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## PREVIEW: 2020 BERLIN SCI-FI FILMFEST

📅 FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2020 AT 7:03PM

The COVID curse has forced the festival out of theatres and into living rooms, but the quality and quantity of science-fiction films coming out of the [2020 Berlin Sci-Fi Filmfest](#) remains unrivalled on the genre film circuit.



A mammoth 110 films from 28 countries will bulk up the [4th edition](#), held once again under the stewardship of co-directors Alexander Pfander, Isabella Hermann and Anthony Straeger. The festival has had to abandon its long-held alliance with the [Babylon Theatre](#) in Mitte, instead screening this year's films via the [XERB Virtual Cinema](#) platform. However, The Babylon Kino is not forgotten; it will be represented in the line-up by Martin Reinhart and Virgil Widrich's experimental short, tx-reverse 360°, a mesmerising work shot at 10K resolution with an OmniCam-360° rig inside the iconic venue.

Seven features will screen at the Berlin Sci-Fi Filmfest, each one exemplifying the vastness of vision the genre offers. Brett Ryan Bonowicz premieres the second part of his Artist Depiction documentary series, with profiles of speculative visualists William K. Hartmann, Pamela Lee and Pat Rawlings; indie sector giggles are assured



in Ryan Barton-Grimley's buddy comedy/horror romp, Hawk and Rev Vampire Slayers and Justin Timpane's A Christmas Cancellation, a 'Purple Rose of Cairo'-style TV-world-meets-real-world charmer; the 'post-apocalyptic dystopia' slot is filled this year by A Feral World, David Liban's stunningly-designed mother's journey drama; and, Neil Rowe's lo-fi/hi-energy invasion thriller, Alien Outbreak (pictured, above).

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Seven features will screen at the Berlin Sci-Fi Filmfest, each one exemplifying the vastness of vision the genre offers. Brett Ryan Bonowicz premieres the second part of his Artist Depiction documentary series, with profiles of speculative visualists William K. Hartmann, Pamela Lee and Pat Rawlings; indie sector giggles are assured in Ryan Barton-Grimley's buddy comedy/horror romp, Hawk and Rev Vampire Slayers and Justin Timpane's A Christmas Cancellation, a 'Purple Rose of Cairo'-style TV-world-meets-real-world charmer; the 'post-apocalyptic dystopia' slot is filled this year by A Feral World, David Liban's stunningly-designed mother's journey drama; and, Neil Rowe's lo-fi/hi-energy invasion thriller, Alien Outbreak (pictured, above).



For the more adventurous viewer, there is Mark Christensen's underground experimental 'lost film', Box Head Revolution (pictured, below), a cinematic journey which began two decades ago with early digital-video cameras and no budget and which has been recovered and reinstated to its intended ultra-bizarre status; and, Søren Peter Langkjær Bojsen's Danish oddity, A Report on the Party and Guests, in which a humanlike creature slowly reveals his mission reporting on the dwindling human activity in an increasingly automated world.

The remainder of the 2020 Berlin Sci-Fi Filmfest is the kind of short film showcase for which the event has become famous worldwide. Arguably, the centrepiece will be The Dach Shorts Session, a cross-section of the finest works from Germany, Austria and Switzerland; amongst the roster are Marcus Hanisch's Q; ghostly remote effect, Franz Ufer's existential drama, The Ticket; and, the European Premiere of directors Evgeny Kalachikhin and Ruben Dauenhauer's post-apocalyptic mini-feature, CYCLE 2217.



Symbolising the Berlin Sci-Fi Filmfest's standing internationally is the collaboration they share with China's Blue Planet Science Fiction Film Festival. This year, seven Chinese short productions will screen to German sci-fi fans ahead of their homeland premieres in Nanjing; they are Cupcake (Dir: Zhang Dawei); Recluse (Dir: Ou Dingding); Basement Millionaire (Dir: Zha Shan); 16 (Dir: Xin Chengjiang); Isabella (Director: Wei Qihong); and, The Chef (Dir: Yuan Gen). A special highlight will be the premiere of Through the Fog, a co-production between the Berlin Sci-Fi Filmfest and the Chinese festival, from directors Peng Xiangjun and Luan Luyang.

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The [2020 BERLIN SCI-FI FILMFEST](#) is available to watch via [XERB Virtual Cinema](#) from November 27 to December 7. Numbers are limited, so be quick. Session passes and ticket packages can be purchased [here](#).



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I suppose it should not be so surprising to see how cosmopolitan the program is. But with the inclusion of a German Speaking Session and a Chinese Session, you feel like you will be immersed in many flavours and styles.

November 28, 2020 | Tony Kay

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