Schubert, Nathan Stewart-Jarrett, Brian Vernel, Irvine Welsh, Chris Young, and Paris Zarcilla.

Kate Taylor, Programme Director for Edinburgh International Film Festival said: "This year's film festival has shown that there is an unquenchable appetite in this city for independent and international cinema. We have been so delighted and moved by the conversations that have taken place between filmmakers and audiences, and the warmth with which people have engaged with the programme. I am beyond proud to have worked alongside the EIFF team who, since March, have worked with great passion and speed to deliver something special, and we all hope that the event's success offers a beacon for a brighter future for EIFF and film culture in the city."

EIFF is supported by Screen Scotland, and enhanced engagement activities are supported by the Scottish Government's Festivals Expo Fund alongside the PLaCE Programme (a partnership between the Scottish Government, City of Edinburgh Council and the Edinburgh Festivals).

Dr Sharon Webb, Museum Director and Curator said: “We’re so excited to be opening the new museum finally after many challenges, including the global pandemic. Kilmartin Glen’s archaeological landscape and the artefacts found here are internationally significant, and it’s been a privilege to have been part of the team telling their story in the new exhibition. We’ve been able to display many more of our own collections, most of which are recognised as Nationally Significant. The new museum facilities also mean that we can welcome visitors, undertake educational activities and research into this amazing legacy. Importantly, the new building also allows us to professionally curate our own archaeological collections and those of Argyll and Bute Council which we also care for.”

Dr Matthew Knight, Senior Curator of Prehistory – Bronze Age Collections at National Museums Scotland, said: “We’re delighted to have been able to support the opening of the new Kilmartin Museum through the loan of over 60 objects as well as a range of other work. The displays include several of the most significant prehistoric and early medieval artefacts from Scotland. We hope that the new museum will attract many visitors and inspire them to visit some of the country’s most important and attractive archaeological sites.”

Caroline Clark, Director for Scotland, The National Lottery Heritage Fund said: “Kilmartin Museum has a world class collection in a very special location we are very proud to have supported this redevelopment to deliver a beautiful venue to house it and make it more accessible for visitors to enjoy.

“At the heart of the redevelopment has been strengthening further the close ties between the museum, landscape, ancient monuments and the communities of Kilmartin Glen. It is creating new opportunities for people, businesses and a wider range of partners to explore, enjoy and share the heritage of this magical part of Argyll with each other and with visitors. We believe it will support sustainable but transformative change to deliver wider benefits for people and place.”