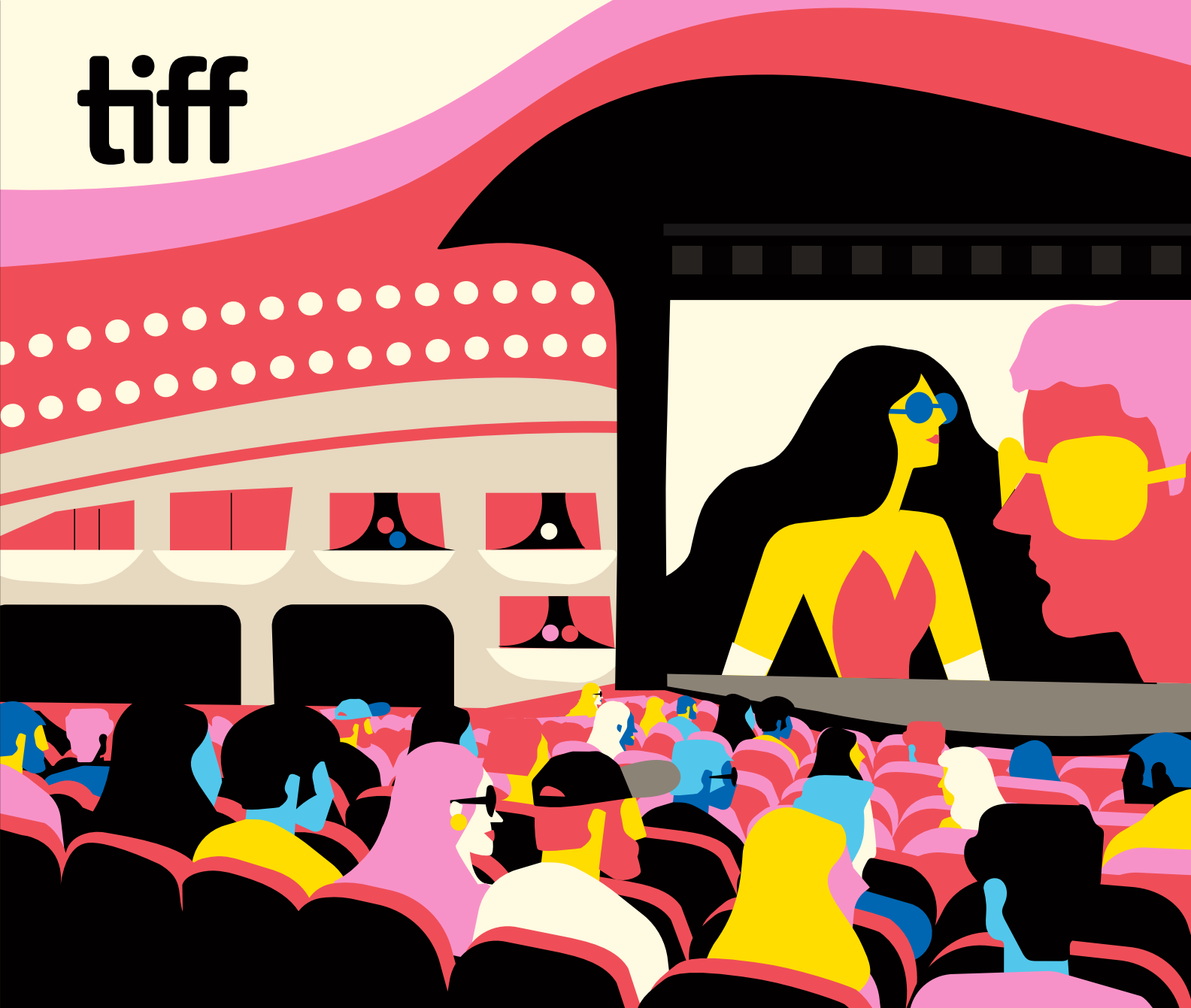


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# TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As you watch with us, we encourage you to reflect on the history of the land that you are watching from. TIFF is located on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit and the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, the Wendat, and the Haudenosaunee. We are grateful to work on this land.



**Cameron Bailey**  
CEO, TIFF

# TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL PRESENTED BY ROGERS

## WELCOME FROM THE CEO

What I remember from reading Jacques Attali's book, *Noise*, is that music began by shaping the noise of the natural world, but now music shapes and even predicts societies.

What we're seeing now is a convergence of screen culture and music culture driven by the inexhaustible energy of fans. Infinite personal passions, organized across the globe via technology, have become their own creative force. This year at the Festival, we expect to see that energy unleashed in all its spectacular glory.

The 49th Toronto International Film Festival presented by Rogers will welcome legends of rock, pop, hip-hop and classical music, among the 280 feature films, series and short films in official selection. As we watched over 8,400 submissions, we saw filmmakers deepen our understanding of well-known musicians, remix the form of the popstar documentary, push the movie musical into new territory, and advance the art of the film score. We're fans too, and we love this for us.

Of course there's much more beyond music at this year's Festival. We found films from 73 countries that illuminate both fast-changing societies and eternal human desires. We found new artists to surprise us. We found new horizons for cinema. We found beauty.

And, as we lay the groundwork for our 50th anniversary next year and the launch of a new, official TIFF Market in 2026, we also found many reasons for optimism. Audiences are watching more than ever before. We are all feeding our human curiosity by watching the vast spectrum of human experience on screen. How we watch and where we watch may evolve, but we're not nearly done watching. That's music to our ears.

Enjoy the Festival.





**Anita Lee**  
Chief Programming  
Officer

# TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL PRESENTED BY ROGERS WELCOME FROM THE CPO

Cinema holds a mirror to our lives and the world around us, crystallizing our triumphs and struggles, illuminating them with wonder and imagination or a different kind of truth. Whether they are much anticipated Hollywood galas, auteur discoveries, or new works by beloved luminaries, the narratives unfolding at this year's Festival are creations of a vibrant international film community. We are excited to celebrate bold new visions across form and genres from voices that define filmmaking and storytelling this year and share them with the best audience in the world.

We look forward to welcoming the world's filmmakers to TIFF. Since last September, TIFF programmers and teams have worked with great passion to bring you the very best in film, series, conversations, and industry events that we hope will set new bars and spark lively conversations.

This year, TIFF will present films and series from 73 countries. We are excited to welcome local, national, and international industry and media delegates to Toronto, a city built by people and cultures from around the world. We want to acknowledge the thousands of stakeholders and supporters who make each year's Festival possible.

As the Festival closes in on a half-century of existence, we strive to be a global gathering connecting the languages, communities, and commerce of cinema. As so many complex forces in society push to separate us, art can open up dialogue to bring us closer. I hope you see a film at the Festival this year that makes you wonder, shifts your perspective, or brings you joy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anita', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.



The Right Honourable  
**Justin Trudeau**



## PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA

It is with great honour that I send my warmest greetings for the 49th annual Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF).

As the largest public film festival in the world, TIFF is a testament to Canada's immense film talent, the outstanding productions that get showcased, and the event organizers' tireless and dedicated efforts. Canadian film content has a unique diversity and voice in the industry, and Canadians are deeply proud of its ability to motivate, to foster inclusivity, and to create positive action. Our government is proud to be a partner and to support this work.

It is my great honour to also recognize the world talented filmmakers, directors, and performers, that join us here. Your work inspires, entertains, and leaves us captivated by your creativity, your depth, and the messages that you share. Your voices are impactful, and I would like to thank you for all that you do to make the world a better place.

I would like to finally recognize the entire TIFF team who makes this event possible. Their commitment towards presenting the best of cinema and fostering collaboration in the global film industry, truly deserves the utmost praise.

Please accept my very best wishes.

C'est avec un grand honneur que je vous adresse mes salutations les plus chaleureuses à l'occasion de la 49e édition du Festival international du film de Toronto (TIFF).

Plus grand festival du film public au monde, le TIFF témoigne de l'immense talent cinématographique que l'on trouve au Canada, des productions exceptionnelles qui y sont présentées et des efforts inlassables et dévoués des organisateurs de l'événement. Le contenu cinématographique canadien a une diversité et une voix uniques dans l'industrie, et les Canadiens sont profondément fiers de sa capacité à motiver les gens, à favoriser l'inclusion et à susciter des actions positives. Notre gouvernement est fier d'être un partenaire du festival et de soutenir ce travail.

J'ai aussi le grand honneur de rendre hommage aux cinéastes, réalisateurs et acteurs talentueux du monde entier qui se sont joints à nous ici aujourd'hui. Votre travail nous inspire et nous divertit. Nous sommes captivés par votre créativité, l'ampleur de votre talent et les messages que vous nous transmettez. Vous exercez une grande influence, et je tiens à vous remercier de tout ce que vous faites pour rendre le monde meilleur.

Enfin, j'aimerais saluer tous les membres de l'équipe du TIFF qui ont rendu possible la tenue de cet événement. Votre détermination à présenter le meilleur du cinéma et à favoriser la collaboration au sein de l'industrie cinématographique mondiale mérite vraiment les plus grands éloges.

Je vous adresse mes meilleurs vœux.



The Honourable  
Doug Ford



## PREMIER OF ONTARIO

Welcome to the 49<sup>th</sup> annual Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF).

Every September, TIFF delivers the very best in Canadian and international cinema, special events and discussions with some of the biggest names in the industry. The festival includes its much-anticipated conference which features top film professionals from across the globe as they examine the art and business of cinema.

Once again, I want to thank the all-star team behind TIFF. Your energy, passion and creativity have helped this event maintain its standing as the world's preeminent film festival.

Our government recognizes that Ontario's screen-based industries provide thousands of jobs for such roles as filmmakers, digital content creators and actors. That is why we will continue to support this sector to ensure it remains vibrant and prosperous.

Best wishes for another memorable festival.

Bienvenue à la 49<sup>e</sup> édition annuelle du Festival international du film de Toronto (TIFF).

Chaque mois de septembre, le TIFF nous offre ce qui se fait de mieux dans le cinéma canadien et international, des événements spéciaux et des discussions avec certains de plus grands noms de l'industrie. Le festival, c'est aussi sa conférence si attendue à laquelle participent les plus grands professionnels de la planète pour discuter de l'art et du marché cinématographiques.

Une fois encore, je tiens à remercier l'équipe d'élite du TIFF. Votre énergie, votre passion et votre créativité contribuent à maintenir le statut de cet événement comme le festival de cinéma prééminent dans le monde.

Notre gouvernement reconnaît que les industries de l'Ontario qui dépendent des écrans fournissent des milliers d'emplois dans des rôles allant des réalisateurs, aux créateurs de contenus digitaux et aux acteurs. C'est pourquoi nous continuerons de soutenir ce secteur pour garantir qu'il demeure dynamique et prospère.

Mes meilleurs vœux de réussite à ce festival, qui s'annonce encore une fois mémorable.





The Honourable  
**Olivia Chow**



## MAYOR OF TORONTO

It is my pleasure to extend greetings and a warm welcome to everyone attending the 49th annual Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF).

This exciting arts and culture festival is dedicated to creating transformational experiences for film lovers and creators of all ages and backgrounds, celebrating Canadian and international cinema. Toronto looks forward to featuring some of the biggest names in film and welcoming everyone to Festival Street, which takes place at the beginning of the festival.

TIFF is a cultural institution in Canada that transforms the way people see the world through film. It will premiere the best in Canadian and international films and serves as a launchpad for award season campaigns. Toronto is so proud to host this festival which has grown into one of the largest and most renowned festivals of its kind worldwide!

I would like to thank TIFF for playing a leading role in supporting the economic vitality of Canada's film and media industry, bringing the joy of film to people from coast to coast to coast. I am very pleased that this festival is taking place in our city. As Mayor, I am grateful for all of the Festival's contributions to the arts and culture scene here in Toronto.

On behalf of Toronto City Council, please accept my best wishes for an enjoyable festival and continued success.

C'est avec plaisir que je souhaite la bienvenue à tous ceux qui participent à la 49e édition du Festival international du film de Toronto (TIFF).

Ce passionnant festival des arts et de la culture se consacre à la création d'expériences transformatrices pour les cinéphiles et les créateurs de tous âges et de tous horizons, en célébrant le cinéma canadien et international. La ville de Toronto se réjouit de présenter certains des plus grands noms du cinéma et d'accueillir tout le monde à Festival Street, un événement qui se déroule au début du festival.

Le TIFF est une institution culturelle canadienne qui transforme la façon dont les gens voient le monde à travers le cinéma. Il présentera en avant-première le meilleur des films canadiens et internationaux et servira de tremplin pour les campagnes de la saison des prix. La ville de Toronto est très fière d'accueillir ce festival qui est devenu l'un des plus grands et des plus renommés en son genre dans le monde entier!

Je tiens à remercier le TIFF de jouer un rôle de premier plan dans le soutien de la vitalité économique de l'industrie canadienne du cinéma et des médias, en faisant découvrir les joies du cinéma à des gens d'un bout à l'autre du pays. Je suis très heureuse que ce festival ait lieu dans notre ville. En tant que mairesse, je suis reconnaissante de toutes les contributions du Festival à la scène artistique et culturelle de Toronto.

Au nom du conseil municipal de Toronto, je vous souhaite un festival très agréable et un succès continu.



The Honourable  
**Pascale St-Onge**

## MINISTER OF CANADIAN HERITAGE

Welcome to the 2024 Toronto International Film Festival!

Since 1976, TIFF has been dedicated to changing perceptions through the power of film. It has become the world's largest public film festival, celebrating the art of storytelling and its profound impact on our lives.

Film connects us, evokes emotions, and sparks conversations. TIFF propels this vision by bringing diverse stories to life, touching hearts and minds, and fostering a deeper understanding of our world.

As the Minister of Canadian Heritage, I am proud to see TIFF's ongoing contribution to Canada's film industry and sharing the joy of film coast to coast to coast. TIFF unites us in a shared cultural experience, celebrating the creativity and vision of filmmakers.

Let us come together to honor the incredible work of filmmakers and enjoy the transformative experience that TIFF offers.

Bienvenue au Festival international du film de Toronto 2024!

Depuis 1976, le TIFF se consacre à changer les perceptions grâce au pouvoir du cinéma. Il est devenu le plus grand festival de cinéma public au monde, célébrant l'art de la narration et son impact profond sur nos vies.

Le cinéma nous connecte, évoque des émotions et suscite des conversations. Le TIFF soutient cette vision en donnant vie à des histoires diverses, en touchant les cœurs et les esprits et en favorisant une meilleure compréhension de notre monde.

En tant que ministre du Patrimoine canadien, je suis fière de voir la contribution continue du TIFF à l'industrie cinématographique canadienne et de partager la joie du cinéma d'un océan à l'autre. Le TIFF nous unit dans une expérience culturelle commune, célébrant la créativité et la vision des cinéastes.

Réunissons-nous pour rendre hommage au travail incroyable des cinéastes et profiter de l'expérience transformatrice qu'offre le TIFF.



The Honourable  
**Stan Cho**

## MINISTER OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND SPORT

Welcome to the 2024 Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF).

TIFF has enriched the lives of Ontarians and visitors alike for nearly half a century, elevating the profile of Ontario's arts and culture sector, boosting the local economy, supporting filmmakers and fostering a vibrant community of artists and enthusiasts.

This festival showcases the strength of Ontario's screen-based industries and reaffirms our province's reputation as an international leader in arts and culture. Industry professionals and film lovers from around the world gather annually in Toronto to view groundbreaking films and celebrate the local and international talent that created them. Our government is proud to support TIFF and its continued contributions to Ontario's dynamic arts and culture landscape.

Best wishes for an exciting festival season!

Bienvenue au Festival international du film de Toronto 2024 (TIFF).

Le TIFF a enrichi la vie des Ontariens et des visiteurs depuis près d'un demi-siècle, rehaussant le profil du secteur des arts et de la culture de l'Ontario, stimulant l'économie locale, soutenant les cinéastes et favorisant une communauté dynamique d'artistes et de passionnés.

Ce festival met en valeur la force des industries ontariennes axées sur l'écran et réaffirme la réputation de notre province en tant que chef de file international des arts et de la culture. Les professionnels de l'industrie et les cinéphiles du monde entier se réunissent chaque année à Toronto pour voir des films novateurs et célébrer les talents locaux et internationaux qui les ont créés. Notre gouvernement est fier d'appuyer le TIFF et ses contributions continues au paysage dynamique des arts et de la culture de l'Ontario.

Meilleurs voeux pour une saison de festivals passionnante!





Executive Director &  
CEO  
**Julie Roy**

## TELEFILM CANADA

In all its prestige, recognition and excitement, the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) shares a mission that we strongly support – to transform the way people see the world, through film. Our continued partnership with TIFF is a testament to our commitment to Canadian and Indigenous cinema.

Investing in films and reinforcing the importance of cinema is our core mission at Telefilm. We do this at every stage of a film production's lifecycle, from pre-development to distribution and international export. As well, it is through ongoing collaborations with festivals like TIFF that Canadian stories continue to touch hearts, stimulate minds and help us explore our common humanity – bringing us closer together.

Film festivals play an invaluable role in boosting the visibility of Canadian and Indigenous films, supporting the growth of the audiovisual sector. These events provide opportunities for networking, collaboration and the formation of new partnerships.

We encourage you to keep supporting the magic of cinema at TIFF and in a theatre near you!

Avec tout son prestige, sa reconnaissance et son enthousiasme, le Festival international du film de Toronto (TIFF) partage une mission commune que nous soutenons activement: transformer notre façon de voir le monde grâce au cinéma. Notre partenariat de longue date avec le TIFF témoigne de notre engagement envers le cinéma canadien et autochtone.

Investir dans les films et renforcer l'importance du cinéma est la mission fondamentale de Téléfilm. Nous le faisons à chaque étape du cycle de vie d'une production cinématographique, du pré-développement jusqu'à la distribution et à l'exportation internationale. En outre, c'est grâce à une collaboration soutenue avec des festivals comme le TIFF que les histoires canadiennes peuvent continuer à toucher les coeurs, à stimuler les esprits et à nous aider à explorer notre humanité commune, nous rapprochant les uns des autres.

Les festivals de films jouent un rôle inestimable en augmentant la visibilité des films canadiens et autochtones, et en favorisant la croissance du secteur audiovisuel. Ces événements offrent des occasions de réseautage et de collaboration et encouragent la création de nouveaux partenariats.

Continuez à vivre la magie du cinéma, au TIFF et dans une salle près de chez vous!



President & CEO  
**Karen Thorne-Stone**

## ONTARIO CREATES

Ontario Creates is thrilled to join in welcoming you to the 49th annual Toronto International Film Festival! We are proud to be a long-time supporter of TIFF's outstanding programming, and are delighted to greet this year's delegates.

Each year we are inspired by the innovative and thought-provoking story-telling of filmmakers from across the globe, and especially those from here in Ontario. Ontario Creates is honoured to support and celebrate the province's talented film community and shine a spotlight on our world-class filming destinations and incentives. We encourage you to visit our stand at the Industry Centre or at [ontariocreates.ca](http://ontariocreates.ca) to learn more.

We are excited to showcase the hottest upcoming films to industry executives during the 19th edition of the International Financing Forum (iff), and we invite you to join us on September 7 at our IP Market Day to discover fresh, award-winning, and compelling content – and to explore promising new business partnerships and opportunities.

On behalf of our Ontario Creates' Board and staff, we congratulate the TIFF team and volunteers for their hard work and dedication, and for bringing us together for the transformative experience of cinema.

Ontario Créatif est ravi de se joindre pour vous accueillir au 49e Festival international du film de Toronto (TIFF) annuel ! Nous sommes fiers d'être un soutien de longue date du programme exceptionnel de TIFF et sommes enchantés d'accueillir les délégués de cette année.

Chaque année, nous sommes inspirés par les récits innovants et stimulants de cinéastes du monde entier, et en particulier ceux d'ici à Ontario. Ontario Créatif est honoré de soutenir et de célébrer la talentueuse communauté cinématographique de la province et de mettre en valeur nos destinations de tournage et nos mesures incitatives de classe mondiale. Nous vous encourageons à visiter notre stand au Industry Centre ou [ontariocreates.ca](http://ontariocreates.ca) pour en apprendre plus.

Nous sommes excités de présenter les films à venir les plus populaires aux dirigeants de l'industrie lors de la 19e édition du Forum sur le financement international (iff), et nous vous invitons à nous rejoindre le 7 septembre à notre Journée pour la PI pour découvrir des contenus frais, primés et captivants – et pour explorer de nouveaux partenariats et d'opportunités prometteurs.

Au nom du conseil d'administration et du personnel d'Ontario Créatif, nous félicitons l'équipe et les bénévoles de TIFF pour leur travail acharné et leur dévouement, et pour nous avoir réunis pour l'expérience transformatrice du cinéma.

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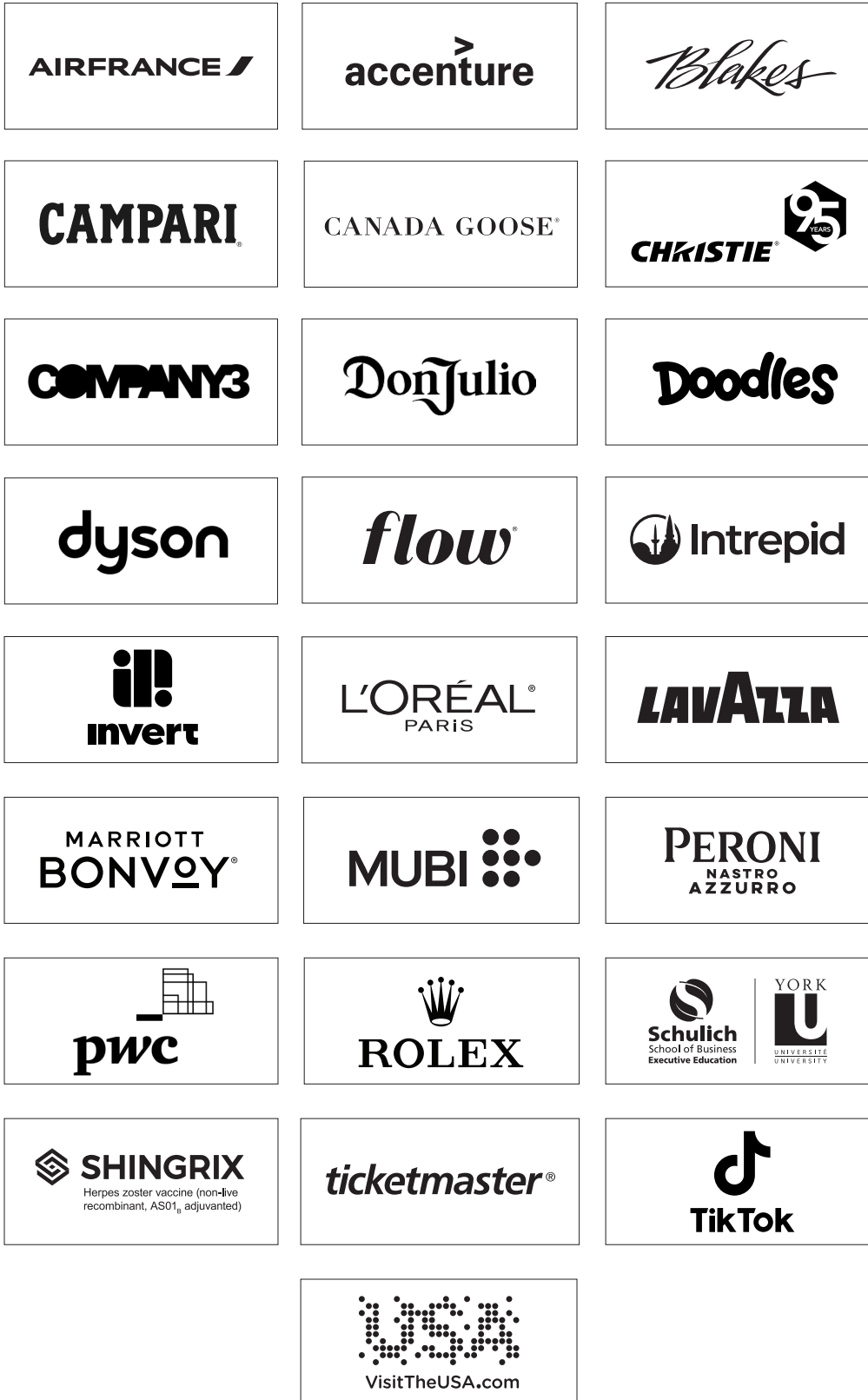
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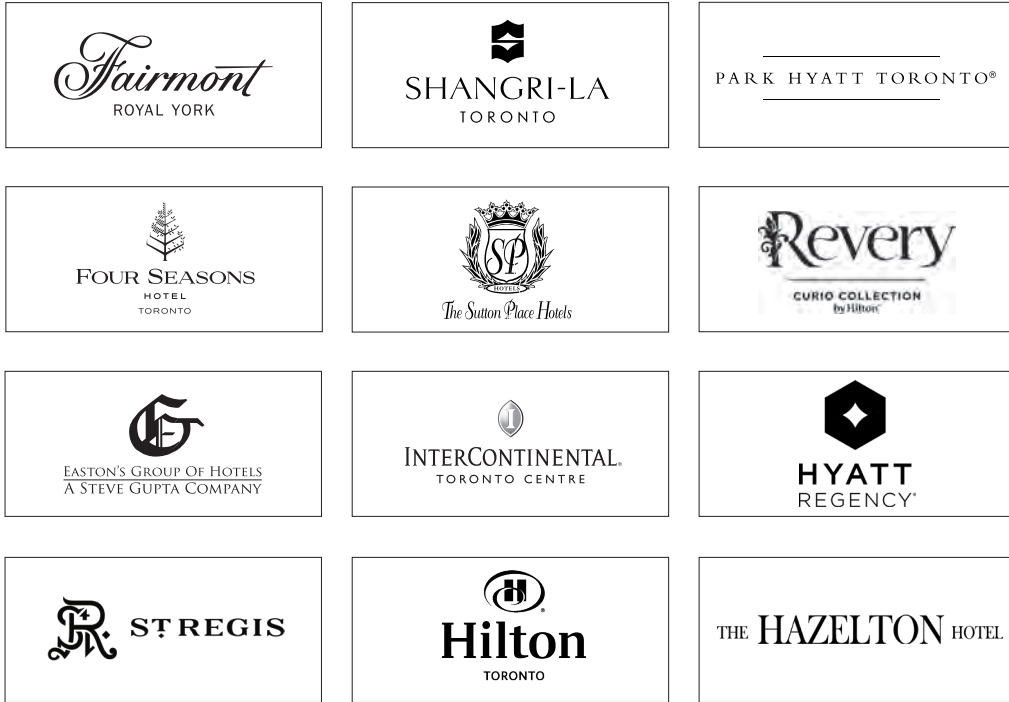
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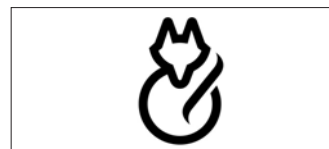
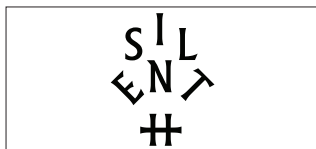
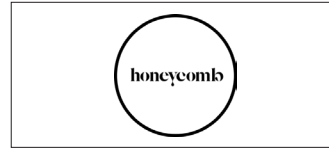
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**Administrative Coordinator, Festival Street Logistics:** Polen Light

### INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

**Executive Producer, Tribute Gala:** Katie Lafferty  
**Executive Producer, Tribute Gala:** Tiffany Tse  
**Producer, Tribute Gala:** Gillian Zulauf  
**Hospitality Consultant:** Tony Manni

### TECHNICAL PRODUCTION SERVICES

**Director, Technical Production:** Diane Cappelletto  
**Senior Manager, Production Services:** Angela Coates  
**Senior Technical Manager:** Andrei Gravelle  
**Senior Technical Manager, TLB:** James King  
**Manager, Film & Digital Print Services:** Steven Landry  
**Senior Technical Production Coordinator:** Declan McMullan  
**Coordinator, Film & Digital Print Services:** Jeff Wright  
**Assistant Technical Production Manager:** Kenzia Dalie

**Digital Media Assistant:** Awsemoon Shab

**Festival Driver:** Marcel La Fleur

**Stage Managers:** Tali Anzel-Sivkin, iz Bragale, Chad Lewis, Frances Johnson, Teagan Keith, Lindsay McDonald

**Assistant Booth Managers:** Nigel Agnew, Adam Harris, Andrew McAllister, Christian Wallace

**Senior Revisor:** Airian McLeish

**Head Projectionist:** Sean Redican

**Projectionists:** Martin Baker, Maxim Billig, Laura Brown, Hans Burgschmidt, Dave Callaghan, Joe Calvano, Chris Cameron, Paul Christensen, Philip De Blasi, Erin Funchion, Giselle Grant, Colin Greenfield, Genevieve Heineman, Winston Hosin, Alan Kennedy, Robinton Kharwanwala, Ron Koperdraad, Eyan Logan, George Lomaga, Amira Mahamad, Alexi Manis, Matthew Mason, Martin Maunder, Isaac Meyer-Odell, Kim Rybnikar, Ned Seager, Sefi Sloman, Rob Trevisan, Sean Rogers, Victoria Watson-Sepejak, Alex Woodside

## INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

**Assistant Technical Manager:** Ian Freer

**Technical Logistics Manager:** Drew Butcher

**Digital Cinema Manager:** Steve Ioannidis

**Digital Cinema Coordinators:** Jonathan Balazs, Phil Clemo, Jack Loney, Peter McHugh, Jim Reid, Wojciech Wojtowicz

**Production Coordinator:** Hans Ohm

**Technical Representatives:** Su Baloglu, Siloën Daley, Gökçe Erdem, Justin Friesen, Drew Gauley, Tim Hennigar, Yorgo Karakostas, Shani McKenzie, Kris Prue, Michael Robinson, Genne Speers, Penelope Walcott



Assistant Booth Managers, Projectionists and Revisors are represented by IATSE Local 58

## TICKETING AND CUSTOMER RELATIONS

**Senior Manager Ticketing & Customer Relations:**

Chris Mercredi

**Manager, Customer Relations:** Rose Sandiford

**Manager, Ticketing Operations:** Raymund Cayetano

**Assistant Manager, Customer Relations:** Amy Witherspoon

**Ticketing Systems Administrators:** Meaghan Rothwell, Jessi Law

**Festival Accreditation Supervisor:** Sonetta Duncan

**Senior Coordinator, Accreditation Production:**

Bill van Heerden

**Festival Seating Coordinator:** Persephone Hitzke-Dean

**Assistants, Ticketing Operations:** Yimaj Ali,

Jovana Raickovic

**Supervisors, Box Office & Call Centre:** Alina Cuglietta,

Edil Farah, Jamila Noritz Reyes, Angelo Pileggi,

Leticia Garcez Fayzano, Samantha Navalta, Tristan Oliver

**Ticket Agents:** Hunachew Engeda, Brian Jansen,

Jeff Schissler, Devlin Ralph, Michelle Owala,

Elizabeth Parenteau, Lisa McAllister-Lawson,

Francois Lepage, Richard Waswa, Tristan Crocker

## FACILITIES

**Senior Manager, Facility Operations:** Mike Ramsay

**Receiving Manager:** Dave Constable

**Senior Coordinator, Facilities:** Yuetong Liu

**Assistants, Facilities:** Spencer Horton, Francois Lepage,

Devon Parasnauth, Khanya Alexis

## INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

**Senior Building Operator:** Orlando Vieira

**Building Operator:** Andre Harrison

**Security Supervisor:** Marie Sokoll

**Cleaning Supervisor:** Jorge Escobar

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**Chief Business & Marketing Officer:** Jennifer Frees

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**Senior Director, Partnerships, New Business:**

Rob Kraszewski

**Senior Manager, Partnerships, Accounts & Client Success:**

Naphtali McKenly

**Senior Manager, Partnerships, Accounts & Ticketing:**

Jessica Bennett

**Senior Manager, Partnerships, Accounts & Client Success:**

Adam Wallace

**Senior Manager, Partnerships, New Business:** Nataliai Kuksa

**Manager, Partnerships, Accounts & Client Success:**

Jerome Ferguson-Cumsille

**Manager, Partnerships, Accounts & Client Success:**

Jolie Featherstone

**Manager, Partnerships, Accounts & Client Success:**

Tara Dorey

**Project Coordinator, Partnerships:** Tenisha Jones

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**Senior Philanthropy Officer:** Jackie Nguyen

**Philanthropy Officer:** Madison Espie

**Advancement Coordinator:** Ana Karina Butron-Landivar

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**Manager, Membership Experience:**

Byron Letourneau-Duynstee

**Manager, Advancement Operations:** Erin Macleod

**Senior Coordinator, Advancement Operations:** Heidi Zarse

**Senior Coordinator, Loyalty & Engagement:** Oliver Belfield

**Coordinator, Advancement Operations:** Matilda Davidson

**Coordinator, Loyalty & Engagement:** Flora Spencer Grant

**Loyalty Representative:** Isabella Roberti

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**Head of Brand & Marketing:** Margaret Lee

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**Senior Motion Designer:** Tara Paquette

**Intermediate Designer:** Kevin Greenspan

**Graphic Designers:** Asna Khan, Cyan Dela Cruz-Galang

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**Senior Manager, Content:** Jodie Davis

**Senior Producer, Video:** Andrew Strapp

**Manager, Social Media Content:** Seana Stevenson

**Manager, Industry Marketing & Digital Engagement:**

Alex Reino

**Social Media Producer:** Jamie Bardocz

**Assistant Video Editor:** Timothy Dunsmore

**Manager, Marketing:** Alexis Mallett

**Manager, Marketing:** Nandita Dutta

**Manager, Production:** Chloe King

**Content Producer:** Leah Cohen

**Copywriter:** Majja Kappler

**Editor & Senior Coordinator:** Maggie Parkhill

**Senior Coordinator, Marketing:** Angela Li

**Coordinator, Marketing:** Dustin Lau

**Coordinator, Marketing:** Farida Shaydullina

**Editorial Coordinator:** Casey Gazzellone

**Production Coordinator:** Melissa Gordon

## INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

**Senior Graphic Designer:** Jordan Bowden

**Writer:** José Teodoro

**Editors:** Kim Hughes, Peter Mersereau

**Copy Editor/Proofreader:** Lynda Spark

**Programme Book Coordinator:** Amanda Monasar

**Video Editor:** Lee Cochrane

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**Director, Digital & Ecommerce:** Elizabeth Hilborn

**Senior Designer:** Carlson Yu

**Digital Content Administrator:** Marisa Savang

**Coordinator, Ecommerce Merchandising:** Amanda Phillips

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**Coordinator, TIFF Shop:** Jade Hurlbut

**Retail Sales Associates:** Corinne Abouem, Bronwen Boals,

Hamish Grant, Liyan Rahmatullah

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**Senior Manager, People & Culture:** Ayesha Khan Faruqui

**Human Resources Generalist:** Andrew Barfield,

Loobna Kamroodien

**Coordinator, People and Culture:** Andrea Mundy

**Project Coordinator, People & Culture:** Hailey Davis

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**Vice President, Strategy, Communications & Stakeholder**

**Relations:** Judy Lung

## COMMUNICATIONS

**Senior Director, Communications & Stakeholder Relations:**

Jennifer Knox

**Senior Manager, Communications & Stakeholder Relations:**

Meg Campbell

**Senior Manager, Communications:** Netta Rondinelli

**Senior Coordinator, Communications:** Christopher Holmes

**Coordinator, Media Inclusion Initiative:** Celestina Aleobua

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**Senior Manager, Executive Office:** Yujia Wen

**Senior Coordinator, Board & Executive Relations:** Regina Sy

**Senior Coordinator, Board & Executive Relations:**

Azucena Mainero

**Executive Office Festival Intern:** Jeremy Geertsema

## AWARDS

# TIFF celebrates exceptional filmmaking with these awards:

### People's Choice Award presented by Rogers

A long-standing tradition at TIFF, the People's Choice Awards presented by Rogers are marking their 47th year. The People's Choice Award presented by Rogers is an Oscars bellwether that has history, dating back to *Chariots of Fire*; *The Princess Bride*; *Slumdog Millionaire*; and including 2023's debut feature from Cord Jefferson, *American Fiction*. All feature films and Primetime series in TIFF's Official Selection are eligible. The winners of the People's Choice Awards presented by Rogers will be announced on Sunday, September 15, 2024.

### Recent winners, People's Choice Award

<b>2023</b>	<i>American Fiction</i>
<b>2022</b>	<i>The Fabelmans</i>
<b>2021</b>	<i>Belfast</i>
<b>2020</b>	<i>Nomadland</i>
<b>2019</b>	<i>Jojo Rabbit</i>
<b>2018</b>	<i>Green Book</i>
<b>2017</b>	<i>Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri</i>

### Platform Award

Named after Jia Zhang-Ke's groundbreaking film, Platform spotlights films with high artistic merit and strong directorial vision. All films in the Platform programme are eligible for this award, which will be selected by an international jury. The winning filmmaker will receive a \$20,000 CAD cash prize.

### Recent winners, Platform Award

<b>2023</b>	Tarsem Singh Dhandwar	<i>Dear Jassi</i>
<b>2022</b>	Anthony Shim	<i>Riceboy Sleeps</i>
<b>2021</b>	Kamila Andini	<i>Yuni</i>
<b>2020</b>	(Programme and award not presented)	
<b>2019</b>	Pietro Marcello	<i>Martin Eden</i>
<b>2018</b>	Wi Ding Ho	<i>Cities of Last Things</i>
<b>2017</b>	Warwick Thornton	<i>Sweet Country</i>

### Best Canadian Feature Film Award presented by Canada Goose

TIFF continues to celebrate the unique craft and storytelling within Canadian cinema with the Best Canadian Feature Film Award presented by Canada Goose. All Canadian feature films in Official Selection — excluding first or second features — will be considered for the award. The winning filmmaker will receive a \$10,000 CAD cash prize.

### Recent winners, Best Canadian Feature

<b>2023</b>	Sophie Dupuis	<i>Solo</i>
<b>2020–2022</b>	(Award not presented)	
<b>2019</b>	Sophie Deraspe	<i>Antigone</i>
<b>2018</b>	Sébastien Pilote	<i>The Fireflies Are Gone (La disparition des lucioles)</i>
<b>2017</b>	Robin Aubert	<i>Les Affamés</i>

## Best Canadian Discovery Award

The Best Canadian Discovery Award celebrates works of emerging filmmakers who contribute to enriching the Canadian film landscape. All first or second feature films in Official Selection by Canadian filmmakers are eligible for this award. The winner will receive a cash prize of \$10,000 CAD.

## Recent winners, Best Canadian First Feature

**2020–2022** (Award not presented)

<b>2019</b>	Matthew Rankin	<i>The Twentieth Century</i>
<b>2018</b>	Katherine Jerkovic	<i>Roads in February</i> ( <i>Les routes en février</i> )
<b>2017</b>	Wayne Wapeemukwa	<i>Luk' Luk'l</i>

## Short Cuts Awards

Films in the Short Cuts programme are eligible for two jury-selected Short Cuts Awards: Best International Short Film and Best Canadian Short Film. These awards provide each winner with a bursary of \$10,000 CAD to help them continue achieving success in their careers. TIFF is an Oscar qualifying festival. Winning a Short Cuts Award contributes towards a film's eligibility for the Academy Awards.

## Recent winners, Short Cuts Award

<b>2023</b>	Daria Kashcheeva Jasmin Mozaffari	<i>Electra</i> <i>Motherland</i>
<b>2022</b>	Lkhagvadulam Purev-Ochir Aziz Zoromba	<i>Snow in September</i> <i>Simo</i>
<b>2021</b>	Samir Karahoda Zacharias Kunuk	<i>Displaced / Pa Vend</i> <i>Angakusajaujuq:</i> <i>The Shaman's</i> <i>Apprentice / Angakusajaujuq</i>
<b>2020</b>	Naila Guiguet Paul Shkordoff	<i>Dustin</i> <i>Benjamin, Benny, Ben</i>
<b>2019</b>	Lasse Linder Chloé Robichaud	<i>All Cats Are Grey in the Dark</i> <i>Delphine</i>
<b>2018</b>	Sandhya Suri Meryam Joobeur	<i>The Field</i> <i>Brotherhood</i>
<b>2018</b>	Niki Lindroth von Bahr Marc-Antoine Lemire	<i>The Burden (Min Börda)</i> <i>Pre-Drink</i>



# FESTIVAL PROGRAMMERS

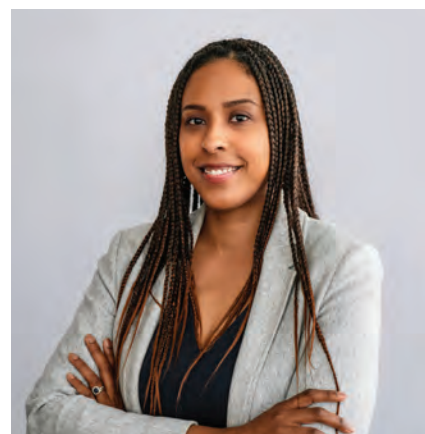
Twenty-three programmers covering six continents.



