

GENEVA 2023

Anaïs Emery • Managing and artistic director, GIFF**"Digital creation is a domain where we're seeing fascinating artistic developments"**

by MURIEL DEL DON

03/11/2023 - The director of the Genevan festival gave her opinion on crucial questions such as parity and inclusion in film festivals, and the attraction of digital creation



We seized the opportunity to chat with **Anaïs Emery**, now in her third year heading up the Geneva International Film Festival (GIFF) (running 3-12 November), who spoke with passion about the challenges which a festival like theirs – which promotes a 360° vision of the seventh art - must face, but also the need to support initiatives aimed at making the industry more inclusive and diverse.

Cineuropa: What does this third year heading up the GIFF mean to you?

Anaïs Emery: This third edition is all about continuity in terms of the festival's position. That said, I never tend to feel satisfied. On the contrary, I think we can always do better, particularly since the societal context, especially in the audiovisual world, is actually pretty tense. That said, I'm happy with the programme we're offering up this year, and with the reflections and opportunities offered by our market. Our guests and the three tributes paid to **Marguerite Kudelski**, **Jean Michel Jarre** and the **Kourtrajmé** collective demonstrate our desire to position the festival as a showcase of all things audiovisual, a festival which offers a global, pluralistic view of the medium.

The Kourtrajmé collective are down to receive the Geneva Award. This shows how open the GIFF is to the "decompartmentalisation of cinema". Could you tell us a bit more about this?

We wanted to award this prize to an initiative rather than a person. I find the Kourtrajmé collective particularly interesting for its approach to different formats. The collective took an interest in the short form at a time when it wasn't easy to champion it, and they were also really dynamic when it came to music videos. [Koi section menu](#) showed just how much this inclusive approach favours artistic innovation and the integration of new and more incisive approaches in the audiovisual field. This collective has always been really ahead of its time in that respect, which is proved by the school it created, a school which is wholly inclusive and which helps students who don't necessarily have the financial or cultural resources to get into a film school and educate themselves. The school is now an international one, and sister schools have been opened in North Africa and the Caribbean. There's a continuity in their approach which I admire.

This year the GIFF is signing the charter promoted by SWAN (the Swiss Women's Audiovisual Network) for parity and inclusion in film festivals. What signal are you hoping to send with this act?

I think festivals have an important role to play in this respect. If we're signing this charter, it's because we think it's fair and that it opens up debate around inclusivity and transparency over numbers. Festivals are often spoken about or criticised, but I think there's a lack of awareness over the other challenges they have to contend with, challenges associated with organisation, funding, industry, human resources, etc. Festivals have many challenges to overcome, including parity and inclusion. The audiovisual sector is pretty complex because it's both an art and an industry, which is often based on the concept of success and is under significant economic pressure. We're in contact with lots of people who are more or less open to change. It's incredibly complex and sometimes risky, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't be open to change!

Does digital creation always manage to win over audiences and, if so, how?

Digital creation is a format which is still in the making in terms of its relationship with audiences. At the GIFF, we're seeing significant growth in this area year on year, which is partly due to the fact that we're presenting an increasing number of works in an installation format, works whose immersive side is keenly felt. At the GIFF, audiences find an offer which is different from the ones you get online, an offer which is hard to access from home. I think it's a domain where we're seeing fascinating artistic developments, even if it's still a language in the making, a language far from being finished or fixed. In terms of themes, this year we're tackling the question of the "female gaze" in VR, but we'll also be looking at the use of immersive techniques to collect testimonials, especially those coming from war zones.

(Translated from French)

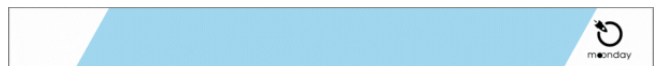
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