



Press release

Nyon, 10th Mars 2025

Blame by Christian Frei to open the 56th edition of Visions du Réel, a world première

The 56th edition of Visions du Réel will open on 4 April 2025 with the world première of *Blame*, the latest feature-length film from renowned Swiss filmmaker Christian Frei. The film combines an investigation into the origins of COVID-19 with a reflection on the place and role of science in the face of political pressure. Retracing the COVID-19 global health crisis, *Blame* is also strongly attuned to recent events, particularly the re-election of 47th President of the United States, Donald Trump. The opening ceremony will be attended by Federal Councillor, Elisabeth Baume-Schneider. The full programme for the 56th edition of Visions du Réel will be released on 12 March.

A scientific thriller on the origins of COVID-19

Blame focuses on the path of three scientists. After having researched the origin of the SARS epidemic which broke out in China in 2003, they were unwittingly thrown into the spotlight during the COVID-19 crisis. Their numerous studies showed that coronavirus was transmitted to humans by bats. Despite detailed evidence at their disposal, some political and media sources, notably within the Trump administration, chose to discredit their results, instead supporting the hypothesis of a leak from the virology laboratory in Wuhan. In this film, Christian Frei highlights the ensuing disarray, and the struggle of these protagonists to forge solutions for the future, even as others seek to discredit their efforts in pursuit of divergent interests. In terms of the growing impact of disinformation and fake news, the Swiss filmmaker strives to shed light on the place and role of science in contemporary society. "For me, *Blame* is much more than a film about bats and viruses. I actually think that this film is relevant to the world of today, in which opinions are polarized and fed into a frenzy without any factual basis." Christian Frei states.

Filmmaker biography

Christian Frei was born in Schönenwerd, in the canton of Solothurn, in 1959. After studying in the department of journalism and communication at the University of Fribourg, Christian Frei started working as a filmmaker in 1981 with his first short film *Die Stellvertreterin*. In 1997, he released his first feature-length documentary, *Ricardo, Miriam y Fidel*, which follows Miriam, a Cuban woman looking to emigrate to the United States. 2001 marked a turning point in Christian Frei's career with the release of *War Photographer*, the first Swiss documentary to be nominated in the documentary category at the Oscars the following year. The diversity of his feature-length films, including *The Giant Buddha* (2005), *Space Tourists* (2009) *Sleepless in New York* (2014), or even *Genesis 2.0* (2018), have consolidated Christian Frei's reputation as one of the most influential documentary filmmakers in Switzerland. He also produced the films *Raving Iran* (2016), *Saudi Runaway* (2020), and *Girl Gang* (2022).

Opening ceremony attended by Federal Councillor, Elisabeth Baume-Schneider

The official opening of the Visions du Réel Festival will take place on Friday 4 April 2025 at the Théâtre de Marens in Nyon, attended by Federal Councillor **Elisabeth Baume-Schneider**, State Councillor **Nuria Gorrite**, and the Mayor of Nyon, **Daniel Rossellat**. The ceremony will be hosted by actress and filmmaker **Kayije Kagame**.

Save the date

12 March 2025: programme announced
4 – 13 April: 56th edition of Visions du Réel

Press area

Images

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56th edition of Visions du Réel: 4 – 13 April 2025

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