**Cameron Bailey**  
CEO, TIFF; Gala Presentations



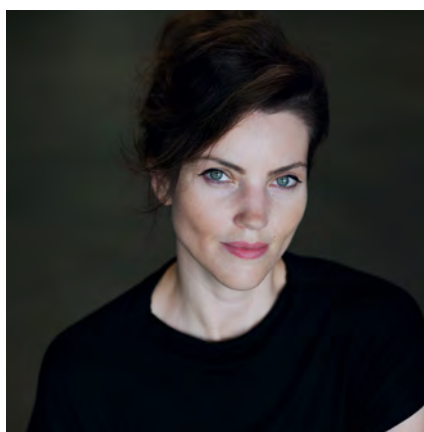
**Anita Lee**  
Chief Programming Officer, TIFF



**Robyn Citizen**  
Director of Programming & Platform Lead



**Jason Anderson**  
International Programmer (Nordic and Benelux features) & Short Cuts Lead



**Sonja Baksa**  
Associate International Programmer, Short Cuts



**Keith Bennie**  
Senior Director, Public Programming





**Kelly Boutsalis**

Canadian Programmer



**Diana Cadavid**

International Programmer (Latin America and Southern Europe)



**Jesse Cumming**

Associate Curator, Wavelengths



**Giovanna Fulvi**

Senior International Programmer (East Asia)



**Nataleah Hunter-Young**

International Programmer



**Jane Kim**

Producer of Industry Programming



**June Kim**

Associate International Programmer, Southeast Asia



**Peter Kuplowsky**

International Programmer, Midnight Madness



**Dorota Lech**

Lead Programmer, Discovery & International Programmer (Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe, the Caucasus, Turkey, and Iran)



**Geoff Macnaughton**

Senior Director, Industry  
Lead Programmer, Primetime



**Andréa Picard**

Senior Curator, Wavelengths & Classics



**Thom Powers**

Lead Programmer, TIFF Docs



**Jason Ryle**

International Programmer, Australia and  
New Zealand, and Global Indigenous Cinema



**Jane Schoettle**

Senior International Programmer,  
Special Presentations



**Meenakshi Shedde**

Senior Programme Advisor, South Asia



**Christoph Straub**

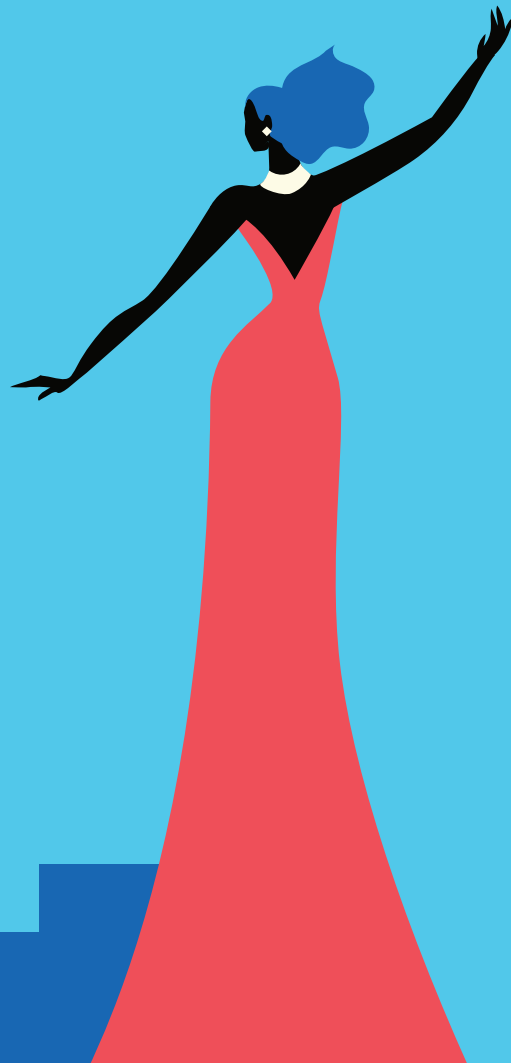
Producer of In Conversation With...



**Norm Wilner**

Senior Canadian Programmer and Industry  
Selects Lead

# GALA PRESENTATIONS



PRESENTED BY

**dyson**





## Nutcrackers

David Gordon Green

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
104 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: Rivulet Films, Rough House Pictures  
Executive Producer: David Gordon Green, Danny McBride, Jody Hill, Rick Steele, Regina Steele  
Producer: Rob Paris, Mike Witherill, Nate Meyer  
Screenplay: Leland Douglas  
Cinematographer: Michael Simmonds  
Editor: Colin Patton  
Production Designer: Richard A. Wright  
Costume Designer: Emily Gunshor, Caitlin Doukas  
Sound: Stephen Barden  
Original Score: Aaron M. Olson  
Principal Cast: Ben Stiller, Linda Cardellini, Edi Patterson, Tim Heidecker, Toby Huss, Homer Janson, Ulysses Janson, Atlas Janson, Arlo Janson

US Sales Agent: United Talent Agency

Over a singular, decades-long career, Ben Stiller has shown himself comfortable in everything from farcical comedies like *Zoolander* to brainy Wes Anderson classics. His *Nutcrackers* director David Gordon Green has displayed similar range, from his acclaimed indie debut *George Washington* to stoner comedy *Pineapple Express* to the *Halloween* horror reboot. What both have in common is a taste for genuine dramatic emotion. In *Nutcrackers*, they let it all out.

Hotshot Chicago real estate developer Michael (Stiller) never had time for family. His sister once said he was incapable of love. But when Michael's sister and her husband have a terrible accident, their house, farm, and four boys become Michael's responsibility. He drives out to his sister's small Ohio town thinking all he needs to do is sign some papers and get back to the city, but it's not nearly that simple.

With their parents gone, the boys are practically feral. Until the family services worker (Linda Cardellini, also at this year's Festival in *Nonnas*) can find them a home, their only guardian is Uncle Mike. Before he knows it, Michael is chasing chickens and providing improvised "health" classes. Desperate to free himself from inherited fatherhood, he's both surprised and thrilled

to learn his sister trained her boys in ballet. Can that make them cute enough to foster?

For those expecting a simple, broad comedy, *Nutcrackers* sneaks up on you. Scene by scene, Green, Stiller, and screenwriter Leland Douglas build the emotion as the makings of a new family emerge.

**David Gordon Green** is a prolific American writer and director. His many credits include the features *George Washington* (00), *All the Real Girls* (03), *Snow Angels* (07), *Pineapple Express* (08), *The Sitter* (11), the Festival selection *Joe* (13), and *The Exorcist: Believer* (23) as well as the rebooted *Halloween* franchise, *Halloween* (18), which also played the Festival, *Halloween Kills* (21), and *Halloween Ends* (22). *Nutcrackers* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

dyson



## The Penguin Lessons

Peter Cattaneo

SPAIN/UNITED KINGDOM, 2024  
English, Spanish  
WORLD PREMIERE  
110 minutes | Colour / DCP

Production Company: 42, Nostromo Pictures  
Executive Producer: Peter Cattaneo, Jeff Pope,  
Steve Coogan, Josh Varney, Joshua Horsfield,  
Richard Mansell, Orlando Wood, Tom Michell,  
Nia Vazirani, Thorsten Schumacher, Claire Taylor,  
Elizabeth Kormanova, Emma Berkofsky,  
Marie-Claire Benson  
Producer: Ben Pugh, Rory Aitken, Andy Noble,  
Adrián Guerra, Robert Walak  
Screenplay: Jeff Pope  
Cinematographer: Xavi Giménez  
Editor: Robin Peters, Tariq Anwar  
Production Designer: Isona Rigau  
Costume Designer: Alberto Valcárcel  
Sound: Oriol Tarragó  
Original Score: Federico Jusid  
Principal Cast: Steve Coogan, Jonathan Pryce,  
Vivian El Jaber, Björn Gustafsson, Alfonsina Carrocio,  
David Herrero

International Sales Agent: Rocket Science  
US Sales Agent: CAA

Propelled by the deliciously dry wit of Oscar nominee Steve Coogan, this poignant dramedy follows an Englishman's personal and political awakening during a period of crisis in Argentina. Inspired by true events, *The Penguin Lessons* takes to heart the notion that saving someone's life begins a new responsibility. In this case, that someone is a surprisingly wise, utterly adorable penguin.

The year is 1976. Tom (Coogan) lands in Buenos Aires to take up a teaching position at a prestigious English boarding school. The city is in the midst of political violence, but the headmaster (Oscar nominee Jonathan Pryce) insists his school simply keep calm and carry on. That suits Tom just fine. When a *coup d'état* shuts down the school, he hops next door to Uruguay to party. A romantic foray leads to a walk along the beach, which leads to the sight of a penguin drenched in oil from a spill. Against his better judgment, Tom rescues the bird, which unlocks its undying loyalty. He's forced to sneak the flightless beast back to Argentina, and thus begins a strange and beautiful friendship.

Against the backdrop of crackdowns from the new dictatorship and echoes from Tom's long-repressed past, the penguin

becomes a sounding board and an unwitting agent of change for him and, ultimately, the whole school.

Helmed by Peter Cattaneo (*The Full Monty*; *Military Wives*, TIFF '19), *The Penguin Lessons* delivers this delightful true story with wit, warmth, and subtle insight into just how rewarding it can be to do the right thing.

Peter Cattaneo was born in London, and graduated from the Royal College of Art. He has directed films including *The Full Monty* (97), *Lucky Break* (01), *Opal Dream* (06), and the Festival selection *Military Wives* (19). *The Penguin Lessons* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

dyson





## Unstoppable

William Goldenberg

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
116 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Amazon MGM Studios, Artists Equity  
Executive Producer: Matt Damon, Michael Joe, Kevin Halloran, Dani Bernfeld, Jack Murray  
Producer: Ben Affleck, Elaine Goldsmith-Thomas, Anthony Robles, Andrew Fraser, Gary Lewis, David Crockett  
Screenplay: Eric Champnella, Alex Harris, John Hindman  
Cinematographer: Salvatore Totino  
Editor: Brett M. Reed  
Production Designer: Jon Carlos  
Costume Designer: Janelle Nicole Carothers  
Sound: Jose Antonio Garcia, Andrew De Cristofaro, Darren Sunny Warkentin, Jon Taylor, Frank A. Montañó  
Original Score: Alexandre Desplat  
Principal Cast: Jharrel Jerome, Bobby Cannavale, Michael Peña, Anthony Robles, Don Cheadle, Jennifer Lopez

Canadian Distributor: Amazon MGM Studios  
US Distributor: Amazon MGM Studios

Stories like Anthony Robles' are the stuff of inspirational fiction, except this one actually happened. Though born without a right leg and growing up in a volatile household, Robles never let go of his dream. He set out to develop the strength and skills that college wrestling demands. He aimed to earn a place on a US Division 1 team despite being its only disabled athlete. And he competed to win.

Starring Jharrel Jerome (*Moonlight*, TIFF '16; *When They See Us*) as Robles in another outstanding performance, *Unstoppable* is both an irresistible sports drama and a family story full of heart. In the wrestling circle and the locker room, he has to convince two tough coaches (played by Michael Peña and Don Cheadle) that his grit and potential are real. At home, he contends with a mother going through some growing up of her own. Jennifer Lopez, too often underrated, is terrific here.

*Unstoppable* marks the follow-up to the sports drama *Air*, from Ben Affleck and Matt Damon's Artists Equity company. Director William Goldenberg, a veteran editor who also cut *Air*, brings a similar optimism and authenticity to this film.

Weaving Jerome's competition performance together with visual effects and

Robles himself doubling in some shots, the wrestling scenes carry the on-the-mat urgency of genuine footage.

The real-life Robles has long been a champion for accessibility, and this film will no doubt bring his message to a wider public. Even better, it wraps that message in persuasive, deeply affecting drama.

William Goldenberg is an acclaimed film editor who worked on the Festival selection *Argo* (12), for which he won an Oscar, *Zero Dark Thirty* (12), *The Imitation Game* (14), which also played the Festival, and *Air* (23). *Unstoppable* (24) is his directorial debut.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

dyson

SCREENING SPONSORED BY

ROGERS



## Elton John: Never Too Late

R.J. Cutler, David Furnish

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
102 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **This Machine Filmworks, Rocket Entertainment**  
Executive Producer: **Elise Pearlstein, Mark Blatty, Luke Lloyd Davies, Rachael Paley, Jane Cha Cutler, John Battsek**  
Producer: **R.J. Cutler, David Furnish, Trevor Smith**  
Cinematographer: **Jenna Rosher**  
Animator: **Sun Creature**  
Editor: **Greg Finton, Poppy Das**  
With: **Elton John**

Canadian Distributor: **Disney+**  
US Distributor: **Disney+**

Icon, beyond a doubt. Trailblazer, always. But even though Sir Elton John has held the bright spotlight of fame for decades, there's still much of his life behind those spectacular scenes that we haven't yet glimpsed. Until now.

Co-directed by R.J. Cutler (*The September Issue*, *Billie Eilish: The World's a Little Blurry*) and John's husband, documentarian and Torontonian David Furnish, this is a portrait of the artist as he looks back on his life and forward to a climactic farewell show at Los Angeles' Dodger Stadium.

We begin at that same stadium, but in 1975 at the first peak of John's fame, when he played to more than 100,000 fans over two nights. In retrospect, he notes, "There was an emptiness within me."

Weaving together intimate interviews with never-before-seen archival footage and photographs, Cutler and Furnish slowly reveal the megastar, from his prodigious childhood talent, through all his self-doubts and demons, to where he has landed today. "This is where you start to think about mortality," the 77-year-old says, and it proves to be a powerful motivator to take stock.

Fans will know some of this story from John's autobiography and the *Rocketman*

biopic. But nothing beats the rare images on display here, or the star's own candour.

Even with the highs, lows, and heartbreak John recounts, the deepest emotional impact comes from the love and family that little Reginald Dwight found at last with Furnish, and continues to share with the world.

**R.J. Cutler** is a documentary filmmaker and producer. He has directed films including *A Perfect Candidate* (96) and *The September Issue* (09). His work has been nominated for an Academy Award and he is the recipient of Emmy, Peabody, GLAAD, Cinema Eye and Television Academy Honor awards. *Elton John: Never Too Late* (24) is his latest film.

**David Furnish** was born in Toronto and now lives in London, England. His credits as producer include *Billy Elliot Live* (14), *Rocketman* (19), and *Hating Peter Tatchell* (21). He has directed *Elton John: Tantrums & Tiaras* (97). His work has received Oscar, Emmy, and Gemini awards. *Elton John: Never Too Late* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**dyson**

SCREENING SPONSORED BY

**Royal Bank**





## Andrea Bocelli: Because I Believe

Cosima Spender

UNITED KINGDOM, 2024  
English, Italian  
WORLD PREMIERE  
107 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Entertainment One**  
Executive Producer: **Malcolm Gerrie, Matt Pritchard, Tara Long, Geno McDermott, Andrea Bocelli, Veronica Bocelli, Scott Rodger, Francesco Pasquero**  
Producer: **Jan Younghusband**  
Cinematographer: **Francesco de Piero**  
Editor: **Manuela Lupini, Valerio Bonelli**  
Sound: **Valerio Tedone**  
With: **Andrea Bocelli**

US Distributor: **Lionsgate**  
International Sales Agent: **Lionsgate**  
US Sales Agent: **Lionsgate**

Over the last 30 years, with a rare repertoire that encompasses pop, rock, and opera, Andrea Bocelli and his golden voice have touched the hearts of millions of listeners around the world. Using last year's magisterial concert at the Baths of Caracalla as its anchor, *Andrea Bocelli: Because I Believe* is an intimate portrait of one of the world's greatest living singers.

Bocelli grew up in the Tuscan village of La Sterza. Despite being born with congenital glaucoma and losing his sight completely at age 12, he frequently took long horseback rides alone, feeling, as he declares, "zero fear." That same fearlessness helped him work his way up, going from dues-paying gigs singing Sinatra songs at piano bars to eventually having a worldwide smash with "Time to Say Goodbye," his astonishing duet with Sarah Brightman. Earning plaudits from Pavarotti, Bocelli then went on to make his name with the gale-force power of his dazzling tenor. Decades later, he continues to move fluidly between genres, singing alongside peers as diverse as Cristina Pasaroïu, Jennifer Lopez, and Dua Lipa.

Directed by Cosima Spender (*Palio*), this inspiring documentary tracks Bocelli's path to success and ongoing dedication to his craft through interviews and archival

performance footage, as well as informal gatherings, such as a diverting party where Bocelli's friends and family reminisce over food and wine. When Bocelli sings, it is as though heaven has opened its gates, but watching *Andrea Bocelli: Because I Believe* reminds us that this remarkable artist is very much rooted in the earth.

**Cosima Spender** was born in Siena and grew up between Italy and England. She studied documentary filmmaking at England's National Film and Television School. Her filmography includes *The Importance of Being Elegant* (04), *Dolce Vita Africana* (08), *Without Gorky* (11), and *Palio* (15). *Andrea Bocelli: Because I Believe* (24) is her latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**dyson**



## Eden

Ron Howard

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
120 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Imagine Entertainment, AGC Studios, Library Pictures, Medan Productions**  
Executive Producer: **Miguel A. Palos, Jr., Zach Garrett, Noah Pink, Mathias Herndl, Namit Malhotra, David Taghioff, Masha Maganova, Matt Murphie, Craig McMahon**  
Producer: **Ron Howard, Brian Grazer, Karen Lunder, Stuart Ford, William M. Connor, Patrick Newall**  
Screenplay: **Noah Pink**  
Cinematographer: **Mathias Herndl**  
Editor: **Matt Villa**  
Production Designer: **Michelle McGahey**  
Costume Designer: **Kerry Thompson**  
Sound: **Paul 'Salty' Brincat**  
Original Score: **Hans Zimmer**  
Principal Cast: **Jude Law, Ana de Armas, Sydney Sweeney, Vanessa Kirby, Daniel Bruehl**

Canadian Distributor: **Amazon Prime Video**  
International Sales Agent: **AGC Studios**  
US Sales Agent: **Creative Artists Agency (CAA), AGC Studios**

Based on historical events, this scintillating thriller from Oscar-winning director Ron Howard stars Jude Law (*Vox Lux*, TIFFF '18; *Dom Hemingway*, TIFFF '13) and Vanessa Kirby (*Pieces of a Woman*, TIFFF '20) as high-minded Europeans seeking a new life on a previously uninhabited island in the Galápagos archipelago. They and those who follow them believe they've found paradise — only to discover that hell is other people.

Dr. Friedrich Ritter (Law, also at the Festival in *The Order*) and his partner Dora Strauch (Kirby) flee their native Germany in 1929, repudiating the bourgeois values they believe are corroding mankind's true nature. On the isle of Floreana, Friedrich can focus on writing his manifesto, while Dora resolves to cure her multiple sclerosis through meditation. Their hard-won solitude, however, is short lived.

They are joined by Margaret (Sydney Sweeney) and Heinz Wittmer (Daniel Bruehl), who prove to be earnest, capable settlers. Next comes Eloise Bosquet de Wagner Wehrhorn (Ana de Armas), a self-described Baroness and the “embodiment of perfection,” who arrives with two devoted lovers, an Ecuadorian servant, a wardrobe full of evening gowns, and plans to erect a luxury hotel.

Between inclement weather, unruly wildlife, and a total lack of amenities, all three groups find life on Floreana arduous. But nothing will test their mettle more than the challenge of coexisting with desperate neighbours capable of theft, deception, and worse.

Written by Noah Pink (*Tetris*), *Eden* offers intrigue, suspense, and keen insights into the pitfalls of idealistic hubris.

**Ron Howard** was born in Duncan, Oklahoma. His many credits as director include *Apollo 13* (95), *A Beautiful Mind* (01), *Cinderella Man* (05), *Frost/Nixon* (08), and the Festival selection *Rush* (13). *Eden* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**dyson**

SCREENING SPONSORED BY

**Royal Bank**





## The Return

Uberto Pasolini

ITALY/UNITED KINGDOM, 2024

English

WORLD PREMIERE

116 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Picomedia, Rai Cinema, Heretic, Ithaca Films, Kabo Productions, Marvelous Productions, Redwave Films  
Executive Producer: Ralph Fiennes, Giorgos Karnavas, Torsten Poeck, Andrew Karpen, Kent Sanderson, Nicholas Sandler, Keith Kehoe  
Producer: Uberto Pasolini, James Clayton, Roberto Sessa, Konstantinos Kontovrakis  
Screenplay: John Collee, Edward Bond, Uberto Pasolini  
Cinematographer: Marius Panduru  
Editor: David Charap  
Production Designer: Giuliano Pannuti  
Costume Designer: Sergio Ballo  
Sound: Maurizio Argentieri, Alessandro Checcacci  
Original Score: Rachel Portman  
Principal Cast: Juliette Binoche, Ralph Fiennes, Charlie Plummer, Marwan Kenzari, Claudio Santamaria, Angela Molina

Canadian Distributor: Mongrel Media  
US Distributor: Bleecker Street  
International Sales Agent: HanWay Films

Director Uberto Pasolini's slow-burning adaptation of Homer's *Odyssey* reunites *The English Patient* stars Ralph Fiennes and Juliette Binoche for a film grounded in a classical style that captures the steeliness of the Greek epic, where gazes are locked tight and every breath and word is measured.

*The Return* picks up as Odysseus (Fiennes, also at the Festival in *Conclave*) washes onto the shores of Ithaca. It has been more than 20 years since he left his kingdom to fight in the Trojan War and, in all that time, his wife and queen Penelope (Binoche) has waited. Their son, Telemachus (Charlie Plummer), has lost faith that his father will return and worries for his mother's safety as a group of increasingly unruly suitors pressure her to take one of them as the new king.

Barely recognizable to himself or to the people who once revered him as a mighty warrior, Odysseus slowly makes his way toward the castle, seeing what has become a desolate island in his absence. With tension growing, Penelope works on weaving a red quilt, promising that she'll choose a suitor once it's finished. It becomes a symbol of all the little ways she keeps holding on. When Odysseus finally enters the fray, Penelope puts forth an iconic and instantly

recognizable test for her weakened king to prove himself true among a viper's nest of men lusty for power.

Uberto Pasolini was born in Rome and is a writer, producer, and director. His directorial credits include *Machan* (08), which played the Festival, *Still Life* (13), and *Nowhere Special* (20). *The Return* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

dyson



## The Wild Robot

Chris Sanders

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
101 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **DreamWorks Animation, Universal Pictures**  
Executive Producer: **Dean DeBlois**  
Producer: **Jeff Hermann**  
Screenplay: **Chris Sanders**  
Cinematographer: **Chris Stover**  
Animator: **Jakob Hjort Jensen**  
Editor: **Mary Blee**  
Production Designer: **Raymond Zibach**  
Sound: **Randy Thom, Gary A. Rizzo, Leff Lefferts, Brian Chumney**  
Original Score: **Kris Bowers**  
Principal Cast: **Lupita Nyong'o, Pedro Pascal, Catherine O'Hara, Kit Connor, Bill Nighy, Stephanie Hsu, Matt Berry, Ving Rhames, Mark Hamill**

US Distributor: **Universal Pictures**

Based on Peter Brown's bestselling children's books, this adventure from Oscar-nominated director Chris Sanders (*Lilo & Stitch*) and DreamWorks Animation follows a robot (voiced by Oscar winner Lupita Nyong'o), designed to assist humans who finds herself stranded on an island populated exclusively by beasts. Also featuring the voices of Pedro Pascal, Catherine O'Hara, and Oscar nominees Stephanie Hsu and Bill Nighy, *The Wild Robot* is an epic tale of survival, in which animals and machines must question their programming and embrace their hidden strengths.

Rozim 7134 (Nyong'o) exists to receive orders. But on the rugged isle where Roz first boots up, no orders are forthcoming. There's no owner is to be found and none of the island's motley menagerie of animals have any use for her skills. Until, that is, she meets Brightbill (Kit Connor), an orphaned gosling who attaches to Roz the moment he's born.

Taking advice from a fox called Fink (Pascal), Roz compiles a set of directives to help Brightbill through his infancy. But in this place where every creature is either predator or prey, learning to eat, swim, and fly isn't enough. Brightbill needs to negotiate sticky social situations and find entry into a flock before migration season comes.

In short, he needs qualities like tenderness and nurturing — things Roz will need to look deep inside her robot soul to find.

Filled with spectacular imagery and hilarious encounters, *The Wild Robot* is perfect family entertainment. It is also a heartfelt story about the sort of love that only comes from believing in yourself — regardless of what materials you're made of.

**Chris Sanders** is a filmmaker, writer, and animator. He has directed *Lilo & Stitch* (02), *How to Train Your Dragon* (10), and *The Croods* (13), all of which earned Oscar nominations. *The Wild Robot* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**dyson**





## 하얼빈

### Harbin

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Woo Min-ho

SOUTH KOREA, 2024

Korean, Japanese

WORLD PREMIERE

108 minutes | Colour and Black & White/DCP

Production Company: **HIVE MEDIA CORP.**

Producer: **Kim Won-kuk**

Screenplay: **Kim Kyoung-chan, Woo Min-ho**

Cinematographer: **Hong Kyeong-pyo**

Editor: **Kim Man-geun**

Production Designer: **Kim Bo-mook**

Costume Designer: **Kwak Jung-ae**

Original Score: **Cho Young-wuk**

Principal Cast: **Hyun Bin, Park Jeong-min, Jeon Yeo-been,**

**Jo Woo-jin, Lee Dong-wook**

International Sales Agent: **CJ ENM**

This gripping historical thriller from director Woo Min-ho (*Inside Men*) dramatizes pivotal events in the arduous struggle for Korean sovereignty. Starring Hyun Bin, Jeon Yeo-been, and Park Jeong-min (TIFF '22's *Decision to Leave*), *Harbin* depicts the complexities of heroism in a time of merciless subjugation.

In 1905, Japan forced Korea to sign the Eulsa Treaty, stripping the nation of its diplomatic rights and reducing the entire peninsula to a Japanese colony. By 1909, when *Harbin* begins, Korea's small but tenacious Righteous Army militia is deep into a campaign of armed resistance against the Japanese. After emerging as the sole survivor of an especially bloody skirmish, Ahn Jung-geun (Hyun) heads an operation to assassinate Itō Hirobumi, the first Japanese Resident-General of Korea and a key symbol of violent colonial oppression.

The operation will require Ahn and his cohort to travel clandestinely into Russia, gathering resources and allies while concocting elaborate decoys. With terrifying risks at every turn, murderous security forces on their tail, and the entire plan under constant threat of collapse, the question arises: how many Koreans must die for the sake of their country's independence?

Woo fills *Harbin* with striking, emblematic images — no single moment encapsulates Ahn's journey like that of him crossing the frozen Tumen River. But this is, above all, a film that alternates between argument and action, with the Righteous Army gathering in gloomy hideouts to hash out high-stakes logistics, then hurtling themselves headlong into harm's way on the promise of some remote triumph.

Woo Min-ho studied film at Chung-Ang University. His film-making credits include *Man of Vendetta* (10), *Inside Men* (15), and *The Man Standing Next*, which was South Korea's entry for Best International Feature Film at the 2021 Oscars. *Harbin* (24) is his latest film.

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PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**dyson**



## Road Diary: Bruce Springsteen and The E Street Band

Thom Zimny

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
99 minutes | Colour/UHD

Production Company: **Thrill Street Productions**  
Producer: **Bruce Springsteen, Jon Landau, Thom Zimny, Adrienne Gerard, Sean Stuart**  
Screenplay: **Bruce Springsteen**  
Cinematographer: **Justin Kane**  
Editor: **Thom Zimny**  
Sound: **John Cooper, Rob Lebret, Jonathan Greber, Gary Rizzo**  
Original Score: **Ron Aniello**  
With: **Bruce Springsteen, Patti Scialfa, Roy Bittan, Nils Lofgren, Garry Tallent, Stevie Van Zandt, Max Weinberg**

Canadian Distributor: **Disney +**  
US Distributor: **Hulu, Disney+**

Twenty Grammy Awards, record-setting concerts, albums charting in the Top 5 in each of the last six decades — as a musician, Bruce Springsteen has conquered just about every mountain there is to climb. From that high vantage point, an artist gains a unique perspective.

That's what Springsteen brings to *Road Diary*: an evocative look back at the path he and his band have blazed since the '70s, and a look forward to what lies on the horizon. Mortality, yes, but also more of the passion, energy, and grit they've always brought to touring, as they prepare to hit the road one more time.

Working again with longtime collaborator Thom Zimny (*Western Stars*, TIFF '19), Springsteen narrates this look at the singular alchemy that produced such a tight, enduring group. The film begins with beautiful, rare images of the band members barely out of boyhood, then contrasts that immediately with a present day challenge, their first tour in six years.

Can they recapture the spark and dynamism they first found over 40 years earlier? Can newer members add fresh colours to the sound, and fill the gap left by the late saxophonist Clarence Clemons. Do they all still have what it takes?

Springsteen could be called a poet, a master craftsman, a voice of his generation. Above all, he is a magnificent performer, and leader of one of the world's greatest-ever live rock bands. *Road Diary* offers an inside look at how he and the E Street Band create what their fans pay to see — “the intensity of your presence.”

**Thom Zimny** is an award-winning director, editor, and producer known for his collaborations with Bruce Springsteen. His many directorial credits include the documentaries *The Gift: The Journey of Johnny Cash* (19) and the Festival selections *The Promise: The Making of Darkness on the Edge of Town* (10), *Western Stars* (19), and *Sly* (23). *Road Diary: Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**dyson**





## Les Barbares Meet the Barbarians

Julie Delpy

FRANCE, 2024  
French  
INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE  
101 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **The Film**  
Producer: **Michael Gentile**  
Screenplay: **Julie Delpy**  
Cinematographer: **Georges Lechaptois**  
Editor: **Camille Delprat**  
Production Designer: **Quentin Millot**  
Costume Designer: **Amandine Cros**  
Sound: **Julien Sicart, Tristan Pontecaille, Victor Praud**  
Original Score: **Philippe Jakkó**  
Principal Cast: **Julie Delpy, Sandrine Kiberlain, Laurent Lafitte, Ziad Bakri, Jean-Charles Clichet, India Hair**

International Sales Agent: **Charades**

From her art house origins acting in films by Jean-Luc Godard and Krzysztof Kieslowski to Richard Linklater's *Before* trilogy to her own films as a director, one quality defines the work of Julie Delpy: truth. Whether delivered in light comedy or devastating drama, Delpy's work serves up the uncomfortable and the undeniable in a single *coup de grâce*. In *Meet the Barbarians*, it's a frequently hilarious pleasure to watch her cast that truthful gaze on small town France.

Paimpont sits nestled in Brittany, content with its centuries-old heritage, its crêpes, and its flattering self-image. The town council is delighted they'll soon be welcoming refugees from Ukraine. But it turns out that too many in France have already taken in Ukrainian refugees, so the van that pulls into Paimpont one day delivers a refugee family from Syria instead. Awkward.

As the extended Fayad family finds its footing in a village very much set in its ways, both townspeople and newcomers must rethink their preconceptions. Will the local businessman (Laurent Lafitte) hold onto his xenophobic views? Can the Fayads bridge the gulf between their lives in wartorn Syria and their current disappointments in Paimpont? Will the town's crusading progressive (Delpy) herself descend into petty barbarism?

*Meet the Barbarians* strikes just the right balance of humour, ideas, and heart. Powered by sharp writing and deft performances — Rita Hayek and Sandrine Kiberlain are standouts — this is a classic comedy of integration.

**Julie Delpy** is a Paris-born actor, director, screenwriter, and musician. She has acted in more than 30 films including *Waking Life* (01), which played the Festival. She's written, directed, and starred in the features *2 Days in Paris* (07), *The Countess* (09), *Le Skylab* (11), *2 Days in New York* (12), and the Festival selections *Lolo* (15) and *My Zoe* (19). *Meet the Barbarians* (24) is her latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**dyson**



## Better Man

Michael Gracey

AUSTRALIA, 2024

English

CANADIAN PREMIERE

134 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Lost Bandits,**

**Footloose Productions**

Executive Producer: **Zhe Chen, Robbie Williams,**

**Markus Barmettler, Philip Lee, Li-Wei Chu,**

**Michael Loney, David Conley, Thorsten Schumacher,**

**Lars Sylvest, Mark Williams, Gregory Jankilevitsch,**

**Klaudia Smieja, David Ravel, Domenic Benvenuto,**

**Gianni Benvenuto, Zoran Stojkovic, Faris Dedic,**

**Daniel Fluri, Adrian Grabe, Andres Kernén, Dean Hood**

Producer: **Paul Currie, Michael Gracey, Coco Xiaolu Ma,**

**Craig McMahon, Jules Daly**

Screenplay: **Simon Gleeson, Oliver Cole, Michael Gracey**

Cinematographer: **Erik A Wilson**

Editor: **Jeff Groth, Lee Smith, Martin Connor,**

**Spencer Susser, Patrick Correll**

Production Designer: **Joel Chang**

Costume Designer: **Cappi Ireland**

Original Score: **Batu Sener**

Principal Cast: **Robbie Williams, Jonno Davies,**

**Steve Pemberton, Damon Herriman, Raechelle Banno,**

**Alison Steadman, Kate Mulvany, Frazer Hadfield,**

**Tom Budge, Anthony Hayes**

Canadian Distributor: **Paramount Pictures**

US Distributor: **Paramount Pictures**

International Sales Agent: **Rocket Science**

“Let me entertain you!” Robbie Williams famously sang. From boy band euphoria to solo stadium tours, the UK pop star has lived large, loud, and right on the edge. No mere music biopic could do his highs and lows justice. And so Michael Gracey hit on an audacious, dazzling approach. Gather round and witness the life of Robbie Williams unfold in a rather unorthodox way, to say the least.

Gracey draws on his substantial background in visual effects and signature images for pop videos, weaving those skills through propulsive storytelling. All of this elevated his blockbuster debut, *The Greatest Showman*; here it results in a truly spectacular film. It helps that Williams is one of the most kinetic and deeply self-aware pop stars on the planet.

*Better Man* begins with young Williams watching his father’s dreams of music stardom swirl around like dust in their cramped sitting room. He absorbs his father’s ambitions — and his crippling self-doubt — but the boy has talent.

Before long he has joined teen idols Take That and they stomp up the charts in a series of showstopping musical numbers. But money and fame bring more doubt, and Williams — played as an adult by actor

Jonno Davies — learns the corrosive art of self-sabotage.

With its vibrant music, state-of-the-art visuals, and brilliant “casting” conceit, there may be no movie experience more singular, disarming, and downright entertaining this year than *Better Man*. And, as a portrait of a tortured, talented star, it’s surprisingly moving.

**Michael Gracey** is an animator, visual effects artist, and director with multiple credits in film, advertising, and music video. He has directed the feature *The Greatest Showman* (17) and the documentary *P!nk: All I Know So Far* (21). *Better Man* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**dyson**





## Megalopolis

Francis Ford Coppola

USA, 2024

English

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

138 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: Caesar Film LLC

Executive Producer: Anahid Nazarian, Barrie Osborne,

Darren Demetre

Producer: Francis Ford Coppola Barry Hirsch, Fred Roos,

Michael Bederman

Screenplay: Francis Ford Coppola

Cinematographer: Mihai Malaimare Jr.

Editor: Cam McLauchlin, Glen Scantlebury

Production Designer: Beth Mickle, Bradley Rubin

Costume Designer: Melina Canonero

Sound: Michael Koff, Christian Cooke, Brad Zoern,

Nelson Ferreira, Nathan Robitaille

Original Score: Osvaldo Golijov

Principal Cast: Adam Driver, Giancarlo Esposito,

Nathalie Emmanuel, Aubrey Plaza, Shia LaBeouf,

Jon Voight, Laurence Fishburne, Kathryn Hunter,

Dustin Hoffman

Canadian Distributor: Lionsgate

US Distributor: Lionsgate

International Sales Agent: Goodfellas

This long-gestating passion project from legendary Oscar-winning writer-director Francis Ford Coppola features Oscar nominee Adam Driver as a visionary architect whose utopian ambitions clash with the more earthbound demands of a modern city. Pivoting between political drama, philosophical science fiction, and star-crossed romance, *Megalopolis* considers the limits of genius and the fragility of empires.

Wracked with grief over the death of his wife, Cesar Catilina (Driver) pours all his energy into his startling new invention, megalon, a building material that is infinitely malleable and miraculously strong — and may just imbue its creator with the power to control time and space. The federal government grants Catilina permission to demolish large parts of New Rome to make way for his colossal building project, *Megalopolis*, outraging the city's mayor, Cicero (Giancarlo Esposito), who clings to the status quo. Adding insult to injury, Cicero's daughter Julia (Nathalie Emmanuel) falls in love with Catilina, positioning herself at the centre of a grand conflict between cynicism and lofty ideals.

Revisiting themes from earlier films such as *Apocalypse Now* and *Tucker: The Man and His Dream* while channelling Fritz Lang's

*Metropolis*, Coppola weaves together dreams of a glorious future with a profound lament for a world withering under the weight of its own corruption.

Elevated by an astonishing supporting cast including Jon Voight, Laurence Fishburne, Talia Shire (also in this year's Festival selection *Nonnas*), Jason Schwartzman, and Dustin Hoffman, *Megalopolis* is the work of an uncompromising artist whose understanding of history, mastery of filmmaking, and belief in civilization's potential remain a beacon of light.

Francis Ford Coppola was born in Detroit and grew up in New York. He studied theatre at Hofstra College and film at UCLA. His many films include *The Godfather* (72), *The Godfather Part II* (74), *The Conversation* (74), *Apocalypse Now* (79), *The Outsiders* (83), *Rumble Fish* (83), *The Cotton Club* (84), *The Godfather Part III* (90), *Dracula* (92), *Tetro* (09), and *Twixt* (11), which played the Festival. *Megalopolis* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

dyson



## William Tell

Nick Hamm

ITALY/UNITED KINGDOM, 2024

English

WORLD PREMIERE

133 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Tempo Productions, Free Turn**

Executive Producer: **Jon Hamm, David Nichols,**

**Francesco Marras**

Producer: **Piers Tempest, Marie-Christine**

**Jaeger-Firmenich, Nick Hamm**

Screenplay: **Nick Hamm**

Cinematographer: **Jamie D. Ramsay**

Editor: **Yan Miles**

Production Designer: **Tonino Zera**

Costume Designer: **Francesca Sartori**

Sound: **James Harrison, Nina Hartstone**

Original Score: **Steven Price**

Principal Cast: **Claes Bang, Connor Swindells,**

**Golshifteh Farahani, Jonah Hauer-King, Ellie Bamber,**

**Rafe Spall, Emily Beecham, Jonathan Pryce,**

**Sir Ben Kingsley**

International Sales Agent: **Beta Cinema**

US Sales Agent: **WME Independent**

Who says they don't make them like they used to? Full of bravery, honour, and some dazzling battles, this big-screen version of the legendary hero's tale is pure pleasure to watch. William Tell may or may not have existed in real life, but his story is so irresistible that it has become the origin story of Switzerland, and embedded throughout Western culture.

In 1307, a cruel Austrian Hapsburg king (Sir Ben Kingsley) occupies the bordering Swiss cantons. His tax collectors oppress and violate the citizens, driving one farmer to thoughts of murderous revenge. Fleeing across a vast landscape, this farmer finds only one man who will come to his aid: William Tell (Claes Bang, also at this year's Festival in *Bonjour Tristesse*). Tell has returned home weary after fighting with the Knights Templar in the Holy Land. Now seeking only a quiet life with the wife he met there (Golshifteh Farahani), he's nevertheless bound by his principles. When pushed beyond his limits by the villainy of the Hapsburg court, Tell picks up his weapons and rides into battle.

Directed with vigour and flair by Nick Hamm (*The Journey*, TIFF '16; *Driven*, TIFF '18), *William Tell* delivers the lore

as a rousing tale for the 21st century. The visuals are rich, the pacing urgent, and the first-rate cast, which includes Rafe Spall and Jonathan Pryce, truly sink their teeth into the material. And that famous moment when Tell is forced to shoot an apple off his son's head with a crossbow is everything you want it to be.

**Nick Hamm** is a producer and director of theatre, film, and television who was born in Belfast. He has directed the films *The Hole* (01), *Godsend* (04), *Killing Bono* (11), *Gigi & Nate* (22), and the Festival selections *The Journey* (16) and *Driven* (18). *William Tell* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**dyson**

SCREENING SPONSORED BY

*Blakes*





## The Friend

Scott McGehee,  
David Siegel

USA, 2024  
English  
INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE  
120 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Big Creek Projects, 3dot Productions**  
Executive Producer: **Naomi Watts, Margaret Chernin**  
Producer: **Liza Chasin, Scott McGehee, David Siegel, Mike Spreter**  
Screenplay: **Scott McGehee, David Siegel**  
Cinematographer: **Giles Nuttgens**  
Editor: **Isaac Hagy**  
Production Designer: **Kelly McGehee**  
Costume Designer: **Stacey Battat**  
Sound: **Paul Hsu**  
Original Score: **Jay Wadley, Trevor Gureckis**  
Principal Cast: **Naomi Watts, Bill Murray, Sarah Pidgeon, Carla Gugino, Constance Wu, Noma Dumezweni, Ann Dowd, Felix Solis, Owen Teague, Bing**

International Sales Agent: **Creative Artists Agency (CAA)**  
US Sales Agent: **Creative Artists Agency (CAA)**

Bill Murray and Naomi Watts get top billing, but it's impossible to deny the star power of Bing, the Great Dane who nearly steals the show in *The Friend*. Adapting the National Book Award-winning novel by Sigrid Nunez, Scott McGehee and David Siegel deliver another wise, insightful character drama, this time leavened both by delightful comedic scenes and by the ever-calming presence of one giant, soulful dog.

Iris (Watts) has had a long, complex friendship with Walter (Murray, also at this year's Festival with *Riff Raff*). Walter is an irresistible charmer, a brilliant author, a lover of many women, and a master at letting down loved ones. When he dies suddenly, Iris is left to deal with all he left behind — three ex-wives with unfinished business, his interrupted literary legacy, and his beloved beast Apollo (Bing). It's not that Iris doesn't like dogs, but this is Manhattan, and she'll get kicked out of her building if they find out she's pretty much trying to house a horse.

Watts delivers a career-best performance here, weaving New York confidence through the anxieties of a struggling writer, through her principled offence at how Walter treated his wives, and through encounters with the women themselves.

Life is complicated, and McGehee and Siegel (*Montana Story*, TIFF '21, *What Maisie Knew*, TIFF '12, *The Deep End*) reflect that in their writing and in how they direct Watts. They also cast supporting actors of the calibre of Constance Wu, Ann Dowd, Noma Dumezweni, and Carla Gugino, who help create a film of both depth and lightness.

**Scott McGehee** was born in Garden Grove, California, and is based in New York. With David Siegel, he has directed films including *Suture* (93), *The Deep End* (01), and the Festival selections *What Maisie Knew* (12) and *Montana Story* (21). *The Friend* (24) is their latest collaboration.

**David Siegel** is a New York-based filmmaker who was born in Brooklyn. With Scott McGehee, he has directed films including *Suture* (93), *The Deep End* (01), and the Festival selections *What Maisie Knew* (12) and *Montana Story* (21). *The Friend* (24) is their latest collaboration.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**dyson**

SCREENING SPONSORED BY

  
**pwc**





## Will & Harper

Josh Greenbaum

USA, 2024

English

CANADIAN PREMIERE

114 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Wayfarer Studios, Delirio Films, Gloria Sanchez Productions

Executive Producer: Justin Baldoni, Andrew Calof, Jamey Heath, Steve Sarowitz, Brian Singer, Imene Meziane

Producer: Rafael Marmor, Christopher Leggett, Will Ferrell, Jessica Elbaum, Josh Greenbaum, Samantha Apfel, Carolina Barlow

Cinematographer: Zoë White

Editor: Monique Zavistovski

Sound: Zach Seivers

Original Score: Nathan Halpern

With: Will Ferrell, Harper Steele

Canadian Distributor: Netflix

US Distributor: Netflix

This heartfelt documentary from director Josh Greenbaum (*Barb and Star Go to Vista Del Mar*) follows *Saturday Night Live* alumni Will Ferrell and Harper Steele as they traverse the US by car following Steele's announcement of her transition. Both a portrait of enduring friendship and a field report on contemporary attitudes toward the trans community, *Will & Harper* reinvents the road movie for an age of change and empowerment.

Ferrell and Steele met in 1995 on their first day of work at *SNL*, where they discovered an instant comedic kinship. Their personal bond deepened in the decades that followed. When Steele came out as trans, she feared the news could alienate those in her orbit. Ferrell declared his unconditional support, yet worried he might inadvertently say or do something offensive.

The duo decide that a road trip could be a great way of reinforcing their friendship and surveying what it means to be transgender in today's sharply divided culture. Their 16-day journey begins in New York, where they revisit their former headquarters at 30 Rock and reunite with old pals Seth Meyers and Tina Fey. From there, it's off to Washington, DC, and the American heartland — including

states that have recently placed restrictions on gender-affirming care.

