

Lifestyle



(From left) British producer Simon Emanuel, US actress Shaunette Renee Wilson, US actor Boyd Holbrook, Danish actor Mads Mikkelsen, US actor Harrison Ford, US director James Mangold, British actor Ethann Isidore, US producer Kathleen Kennedy and US producer Frank Marshall arrive for the screening of the film "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny" during the 76th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France.—AFP photos

Cannes honors Ford at Indiana Jones premiere



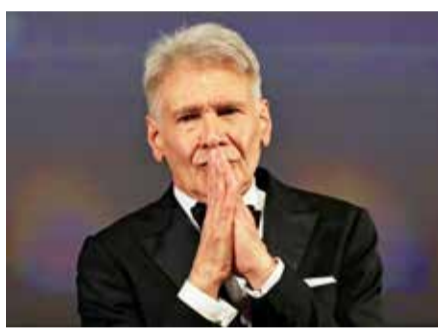
US actor Harrison Ford (left) poses on stage with French Director of the Cannes film festival Iris Knobloch after he was awarded with an Honorary Palme d'or prior to the screening of the film "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny".

"Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny" saw Harrison Ford defy age and crack the whip one last time as one of the most anticipated blockbusters of the year got its world premiere in Cannes on Thursday.

The star, who has vowed this will be the last time he dons the famous fedora, showed a rare bit of emotion as the Cannes Film Festival presented him with an honorary Palme d'Or on stage ahead of the screening. "I'm very moved by this," he said following a collage of clips from his many hit movies. "I just saw my life flash before my eyes."

The fifth outing for the world's favourite adventuring archaeologist, due for general release in late June, sees the 80-year-old de-aged by several decades using special effects that ate up a large chunk of its \$294 million budget.

The extended flashback, that takes up the first chunk of the film, sees a younger Indy in World War II in an action scene on a Nazi train. The film then flashes forward to 1969 with the professor on the brink of retirement



US actor Harrison Ford thanks the audience before being awarded with an Honorary Palme d'or prior to the screening of the film "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny".

and needing a fresh adventure. He finds himself racing across Tangiers, Sicily and New York in pursuit of a former Nazi scientist, played with relish by Mads Mikkelsen, and a treasure that would allow him to travel through time.

British actress Phoebe Waller-Bridge plays Jones's goddaughter, and joined the cast on the red carpet in Cannes. It is the first of the five films -- which began back in 1981 with "Raiders of the Lost Ark" -- not to be directed by Steven Spielberg.

Spielberg passed the reins to James Mangold, known for "Logan" and the Johnny Cash biopic "Walk The Line".

He told AFP that Ford was still "pretty fit" for his age, but it was important to have a story that was "honest, and addressed time, aging and regret".

The first reviews, however, were middling, with the Irish Times saying "nobody with a brain in their heads will compare (it) favourably to the first three films". But Britain's Radio Times gave it four stars, saying it was "a little safe, but it's an enjoyable, old-school action-adventure".

Long docs

Oscar-winning "Twelve Years a Slave" director Steve McQueen was on the red carpet, having arrived in Cannes for his four-hour documentary about wartime Amsterdam, "Occupied City". Playing out-of-competition on Wednesday, McQueen's doc wowed some critics while boring others.

Premiering at the festival just after Indiana Jones was "Black Flies", a tense drama about New York paramedics starring Sean Penn, with an unlikely

supporting role for ex-boxer Mike Tyson as his station chief. There was another lengthy documentary showing on Thursday from a master of the genre, Wang Bing, who offers rarely seen insights into daily life in China.

His 210-minute film, "Youth (Spring)", came from five years of footage of migrant textile workers around Shanghai and is a rare documentary in the main competition for the Palme d'Or at Cannes.

Documentaries have done well on the festival circuit recently, with "All the Beauty and the Bloodshed" (Laura Poitras's film about big pharma) winning Venice last year, and "On the Adamant" (about a daycare centre for mentally ill patients) winning in Berlin in February.

There are 21 films competing for the top prize at Cannes -- the Palme d'Or -- including several previous winners such as Japan's Hirokazu Kore-eda, Germany's Wim Wenders and two-time British winner Ken Loach.—AFP

Cannes moved by film exploring girls' decision to join IS

How do two girls go from being typical teenagers, dying their hair blue and entertaining a gothic phase -- to joining the Islamic State?

"Four Daughters", which premiered on Friday at the Cannes Film Festival, explores the true story of how a mother comes to terms with the decision by two of her children to flee to Libya and join the extremist organisation, and her responsibility for it. Not quite a feature film and not quite a documentary, Oscar-nominated Tunisian filmmaker Kaouther Ben Hania uses the mother, Olfa Hamrouni, and her two remaining daughters alongside actresses to recreate scenes from their life.



Tunisian actress Hend Sabri (left) and Tunisian director Kaouther Ben Hania arrive for the screening of the film "Les Filles D'Ifa" (Four Daughters) during the 76th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France.—AFP photos

Olfa recounts her own upbringing, with devastating tales of trying to protect a house of women from predatory men, and the brutality of her wedding

night. Initially a sympathetic character, complexities emerge as she is forced to confront how her desire to keep her daughters safe led her to repeat generational violence and trauma.

