



**ZÜRICH  
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## MEDIA RELEASE



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### Dakota Johnson to Open the 21st Zurich Film Festival and Receive the Golden Eye

Zurich, September 4, 2025

**The Zurich Film Festival (September 25 – October 5) is delighted to announce that American actress and producer Dakota Johnson will open this year's ZFF. Johnson will present her relationship comedy SPLITSVILLE with director, actor and producer Michael Angelo Covino at the festive Opening Night – a project she not only stars in but also produced. During the Opening Night, she will be honored with the Golden Eye for her role in the film and her outstanding career. Additionally, she will be offering insights into her work at a ZFF Masters conversation.**

In full bloom as a character actress: Dakota Johnson has established herself as one of the most versatile actresses of her generation. Coming from a Hollywood dynasty – father Don Johnson, mother Melanie Griffith, and granddaughter of actress Tippi Hedren – she achieved international fame in 2015 with the role of Anastasia Steele in the blockbuster trilogy FIFTY SHADES OF GREY, for which she received the People's Choice Award. Since then, she has appeared in works ranging from arthouse cinema to major international productions. Under the direction of Luca Guadagnino, she shone in A BIGGER SPLASH (2015) and SUSPIRIA (2018). She starred alongside Johnny Depp in BLACK MASS (2015), impressed under Maggie Gyllenhaal's direction in THE LOST DAUGHTER (2021), and captivated audiences in CHA CHA REAL SMOOTH (2022), which won the Audience Award at Sundance. She thus joins the ranks of actresses who successfully navigate between Hollywood mainstream and independent cinema.

In the new film SPLITSVILLE by Michael Angelo Covino, Dakota Johnson plays the character Julie. When her friend Ashley (Adria Arjona) tells her husband Carey (Kyle Marvin) that she wants a divorce, he seeks comfort from Julie and Paul (Michael Angelo Covino). The couple shares their secret to a happy marriage: an open relationship. But when Carey and Julie cross the line, everything spirals into utter chaos. SPLITSVILLE is a fast-paced indie comedy full of absurd twists and subtle humor, charmingly spotlighting the pitfalls of modern love. A dream of an opening film!



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#### «A great honor»

«Dakota Johnson is one of the most fascinating actresses in modern cinema. She gives her characters great credibility through her honesty, and you can always sense how much she cares for them. She impresses with her subtle expressiveness, uncompromising choice of roles, and her ability to embody both audience favorites and demanding character studies», says Christian Jungen, Festival Director of the Zurich Film Festival. «The fact that she is opening our festival and presenting the comedy SPLITSVILLE, which she also produced through her company TeaTime Pictures, is a great honor and a wonderful gift to the Zurich audience.»

#### Award Ceremony and Gala Premiere

Dakota Johnson will personally accept the Golden Eye on September 25 during the festive opening gala and present the film together with director, actor and producer Michael Angelo Covino. Distinguished guests of the evening include Federal Councillor Elisabeth Baume-Schneider and Zurich's Mayor Corine Mauch. Additionally, she will be offering insights into her work at a ZFF Masters.

The Opening Night is presented by Breuninger.

#### From Austin to Hollywood

Dakota Johnson was born on October 4, 1989, in Austin, Texas, into a renowned Hollywood family – her father is Don Johnson, her mother Melanie Griffith, and her grandmother the legendary Tippi Hedren. She made her acting debut in 1999 in CRAZY IN ALABAMA under the direction of Antonio Banderas before returning to the screen a decade later with a supporting role in David Fincher's THE SOCIAL NETWORK (2010). Early appearances in comedies such as THE FIVE-YEAR ENGAGEMENT and 21 JUMP STREET followed, before her international breakthrough with the global phenomenon FIFTY SHADES OF GREY, which earned her a BAFTA Rising Star nomination and established her as one of the most intriguing new voices in Hollywood.

In recent years, Johnson has broadened her creative spectrum as both actress and producer. She was most recently seen in Celine Song's romantic comedy-drama MATERIALISTS alongside Chris Evans and Pedro Pascal, and starred in TeaTime Pictures' SPLITSVILLE, which premiered to a six-minute standing ovation at the 2025 Cannes Film Festival. Other notable credits include the indie hit THE PEANUT BUTTER FALCON, which became one of the most successful platform releases in the U.S., and the Netflix adaptation of Jane Austen's PERSUASION.

With her production company TeaTime Pictures, which she co-founded in 2019, she has produced a string of acclaimed projects including AM I OK?, DADDIO with Sean Penn, and the documentary THE DISAPPEARANCE OF SHERE HITE. She also ventured into directing with Coldplay's «Cry Cry Cry» and the short film LOSER BABY, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival.

Beyond the screen, Johnson is an outspoken advocate for women's reproductive rights and mental health awareness and serves as co-creative director of the sexual wellness company maude. She is also the face of Gucci and Roberto Coin. Today, Dakota Johnson is recognized not only as a captivating performer but also as a creative force shaping contemporary cinema with courage, intelligence, and vision.

#### Zurich Film Festival

The Zurich Film Festival (ZFF) is the second largest festival in the German-speaking world. Over 11 days in autumn, it presents the greatest discoveries and the year's most anticipated movies. The ZFF promotes exchange between upcoming directors, established filmmakers, the film industry and the general public. In the last 20 years, the festival has attracted a total of 1.35 million visitors. 500 of the 2,300 films screened celebrated their world or European premiere at the Zurich Film Festival.

**The 21st edition will take place from 25 September to 5 October 2025.**

**Further Information: [Zurich Film Festival](#) | [ZFF Industry](#)**

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