While buoyed by humour and warmth, *Will & Harper* delivers an urgent message regarding the sobering challenges still facing trans people. In precarious times, the love of a friend can supply some of the strength needed to forge ahead.

**Josh Greenbaum** was born in Saratoga Springs, NY. He is a writer, producer, and director with multiple film and television credits, including the documentaries *The Short Game* (13), *Becoming Bond* (17), and *Too Funny to Fail: The Life & Death of The Dana Carvey Show* (17), and the features *Barb and Star Go to Vista Del Mar* (21), and *Strays* (23). *Will & Harper* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

dyson

SCREENING SPONSORED BY

accenture





## The Shrouds

David Cronenberg

CANADA/FRANCE, 2024  
English  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
119 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Prospero Pictures, SBS Productions, Saint Laurent Productions**  
Executive Producer: **Kevin Chneiweiss, Kateryna Merkt, Marieke Tricoire, Ariane Giroux-Dallaire, Charles Tremblay**  
Producer: **Saïd Ben Saïd, Martin Katz, Anthony Vaccarello for Saint Laurent**  
Screenplay: **David Cronenberg**  
Cinematographer: **Douglas Koch**  
Editor: **Christopher Donaldson**  
Production Designer: **Carol Spier**  
Costume Artistic Creator: **Anthony Vaccarello for Saint Laurent**  
Costume Designer: **Anne Dixon**  
Sound: **Jason McFarling**  
Original Score: **Howard Shore**  
Principal Cast: **Vincent Cassel, Diane Kruger, Guy Pearce, Sandrine Holt**

Canadian Distributor: **Sphere Films**  
International Sales Agent: **SBS International**

*The Shrouds* is steeped in grief; the loss of the David Cronenberg's wife Carolyn in 2017 is the engine that drives every scene, and his decision to style and groom star Vincent Cassel as his own doppelgänger brings the point home all the more powerfully.

Cassel plays Karsh, a technological entrepreneur still grieving the death of his wife Becca (Diane Kruger) four years earlier. He has thrown himself into his work, devising technologically augmented burial shrouds that let loved ones watch their lost family members decompose. It's the closest thing to being there with them — and no, it's not for everyone. But when his wife's plot is among several desecrated in an apparent act of vandalism, Karsh slips into a full-on crisis that expands to involve Becca's lookalike sister, Terry (also Kruger), her ex-husband Maury (Guy Pearce, also at this year's Festival in *The Brutalist*), and, eventually, Soo-Min (Sandrine Holt), the enigmatic wife of a dying Hungarian tycoon who wants to open one of Karsh's cemeteries in Budapest. Is Karsh losing his mind, or is some strange web closing around him?

Though *The Shrouds* does call back to Cronenberg's body of work — specifically *Videodrome*, *Naked Lunch*, and *Crash* — it's fully its own thing, a film unlike any he's ever

done before. It's a work of art, written on the bodies of its characters, exploring the horror of simple human fragility. And it's made by a master.

**David Cronenberg** was born in Toronto. He has directed many films, including the Festival selections *M. Butterfly* (92), *A History of Violence* (05), *Eastern Promises* (07), *A Dangerous Method* (11), and *Maps to the Stars* (14), as well as *Crimes of the Future*, one of TIFF's Top Ten Canadian Films of 2022. He is the recipient of the Norman Jewison Career Achievement Award at the 2024 TIFF Tribute Awards. *The Shrouds* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**dyson**





## Nonnas

Stephen Chbosky

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
111 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Fifth Season, 1Community, Madison Wells Media**  
Executive Producer: **Jay Peterson, Todd Lubin, Leah Gonzalez, Stacy Calabrese, Amanda Morgan Palmer, Scott Budnick, Ameet Shukla, Jody Scaravella, Pam Hirsch, Vince Vaughn**  
Producer: **Gigi Pritzker, Rachel Shane, Jack Turner**  
Screenplay: **Liz Maccie**  
Cinematographer: **Florian Ballhaus**  
Editor: **Anne McCabe**  
Production Designer: **Diane Lederman**  
Costume Designer: **Brenda Abbandandolo**  
Sound: **Antonio Arroyo**  
Original Score: **Marcelo Zarvos**  
Principal Cast: **Susan Sarandon, Linda Cardellini, Vince Vaughn, Brenda Vaccaro, Talia Shire, Lorraine Bracco, Joe Manganiello, Drea de Matteo, Campbell Scott, Michael Rispoli**

International Sales Agent: **WME, Fifth Season**  
US Sales Agent: **WME, Fifth Season**

Joe Scaravella is at loose ends. His mother has died after a long illness, leaving him rattling around in their Brooklyn house all by himself. He's got a good job as a mechanic at the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, but it's not exactly fulfilling. And then one day, he has a thought: Why not use his inheritance to open a restaurant on Staten Island, name it after his mom, and hire her contemporaries to run the kitchen?

This actually happened, more or less. And now it's a movie, with Vince Vaughn slipping back into the fast-talking, starry-eyed persona that made him a star in *Swingers* (TIFF '96).

Producer-director Stephen Chbosky, whom Festival audiences will know from *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (TIFF '12) and *Dear Evan Hansen* (TIFF '21), keeps things light as Joe assembles his restaurant's chefs from a mixture of family, friends, and walk-ins played by screen legends like Lorraine Bracco, Brenda Vaccaro, Talia Shire (also at this year's Festival in *Megalopolis*), and Susan Sarandon. He also ends up reconnecting with his old high-school girlfriend (Linda Cardellini, also at this year's Festival in *Nutcrackers*), who's a lawyer now. Sure, he messed up their prom night, but that was a long time ago.

*Nonnas* is comfort food — it's a movie about a guy with a dream, and the women who join him in realizing that dream because inside all the desperate talk there's a hint of something good and true. Joe Manganiello and Drea de Matteo turn up as Joe's best friends, who keep him grounded... when they're not working as his two-person renovation crew.

And yes, before you ask, of course Chbosky has seen *Big Night*. What, you think Campbell Scott just shows up here by accident?

Welcome to Enoteca Maria. Welcome to *Nonnas*. Go easy on the olive oil.

**Stephen Chbosky** is a filmmaker and novelist. His feature debut, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (12), was an adaptation of his own novel and played at the Festival. He also directed *Wonder* (17) and the Festival selection *Dear Evan Hansen* (21). *Nonnas* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

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SCREENING SPONSORED BY

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## Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight

Embeth Davidtz

**SOUTH AFRICA, 2024**  
**English, Shona**  
**CANADIAN PREMIERE**  
**98 minutes | Colour/DCP**

Production Company: **Rose and Oaks Media**  
 Executive Producer: **Anele Madoda, Frankie Du Toit**  
 Producer: **Helena Spring, Paul Buys, Embeth Davidtz**  
 Screenplay: **Embeth Davidtz**  
 Cinematographer: **Willie Nel**  
 Editor: **Nicholas Costaras**  
 Production Designer: **Anneke Dempsey**  
 Costume Designer: **Monique Lampbrecht**  
 Sound: **Barry Donnelly, Guy Steere**  
 Original Score: **Chris Letcher**  
 Principal Cast: **Lexi Venter, Embeth Davidtz, Zikhona Bali, Fumani Shilubana, Rob Van Vuuren, Anina Reed**

International Sales Agent: **Creative Artists Agency (CAA)**  
 US Sales Agent: **Creative Artists Agency (CAA)**

From *Schindler's List* to *The Amazing Spider-Man*, *Matilda* to *The Morning Show*, American actor Embeth Davidtz has earned a reputation as an engaging, relatable on-screen presence in some of Hollywood's biggest films and series. But Davidtz's roots are in South Africa, where she spent her youth. Just as that nation and neighbouring Zimbabwe were going through convulsive political change driven by a rejection of previous racial hierarchies, Davidtz was becoming an actor.

In her first film as both actor and director, she adapts Alexandra Fuller's memoir of life in a white farming family in the last days of Rhodesia's government. As the 1980 election that would create Zimbabwe approaches, the brittle truce between white landowners and the Black majority workers fractures.

Davidtz plays Nicola Fuller, mother to young, perceptive Bobo (Lexi Venter). Nicola sleeps with a machine gun, ready to use it for "terrorists" or snakes, whatever threatens her family. She's taught her daughter that any African could be a terrorist.

*Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* shifts with admirable nuance from the coarse nihilism of the white adults who know their days of relative comfort are

numbered, to the magic seen through Bobo's innocent eyes, to the razor-sharp long view of Sarah (Zikhona Bali) and Jacob (Fumani N. Shilubana) who work for the Fuller family until they can reclaim land that was taken from them.

No one emerges as an unblemished hero in Davidtz's film, nor is anyone an absolute villain. Even in this harsh, most intimate of conflicts, people have their reasons.

**Embeth Davidtz** is an American–South African actor known for roles in film and TV including *Schindler's List* (93), *Matilda* (96), *Mad Men* (09–12), *Ray Donovan* (16), and *The Morning Show* (19–21). *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* (24) is her directorial debut.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**dyson**





## Oh, Canada

Paul Schrader

USA, 2024

English

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

91 minutes | Colour and Black & White/DCP

Production Company: Northern Lights, Vested Interest, Left Home Productions, Ottocento Films  
Executive Producer: Gary Hamilton, Ying Ye, Ryan Hamilton, Brian Beckmann, Caerthan Banks, Steven Kravitz, Terri Garbarini, Jon Adgemi, John Molloy, Andrea Chung, Riccardo Maddalosso, Rob Hinderliter, Joel Michaely, Steven Demmler, Tom Ogden, Andrea Bucko, Braxton Pope, Elsa Ramo, Emilio Schenker, Eyal Rimmon, Arun K. Thapar, Damiano Tucci, Kathryn M. Moseley, Oliver Ridge, R. Wesley Sierk, Kyle Stroud, Gideon Tadmor

Producer: David Gonzales, Tiffany Boyle, Meghan Hanlon, Scott LaStaiti, Luisa Law

Screenplay: Paul Schrader

Cinematographer: Andrew Wonder

Editor: Benjamin Rodríguez Jr.

Production Designer: Deborah Jensen

Costume Designer: Aubrey Laufer

Sound: James Baker

Original Score: Phosphorescent

Principal Cast: Richard Gere, Uma Thurman, Jacob Elordi, Michael Imperoli

International Sales Agent: Arclight Films

US Sales Agent: WME Independent

A fascinating, unintended counterpoint to David Cronenberg's *The Shrouds*, which is also at this year's Festival, Paul Schrader's *Oh, Canada* likewise sees its protagonist confronting mortality through radical, wilfully Canadian acts of self-definition. Schrader's hero makes a documentary.

Richard Gere, reuniting with Schrader 44 years after *American Gigolo*, plays Leonard Fife, who left the US for Canada as a young man during the Vietnam war draft. Fife became an acclaimed documentary filmmaker in Montreal. Now, riddled with illness and palliative medicine, he allows former film students, led by Malcolm (Michael Imperoli), to interview him. Uma Thurman, playing Fife's watchful wife Emma, stands guard to protect her husband's legacy. But as Fife's memories pour out to the camera and come to life in flashbacks, the great man's official story fractures.

In a casting masterstroke, Jacob Elordi (also at the Festival in *On Swift Horses*) plays the young Fife, unleashing the same enigmatic charisma Gere brought to *American Gigolo*. Seduction came easily to young Fife; as his older self recounts and immerses himself in those memories, he's finally ready to admit where selfishness and cowardice led him.

In adapting Russell Banks' 2021 novel *Foregone*, Schrader brings uniquely cinematic tools to the story. His play with aspect ratios, colour palettes, and the shifting certainties of flashbacks give *Oh, Canada* an interior perspective that only movies can offer. There is artifice here, but also devastating truth.

Paul Schrader was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He has written acclaimed films such as *Taxi Driver* (76), *Raging Bull* (80), *The Last Temptation of Christ* (88), and *Bringing Out the Dead* (99). His many directorial credits include *Hardcore* (79), *American Gigolo* (80), and the Festival selections *Dog Eat Dog* (16) and *First Reformed* (17). *Oh, Canada* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

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SCREENING SPONSORED BY

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## Superboys of Malegaon

Reema Kagti

INDIA, 2024

Hindi

WORLD PREMIERE

127 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Amazon MGM Studios

Producer: Ritesh Sidhwani, Zoya Akhtar, Reema Kagti,

Farhan Akhtar

Screenplay: Varun Grover

Cinematographer: Swapnil S. Sonawane

Editor: Anand Subaya

Production Designer: Sally White

Costume Designer: Bhawna Sharma

Sound: Niraj Gera

Original Score: Sachin Jigar

Principal Cast: Adarsh Gourav, Vineet Kumar Singh,

Shashank Arora

Canadian Distributor: Amazon MGM Studios

US Distributor: Amazon MGM Studios

Based on a true story, *Superboys of Malegaon* chronicles the life and work of self-made auteur Nasir Shaikh, whose no-budget, community-sourced productions turned his pals into cineastes and his hometown into an unlikely dream factory. Helmed by Reema Kagti (*Talaash: The Answer Lies Within*) in her latest collaboration with producer Zoya Akhtar (*Gully Boy*), the film is an inspiring ode to tenacity, self-actualization, and the sheer fun of filmmaking.

It's 1997 and movie-mad Nasir (Adarsh Gourav, *The White Tiger*) is certain he's destined for cinematic greatness, but great cinema never came out of his humdrum hometown of Malegaon. Nasir gets his first taste of success screening mashups of Buster Keaton and Jackie Chan action sequences, leading him toward a bright idea: if Malegaon moviegoers love revisiting the classics, wouldn't they flock to see classics reimagined on their own turf?

Borrowing gear from a wedding videographer and assembling a cast and crew of locals, Nasir sets out to remake Ramesh Sippy's beloved 1975 film *Sholay*.

Nasir's campy, go-for-broke vision is a regional smash, and a glittering new road seems to open before him. But his journey will prove arduous, requiring him to check

his ego and recognize that the friendships that helped him start making movies were essential to their magic.

Written by Kagti and Varun Grover (*Three of Us*), *Superboys of Malegaon* follows Nasir and his buddies over several years, tracking their joys, sorrows, and twists of fate.

Brimming with comedy, adventure, and colourful characters, the film is a testament to the wonders that can be achieved when imagination is matched with resourcefulness, loyalty, and lots of love.

**Reema Kagti** is an Indian writer, producer, and director. Her directorial credits include *Talaash: The Answer Lies Within* (12), *Gold* (18), and the TV series *Dahaad* (23). *Superboys of Malegaon* (24) is her latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

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## The Deb

Rebel Wilson

AUSTRALIA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
119 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Camp Sugar, Unigram, AI Film, Bunya Productions**  
Executive Producer: **Len Blavatnik, Vince Holden, Meg Washington, Kevin Whyte**  
Producer: **Rebel Wilson, Gregor Cameron, Amanda Ghost, Greer Simpkin, David Jowsey**  
Screenplay: **Hannah Reilly**  
Additional Writing: **Rebel Wilson**  
Cinematographer: **Ross Emery**  
Editor: **Jane Moran**  
Production Designer: **Sam Hobbs**  
Costume Designer: **Margot Wilson**  
Sound: **David Lee, Liam Egan**  
Music: **Meg Washington**  
Lyrics: **Meg Washington, Hannah Reilly**  
Executive Music Producer: **Ian Eisendrath**  
Choreographer: **Rob Ashford**  
Original Score: **Michael Yezerski**  
Principal Cast: **Rebel Wilson, Shane Jacobson, Tara Morice, Natalie Abbott, Charlotte MacInnes, Julian McMahon, Hal Cumpston, Stevie Jean, Costa d'Angelo, Steph Tisdell, Scarlett Crabtree, Susan Prior**

International Sales Agent: **WME**  
US Sales Agent: **WME**

Bold, outrageous, and slyly hilarious, Australian-born star Rebel Wilson finds the perfect material for her directorial debut in *The Deb*. Her film brings to teen girl social warfare the same blend of raw, sweet, and romantic that fans will recognize from her performances in *Bridesmaids* and *Pitch Perfect*.

Maeve (Charlotte MacInnes) is queen bee at her exclusive private school in the city. But when one of her misguided crusades provokes outrage, she gets not only disciplined by the school but #cancelled by her peers. Mom sends Maeve off to stay with her country cousin in a dusty, Outback town called Dunburn. Taylah (Natalie Abbott) is the exact opposite of a queen bee. Not only does she lack Maeve's privilege, she's unschooled in her cousin's new-found progressiveness. "I think I might be the feminist voice of my generation," Maeve confesses in all seriousness.

In the tradition of the best musicals, the story unfolds in memorable, whip-smart songs composed by Hannah Reilly and Megan Washington. As Taylah dreams of being invited to the town's debutante ball and Maeve rails against such "heteronormative bullshit," the two girls clash, crash, and ultimately connect. And Dunburn turns

out to be a lot more complex than its country fair would indicate. Wilson herself delivers a delicious turn as the local aspiring cool mom.

For everyone navigating, observing, or panicking over contemporary teen girl life, *The Deb* is an absolute blast.

**Rebel Wilson** is an Australian actor, producer, and filmmaker. She has appeared in films including *Bridesmaids* (11), *Bachelorette* (12), the *Pitch Perfect* trilogy (12–17), *Isn't It Romantic* (19), and the Festival selection *Jojo Rabbit* (19). *The Deb* (24) is her directorial debut.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

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# SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

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## Nightbitch

Marielle Heller

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
98 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Searchlight Pictures, Annapurna Pictures, Archer Gray, Defiant By Nature, Bond Group Entertainment  
Executive Producer: Megan Ellison, Allison Rose Carter, Havilah Brewster, Adam Paulsen, Sammy Scher, Rachel Yoder  
Producer: Anne Carey, Marielle Heller, Sue Naegle, Christina Oh, Amy Adams, Stacy O'Neil  
Screenplay: Marielle Heller  
Cinematographer: Brandon Trost  
Editor: Anne McCabe  
Production Designer: Karen Murphy  
Costume Designer: Arjun Bhasin  
Sound: Anthony Ortiz  
Original Score: Nate Heller  
Principal Cast: Amy Adams, Scoot McNairy, Arleigh Patrick Snowden, Emmett James Snowden, Zoë Chao, Mary Holland, Archana Rajan, Jessica Harper

US Distributor: Searchlight Pictures

Based on the bestselling 2021 novel of the same name, director Marielle Heller (*Can You Ever Forgive Me?*, TIFF '18) has created a profoundly original exploration of motherhood and identity, destined to be one of the most talked-about films of the year.

Amy Adams plays Mother, a former city-dwelling artist and curator who chooses to stay home (now a suburban home) with her toddler son as her husband travels frequently for business. She loves her son deeply, but that does not prevent her from feeling isolated and exhausted. How did her life become a numbing grind of diaper changes and cutting bananas into little pieces?

Still unstrung from an extremely unsuccessful attempt to connect with other mothers at the library's Baby Book Time, and unable to keep her emotions bottled up inside any longer, Mother begins to see and hear things in the night that beckon to her. Soon, something primal and feral rises up within her, allowing her to unleash — and return to — her inner power and identity.

Scoot McNairy plays Mother's Husband, a relatable, sensitive man struggling with his own challenges around parenthood. But make no mistake, this is Adams' film. It is her fearless, unselfconscious, and

fiercely intelligent performance that makes *Nightbitch* such a memorable experience.

Heller weaves drama, comedy, and significant elements of magic realism into an audacious and important film, examining those aspects of motherhood — both dark and darkly humorous — of which we rarely speak.

JANE SCHOETTLE

**Marielle Heller** is a filmmaker, producer, and actor who was born in Marin County, California. She has directed the films *The Diary of a Teenage Girl* (15) as well as the Festival selections *Can You Ever Forgive Me?* (18) and *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood* (19). *Nightbitch* (24) is her latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## Bird

Andrea Arnold

UNITED KINGDOM, 2024  
English  
CANADIAN PREMIERE  
119 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **House Productions**  
Executive Producer: **Claude Amadeo, Mollye Asher, Len Blavatnik, Jessamine Burgum, Danny Cohen, Michael D'Alto, Kara Durrett, Randal Sandler, Chris Triana, Eva Yates**  
Producer: **Juliette Howell, Tessa Ross, Lee Groombridge**  
Screenplay: **Andrea Arnold**  
Cinematographer: **Robbie Ryan**  
Editor: **Joe Bini**  
Production Designer: **Maxine Carlier**  
Costume Designer: **Alex Bovaird**  
Sound: **Nicolas Becker**  
Principal Cast: **Nykiya Adams, Barry Keoghan, Franz Rogowski, James Nelson-Joyce**

US Distributor: **MUBI**  
International Sales Agent: **Cornerstone Films**

Twelve-year-old Bailey (played by charismatic newcomer Nykiya Adams) lives with her father Bug (a devoted but emotionally chaotic Barry Keoghan, also at this year's Festival in *Bring Them Down*) in a graffiti-strewn tenement. When Bug informs her that he'll be marrying his new girlfriend soon, Bailey is furious and hurt, for what will become of her? Her mother lives with a violent, cruel man and, while Bug sports a ferocious love for his daughter, he can be oblivious to the needs of a fledgling teenage girl.

As she often does, Bailey retreats to the open fields on the outskirts of her hometown to seek comfort. It is here she is most herself, with an uncanny ability to communicate with animals and experience nature in a profound way. It is on one of these walks that Bailey has a mysterious, yet deeply meaningful, encounter that helps her when she must force a confrontation with her mother's vicious partner.

This latest film from renowned English filmmaker Andrea Arnold is a compelling, ultimately joyous story that tackles themes of identity, sexism, loneliness, and class struggle. The director's empathy and skill at showing us beauty despite dire circumstances elevates *Bird* beyond its roots. Add to

that a crystalline thread of magic realism and the result is an ode to the wondrous transition from childhood to adolescence.

JANE SCHOETTLE

**Andrea Arnold** was born in England. Her short films include *Milk* (98), *Dog* (01), and *Wasp* (06), for which she won an Academy Award. Her feature films *Red Road* (06), *Fish Tank* (09), *Wuthering Heights* (11) and *American Honey* (16) have all screened at the Festival. *Bird* (24) is her latest film.

### TIFF Next Wave

Celebrating the highs and lows (and everything in between) of young voices in today's fast-moving world. This film has been selected for the next generation of film lovers by the TIFF Next Wave Committee.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## The Fire Inside

Rachel Morrison

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
109 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: Amazon MGM Studios  
Executive Producer: Lyn Lucibello Brancatella, Rachel Morrison, Claressa Shields, Drea Cooper, Zackary Canepari, Sue Jaye Johnson  
Producer: Barry Jenkins, Elishia Holmes  
Screenplay: Barry Jenkins  
Cinematographer: Rina Yang  
Editor: Harry Yoon  
Production Designer: Zosia Mackenzie  
Costume Designer: Marcia Scott  
Sound: John Thomson  
Original Score: Tamar-Kali  
Principal Cast: Ryan Destiny, Brian Tyree Henry

Canadian Distributor: Warner Brothers Pictures  
US Distributor: Amazon MGM Studios

Based on the champion boxer's true life story, *The Fire Inside* begins as a young Claressa Shields sneaks into a gym, eager to spar with the boys in the ring. Local volunteer coach Jason Crutchfield (Brian Tyree Henry) quickly takes her under his wing and Claressa proves fiercely talented. But soon Crutchfield must go beyond his coaching duties to keep her on track as she starts to feel not just the pressure of winning, but also the glare of her beleaguered hometown, Flint, Michigan, seeking hope in her resilience.

Ryan Destiny gives a stunning performance as Shields, weaving between grounded and intense as she tries to shake off her precarious reality. You're quickly rooting for Claressa's ascent to the Olympics but also forced to confront the crushing disappointment when things don't turn out. All the while, Henry keeps us in the fight with a performance that finds warmth and patience amid the frustrations.

*The Fire Inside* marks Rachel Morrison's feature directorial debut as she uses her multifaceted experience as cinematographer on films big and small (*Fruitvale Station*; *Mudbound*, TIFF '17; *Black Panther*) to capture both the intimate moments of Claressa's life and her extraordinary

matchups in the ring. Written and produced by Oscar-winning filmmaker Barry Jenkins (*Moonlight*, TIFF '16), this film is a journey that takes us through the usual triumphs of the underdog *and* to what comes after. Where countless sports stories find their end, Claressa's begins.

JANE SCHOETTLE

Rachel Morrison is an American cinematographer. Her many credits include *Fruitvale Station* (13), *Dope* (15), and *Black Panther* (18) plus the Festival selections *Cake* (14) and *Mudbound* (17), for which she earned an Academy Award nomination for cinematography, the first for a woman. *The Fire Inside* (24) is her feature directorial debut.

### TIFF Next Wave

Celebrating the highs and lows (and everything in between) of young voices in today's fast-moving world. This film has been selected for the next generation of film lovers by the TIFF Next Wave Committee.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## On Becoming a Guinea Fowl

Rungano Nyoni

ZAMBIA/UNITED KINGDOM/IRELAND, 2024  
Bemba, English  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
95 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: BBC Film, Fremantle, A24, Element Pictures  
Executive Producer: Eva Yates, Christian Vesper, Olivia Sleiter  
Producer: Ed Guiney, Andrew Lowe, Tim Cole  
Screenplay: Rungano Nyoni  
Cinematographer: David Gallego ADFC  
Editor: Nathan Nugent  
Production Designer: Malin Lindholm  
Sound: Olivier Dandré  
Original Score: Lucrecia Dalt  
Principal Cast: Susan Chardy, Elizabeth Chisela, Henry B.J. Phiri

US Distributor: A24  
International Sales Agent: A24  
US Sales Agent: A24

Here lies Shula's uncle Fred — dead in the middle of an empty road. It's late, but Shula knows her family will expect her to wait with his body, no matter how much she might resent it. Bemba funerals are for the living, and the family will have questions. With the days-long ceremony beginning immediately, the blithe and unperturbed Shula — played by Susan Chardy in her debut film role — attempts to opt out of the haunted proceedings. But in this household, mourning is not optional. Tradition dictates that visitors will soon gather while relatives fill the family home with wails of grief. And what will they say about the dry-eyed and resolutely emotionless Shula?

Surely the dead can't take all their secrets to the grave, and Fred, in particular, had many. Attempting to escape the inquisition of her heartbroken aunts, Shula is drawn to her cousins. Layered somewhere within the flurry of caring for each other, the whispered memories of this middle-class Zambian family will find a new frequency. In misery's company, Shula will find a new voice.

In the long-awaited follow-up to her widely acclaimed debut *I Am Not a Witch* (TIFF '17), visionary Zambian Welsh auteur Rungano Nyoni returns to the Festival with a fearless parable about the toll family secrets

take on their keepers and the complicated costs of speaking up. Moulding her darkly comedic surrealist signature through the reverent cinematography of David Gallego (TIFF '15's *Embrace of the Serpent*, *I Am Not a Witch*), Nyoni's hypnotically fresh perspective will leave audiences unsure whether to laugh, shout, or cry.

NATALEAH HUNTER-YOUNG

**Rungano Nyoni** is a self-taught writer and director who was born in Lusaka, Zambia and grew up in Wales. She has made the short films *The List* (09), *Mwansa the Great* (11) and *Listen* (14). Her debut feature *I Am Not a Witch* (17) premiered at Cannes. *On Becoming a Guinea Fowl* (24) is her latest film.

### TIFF Next Wave

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PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Rez Ball

Sydney Freeland

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
110 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **The Springhill Company, Wise Entertainment, Chernin Entertainment, Lake Ellyn Entertainment**  
Executive Producer: **Peter Chernin, Jenno Topping, D. Scott Lumpkin, Maverick Carter, Jodi Archambault**  
Producer: **Katie Elmore, Maurício Mota, Spencer Beighley, Jamal Henderson, LeBron James, Nancy Utley**  
Screenplay: **Sydney Freeland, Sterlin Harjo**  
Cinematographer: **Kira Kelly**  
Editor: **Jessica Baclesse**  
Production Designer: **Richard Toyon**  
Costume Designer: **Olivia Miles**  
Sound: **Paul Hsu**  
Original Score: **Dan Deacon**  
Principal Cast: **Jessica Matten, Kauchani Bratt, Amber Midthunder, Cody Lightning, Dallas Goldtooth, Ernest David Tsosie, Kusem Goodwind, Zoey Reyes, Julia Jones**

Canadian Distributor: **Netflix**  
US Distributor: **Netflix**

With her third feature film, director and co-writer Sydney Freeland shares a deeply inspiring and energetic account of overcoming adversity and finding one's purpose. Inspired by a remarkable true story and set in the sprawling and beautiful Navajo Nation, *Rez Ball* follows one unforgettable season in the lives of the Chuska Warriors boys' basketball team.

Fronted by the charismatic local hero Nataanii Jackson (Kusem Goodwind), the team is searching for a way out of its current losing streak, which frustrated community members blame on Coach Hobbs (Jessica Matten), herself a former basketball star. But Nataanii is struggling with the tragic deaths of his mother and sister and, after a devastating turn of events results in his dying, the team is left even more bereft and rudderless. The heir apparent to lead the team is Nataanii's best friend, Jimmy Holiday (Kauchani Bratt), whose own family and financial struggles threaten to derail his hoop dreams.

As their slump continues, Hobbs, Jimmy, and the rest of the team must find a new path forward. Using their language and culture as inspiration, they develop a uniquely Navajo twist to playing basketball — which they dub “Rez Ball” — leading to an unexpected win

streak that keeps alive their hopes of competing in the state championships.

With a tender and assured lens, Freeland explores complex and sensitive topics with grace and care as she draws out impressive performances from her cast, including a radiant Bratt in his debut performance. The film is executive produced by NBA superstar LeBron James and co-written by *Reservation Dogs* co-creator Sterlin Harjo.

JASON RYLE

**Sydney Freeland** is a Navajo filmmaker who grew up in New Mexico. She has directed the features *Drunktown's Finest* (14) and *Deidra & Laney Rob a Train* (17), as well as episodes of many acclaimed TV series, including *Grey's Anatomy* (18-19), *P-Valley* (20), *Rutherford Falls* (21), and *Reservation Dogs* (21). *Rez Ball* (24) is her latest film.

### TIFF Next Wave

Celebrating the highs and lows (and everything in between) of young voices in today's fast-moving world. This film has been selected for the next generation of film lovers by the TIFF Next Wave Committee.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## Rumours

Guy Maddin, Evan Johnson,  
Galen Johnson

CANADA/GERMANY, 2024  
English, French, Swedish, German  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
103 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Buffalo Gal Pictures, Thin Stuff, Walking Down Broadway, Maze Pictures, Square Peg, Ludascripts, Aloe Entertainment, Laokoon Filmgroup, Telefilm Canada, Orogen Entertainment, ZDF/ARTE, Crave, CBC Films, Manitoba Film & Music  
Executive Producer: Ari Aster, Cate Blanchett, Phyllis Laing, Jörg Schülze, Joe Neurauder, Tyler Campellone, Adrian Love, Michael O'Leary, Andrew Karpen, Kent Sanderson  
Producer: Liz Jarvis, Philipp Kreuzer, Lars Knudsen  
Screenplay: Evan Johnson  
Cinematographer: Stefan Ciupek  
Editor: John Gurdebeke, Evan Johnson, Galen Johnson  
Production Designer: Zosia Mackenzie  
Costume Designer: Bina Daigeler  
Sound: John Gurdebeke, Clare Dobson, Dave Rose, Graham Rogers, Martin Lee, Bálint Zándoki  
Original Score: Kristian Eidnes Andersen  
Principal Cast: Cate Blanchett, Roy Dupuis, Nikki Amuka-Bird, Charles Dance, Takehiro Hira, Denis Ménochet, Rolando Ravello, Zlatko Burić, Alicia Vikander

Canadian Distributor: Elevation Pictures  
US Distributor: Bleecker Street  
International Sales Agent: Protagonist Pictures

In this wildly entertaining satire from co-directors Guy Maddin, Evan Johnson, and Galen Johnson, the leaders of the G7 nations — the US, Canada, Germany, Japan, Italy, France, and the UK — stumble into a surreal scene and are left to their own (inept) devices to get themselves out.

*Rumours* is ribald, playful, and an expansion of the Maddin-Johnson-Johnson oeuvre. The trademark oddities, like a glowing brain and bog people, are there; there's a brief foray into black and white; and it was partly filmed in Winnipeg.

Co-produced by Ari Aster among others, it was also filmed in Hungary, with a stand-out international cast. Cate Blanchett (also at this year's Festival in *Disclaimer*) is German chancellor Hilda, the host of the gathering; Roy Dupuis is the passionate Canadian prime minister; UK Prime Minister Cardoso Dewindt (Nikki Amuka-Bird) doggedly tries to keep this ragtag group on task, and, inexplicably, English actor Charles Dance keeps his accent as the president of the United States.

The G7 leaders are so lost in working on a provisional statement filled with platitudes and nonsense and addressing an unnamed crisis, that they don't realize they've been abandoned by their servers. It's only then,

when the cameras and aides have left, that things really go off the rails and each of their shortcomings comes glaringly into focus.

KELLY BOUTSALIS

**Guy Maddin** has directed films including Festival selections *The Saddest Music in the World* (03), *Brand Upon the Brain!* (06), and Best Canadian Feature winner *My Winnipeg* (07). He's a member of the Order of Canada and the Order of Manitoba. *Rumours* (24) is his latest film.

**Evan Johnson** is a Winnipeg-based writer and filmmaker. He previously worked at a chemical bottling plant, where he was discovered by Guy Maddin. Their first feature collaboration was co-directing *The Forbidden Room* (15), and they've been making films together ever since. *Rumours* (24) is his latest film.

**Galen Johnson** is a Winnipeg-based filmmaker, production designer, and composer. He was a designer on *The Forbidden Room* (15), and first co-directed with Evan Johnson and Guy Maddin on the short documentary *Bring Me the Head of Tim Horton* (15), which played the Festival. *Rumours* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





# CHARLES KRANTZ

## 39 GREAT YEARS!

### Thanks Chuck!



## The Life of Chuck

Mike Flanagan

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
110 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Intrepid Pictures, Red Room Pictures**  
Executive Producer: **Stephen King, Melinda Nishioka, D. Scott Lumpkin, Molly C. Quinn, Matthew M. Welty, Elan Gale, Dan Williams, Amanda Williams, Kevin Park**  
Producer: **Trevor Macy, Mike Flanagan**  
Screenplay: **Mike Flanagan**  
Cinematographer: **Eben Bolter**  
Editor: **Mike Flanagan**  
Production Designer: **Steve Arnold**  
Costume Designer: **Terry Anderson**  
Sound: **Jonathan Wales**  
Original Score: **The Newton Brothers**  
Principal Cast: **Tom Hiddleston, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Karen Gillan, Mia Sara, Carl Lumbly, Benjamin Pajak, Jacob Tremblay, Mark Hamill**

International Sales Agent: **FilmNation Entertainment**  
US Sales Agent: **WME**

With *The Life of Chuck*, Mike Flanagan takes a detour from the macabre to explore one of Stephen King's alternate sensibilities in an adaptation that carries the spirit of his most optimistic work. The world feels like it's ending and everybody's saying goodbye to Chuck. Wherever Marty (Chiwetel Ejiofor) goes, he can't get away from Charles Krantz (Tom Hiddleston). His face is showing up on billboards, window signs — even TV commercials. What's so special about this seemingly ordinary accountant and why does he warrant such a sendoff?

Their connection includes Marty's ex-wife (Karen Gillan), her co-worker, his neighbour, and just about everyone else they know. Chuck's life story soon begins to unravel in front of us, going back to a childhood with grandfather Albie (Mark Hamill), who teaches him about accounting and passes on a love for dancing, all the while keeping him from a prophetic secret in the attic.

*The Life of Chuck* starts grand and ends intimate, like a setting sun. It's a *Stand By Me* for the multiple lives within each of us, pulled between our dreams and down-to-earth pragmatism. Fans of Flanagan's skilful storytelling in *The Haunting of Hill House*, *Midnight Mass*, and *Doctor Sleep* will easily

see why he gravitated towards the unorthodox structure of this King novella. Coupled with his impressive knack for elevating simple conversations and interactions into memorable set pieces, Flanagan manages a rare feat: finding warmth in melancholy.

JANE SCHOETTLE

**Mike Flanagan** was born in Salem, Massachusetts. His writing and directing credits include the series *The Haunting of Hill House* (18) and *Midnight Mass* (21). He has also directed films including the Festival selection *Oculus* (13), *Gerald's Game* (17), and *Doctor Sleep* (19). *The Life of Chuck* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## We Live in Time

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John Crowley

UNITED KINGDOM/France, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
107 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **STUDIOCANAL, SunnyMarch, Film4, SHOEBOX FILMS**  
Executive Producer: **Benedict Cumberbatch, Anna Marsh, Ron Halpern, Joe Naftalin, Ollie Madden, Daniel Battsek, David Kimbangi**  
Producer: **Adam Ackland, Leah Clarke, Guy Heeley**  
Screenplay: **Nick Payne**  
Cinematographer: **Stuart Bentley**  
Editor: **Justine Wright**  
Production Designer: **Alice Normington**  
Costume Designer: **Liza Bracey**  
Sound: **John Casali**  
Original Score: **Bryce Dessner**  
Principal Cast: **Florence Pugh, Andrew Garfield**

Canadian Distributor: **Sphere**  
US Distributor: **A24**  
International Sales Agent: **STUDIOCANAL**  
US Sales Agent: **STUDIOCANAL**

Featuring gorgeously detailed performances from Oscar nominees Florence Pugh and Andrew Garfield, this inventively structured romance from director John Crowley (TIFF '19's *The Goldfinch*, TIFF '15's *Brooklyn*) and screenwriter Nick Payne explores the question of how to make the most of our time in this world.

Since their first encounter, Almut (Pugh) and Tobias (Garfield) have rarely had a dull moment. A meet-cute accident, giving birth in the unlikeliest of locations, a world-class gastronomic competition... their time together seems fated to brim with striking events.

*We Live in Time* alternates between three distinct chronologies, allowing us to experience this couple's story in a way that heightens our understanding of how memory collides with present experience and how meaning is made through accumulation.

As the film begins, Almut is given a sobering medical diagnosis and options for treatment that may or may not prove effective. What if the time spent in treatment wastes time that could be spent living life to the fullest?

Pugh is exhilarating as a young woman determined to balance personal relationships with professional ambitions, while Garfield gives a career-best performance by using Tobias' innate restraint as a way of

revealing a deep well of intense emotion. The pair ensure that this intricately told story mirrors our own blend of dizziness and gratitude in the face of time's merciless march.

JANE SCHOETTLE

**John Crowley** is a film and theatre director who was born in Cork, Ireland. His film credits include *Intermission* (03), and *Boy A* (07). Many of his films have played the Festival, including his debut feature, *Is Anybody There?* (08), *Brooklyn* (15) and *The Goldfinch* (19). *We Live in Time* (24) is his latest film.

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PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Anora

Sean Baker

USA, 2024  
English, Russian  
CANADIAN PREMIERE  
138 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Cre Film**  
Executive Producer: **Ken Meyer, Clay Pecorin, Glen Basner, Alison Cohen, Milan Popelka**  
Producer: **Sean Baker, Alex Coco, Samantha Quan**  
Screenplay: **Sean Baker**  
Cinematographer: **Drew Daniels**  
Editor: **Sean Baker**  
Production Designer: **Stephen Phelps**  
Costume Designer: **Jocelyn Pierce**  
Principal Cast: **Mikey Madison, Mark Eydelshteyn, Karren Karagulian, Yura Borisov, Vache Tovmasyan**

Canadian Distributor: **Elevation Pictures**  
US Distributor: **NEON**  
International Sales Agent: **FilmNation Entertainment**

Sean Baker's latest casts Mikey Madison as a sex worker named Anora, or Ani as she prefers to be called. She may live in a shabby Brooklyn apartment above the rattle of the subway, but every night, Ani glams up and puts on a flirty smile for the men at a local club.

Between myriad lap dances, Ani finds herself talking to Vanya, a young Russian boy who joyfully throws around his parents' money. His innocence charms Ani, and the two fall into a comfortable rhythm. She shows him a good time, and he opens the door to a charmed life she could only have imagined.

They begin a whirlwind romance that's soon threatened by Vanya's powerful family. Ani finds herself gripping onto a fantasy by her long pink fingernails.

From quick-cut montages to anxious extended sequences, *Anora* showcases a filmmaker in brilliant command of his craft, expertly upholding a tragicomical tone for a story that keeps us on the edge of our seat.

Painting the air blue with her profanity, Madison is unflinching, delivering an unforgettably charismatic performance. It's another stalwart actor-director partnership for Baker, who builds on his work in

*Tangerine*, *The Florida Project* (TIFF '17), and *Red Rocket* for his most propulsive film yet, which won the Palme d'Or at Cannes.

JANE SCHOETTLE

**Sean Baker** is a writer, director, producer, and editor. His credits include *Starlet* (12), *Tangerine* (15), the Oscar-nominated *The Florida Project* (17), and *Red Rocket* (21). *Anora* (24), which won the Palme d'Or at Cannes, is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Emilia Pérez

Jacques Audiard

FRANCE, 2024

Spanish

CANADIAN PREMIERE

132 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Why Not Productions, PAGE 114, Saint Laurent Productions, Pathé, France 2 Cinéma, Library Pictures International, Logical Content Ventures, Les Films du Fleuve, The Veterans, Vixens, Casa Kafka Pictures, Pimienta Films, CNC, la Région Ile-de-France, Ciné+, Canal+**

Executive Producer: **Pauline Lamy**

Producer: **Pascal Caucheteux, Jacques Audiard, Valérie Schermann, Anthony Vaccarello, Ardavan Safae, Jean-Pierre Dardenne, Luc Dardenne**

Screenplay: **Jacques Audiard**

Cinematographer: **Paul Guillaume**

Editor: **Juliette Welfling**

Production Designer: **Emmanuelle Duplay**

Costume Designer: **Anthony Vaccarello**

Sound: **Erwan Kerzanet**

Original Score: **Clément Ducol, Camille**

Principal Cast: **Zoe Saldana, Selena Gomez, Karla Sofía Gascón, Edgar Ramírez, Adriana Paz, Mark Ivanir, Eduardo Aladro**

Canadian Distributor: **Netflix**

US Distributor: **Netflix**

Exhilarating and piercingly resonant, the latest from director Jacques Audiard (*Rust and Bone*, TIFF '12; *The Sisters Brothers*, TIFF '18) audaciously merges pop opera, narco thriller, and gender affirmation drama.

*Emilia Pérez* is a rollercoaster in which crime, redemption, and karma collide, featuring fearless performances from Zoe Saldana, Selena Gomez, Adriana Paz, and the amazing Karla Sofía Gascón, an ensemble that collectively received the Best Actress award at the Cannes Film Festival this year.