Viewers see Hamrouni as for the first time she hears her daughters recount their experiences of her as a mother, and her shock when she catches them giggling about growing breasts or exploring their bodies. "It's clear she absorbed the conservative, male-oriented point of view that innocent girls are but one misstep away... from instant transformation into 'whores,'" wrote Deadline magazine.

The violence of men, and Tunisia's politics throughout the Arab Spring are constantly in the background. Even after losing two daughters to the Islamic State, and despite the fact she doesn't wear the hijab, she said she loved her daughters wearing it as it made her feel they were safer.

"Four Daughters is an enthralling narrative about memory, motherhood and the inherited traumas of a patriarchal society," said The Hollywood Reporter.

Deadline said it would be "a deserving winner" of the Palme D'Or, to be announced on May 27. "I wanted to explore the violence that we transmit from mother to daughter that is not unique to Tunisian society," Ben Hania told AFP, calling it a "curse". "The new world has yet to arrive," she said of Tunisia after the 2011 revolution and the rise of Islamists in the country.—AFP



(From left) Tunisian actress Hend Sabri, Tunisian actress Ichraq Matar, Tunisian actress Nour Karoui, Tunisian actress Tayssir Chikhaoui, Tunisian director Kaouther Ben Hania, actress Eya Chikahoui, Tunisian actress Olfa Hamrouni and Tunisian actor Majd Mastoura pose during a photocall for the film "Les Filles D'Ifa" (Four Daughters) at the 76th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes.



(From left) Producer Sonia Buchman, French producer Nicolas De La Mothe, Pascale Wei-Guinot, Chinese director Bing Wang, Cameraman Maeda Yoshitaka, Producer Vincent Wang, Cameraman Xianhui Liu and French film editor Dominique Auvray attend a press conference for the film "Qing Chun" (Youth - Spring) during the 76th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes.—AFP photos

Cannes gets rare look at real life in Chinese factories

Chinese filmmaker Wang Bing got incredible access to the inner workings of his country's textile industry by spending five years with its employees, but he fears it may be more difficult for him to work there in future.

Wang, who has delivered some of the most important and immersive documentaries about China, made "Youth (Spring)" from 2,600 hours of footage.

The unflinching but tender portrait of young workers in textile factories premiered at the Cannes Film Festival on Thursday -- a rare documentary to be included in the main competition for the Palme d'Or.

The factory managers are filmed openly as they negotiate dirt-cheap wages and tell workers to leave if they aren't happy -- footage gained thanks to Wang's many years on the ground. "Bit by bit as I got to know all these managers from the factories, I was really able to get total freedom from them and even very strong support on their part," he told AFP. But now Wang worries he may not have such access to film in China again.

"It will be more and more difficult to shoot there because China is entering a phase in its history where denunciation is becoming the heart of society", he said. China has seen a tightening of its authoritarian rule in recent years under Premier Xi Jinping. "The concrete changes that are happening, that we can see and are real, are totally unexpected and surprise me. I must say it is totally incomprehensible to me," Wang said.

Patient observer

Filmed in Zhili, the Chinese garment capital on the Yangtze River, the movie shows the small textile factories in bleak grey concrete high-rises strewn

with garbage. Wang's camera patiently observes the daily lives of young people who have come from rural regions to join the sprawling workforce.

In long takes we see their rapid mechanical movements hunched over sewing machines, often against a background of banter and blaring music.

But it also shows its young subjects as they relax, joking with each other, flirting, drinking and talking about everything from abortion to marriage.

The filmmaker knows the 212-minute running time will put off many viewers but he said his priority was staying true to his subject. "What's essential for the director is to feel that the length corresponds with the true length of the subject being treated," he said.

Nine hours

And he is not done yet. Since 2021, Wang has been editing in Paris and plans two more parts of "Youth", to create a trilogy of more than nine hours. The premiere in Cannes on Thursday

received a standing ovation, and early reviews were broadly positive.

Deadline hailed an "exceptional" documentary that paints a "grim picture of life for young Chinese workers". For The Guardian it was a "giant, immersive documentary" full of "heart-stopping stories". Variety magazine was less enthusiastic, calling it "a deflating, even dehumanising, experience".

Wang was nominated in 2018 at Cannes for his eight-hour-plus documentary, "Dead Souls", on re-education camp survivors. His first epic documentary, "West of the Tracks", about migrant workers, ran for over nine hours.

Other films include "Til Madness Do Us Part" (2013), set in an asylum where mentally ill patients are locked up with political prisoners, and "Three Sisters" (2012), which won a prize in Venice, about three young girls left to fend for themselves in the Yunan mountains while their parents work in the city.—AFP



(From left) Cameraman Liu Xianhui, cameraman Maeda Yoshitaka, Chinese director Wang Bing, French film editor Dominique Auvray, Chinese assistant director Bingyuan Xu and Chinese film editor Liyo Gong pose during a photocall for the film "Qing Chun" (Youth - Spring).