



Visions du Réel 2026: exhibition of documentary cinema

Since 1969, Visions du Réel has been presenting audacious and singular works, imbued with past, present or future realities

MÉLANIE **COURVOISIER** *

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Scenes of the
Visions du Réel 2025
Opening Ceremony

Since its creation in 1969, Visions du Réel has established itself as one of the world's most renowned festivals in its field.

The Federal Office of Culture considers it one of Switzerland's leading film festivals, alongside the Locarno Film Festival. Every spring, Visions du Réel turns Nyon into an international capital of documentary cinema. The festival aims to highlight

emerging filmmakers while showcasing leading figures in cinema. It presents bold, previously unseen films, with around 160 productions, many of them world premieres. In addition to being a key forum for cinema, Visions du Réel has developed VdR-Industry, the only market of its kind in Switzerland and one of the leading platforms internationally for documentary production. This program selects and supports projects in development and serves as an important networking hub. VdR-Industry also takes part in major film

events such as the Cannes Marché du Film and the Berlinale.

Its most recent edition featured 154 films from a record 57 countries. Among the 129 new films presented, 88 were world premieres and a further 12 were international premieres. Fifty-eight debut films, including 28 first features, completed the selection, along with 31 Swiss co-productions, compared with 25 in 2024. Visions du Réel has thus confirmed its position as the second most important festival in Switzerland for launching new films and as a key international event for non-fiction cinema.

Renowned guests at the 57th edition (17 to 26 April 2026)

For its next edition this month, Visions du Réel will welcome a number of distinguished guests and major figures from contemporary cinema, including Kelly Reichardt, Laura Poitras and Sergei Loznitsa. As guest of honor, Kelly Reichardt will take part in the festival with a masterclass, a retrospective of her work and a carte blanche. Her latest feature film, *The Mastermind*, will also be screened ahead of its limited theatrical release. A key figure in contemporary independent cinema, she will discuss her bold, meticulous and radical body of work, which often revisits

major American myths and is marked by a refined, observational aesthetic and a rejection of spectacle through minimalist storytelling rooted in gesture, place and the passage of time. Emilie Bujès, Artistic Director of Visions du Réel, said: “It is a tremendous privilege to welcome one of the great voices of contemporary cinema. Film after film, Kelly Reichardt creates fragments of history and lives through remarkably refined and elegant narratives which, by rejecting spectacle and paying sensitive attention to detail, reveal a fascinating relationship with reality.”

Visions du Réel is also honored to announce that American filmmaker and journalist Laura Poitras will be the special guest at the opening of the 24th edition of VdR-Industry, the festival’s program dedicated to industry professionals. She is notably the author of a post-9/11 trilogy, concluded with the Academy Award-winning film *CITIZENFOUR*, a real-life international thriller about whistleblower Edward Snowden and global surveillance. Spanning more than two decades, her work reflects a strong political commitment and offers a critical analysis of US systems of power, as well as the abuses of the so-called war on terror. Her films document social upheaval as it unfolds. On Sunday 19

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VISIONS DU RÉEL
CHAMPIONS
BOLD
DOCUMENTARY
VOICES SHAPING
HOW WE SEE
THE WORLD

▼
The festival
brings together
like-minded
enthusiasts
of cinema



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➤
Bringing film
to the next
generation of
filmmakers

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THE PERCEPTION
CHANGE AWARD
HONORS FILMS
THAT SHIFT
PERSPECTIVES
ON GLOBAL
ISSUES

April, the Oscar- and Venice Film Festival-winning filmmaker will take part in a public conversation in collaboration with SRG SSR, while her most recent film, *Cover-Up*, will also be screened as part of the official selection. This event will mark the official launch of the VdR-Industry days.

Sergei Loznitsa will also be a special guest at the festival, presenting a masterclass and a curated retrospective of his documentary work. With a filmography of remarkable range, spanning short and feature-length films and moving between fiction and documentary, he is a major figure in contemporary non-fiction cinema. His films have been selected at major festivals and widely acclaimed by critics and audiences alike. Drawing on the tradition of the Soviet avant-garde, he explores post-Soviet territories and memory through their upheavals and cycles of violence. Built around a rigorous formal structure and often incorporating archival material, his work observes the course of history, frequently marked by authoritarian excess, while examining the processes of memory that shape our understanding of past tragedies.

Festival, he chronicles the demonstrations that sparked the Ukrainian Revolution in a structural portrait with no central hero other than a political community in the process of forming. In *Donbass* (2018), based on amateur videos found on YouTube, he depicts the takeover of the Donbass region by Russian-speaking militias in conflict with the Ukrainian army. Composed of 13 sequences arranged like tableaux, the film portrays the daily lives of residents caught between loyalty and separatism. Finally, in *The Invasion* (2024), he continues his chronicle of Ukraine with a film about the country’s resistance to the Russian invasion. Filmed over two years, it depicts the lives of civilians across Ukraine and captures their resilience in the face of war.

**Perception Change Award:
an award presented by the UN**

Each year, Visions du Réel awards the Perception Change Award to a film that sheds light on issues shaping the world of tomorrow. The prize is presented with the support of the Diplomatic Club of Geneva, and the winner is announced at the festival’s closing ceremony. ■

*This article
was written
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Three of his films take the pulse of Ukraine’s political situation and the places where history is unfolding. With *Maidan* (2014), made in just four months and presented in a special screening at the Cannes Film



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