Rita Moro Castro (Saldana) is a Mexico City defence attorney whose brilliant strategies have kept many murderous but wildly affluent clients out of jail. Her reputation draws the attention of Manitas Del Monte (Gascón), a notorious kingpin, who is secretly transitioning. He hires Rita to arrange an itinerary of under-the-table procedures with the world's best surgeons, while making a plan for the wife (Gomez) and kids he's leaving behind. The process is a success, Manitas' murder is staged, and Emilia Pérez is born. This new identity affords Emilia the ability to create a whole new life for herself, but the past begins to creep back, threatening to undo everything she and Rita have worked so hard to achieve.

Written by Audiard with Thomas Bidegain, Nicolas Livecchi, and Léa Mysius, with music by Camille Dalmais and Clément Ducol (recipients of this year's TIFF Variety Artisan Award), *Emilia Pérez* upends expectations with its ingenious plot twists, eye-popping spectacle, and inspired musical detours, which find the entire cast singing, rapping, and dancing as a means to express the dreams and anxieties of an entire culture struggling against corruption, fear, and harmful stereotypes.

JANE SCHOETTLE

**Jacques Audiard** is a French director, producer, and screenwriter. His credits include *The Beat That My Heart Skipped* (05), *A Prophet* (10), and the Festival selection *Rust and Bone* (12) and *The Sisters Brothers* (18). *Emilia Pérez* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## Can I Get A Witness?

Ann Marie Fleming

CANADA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
110 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Sleepy Dog Films**  
Executive Producer: **Haydn Wazelle, Sandra Oh, Ann Marie Fleming**  
Producer: **Ruth Vincent, Raymond Massey, Ann Marie Fleming**  
Screenplay: **Ann Marie Fleming**  
Cinematographer: **C. Kim Miles**  
Animator: **Kevin Langdale**  
Editor: **Justin Li**  
Production Designer: **Cheryl Marion**  
Costume Designer: **Angela Bright**  
Sound: **Kelly Cole, Gregorio Gomez**  
Original Score: **Brent Belke**  
Principal Cast: **Keira Jang, Joel Oulette, Sandra Oh**

Canadian Distributor: **Mongrel Media**

Eight years since her last feature, filmmaker, writer, and visual artist Ann Marie Fleming brings her gentle, introspective touch to the timely genre of environmental science fiction.

Joined by past collaborator Sandra Oh — who voiced and co-produced Fleming’s *Window Horses* (TIFF ’16) — and elements of her trademark animation, *Can I Get a Witness?* tells the story of a mother and daughter in a near-future world where huge sacrifices are made to maintain life on Earth.

With its resources swallowed by e-waste and overpopulation, the world is experiencing an environmental collapse. To manage, technological advances are shunned. Nobody has electricity and only people with exceptions are permitted cars. Most importantly, there is also a collective agreement that nobody is allowed to live beyond the age of 50.

Oh’s Ellie lives with her teenage daughter Kiah (Keira Jang), who is starting her first day as a Documenter, an important role in this new world order. She uses her artistic gifts — beautifully conjured in animations — to draw the dying ceremonies, since printing and photography have been banned.

Kiah is paired with Daniel (Joel Oulette), the young man who performs the contractual

elements of each person’s end-of-life ceremony. He matter-of-factly provides the packages a person can choose, sets them up when the time comes, and performs the burials. But his new co-worker is having a hard time handling the emotional impacts of the job.

With Fleming’s deft touch, *Can I Get a Witness?* is an inspired look at what memories — and catastrophic climate change — might look like.

KELLY BOUTSALIS

**Ann Marie Fleming** was born in Okinawa and is based in Vancouver. Her body of work includes fiction, documentary, and animation. She has directed short films including *You Take Care Now* (90) and *Blue Skies* (02), and the features *The Magical Life of Long Tack Sam* (03) and *Window Horses* (16), which screened at the Festival. *Can I Get a Witness?* (24) is her latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







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## The Piano Lesson

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### Malcolm Washington

USA, 2024  
English  
INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE  
125 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Netflix, Mundy Lane Entertainment, Escape Artists**  
Executive Producer: **Jennifer Roth, Constanza Romero, Katia Washington**  
Producer: **Denzel Washington, Todd Black**  
Screenplay: **Virgil Williams, Malcolm Washington**  
Cinematographer: **Michael Gioulakis**  
Editor: **Leslie Jones**  
Production Designer: **David J. Bomba**  
Costume Designer: **Francine Jamison-Tanchuck**  
Sound: **Harry Cohen, Ando Johnson, Ben Cook**  
Original Score: **Alexandre Desplat**  
Principal Cast: **Samuel L. Jackson, John David Washington, Danielle Deadwyler, Michael Potts, Ray Fisher, Corey Hawkins, Erykah Badu**

Canadian Distributor: **Netflix**  
US Distributor: **Netflix**

The Charles family of Pittsburgh has a precious heirloom that sits quietly in the middle of their home: a piano. In its wooden frame are carefully chiselled carvings of the faces of their great-grandparents during a time when they were enslaved.

It's 1936 and Boy Willie (John David Washington) wants to sell the piano to buy the land his ancestors were enslaved upon. His sister Berniece (Danielle Deadwyler, also at the Festival in *40 Acres*) is fiercely protective of it, even though she never plays it. Their uncle Doaker (Samuel L. Jackson) tries to keep the peace as *The Piano Lesson* finds levity in this sibling confrontation before the family is troubled by a more serious shadow that hangs over their heads. A ghost descends on their home and Boy Willie gives Berniece an ultimatum that she is too scared to face.

In his auspicious feature directorial debut, Malcolm Washington brings August Wilson's Pulitzer Prize-winning play to the screen, adapted from a 2022 Broadway revival and carrying over many of the same cast members. Deadwyler gives an exceptional performance that captures the strength it takes to pull apart your family's history. *The Piano Lesson* joins other works by Wilson that have been successfully

adapted, including *Fences* and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, stories about the African American legacy, and how we can best make use of the things that are left to us.

JANE SCHOETTLE

**Malcolm Washington** was born in Los Angeles. He has directed the short film *Benny Got Shot* (17), and produced the short films *Summer of 17* (17) and *The Dispute* (19) and the feature *North Hollywood* (21). *The Piano Lesson* is his feature directorial debut.

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PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## Feng Liu Yi Dai Caught by the Tides

Jia Zhang-Ke

CHINA, 2024  
Mandarin  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
111 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: X Stream Pictures  
Executive Producer: Jia Zhang-Ke, Tang Yan, Dong Ping, Zhu Weijie  
Producer: Casper Liang Jiayan, Shōzō Ichiyama  
Screenplay: Jia Zhang-Ke, Wan Jiahuan  
Cinematographer: Yu Lik-Wai, Eric Gautier  
Editor: Yang Chao, Lin Xudong, Matthieu Laclau  
Production Designer: Ye Qiusen, Liu Qiang, Liu Weixin, Liang Jingdong  
Sound: Zhang Yang  
Original Score: Lim Giong  
Principal Cast: Zhao Tao, Li Zhubin

Canadian Distributor: Films We Like  
US Distributor: Janus Films  
International Sales Agent: mk2 Films

A mesmerizing work that spans 20 years yet challenges the idea of time, Jia Zhang-Ke's latest masterpiece is a reimagining of his cinema, the rewriting of his career, and a lucid portrait of China's recent history. A countercurrent film that sweeps away the dust settling on the images of memory, *Caught by the Tides* is a love letter to actress Zhao Tao, the very embodiment of Jia's cinema. She has shaped it, and continues to define and inspire his films, with the beautiful power of her performances.

In the first part of *Caught by the Tides*, Jia revisits footage filmed from the century's start to today. He then unravels the thread of the relationship between Bin (Li Zhubin) and Qiaoqiao (Zhao), and follows the woman's journey in search of her lost love, from Datong to the banks of the Yangtze River, where millions face relocation and where the Three Gorges Dam is about to submerge cities, memories, and histories.

Here, Jia retraces the leitmotifs of his cinema, from social changes and modernization, to memory and nostalgia, in a captivating cinematic experiment that recontextualizes familiar scenes and outtakes from his previous films.

Capturing the emotional and historical trajectories of his characters, the film serves

as an active chronicle, leading, in the second part, into the pandemic era of 2022, where societal fractures could be seen most vividly.

As Jia interrogates the power of images and their capacity to shape truth, *Caught by the Tides* emerges as both a meditation on moviemaking history and a testament to the enduring relevance of storytelling.

GIOVANNA FULVI

**Jia Zhang-Ke** was born in Fenyang, China and studied at Beijing Film Academy. He's directed many films, including *Xiao Wu* (98) and *Still Life* (06). Among his films that have played the Festival are *Platform* (00), *Unknown Pleasures* (02), *A Touch of Sin* (13), and *Ash Is Purest White* (18). He has received many awards, including the Carrosse d'or at Cannes in 2015. *Caught by the Tides* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Bring Them Down

Christopher Andrews

IRELAND, BELGIUM 2024  
English, Irish  
WORLD PREMIERE  
105 minutes | Colour/DCP 2K

Production Company: Tailored Films, WILD SWIM FILMS, Frakas Productions  
Executive Producer: Efe Çakarel, Jason Ropell, Bobby Allen, Christopher Abbott, Barry Keoghan, Niamh Fagan, Celine Haddad  
Producer: Ivana MacKinnon, Jacob Swan Hyam, Ruth Treacy, Julianne Forde, Jean-Yves Roubin, Cassandre Warnauts  
Screenplay: Christopher Andrews  
Cinematographer: Nick Cooke  
Editor: George Cragg  
Production Designer: Fletcher Jarvis  
Costume Designer: Hannah Bury  
Sound: Gert Janssen  
Original Score: Hannah Peel  
Principal Cast: Christopher Abbott, Barry Keoghan, Colm Meaney, Nora-Jane Noone, Paul Ready

US Distributor: MUBI  
International Sales Agent: Charades

The characters in Christopher Andrews' feature directorial debut live on a knife's edge, eager to evade the dark shadows of the past and the myriad forms of ruin threatening their future. Chronicling a feud between neighbouring families in rural Ireland, *Bring Them Down* draws us to a world of desolate beauty and desperate men.

Michael (Christopher Abbott, *Sanctuary*, TIFF '22; *The Forgiven*, TIFF '21) tends his family's sheep business entirely on his own. His father (Colm Meaney) is disabled, and his mother died years ago in a car accident in which Michael was the driver. Michael has lived with guilt ever since — as well as a secret he hopes will never come to light.

Michael's ex, Caroline (Nora-Jane Noone), was also in that car accident and has the scars to prove it. She wound up marrying Gary (Paul Ready), another sheep farmer. Near the start of *Bring Them Down*, Caroline and Gary's son, Jack (Barry Keoghan, also at the Festival with *Bird*), claims that two of Michael's prize rams were found dead on his family's property. Michael's suspicions are aroused, old wounds are opened, and the two families, with neither willing to stand down, find themselves on a perilous collision course.

*Bring Them Down* bristles with twists and tension, its gorgeous pastoral landscapes

turning into sites of escalating violence. Yet the film never settles for simplistic hero/villain binaries. Instead, it brilliantly shifts perspective, revealing the fears and aspirations driving all its characters — a strategy that succeeds in no small part due to Abbott and Keoghan, who share an incredible ability to reveal for the camera what their characters are hell-bent on hiding.

ROBYN CITIZEN

Christopher Andrews is a UK-based writer-director. He has directed the short films *Fire* (15) and *Stalker* (18), and has written scripts for the upcoming films *Cavendish* and *Frankenstein in Baghdad*. *Bring Them Down* (24) is his feature debut.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## Conclave

Edward Berger

USA/UNITED KINGDOM, 2024  
English, Italian  
INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE  
120 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **FilmNation Entertainment, House Productions, Indian Paintbrush**  
Executive Producer: **Steven Rales, Alison Cohen, Milan Popelka, Ben Browning, Len Blavatnik, Danny Cohen, Edward Berger, Ralph Fiennes, Robyn Slovo, Peter Straughan**  
Producer: **Tessa Ross, Juliette Howell, Michael A. Jackman, Robert Harris, Alice Dawson**  
Screenplay: **Peter Straughan**  
Cinematographer: **Stéphane Fontaine**  
Editor: **Nick Emerson**  
Production Designer: **Suzie Davies**  
Costume Designer: **Lisy Christl**  
Sound: **Ben Baird, C.A.S., Valentino Gianni**  
Original Score: **Volker Bertelmann**  
Principal Cast: **Ralph Fiennes, Stanley Tucci, John Lithgow, Carlos Diehz, Lucian Msamati, Brian F. O'Byrne, Merab Ninidze, Sergio Castellitto, Isabella Rossellini**

Canadian Distributor: **Elevation Pictures**  
US Distributor: **Focus Features**  
International Sales Agent: **FilmNation Entertainment**

When the Pope unexpectedly dies, Cardinals from all over the world rush to the Vatican, where they immediately sequester themselves. Digital devices are stashed, doors are locked, and windows are shuttered as they prepare for the election of a new leader — one who will not only provide spiritual guidance for the world's Catholics, but set the tone for the future.

Director Edward Berger returns to the Festival, after his TIFFF '22 selection, the Oscar-winning *All Quiet on the Western Front*, with this high-stakes drama set within the stunning walls of the Vatican. Featuring scintillating performances from Oscar nominees Ralph Fiennes, Stanley Tucci, and John Lithgow, *Conclave* imagines a secret process that affects millions but is witnessed by few.

Cardinal Lawrence (Fiennes, also at this year's Festival in *The Return*) oversees the proceedings, assuming that the contest will come down to a battle between the reactionary, openly racist Cardinal Tedesco (Sergio Castellitto) and the liberal progressive Cardinal Bellini (Tucci). And matters soon turn complicated as rumours circulate, secrets emerge, and acts of sabotage are undertaken.

Adapted by Peter Straughan (*The Goldfinch*, TIFFF '19) from the Robert Harris

novel, and lensed by cinematographer Stéphane Fontaine (*Revoir Paris*, TIFFF '23), the film captures the potent gravity of this whole competition with one arresting composition after another.

*Conclave* unfolds over a tension-riddled 72 hours, depicting a gripping confrontation between tradition, politics, and faith. Featuring brilliant supporting performances — most notably from Isabella Rossellini as the silent yet formidable Sister Agnes — it focuses on the all-too-human aspects of a hallowed procedure, one that speculates on the role of religion in a rapidly changing world.

JANE SCHOETTLE

**Edward Berger** was born in Wolfsburg, Germany. His directorial credits include the features *Jack* (14) and *All My Loving* (19), as well as the television series *Deutschland 83* (15) and *Patrick Melrose* (18). His last film, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (22), premiered at the Festival. *Conclave* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Bergers Shepherds

Sophie Deraspe

CANADA/FRANCE, 2024  
French  
WORLD PREMIERE  
113 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **micro\_scope**,  
**Avenue B Productions**  
Producer: **Kim McCraw**, **Luc Déry**, **Élaine Hébert**,  
**Caroline Bonmarchand**, **Xenia Sulyma**  
Screenplay: **Sophie Deraspe**, **Mathyas Lefebure**  
Cinematographer: **Vincent Gonneville**  
Editor: **Stéphane Lafleur**  
Production Designer: **André-Line Beauparlant**  
Costume Designer: **Éric Poirier**  
Sound: **Stephen De Oliveira**, **Olivier Calvert**, **Hans Laitres**  
Original Score: **Philippe Braut**  
Principal Cast: **Félix-Antoine Duval**, **Solène Rigot**

Canadian Distributor: **Maison 4:3**  
International Sales Agent: **Pyramide International**

Following a medical wake-up call, Montréal copywriter Mathyas Lefebure (Félix-Antoine Duval) abandons his life in Canada to reinvent himself as a sheep herder in the French Alps. After a rough start, he's joined by Élise (Solène Rigot), a civil servant tempted by his stories of pastoral life, and together they commit to a summer on the mountainside. Just the two of them. And one border collie. And 800 sheep.

After such films as *Missing Victor Pellerin*, *Vital Signs*, and *Antigone* (Best Canadian Feature, TIFF '19), *Shepherds* feels like a levelling up in scope and complexity for director and co-writer Sophie Deraspe. It's a naturalistic, beautiful adaptation of the real-life Lefebure's 2006 book, clear-eyed about the messy and often brutal realities of a shepherding life while also allowing us to see the wondrous spectacle that draws people to work on the land.

Duval, most recently seen in Bruce LaBruce's *Saint-Narcisse*, embodies Lefebure's questing nature, working earnestly to gain the respect of his fellow *bergers* while also trying to find his own style. Rigot has her own quest as Élise, whose impulsive decision to join Mathyas proves to be as life-changing as it is fulfilling.

And while violence and death are an essential part of the natural world, Deraspe's

depictions of such things are respectful and even compassionate... though the closing disclaimer that no animals were harmed still comes as a relief.

NORM WILNER

**Sophie Deraspe** was born in Rivière-du-Loup, Quebec. She has directed the feature films *Missing Victor Pellerin* (06), *Vital Signs* (09), *The Wolves* (15), and *Antigone* (19), which played the Festival and was named Best Canadian Feature. She also directed the documentary *The Anima Profile* (15). *Shepherds* (24) is her latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## Without Blood

### Angelina Jolie

USA/ITALY, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
91 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: Fremantle North America, The Apartment, Jolie Productions, Fremantle, De Maio Entertainment  
Executive Producer: Roberto Malerba, Michael Vieira, Elena Recchia  
Producer: Angelina Jolie, Lorenzo Mieli, Lorenzo De Maio, Simone Gattoni  
Screenplay: Angelina Jolie, Alessandro Baricco  
Cinematographer: Seamus McGarvey  
Editor: Xavier Box, Joel Cox  
Production Designer: Ursula Patzak  
Sound: Angelo Bonanni  
Original Score: Rutger Hoedemaekers  
Principal Cast: Salma Hayek Pinault, Demián Bichir, Juan Minujin

As a director, Angelina Jolie has made a decisive turn from her glamorous on-screen image, crafting thoughtful dramas that illuminate the horrors war visits on individuals. *In the Land of Blood and Honey* (2011) and *First They Killed My Father* (TIFF '17) sharpen that focus further to war's impact on women and girls in Bosnia and Cambodia, respectively. *Without Blood* sees Jolie returning to that neglected theme in the cinema of war. This time she directs another global screen icon, Salma Hayek Pinault.

In a frontier landscape at the beginning of the 20th century, gunmen descend on a remote farmhouse, determined to exact revenge. Their target, a doctor — alone with his son and daughter — tries desperately to protect his children. Inevitably, bullets fly.

Years later, Nina (Hayek Pinault) engages Tito (Demián Bichir), a lottery seller, in what seems like casual conversation at his kiosk. But the encounter is anything but chance. It soon dawns on him. "I know who you are," Tito says, "and I know why you've come." As their conversation continues, it becomes clear that revenge casts a long shadow, and takes many forms.

Adapting Alessandro Baricco's novel of the same name, Jolie maintains the book's parable quality, but with crackling precision,

especially in Hayek Pinault and Bichir's exchanges — between a woman who witnessed her family suffer shocking violence and the man who inflicted it. Shot at Rome's fabled Cinecittà studios, this is an intimate chamber piece about how war seeps inside each person it touches long after the weapons fall silent.

CAMERON BAILEY

Angelina Jolie is an Academy Award-winning actor, writer, producer, director, and humanitarian who was born in Los Angeles. Her directorial credits include *In the Land of Blood and Honey* (11), *Unbroken* (14), and the Festival selection *First They Killed My Father* (17). *Without Blood* (24) is her latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## K-Pops

### Anderson .Paak

USA, 2024  
 ENGLISH, KOREAN  
 WORLD PREMIERE  
 109 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Stampede Ventures**  
 Executive Producer: **Michael Tadross, Khaila Amazan, Eric Tu, Kevin Nishimura, Anna Savage, Jeffery Azoff, Gideon Yu, Chris Bosco**  
 Producer: **Greg Silverman, Anderson .Paak, Jon Berg, Jaeson Ma, Jonnie "Dumbfoundead" Park**  
 Screenplay: **Anderson .Paak, Khaila Amazan**  
 Cinematographer: **Edward J. Pei**  
 Editor: **Ryan Folsey, Joe Frataccia**  
 Production Designer: **Bradley Rubin**  
 Costume Designer: **Bao Tranchi**  
 Sound: **Mike Guarino**  
 Original Score: **Emily Bear**  
 Principal Cast: **Anderson .Paak, Soul Rasheed, Jee Young Han, Jonnie "Dumbfoundead" Park, Yvette Nicole Brown**

US Sales Agent: **WME Independent, Stampede Ventures**

Anderson .Paak is best known for his brilliant music career, but this first feature film opens up a vibrant new avenue for him as an artist. In *K-Pops*, .Paak directs and acts opposite his real-life son Soul Rasheed for a family project inspired by his own personal history and parental connection to Korea.

BJ (.Paak) is a washed-up drummer with a love for music that's both naive and obsessive. When his friend pushes him to travel to South Korea and work on a pop idol show, he meets Tae Young (Rasheed), a young performer in competition to be the nation's next music star. Soon, BJ is introduced to Tae Young's mother, Yeji (Jee Young Han), a woman he had a brief relationship with more than a decade ago. Tae Young is the son he never knew existed.

BJ makes up for lost time, showing a sincere interest in getting to know Tae Young while helping his troupe bring something special to their music and choreography. But in the background, BJ's desire for stardom persists, tempting him to choose between fame or family once again.

*K-Pops* thrives on the charisma of .Paak and Rasheed as the two become a dynamic duo, riffing off each other in a story that captures the layered identities of their real

family. It's a charming coming-of-age comedy where the parent has as much growing up to do as the child.

JANE SCHOETTLE

**Anderson .Paak** was born in Oxnard, California. He's one half of the R&B duo Silk Sonic, and is a Grammy Award-winning musician, songwriter, producer, and director. In 2022 he was named BET's Video Director of the Year. *K-Pops* (24) is his feature debut.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## Sharp Corner

### Jason Buxton

CANADA/IRELAND, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
110 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Alcina Pictures, Shut Up & Colour Pictures, Kobalt Films, Workhorse Pictures  
Executive Producer: Cameron MacLaren, Kristen Figeroid, Marc Schaberg, Noah Segal, Adrian Love, Laurie May, Peter Graham, Stephen Hays, Donald Johnston, Sheila Johnston, Robert Munroe  
Producer: Paul Barkin, Marc Tetreault, Jason Levangie, Jason Buxton, Susan Mullen  
Screenplay: Jason Buxton  
Cinematographer: Guy Godfree  
Editor: Jorge Weisz  
Production Designer: Jennifer Stewart  
Costume Designer: Sarah Haydon Roy, Angela Bateman  
Sound: Zan Rosborough, Lou Solakofski, Colm Mullally  
Original Score: Stephen McKeon  
Principal Cast: Ben Foster, Cobie Smulders, Gavin Drea, William Kosovic

Canadian Distributor: Elevation Pictures  
International Sales Agent: NEON  
US Sales Agent: Range Media Partners

In his long-awaited second feature, Nova Scotia filmmaker Jason Buxton taps into the same vein of perverse fixation defined by Atom Egoyan with *The Adjuster* (TIFF '91) and *Exotica* (TIFF '94), and David Cronenberg with *Crash*, in the 1990s. But Buxton, whose *Blackbird* (TIFF '12) was a devastating portrait of a teenager reaching his breaking point, has some very different ideas of what that fixation looks like.

On the night they move from the city into a sprawling suburban home, parents Josh (Ben Foster, *Finestkind*, TIFF '23) and Rachel (Cobie Smulders, *High School*, TIFF '22) are jolted by a car crashing into the tree on their front lawn, killing the driver and injuring his passengers. And once Josh discovers such accidents are a regular occurrence due to the design of the road, he becomes obsessed with being ready to save the next victims... to the exclusion of everything else.

Foster holds us in a state of queasy apprehension as Josh's impulsive, sanctimonious dedication to learning CPR and policing the street start to form a pattern of privileged overconfidence — or maybe it's deluded competence. Foster has played tightly wound characters before, but Buxton gives him a new, unsettling gear.

Smulders brings a strength and sensibility to Rachel, along with an understated exasperation that tells us whatever's wrong with Josh has been wrong for a very long time. Is he genuinely trying to be a good citizen, or is something darker motivating him? As *Sharp Corner* creeps towards its unnerving climax, that question seems less and less important. The real question is: What happens next?

NORM WILNER

Jason Buxton was born in England and raised in Nova Scotia. He studied film at Simon Fraser University, and holds a BFA from Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. His debut feature *Blackbird* (12) premiered at the Festival, where it won Best Canadian First Feature. *Sharp Corner* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Young Werther

José Avelino Gilles Corbett Lourenço

CANADA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
101 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Wildling Pictures**  
Executive Producer: **Mason Novick, Simon Williams, Joe Simpson, Andy Wang, Matthew Chausse, Douglas Booth, Alison Pill, David Garrett, David Mephram**  
Producer: **Matt Code**  
Screenplay: **José Avelino Gilles Corbett Lourenço**  
Cinematographer: **Nick Haight**  
Editor: **Sandy Pereira**  
Production Designer: **Ciara Vernon**  
Costume Designer: **Courtney Mitchell**  
Sound: **Herwig Gayer**  
Original Score: **Owen Pallett**  
Principal Cast: **Douglas Booth, Alison Pill, Iris Apatow, Amrit Kaur, Jaouhar Ben Ayed, Patrick J. Adams**

Canadian Distributor: **LevelFILM**  
International Sales Agent: **Mister Smith Entertainment**  
US Sales Agent: **Creative Artists Agency (CAA)**

Wit and unrequited love are at the core of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's 18th-century novella *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, and those elements are updated and adapted beautifully in this snappy, humorous reimagining, set in modern-day Toronto.

Werther, played by Douglas Booth (*Shoshana*, TIFFF '23), is making a brief pit stop to retrieve a statue before departing on a European adventure with his best friend, but a chance encounter with Charlotte (Alison Pill, *All My Puny Sorrows*, TIFFF '21), puts those plans on hold until he can win her over. He falls more in love with her as they spend time together. She's introverted, loves to read, and has been the main caretaker of her siblings since the deaths of their parents. A small snag to their union, however, is that Charlotte is engaged to successful lawyer Albert (Patrick J. Adams, *The Swearing Jar*, TIFFF '22).

Hurdles continue to pile up against Werther, not the least of which is that Albert is so darn likeable to everyone, including our protagonist. But while he suffers in comically escalating situations in his dogged pursuit of romance, the object of his affection might be having misgivings about her upcoming nuptials. Charlotte, supported by friends played by Amrit Kaur

(*The Queen of My Dreams*, TIFFF '23) and Iris Apatow (*Funny People*), finds herself drawn to the fun that Werther has brought into her life. But will she be swayed?

With delightful performances from Booth, Pill, and the rest of the cast, director José Avelino Gilles Corbett Lourenço's feature debut succeeds in the difficult task of preserving the pertinence of Goethe's dark and philosophical work in a bright and fun romantic comedy for a modern audience.

KELLY BOUTSALIS

José Avelino Gilles Corbett Lourenço is a Toronto-based writer and filmmaker. He has directed short films including *Hollow Bones* (12) and *Romance Language* (19). *Young Werther* (19) is his feature debut.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Sketch

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Seth Worley

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
92 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Morphan Time, LLC**  
Producer: **Steve Taylor, Tony Hale, Dusty Brown**  
Screenplay: **Seth Worley**  
Cinematographer: **Megan Stacey**  
Original Score: **Cody Fry**  
Principal Cast: **Tony Hale, D'Arcy Carden, Bianca Belle, Kue Lawrence, Kalon Cox**

US Sales Agent: **United Talent Agency (UTA)**

Sometimes we need to purge our darkest dreams to reach the light. In writer-director Seth Worley's big-hearted, audaciously entertaining feature debut, a young girl's active imagination and unprocessed grief collide, unleashing a horde of goofy, made-up monsters on an unsuspecting neighbourhood. But if a child's rich inner world can manifest such pandemonium, maybe that same inner world possesses the power to quash it.

Since the death of their beloved matriarch, each member of the Wyatt family has sought their own coping mechanisms. Determined to keep painful memories at bay, dad Taylor (Tony Hale) tries to remain upbeat and open to change. He puts the family house on the market, hoping that new surroundings will help his kids move forward.

Son Jack (Kue Lawrence), however, secretly harbours fantasies of resurrecting his mom, while daughter Amber (Bianca Belle) fills a private sketchbook with bizarre, twisted imagery. When that sketchbook is accidentally plunged into a magical pond, its creatures come to life, ready to wreak havoc, leaving plumes of crayon dust in their wake.

Fighting off giant eyeballs with spider legs will require courage and some creative thinking, but the real solution to quelling

all this chaos lies in Amber's mind. Her drawings got them into this mess — and her drawings will have to get them out.

Reminiscent of family classics like *Gremlins*, *Jumanji*, and *The Goonies*, *Sketch* combines an eye-popping rollercoaster ride with a tender understanding of loss, the resources required to heal, and just how deeply children feel about a world that changes around them.

JANE SCHOETTLE

**Seth Worley** is a writer, director, and visual effects artist. He has written and directed short films including *Real Gone* (15) and *Go Bag* (16), as well as numerous commercials. *Sketch* (24) is his feature debut.

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PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## Vermiglio

Maura Delpero

ITALY/FRANCE/BELGIUM, 2024  
Italian  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
118 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Cinedora, Charades Productions,  
Versus Production

Producer: Francesca Andreoli, Carole Baraton,  
Tatjana Kozar

Screenplay: Maura Delpero

Cinematographer: Mikhail Krichman

Principal Cast: Tommaso Ragno, Giuseppe de Domenico,  
Roberta Rovelli, Martina Scrinzi

International Sales Agent: Charades

Told in four chapters, each set in a different season, Maura Delpero's stunningly beautiful and powerful new film takes us into the world of a remote Italian mountain village. It is nearing the end of the Second World War, something that has not really touched this place at all — until now.

A young Sicilian soldier named Pietro has carried his injured comrade Attilio all the way back to his mountain home, much of the journey with his passenger on his back. Hailed as a hero, Pietro is furnished with the best the village can provide.

As a rare newcomer (and a Sicilian, so an exotic stranger), Pietro is much gossiped about but keeps to himself. He catches the eye of Lucia (Martina Scrinzi), the eldest daughter of the stern village schoolteacher (Tommaso Ragno), and soon the two are gently flirting and falling in love.

This seemingly simple pairing of two young hearts sets off a sweeping series of events that shakes the village and a small town in Sicily, uncapping age-old misogyny, intolerance, and narrowness with tragic results.

*Vermiglio* is deeply moving from a narrative standpoint, but also a treat for the eye, as every scene is composed as a sonnet, beautifully photographed and filled with emotion as Delpero understands stillness like few

other contemporary directors. Ultimately, it's a story about women trapped in ancient traditional roles, who must bear the burden of men's mistakes with no recourse of their own.

JANE SCHOETTLE

Maura Delpero was born in Bolzano, Italy, and studied literature and dramaturgy in Bologna, Paris, and Buenos Aires. She has directed the films *Nadea e Sveta* (12) and *Maternal* (19). *Vermiglio* (24) is her latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Pigen med nålen The Girl with the Needle

Magnus von Horn

DENMARK/POLAND/SWEDEN, 2024

Danish

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

115 minutes | Black & White/DCP 4K

Production Company: Nordisk Film Production A/S  
Executive Producer: Madeleine Ekman, Kristina Börjeson, Calle Marthin, Lone Scherfig, Katrine Vogelsang, Henrik Zein  
Producer: Malene Blenkov, Mariusz Wlodarski  
Screenplay: Magnus von Horn, Line Langebek Knudsen  
Cinematographer: Michal Dymek  
Editor: Agnieszka Glińska  
Production Designer: Jagna Dobesz  
Costume Designer: Małgorzata Fudala  
Sound: Oskar Skriver  
Original Score: Frederikke Hoffmeier  
Principal Cast: Victoria Carmen Sonne, Trine Dyrholm

US Distributor: MUBI

International Sales Agent: The Match Factory

Though loosely based on the true story of one of Denmark's most infamous killers, director Magnus von Horn's audacious third feature is a far cry from conventional tales of evil-doers preying on the vulnerable. Neither its setting of post-World War I Copenhagen nor its stark black-and-white cinematography provide any comfortable sense of remove. Instead, *The Girl with the Needle* is discomfitingly resonant as a story about the choices — and dangers — so often faced by women at society's fringes.

Victoria Carmen Sonne stars as Karoline, a young seamstress trying to survive on her own since her husband was declared missing in action. Fortune smiles upon her when she develops a connection with Jørgen (Joachim Fjølstrup), the owner of the factory where she works. Yet a cascade of misfortunes soon reminds her of how little protection she actually enjoys. Her woes set her on the path toward Dagmar (Trine Dyrholm), a shop owner who offers a particular service to women in need. The dynamic they form will have major repercussions for them both.

For all its squalor and horror, there's great vitality within the film, too. With von Horn demonstrating the same boldness that energized his second feature, *Sweat*, the film blends hard-nosed naturalism and a more

expressionistic mode pitched somewhere between fairy tale and gothic nightmare. While the nods to Fritz Lang, Carl Theodor Dreyer, and Tod Browning highlight his deft deployment of an earlier era's cinematic vocabulary, Sonne and Dyrholm's fierce performances bring this darkly hued parable into the now.

JASON ANDERSON

Magnus von Horn was born in Gothenburg, Sweden, and is based in Poland. He graduated from the Polish National Film School, where he teaches directing. He has directed several short films, including *Echo* (10) and *Without Snow* (11), as well as the features *The Here After* (15) and the Festival selection *Sweat* (20). *The Girl with the Needle* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## All We Imagine as Light

Payal Kapadia

FRANCE/INDIA/NETHERLANDS/  
LUXEMBOURG, 2024  
Malayalam, Hindi  
CANADIAN PREMIERE  
118 minutes | Colour

Production Company: **Petit Chaos**  
Executive Producer: **Harshit Agarwal, K C Pranav Raj, Neil Chowdhury**  
Producer: **Thomas Hakim, Julien Graff**  
Screenplay: **Payal Kapadia**  
Cinematographer: **Ranabir Das**  
Editor: **Clément Pinteaux**  
Production Designer: **Piyusha Chalke, Yashasvi Sabharwal, Shamim Khan**  
Costume Designer: **Maxima Basu**  
Sound: **Benjamin Silvestre, Olivier Voisin, Romain Ozanne**  
Original Score: **Dhritiman Das**  
Principal Cast: **Kani Kusruti, Divya Prabha, Chhaya Kadam, Hridhu Haroon**

Canadian Distributor: **Films We Like**  
US Distributor: **Sideshow and Janus Films**  
International Sales Agent: **Luxbox**

Following her celebrated documentary *A Night of Knowing Nothing* (TIFF '21), writer-director Payal Kapadia's fiction feature debut follows two women at turning points. Moving from urban bustle to seaside idyll, *All We Imagine as Light* locates dreamlike reverie in emotional shifts and everyday experiences.

Prabha (Kani Kusruti) and Anu (Divya Prabha) are roommates and nurses at a Mumbai hospital. Prabha is married, but her husband went abroad to work many years ago. Now drifting into middle age, she focuses on her job. Anu, by contrast, is young and full of dreams for her future, which she hopes will include the handsome Muslim boy she's secretly seeing. Prabha initially regards the potentially scandalous affair as an annoyance, but she comes to sympathize with Anu's passion, perhaps because she, too, feels the tug of frustrated ardour, thanks to the attentions of a poetry-writing doctor.

When Prabha's friend Parvaty (Chhaya Kadam) is evicted from her home by heartless developers, she decides to return to the coastal village of her youth. Prabha and Anu tag along for a holiday. Far from the city's perpetual clamour, the women's feelings and sense of life's possibilities are given free rein.

Working again with cinematographer Ranabir Das, Kapadia crafts exquisite beauty from images as simple as people wending through a crowded marketplace or women retrieving laundry from a rooftop clothesline. Yet for all the rapturous visuals, nothing in this heartfelt film is more striking than seeing Prabha and Anu forging their connection. Their sisterhood emerges slowly and is all the more moving for its measured pace.

ROBYN CITIZEN

**Payal Kapadia** is a Mumbai-based filmmaker and artist. She studied directing at the Film and Television Institute of India. She's the director of the shorts *Afternoon Clouds* (17) and *And What Is the Summer Saying* (18), and the feature *A Night of Knowing Nothing* (21), which won the Amplify Voices Award when it screened at the Festival. *All We Imagine as Light* (24) is her latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## Quislings siste dager Quisling – The Final Days

Erik Poppe

NORWAY, 2024  
Norwegian, Russian  
INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE  
146 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: Paradox Pictures Inc., SF Studios,  
Film i Väst, TV 2 Norway  
Executive Producer: Tim King, Yaba Holst  
Producer: Stein B. Kvae, Finn Gjerdrum  
Screenplay: Anna Bache- Wiig, Siv Rajendram Eliassen  
Cinematographer: Jonas Alarik  
Editor: Einar Egeland  
Production Designer: Pia Wallin  
Costume Designer: Karen F. Gram  
Sound: Hans Møller  
Original Score: Jonas Colstrup  
Principal Cast: Gard Bjørnstjerne Eidsvold,  
Anders Danielsen Lie, Lisa Carlehed, Lisa Loven Kongsli

International Sales Agent: REinvent Studios

Such was the infamy that Vidkun Quisling earned as the head of Norway's government during its occupation by Nazi Germany, his surname became a synonym for those who commit the most reprehensible forms of treasonous collaboration. Yet one reason Erik Poppe's feature is so compelling is the director's determination to dig more deeply into his circumstances and motivations. The result presents Quisling as not only a figure of great complexity, but also one with a discomfiting abundance of contemporary counterparts.

Questions of justice and accountability permeate this bracing account of events following Norway's liberation in 1945. With Quisling awaiting trial, a pastor named Peder Olsen begins a series of meetings that officials hope will extract a measure of contrition from the defiant politician. This man of faith, played by Anders Danielsen Lie — best known for his work with Joachim Trier on films such as *The Worst Person in the World* (TIFF '21) — will be shaken by his task. Played by Gard Bjørnstjerne Eidsvold as a roiling cauldron of outrage and self-justification, Quisling maintains his bluster while concealing his fears about his fate.

Though these characters' exchanges provide the film with great force, Lie and Bjørnstjerne Eidsvold are well supported

by castmates such as Lisa Carlehed as the traitor's Ukrainian wife, Maria, whose devotion reflects the reverence that the anti-Bolshevist Quisling inspired in her country for his relief work during the Holodomor. Poppe's bold directorial choices further ensure that this ostensibly historical film couldn't feel more urgent.

JASON ANDERSON

**Erik Poppe** is a Norwegian writer, director, and former cinematographer. His credits include *A Thousand Times Good Night* (13), *The King's Choice* (16), and *Utøya 22 July* (18). *Quisling - The Final Days* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Went Up the Hill

Samuel Van Grinsven

NEW ZEALAND/AUSTRALIA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
100 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Causeway Films, Pop Film**  
Executive Producer: **Vicky Krieps, Dacre Montgomery, Stephen Kelliher, Sophie Green, Josh Pomeranz, Jonathan Hairman, Christian Debney, Phil Hunt, Compton Ross, Daniel Negret, Phil Bremner, Jill Macnab, Robert Mackenzie, Monica Anderson**  
Producer: **Vicky Pope, Samantha Jennings, Kristina Ceyton**  
Screenplay: **Samuel Van Grinsven, Jory Anast**  
Cinematographer: **Tyson Perkins**  
Editor: **Dany Cooper**  
Production Designer: **Sherree Philips**  
Costume Designer: **Kirsty Cameron**  
Sound: **Robert Mackenzie**  
Original Score: **Hanan Townshend**  
Principal Cast: **Vicky Krieps, Dacre Montgomery, Sarah Peirse**

International Sales Agent: **Bankside Films**  
US Sales Agent: **Creative Artists Agency (CAA), Bankside Films**

Jack (Dacre Montgomery, *Stranger Things*) travels to a remote region of New Zealand to attend the wake of his estranged mother Elizabeth, a troubled architect who abandoned him as a child. Jack claims he was invited to the funeral by his mother's widow, Jill (Vicky Krieps, TIFF 2023's *The Dead Don't Hurt*), who has no recollection of contacting him.

Out of a sense of obligation to her late wife, Jill invites Jack to stay at their house until the funeral, intrigued, as he is, for them to learn more about each other. As Jack grapples with his complex emotions about his mother and the boyfriend he has left behind, his encounters with Jill begin as terse and sometimes tense affairs. Their lives are soon upended further when Elizabeth's spectral presence makes itself known, inhabiting each of their bodies in turn but leaving no memories of what was said — or done — during the possessions.

Elizabeth's spirit causes chaos, confusion, and fractures for Jack and Jill. As they struggle to make sense of her intentions, her interventions begin to take ever darker and more sinister turns.

Director Samuel Van Grinsven crafts a brooding and deeply atmospheric story that explores the legacy of loss, grief, and abuse

through tremendous performances from its two leads, set amid New Zealand's breathtaking South Island. *Went Up The Hill* is that exciting gem: a beautiful, intimate, and original ghost story.

JASON RYLE

**Samuel Van Grinsven** is an Aotearoa filmmaker now based in Sydney. He has directed the short film *Loved* (17) and the feature *Sequin in a Blue Room* (19). *Went Up the Hill* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Miséricorde Misericordia

Alain Guiraudie

FRANCE/SPAIN/PORTUGAL, 2024

French

CANADIAN PREMIERE

103 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: CG Cinema, Scala Films, Andergraun Films, Rosa Filmes, Arte France Cinéma  
Arte France Cinéma, Andergraun Films, Rosa Filmes  
Producer: Charles Gillibert  
Screenplay: Alain Guiraudie  
Cinematographer: Claire Mathon  
Editor: Jean-Christophe Hym  
Production Designer: Emmanuelle Duplay  
Costume Designer: Khadija Zeggai  
Sound: Vasco Pedroso, Jordi Ribas, Branko Neskov  
Original Score: Marc Verdaguer  
Principal Cast: Félix Kysyl, Catherine Frot, Jean-Baptiste Durand, Jacques Develay, David Ayala

Canadian Distributor: Films We Like  
US Distributor: Sideshow  
International Sales Agent: Les Films du Losange

An immediate and uncanny paranoia attends the return of Jérémie (a suitably inscrutable Félix Kysyl) to his rural hometown of Saint-Martial in southwestern France. The visit is precipitated by the death of his former boss, the town's master baker, with whom he was presumably in love. As with other films by the acclaimed French writer-director Alain Guiraudie (*Stranger by the Lake*, TIFF '13), presumably remains the operative term, guiding a twisted tale in which pervasive desire is often commingled with surprise, humour, uncertainty, and foreboding.

Appealing yet mysterious, Jérémie's sensual presence is promptly and progressively destabilizing to all around him, as he prolongs his stay with the widow Martine (Catherine Frot), who also happens to be the mother of his childhood friend, the brutish Vincent (filmmaker and actor Jean-Baptiste Durand). The duo's interactions are terse and laden with resentment, but clearly erotically charged. When a tussle goes awry, *Misericordia* swerves into noir territory with absurdist undertones, and an ensuing investigation spirals around a loner neighbour, ineffectual gendarmes, and a nosy country priest — seemingly the only inhabitants in this dewy, mountainous village perpetually bathed in twilight.

