

Between prospective essays and documentaries on intensive agriculture, the third edition of the Yonne festival, which ended on Sunday, brilliantly questions the links between science fiction and the countryside.



Over four days, films from all over the world will have been shown on screen – in a converted barn or with our heads in the stars. (La Maison Composer)

by [Jacques Denis](#)

published on September 4, 2023 at 4:35 p.m.

It's a clash of cultures, between two worlds that are called to coexist. The neo-rurals, most of whom have left Paris and its outskirts, often in search of common sense, and the local elders, only a two-hour drive from the City of Lights. How can we establish a dialogue between these two species? This was the challenge of this third edition of Ciné Pampa, subtitled "film festival from here and elsewhere" and based in Saints-en-Puisaye (Yonne), which brought science fiction and rurality into collision from August 31 to September 3. *"The first edition focused on activities in the countryside to show that culture exists there. The second on visual anthropology, focused on documentaries. This year, the theme should be understood more as anticipation, that is, how the countryside can survive and be inhabited,"* explains Ann Guillaume, doctor of art and sociology. *"We set up this festival because while not everyone has been to a contemporary art gallery, everyone has seen a film ,"* adds Tom Bücher, his partner, who, after working as a graphic designer and artistic director on a number of projects in Paris, chose to set up a home in the village of Puisaye.

“Strong creative potential”

So no *Cabbage Soup* , no more *Bad Taste* , Peter Jackson's rural gore, but films that implicitly question the future of humanity in a time of cascading crises, whether they are the subject of intimate disorder or the object of a more global collapse . *"There is science fiction when there is the invention of a world, the creation of societies, of unknown organisms. What matters most to Ciné Pampa, in science fiction, is fiction. In this domain, the countryside has a strong creative potential ,"* describes the program. Over four days, we will have seen on screen – a barn converted for the afternoon, a large canvas to be with our heads in the stars after 9 p.m. – films from all over, from real-life cinema to contemporary art, documentaries (a focus on an Afro-Colombian community facing the ravages of intensive agriculture) as well as prospective essays, short films (special mentions to *Sous le soleil du Neubourg*, a drone's point of view on the activities of an

agricultural high school, and to the two magnificent animated drawings by Fabien Granet) and longer films (the prize goes to *Manifeste pour une agriculture de l'amour*, declined by Hervé Covès, an agricultural engineer who became a Franciscan priest converted to agroforestry), a film-concert based on prepared piano and synths on three films by the iconic Maya Deren as a final-year project. A plurality of perspectives, all of which converge towards a future where ancestral knowledge has its place.



The prize goes to the Manifesto for an Agriculture of Love, developed by Hervé Covès, an agricultural engineer who became a Franciscan priest and converted to agroforestry.

What can we take away from this? A bubbling of ideas, lines of thought that testify, in a pictorial or more direct way, that the nature of our world is part of the world of nature. This is the subject of *Last Things* by Deborah Stratman, a film punctuated by microscopic points of view as well as macro visions, which establish the principles of life on Earth. The moral could be "In the beginning was the end, inevitable." "*Is it possible that viruses contribute to the origin of the world. And if so, in what way?*" One of the first sentences, all in the form of questions, which open the 19 minutes of *Earth's*

Answer , sets the tone of this film made from the archives of the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) between post-psychedelic visions and scientific research, a gentle delirium with the inductive thread Tim Blake, ex-member of the group Gong who signs the soundtrack and whose voice serves as the framework. CERN is still at the heart of the subject of *Les Particules*, the first feature film by documentary filmmaker Blaise Harrison about the world's most powerful particle accelerator located in the Pays de Gex, which causes a teenager to experience strange hallucinations.

Sustainable Laboratory

It's also a kind of trip that provokes an irresistible ascent to [*the Mountain of Thomas Salvador*](#) , the story of a Parisian engineer who leaves his low works to penetrate the secrets of the high peaks and whose allegory makes sense here, in this Puisaye which has become the refuge of urbanites running out of spiritual fuel; just like the inverse metaphor developed in the cult classic *The Wicker Man* , where a blessed sergeant who came from the continent to conduct an investigation is in the midst of existential disarray in the face of pagans lost on an island in the Hebrides. They will sacrifice him. Not that in Saints-en-Puisaye, a small ecosystem which has been working for a long time as a laboratory of sustainability in this territory which has gradually become entrenched in identity withdrawal. A retired farmer, Philippe was born there and has cultivated another furrow there, having converted to organic farming a long time ago. With his wife, Françoise, and his grandchildren, he came to support this local initiative. *"When I was young, the region was dying; today, this demographic influx is allowing for a revival. Not all farmers are conservatives!"*

Certainly, these latter do not constitute, far from it, the majority of the several hundred participants. But it is a start, for those who make do with the means at hand: a tiny budget (10,000 euros, enough to pay for the film rights, accommodation for the filmmakers who come to exchange, equipment, etc.), barely financed by a grant from the Drac, patronage, and the free entry price, *"ten euros on average ."* Here, the volunteers - about twenty of them - and the goodwill do the rest. *"Our project is to be*

defined. Hence the name of this house, to be composed, with the people who come there and help each other. Ciné Pampa comes to shine a light on this place, through a popular festival, even if the films are not necessarily so ," summarizes Ann Guillaume, disciple of Bruno Latour. In this house organized as a collegiate body (twelve people including two farmers, two doctors, artists, etc.) which aims to bring the arts, life sciences, and territories into dialogue, a different score has been recomposed for three years, summer and winter now. Visual artist Etienne de France is in residence there in 2023, and guitarist Eric Chenaux was heard there in February. Enough to pique curiosity and patiently weave another community.