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## Zurich: Festival's German-Language Lineup Unveiled

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### **Katharina Wyss' 'Sarah Plays a Werewolf' and Lisa Bruhlmann's 'Blue My Mind' are among the highlights of the section, which focuses on cinema from Switzerland, Germany and Austria.**

Personal drama and political debate are in focus in the selection of titles that will screen in the Focus: Switzerland, Germany, Austria section of the upcoming Zurich International Film Festival, which is set to run Sept. 29-Oct.8.

The section features six fiction and six documentary films, all shot in the German language, which will compete for Zurich's Golden Eye Award and the newly launched Film Prize of the Zurich Churches. The winner of the Golden Eye honor will receive a cash bursary of 20,000 Swiss Francs (\$21,000). The Zurich Churches prize, voted on by the city's local parishes, comes with \$5,200 in cash.

The 2017 fiction selection includes Katharina Wyss' high school drama *Sarah Plays a Werewolf*, which recently premiered in Venice's Critic Week. The feature stars newcomer Loane Balthasar as an introverted teen who transforms into a fearless performer onstage in her school drama class. A who's who of Swiss screen talent, including Michel Voita, Manuela Biedermann, Annina Walt and Sabine Timoteo, co-star.

Another Swiss drama, Lisa Bruhlmann's coming-of-age feature *Blue My Mind*, will screen in Zurich shortly after its world premiere at San Sebastian, where it was picked for the festival's New Directors competition. Set in Zurich, the drama follows a 15-year-old Swiss girl (Luna Wedler) struggling with the challenges of adolescence.

The political and the personal dominate in the documentaries on offer in Zurich this year. Kaleo La Belle's *Fell in Love With a Girl*, which will have its world premiere at the fest, is an intimate portrait of the director's patchwork family, and Maryam Goormaghtigh's *Before Summer Ends* takes the form of a comedy road trip in which the helmer accompanies three Iranians on vacation across the South of France.

In contrast, Thomas Furhapter's *The Third Option* places politics and ethics at its core with an examination of the morality of pre-natal screening for genetic defects, while *Free Lunch Society* from Austrian filmmaker Christian Tod investigates one of the big political ideas of our time: the concept of providing a universal basic income for all citizens.

The Zurich Churches award will be presented at the festival on Oct. 5, with the Golden Eye honor to be announced on Oct. 7.

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