With a thrilling mix of the macabre and his signature brand of erotic pastoral mysticism — alongside shades of Hitchcock meets Pasolini — Guiraudie usurps the traditional morality tale by focusing instead on the mysteries of desire. Holding a suggestive charge throughout, *Misericordia*'s subtly shifting tones are conveyed in a Courbet-hued, autumnal realism masterfully captured by director of photography Claire Mathon, instilling elegance in its wayward yearning.

ANDRÉA PICARD

Alain Guiraudie was born in Villefranche-de-Rouergue, France. He has written and directed the films *That Old Dream That Moves* (01), *No Rest for the Brave* (03), *Time Has Come* (05), *The King of Escape* (09), and the Festival selection *Stranger by the Lake* (13). *Misericordia* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Piece by Piece

Morgan Neville

USA, 2024

English

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

93 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: i am OTHER, Tremolo Productions  
Executive Producer: David Lawrence, Shani Saxon, Jill Wilfert, Keith Malone, Joshua R. Wexler, Sanjee K. Gupta, James De Julio, Lesley Worton  
Producer: Pharrell Williams, Mimi Valdés, Morgan Neville, Caitrin Rogers  
Screenplay: Morgan Neville, Jason Zeldes, Oscar Vasquez, Aaron Wickenden  
Animator: Tongal, Pure Imagination Studios, Zebu Animation Studios  
Editor: Jason Zeldes, Oscar Vasquez, Aaron Wickenden  
Sound: Dennis Hamlin, Pete Horner, Al Nelson  
Original Score: Michael Andrews  
With: Pharrell Williams, Jay-Z, Missy Elliott, Timbaland, Gwen Stefani, Justin Timberlake, Busta Rhymes, Snoop Dogg, N.O.R.E., Pusha T., Daft Punk, Kendrick Lamar

Canadian Distributor: Universal Films Canada

US Distributor: Focus Features

Charting Pharrell Williams' vibrant career with a conventional documentary would have never been satisfying enough. Fittingly, *Piece by Piece* tells his story entirely with LEGO, for a bright, bouncy, and energetic treatment that captures the multi-hyphenate musician's unyielding creative spirit.

The film takes us through Pharrell's spirited upbringing in Virginia, his first job at a record label, the start of production duo, the Neptunes, with Chad Hugo, the formation of the band N.E.R.D., and beyond.

When nobody wants to give him a shot as a singer and performer, Pharrell pivots to producing, giving him new fuel that blasts him into orbit, working with artists like Gwen Stefani, Jay-Z, and Snoop Dogg, all also presented in LEGO form and who talk about Pharrell's unique vision and golden touch. But, as the film also shows, being in the stratosphere doesn't come without a cost.

With *Piece by Piece*, Oscar-winning documentarian Morgan Neville adds another feather to an already prolific directing career. Here, he represents Pharrell's signature beats as little LEGO sculptures. They pop and come to life as his songs develop before exploding into hits familiar as Pharrell tracks as well as some not necessarily attributed to him. Brimming with

charm and visual panache, *Piece by Piece* is a sensory delight.

CAMERON BAILEY

**Morgan Neville** is a Los Angeles-based producer and documentary filmmaker. His credits include the Oscar winner *20 Feet From Stardom* (13), *The Music of Strangers: Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble* (15), which played the Festival, *Best of Enemies: Buckley vs. Vidal* (15), *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* (18), and *Roadrunner: A Film About Anthony Bourdain* (21). *Piece by Piece* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## 대도시의 사랑법 Love In The Big City

E.oni

SOUTH KOREA, 2024  
Korean  
WORLD PREMIERE  
118 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: SHOWBOX, Tale Farming, Plus M Entertainment  
Executive Producer: Hong Jeongin, Cho Il Hyung  
Screenplay: Nadeul Kim  
Cinematographer: Hyungju Kim  
Editor: Sun Min Kim, Hyun Mee Lee  
Production Designer: Nae Kyung Lee  
Costume Designer: Jung Won Kim  
Sound: Ji Young Jeong  
Original Score: Primary  
Principal Cast: Kim Go-eun, Steve Sanghyun Noh

International Sales Agent: Plus M Entertainment

Jae-hee (Kim Go-eun) was never like the others and, in a collective, uniform culture like South Korea's, embracing her individuality has triggered endless gossip. One day, she meets Heung-soo (Steve Sanghyun Noh), another misfit lost in the big city. But unlike Jae-hee, Heung-soo hopes to hide his true identity. When Jae-hee finds out his secret by chance, the two form an unlikely relationship. Misunderstood by many, the young adults navigate growing pains in search of love and self in Seoul.

Based on the novel of the same name by Park Sang-young — longlisted for the International Booker Prize in 2022 — the cinematic version by filmmaker E.oni is easily approachable and speaks to a wide audience, exploring more than just the hardships Heung-soo faces as a young, gay man. Watching Jae-hee and Heung-soo is like looking at snippets of our own lives, reflecting the turbulence and chaos of youth regardless of their backgrounds.

E.oni is a rare female commercial filmmaker from the region. Her highly received debut feature *...ing* (03) was seen as a high-water mark during the heyday of Korean romance cinema. Since then, she has explored various genres including suspense, crime, and comedy. *Love In The Big City* takes her back

to her romance roots. Kim Go-eun — who recently won the best actress Baeksang Award for the box-office hit *Exhuma* — shines in the role of Jae-hee.

GIOVANNA FULVI

E.oni is a Korean filmmaker who studied directing at the Korea National University of Arts in Seoul. She has directed the films *...ing* (03), *Love Exposure* (07), *Missing Woman* (16), and *The Accidental Detective 2: In Action* (18). *Love In The Big City* (24) is her latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Os Enforcados Carnival is Over

Fernando Coimbra

BRAZIL/PORTUGAL, 2024  
Portuguese  
WORLD PREMIERE  
123 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: Gullane, Fado Filmes, Globo Filmes, Telecine, Pavuna Pictures, TC Filmes, Playtime, Paris Filmes

Executive Producer: Rui Pires, Daniela Antonelli Aun, Gabriela Tocchio, Ana Saito, Pablo Torrecillas, João Fonseca, Fernando Fraiha, Rodrigo Castellar, José Alvarenga Júnior, Leandra Leal, Marcio Fraccaroli, Veronica Stumpf

Producer: Caio Gullane, Fabiano Gullane, André Novis, Fernando Coimbra, Luís Galvão Teles, Gonçalo Galvão Teles

Screenplay: Fernando Coimbra

Cinematographer: Júnior Malta, ABC

Editor: Karen Harley, EDT

Production Designer: Caio Costa, Rafael Torah

Costume Designer: Valeria Stefani

Sound: Olivier Blanc, Ricardo Cutz, Branko Neskov, c.a.s.

Original Score: Thiago França

Principal Cast: Leandra Leal, Irandhir Santos, Pêpê Rapazote

International Sales Agent: Playtime

This sleek, dark, and funny neo-noir film marks the Festival return of Brazilian writer-director Fernando Coimbra (*A Wolf at the Door*, TIFF '13).

Regina (Leandra Leal) and Valerio (Irandhir Santos) are happy in their relationship and lead a relaxed life in their luxury villa in the hills of contemporary Rio de Janeiro. But since the death of Valerio's father, the city's biggest mafioso, they've been looking for a way out of the criminal hornet's nest that is Valerio's family business.

But they also have considerable expenses and debts to contend with. Valerio's uncle Linduarte (Pêpê Rapazote) — who has been running the operation and taking its risks — insists that Valerio take over the business. One serendipitous night, the two come up with a solution to their problem: kill the uncle and sell the business. But in doing so, they fall deeper into the violence they wanted to escape.

For its ambitious dive into the depths of the underworld, the beating heart of the film is the relationship between Regina and Valerio. He's willing to execute on her wickedly risky ideas, and her insatiable thirst for dominance offers an exhilarating, unpredictable view into the abyss.

Leal and Santos are both renowned stars in Brazil. It's time for the wider world to witness their talents as their vibrant characters try to outrun justice, death, and themselves.

DIANA CADAVID

**Fernando Coimbra** is a screenwriter and director who was born in Ribeirão Preto, Brazil and lives in São Paulo. He has directed short films including *Tropic of Goats* (07), episodes of TV series including *Narcos* (15–17) and *Perry Mason* (23), and feature films including *A Wolf at the Door* (13), which premiered at the Festival. *Carnival is Over* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## Ainda Estou Aqui I'm Still Here

Walter Salles

BRAZIL/FRANCE, 2024  
Portuguese  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
136 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: VideoFilmes, RT Features, Mact Productions, Conspiração  
Executive Producer: Guilherme Terra, Thierry de Clermont-Tonnerre, Lourenço Sant'anna, Renata Brandão, Juliana Capelini, David Taghioff, Masha Magonova  
Producer: Rodrigo Teixeira, Maria Carlota Bruno, Martine De Clermont-Tonnerre  
Screenplay: Murilo Hauser, Heitor Lorega  
Cinematographer: Adrian Teijido  
Editor: Alfonso Goncalves  
Production Designer: Carlos Conti  
Costume Designer: Claudia Kopke  
Original Score: Warren Ellis  
Principal Cast: Fernanda Montenegro, Fernanda Torres, Selton Mello

US Distributor: Sony Pictures Classics

Based on Marcelo Rubens Paiva's memoir, *I'm Still Here* transports us to Rio de Janeiro in the early 1970s when Brazil's dictatorship sought to exert its authority through detentions and disappearances. The latest from Walter Salles, director of the Oscar-nominated *Central Station* (TIFF '98) and the Oscar-winning *The Motorcycle Diaries* (TIFF '04), focuses on Eunice Paiva, whose terrifying experiences transformed her into an activist, lawyer, and hero.

When *I'm Still Here* begins, life in the merrily crowded Paiva household is warm and jovial, despite the threat of spot checks and arrests that loom over every outing. All this changes when patriarch Rubens (Selton Mello), a former congressman forced to live in exile during the previous decade, is ushered away to provide a mysterious deposition to military interrogators. Soon after, officers come for Eunice (a superb Fernanda Torres), holding her 12 days in a windowless prison as they try to persuade her to incriminate friends and associates accused of left-wing activities. Eunice emerges from prison transformed, embarking on a journey to expose the government's illegal activities and refusals to acknowledge their role in the disappearances of thousands of innocent citizens.

Part of what gives *I'm Still Here* its tremendous power is the way Salles and his collaborators give equal weight to the personal and the political. Eunice remains a loving and fiercely protective mother to her children, even as she pursues the courageous campaign against the dictatorship that will consume several decades of her life. This is an engrossing, deeply moving film about ordinary people who refuse to hide when the tempests of history come calling.

DIANA CADAVID

Walter Salles is a writer, director, and producer from Rio de Janeiro. He has directed films including *Behind the Sun* (*Abril Despedaçado*) (01) and the Festival selections *The Motorcycle Diaries* (04) and *On the Road* (12). *I'm Still Here* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## 40 Acres

R.T. Thorne

CANADA, 2024  
English, Cree  
WORLD PREMIERE  
108 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Hungry Eyes Media**  
Executive Producer: **Taj Critchlow, R.T. Thorne, Danielle Deadwyler, Sudz Sutherland, John Lang, Mark Gingras, Andrew Frank**  
Producer: **Jennifer Holness**  
Screenplay: **R.T. Thorne, Glenn Taylor**  
Cinematographer: **Jeremy Benning**  
Editor: **Dev Singh, Sandy Pereira**  
Production Designer: **Peter Cosco**  
Costume Designer: **Charlene Akuamoah**  
Sound: **David Ottier**  
Original Score: **Todor Kobakov**  
Principal Cast: **Danielle Deadwyler, Kataem O'Connor, Michael Greyeyes, Milcania Diaz-Rojas, Leenah Robinson, Jaeda LeBlanc, Haile Amare, Elizabeth Saunders, Tyrone Benskin**

Canadian Distributor: **Mongrel Media**

After a series of plagues and wars leaves society in ruins, the Freemans are surviving — even thriving — on a farm in the middle of nowhere... so long as they repel the occasional raiding party. But what good is surviving the end of the world if it means snuffing out your own humanity?

Former soldier Hailey (Danielle Deadwyler, also at this year's Festival in *The Piano Lesson*) made that choice years ago, believing that isolation was the only way to protect her family. She and her partner Galen (Michael Greyeyes) fled the collapse along with their children, training them to fight (and, yes, kill). But now Hailey's eldest Emanuel (Kataem O'Connor) is a young man, and when he meets a young woman (Milcania Diaz-Rojas) in the forest beyond the fence, his need for human contact could place the whole family in jeopardy.

Writer-director R.T. Thorne infuses his dystopian narrative with contemporary relevance and an inescapable historical metaphor, placing Black and Indigenous characters at the centre of a story about people defending their land from those who would kill them for it without a second thought.

Deadwyler is electric as the driven Hailey, whose refusal to consider even the slightest

deviation from her shoot-first philosophy is rooted in the fear that she won't be able to defend her people. And Greyeyes finally gets a role that synthesizes his paradoxical strengths as a charismatic badass and deadpan comic player. But Toronto's own O'Connor is the real discovery as Emanuel, a young man realizing that he might need to defy his family in order to save it.

NORM WILNER

**R.T. Thorne** is a producer and filmmaker who was born in Calgary. He got his start directing music videos for artists including Sean Paul and Kardinal Offishall. His credits also include episodes of TV series including *Blindspot* (19), *Utopia Falls* (20), which he co-created, and *The Porter* (22). *40 Acres* (24) is his feature debut.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## 베테랑2 I, the Executioner

Ryoo Seung-wan

**SOUTH KOREA, 2024**  
Korean  
**NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE**  
118 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Filmmakers R&K**  
Producer: **Kang Hye-jung, Cho Sung-min, Ryoo Seung-wan**  
Screenplay: **Lee Won-jae, Ryoo Seung-wan**  
Cinematographer: **Choi Young-hwan**  
Editor: **Bae Youn-tae**  
Production Designer: **Han Ah-rum**  
Costume Designer: **Kim Kyeong-mi, Jang Min-suk**  
Sound: **Kim Chang-sub**  
Original Score: **Chang Ki-ha**  
Principal Cast: **Hwang Jung-min, Jung Hae-in**

Canadian Distributor: **Capelight Pictures**  
US Distributor: **Capelight Pictures**  
International Sales Agent: **CJ ENM**

Acclaimed action-film genius Ryoo Seung-wan, fresh off the success of his aquatic-crime epic *Smugglers* (TIFF '23), brings us the highly anticipated sequel to his blockbuster, *Veteran* (TIFF '15).

A gripping, entertaining detective thriller, *I, The Executioner* balances high-octane fight scenes and chases with a nuanced exploration of the corrosive impact of “fake news” and populist violence on society. It marks a departure from the original’s often comedic narrative and much lighter tone.

Returning detective Seo Do-cheol (Hwang Jung-min) now faces the challenges of fatherhood while grappling with the impact of his brutal job on his family. Joining him is rookie officer Park Sun-woo (Jung Hae-in), an ambitious young agent enamoured with the dark side of police work and the intoxicating power it has lent him. They team up to hunt a serial killer targeting criminals who have managed to escape justice.

The film’s critique of vigilantism and the abuse of social media and its reflection on societal disillusionment with the legal system are timely and deeply rooted in a collective global consciousness. Spectacular action sets and carefully orchestrated editing — enhanced by chilling sound design — offer a high level of suspense and

excitement within an emotionally charged narrative, a testament to Ryoo’s great skill in creating visually stunning, highly dramatic cinematic experiences.

*I, The Executioner* is a standalone sequel that builds on the legacy of the original. The film’s reflection on the blurred lines between good and evil resonates deeply, offering a complex view of justice and violence in today’s society.

GIOVANNA FULVI

**Ryoo Seung-wan** was born in Onyang, South Korea. He has directed many films including *Die Bad* (00), *Arahan* (04), *Crying Fist* (05), *The Unjust* (10), *The Berlin File* (13), and the Festival selections *Veteran* (15) and *Smugglers* (23). *I, the Executioner* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## The Assessment

### Fleur Fortuné

UNITED KINGDOM/GERMANY/USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
114 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Number 9 Films, ShivHans Pictures, Tiki Tane Pictures, augenschein Filmproduktion, Project Infinity**  
Executive Producer: **Allen Gilmer, Riki Rushing, William Shockley, Tom Brady, Connor Flanagan, Madeleine K. Rudin, William Bruce Johnson, Thomas K. Richards, Carlotta Löffelholz, Jonathan Saubach, Rusta Mizani**  
Producer: **Stephen Woolley, Elizabeth Karlsen, Shivani Rawat, Julie Goldstein, Jonas Katzenstein, Maximilian Leo, Grant S. Johnson**  
Screenplay: **Mrs. & Mr. Thomas, John Donnelly**  
Cinematographer: **Magnus Jønck**  
Editor: **Yorgos Lamprinos**  
Production Designer: **Jan Houllévig**  
Costume Designer: **Sarah Blenkinsop**  
Sound: **Erik Seifert**  
Original Score: **Emilie Levenaise-Farouch**  
Principal Cast: **Elizabeth Olsen, Alicia Vikander, Himesh Patel**

International Sales Agent: **WME Independent**  
US Sales Agent: **UTA Independent Film Group**

In the future depicted in *The Assessment*, everyone gets to live a calm life but the government maintains a strict control of resources. As part of that, and to ensure the world doesn't become overpopulated, it decides who can and can't have children.

Mia (Elizabeth Olsen) and Aaryan (Himesh Patel) are nervous about their application to become parents, but they have everything going for them. They live in a peaceful, secluded home where Aaryan has a studio for his genetic research and Mia maintains a greenhouse as part of her work as a botanical scientist. The two are assigned an assessor named Virginia (Alicia Vikander), who comes to evaluate them in their home over seven days.

Virginia asks them invasive and awkward questions about everything from how they first met to how often they have sex. But this is just the beginning as Virginia puts Mia and Aaryan through simulations of the potential horrors children can inflict on their parents. As the tests become increasingly abstract and confounding, the right answers seem less obvious and the assessment foments a rift between the couple.

This debut from director Fleur Fortuné is striking for its precise control of story, performance, and production design. Olsen

and Patel capture the psychological turmoil of two people having their lives forensically examined, while Vikander gives an exceptional performance that's surprising all the way to the end.

ROBYN CITIZEN

**Fleur Fortuné** is a Paris-based filmmaker. She has directed music videos for artists such as M83, Drake, Travis Scott, Lykke Li, and Movement. *The Assessment* (24) is her feature debut.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## Relay

David Mackenzie

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
112 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Black Bear, Thunder Road Films, Sigma Films**

Executive Producer: **Michael Heimler, John Friedberg, Erica Lee, Charlie Morrison, Per Melita**

Producer: **Basil Iwanyk, Gillian Berrie, David Mackenzie, Teddy Schwarzman**

Screenplay: **Justin Piasecki**

Cinematographer: **Giles Nuttgens**

Editor: **Matt Mayer**

Production Designer: **Jane Musky**

Costume Designer: **Alana Morshead**

Original Score: **Tony Doogan**

Principal Cast: **Riz Ahmed, Lily James, Sam Worthington, Willa Fitzgerald**

Canadian Distributor: **Elevation Pictures**

International Sales Agent: **Black Bear**

US Sales Agent: **Creative Artists Agency (CAA), United Talent Agency (UTA)**

This clever, high-concept thriller stars Oscar winner Riz Ahmed as a rigorously reclusive middleman for would-be whistleblowers seeking to settle with corporate malefactors. Deftly helmed by David Mackenzie (*Outlaw King*, TIFF '18), *Relay* is a cat-and-mouse game for an age of hyper-surveillance when it's never been harder to leave no trace.

Tom (Ahmed) brokers deals between parties who never learn what he looks like, sounds like, or where he's located. A brilliant manipulator of technologies old and new, Tom's primary method of communication is a telephone relay service where operators are legally bound to withhold the identities of their users. Tom's latest client is Sarah Grant (Lily James, TIFF '17's *Darkest Hour*), a former bio-tech company staffer who's been on the run since stealing documents that, if made public, would be scandalous for her employer. Sarah now wants to return the documents in exchange for whatever remuneration she can get.

The case should be business as usual for Tom, but the henchmen hired to follow Sarah are ruthless and dogged. What's more, Tom begins to connect with Sarah on a personal level, potentially compromising the private existence he's worked so arduously to construct.

Written by Mackenzie and Justin Piasecki, *Relay* is riddled with ingenious feats of misdirection, novel set pieces, and jaw-dropping twists that would have made Hitchcock proud. At its heart is a hero who has made a vocation of living in the shadows, but is faced with a situation in which he may have no other choice but to step into the light.

JANE SCHOETTLE

**David Mackenzie** was born in Corbridge, England, and raised in Scotland. His directorial credits include the Festival selections *The Last Great Wilderness* (02), *Young Adam* (03), *Starred Up* (13), and *Outlaw King* (18). *Relay* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## The Cut

Sean Ellis

UNITED KINGDOM, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
99 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Tea Shop Productions, Amazing Owl, Stellar**  
Executive Producer: **Blair Ward, Anders Erdén, Lee Harrison, Kalyn Harper, Alan Harper, Ben Kramer, Jeff Bowler, Michael Torchia**  
Producer: **Mark Lane, Leonora Darby, James Harris, Orlando Bloom, Adam Karasick, Bret Saxon, Thomas Fanning**  
Screenplay: **Justin Bull**  
Cinematographer: **Sean Ellis**  
Editor: **Mátyás Fekete**  
Production Designer: **Matthew Button**  
Costume Designer: **Sophie Canale**  
Sound: **Alex Outhwaite**  
Original Score: **Lorne Balfe, Stuart Michael Thomas**  
Principal Cast: **Orlando Bloom, Caitríona Balfe, John Turturro**

International Sales Agent: **The Exchange**  
US Sales Agent: **United Talent Agency (UTA), WME**

It looks like a sports movie, but this intensely visceral drama from director Sean Ellis (*Metro Manila*; *Cashback*, TIFFF '06) digs deep into the ways we punish the body to relieve a soul in torment. Featuring powerful performances from Orlando Bloom, John Turturro, and Caitríona Balfe (TIFF '21 People's Choice Award winner for *Belfast*), *The Cut* follows a retired fighter obsessed with getting back in the ring, even if it costs him his life.

The protagonist (Bloom) is known only as The Boxer. And boxing is virtually all he lives for. Ten years ago, a nasty cut took The Boxer out of commission. Ever since, he and his wife and trainer Caitlin (Balfe) have run a successful gym. It should be enough, but when another boxer unexpectedly dies before a title fight, The Boxer puts himself forward as a replacement and the event's shady promoter decides to make him the new contender — everyone loves a comeback. The only problem is that, to qualify, The Boxer needs to drop a precipitous number of pounds in just six days. Enter Boz (Turturro, also at the Festival in Pedro Almodóvar's *The Room Next Door*), a brash trainer infamous for using every possible technique, legal or not.

Many scenes are brutal, yet you cannot look away. Written by Justin Bull and Mark Lane, *The Cut* is about wounds that will not heal.

The harder The Boxer trains, the more painful childhood memories come surging back to haunt him. At the centre of the maelstrom is Bloom, whose dedication to embodying his character's desperate, ultimately hallucinatory campaign is simply staggering.

JANE SCHOETTLE

**Sean Ellis** is an English writer and director. His filmography includes the Festival selection *Cashback* (06) as well as *The Broken* (08), *Metro Manila* (13), *Anthropoid* (16), and *Eight for Silver* (22). *The Cut* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## All of You

William Bridges

UNITED KINGDOM, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
98 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **MRC**  
Executive Producer: **Alexander Black, Jon Rosenberg**  
Producer: **Aaron Ryder, Andrew Swett, William Bridges, Brett Goldstein**  
Screenplay: **Brett Goldstein, William Bridges**  
Cinematographer: **Benoit Soler**  
Editor: **Victoria Boydell**  
Production Designer: **Luke Moran-Morris**  
Costume Designer: **Nat Turner**  
Sound: **Gareth Bull, Will Stanton, Nina Hartstone, Ben Meechan**  
Original Score: **Ian Hultquist, Sofia Degli Alessandri**  
Principal Cast: **Brett Goldstein, Imogen Poots, Steven Cree, Zawe Ashton**

International Sales Agent: **MRC**  
US Sales Agent: **MRC**

In a recognizable near-future, Simon (Brett Goldstein) accompanies his best friend, Laura (Imogen Poots), as she takes a new test guaranteeing to match anyone with their soulmate. As Laura hurtles towards milestones with her new man, Simon begins to understand how deeply he cares about her, even if he's not ready to accept it.

Despite their feelings, Simon and Laura must navigate the path destiny has laid out for them, before it all becomes too much and their love spills over into their complicated lives. *All of You* utilizes an innovative structure that presents a brief peek into the main characters' lives before whisking us into the future, repeating this cycle to offer snapshots of a love that lasts a lifetime.

Goldstein also serves as co-writer alongside director William Bridges. Both have earned acclaim, with Goldstein having written on *Ted Lasso*, in addition to playing footballer Roy Kent. He also co-created the Emmy-nominated series *Shrinking*. Bridges, meanwhile, is known for one of *Black Mirror's* most famous episodes, "U.S.S. Callister." Their script is brought to life by affecting lead performances that have you hoping against hope Simon and

Laura will find their happily ever after. It may be set in the future, but *All of You* shows love never changes.

JANE SCHOETTLE

**William Bridges** is a screenwriter and filmmaker. He wrote the Emmy-winning *Black Mirror* episode "U.S.S. Callister," and created the TV series *Soulmates* (20). He also wrote and directed the short film *Shallow* (12). *All of You* (24) is his feature directorial debut.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Millers in Marriage

Edward Burns

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
117 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Marlboro Road Gang Productions**  
Producer: **Aaron Lubin, Ellen H. Schwartz, Edward Burns**  
Screenplay: **Edward Burns**  
Cinematographer: **William Rexer**  
Editor: **Janet Gaynor**  
Production Designer: **Jason Singleton**  
Costume Designer: **Rosemary Lepre Forman**  
Sound: **Jerry Stein**  
Original Score: **Andrea Vanzo**  
Principal Cast: **Morena Baccarin, Benjamin Bratt, Edward Burns, Minnie Driver, Brian d'Arcy James, Julianna Margulies, Gretchen Mol, Campbell Scott, Patrick Wilson**

US Distributor: **Republic Pictures**

Writer-director-actor Edward Burns' follow-up to TIFF '19's *Beneath the Blue Suburban Skies* surveys the thorny emotional lives of three siblings adrift in middle age. An ensemble drama with a stunning cast and a bold approach to storytelling, *Millers in Marriage* takes a sobering look at the vagaries of long-term love while championing the possibilities for personal change.

Eve (Gretchen Mol) was a rocker in her early twenties but gave it up to be a full-time mom, while her husband, Scott (Patrick Wilson), poured his energy into his own music... while frequently pouring himself too many drinks. Now an empty-nester, Eve wonders if it's possible to return to her art. She's certainly encouraged by a hunky music critic (Benjamin Bratt) whose interest seems more than professional.

Eve's sister, Maggie (Julianna Margulies), is losing patience with her husband, Nick (Campbell Scott). Both are novelists, but while Maggie feels productive, Nick seems resigned to perpetual writer's block. Meanwhile, Eve and Maggie's brother, Andy (Burns), is starting a new relationship with Renee (Oscar nominee Minnie Driver), though he might not be finished with Tina (Morena Baccarin), who left him after 15 years only to come back after hearing of his new romance.

A consummate director of actors, Burns focuses on character development and tracking emotional memory. Several times in *Millers in Marriage*, someone mentions a past event and, mid-scene, we are transported directly to that moment in time. It's just one of many ways this smart, sensitive film draws us close to its characters and the universal feelings that come to shape their paths.

JANE SCHOETTLE

**Edward Burns** is from New York. He has acted in numerous films including *Saving Private Ryan* (98) and *The Holiday* (06). He has also written and directed many films, including the Festival selections *Sidewalks of New York* (01), *The Fitzgerald Family Christmas* (12), and *Beneath the Blue Suburban Skies* (19). *Millers in Marriage* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Harvest

Athina Rachel Tsangari

UNITED KINGDOM, GERMANY, GREECE,  
FRANCE, USA 2024  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
131 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Sixteen Films, The Match Factory, Louverture Films, Haos Film, Why Not Productions  
Executive Producer: Christos V. Konstantakopoulos, Simon Williams, Joe Simpson, Jonathan Bross, Matthew E. Chausse, Eva Yates, Claudia Yusef, Steven Little, Kieran Hannigan, John Jencks, Pascal Caucheteux, Gregoire Sorlat, Efe Kakarell, Jason Ropell, Kyle Stroud, Lorenza Veronica  
Producer: Rebecca O'Brien, Joslyn Barnes, Michael Weber, Viola Fuegen, Athina Rachel Tsangari, Marie-Elena Dyche  
Screenplay: Joslyn Barnes, Athina Rachel Tsangari  
Cinematographer: Sean Price Williams  
Editor: Matt Johnson, Nico Leunen  
Production Designer: Nathan Parker  
Costume Designer: Kirsty Halliday  
Sound: Nicolas Becker, David Bowtle-McMillan, Ian Tapp, Linda Forsén  
Original Score: Nicolas Becker, Ian Hassett, Caleb Landry Jones, Lexx  
Principal Cast: Caleb Landry Jones, Harry Melling, Rosy McEwen, Arinzé Kene, Thalissa Teixeira, Frank Dillane

International Sales Agent: The Match Factory  
US Sales Agent: The Match Factory

This visionary period piece from Greek Weird Wave godmother Athina Rachel Tsangari (TIFF '15's *Chevalier*, TIFF '10's *Attenberg*) transports us to a remote English village where traditional ways of life are brutally disrupted by an Enclosure bill, transforming what was once common land into private property. Adapted by Tsangari and Joslyn Barnes from Jim Crace's novel, *Harvest* is a haunting allegory about the contagion of xenophobia and the perils of unchecked capitalism.

Widower Walter Thirsk (Caleb Landry Jones) is something of an outsider in his tiny, superstitious community of farmers and shepherds. His isolation makes him accessible to visitors his fellow villagers shun, such as the cartographer Walter helps to survey the village boundaries.

When a fire consumes the village stables and a pair of drifters are scapegoated, a feeling of existential threat takes root. That's exacerbated by the arrival of Edmund Jordan (Frank Dillane), wealthy cousin to mayor Master Kent (*Harry Potter* stalwart Harry Melling), who claims the village as his possession and castigates those who fail to forfeit what was theirs. Life as they knew it is rapidly disintegrating for the villagers, escalating tensions and directing suspicion toward anyone from elsewhere.

Gorgeously photographed on 35mm by Sean Price Williams, *Harvest* immerses us in a pre-industrial world of pagan rituals and small-scale agriculture that appears so different from ours, though its conflicts are familiar. This is a haunting story about what it means to forge a community only to have a calamitous combination of outside greed and internal paranoia take it all away.

ROBYN CITIZEN

Athina Rachel Tsangari was born in Greece and studied theatre at NYU before obtaining her MFA in film production at the University of Texas. Her production credits include *Kinette* (05) and *Dogtooth* (10). She's the director of films including *The Slow Business of Going* (00) and the Festival selections *Attenberg* (10) and *Chevalier* (15). *Harvest* (24) is her latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Riff Raff

Dito Montiel

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
103 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Canopy Pictures, Signature Entertainment**  
Executive Producer: **John Pollono, Randal Sandler, Chris Dennis, Patrick Muldoon, Patrick Hibler, Gareth Williams, David Sullivan, Alex Baskin, Barry Germansky, Wesley Pentz, Emily Hunter Salveson, Ryan Donnell Smith, Tom Bombadil, William P. Evans, Robby Blanchard, Kamran Dastoury, Amanda Wood, Sebouh Gueyikian, William Roth II, Zane Windham, Barry Brooker, Stan Wertlieb, Eric D'Arbeloff, Howard Cohen, Molly Conners, Amanda Bowers**  
Producer: **Noah Rothman, Sarah Gabriel, Marc Goldberg, Adam Paulsen**  
Screenplay: **John Pollono**  
Cinematographer: **Xavier Grobet**  
Editor: **Tim Streeto**  
Production Designer: **Kassandra De Angelis**  
Costume Designer: **Christine Wada**  
Sound: **James Baker**  
Original Score: **Adam Taylor**  
Principal Cast: **Jennifer Coolidge, Ed Harris, Gabrielle Union, Lewis Pullman, Miles J. Harvey, Emanuela Postacchini, Michael Angelo Covino, Pete Davidson, Bill Murray**

US Distributor: **Roadside Attractions**  
International Sales Agent: **Signature Entertainment**  
US Sales Agent: **Capstone Pictures**

With an all-star ensemble cast that includes Ed Harris, Gabrielle Union, Jennifer Coolidge, and Bill Murray, the latest from director Dito Montiel (TIFF '15's *Man Down*) is a pitch-black comedy about all the silly little things we do for family. Such as, you know, murder.

One-time criminal Vince (Harris) turned his life around when he fell in love with Sandy (Union). Nearly 20 years later, the still-happy couple are looking forward to spending a quiet New Year's Eve in their country home with their good-natured son, DJ (Miles J. Harvey). Then Vince's other son, Rocco (Lewis Pullman), shows up unannounced with his pregnant girlfriend, Marina (Emanuela Postacchini), and Vince's first wife, Ruth (Coolidge), in tow. It is not a happy reunion. Ruth is rude, lewd, and randy, while Rocco — who never divested himself of the family business — is clearly hiding something sinister. Hot on Rocco's tail is Lefty (Bill Murray, also at the Festival with *The Friend*), an aging mafioso with a score to settle regarding his own son. When Lefty catches up with Vince's teeming clan, it seems likely that blood ties will yield blood spilled.

Written by John Pollono (TIFF '17's *Stronger*), *Riff Raff* is gloriously irreverent, taking a deadpan approach to both humour

and violence, while inserting some hilarious surprises along the way. Every member of the film's dream cast has fun with even the most grotesque moments, but special mention goes to Murray, who should be on everyone's A-list for heavies, and Coolidge, whose singular way with words makes beautiful music of Ruth's filthiest dialogue.

JANE SCHOETTLE

**Dito Montiel** was born in New York and began his career as a musician. He has directed the films *A Guide to Recognizing Your Saints* (06), based on his memoir of the same name, *Fighting* (09), *The Son of No One* (11), *Empire State* (13), *Boulevard* (14), and the Festival selection *Man Down* (15). *Riff Raff* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## Hard Truths

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Mike Leigh

UNITED KINGDOM/SPAIN, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
97 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Cornerstone Films, Film4, The Mediapro Studio, Thin Man Films, Creativity Media, Sony Pictures Classics**  
Executive Producer: **Richard Kondal, Jennifer Eriksson, Alison Thompson, Mark Gooder, Andrew Karpen, Kent Sanderson, Javier Méndez, Javier Pons, Ollie Madden, Daniel Battsek, Gail Egan**  
Producer: **Georgina Lowe**  
Screenplay: **Mike Leigh**  
Cinematographer: **Dick Pope**  
Editor: **Tania Reddin**  
Production Designer: **Suzie Davies**  
Costume Designer: **Jacqueline Durran**  
Sound: **Tim Fraser**  
Original Score: **Gary Yershon**  
Principal Cast: **Marianne Jean-Baptiste, Michele Austin, David Webber, Tuwaine Barrett, Ani Nelson, Sophia Brown, Jonathan Livingstone**

Canadian Distributor: **Mongrel Media**  
US Distributor: **Bleecker Street**  
International Sales Agent: **Cornerstone Films**

Reuniting with Oscar-nominated *Secrets & Lies* star Marianne Jean-Baptiste and returning to contemporary London for a story inverse to his 2008 Festival favourite *Happy-Go-Lucky*, the latest from seven-time Oscar-nominated auteur Mike Leigh is bracingly tough, darkly funny, and pierced with insight. Shifting between various members of an extended Black family in London, *Hard Truths* is a psychologically rich ensemble film as only Leigh can cultivate.

Hypersensitive to the slightest possible offence and ever ready to fly off the handle, Pansy (Jean-Baptiste) does not ingratiate. She criticizes her husband Curtley (David Webber) and their adult son Moses (Tuwaine Barrett) so relentlessly that neither bother to argue with her. She picks fights with strangers and sales clerks and enumerates the world's countless flaws to anyone who will listen, most especially her cheerful sister Chantal (Michele Austin), who might be the only person still capable of sympathizing with her. As the film peels back Pansy's pain and the daily fallout left in its wake, we wonder if a breaking point will come for the family.

This being a Mike Leigh film, Pansy's orneriness frequently inspires a chuckle, while the diverse responses from members

of her family speak to the complexities of grappling with a loved one's grief and chronic disappointment. The film's meticulous attention to its characters' subtlest behavioural shifts infuses every scene with tenderness, so that even as it refuses simplistic resolutions, *Hard Truths* leaves us with a genuine understanding of who these people are, and why even the most frustrating of them deserves some care.

ROBYN CITIZEN

**Mike Leigh** is an English writer and filmmaker. He won the Cannes Best Director award for *Naked* (93) and the Palme d'Or for *Secrets & Lies* (96). His other features include *Vera Drake* (04) and the Festival selections *All or Nothing* (02), *Happy-Go-Lucky* (08), *Another Year* (10), *Mr. Turner* (14), and *Peterloo* (18). *Hard Truths* (24) is his latest film.

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PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## The Order

Justin Kurzel

USA/CANADA, 2024  
English  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
114 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **AGC Studios, Chasing Epic Pictures, Riff Raff Entertainment, Arcana Studio**  
Executive Producer: **Miguel A. Palos, Jr., Zach Garrett, Anant Tamirisa, Zach Baylin, Kate Susman, Alastair Burlingham, Gary Raskin, Jeremy Saulnier, Ben Jackson, Stephen Fuss, Sean Patrick O'Reilly, Eric Rebalkin**  
Producer: **Bryan Haas, Jude Law, Stuart Ford, Justin Kurzel**  
Screenplay: **Zach Baylin**  
Cinematographer: **Adam Arkapaw**  
Editor: **Nick Fenton**  
Production Designer: **Karen Murphy**  
Costume Designer: **Rachel Dainer-Best**  
Sound: **Michael Playfair**  
Original Score: **Jed Kurzel**  
Principal Cast: **Jude Law, Nicholas Hoult, Tye Sheridan, Jurnee Smollett, Marc Maron**

Canadian Distributor: **Amazon Prime Video**  
US Distributor: **Vertical**  
International Sales Agent: **AGC Studios**  
US Sales Agent: **Creative Artists Agency (CAA), AGC Studios**

Featuring startling performances from Jude Law (*Vox Lux*, TIFFF '18; *Dom Hemingway*, TIFFF '13), Tye Sheridan (*The Forger*, TIFFF '14), and Nicholas Hoult (TIFF '22's *The Menu*), this riveting historical thriller from director Justin Kurzel (*Nitram*) and screenwriter Zach Baylin (*King Richard*) recreates one of the largest manhunts in FBI history. Based on Kevin Flynn and Gary Gerhardt's nonfiction bestseller *The Silent Brotherhood*, *The Order* depicts a domestic terrorist group determined to promote their racist ideology — and the lawmen who will go to any lengths to stop them.

The year is 1983. A series of bank robberies and car heists plague the Pacific Northwest. Believing these crimes to be connected to a white supremacist organization, FBI Agent Huss (Law) undertakes an investigation with the aid of an eager young small-town deputy (Sheridan). Their search leads them to Robert Jay Mathews (Hoult), a charismatic cult leader recruiting a small army to raise funds for an armed revolution. As their paths bring them into ever-closer proximity, Huss and Mathews' powerful convictions will ensure only one of them will emerge from their inevitable confrontation.

Distinguished by gorgeous pastoral landscapes and a brooding score, *The Order*

cultivates an atmosphere of dread and intrigue. But the film's greatest asset lies in its main character, a veteran agent whose obsessiveness is fuelled by alcohol and estrangement from his family. Law (also at the Festival with *Eden*) has never been more unnervingly compelling. At the heart of his performance lies a fascination with a persistent darkness hiding in our culture — one that threatens to consume those dedicated to dragging it out of the shadows.

ROBYN CITIZEN

**Justin Kurzel** is an Australian filmmaker who began his career as a theatrical designer. His directorial credits include *Macbeth* (15), *Nitram* (21), and the Festival selections *Snowtown* (11) and *True History of the Kelly Gang* (19). *The Order* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## The Last Showgirl

Gia Coppola

USA, 2024

English

WORLD PREMIERE

85 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Utopia Originals**

Executive Producer: **Dani Koenigsberg, Nick**

**Darmstaedter, Michael Clofine, Jessamine Burgum,**

**Kara Durrett, Alex Orlovsky, Jack Selby**

Producer: **Robert Schwartzman, Natalie Farrey**

Screenplay: **Kate Gersten**

Cinematographer: **Autumn Durald Arkapaw**

Editor: **Blair McClendon, Cam McLaughlin**

Production Designer: **Natalie Ziering**

Costume Designer: **Jacqui Getty**

Original Score: **Andrew Wyatt**

Principal Cast: **Pamela Anderson, Dave Bautista,**

**Jamie Lee Curtis, Kiernan Shipka, Brenda Song,**

**Billie Lourd**

International Sales Agent: **Goodfellas**

US Sales Agent: **Creative Artists Agency (CAA)**

Most films set in Las Vegas centre on the high-wattage neon glow of The Strip. But the latest from Gia Coppola (*Palo Alto*, TIFF '13) turns that tradition around, showing us a story from behind the lights, with a captivating and affecting lead performance by Pamela Anderson.

Shelley (Anderson) has been a Las Vegas showgirl for over 30 years, the feather and crystal-adorned centrepiece of Sin City's last remaining traditional floor show. The stage and the women she shares it with are her loving, bickering, sequin-clad family. When the stage manager Eddie (Dave Bautista, an island of masculinity in a sea of women) announces the show will close permanently in two weeks, Shelley and her co-workers must make decisions for their future. But the future looks different when you are 50 rather than 20, and your sole job skill is dancing.

Emotionally floundering, Shelley tries to reconnect with a daughter she hardly knows, which proves just as difficult as losing the only job she has ever had. Bolstered by her best friend Annette (Jamie Lee Curtis), a brash cocktail waitress who laughs a little too loud and too often, Shelley must find her place in a world that she shut the (stage) door on years before.

Coppola's camera slyly but gently goes everywhere with her characters, capturing the childlike bewilderment on Shelley's face as she absorbs news, and the heartbreaking compassion emanating from Eddie's eyes as he delivers it. The director's capable hand with a superb company of actors highlights the all-too-human sensitivities behind the harsh glare of those famous neon signs and stage lights.

