

Odense Film Festival

August 28 – September 3, 2017

From the website...

Odense International Film Festival

OFF is Denmark's international short film festival, and with its launch in 1975, it is also the country's oldest film festival. OFF is a different film festival that was started with passion and creativity, a spirit that the festival has maintained and nurtured ever since. OFF celebrates the short film genre without compromise, but at the same time Odense International Film Festival is also a festival for the audience and every year we experience a massive support from the locals in the town of Odense. Hundreds sign up as volunteers, and even more visit our festival for the high quality experience that we deliver. OFF works all year to support the Danish film-culture, as well as to expand and offer diverse experiences for the people.

Celebration of the art form of short film

"Expect the unexpected" – OFF is access to the world and insight into one self. A break from the grey everyday life where obligation is replaced by adventurous desire. Desire for more. Desire for the new. Every year 'Brandts Klædefabrik' exhibition space in Odense is transformed into a magical experience. Everyone is invited, large and small, to experiences that cover the entirety of the emotional spectrum.

OFF celebrates the short film format as media and as an art form, and, above all, all the creative individuals who put their heart and soul into creating short films. In the days leading up the festival, we receive thousands of short films, both Danish and international, and our carefully selected jury selects the best of the best to be shown during OFF in sessions of five to eight short films. These sessions last up to two hours and for every screening there is always a director or another film expert at the scene to help answer any questions from the audience.

Every year the festival ends with a grand award show with ovations and celebration, where we announce the winners of our three competitions: The International Competition, the Danish Competition, and the Animated Competition.

The Competition

In 2013 we were rewarded a very prestigious title, as OFF was acknowledged as Denmark's first Oscar qualifying film festival. This meant that we could send the winners from our Main Competition and from our Danish Competition straight to the pre-jury of the Academy Awards in Hollywood. As of 2015, we have been given yet another Oscar qualifying category, which means that the winner of the Animation Competition will also be in the running for an Oscar nomination.

However, OFF is for all lovers of cinema, and that is why, in collaboration with TV2/FYN, we give out the Audience Award as well. Everyone is part of the jury, and are able to vote for their favorite shortfilm with a text message. We also have our "Youth Jury Award". In this category the nominated films are judged and presented by a youth jury consisting of a 8th grade class from one of the local schools, who have received training in what to look for when judging films.

Focus Programmes

Aside from the competition program that is a steady component of the program each year, OFF also introduces a focus program every year with a unique angle defined by our "Artistic Profile". The contents of these focus programs is among other things a variety of films, debates and seminars and the audience are invited to participate and to immerse in these focus topics. However, OFF has several other things planned for the week of the festival and there are always open-air film screenings and a Talent Symposium for the students of the danish film academies. Furthermore, OFF always has an extensive program planned out for children and youths from the town of Odense ranging from the very youngest pre-schoolers to youths from Odenses high school that might carry around a dream about becoming a film maker.

The area of Brandts Exhibition space

All of this takes place in the area around Brandts; In the Café Biografen (Cinema), In Kulturmaskinen, in Magasinet and in the open-air area of the Amfi Theatre – and everyone is invited to take part in the festivities. Most of all of these events and film screenings are free, so everyone is invited to just walk in, have a seat and wait for the adventure to start. We do, however, recommend that you book a ticket on-line through our web-page.

Odense International Film Festival is thus not just short film in the dark and seats of red velvet. It's an event that opens the doors to a world filled with inspiration, surprises and emotions. In the days leading up to the festival and all through the week itself, all of Odense is imbued with events, workshops, music, party, seminars, interesting guests and impressions from all over the world. – And they are all here; film critics, film people, up-comings, dreamers and marvelors – and hopefully YOU!

Get ready to experience the sweet, the fun, the sad, the sensual, and what is so OFF that is difficult to describe.

Odense International Film Festival is Denmark's international Oscar-qualifying short film festival with a long and successful tradition!

OFF is Denmark's international short film festival and with its beginning already back in 1975 OFF is also the oldest film festival in the country. The festival was started in connection with the 100th anniversary of the death of Hans Christian Andersen. The initiator of the festival was the then film editor for the local newspaper, "Fyens Stifttidende", Bent Aagaard and the Festival was named "The International Fairytale Festival". Back then, The Fairytale Festival was a festival that celebrated fairytale-inspired animation films in the spirit of Hans Christian Andersen and it was going to be held every second year.

