

characteristics, whose soul has been captured by the analogue camera; which we saw in the first part of this non-fiction film.

A far cry from the spectacular and epic nature documentaries that are usually popular on TV screens and platforms all over the world, *7 Walks with Mark Brown* is based on humility, simplicity and calm, as if it were an organic extension of the Canary Islands festival.

A fiercely independent feature film, where the directors have also been involved in the script and editing - one of its characters jokingly compares it to Derek Jarman's *The Garden*. *7 Walks with Mark Brown* invites the viewer to forget about rushing around and embrace the peace and quiet. Get back to basics and put away your screens, share evenings with friends or neighbours and - as at some point in the film - allow nature to observe us as well.

The film also exposes how the climate and fungicidal disruption caused by humans is affecting all living beings (grasses, insects, trees, etc.). Some of which are supersensitive and after managing to survive for thousands of years, may now have their days numbered. But it does so in the format of a friendly botany lesson. Calm and thorough, while, during the excursions, someone writes their impressions down in their “dream book”, another person draws flowers in their notebook, and Mark Brown drops pearls like “let’s be humble and simple like wild flowers”, “let the plants speak” and, at the end of the filming and while shedding tears of emotion, he describes this film process as “seven days of happiness”. ♦

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

7 Walks with Mark Brown (Dir. Pierre Creton and Vincent Barré, 2024, 103 min)

Filmmaker and farmer Pierre Creton returns to the Normandy landscape so lushly portrayed in 2023's *A Prince*. Now, in this singularly tranquil documentary, co-directed with filmmaker-sculptor Vincent Barré, he offers an experience pleasing in its magnificent simplicity. Accompanied by a small filming crew, Creton and Barré follow paleobotanist Mark Brown across seven locations in the Pays des Caux region as he seeks out native plants from which an ancient garden could be created and explains, with the loving tenderness of a true expert, the etymology, beauty, and scientific properties of the region's flora. Structured in two halves, *7 Walks with Mark Brown* first documents the making of these expeditions and then presents the result, a cinematic work of taxonomy and poetry, of nature and camaraderie.

Followed by:

Va, Toto! (Dir. Pierre Creton, 2017, 94 min)

The appearance of a wild boar in the life of Madeleine, an elegant and solitary septuagenarian, disrupts the lives of several neighbors in a hamlet in the Normandy region of Caux, including the faithful filmmaker Pierre Creton. From this singular situation, the artist builds an unruly ark, as resistant to the demands of an inflexible world as it is open to the boundaries of dreams, stories, and free association. A profoundly original and audacious work, *Va, Toto!* then composes a new material, mixing reality with a rare romantic and meaningful power. Insular, the beautiful cinema of Pierre Creton still plows a tiny territory to erect it into an inexhaustible mythology of desire.

TRT: 197 min

7 Walks with Mark Brown by Pierre Jendrysiak

The following article was originally published by Screen Slate, June 22, 2025

In the first part of *7 Walks with Mark Brown* (2024), the latest full-length film by Pierre Creton and Vincent Barré, the directors and their small film crew wander through the French countryside with botanist Mark Brown. Brown monologues about ancient plants that the crew observes. Then, he guides them through his own recreation of a prehistoric forest, which he calls “The Dawn of Flowers.” During these walks, we see the film's cinematographer use his 16mm camera to shoot flowers, trees, and ferns. This footage forms the second part of the film, in which we see static shots of wildlife accompanied by a discussion that took place between Creton and Brown, where they do little more than identify the different flowers shown: what species they belong to and where they can be found in the world.

For those who liked Creton's previous effort, *A Prince* (2023), but were hesitant about the more conventional approach to storytelling it assumed relative to the rest of his films, *7 Walks with Mark Brown* will prove reassuring. Here, Creton and Barré return to their habit of doing everything that is usually avoided in mainstream cinema. They mix digital and analog film; they preserve the hiccups in their voice-over; they often show the same thing twice. But those beginner's mistakes are, of course, the salt of their work and the unfocused footage that

proved less essential in *A Prince* constitutes the heart of their new film.

In *7 Walks with Mark Brown*, it is not only a film crew that wanders through Normandy's countryside, but a group of friends, almost a family. The film's unfocused quality lends it the incomparable charm of a home movie. Add to that the fact that the cinematographer, Antoine Pirotte, was also the main actor in *A Prince* and that, from their interactions, it's clear that Brown and Creton know each other well. The walks and the filmmaking in *7 Walks with Mark Brown* almost seem like excuses for its makers to chat, eat, and drink together. Their naps on the side of the road become as important as their main hike. When some characters start to talk about the beauty of a wheat field before them, Brown gets emotional, recalling a long lost love story that becomes the real subject of discussion among the group.

As in most of Creton's films, the birds and the bees are to be taken literally; nature, flora, and fauna are regarded as the point of origin from which all relationships, discourse, and actions stem. Creton and Barré do not create a fantasy of an unchanging, sublime wilderness, but instead attempt to picture how nature relates to us: how we are a part of it and how we are, also, separate from it. There's no need for Brown to lecture the viewer about the fragility of the human race in relation to the unbending serenity of nature. All he has to do is murmur that a plant has existed for “a hundred million years” to make us grasp how fragile and trivial our existence is compared to that of most life on Earth. This might also be precisely why Creton and Barré are so uninterested in *professionalism*: because it is unsustainable. ♦

7 Walks with Mark Brown by Alfonso Rivera

The following article was originally published by Cineuropa, May 12, 2024

7 Walks with Mark Brown, the new collaboration between the artist Vincent Barré and the gardener Pierre Creton (*A Prince*), at the 14th Lanzarote Film Festival received two special mentions: from the young jury and the official jury. In the official jury's public analysis they noted that the French filmmakers, by filming the minutiae of real life, have returned to the spirit of the Lumière brothers, highlighting this film for its luminosity, over the rest of the competition, which is full of dark, dramatic and terrible stories.

It is true that this great little film, which had its world premiere at the FIDMarseille last June, where it won the French National Centre of Visual Arts (CNAP) prize, is pure light. It all takes place outdoors, in the forests, meadows and beaches of Normandy, where a group of people and a chocolate-coloured Labrador dog accompany the British botanist Mark Brown. Watching, filming and learning about plants, from the simplest flower to the most sophisticated - and camouflaged - carnivore, because even this apparently exotic species is closer to us than we thought.

Divided in the form of a diptych, the film has a first part - filmed in digital - as a kind of “making of” for a later film. It shows how this human flock, loaded with a film camera, wanders through seven different places, paying careful and respectful attention to what is growing freely around them. In the second part of the film we enjoy the result. A glossary of frontal images of plants that the scientist of the title describes with their name, origin, and