JANE SCHOETTLE

**Gia Coppola** is a filmmaker and photographer from Southern California. She has directed numerous shorts as well as music videos for artists including Blood Orange and Carly Rae Jepsen. Her feature directing credits include *Palo Alto* (13), which screened at the Festival, and *Mainstream* (20). *The Last Showgirl* (24) is her latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Heretic

Scott Beck, Bryan Woods

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
110 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Beck/Woods, Shiny Penny, Catchlight Studios**  
Producer: **Stacey Sher, Scott Beck, Bryan Woods, Julia Glausi, Jeanette Volturno**  
Screenplay: **Scott Beck, Bryan Woods**  
Cinematographer: **Chung-Hoon Chung**  
Editor: **Justin Li**  
Production Designer: **Philip Messina**  
Costume Designer: **Betsy Heimann**  
Sound: **Chris Duesterdiek**  
Original Score: **Chris Bacon**  
Principal Cast: **Hugh Grant, Sophie Thatcher, Chloe East**

Canadian Distributor: **VVS Films**  
US Distributor: **A24**  
International Sales Agent: **A24**

Deliciously dark and frequently hilarious, this chamber horror from writer-director duo Scott Beck and Bryan Woods (the celebrated scenarists behind *A Quiet Place*) considers how an innocent chat about theology can go terribly awry. Starring Hugh Grant in a brilliantly against-type performance, *Heretic* is a fiendishly irreverent tale of battling convictions.

Sister Paxton (Chloe East, TIFF '22's *The Fabelmans*) and Sister Barnes (Sophie Thatcher, *Prospect*) are cheerfully going about their mission to spread good news about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Working down a list of doors to knock on, they arrive at the quiet suburban house of Mr. Reed (Grant), who seems not only polite and hospitable but also genuinely fascinated by the history and teachings of Mormonism.

In fact, Mr. Reed is quite knowledgeable about all the world's major religions and is eager to discuss them with the women. Perhaps too eager. With the rain coming down outside and Mr. Reed's wife making pie in the next room, the setting is utterly cozy. The only thing that could spoil it would be if Sister Paxton and Sister Barnes wanted to leave.

Half the fun of *Heretic* is waiting to see where it leads you next. Beck and Woods

take the familiar and turn it on its head, while their characters ask serious questions about the role of faith and piety in a world rendered incomprehensible by chaos and violence. It's a chilling, provocative thrill ride, and it showcases Grant's immense talents.

ROBYN CITIZEN

**Scott Beck** is a director, screenwriter, and producer who was born in Denver. With Bryan Woods, he wrote the script for *A Quiet Place* (18), and wrote and directed *Nightlight* (15), *Haunt* (19), and *65* (23). *Heretic* (24) is their latest collaboration.

**Bryan Woods** was born in Davenport, Iowa. With Scott Beck, he wrote the script for *A Quiet Place* (18), and wrote and directed *Nightlight* (15), *Haunt* (19), and *65* (23). *Heretic* (24) is their latest collaboration.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## Dahomey

Mati Diop

BENIN/FRANCE/SENEGAL, 2024

French, Fon, English

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

68 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: Les Films du Bal

Executive Producer: Eve Robin, Judith Lou Lévy,

Christiane Chabi Kao

Producer: Eve Robin, Judith Lou Lévy, Mati Diop

Screenplay: Mati Diop

Cinematographer: Joséphine Drouin-Viallard

Editor: Gabriel Gonzalez

Sound: Nicolas Becker, Corneille Houssou, Cyril Holtz

Original Score: Wally Badarou, Dean Blunt

Canadian Distributor: MUBI

US Distributor: MUBI

International Sales Agent: Les Films du Losange

For centuries, the Kingdom of Dahomey, within the borders of modern-day Benin, was a central cultural meeting point in West Africa, a site of European colonial conquest and the transatlantic slave trade. In 1892, the French invaded and looted hundreds of treasures from the royal palace, alongside thousands of other works. Following years of appeals and reports, in 2021 an agreement was made for several of these artworks to be returned from France to Benin.

French-Senegalese filmmaker Mati Diop (*Atlantics*, TIFF '19), whose spectral, category-defying cinema has frequently focused on identity and exile, was granted access to the multipartite process. Tracing the historic repatriation of 26 royal treasures from the Musée du quai Branly in Paris, through their crating, overseas shipping to Cotonou, condition assessment, and eventual unveiling, Diop reveals not only the material and logistical process with elegance and precision, but also summons the ghosts of displacement.

Carried by the surreal, disembodied voice and restless spirit of a bronze itself (speaking in Fon) — as well as evocative music by Dean Blunt and Wally Badarou — the film is at once lean and expansive, trimmed of any extraneous elements while

provocatively gesturing towards unresolved histories of colonial expansion and exploitation (with which museums the world over are rife). As a galvanizing gathering of young, cross-disciplinary Beninese students and teachers at the Université d'Abomey-Calavi fervently debate the arrival of the treasures, their impassioned arguments and ideas echo the film's timely, political reckoning.

Winner of this year's Golden Bear at the Berlinale, *Dahomey* further cements Diop as a leading voice in contemporary cinema.

ANDRÉA PICARD

**Mati Diop** is a Paris-born actor and filmmaker. She has directed several shorts, including *Atlantiques* (09), *A Thousand Suns* (13), both of which played the Festival, and *Liberian Boy* (15). Her feature debut, *Atlantics* (19), won the Grand Prix at Cannes, and played the Festival. *Dahomey* (24) is her latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## The Room Next Door

Pedro Almodóvar

SPAIN, 2024  
English  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
110 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **El Deseo**  
Producer: **Agustín Almodóvar, Esther García**  
Screenplay: **Pedro Almodóvar**  
Cinematographer: **Eduard Grau**  
Editor: **Teresa Font**  
Production Designer: **Inbal Weinberg**  
Costume Designer: **Bina Daigeler**  
Sound: **Sergio Bürmann**  
Original Score: **Alberto Iglesias**  
Principal Cast: **Tilda Swinton, Julianne Moore, John Turturro, Alessandro Nivola**

US Distributor: **Sony Pictures Classics**

*The Room Next Door* might be renowned Spanish director Pedro Almodóvar's first English-language feature but he has left none of his signature hallmarks behind. The complex narratives filled with heartbreaking choices, visuals saturated with colour, and the precise rendering of women's inner lives are very much intact.

Ingrid (Oscar winner Julianne Moore) is a bestselling author so famously afraid of death she has written a book about it. When she learns that Martha (Oscar winner Tilda Swinton, also at this year's Festival in *The End*) — a former war correspondent — is ill, she visits her in hospital, reigniting a friendship from years past, when both were journalists.

Martha is fighting another war now, and the rekindled closeness between the women means Ingrid is drawn into her gruelling cycle of treatments as stories are told, secrets are revealed, and regret, redemption, and mortality are discussed over tea. One day, Martha asks Ingrid for the one thing she is most hesitant to give. The way they negotiate life's deepest choices is what makes the film so memorable.

Almodóvar's latest is a feast for the eyes, thanks to Eduard Grau's exquisite cinematography, but other senses are aroused as

well. We can almost taste the crisp white wine that Ingrid sips and hear nuances in the birdsong Martha adores. Superb performances by Swinton and Moore — who inhabit these complex, flawed, and fascinating women — give the film its pounding heart, making it less about death than about the quality of life while we live it.

ANITA LEE

**Pedro Almodóvar** was born in Calzada de Calatrava, Spain. His many directorial credits include the Festival selections *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* (88), *Talk to Her* (02), *Bad Education* (04), *Volver* (06), *Broken Embraces* (09), *Julieta* (16), and *Pain and Glory* (19). In 2023, he received the Impact Media Award at the TIFF Tribute Awards. *The Room Next Door* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## SATURDAY NIGHT

Jason Reitman

USA, 2024  
English  
CANADIAN PREMIERE  
109 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Columbia Pictures  
Executive Producer: Erica Mills, JoAnn Perritano  
Producer: Jason Blumenfeld, Peter Rice, Jason Reitman, Gil Kenan  
Written by: Gil Kenan, Jason Reitman  
Cinematographer: Eric Steelberg  
Editor: Nathan Orloff, Shane Reid  
Production Designer: Jess Gonchor  
Costume Designer: Danny Glicker  
Sound: Steve Morrow, William Files, Tom Ozanich, Lee Gilmore  
Original Score: Jon Batiste  
Principal Cast: Gabriel LaBelle, Rachel Sennott, Cory Michael Smith, Ella Hunt, Dylan O'Brien, Lamorne Morris, Finn Wolfhard, Nicholas Braun, Cooper Hoffman, Matthew Rhys

US Distributor: Sony Pictures Entertainment

It's the mid-1970s and a flipbook of Watergate, Vietnam, and rising counterculture makes everything old in America feel broken, and everything new feel scary as hell. And now, yet another certainty is about to crack. Because in 90 minutes' time, live, from New York, it's Saturday Night.

*SATURDAY NIGHT* dives headfirst into the frenzied hour-and-a-half before a clutch of unknown, untrained, unruly young comedians took over network television and transformed the culture. *Saturday Night Live* would go on to become the late-night institution that brought John Belushi, Dan Aykroyd, and later Eddie Murphy, Tina Fey, Will Ferrell and others to our screens. But tonight, it's barely contained madness backstage, with Canadian Lorne Michaels (Gabriel LaBelle, *The Fabelmans*, TIFF '22) desperately trying to channel the chaos towards a vision even he's not sure of.

On the eve of *SNL*'s 50th anniversary, it's a particular pleasure to watch how unlikely it all was at the beginning. Chevy Chase honing the frat boy charm that would make him a movie star. Garrett Morris saying America's racial quiet part out loud. Belushi a bundle of Id in the corner. Jane Curtin, Laraine Newman, and Gilda Radner holding their own against a tide of comedy testosterone.

Director Jason Reitman (*Juno*, *Up in the Air*, *Ghostbusters: Afterlife*) has made certified classics but he's never made a film like this. Fuelled by the same anarchic energy that drove the show to air, he orchestrates this tour de force as a glorious circus of talent, ambition, and appetite for risk, with the clock ticking down to showtime.

CAMERON BAILEY

Jason Reitman was born in Montreal and raised in Los Angeles, where he studied creative writing at USC. His films include the Festival selections *Thank You For Smoking* (05), *Juno* (07), *Up In the Air* (09), *Men, Women & Children* (14), and *The Front Runner* (18). *SATURDAY NIGHT* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## The Brutalist

Brady Corbet

UNITED KINGDOM, 2024  
English, Hungarian, Yiddish, Hebrew, Italian  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
215 minutes | Colour/70mm

Production Company: **Brookstreet Pictures, Kaplan Morrison, Andrew Lauren Productions**  
Executive Producer: **Carter Stanton, Aaron Himmel, Joshua Horsfield**  
Producer: **Trevor Matthews, Nick Gordon, Brian Young, Andrew Morrison, Andrew Lauren, D.J. Gugenheim**  
Screenplay: **Brady Corbet, Mona Fastvold**  
Cinematographer: **Lol Crawley**  
Editor: **David Jancso**  
Production Designer: **Judy Becker**  
Costume Designer: **Kate Forbes**  
Sound: **Steve Single, Andy Neil**  
Original Score: **Daniel Blumberg**  
Principal Cast: **Adrien Brody, Felicity Jones, Guy Pearce, Joe Alwyn, Raffey Cassidy, Stacy Martin, Isaach De Bankolé, Alessandro Nivola**

International Sales Agent: **Protagonist Pictures**  
US Sales Agent: **Creative Artists Agency (CAA)**

Director Brady Corbet (*Vox Lux*, TIFF '18) returns to the Festival with another bold vision — an American epic, starring Adrien Brody as a Jewish Hungarian architect who flees Europe at the end of the Second World War to rebuild his life in an unfamiliar land.

László Toth (Brody) arrives in America with barely anything to his name, eagerly hoping to soon be joined by his wife Erzsébet (Felicity Jones). Settling in Philadelphia, he has a not-so-gracious run-in with Harrison Lee Van Buren (Guy Pearce, also at this year's Festival in *The Shroud*), a wealthy businessman, after he becomes an unwitting client for a home renovation scheme. This serendipitous encounter leads to a more complex undertaking, as Van Buren and his son (Joe Alwyn) enlist László's brilliance for a monumental new project. It's a dream that he never thought he could relive, but it comes with a dark cost, as László sacrifices more and more of himself to complete his exacting vision.

Presented in 70mm at the Festival, this is the most ambitious project of Corbet — working again with frequent co-writer Mona Fastvold — to date. Brody gives a potent performance as a man trying to reconstruct his life, his love, and his home, all as part of the same process. *The Brutalist* takes us on a

journey that asks some stark questions about how the march of time impacts us, how certain events give shape to our lives, and how much of ourselves we put in our work.

JANE SCHOETTLE

**Brady Corbet** was born in Arizona. As an actor, he has appeared in many films including the 2014 Festival selections *Clouds of Sils Maria*, *Force Majeure*, *Eden*, *While We're Young* and *Escobar: Paradise Lost*. His directing credits include *The Childhood of a Leader* (15) and the Festival selection *Vox Lux* (18). *The Brutalist* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Babygirl

Halina Reijn

USA, 2024  
English  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
120 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **A24, 2AM, Man Up Films**  
Screenplay: **Halina Reijn**  
Cinematographer: **Jasper Wolf**  
Editor: **Matt Hannam**  
Production Designer: **Stephen Carter**  
Costume Designer: **Kurt Swanson, Bart Mueller**  
Sound: **Wyatt Tuzo**  
Original Score: **Cristobal Tapia de Veer**  
Principal Cast: **Nicole Kidman, Harris Dickinson, Antonio Banderas, Sophie Wilde**

Canadian Distributor: **Elevation Pictures**  
US Distributor: **A24**  
International Sales Agent: **A24**

When Romy, the high-powered executive played by Nicole Kidman in the thrilling, sensual *Babygirl*, starts cheating on her urbane theatre director husband (Antonio Banderas), it's not because their sex life has dried up. As the opening scene explicitly demonstrates, there's still significant heat between them. But when he goes to sleep, Romy sneaks out of the room to finish, alone, what she clearly couldn't achieve with him. Covering her mouth to stifle any noise, it's made excessively clear that this is someone who struggles to articulate her desire.

The movie doesn't let up from there. Gen-Z moralists who object to sex scenes are definitely not *Babygirl's* target audience. When Romy meets Samuel (Harris Dickinson), an impertinent intern at her company who can intuit more about her than she intends to share — and who's happy to take control — it's only a matter of time before they find themselves in a seedy hotel together. They wrestle, literally and figuratively, over a twisty power dynamic. Romy's age and position give her an advantage, but as Samuel reminds her, he could ruin her life with one phone call.

By some definitions, the film is an erotic thriller, but writer-director Halina Reijn (*Bodies Bodies Bodies*) is more interested in

exploring emotional truths than playing by genre rules. *Babygirl* may earn some comparisons to Steven Shainberg's *Secretary* (TIFF '02), but surface similarities aside, it's something entirely its own.

ANITA LEE

**Halina Reijn** is an actor, writer, and filmmaker who was born in Amsterdam. She's the director of the features *Instinct* (19), which played the Festival, and *Bodies Bodies Bodies* (22). *Babygirl* (24) is her latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## The End

Joshua Oppenheimer

DENMARK/GERMANY/IRELAND/ITALY/  
UNITED KINGDOM/SWEDEN, 2024  
English  
CANADIAN PREMIERE  
148 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: Final Cut for Real,  
The Match Factory, Wild Atlantic Pictures, Dorje Film,  
Moonspun Films, Anagram Sweden  
Executive Producer: Marcus Clausen, Waël Kabbani,  
Greg Moga, Michael Quintin, Melinda Quintin, Spencer  
Myers, David Unger, Amy Gardner, Ilya Katsnelson, Jean  
Doumanian  
Producer: Signe Byrge Sørensen, Joshua Oppenheimer,  
Tilda Swinton, Viola Fügen, Conor Barry, Flaminio Zadra,  
Tracy O'Riordan, Ann Lundberg  
Screenplay: Rasmus Heisterberg, Joshua Oppenheimer  
Cinematographer: Mikhail Krichman  
Editor: Niels Pagh Andersen  
Production Designer: Jette Lehmann  
Costume Designer: Frauke Firl  
Sound: Jörg Kidrowski, Henrik Garnov, Per Boström  
Original Score: Josh Schmidt, Marius de Vries  
Principal Cast: Tilda Swinton, George MacKay,  
Moses Ingram, Michael Shannon, Bronagh Gallagher,  
Tim McInnerny, Lennie James

Canadian Distributor: Elevation Pictures  
US Distributor: NEON  
International Sales Agent: The Match Factory

Best known for his groundbreaking documentary, *The Act of Killing* (TIFF '12), Joshua Oppenheimer makes his fiction feature debut with *The End*. It's a story about what seems to be the last remaining human family on earth, as they hide in an ornate bunker built deep inside a salt mine after environmental collapse has destroyed society. Oh, and it's also a sombre musical.

George MacKay plays the naive young man who was born in this bunker. In his 20 years of life, he has only heard stories of the outside world. He spends his days working on a dubious book with his father (Michael Shannon), a former energy tycoon, while his mother (Tilda Swinton, also at this year's Festival in *The Room Next Door*) frets over the upkeep of the many priceless paintings and artworks adorning their walls. It's a semblance of a normal (albeit affluent) life. But when a woman (Moses Ingram) from the outside arrives at their doorstep seeking refuge, the family's delicate dynamic begins to crumble.

*The End* is markedly different from other end-of-days stories. Not only does it offer characters who are haunted by the guilt of their role in it, but it also shows how easy it is to become part of a cloistered family if we're too afraid to confront the real world.

In between their weighty conversations, the mother, father, son, and woman all sing. And much like in Oppenheimer's previous work, music is used here as a way to ward off the horror of these characters' pasts while perpetuating the denial they continue to live in.

JANE SCHOETTLE

Joshua Oppenheimer was born in Texas and is a director and producer working in both documentary and fiction. He holds a BA from Harvard and a PhD from Central St. Martins College of Arts and Design in London. His directorial credits include the pseudo-documentary *The Entire History of the Louisiana Purchase* (98) and the documentaries and Festival selections *The Act of Killing* (12) and *The Look of Silence* (14). *The End* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Paul Anka: His Way

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John Maggio

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
100 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: PA Doc, LLC, Ark Media, LLC,  
Blue Ant Studios  
Executive Producer: Jo Henriquez, Dorin Razam,  
Zach Herrmann, Laura Michalchyshyn, Sam Sniderman,  
Irving Azoff, Larry Mestel, Charlie Corwin, Randy Lennox  
Producer: Caroline Kimmel, Monica Berra, John Maggio  
Cinematographer: Justin Zweifach  
Editor: Seth Bomse  
With: Paul Anka, Irving Azoff, Michele Kahl, Alicia Anka,  
Frankie Avalon, Bill Burr

US Sales Agent: United Talent Agency (UTA)

When setting out to make a documentary about Canadian-born singer-songwriter Paul Anka, award-winning director John Maggio had a Herculean task. How to properly capture a remarkable career spanning eight decades and filled with unprecedented global success that is still going strong?

Born in Ottawa, the son of Syrian/Lebanese immigrants, Anka exhibited musical talent early on. In an act of bravado and ambition, he borrowed money at 16 to head to New York City, and soon after exploded onto the charts with his first hit “Diana,” which was followed by more record-breaking titles. What set Anka apart from other teen idols of the day was his ability to write his own songs. While he toured the world and performed for millions, he simultaneously wrote for such luminaries as Frank Sinatra, Buddy Holly, Michael Jackson, Céline Dion, and, later, even Toronto’s own Drake. Anka’s ability to create across decades and genres has meant a catalogue of instantly recognizable music has been embedded in the hearts of several generations.

Besides its remarkable volume of archival footage, the singular feature here is Anka’s candour. The singer freely reveals previously unheard stories about everything from his business success to his mistakes (although he clearly never made the same one twice),

the pressures of fame on his first marriage, and numerous ribald recollections around his working relationships with other musical icons. *Paul Anka: His Way* holds fresh insight for longtime fans as well as newcomers ready to learn just how far-reaching this artist’s words have been through the years.

JANE SCHOETTLE

**John Maggio** is a documentary filmmaker who was born in Buffalo. His filmography includes *The Newspaperman: The Life and Times of Ben Bradlee* (17), *Panic: The Untold Story of the 2008 Financial Crisis* (18), and *The Perfect Weapon* (20). *Paul Anka: His Way* (24) is his latest film.

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PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## The Luckiest Man in America

Samir Oliveros

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
90 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Plenty Good, Fabula**  
Executive Producer: **Juan de Dios Larraín, Pablo Larraín, Andrew Hevia, Paul Walter Hauser, Ron Black, Sara McFarlane, Damiano Tucci, Tiziano Tucci, Sophia Banks, Divya Shahani, Arun Thapar, Roger Lolly, Juan Pablo Solano, Simón Beltrán**  
Producer: **Amanda Freedman**  
Screenplay: **Maggie Briggs, Samir Oliveros**  
Cinematographer: **Pablo Lozano**  
Editor: **Sebastián Hernández**  
Production Designer: **Lulú Salgado**  
Costume Designer: **Carolina Serna**  
Sound: **Andrés Velásquez**  
Original Score: **John Carroll Kirby**  
Principal Cast: **Paul Walter Hauser, Walton Goggins, Shamier Anderson, David Strathairn, Maisie Williams, Patti Harrison, Brian Geraghty, Haley Bennett, Johnny Knoxville, David Rysdahl, Shaunette Renée Wilson, Ricky Russert, Lilli Kay, James Wolk**

International Sales Agent: **Protagonist Pictures**  
US Sales Agent: **Creative Artists Agency (CAA)**

This stranger-than-fiction drama resurrects a hugely popular 1980s game show and the “luckiest man in America” who broke it. Directed by Samir Oliveros (*Bad Lucky Goat*) and featuring performances from Paul Walter Hauser (*Richard Jewell*), Walton Goggins, and David Strathairn, *The Luckiest Man in America* illuminates a forgotten turning point in television history, when a network executive took a gamble and inadvertently made an obsessive eccentric into a folk hero.

Michael Larson (Hauser) shouldn't even be there. An unemployed ice cream truck driver from Lebanon, Ohio, Michael only made it into auditions for Press Your Luck because he stole someone else's appointment. The show's casting director (an excellent Shamier Anderson) thinks Michael is a creep, but co-creator Bill Carruthers (Strathairn) likes Michael's chutzpah and sees him as a Middle-American everyman the audience can cheer for. The dark horse is in.

Michael fumbles through the first several minutes of play, but once host Peter Tomarken (Goggins) moves onto the second “spin” section of Press Your Luck, where contestants try to get a randomly lit electronic game board to stop on a winning tile, Michael suddenly can't lose. In fact, he quickly breaks

the show's record — before breaking its savings account. Is Michael cheating? Or does he understand something about Press Your Luck that no one has seen before?

Written by Oliveros and Maggie Briggs (TIFF '22's *Joyland*), the film ushers us behind the scenes of Press Your Luck's most infamous episode and speculates on Larson's motives. With his unruly mane and beard, and his thrift-store blazer and khaki shorts, Hauser's Michael is the embodiment of nerdy desperation, a man who has banked everything on the chance to win the American Dream as millions watch.

ROBYN CITIZEN

**Samir Oliveros** was born in Bogotá, Colombia. He has directed the TIFF Next Wave selection *Bad Lucky Goat* (18) and short films including *El Jardín* (18) and *Cactus Blossom* (19). *The Luckiest Man in America* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## Queer

### Luca Guadagnino

ITALY/USA, 2024  
 English  
 NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
 135 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **The Apartment** (a Fremantle Company), **Frenesy Film**, **Fremantle North America**, **Cinecittà SPA**, **Frame By Frame**  
 Executive Producer: **Justin Kuritzkes**, **Christian Vesper**, **James Grauerholz**, **Peter Spears**, **Elena Recchia**, **Emanuela Matranga**  
 Producer: **Lorenzo Mieli**, **Luca Guadagnino**  
 Screenplay: **Justin Kuritzkes**  
 Cinematographer: **Sayombhu Mukdeeprom**  
 Editor: **Marco Costa**  
 Production Designer: **Stefano Baisi**  
 Costume Designer: **Jonathan Anderson**  
 Sound: **Craig Berkey**, **Alessandro Bonfanti**  
 Original Score: **Trent Reznor**, **Atticus Ross**  
 Principal Cast: **Daniel Craig**, **Drew Starkey**, **Lesley Manville**, **Jason Schwartzman**, **Henrique Zaga**, **Omar Apollo**, **Andra Ursuta**, **Andres Duprat**, **Ariel Shulman**, **Drew Droege**, **Michael Borremans**, **David Lowery**, **Lisandro Alonso**, **Colin Bates**.

US Sales Agent: **Creative Artists Agency (CAA)**

Brilliant, audacious author, meet brilliant, audacious director: it takes chutzpah to translate the work of William S. Burroughs for the screen, but Oscar-nominated filmmaker Luca Guadagnino's (*Call Me by Your Name*, TIFF '17) spin on the Beat legend's autobiographical novel matches its source material in vulnerability and taboo-smashing adventurousness. Starring Daniel Craig (*Knives Out*, TIFF '19) and featuring supporting turns from Jason Schwartzman (*Quiz Lady*, TIFF '23) and Oscar nominee Lesley Manville (*Phantom Thread*), *Queer* is a hallucinogenic odyssey bathed in aching desire.

Lee (Craig) mingles with the expatriate set in postwar Mexico City, wandering its streets, frequenting its gay bars, and ingesting whatever illicit substances are available. He is a consummate raconteur who has no trouble finding an audience, but he is also a desperately lonely, middle-aged addict with an alarming fondness for guns.

Early in *Queer*, Lee sets his sights on a journey to the Amazon in search of a potentially telepathic drug — and he wants handsome young bi-curious Oklahoman Allerton (Drew Starkey, *The Hate U Give*, TIFF '18) to accompany him. Their travels will yield a string of unexpected encounters

and provide Lee with sobering lessons in what Burroughs dubbed “the algebra of need.”

Adapted by Justin Kuritzkes (who wrote Guadagnino's *Challengers*), *Queer* is both faithful to the book and a radical reimagining. Period detail is offset by anachronistic musical choices, while an eerie epilogue alludes to the real-life tragedy that prompted Burroughs' writing career. Through it all, Craig makes Lee his own, creating a fully lived-in protagonist whose unruly obsessions lead to something akin to enlightenment.

ANITA LEE

**Luca Guadagnino** was born in Palermo and studied literature and cinema history at the Sapienza University of Rome. His directorial credits include *The Protagonists* (99), *Melissa P.* (05), and the Festival selections *I Am Love* (09), *A Bigger Splash* (15), and *Call Me By Your Name* (17). *Queer* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Shell

### Max Minghella

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
100 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Range, Blank Tape, Love & Squalor, Dark Castle Entertainment  
Executive Producer: Jamie Bell, Peter Micelli, Daryl Katz, Chloe Katz, Paul Marcaccio  
Producer: Fred Berger, Max Minghella, Brian Kavanaugh-Jones, Elisabeth Moss, Lindsey McManus, Hal Sadoff, Norman Golightly  
Screenplay: Jack Stanley  
Cinematographer: Drew Daniels  
Editor: Gardner Gould  
Production Designer: Susie Mancini  
Costume Designer: Mirren Gordon-Crozier  
Sound: Óscar Grau Martin, P.K. Hooker, Joel Dougherty  
Original Score: Eldad Guetta  
Principal Cast: Elisabeth Moss, Kate Hudson, Kaia Gerber, Arian Moayed, Este Haim, Lionel Boyce, Amy Landecker, Elizabeth Berkley

Canadian Distributor: Elevation Pictures  
International Sales Agent: Black Bear International  
US Sales Agent: WME, Creative Artists Agency

If you could restore youthful beauty and guarantee longevity by committing to a few days of mysterious treatments, would you? Would you trust your life and health to science and technology that might be more hype than healthy?

Samantha (Elisabeth Moss) is thinking it over. She's a slightly unkempt, earnest, talented actress who can't seem to nail the jobs she wants, and both her confidence and bank account are shrinking. She also looks slightly older than her competition, so at the prompting of her agent and the numerous neon billboards touting its miraculous outcomes, Samantha commits to a treatment from Shell. It's a success and the result is a glowing, more invigorated Samantha with a new lease on life.

Enter Zoe Simpson (Kate Hudson) the glamorous CEO of Shell, the living embodiment of her products. Zoe offers to take Samantha on as a protégé and soon the actress's star starts to rise. But Samantha also starts to get suspicious about missing friend Chloe (Kaia Gerber), some unusual symptoms she started exhibiting, and what might truly be going on in the laboratories of Shell. Samantha's trepidation and Zoe's paranoia escalate into a frantic cat-and-mouse game that climaxes in a high-stakes confrontation with surprising results.

Weaving together genre elements and significant social commentary, director Max Minghella (*Teen Spirit*, TIFF '18) finds a way to vividly entertain while inviting us to think about the outsized value we put on physical beauty and how twisted we may find ourselves becoming in the efforts to pursue it.

JANE SCHOETTLE

**Max Minghella** is an English director, producer, and actor. His acting credits include *The Social Network* (10), *The Ides of March* (11), *The Handmaid's Tale* (17-22), and *Babylon* (22). His debut feature *Teen Spirit* (18) played the Festival. *Shell* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## The Salt Path

Marianne Elliott

UNITED KINGDOM, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
115 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Number 9 Films, Shadowplay Features**  
Executive Producer: **Kristin Irving, Nick Sidi, Chris Harper, Norman Merry, Peter Hampden, Thorsten Schumacher, Jonathan Lynch-Staunton**  
Producer: **Elizabeth Karlsen, Stephen Woolley, Lloyd Levin, Beatriz Levin**  
Screenplay: **Rebecca Lenkiewicz**  
Cinematographer: **Hélène Louvart**  
Editor: **Lucia Zucchetti, Gareth C. Scales**  
Production Designer: **Christina Moore**  
Costume Designer: **Matthew Price**  
Sound: **Martin Trevis**  
Original Score: **Chris Roe**  
Principal Cast: **Gillian Anderson, Jason Isaacs, James Lance, Hermione Norris**

International Sales Agent: **Rocket Science**

Ray (Gillian Anderson) and Moth (Jason Isaacs) are out of time, money, and hope. They've been forced out of the B&B that was going to provide for their retirement, with nowhere to go, and Moth has recently been diagnosed with a terminal neurodegenerative disease. And that is how, in a moment of panic, they decide to walk the Salt Path, a 630-mile trek along the English coast from Dorset to Somerset. Are they trying to outrun an existential crisis or embarking on one last adventure? Does it even matter?

Adapted by Rebecca Lenkiewicz (*Ida*, *Disobedience*, *She Said*) from the 2018 memoir by Raynor Winn, *The Salt Path* marks the moviemaking debut of four-time Tony Award-winning theatre director Marianne Elliott. But this is no chamber drama. Elliott and her crew filmed in some breathtakingly beautiful locations — though not always in the finest of weather. This is a bracingly cinematic tale of a couple struggling against the elements and trying not to turn on one another, while the whole world seems bent on beating them down.

Anderson and Isaacs put everything they have into their performances, conveying physical exhaustion on their faces as much as their bodies. The two stars carry one another like the rucksacks on their backs,

trudging ever forward as the characters learn the cycles of coastal weather and slowly shed their expectations of luxury or even comfort. *The Salt Path* is a story of who we become when everything else is stripped away — and who we find walking alongside us, if we're very lucky.

JANE SCHOETTLE

**Marianne Elliott** is an acclaimed theatre director who has directed shows including *War Horse*, *Angels in America*, *Company*, and *Death of a Salesman* in the West End and on Broadway. She was an associate director at the National Theatre for over 10 years, and is an Officer of the Order of the British Empire. *The Salt Path* (24) is her filmmaking debut.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## On Swift Horses

Daniel Minahan

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
117 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Ley Line Entertainment, FirstGen Content, Cor Cordium, Wavelength, The Dan Corp**  
Executive Producer: **Nate Kamiya, David Darby, Claude Amadeo, Randal Sandler, Chris Triana, Jenifer Westphal, Joe Plummer, Christine Vachon, Mason Plotts, Alvaro R. Valente, Lauren Shelton, Jeffrey Penman, Jacob Elordi, Daisy Edgar-Jones**  
Producer: **Peter Spears, Daniel Minahan, Tim Headington, Mollye Asher, Theresa Steele Page, Michael D'Alto**  
Screenplay: **Bryce Kass**  
Cinematographer: **Luc Montpellier**  
Editor: **Joe Murphy, Robert Frazen, Kate Sanford**  
Production Designer: **Erin Magill**  
Costume Designer: **Jeriana San Juan**  
Sound: **Sean O'Malley**  
Original Score: **Mark Orton**  
Principal Cast: **Daisy Edgar-Jones, Jacob Elordi, Will Poulter, Diego Calva, Sasha Calle**

International Sales Agent: **Black Bear International**  
US Sales Agent: **UTA Independent Film Group**

Life pushes some to seek security, others to surrender to chance. This gorgeous adaptation of Shannon Pufahl's 2019 novel from director Daniel Minahan and screenwriter Bryce Kass extends sympathy to both sensibilities, even when the former can be stifling and the latter can break your heart.

It's the 1950s. Newlyweds Muriel (Daisy Edgar-Jones) and Lee (Will Poulter) leave their Kansas home for a new life in San Diego, with steady jobs and a house they can start a family in. Lee's brother Julius (Jacob Elordi, also at the Festival in *Oh, Canada*), meanwhile, returns from the Korean War without any long-term plans. A deft hand at poker, he winds up in Las Vegas, where he does pit surveillance at a casino and befriends Henry (Diego Calva, TIFF '15's *Te prometo anarquía*), a handsome Chicano who, like Julius, loves a good gamble.

All this time, Muriel and Julius correspond, though neither realize how much they have in common. Bored with waiting tables, Muriel secretly begins playing the horses — and winning. What's more, Muriel and Julius find themselves on parallel journeys involving clandestine transgressions that could place them in greater danger than either bargained for.

Shot by Canadian maestro Luc Montpellier (TIFF '22's *Women Talking*), *On Swift Horses*

finds rapturous beauty in the décor and accoutrements of the era. Yet what lingers most is the power of its characters' yearnings, whether secret or boldly declared. This is a story about risking everything for love, only to gain self-knowledge along the way.

ROBYN CITIZEN

**Daniel Minahan** is a writer and director. He has directed the film *Series 7: The Contenders* (01) and episodes of many acclaimed TV shows, including *The L Word* (04-05), *True Blood* (08-12), *Homeland* (13), *Game of Thrones* (11-13), and *Fellow Travelers* (23). *On Swift Horses* (24) is his feature debut.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## Hold Your Breath

Karrie Crouse, Will Joines

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
94 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Mad Dog Films, Secret Engine**  
Executive Producer: **Sarah Paulson**  
Producer: **Alix Madigan-Yorkin, Lucas Joaquin**  
Screenplay: **Karrie Crouse**  
Cinematographer: **Zoë White**  
Editor: **Luke Ciarrochi**  
Production Designer: **Tim Grimes**  
Costume Designer: **Colin Wilkes**  
Sound: **Andrejs Prokopenko**  
Original Score: **Colin Stetson**  
Principal Cast: **Sarah Paulson, Amiah Miller, Annaleigh Ashford, Alona Robbins, Ebon Moss-Bachrach**

Canadian Distributor: **Searchlight Pictures**  
US Distributor: **Searchlight Pictures**

Sarah Paulson won a Tony Award this year for her lead performance in *Appropriate*, and has done memorable work in such award-winning art-house dramas as Steve McQueen's *12 Years a Slave* (TIFF '13) and Todd Haynes' *Carol*. But many will know her best for her work in chilling genre fare such as *American Gothic* and *American Horror Story*. While *Hold Your Breath* is more ghost story than horror, it benefits from Paulson's particular talent for the unsettling.

In dust bowl Oklahoma of the 1930s, a mother (Paulson) nears the breaking point as she tries to protect her daughters from deadly windstorms and the impact of her own harrowing past. When the older girl tells the legend of the Grey Man to the younger one, the story slips under the skin of the whole family. The Grey Man is a spirit carried like dust in the wind, breathed in, and never to be shaken.

Written by Karrie Crouse and directed by Crouse and Will Joines, *Hold Your Breath* perches between the supernatural and the psychological, building suspense through Paulson's layered performance and an enigmatic turn by Ebon Moss-Bachrach (*The Bear*) as a mysterious, threatening character. Transplanting gothic horror to the story's parched, Midwest landscapes gives

the film a deliciously disorienting feel, as if its spookiest elements could be dream or faded memory, or all too frighteningly real.

CAMERON BAILEY

**Karrie Crouse** is a filmmaker, screenwriter, and actor. She has written episodes of *Westworld* (20) and co-wrote the short film *Hotel Y* (12) and the feature *Pilgrim Song* (12). With Will Joines, she has directed the short films *Be Still* (11) and *The Push* (16). *Hold Your Breath* (24) is their feature directorial debut.

**Will Joines** is a filmmaker and screenwriter. He has directed the short films *Fallout* (03) and *The Cellar* (2003). With Karrie Crouse, he directed the short films *Be Still* (11) and *The Push* (16). *Hold Your Breath* (24) is their feature directorial debut.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





A stylized graphic of a classical column. The column is composed of a yellow shaft with vertical white stripes, a white capital, and a white abacus. The word "PLATFORM" is written in large, bold, white, sans-serif capital letters across the top of the column. The background is a solid red color, with a black semi-circular archway above the column. A thin, light purple line curves along the left side of the red background.

**PLATFORM**



## Daniela Forever

Nacho Vigalondo

SPAIN/BELGIUM, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
113 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Sayaka Producciones, Wrong Men, Señor & Señora, Mediarest  
Executive Producer: Nahikari Ipiña  
Producer: Nick Spicer, Nahikari Ipiña, Nacho Vigalondo, Aram Tertzakian, Todd Brown, Maxime Cottray  
Screenplay: Nacho Vigalondo  
Cinematographer: Jon D. Dominguez  
Editor: Carolina Martinez Urbina  
Production Designer: Idoia Esteban  
Costume Designer: Alberto Valcárcel  
Sound: David Vrankan  
Original Score: Hidrogenesse  
Principal Cast: Henry Golding, Beatrice Grannò, Aura Garrido, Nathalie Poza

International Sales Agent: XYZ Films  
US Sales Agent: XYZ Films

Nacho Vigalondo's (*Colossal*, TIFF '16) signature blend of wit, whimsy, and darkly provocative allegory is in full effect in his latest film, which soulfully ruminates on love, grief, and the toxic ramifications of making all your dreams come true.

We meet Nick (Henry Golding) in Madrid, adrift in a deep-seated malaise over the sudden death of his lover Daniela (Beatrice Grannò). A concerned friend enrolls him in a clinical trial for a drug that imbues its participants with fully lucid dreams — in an effort to sublimate his woe. The experiment goes awry when Nick fails to adhere to the prescription. With his new-found ability to control his dreams, he sets out to rebuild his relationship with Daniela in an idealized fantasy of his own design.

Articulating Nick's fog of depression by shooting the "real world" in affectless digital video and a boxy ratio, Vigalondo delightfully distinguishes Nick's dreams by expanding their frames to vibrant high-definition cinemascope, with their subjects surreally bathed in a warm glow of Mediterranean sunlight, no matter the time of day. But while these dreams are at first limited to the boundaries of Nick's own memories, with Daniela appearing as a mere palimpsest of the woman Nick loved, the verisimilitude of

this realm enriches with each slumber, and Daniela begins to exhibit a gradual, disquieting autonomy that raises thorny ethical implications.

What first proceeds in the spirit of *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* soon recalls *Inception* and *Solaris* as reality is torn asunder, and Vigalondo cements his status as a gifted genre fabulist. Few are as adept in deploying high-concept science fiction to so cannily probe the human condition.

PETER KUPLOWSKY

**Nacho Vigalondo** is a Madrid-based writer and director. He's the director of several short films, including the Oscar-nominated *7:35 in the Morning* (03), as well as the features *Timecrimes* (07), and the Festival selections *Extraterrestrial* (11) and *Colossal* (16). *Daniela Forever* (24) is his latest film.





## Pedro Páramo

Rodrigo Prieto

MEXICO, 2024

Spanish

WORLD PREMIERE

123 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Redrum, Woo Films

Executive Producer: Rodrigo Prieto, Manuel García-Rulfo,

Tenoch Huerta Mejía, Gildardo Martínez

Producer: Stacy Perskie, Rafael Ley

Screenplay: Mateo Gil

Cinematographer: Rodrigo Prieto, Nico Aguilar

Editor: Soledad Salfate

Production Designer: Carlos Y. Jaques, Eugenio Caballero

Costume Designer: Ana Terrazas

Sound: Severin Favriau

Original Score: Gustavo Santaolalla

Principal Cast: Manuel García-Rulfo, Tenoch Huerta,

Dolores Herediam, Ilse Salas, Héctor Kotsifakis,

Mayra Batalla

Canadian Distributor: Netflix

US Distributor: Netflix

International Sales Agent: Netflix

U.S. Sales Agent: Netflix

A sumptuous adaptation of Juan Rulfo's 1955 literary masterpiece, *Pedro Páramo* marks the auspicious feature directorial debut of Rodrigo Prieto, the Oscar-nominated cinematographer known for his collaborations with Martin Scorsese and Alejandro González Iñárritu.

Determined to fulfill his mother's dying wish, Juan Preciado (Tenoch Huerta) travels to Comala to find the father he never knew, a wealthy landowner named Pedro Páramo (Manuel García-Rulfo). But in Comala, nothing is as it seems. Juan speaks with someone, only to be informed that person has died. Deserted streets are suddenly teeming with life. Figures dissolve into soil or are washed away in a deluge. The closer Juan gets to locating his father, the more the realm of the dead eclipses that of the living, while Pedro Páramo's infamy as a merciless tyrant only burgeons. Will Juan's spirit be absorbed into the phantasmagorical tapestry of this place where the voices of those who have passed forever echo in the wind?

Working from Mateo Gil's remarkably faithful screenplay, Prieto casts an intoxicating spell, fusing the carnal with the ethereal, while fluidly darting back and forth in history, between the 1950s and the early days of the Mexican Revolution. A massive

influence on Gabriel García Márquez, *Pedro Páramo* has long been considered the prototype for magic realism and the most important novel in Mexican history. With Prieto's spectacular iteration of this canonical text, Rulfo's innovative ghost story can now haunt a wider audience.

DIANA CADAVID

**Rodrigo Prieto** is a renowned, Academy Award-winning director of photography. His many credits as cinematographer include Alejandro González Iñárritu's *Amores Perros* (00) Ang Lee's *Brokeback Mountain* (05), and Ben Affleck's *Argo* (12), all of which played the Festival, as well as Martin Scorsese's *Killers of the Flower Moon* (23), and Greta Gerwig's *Barbie* (23). He's the director of the short films *Likeness* (13) and *R&R* (19). *Pedro Páramo* (24) is his feature directorial debut.