In 1983, the first shift was made in terms of festival administrator. The choice of new administrator fell upon the internationally renowned film director and writer, Henning Carlsen. With this change of management, other changes were also introduced, the most important one being that the film festival now opened up to other categories of short film. Creative short films of all kinds were now welcome to enter and the festival changed its name to “Odense International Film Festival”. Furthermore, in 1985, this change of name was set in concrete when the internationally award winning documentarist and artistic director to the festival, Jørgen Roos, moved the festival to “Brandts Klædefabrik”, where it has been held ever since.

Two separate festivals

The new concept of Odense International Film Festival was so successful that a need for an annual film festival was met. Consequently, in 1994, the Danish Film Festival was initiated, which was also to be held every second year and as such, fill the gaps between the festivals in Odense. Allan Berg Nielsen took over the artistic management of the Danish Film festival, which focused mainly on Danish films as opposed to Odense International Film festival, which dealt in the international realm of films.

In 1995, with Frantz Ernst in charge of the Odense festival, we celebrated two special anniversaries. OFF turned 20 and film as media turned one hundred years. This was celebrated with film screenings of some of the very first films ever made created by the French Lumiere brothers. At the time, the Danish Film Festival was run by Ulrich Breuning, who today has a special place in the heart of OFF. Ulrich Breuning is still today a big help to OFF and we consider him our “grand ol’ man” in the development and history of OFF.

From two festivals to one

When Christian Braad Thomsen stepped in as artistic director in 1997, he started an important era for OFF. The Danish Film Festival and Odense International Film Festival melted together and became one festival under the name Odense International Film Festival that was to show both Danish and foreign films. Going forward, the festival was to take place every year. Christian Braad Thomsen stayed on till 2005 and made quite a few changes and innovative initiatives. Among other things, Thomsen introduced the independent youth jury, “Video Clip Cup” and he was the man behind making Magasinet venue for the festival. This development with new initiatives was carried on by the following artistic director of the festival, Cecilia Lidin, who also initiated a cooperation with ANIS – The Danish Animation Society – on how to create a competition and prize for Danish and foreign animated films in the festival. In this same period of time, the Video Clip Cup was replaced with what we know today as Talent Camp for young film makers.

OFF as we know it today

In 2009, Birgitte Weinberger took over the festival and was given a completely new role as both head of festival as well as artistic director of the festival. Prior to this, the festival had not had an actual head of festival, but instead the managerial structure had been centered around a local administrator and an

artistic director. In 2009, the organizational structure was thus strengthened with a manager that was visible and active all year round. With these managerial changes came also the introduction of the so-called “artistic profile” that was to be changed every year. From hereon in, the festival was to have a high-profile artistic persona from the film industry as “artistic profile”, a person, who would function as an external contributor with his or hers personal angle to the festival program.

Birgitte coined the abbreviation OFF – Odense International Film Festival and in many aspects revitalized the whole concept in both content and expression. She initiated a cooperation with the local add company, “Stupid Studio” to help brand the new OFF concept and create a new graphic expression.

The festival has over the past 6 years experienced significant growth as Denmark’s International Film Festival. The clearest example was when OFF in 2013 was Denmark’s first and only film festival that got labeled as Oscar-qualifying, and thus can send the winners of both the national and international short film competition on to the Academy Awards. In 2015 the Animation Competition received the same status.

OFF grows increasingly strong especially because of the many partners who are helping OFF reach new heights year by year.

In 2015 OFF celebrated 40 years of festival with plenty of gold confetti, glammers parties and good old fashion fun. Guests came from all over the world to celebrate with us and never before has OFF had so many visitors, whom of course got a huge shot of short films and love.

Our 40th birthday culminated with the publication of an anniversary book in December 2015, packed full of interviews with directors, artistic profiles and other people who over the years have had contact with OFF.

PLAYOFF

In 2016 Odense International Film Festival presented PLAYOFF – a new festival-within-the-festival: three whole days of pure focus on gaming, animation and film – and every possible intersection between them.

Head of Festival

Birgitte Weinberger took over the position as Festival Director or Head of Festival in 2009. Since then both content and image of the Danish short film festival, OFF, have been revised considerably. OFF strives to be an international film event with great impact on both audience, industry and press. We want to be the melting pot of creativity, talent and quality. An artistic space with bold experiments and direct hits. We want to be a cultural event carried by love where experience and enlightenment go hand in hand – and we have come far.

OFF is the unexpected, the surprising. OFF is a view to the world and insight to itself. A recess from the grey everyday life where obligations become desire. A desire for more. A desire for the new.

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