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Screenwriters Festival to take centre stage in industry debate

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This year's International Screenwriters Festival falls at a critical time in the history of writers.

The event, which runs from July 3-6 in the UK town of Cheltenham, has quickly established itself as a major event in the industry calendar.

Last year the event, backed by Screen International, attracted such leading figures as Guillermo Del Toro, William Nicholson and Julian Fellowes.

But this year there is an added sense of purposes, says festival head David Pearson.

Writers have been particularly vocal about their place in the industry, culminating in the creation of a Screenwriters Manifesto last year.

It has been signed by thousands of writers around the world and demands a changed relationship between writer and film.

Pearson believes this year's festival, supported by Screen International, is the right time for serious discussion.

"The whole industry is going through a period of change and the Screenwriters Festival should be the perfect place to hold that debate.

"One of the core values of the festival is how we can bring the different sides of the business, particularly writers and producers together."

The European Screenwriters Manifesto ([click here to see in full](#)) makes up one of the key topics of the event.

Its call for action to support screenwriter rights – legal, moral, creative and financial - are a big challenge to the industry.

Christine Kallas, president of the European writers body FSE, believes it's time that screenwriting took its place at the heart of the film-making process.

"Writers are not looking for recognition of their role in the creation of a film. But films are still generally thought of as either a producer's film or a director's film and our creativity is often not recognised."

The festival will be the focus for much of that discussion but it is part of a wide programme of events.

Other sessions at the event include:

- I The under-representation of women in screenwriting
- I The benefits of close producer/ writer partnerships at every stage of production
- I Spain's film industry and writers

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