## Polvo serán They Will Be Dust

Carlos Marques-Marcet

SPAIN/ITALY/SWITZERLAND, 2024

Spanish, English  
WORLD PREMIERE

106 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Lastor Media, Kino Produzioni, Alina Film**  
Executive Producer: **Ariadna Dot, Lara Costa**  
Producer: **Tono Folguera, Ariadna Dot, Giovanni Pompili, Eugenia Mumenthaler, David Epiney**  
Screenplay: **Carlos Marques-Marcet, Clara Roquet, Coral Cruz**  
Cinematographer: **Gabriel Sandru**  
Editor: **Chiara Dainese**  
Production Designer: **Laia Ateca**  
Costume Designer: **Pau Aulí**  
Sound: **Xavier Lavorel**  
Original Score: **Maria Arnal**  
Principal Cast: **Alfredo Castro, Ángela Molina, Mònica Almirall**

International Sales Agent: **Latido Films**

In his latest feature, Carlos Marqués-Marcet, whose 2014 film *10.000 KM* won the Goya for best new director, treats the audience to a unique, daring, and rewarding look at our unavoidable death. When Claire (Ángela Molina) decides she doesn't want to passively wait for her illness to take away all of her agency, her longtime partner Flavio (Alfredo Castro) sets in motion their plan to end their lives together in Switzerland. Unequal parts contemporary dance-musical and taut ensemble drama with a theatrical — at times almost comical — intensity, *They Will Be Dust* reaches for the raw emotional core of humanity in all its inherent messiness.

The couple are so consumed by the prospect they're facing that they somehow forget about everyone else. Their loving daughter Violeta, who becomes the involuntary mediator between them and everything they leave behind, struggles to find her place in their story. And the rest of the adult siblings scramble to make space for the new realities when they arrive from afar startled and confused to join in the hasty wedding their elders wish to throw for themselves.

Credit goes to Marqués-Marcet for finding the right people for his bold, fresh take on such daunting material. Molina and Castro are at the top of their game dealing

with visceral fear, passion, and tenderness, while finding strength in the most vulnerable moments to inscribe their tale in the canon of cinema that deals with challenging, transcendental truths.

DIANA CADAVID

**Carlos Marqués-Marcet** was born in Barcelona and studied directing at UCLA. His debut feature *10.000KM* (14) won the Goya Award for Best New Director. He has also directed the films *Anchor and Hope* (17) and *The Days to Come* (19). *They Will Be Dust* (24) is his latest film.





## Hiver à Sokcho

### Winter in Sokcho

Koya Kamura

FRANCE, 2024  
French, Korean  
WORLD PREMIERE  
104 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Offshore, Keystone Films**  
Producer: **Fabrice Prél-Cléach, Yoon-Seok Nam**  
Screenplay: **Koya Kamura, Stéphane Ly-Cuong, Elisa Shua-Dusapin**  
Cinematographer: **Elodie Tahtane**  
Animator: **Agnès Patron**  
Editor: **Antoine Flandre**  
Production Designer: **Hyein Ki**  
Costume Designer: **Suhee Hong**  
Sound: **Didier Falk, Clémence Louesdon, Kinane Moualla**  
Original Score: **Delphine Malausséna**  
Principal Cast: **Roschdy Zem, Bella Kim, Mi-Hyeon Park, Tae-Ho Ryu, Doyu Gong, Kyung-Soon Jung**

International Sales Agent: **Be For Films**

In the bitter winter months, Soo-Ha (Bella Kim) lives a peaceful but dreary existence in the seaside tourist village of Sokcho, in South Korea. But all that is disrupted by the appearance of an eccentric middle-aged French artist, Yan Kerrand (Roschdy Zem, *Other People's Children*, TIFFF '22), at the lodging house where she works. He is unaware that his presence opens up past wounds for the young woman, whose French father left her mother before she was born.

Kerrand, thirsty for new inspiration for his next piece, and Soo-Ha, looking to fill a void in her life, soon embark on a sightseeing journey. Amid their travels, Soo-Ha attempts to unpack her mother's narrative of abandonment and her own feelings as an outsider, and finds with Kerrand a fragile bond, one that threatens to disintegrate when spring inevitably arrives.

Masterfully blending animation and live action, director Koya Kamura's feature debut is an unconventional love story. It is also a search for identity and an exploration of the scars of absence, manifest in the experiences of transient foreign workers, navigated by passing-through tourists who find unexpected connections, and endured by a divided nation itself.

Breakout actor Kim and the always-compelling Zem melt the coldness of the winter in Sokcho with memorable performances and a rapport that is both warm and bristling with an indeterminate tension.

ROBYN CITIZEN

**Koya Kamura** is a French-Japanese filmmaker based in Paris. He studied film at Paris Diderot University and Keio University in Tokyo. He has directed the short film *Homesick* (19). *Winter in Sokcho* (24) is his debut feature film.





## Mr. K

Tallulah H. Schwab

NETHERLANDS, BELGIUM, NORWAY, 2024

English

WORLD PREMIERE

94 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Lemming Film, A Private View, Take 1, The Film Kitchen

Executive Producer: Turid Øversveen, Katja Harterink, Mieke Debruijn, Els van de Vorst, Frank Klein, Martin Koolhoven, Tine Klint, Martien Uyttendaele, Dirk de Lille, Olivier Mortagne, Edgar Daarnhouwer, Niki Leskinen, Roosa Toivonen, Ari Tolppanen

Producer: Erik Glijnis, Leontine Petit, Dries Phlypo, Judy Tossell, Jan van der Zanden, Ineke Kanters

Screenplay: Tallulah H. Schwab

Cinematographer: Frank Griebbe

Editor: Maarten Janssens

Production Designer: Maarten Piersma, Manolito Glas

Costume Designer: Charlotte Willems

Sound: Nils Viken, Bror Kristiansen

Original Score: Stijn Cole

Principal Cast: Crispin Glover, Sunnyi Melles, Fionnula Flanagan, Bjørn Sundquist, Dearbhla Molloy, Barbara Sarafian, Jan Gunnar Røise, Esmée van Kampen, Sam Louwyck

International Sales Agent: LevelK

Even though the title character of *Mr. K* lacks a full surname, it's easy to imagine what it could be. Inventive and surreal, this second feature by Amsterdam-based director Tallulah H. Schwab playfully evokes Franz Kafka's tales of hapless characters finding themselves in increasingly strange, bewildering, and sinister circumstances. And, as is the case in those literary counterparts, the predicament unfolding on screen serves as a potent allegory about conditions facing people living in less outlandish scenarios.

The ordeal for *Mr. K*'s misfortunate protagonist — a travelling magician played by Crispin Glover in one of the richest performances in his long and continually surprising career — begins when he checks into a once-stately hotel. The following morning, Mr. K is understandably confused by his inability to find the exit. Then again, the magician doesn't have much time to search for it due to the demands imposed on him by the hotel's other inhabitants, a colourful gallery that includes a rather intimidating troupe of musicians, a bustling crew of kitchen workers, and a very classy elderly guest played by the great Fionnula Flanagan.

Though Glover's Mr. K expresses admirable patience and fortitude in the face of many curveballs, he inevitably starts to

come undone. Conversely, Schwab grows ever more exacting in her control of the film's unabashedly peculiar tone. Evocative of the early hits of Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro and the hotel nightmares of Stanley Kubrick and David Lynch, the ingenious visual design is another reason that *Mr. K* is well worth getting lost in.

JASON ANDERSON

Tallulah H. Schwab was born in Oslo and now lives in Amsterdam. She studied writing, editing, and directing at Netherlands Film Academy. Her directorial credits include the short *The First Cut* (11), the TV series *Pie* (14), and the feature *Confetti Harvest* (14). *Mr. K* (24) is her latest film.





## Viktor

Olivier Sarbil

UKRAINE/USA, 2024  
Ukrainian, Russian  
WORLD PREMIERE  
89 minutes | Black & White/DCP 4K

Production Company: Protozoa Pictures, Real Lava, Newen Studios, Time Studios, Impact Partners  
Executive Producer: Ari Handel, Romain Bessi, Jenny Raskin, GERALYN WHITE DREYFUS, Mike Beck, Loren Hammonds, Mariia Antypenko, Ilya Kaminsky, Lani Levine  
Producer: Darren Aronofsky, Dylan Golden, Brendan Naylor, Sigrid Dyekjær, Philippe Levasseur, Olivier Sarbil  
Cinematographer: Olivier Sarbil  
Editor: Atanas Georgiev  
Sound: Peter Albrechtsen, Nicolas Becker, Heikki Kossi  
Original Score: DISASTERPEACE  
With: Viktor Korotovsky

Add International Sales Agent: Cinephil  
US Sales Agent: Cinephil

Elegantly fusing rigorous reportage with cinematic subjectivity, this bold documentary from filmmaker and veteran war photographer Olivier Sarbil offers a deeply personal perspective on the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Crafting an audiovisual experience carefully designed to match that of its subject, *Viktor* is an intimate portrait of a deaf person navigating chaos and violence.

Viktor lives with his mother in Kharkiv. Having lost his hearing at age five, he has dedicated his life to visual representation, creating beautiful black-and-white photographs of the world around him. Heavily influenced by his late father, who taught him “the military spirit,” and by Miyamoto Musashi’s canonical *The Strategy of the Samurai*, Viktor aspires to a noble warrior philosophy.

But his disability means he can’t find work and, when war breaks out, he is frustrated by his inability to defend his country. That is, until he convinces the local army to take him on as a volunteer photographer. What Viktor captures with his camera, both among desperate civilians and those fighting on the frontlines, is startling, vital, and palpably humane.

Director Sarbil himself suffered an injury that affected his hearing, and this

film — which uses the same Oscar-winning sound design team that worked on TIFF ’19 Platform contender *Sound of Metal* — brilliantly evokes the winnowed voices and muffled rumbles of Viktor’s aural environment. Just don’t mistake Sarbil’s mimetic of sound as anything resembling pity. As Viktor himself explains, silence is not the absence of something. It is the presence of the self.

THOM POWERS

**Olivier Sarbil** is a French documentary filmmaker and cinematographer now based in New York. For over two decades, he has worked as a conflict photographer. *Viktor* (24) is his latest film.



## Triumph

Petar Valchanov,  
Kristina Grozeva,

BULGARIA/GREECE, 2024  
Bulgarian  
WORLD PREMIERE  
97 minutes | Colour / DCP

Production Company: **Abraxas Film, Graal Films**  
Producer: **Konstantina Stavrianou, Irini Vougioukalou, Kristina Grozeva, Petar Valchanov, Maria Bakalova, Julian Kostov**  
Screenplay: **Kristina Grozeva, Decho Taralezhkov, Petar Valchanov**  
Cinematographer: **Krum Rodriguez**  
Editor: **Yorgos Mavropsaridis**  
Production Designer: **Ivelina Mineva**  
Costume Designer: **Ivelina Mineva**  
Sound: **Ivan Andreev, Kostas Varympopiotis**  
Original Score: **Theodore OikonomouIvan**  
Principal Cast: **Maria Bakalova, Margita Gosheva, Julian Vergov, Julian Kostov, Stanislav Ganchev, Ivan Savov**

International Sales Agent: **Bankside Films**

With freedom still a new concept after the fall of communism in the 1990s, a Bulgarian task force of high-ranking military officials is charged by the ailing General Zlatev (Ivan Savov) and his personal psychic Pirina (Margita Gosheva) with a highly classified mission. The head of the Army's Science Department, Colonel Platnikov (Julian Vergov), tasked as leader (despite his reasonable objections) is, due to unforeseen circumstances, accompanied by his precocious daughter Slava (the scene-stealing Maria Bakalova).

As picks and shovels pierce the ground, Pirina declares Slava a powerful "signal conductor," able to communicate with an alien that is guiding the team in unearthing a powerful artifact that will change the future of humanity. It soon becomes clear the expedition will not reveal a powerful cosmic relic (nor a space capsule or a fountain of youth), but perhaps something else much more realistic — and previously completely unknown — will be unearthed.

This latest work from co-directors Kristina Grozeva and Petar Valchanov, combined with their previous films *The Lesson* (TIFF '14) and *Glory* (2016), forms a trilogy inspired by sensationalist news stories from their homeland that prove once and for all that truth is

stranger than fiction. *Triumph*, absurd as it seems, is based on true events (yes, really!).

While exploring the legacy of communism and the confusing and turbulent transition to democracy, *Triumph* also provides a poignant reflection on the present, where nationalist grandiose desires and military madness continues to reverberate worldwide.

DOROTA LECH

**Petar Valchanov** holds a degree in film and television from the National Academy of Theatre and Film Arts in Sofia. With Kristina Grozeva, he co-directed the documentary *Parable of Life* (10), the short *Jump* (12), the feature *Glory* (16), and the Festival entries *The Lesson* (14) and *The Father* (19). *Triumph* (24) is his latest film.

**Kristina Grozeva** was born in Sofia and holds a degree in journalism from the University of Sofia. With Petar Valchanov, she co-directed the documentary *Parable of Life* (10), the short *Jump* (12), the feature *Glory* (16), and the Festival selections *The Lesson* (14) and *The Father* (19). *Triumph* (24) is her latest film.





## Paying For It

Sook-Yin Lee

CANADA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
85 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Wildling Pictures, Hawkeye Pictures  
Executive Producer: Dan Beirne, John Cameron Mitchell  
Producer: Matt Code, Aeschylus Poulos, Sonya Di Rienzo  
Screenplay: Sook-Yin Lee, Joanne Sarazen  
Cinematographer: Gayle Ye  
Editor: Anna Catley  
Production Designer: Olivia D'Oliveira  
Costume Designer: Cameron Lee  
Sound: Rosángela Hernández Gómez, David Gertsman  
Original Score: Dylan Gamble, Sook-Yin Lee  
Principal Cast: Dan Beirne, Emily Lê, Andrea Werhun

Canadian Distributor: Paying For It Productions

Chester Brown's 2011 graphic novel told the story of his own journey into johnhood after the dissolution of his romantic life with longtime partner Sook-Yin Lee. More than a decade later, Lee, working with co-writer Joanne Sarazen (*Tammy's Always Dying*, TIFF '19), finds a cinematic analogue for Brown's framing and compositions — a little gray, a bit flat — while bringing his characters to three-dimensional life. The result is a synthesis of Brown's confessional storytelling and Lee's auto-fictional style.

Dan Beirne (*The Twentieth Century*, TIFF '19; *I Like Movies*, TIFF '22), plays Chester, who's liberated by the idea of sexual relationships without any emotional entanglements; if anything, he's slightly befuddled by the way everyone asks him if he knows what he's doing.

Emily Lê (*Riceboy Sleeps* TIFF '22) is Lee's alter ego Sonny, who follows her open heart into every new opportunity and expects Chester to give her the space to figure out each resulting reconfiguration of their relationship. (Lee doesn't let herself off the hook for the pain she causes, either.)

They're surrounded by a cast of gifted character actors, most vividly *Modern Whore* author-producer Andrea Werhun as a culturally literate outcall worker whose

genuine chemistry with Chester might challenge his new-found sexual liberation. (Or not.)

Lee connects the past with the present, bringing together underground artists and innovative cross-generational musicians to explore ideas around labour, sex work, queer culture, and forward-thinking freedoms. The result is a story only she could bring to the screen ... because it's her story, too.

NORM WILNER

**Sook-Yin Lee** is a Toronto-based filmmaker, actor, writer, musician, and broadcaster. She has acted in films including *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (01), *Shortbus* (06), *Jack* (13), and *Darkest Miriam* (24), and has contributed music to *Antiviral* (12) and *Infinity Pool* (23). Her directorial credits include *Year of the Carnivore* (09), which played the Festival, and *Octavio is Dead!* (18). *Paying For It* (24) is her latest film.



## 女兒的女兒 Daughter's Daughter

Huang Xi

TAIWAN, 2024  
Mandarin, English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
126 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Sun Lok Productions  
Executive Producer: Hou Hsiao-hsien, Sylvia Chang  
Producer: Shao Dongxu, Liu Hsin-li  
Screenplay: Huang Xi  
Cinematographer: Yao Hung-i  
Editor: Liao Ching-song  
Production Designer: Hwang Wern-ying  
Costume Designer: Shirley Kao  
Sound: Agnes Liu, Chu Shih-yi  
Original Score: Kay Huang, Point Hsu, Angu Liang, Mukio Chang  
Principal Cast: Sylvia Chang, Karena Lam, Alannah Ong, Winston Chao, Eugenie Liu, Tracy Chou

International Sales Agent: Rediance

This emotionally faceted, masterfully assembled second feature from Huang Xi (*Missing Johnny*) confirms the young writer-director's status as the bold new voice in Taiwanese cinema. Starring screen legend Sylvia Chang, *Daughter's Daughter* is both a character study that sheds light on what it means to pursue independence as an older woman and a highly contemporary moral tale that poses dizzying questions about parental responsibility.

Jin Aixia (Chang) has two daughters, but Emma (Karena Lam), who grew up in New York, and Fan Zuer (Eugenie Liu), who grew up in Taipei, never knew about each other until well into adulthood. When Zuer and her partner decide to try and get pregnant via in vitro fertilization, they wind up travelling to the US for treatments. Tragically, the couple die there in an accident, but their embryo remains alive and well — and Aixia is left as its legal guardian. Arriving in New York overwhelmed with grief, she is faced with the choice to donate, terminate, or find a surrogate for the embryo. But after a life spent feeling like she's fallen short as a mother, who is she to decide what to do with her deceased daughter's unborn child?

The above is relayed in chronological order, but part of *Daughter's Daughter's* poignancy

comes from the elegant way that Huang slides seamlessly back and forth in time.

Executive produced by Chang and Taiwanese New Wave luminary Hou Hsiao-hsien, the film is anchored in tradition while forging brilliant new paths regarding cinematic storytelling — and chronicling ways that scientific advancements alter our relationship to family and legacy.

GIOVANNA FULVI

Huang Xi attended NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and is now based in Taipei. She has directed *Missing Johnny* (17) and the series *Twisted Strings* (22). *Daughter's Daughter* (24) is her latest film.





## Чоно үүр шөнөөр ирдэг

### The Wolves Always Come at Night

Gabrielle Brady

AUSTRALIA/MONGOLIA/GERMANY, 2024  
Mongolian  
WORLD PREMIERE  
96 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Guru Media, Over Here Productions, Chromosom Film**  
Executive Producer: **Deanne Weir, Emma Hindley, Alexander Wadouh, Stefanie Plattner, Dan Cogan**  
Producer: **Ariunaa Tserenpil, Rita Walsh, Julia Niethammer**  
Screenplay: **Davaasuren Dagvasuren, Otgonzaya Dashzeveg, Gabrielle Brady**  
Cinematographer: **Michael Latham**  
Editor: **Katharina Fiedler**  
Sound: **Carlos García, Zendmene-Erdene Ichinnorov, Miguel Villada**  
Original Score: **Aaron Cupples**  
Principal Cast: **Davaasuren Dagvasuren, Otgonzaya Dashzeveg**

International Sale Agent: **Cinephil**

Seamlessly blending documentary and fiction, *The Wolves Always Come at Night* is a timely reminder of the sometimes tenuous foundations of the places we call home. Born to generations of herders in Mongolia's immense Bayankhongor region, young couple Daava (Davaasuren Dagvasuren) and Zaya (Otgonzaya Dashzeveg) are raising their four children as they were brought up: with an intimate connection to the land and the animals they share their lives with.

After an unexpectedly severe sandstorm leaves a devastating impact in its wake, Daava and Zaya must make a once-unthinkable decision that will irrevocably change their family's lives. With herding now untenable, they relocate to the city for work, as hundreds of thousands have done before them. For Daava, this includes selling his beloved stallion whose absence leaves a lingering hole in his heart. Once in Ulaanbaatar, the family sets up in the ger district, a sprawling yurt settlement on the city's outskirts where most of the former herders now live, and where overpopulation and pollution thrive.

Director Gabrielle Brady lays bare the emotional ruptures of climate change and urban migration on Mongolian herders, told through the experiences of one family.

Dagvasuren and Dashzeveg, also credited as the film's co-writers, are revelatory. The quiet heartbreak they endure is etched on their faces as they drift ever further from the herding life and culture they deeply love, yearning for a day they can return home and hoping, likely in vain, that it continues to exist.

JASON RYLE

**Gabrielle Brady** studied documentary direction at La Escuela Internacional de Cine in Cuba. She's the director of the short films *Los pantalones rotos* (13), *Static Miracles* (14), and *The Island* (17), and the feature *Island of the Hungry Ghosts* (19). *The Wolves Always Come at Night* (24) is her latest film.

# IN CONVERSATION WITH...







## In Conversation With... Zoe Saldaña

Zoe Saldaña brings a commanding presence to each and every role. She first appeared as part of the ballet ensemble in *Center Stage* (2000) and as Anamaria in *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl* (2003). Her performance as Nyota Uhura in J.J. Abrams' *Star Trek* (2009) — a role she inherited from Nichelle Nichols and reprised in the sequels *Star Trek Into Darkness* (2013) and *Star Trek Beyond* (2016) — elevated her career to new heights. But it was her starring role as Neytiri in James Cameron's groundbreaking *Avatar* (2009) — the highest-grossing film of all time — which solidified her status as a leading actress in Hollywood. You might expect that *Avatar* and the 2022 sequel *Avatar: The Way of Water* (2022) would be her best-known work, but it's her turn as Gamora, a fierce warrior with a complex moral code, across five films within Marvel's Avengers universe, which shot her to superstardom and has seen her reign supreme at the box office. Most recently, Saldaña led Marco Perego's independent film *The Absence of Eden* (2024) and currently stars in the drama series *Lioness* for Paramount+ — both of which she executive produced with her production company Cinestar Pictures — and she is involved in many other projects. At this year's Festival, the multi-talented Saldaña showcases her remarkable range with an utterly gripping performance as a lawyer who receives an unexpected request from a cartel leader in Jacques Audiard's highly anticipated *Emilia Pérez*. In this intimate conversation, Saldaña reflects on her career journey and this exciting new role, for which she, along with her co-stars, received the Cannes Best Actress Award.



## In Conversation With... Cate Blanchett

Cate Blanchett is one of the most revered actors of our time. With two Academy Awards and four BAFTAs to her name, her genre-spanning performances across theatre, independent cinema, and major blockbusters have enthralled audiences and cemented her place as an astonishing talent. From her Oscar-winning performances as Katharine Hepburn in *The Aviator* (2004) and a neurotic socialite in *Blue Jasmine* (2013), to portraying Queen Elizabeth I in *Elizabeth* (1998) and an elven queen in *The Lord of Rings* trilogy, to Bob Dylan in *I'm Not There* (2007) and a 1950s housewife in *Carol* (2015), Blanchett has done it all. In her most recent Academy Award-nominated performance in *Tár* (2022), Blanchett stars as an enigmatic conductor at the peak of her career and delivers one of her most intimate and compelling performances. Blanchett has brought nuance, versatility, and an elusive yet powerful presence to each of her multifaceted characters across her impressive oeuvre on screen and stage. She also helms the production company Dirty Films, whose releases include TIFF 2023 Official Selections Noora Niasari's *Shayda*, Christos Nikou's *Fingernails*, and Warwick Thornton's *The New Boy*. Blanchett joins us to discuss her expansive and illustrious career, as well as her role in two projects in Official Selection at this year's Festival: Alfonso Cuarón's series *Disclaimer* and Guy Maddin, Evan Johnson, and Galen Johnson's latest feature *Rumours*.



## In Conversation With... Hyun Bin and Lee Dong-wook

Korean superstars Hyun Bin and Lee Dong-wook join us for a highly-anticipated conversation about their respective careers in the Korean film and television industry and their espionage thriller *Harbin*, which will have its world premiere at this year's Festival as a Gala presentation.

Hyun Bin is known for his remarkable on-screen presence in such award-winning drama series as *My Lovely Sam Soon* (2005), *Secret Garden* (2010) for which he won the Grand Award at the Baeksang Art Awards, and the megahit *Crash Landing on You* (2019-2020). He has also starred in numerous feature films, including 2010 Festival Selection *Late Autumn*, and has become one of the most sought-after actors in Korea and beyond.

Following his debut in the popular series *School* (1999-2001), Lee Dong-wook became a household name for Korean and international audiences through his lead roles in such series as *My Girl* (2005-2006), *Scent of a Woman* (2011) and *Guardian: The Lonely and Great God* (2016-2017), showcasing his range and versatility as a dramatic and romantic lead. He won the Top Excellence Award in Acting at the SBS Drama Awards for his role in *Scent of a Woman* and most recently appeared in the smash hit *A Shop for Killers* (2024).

Hyun Bin and Lee Dong-wook will discuss their first on-screen collaboration in Woo Min-ho's *Harbin* and their respective career paths in this wide-ranging on-stage conversation.



## In Conversation With... Steven Soderbergh

Steven Soderbergh is a cinema polymath whose prolific career defies easy categorization, yet is unified by his passion for exploring bold storytelling and technical innovation. From the indie verité of *sex, lies, and videotape* (1989), which was awarded the Palme d'Or at that year's Cannes Film Festival, and the slinky neo-noir aesthetic of *Out of Sight* (1998) to the blockbuster sheen of the *Ocean's* trilogy (2001, 2004, 2007), Soderbergh's filmography offers a kaleidoscope of styles and genres. His dual triumphs at the 2000 Academy Awards — a Best Director win for *Traffic* and nomination for *Erin Brockovich* — is testament to his gift for balancing critical acclaim with popular success, as evidenced further by *The Informant!* (2009), *Magic Mike* (2012), and *Behind the Candelabra* (2013). Beyond the director's chair, Soderbergh's contributions as producer, editor, and cinematographer have solidified his status as a singular force in contemporary filmmaking. Join us as we explore the multi-faceted career of this visionary and discuss his most recent feature, TIFF Centrepiece selection *Presence*, starring Lucy Liu and Chris Sullivan, which once again offers a unique point of view on the art of storytelling.

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# SPECIAL EVENTS





Photo credit: Rolex - Xiaoxue Liu

## Play the Part: Insights from Jia Zhang-Ke and Rafael Manuel

In partnership with Rolex, TIFFF proudly presents a special conversation with two participants of the Rolex mentoring program: Jia Zhang-Ke (*Caught by the Tides*, *A Touch of Sin*, *Still Life*) and protégé Rafael Manuel (*Filipiñana*, *102 Narra*). Directors Jia and Manuel join TIFFF CEO Cameron Bailey to provide insights into their creative exchanges, their approach to documenting social and political change in their respective countries, and the highly collaborative process of making films — regardless of their length.

This event includes an exclusive excerpt from Manuel's upcoming feature *Filipiñana*, as well as behind-the-scenes footage from the making of Jia's Festival Selection *Caught by the Tides*, captured over the past two years as part of the Rolex mentoring program.

Rolex is dedicated to encouraging individual excellence and achievement and believes in giving emerging artists time to learn, create, and grow. In 2002, the company established a mentoring program that was specifically set up to enable an exchange between different generations of artists, to assist in perpetuating the world's cultural heritage. The idea was to seek out gifted young talents from all over the world and pair them with world-renowned artists in architecture, dance, film, literature,

music, theatre, and visual arts for a period of creative collaboration in a one-to-one mentoring relationship.

**Jia Zhang-Ke** Considered one of today's most daring Chinese filmmakers, Jia Zhang-Ke, a Rolex Testimonee, is a leading figure in the post-1990 Sixth Generation of Chinese directors. His early films, known as the Shanxi trilogy, captured moments of transition in Chinese society. Jia's *Still Life* won the Golden Lion at the 2006 Venice Film Festival, and he was named Best Director at the 2007 Asian Film Awards. Among his award-winning films are *A Touch of Sin* (2013), *Mountains May Depart* (2015), and *Ash is Purest White* (2018). *Caught by the Tides* premiered at the 2024 Cannes Film Festival. In 2017, Jia founded the Pingyao International Film Festival.

**Rafael Manuel** Filipino filmmaker Rafael Manuel, who is based in Amsterdam, London, and Manila, has grounded his creations in the study of philosophy. Manuel won the Silver Bear Jury Prize at the 70th Berlin International Film Festival for his short film *Filipiñana* (2020). He is an alumnus of La Cinéf's Résidence programme, Berlinale Talents, Locarno Filmmakers Academy, BFI Network, Oxbelly Lab, and Talents Tokyo. He is currently working on his first two feature films: *Filipiñana* (financed by Film4 in the United Kingdom) and *Patrimonio* (supported by the Hubert Bals Fund). Manuel is the co-founder of Idle Eye Productions.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH







## Double Happiness

Mina Shum

CANADA, 1994  
English, Chinese  
87 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Thoughts from the Asylum Productions**

Producer: **Stephen Hegyes, Rose Lam Waddell, Mina Shum**

Screenplay: **Mina Shum**

Cinematographer: **Peter Wunstorf**

Editor: **Alison Grace**

Production Designer: **Michael Bjornson**

Costume Designer: **Cynthia Summers**

Sound: **Frank Faugno**

Original Score: **Shadowy Men on a Shadowy Planet**

Principal Cast: **Sandra Oh, Callum Keith Rennie, Alanna Ong, Stephen Chang, Frances You**

Canadian Distributor: **Mongrel Media**

US Distributor: **Samuel Goldwyn Films**

Jade Li is a good daughter. Unmarried, she still lives with her parents and younger sister, works at a family friend's shop, and dates nice young men of Chinese ancestry. But she's also pursuing a career as an actor and sneaking out to auditions without telling her very traditional father. Then she meets a relaxed and charming guy very much into her. He's not Chinese. That's... going to be a problem.

A critical and popular hit after it premiered at TIFF in 1994, Mina Shum's *Double Happiness* remains a key film in the evolution of Canadian cinema. At a time when our movies were dominated by serious-minded, artful studies of alienation and stasis — give or take the occasional Bruce McDonald joint — *Double Happiness* spun an unpretentious, earthbound narrative of a young woman trying to negotiate two very different worlds, and struggling to find her footing.

That the woman happened to be the luminous Sandra Oh in her first feature film was an added bonus. Whether she's flirting with Callum Keith Rennie's Mark or enduring the ritual humiliations of auditions and arranged dates, Oh is present and alive in every frame. She's the perfect avatar for Shum's puckish humour and sharp cultural commentary, even if Oh is Korean and not Chinese. (The casting director who

worries about Jade's look? That's Shum in a sly cameo.)

Thirty years on, *Double Happiness* hasn't lost any of its sheen. The fashions might be a little dated, but the story — and the star — are as engaging and relevant as ever.

ANITA LEE

**Mina Shum** was born in Hong Kong and raised in Vancouver. Many of her films have played the Festival, including *Me, Mom and Mona* (93), *Double Happiness* (94), *Drive, She Said* (97), *Long Life, Happiness and Prosperity* (02), the Canada's Top Ten selection *Ninth Floor* (15), and *Meditation Park* (17), which won the TIFF Film Circuit's People's Choice Award.



## Whiplash

Damien Chazelle

USA, 2014  
English  
107 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Bold Films, Blumhouse Productions, Right of Way Films**  
Executive Producer: **Jason Reitman, Gary Michael Walters, Couper Samuelson, Jeanette Volturno**  
Producer: **Jason Blum, Helen Estabrook, Michel Litvak, David Lancaster**  
Screenplay: **Damien Chazelle**  
Cinematographer: **Sharone Meir**  
Editor: **Tom Cross**  
Production Designer: **Melanie Jones**  
Costume Designer: **Lisa Norcia**  
Sound: **Andy Ross**  
Original Score: **Justin Hurwitz**  
Principal Cast: **Miles Teller, J.K. Simmons**

US Distributor: **Sony Pictures Classics**

“There are no two words more harmful than ‘good job.’” This sentiment — spoken by a music teacher to a young student — sows the seeds of a harsh tutelage in *Whiplash*, a cautionary tale about the pursuit of excellence.

In his second feature film, writer-director Damien Chazelle pits revered and feared jazz conservatory instructor Terence Fletcher (J.K. Simmons) against drumming prodigy Andrew Neyman (Miles Teller).

Vying for a core position in Fletcher’s elite ensemble, and aspiring to no less than greatness, Neyman will do anything to secure first chair. Before long, reason is abandoned and civility deserted, and the blistered and bleeding Neyman succumbs to Fletcher’s abusive teaching techniques. But Neyman has a couple of surprises up his sleeve, and things will get progressively nastier — both on and off the stage — before their scorching musical showdown.

Teller and Simmons fairly leap off the screen with arresting physicality. Their performative rhythms mesh with Chazelle’s stylish, syncopated directing to suffuse the film with an anxious energy that will keep audiences on the edge of their seats, while Tom Cross’ staccato editing makes the film play like its own brilliant piece of music.

Winner of both the US Grand Jury and Audience Awards at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival, and a TIFF selection that year, *Whiplash* announced Chazelle as an exciting new talent. At once fierce and precise, the film begs the question: how far would you go to achieve perfection?

**Damien Chazelle** was born in Providence, Rhode Island and grew up in Paris and New Jersey. He studied filmmaking at Harvard. He has directed the Festival selections *Whiplash* (14), *La La Land* (16), and *First Man* (18).

*Programmed by Robyn Citizen. Adapted programme note by Cameron Bailey from TIFF’s archives.*



A stylized graphic illustration of a cityscape. A large, semi-circular pink sun is positioned in the upper half of the frame. Below it, several blue buildings of varying heights and shapes are depicted. The buildings have small, light blue squares representing windows. The entire scene is set against a light yellow background and is framed by a thick yellow border. The outer edges of the page feature a decorative pattern of alternating black and light blue horizontal stripes.

# CENTREPIECE

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## Suyoocheon By the Stream

Hong Sangsoo

SOUTH KOREA, 2024  
Korean  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
111 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Jeonwonsa Film Co.**  
Producer: **Hong Sangsoo**  
Screenplay: **Hong Sangsoo**  
Cinematographer: **Hong Sangsoo**  
Editor: **Hong Sangsoo**  
Sound: **Hong Sangsoo**  
Original Score: **Hong Sangsoo**  
Principal Cast: **Kim Minhee, Kwon Haehyo, Cho Yunhee**

Canadian Distributor: **Cinema Guild**  
US Distributor: **Cinema Guild**  
International Sales Agent: **Finecut Co., Ltd.**

Bookending her days by contemplatively sitting by a stream, Jeonim (Kim Minhee) sketches in her notebook, where patterns inspired by nature serve her elaborate textile designs. An artist and lecturer at a woman's university, she calls upon her uncle Chu Sieon (Kwon Haehyo), a once-famous actor-director to come direct her department's production for the school's annual skit festival, as a scandal has caused literal drama among the group and the dismissal of the original director.

While the visit stirs the latter's memories from his experience directing a skit at that same university 40 years prior, Jeonim's supervisor (Cho Yunhee) grants him a warm and flirty welcome, happy to be in the presence of greatness. During the course of the rehearsals, and as the moon grows fuller and energies collide, students and teachers alike reach deep within themselves to explore their fragile, fallible selves.

*By the Stream* is the latest feature by wildly prolific Korean auteur Hong Sangsoo. It's a bittersweet tale of loneliness, connection, and artistic creation as solace. Produced in his typically minimalist fashion and reuniting a troupe of regulars, Hong's latest explores the ineffable and complex nature of human bonds against a beautiful autumnal landscape of changing leaves.

With a celestial aura cast over the proceedings — which range from boozy, confessional meals to mysterious Rivettian acting exercises — the film raises existential questions about life's overwhelming nature, be it family strife, mental health challenges, or the elusiveness of love. It also suggests a path, however murky, through art making and human compassion, toward some form of inner peace.

ANDRÉA PICARD

**Hong Sangsoo** was born in Seoul and has studied at Chung-Ang University, California College of the Arts, and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. His many films include *Woman on the Beach* (06), *In Another Country* (12), *Our Sunhi* (13), *Right Now, Wrong Then* (15), *The Day After* (17), *Hotel by the River* (18), and *Walk Up* (22), all of which played the Festival. *By the Stream* (24) is his latest film.

### Luminaries

The latest from the world's most influential art-house filmmakers. A designated subsection of films within Centrepiece, Wavelengths, and TIFF Docs sections.

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## Cloud クラウド Cloud

Kiyoshi Kurosawa

JAPAN, 2024  
Japanese  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
123 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Nikkatsu Corporation,  
Toyko Theatres Co., Ltd.  
Producer: Yumi Arakawa, Yuki Nishimiya, Nobuhiro Iizuka  
Screenplay: Kiyoshi Kurosawa  
Cinematographer: Yasuyuki Sasaki  
Editor: Koichi Takahashi  
Production Designer: Norifumi Ataka  
Costume Designer: Haruki Koketsu  
Sound: Shinji Watanabe, Kenji Shibasaki  
Original Score: Takuma Watanabe  
Principal Cast: Masaki Suda, Kotone Furukawa,  
Masataka Kubota

International Sales Agent: Nikkatsu Corporation

This has been a prolific year for Kiyoshi Kurosawa, one of the great auteurs of Japanese cinema. After directing both a French-language remake of his 1998 film *The Serpent's Path* and the mid-length mystery horror *Chime*, he has ventured into genre territory with the action-packed scenes, unexpected adventurous notes, and chilling suspense of his latest thriller, *Cloud*.

Borrowing its title from the nebulous internet entity that has forcefully entered our daily lives in recent years, *Cloud* delves into the sinister undercurrents of modern society where digital anonymity fuels real-world malice.

The story centres on Ryosuke Yoshii (Masaki Suda), a factory worker in Tokyo who makes extra money reselling goods online under a pseudonym. After a successful stint, he quits his job and relocates to the countryside with his girlfriend, hiring a local young man to help with his reselling business. However, Yoshii's seemingly idyllic life is shattered by mysterious attacks from unknown assailants, dismantling his peace as he discovers multiple enemies targeting him.

*Cloud* captures the eerie tension that Kurosawa's fans admire, showcasing his unique style — “Kiyoshiism” — with atmospheric settings and spine-chilling visuals.

His exploration of internet-incubated insanity echoes his 2001 film *Pulse* (TIFF '01), now set against the backdrop of today's pervasive digital hostility. *Cloud*'s gripping narrative resonates with contemporary fears, depicting how petty grudges can escalate into uncontrollable violence. Featuring Suda's compelling performance, this film is both a cautionary tale and a thrilling dive into the chaos of Japan's modern media landscape, where the horrors of online malice come terrifyingly to life.

GIOVANNA FULVI

Kiyoshi Kurosawa was born in Kobe, Japan. His many directorial credits include *Cure* (98), *Séance* (00), *Pulse* (01), *Bright Future* (03), *Tokyo Sonata* (08), *Real* (13), *Journey to the Shore* (15), *Daguerrotype* (16), and *To the Ends of the Earth* (19), all of which played the Festival. *Cloud* (24) is his latest feature.

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## The Mountain

Rachel House

NEW ZEALAND, 2024  
English, Māori  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
89 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Piki Films, Sandy Lane Productions  
Executive Producer: Carthew Neal, Taika Waititi, Paul Wiegard  
Producer: Desray Armstrong, Morgan Waru  
Screenplay: Rachel House, Tom Furniss  
Cinematographer: Matt Henley  
Editor: Cushla Dillion, Carly Turner  
Production Designer: Andy McLaren  
Costume Designer: Mataara Stokes, Te Ura Taripo-Hoskins  
Sound: Nick Buckton  
Original Score: Troy Kingi, Arli Liberman  
Principal Cast: Elizabeth Atkinson, Terence Daniel, Reuben Francis

International Sales Agent: Upgrade Productions  
US Sales Agent: Upgrade Productions

In her vibrant debut feature film as director and co-writer, Rachel House — known for her many celebrated acting roles including *Hunt for the Wilderpeople* — shares a touching tale of three unlikely young friends on the adventure of a lifetime. Convinced her cancer is in remission, Sam (Elizabeth Atkinson) escapes from the juvenile hospital ward to go on a potentially dangerous journey to climb Taranaki Maunga, the mountain that, as a Māori, she is culturally and personally connected with.

Meanwhile, precocious Bronco (Terence Daniel), a proudly confident Māori boy feeling neglected by his single father, meets Mallory (Reuben Francis), who struggles with loneliness following the recent death of his mother. The two boys soon cross paths with Sam and need little convincing to join her on the secret mission to reach Taranaki. They form a quick bond as their worried parents begin searching for the trio, concerned for their safety and health.

As they near their destination, Sam, Bronco, and Mallory face continuous obstacles as it becomes clear that Sam's physical condition isn't as great as she's letting on. When they finally reach the mountain, truths are exposed, and the young friends learn unforgettable lessons.

Filled with charm, humour, and deep emotion, *The Mountain* is a highly entertaining family film that doesn't shy away from life's sometimes difficult realities. House trusts her young protagonists to convey the ways children can rise above any challenges they face, as they demonstrate the lasting power of acceptance, cultural legacy, and friendship.

JASON RYLE

Rachel House was born in Auckland. She has performed in and directed numerous stage productions and short films. Her many credits include voice acting in *Moana* (16), and acting in *Eagle vs Shark* (07), *Hunt for the Wilderpeople* (16), and *Thor: Ragnarok* (17). *The Mountain* (24) is her debut feature film.

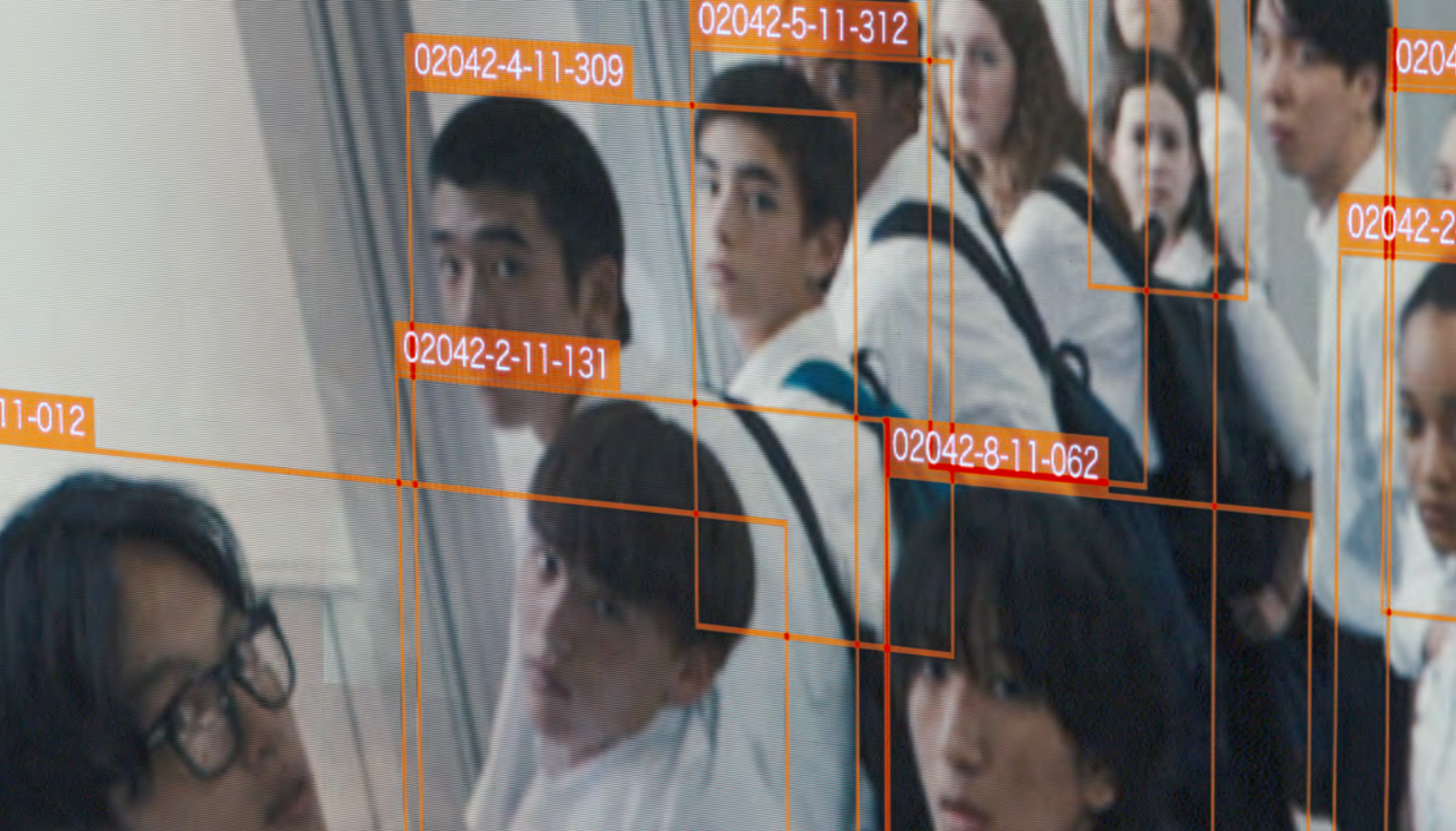
### TIFF Next Wave

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## Happyend

Neo Sora

JAPAN/USA, 2024  
 Japanese  
 NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
 113 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: Zakkubalan, Cineric Creative, Cinema Inutile  
 Executive Producer: Kaoru Hayashi, Douglas Choi, Robina Riccitiello, Ema Ryan Yamazaki  
 Producer: Albert Tholen, Aiko Masubuchi, Eric Nyari, Alex C. Lo, Anthony Chen  
 Screenplay: Neo Sora  
 Cinematographer: Bill Kirstein  
 Editor: Albert Tholen  
 Production Designer: Norifumi Ataka  
 Costume Designer: Juni Kurita  
 Sound: Miki Nomura, Tatsuya Ohbo  
 Original Score: Lia Ouyang Rusli  
 Principal Cast: Hayato Kurihara, Yukito Hidaka, Yuta Hayashi, Shina Peng, ARAZI, Kilala Inori, Ayumu Nakajima, Masaru Yahagi, PUSHIM, Makiko Watanabe, Shiro Sano

International Sales Agent: MAGNIFY  
 US Sales Agent: MAGNIFY

This beautifully crafted fiction feature debut from director Neo Sora transports us to a near-future Tokyo, a city on high alert for cataclysmic earthquakes and moving dangerously close to applying total surveillance to its public spaces. Focusing on a handful of rebellious adolescents struggling to find their path in a corrupt modern world, *Happyend* is an ode to youth's stubborn insistence of dreaming of a better future.

Headphones permanently curled around their necks, Yuta and Kou are highschoolers who love to DJ. The film begins with the friends participating in a secret party that gets busted by police. The party is just one of the ways that Yuta and Kou try to escape the cameras proliferating throughout the city, especially at school, where a new system monitors and instantly scrutinizes student behaviour, reporting demerits in its live feed for all to see.

Adults insist the system ensures student safety, but the kids feel they're being treated like prisoners. They wonder whether there's any point in seeking change, asking age-old questions about the efficacy of protests. Some resort to spectacular pranks, such as standing the principal's sportscar on its boot, while others stage a sit-in.

Hot on the heels of *Ryuichi Sakamoto:*

*Opus*, Sora's moving document of his late father's final performance, *Happyend*, with its stunning vistas of eerily empty urban landscapes, announces Sora as a bold new visionary. Imagining Tokyo in a time of cultural and geological upheaval, *Happyend* is both speculative and urgent. Though these characters speak to us from the future, we are urged to consider their pleas in the here and now.

GIOVANNA FULVI

*Neo Sora* is a filmmaker, artist, and translator who lives between New York and Tokyo. He wrote and directed the short films *The Chicken* (20) and *Sugar Glass Bottle* (22), and directed the feature-length concert film *Ryuichi Sakamoto: Opus* (23). *Happyend* (24) is his debut fiction feature.

### TIFF Next Wave

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## Sweet Angel Baby

Melanie Oates

CANADA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
96 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: Chara Pictures, Dodd Motors  
Producer: Chris Hatcher, Matt Power, Melanie Oates  
Screenplay: Melanie Oates  
Cinematographer: Christopher Mabley  
Editor: James Vandewater  
Production Designer: Xavier Georges  
Costume Designer: Alison Ruth Hicks  
Sound: Otto Quinton, Steve Foster  
Principal Cast: Michaela Kurimsky,  
Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers, Peter Mooney

In director Melanie Oates' second feature, people in a bucolic coastal town turn quickly on their own when the status quo is inadvertently challenged.

Attending church, baking bread, and marrying high school sweethearts are the standard in a small fishing town in Newfoundland and, despite not having checked the last two of those boxes, Eliza (Michaela Kurimsky) is beloved by all those around her.

After a church service, she parts ways with her mom and grandmother and heads into the nearby woods, with a purpose that nobody in her life is aware of: taking self-portraits in a bikini and ski mask to post to her super-popular anonymous social media account, which is filled with many more suggestive photos of Eliza.

Nobody from the town knows about another secret of hers: that in private, she has a relationship with Toni (Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers, TIFF '22's *Stellar*). An outsider to the town and an out lesbian, Toni is begrudgingly welcomed.

A questionable meet-up with a married man unravels all of Eliza's secrets and forces her to re-examine her morals, her identity, and her place in the community, in a spectacular fashion. She can't run away from the

repercussions of her choices and, ultimately, is surprised by those who continue to stand with her.

*Sweet Angel Baby* is a beautiful and heart-breaking look inside small-town identity politics, masterfully deploying themes of conformity, queerness, and sexuality.

KELLY BOUTSALIS

Melanie Oates is based in St. John's. She is the writer, director, and producer of five short films as well as the digital comedy series *The Manor* (16). She made her feature debut with *Body and Bones* (19). *Sweet Angel Baby* (24) is her latest film.

### TIFF Next Wave

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## Presence

Steven Soderbergh

USA, 2024  
English  
INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE  
85 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Extension 765**  
Executive Producer: **David Koepp, Corey Bayes**  
Producer: **Julie Anderson, Ken Meyer**  
Screenplay: **David Koepp**  
Cinematographer: **Peter Andrews**  
Editor: **Mary Ann Bernard**  
Production Designer: **April Lasky**  
Costume Designer: **Marci Rodgers**  
Sound: **Thomas Varga, Glenfield Payne**  
Original Score: **Zack Ryan**  
Principal Cast: **Lucy Liu, Chris Sullivan, Callina Liang, Eddy Maday, West Mulholland, Julia Fox**

Canadian Distributor: **Elevation Pictures**  
US Distributor: **NEON**

Steven Soderbergh approaches every category of movie with playful rigour and an encyclopedic knowledge of film, but the prolific Academy Award-winning director's take on horror may be his most wondrous feat of genre reinvention yet. Written by superstar screenwriter David Koepp (*Jurassic Park*), *Presence* shakes the ghost story to life by embracing death. Told from the point of view of a housebound spirit, the film makes a spectre of the spectator, granting us singular access to a family passing through troubled times.

Following a hypnotic prologue in which the camera glides weightlessly through an unfurnished house, we are introduced to a realtor (Julia Fox) showing the premises to married couple Rebekah (Lucy Liu) and Chris (Chris Sullivan) and their kids, Tyler (Eddy Maday) and Chloe (Callina Liang).

The family moves in, but their occupancy fails to infuse the home with warmth. Rather, a litany of problems are revealed: Rebekah is in trouble at work, Chloe is grieving a friend who recently died of an overdose, and Tyler's buddy Ryan (West Mulholland) becomes a fixture in the household, though his influence on Chloe proves fraught. All the while, the ghost bears witness and strategizes methods of

hair-raising intervention, prompting Chris to summon a spiritualist.

An air of melancholy permeates *Presence*, while its innovative narrative style generates a steady thrum of anxiety and tension. With its floating, voyeuristic viewpoint recalling such classics as Robert Wise's *The Haunting*, the film pivots between the familiar and the startlingly new, mirroring the feeling of living in the present while the past comes back to haunt you.

ROBYN CITIZEN

**Steven Soderbergh** was born in Atlanta and is based in New York. His feature directorial debut, *sex, lies, and videotape* (89), won the Palme d'Or at Cannes. His many films include *Out of Sight* (98), *Erin Brockovich* (00), *Traffic* (00), and the Festival selections *Gray's Anatomy* (96), *The Limey* (99), *Che* (08), *The Informant!* (09), and *The Laundromat* (19). *Presence* (24) is his latest film.

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## Under the Volcano

Damian Kocur

**POLAND, 2024**  
Ukrainian, Spanish, English, Russian,  
German, Wolof  
**WORLD PREMIERE**  
102 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Lizart Film, Hawk Art, MGM, TVP  
Producer: Mikołaj Lizut, Agnieszka Jastrzebska  
Screenplay: Damian Kocur, Marta Konarzewska  
Cinematographer: Nikita Kuzmienko  
Editor: Alan Zejer  
Production Designer: Aleksandra Markowska  
Costume Designer: Magdalena Sekrecka,  
Agata Piesiewicz  
Sound: Serhii Avdieiev  
Principal Cast: Sofia Berezovska, Roman Lutskyi,  
Anastasia Karpienko, Fedir Pugachov

International Sales Agent: Salaud Morisset

At the foot of Mount Teide on the Spanish island of Tenerife, a Ukrainian family of four including father Roman (Roman Lutskyi), stepmother Anastasiia (Anastasiia Karpienko), teenage daughter Sofia (Sofia Berezovska), and young Fedir (Fedir Pugachov) are on vacation. Enjoying their final beach day, the pack is blissfully unaware that, soon, their return flight to Kyiv will be cancelled and that Russian bombs and rockets will fall on their country.

On February 24, 2022, Russia's ongoing occupation of their peaceful neighbour has escalated into a full-scale invasion and, overnight, these tourists have become refugees. While frantically awaiting news from home, they, the lucky ones as some might say, are left wondering what to do and where to go.

Meanwhile, the world keeps spinning; the sun is bright, the sea is blue, and they are surrounded by happy-go-lucky families enjoying the idyllic Canary Islands. We gain insight about the dynamics through Sofia's Generation-Z perspective, sinking into the group's inner guilt and their paradoxical issues with the safe place in which they — for now — have refuge. Quickly, the most fraught aspects of the clan bubble to the surface and, like the nearby volcano, dormant conflicts threaten to explode anew.

Shot by Nikita Kuzmienko and co-written by Marta Konarzewska and director Damian Kocur, *Under the Volcano* is the second feature for Kocur, following *Bread and Salt*, which garnered the Special Jury Prize in the Orizzonti programme of the 2022 Venice Film Festival. Already a master of tension, Kocur's timely and acute scope makes this a must-see.

DOROTA LECH

**Damian Kocur** is a writer, director, and cinematographer who was born in Katowice, Poland. His credits as a director include the short films *Lesson* (13), *The Return* (16), and *As It Was* (23), and the feature *Bread and Salt* (22). *Under the Volcano* (24) is his latest film.

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## An Unfinished Film

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Lou Ye

SINGAPORE/GERMANY, 2024  
Mandarin  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
107 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Essential Films, Yingfilms Pte. Ltd.**  
Executive Producer: **Alex Lo**  
Producer: **Philippe Bober, Yingli Ma**  
Screenplay: **Lou Ye, Yingli Ma**  
Cinematographer: **Zeng Jian**  
Editor: **Tian Jiaming**  
Production Designer: **Zhong Cheng**  
Costume Designer: **Yang Yang**  
Sound: **Fu Kang**  
Principal Cast: **Qin Hao, Mao Xiaorui, Qi Xi**

International Sales Agent: **Coproduction Office**

Relevant and moving, deeply personal yet universally resonant, *An Unfinished Film* by Lou Ye revisits footage from the past and brings order — through intelligent, unconventional filmmaking — to the flood of memories and mobile-phone images that overwhelmed us during the COVID years.

The film begins in 2019, with filmmaker Xiaorui (Mao Xiaorui) and his team discovering fascinating old footage from a project abandoned 10 years earlier. This unfinished work, reminiscent of Lou Ye's critically acclaimed *Spring Fever* (TIFF '09), brings back poetic images of past youth with sequences featuring a gay couple. Nostalgia and the desire to bring completion to a project dear to him prompts Xiaorui to reunite his original crew to complete it. Their efforts, however, are disrupted by the onset of COVID-19 in Wuhan, forcing the group into lockdown.

Blending fiction with real footage from social media, Lou Ye creates a unique documentary-style narrative that conveys the early days of the pandemic. The film shows the characters' lives in suspension: confined to their hotel rooms, they communicate through screens and experience the monotony, anxiety, and isolation that defined those months. It juxtaposes painful

and dramatic moments with flashes of joy and culminates with the lifting of the lockdown and commemoration of the victims. This blend of personal narrative and broader societal impact stands as a unique testament of and tribute to a nation's trauma.

Lou Ye captures the essence of confinement and the struggle to maintain creativity amid chaos in a profound exploration of unfinished projects and the broader sense of unfinishedness imposed by the pandemic.

GIOVANNA FULVI

**Lou Ye** is a Chinese filmmaker who studied at Shanghai School of Fine Arts and Beijing Film Academy. His many directorial credits include the Festival selections *Purple Butterfly* (03), *Summer Palace* (06), *Spring Fever* (09), *Love and Bruises* (11), and *Saturday Fiction* (19). *An Unfinished Film* (24) is his latest movie.

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## Querido Trópico Beloved Tropic

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Ana Endara

PANAMA/COLOMBIA, 2024  
Spanish  
WORLD PREMIERE  
108 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Mente Pública, Big-Sur Películas, Mansa Productora**  
Executive Producer: **Isabella Galvez, Joan Gómez**  
Producer: **Isabella Galvez**  
Screenplay: **Ana Endara, Pilar Moreno**  
Cinematographer: **Nicolas Wong**  
Editor: **Bertrand Conard**  
Production Designer: **Daniel Rincón**  
Costume Designer: **Alfa García**  
Sound: **Carlos García**  
Principal Cast: **Paulina García, Jenny Navarrete, Juliette Roy**

International Sales Agent: **FiGa Films**  
US Sales Agent: **FiGa Films**

The lush, secluded garden of a house in bustling Panama City becomes the stage for an encounter between two lonely women who keep each other company for a while. Ana María (Jenny Navarrete) is a pregnant Colombian immigrant with status and money issues. Her honest, dutiful care for the elderly lands her a job looking after Mercedes (Paulina García, also at this year's Festival in *Horizonte*), a well-to-do matriarch suffering early onset dementia and needing to make adjustments to her daily routine.

In the skilled hands of writer-director Ana Endara, an accomplished documentarian making her first foray into feature fiction, the simple premise offers entrance into the carefully observed relationship between the seemingly disparate women. After a rocky start, Mercedes begins to rely on Ana María, opening her heart as her health deteriorates. That delicate connection allows her to reach out to her caregiver, who is isolated from the world by a dark secret.

The spacious narrative allows both actresses to present lived-in personas, each accessing the strength required to be who they need to be. García (*Gloria*, TIFF '13; *Las Analfabetas*) isn't new to complex

characters, while Navarrete (*The Other Son*) cements her place among the most talented Latin American actresses of the moment.

DIANA CADAVID

**Ana Endara** is a filmmaker based in Panama City. She studied direction at the International Film and Television School in Cuba, and worked as a videographer at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute. She has directed several documentaries, including *Reinas* (14) and *La felicidad del sonido* (16). *Beloved Tropic* (24) is her fiction debut.

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## Jane Austen a gâché ma vie

### Jane Austen Wrecked My Life

Laura Piani

FRANCE, 2024  
English, French  
WORLD PREMIERE  
94 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Les Films du Veyrier,  
Sciapode  
Producer: Gabrielle Dumon  
Screenplay: Laura Piani  
Cinematographer: Pierre Mazoyer  
Editor: Floriane Allier  
Production Designer: Agnès Séry  
Costume Designer: Flore Vauvillé  
Sound: Lucas Héberlé  
Original Score: Peter von Poehl  
Principal Cast: Camille Rutherford, Pablo Pauly,  
Charlie Anson, Annabelle Lengronne

International Sales Agent: The Bureau Sales

As a clerk at Shakespeare & Co., the legendary British bookshop in Paris, Agathe (Camille Rutherford, *OK, TUFF '23*) loves her job. But there are faint stirrings of discontentment when she realizes how long she has been surrounded by stories of others' desires and adventures instead of chasing her own. Perpetually single, she hopes to find a romance like those in the novels of her favourite author, Jane Austen, in which love triangles, ardent admirers, and reckless unrequited crushes abound.

Agathe's other dream is to become a novelist. She aspires to finally finish one of the many stories she starts but ultimately abandons when they risk falling short of her lofty expectations. Supported by her encouraging — and conspicuously rakish — best friend Felix (Pablo Pauly), who has recently expressed an interest in her personal life, Agathe leaves for a Jane Austen writing residency. Upon arrival, she meets a distant relation of the author, the handsome — and haughty — Oliver Lowe (Charlie Anson). Between the writing obligations, realizing that she may miss Felix, and constantly running into the intriguing Mr. Lowe, Agathe's life has taken a stressful, yet strangely familiar, turn...

In her utterly charming debut, writer-director Laura Piani draws from Austen's

works while crafting a wholly contemporary romantic comedy that stands on its own merits. A breezy and smart exploration of the competing modern desires for both connection and escapism, Piani's film also delves into how past tragedies and heartbreaks can cause us to live like supporting characters in our own lives.

ROBYN CITIZEN

**Laura Piani** was born in Neuilly-sur-Seine, France, and is based in Paris. She has worked as a screenwriter and script consultant for numerous film and TV projects, including the series *Philharmonia* (18-19) and the film *Into the World* (20). *Jane Austen Wrecked My Life* (24) is her feature directorial debut.

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## Crocodile Tears

Tumpal Tampubolon

INDONESIA/FRANCE/SINGAPORE/GERMANY,  
2024  
Indonesian  
WORLD PREMIERE  
98 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Talamedia, Acrobates Films, Giraffe Pictures PTE LTD, Poetik Film, 2Pilots Filmproduction GmbH**  
Producer: **Mandy Marahimin, Anthony Chen, Claire Lajoumard, Yi Peng Teoh, Christophe Lafont, Harry Flöter, Jörg Siepmann**  
Screenplay: **Tumpal Tampubolon**  
Cinematographer: **Teck Siang Lim**  
Editor: **Jasmine Ng Kin Kia, Kelvin Nugroho**  
Production Designer: **Jafar Shiddiq**  
Costume Designer: **Hagai Pakan**  
Sound: **Roman Dymny**  
Original Score: **Kin Leonn**  
Principal Cast: **Yusuf Mahardika, Marissa Anita, Zulfa Maharani**

International Sales Agent: **Cercamon**  
US Sales Agent: **Cercamon**

The expression “crocodile tears” is used to imply tears that are insincere. It came about because crocodiles are known to shed tears while devouring their prey. Experts say the tears are involuntary, possibly stemming from overstimulation while feeding. Strangely enough, the same teeth crocodiles use to bite into their prey are used to cradle their young. Then would they also shed tears while holding their offspring between their teeth? Tumpal Tampubolon’s slow-burning debut explores the emotional complexities that can exist between mothers and sons, especially with authoritarian parenting, which imposes power in the name of love.

Johan (Yusuf Mahardika) is a young man who lives with his Mama (Marissa Anita) on their run-down, scarcely visited crocodile farm in West Java. He never asked for it, but his mother controls his every move. The farm is at the centre of their lives — the crocodiles keep them busy, and the work isolates them from the rest of the world. But the fraught balance of their day-to-day routine is turned upside down when a young woman (Zulfa Maharani) enters Johan’s life.

Taut, suspenseful, and thrilling, *Crocodile Tears* is a family drama about the intimate — yet toxic — relationship between Mama

and Johan. Is Mama really prioritizing Johan’s best interest? Or is she mimicking crocodiles, whose tears might indicate compassion... or ruthless destruction?

JUNE KIM

**Tumpal Tampubolon** is a writer and filmmaker based in Jakarta. His directorial credits include the short films *Soleram* (11) and *Laut Memanggilku* (*The Sea Calls for Me*) (21). *Crocodile Tears* (24) is his feature debut.

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## აპრილი

April

Dea Kulumbegashvili

ITALY/FRANCE/GEORGIA, 2024  
Georgian  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
134 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: First Picture, Frenesy, Memo Films,  
Independent Film Project

Executive Producer: Steven Darty, Adrien Dassault,  
Christian Vesper, Giovanni Corrado, Raffaella Viscardi,  
Moreno Zani, Malcom Pagani, Marco Colombo,  
Federico Marchetti

Producer: David Zerat, Ilan Amouyal, Luca Guadagnino,  
Francesco Melzi d'Eril, Archil Gelovani, Gabriele Moratti,  
Alexandra Rossi

Screenplay: Dea Kulumbegashvili

Cinematographer: Arseni Khachaturan

Editor: Jacopo Ramella Pajrin

Production Designer: Beka Tabukashvili

Costume Designer: Nikoloz Gurapashvili,

Tornike Kirtadze

Sound: Lars Ginzler, Tina Laschke, Zveva Pochkhidze

Original Score: Matthew Herbert

Principal Cast: Ia Sukhitashvili, Kakha Kintsurashvili,  
Merab Ninidze

International Sales Agent: Goodfellas

Nina (Ia Sukhitashvili) is an ob-gyn living an austere life in eastern Georgia at the foot of the Greater Caucasus mountains. Like the landscapes that surround her, Nina possesses a stark and rugged character — easily distinguishable in a place where independent women can find themselves at a disadvantage. Nina endures the hardships of life, and allows her pain to fuel her ambitions. Despite constant obstacles, she is steadfast in her choices and grounded by her mission. As well as doing her ob-gyn job, including tending to those in the throes of excruciating labour, she performs clandestine abortions for desperate women on her own time.

When a baby dies under her care shortly after delivery at the hospital, Nina's morals and professionalism come under scrutiny and she becomes the subject of an investigation when rumours about the illegal abortions reach the administration. While Nina has some protection from David (Kakha Kintsurashvili), a colleague and former lover — as well as receiving the benefit of the doubt from the head doctor (Merab Ninidze) — outside pressures are mounting, Nina's reputation threatens the health of the clinic, and there is a great deal at stake for her, personally.

A powerful convergence of existence and womanhood, *April* is the second feature of writer-director Dea Kulumbegashvili, whose film *Beginning* had its world premiere at the Festival in 2020. Shot by Arseni Khachaturan (*Bones and All*, *The Idol*, *Beginning*), edited by Jacopo Ramella Pajrin, and with an original score by Matthew Herbert, *April* is a tour de force.

DOROTA LECH

Dea Kulumbegashvili was born and raised in Georgia. She studied film directing at Columbia University School of the Arts in New York. She wrote and directed the short films *Invisible Spaces* (14) and *Léthé* (16) and the feature *Beginning* (20), which played the Festival. *April* (24) is her latest film.

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## Sunshine

Antoinette Jadaone

PHILIPPINES, 2024

Tagalog

WORLD PREMIERE

86 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Project 8 Projects, Cloudy Duck Pictures, Anima Studios, Happy Infinite Productions

Executive Producer: Antoinette Jadaone, Dan Villegas,

Reign Anne De Guzman, Bianca Balbuena,

Claudia Diaz Cojuangco, Grace Mariel Isais,

Anthony Isais

Producer: Geo Lomuntad, Dan Villegas, Bianca Balbuena

Screenplay: Antoinette Jadaone

Cinematographer: Pao Orendain

Editor: Benjamin Tolentino

Production Designer: Eero Yves Francisco

Costume Designer: Zara Loayon

Sound: Vincent Villa

Original Score: Rico Blanco

Principal Cast: Maris Racal, Annika Co, Jennica Garcia,

Elijah Canlas, Meryll Soriano, Xyriel Manabat

Young and talented, Sunshine (Maris Racal) is admired by all the other aspiring gymnasts. Her spot practically secured on the national team, the upcoming tryout seems just a formality. But during practice her perfect form falters, and the day brings Sunshine a terrifying realization — she might be pregnant, jeopardizing her career.

Shaken by a positive reading on a home pregnancy test, Sunshine jumps on a jeepney, asking the driver to take her wherever. The jeepney's name — Gift of God — seems to ask age-old questions about reproductive rights. Her morality is tested.

Overcome by fear, but still desperate and determined to continue her dream path as a gymnast, Sunshine searches the dark corners of a market to get her hands on abortifacients. At the same time, she runs into a mysterious young girl who seems to know more about her than she knows herself.

Up-and-coming actor Racal executes the troubled athlete with immense emotion and realism under seasoned filmmaker Antoinette Jadaone's direction. As Sunshine continues her quest, she must fight through the hardships at hand, including an irresponsible boyfriend, fast-approaching qualifiers, and, most of all, the fact that abortions in the Philippines are illegal.

*Sunshine's* depiction of healthcare, religious culture, and the lack of access to reproductive support may be location-specific, but the issues raised are universal, relatable, and timely. Will she find a way to make her dream come true despite all the hurdles?

JUNE KIM

Antoinette Jadaone is from the Philippines. Her credits include *Six Degrees of Separation* from Lilia Cuntapay (11), *That Thing Called Tadhana* (14), and *Fan Girl* (20). *Sunshine* (24) is her latest film.

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## Little Jaffna

Lawrence Valin

FRANCE, 2024  
French, Tamil  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
100 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Ex Nihilo, Mean Streets**  
Producer: **Simon Bleuzé, Marc Bordure**  
Screenplay: **Lawrence Valin, Marlène Poste, Malysone Bovorasmay, Gaëlle Macé, Arthur Beaupère, Yacine Badday**  
Cinematographer: **Maxence Lemonnier**  
Editor: **Anaïs Manuelli, Guericc Catala**  
Production Designer: **Michel Schmitt**  
Costume Designer: **Joana Georges Rossi**  
Sound: **Thomas Van Pottelberge, Sébastien Jeannot, Clément Gallice, Aude Baudassé, Clément Laforce**  
Original Score: **Maxence Dussère**  
Principal Cast: **Lawrence Valin, Puviraj Raveendran, Vela Ramamoorthy, Radikaa Sarathkumar, Marilou Aussilloux**

International Sales Agent: **Charades**

Lawrence Valin's feature debut is a crime drama that tells the story of Michael — played by the director himself — a young police officer from a Tamil family, living in Paris, as he's tasked with infiltrating a local criminal enterprise that's funnelling money to the Eelam liberation movement back home in Sri Lanka.

Stern and always suspicious, Puvi (Puviraj Raveendran) heads a local gang that's part of this scheme, every one of his troupe clad in vibrant clothes that match their vivacity. When Michael jumps in to help them during a fight, he's brought into the fold, soon meeting with Aya (Vela Ramamoorthy), a former Tamil Tiger and the leader of this whole organization — who waits for him on a rooftop with a cricket bat.

Puvi and Aya become pivotal figures in Michael's life, as friend and father figure respectively, complicating his task as the group's next clandestine move inches closer. Increasingly confronted by what's happening in the homeland and the reality of how France treats Tamil immigrants, Michael's identity and loyalty are tested, pulled between the community he has finally found, and the reality that his mission is to dismantle it.

Valin's first feature recalls Ladj Ly, another breakout director from France. Great casting, dynamic action, and sociopolitical story-

telling make *Little Jaffna* a memorable showing, not just for the thrill of Michael's journey, but also for the energy and colour that new voices bring to the screen.

ROBYN CITIZEN

**Lawrence Valin** is a filmmaker, writer, and actor who was born in Neuilly-Sur-Seine, France, and raised in Paris. He has directed short films including *The Loyal Man* (20). *Little Jaffna* (24) is his feature directorial debut.

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## Santosh

Sandhya Suri

UNITED KINGDOM, 2024  
Hindi  
Canadian Premiere  
128 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Good Chaos**,  
**Razor Film Produktion**, Haut et Court, BBC Films  
Producer: **Mike Goodridge**, James Bowsher,  
**Balthazar De Ganay**, Alan McAlex  
Screenplay: **Sandhya Suri**  
Cinematographer: **Lennert Hillege**  
Editor: **Maxime Pozzi-Garcia**  
Production Designer: **Devika Dave**  
Costume Designer: **Bhagyashree Dattatreya Rajurkar**  
Sound: **Susmit Nath**  
Original Score: **Luisa Gerstein**  
Principal Cast: **Shahana Goswami**, Sunita Rajwar

US Distributor: **Metrograph Pictures**  
International Sales Agent: **mk2 Films**

Filmmaker Sandhya Suri's searing narrative debut *Santosh* follows a young housewife (Shahana Goswami) widowed when her police constable husband is killed on the job. Through a government initiative, she is trained to take his place in an overwhelmingly male police station in rural Northern India.

Against Santosh's urging, her superior cruelly dismisses a low-caste father's attempt to file a missing report on his teen daughter. The discovery of the girl's body ignites protests in her community. In response to the negative publicity, the department recruits female inspector Sharma (Sunita Rajwar) to lead the investigation. Santosh is immediately fascinated by Sharma's ability to ingratiate herself into the masculine culture of the station while remaining a fierce advocate against gendered violence in public. Sharma, meanwhile, spots Santosh's keen intelligence and ambition and offers to mentor her.

Suri blends a journalistic attention to procedural detail — expertly building tension as evidence and characters are revealed — with an empathetic rendering of Santosh's internal conflicts. She seeks professional advancement and respect from her peers while clinging to ethics in a system that prioritizes suspect confessions and convictions by any means.

As Santosh, Goswami projects a practical resilience with each action grounded in careful observation. But it is Rajwar's turn as the charismatic Inspector Sharma — the moral gradations of her character conveyed in the smallest inflections — that communicates the scope of the compromised system both women struggle against.

ROBYN CITIZEN

**Sandhya Suri** is an English-Indian writer and director who studied at England's National Film and Television School. She's the director of the documentary *I for India* (05) and fiction film *The Field* (18), which won Best International Short Film at the Festival. *Santosh* (24) is her latest film.

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## Addition

Marcelle Lunam

AUSTRALIA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
91 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Made Up Stories, Buon Giorno Productions**  
Executive Producer: **Ricci Swart, Meryl Metni, Deanne Weir, Olivia Humphrey, Monica Saunders-Weinberg, Frank Cox, Joel Pearlman, Edwina Waddy**  
Producer: **Cristina Pozzan, Bruna Papandrea, Steve Hutensky, Jodi Matterson, Jeanne Snow**  
Screenplay: **Becca Johnstone**  
Cinematographer: **Gin Loane**  
Editor: **Deb Peart, Scott Gray**  
Production Designer: **Vanessa Cerne**  
Costume Designer: **Shareen Beringer**  
Sound: **Mick Boraso, Andy Wright**  
Original Score: **Piers Burbrook de Vere**  
Principal Cast: **Teresa Palmer, Joe Dempsie, Eamon Farren, Sarah Peirse**

International Sales Agent: **WME**  
US Sales Agent: **WME**

Numbers are everything to Grace Lisa Vandenburg (Teresa Palmer, *Message from the King*, TIFFF '16). The life of Grace, a Melbourne-based mathematician, is largely governed by her arithmomania, an obsessive-compulsive need to count everything from the poppy seeds on her cake to the bristles on her toothbrush (three times to ensure accuracy). In a chaotic, sometimes tragic, and constantly changing world, Grace's preoccupation gives her a sense of order and control. And she does her best to lead a "normal" life, spending time with her mother and sister, her beloved niece Larry... and a manifestation of the late inventor and engineer Nikola Tesla (Eamon Farren) who is Grace's closest confidante.

Grace's structured life takes an unexpected but not altogether unwelcome turn when she meets Seamus (Joe Dempsie), a British immigrant captivated by Grace's offbeat charm. As their relationship deepens, Grace grapples with revealing her compulsion. In an effort to change, she begins seeing a therapist and agrees to take medication, which dulls and upends her once-vibrant world. Adrift in this new reality, Grace must face the spectre of a long-buried childhood tragedy, forging a new path towards balance.

Director Marcelle Lunam's first narrative feature is a warm-hearted and illuminating adaptation of the bestselling romance novel by Toni Jordan. Palmer delivers a delightful, insightful performance that delves into the realities of obsessive compulsiveness with care, humour, and, yes, grace.

JASON RYLE

**Marcelle Lunam** is a Kiwi-Australian filmmaker who studied directing at Melbourne's Swinburne University of Technology. She has directed multiple music videos and short films, as well as the feature documentary *Habana Shakes* (23). *Addition* (24) is her debut narrative feature.

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## The Seed of the Sacred Fig

Mohammad Rasoulof

IRAN/France/GERMANY, 2024  
Farsi  
CANADIAN PREMIERE  
167 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Run Way Pictures**  
Producer: **Mohammad Rasoulof, Amin Sadraei, Jean-Christophe Simon, Mani Tilgner, Rozita Hendijanian**  
Screenplay: **Mohammad Rasoulof**  
Cinematographer: **Pooyan Aghababaei**  
Editor: **Andrew Bird**  
Production Designer: **Amir Panahifar**  
Costume Designer: **Nazanin Tavassoli**  
Sound: **Philipp Kemptner, Hassan Shabankareh**  
Original Score: **Karzan Mahmood**  
Principal Cast: **Misagh Zare, Soheila Golestani, Mahsa Rostami, Setareh Maleki, Niousha Akhshi, Reza Akhlaghi, Shiva Ordooei, Amineh Arani**

Canadian Distributor: **Elevation Pictures**  
US Distributor: **NEON**  
International Sales Agent: **Films Boutique**

A patriarch in every sense, Iman (Misagh Zare) is an ambitious middle-class lawyer working for the Iranian government. He has just been promoted to state investigator — the stepping stone to becoming a revolutionary court judge — and, alongside an increase in income and social cachet, his family has received clear instructions on what is required of them as Iman's star rises in the eyes of the state. His wife (played by actress and activist Soheila Golestani) and adolescent daughters (the scene-stealing Setareh Maleki and Mahsa Rostami) must fall in line.

Outside the home, the streets are alight with protests, depicted through real-life footage of the “Women, Life, Freedom” movement that exploded following the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, who died in 2022 while in police custody after being arrested for allegedly improperly wearing a hijab.

Soon, Iman understands his role — rubber-stamping death-penalty judgments against activists without giving due process (which, on the ground, has resulted in the deaths of hundreds). As Iman becomes more entrenched in his work, he grows increasingly at odds with his own family. What follows is a social drama turned cat-and-mouse thriller that will have you at the edge of your seat.

*The Seed of the Sacred Fig* received the Jury Special Prize and the FIPRESCI award at the 2024 Cannes Film Festival. Filmmaker Mohammad Rasoulof (who wrote Mahnaz Mohammadi's TIFF '19 entry, *Son-Mother*), has fled Iran, where the film was made, after receiving an eight-year prison sentence, including whipping, as his revolutionary art is perceived to represent crimes against the country's security.

DOROTA LECH

**Mohammad Rasoulof** was born in Shiraz, Iran and is now living in exile in Europe. He has directed many films, including the features *The Twilight* (02), *Manuscripts Don't Burn* (13), *A Man of Integrity* (17), and *There Is No Evil* (20). *The Seed of the Sacred Fig* (24) is his latest film.

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## Gecenin Kıyısı Edge of Night

Türker Süer

GERMANY, 2024  
Turkish  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
85 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: MFP GmbH, Liman Film,  
WDR/ARTE  
Producer: Viola Fügen, Michael Weber, Nadir Öperli  
Screenplay: Türker Süer  
Cinematographer: Matteo Cocco  
Editor: Rainer Nigrelli  
Production Designer: Yunus Emre Yurtseven,  
Meral Efe Yurtseven  
Costume Designer: Damla Turan  
Sound: Hasan Can Kaya  
Original Score: Ozan Tekin  
Principal Cast: Berk Hakman, Ahmet Rifat Sungar

International Sales Agent: The Match Factory GmbH

Brothers Kenan (Berk Hakman) and Sinan (Ahmet Rifat Şungar) Yeşilyaprak, both officers in the Turkish army, have been conflicted since birth. Their father was a prominent — later persecuted — general and their mother a member of the oft-discriminated-against Kurdish minority.

The two have grown apart over the years, yet both carry a heavy burden of guilt related to the part each played in the death of their father. Sinan, now a rising young lieutenant, has been summoned to hand over Kenan to a military court for a trial that will likely lead to a very long prison sentence for his actions against state interests.

Navigating a long journey through a divided land and an ever-shifting landscape, the brothers are unaware that a storm is underway. Set on July 15, 2016, when a faction within the Turkish Armed Forces attempted a coup against the democratically elected government, citing the erosion of secularism, elimination of democratic rule, and disregard for human rights, the men's fates will soon be in the hands of history.

*Edge of Night*, shot by Matteo Cocco's attentive lens and propelled by Ozan Tekin's score, is the captivating debut of writer-director Türker Süer. Unveiling in a climate of distrust, where the state demands

absolute — if not blind — loyalty and the only options are to adapt or rebel, this gripping story of two brothers who must ultimately choose between blood and country is impeccably crafted, timely, and unmissable.

DOROTA LECH

Türker Süer was born in Cologne, Germany. His short films include *Shaving Hacke* (05), *The Best Father Ever* (10), and *Brothers* (12). *Edge of Night* (24) is his feature debut.

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## Ka Whawhai Tonu Struggle Without End

Michael Jonathan

NEW ZEALAND, 2024  
Māori, English  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
114 minutes | Colour / DCP

Production Company: **Akeake Ltd**  
Executive Producer: **Christina Milligan, Simon Barnes, Yangiu Qian, Doug Abbott**  
Producer: **Piripi Curtis, Thomas Toby Parkinson**  
Screenplay: **Tim Worrall**  
Cinematographer: **Grant McKinnon**  
Editor: **Martin Brinkler, Te Rurehe Paki**  
Production Designer: **Shayne Radford**  
Costume Designer: **Te Ura Taripo-Hoskins, Hannah Woods**  
Sound: **Bruce Langley**  
Original Score: **Tiki Taane, Arli Liberman**  
Principal Cast: **Temuera Morrison, Paku Fernandez, Jason Flemyng, Hinerangi Harawira-Nicholas, Cliff Curtis, Miriama Smith, Te Wakaunua Te Kurapa**

International Sales Agent: **Locomotive Entertainment**

Michael Jonathan's debut feature is an epic, action-filled account of the 1864 battle of Ōrākau where a small group of disparate Māori, vastly outnumbered by British soldiers, went to war to defend their families and homeland.

Born to an English army father and Māori mother, young Haki (Paku Fernandez) has followed in his father's footsteps. Captured by Māori, Haki's life is placed on the line. He's set free by Kōpū (Hinerangi Harawira-Nicholas), a reluctant medium to a war god who dreams of her own freedom from service. As British forces inch nearer, the tribe's leader, Rewi Maniapoto (Temuera Morrison), agrees to a pact with neighbouring tribes to take a seemingly impossible stand against the invaders.

During the ensuing battle, Haki and Kōpū escape with the surviving younger children. As they search for a safe haven, Haki is haunted by an unspeakable act of war he committed at his militaristic father's behest. And as the British forces continue to take hold and tragedy strikes again, Haki must make a critical decision that will define the rest of life.

Visually spectacular and told from an staunchly Māori perspective, *Ka Whawhai Tonu* features stunning debut lead per-

formances from its two young stars and appearances from Māori screen legends Morrison and Cliff Curtis. With a cast and crew composed of many descendants of the actual battle of Ōrākau, director Jonathan and writer Tim Worrall draw a direct and potent connection between the legacy of the strength of one's ancestors and the power that's inherent in cultural perseverance.

JASON RYLE

**Michael Jonathan** is a director, cinematographer, and camera operator from Rotorua, New Zealand. His filmmaking credits include the documentaries *The Road to the Globe* (12) and *Freezing Works* (15). *Ka Whawhai Tonu* (24) is his latest film.

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## El Jockey Kill the Jockey

Luis Ortega

ARGENTINA/MEXICO/SPAIN/DENMARK/  
USA, 2024

Spanish

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

96 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Rei Pictures, El Despacho, Infinity Hill, Warner Music Entertainment, Exile, Piano, El Estudio, Snowglobe, Jacinto Films, Barraca Producciones, ViX, Dim Films, Fundación Ernesto Sábato, Pampa Films, Gloriamundi Producciones

Executive Producer: Benicio Del Toro, Isaac Lee, Ron Broitman, Federico Frágola, Phin Glynn, Delfina Montecchia, Martín Fisner

Producer: Benjamín Domenech, Santiago Gallelli, Matías Roveda, Luis Ortega, Esteban Perroud, Axel Kuschevatzky, Cindy Teperman, Charlie Cohen, Paz Lázaro, Nando Vila

Screenplay: Luis Ortega, Rodolfo Palacios, Fabián Casas

Cinematographer: Timo Salminen

Editor: Rosario Suárez, Yibrán Asuad

Production Designer: Julia Freid

Costume Designer: Beatriz Di Benedetto

Sound: Guido Berenblum, Javier Umpiérrez, Claus Lynge

Original Score: Sune Rose Wagner

Principal Cast: Nahuel Pérez Biscayart, Úrsula Corberó, Daniel Giménez Cacho, Mariana Di Girolamo, Daniel Fanego, Osmar Núñez, Roberto Carnaghi, Luis Ziembrowski, Jorge Prado, Adriana Aguirre, Roly Serrano

International Sales Agent: Protagonist Pictures

US Sales Agent: Protagonist Pictures

Argentinian auteur Luis Ortega, whose unique filmography includes *Monobloc* (TIFF '05), *Los santos sucios* (TIFF '09), and *El Ángel* (TIFF '18), returns to the Festival with a film that places him back at the centre of the most visionary currents of contemporary Latin American cinema.

The deceptively straightforward narrative follows jockeys Remo (Nahuel Pérez Biscayart) and his partner Abril (a superb Úrsula Corberó, known for the series *Money Heist*). Remo is a former star struggling with relentless addictions and a dangerously stubborn drive to remain relevant. Abril, though technically ready to take over from Remo and pursue greater success in racing, debates continuing her pregnancy. (In one memorable scene, the couple regale us with an unmissable dance sequence.)

The pair are linked to Sirena (Daniel Giménez Cacho), a mobster who has saved Remo's life in the past and who is betting hard on him winning the coming races. After an unfortunate accident kills a valuable horse, Remo disappears into the seedy streets of Buenos Aires, and Sirena sends his thugs to turn over every stone in town to find him.

What follows, in the talented hands of cinematographer Timo Salminen, is a

dreamlike immersion into the unstable identity of a fugitive whose life cycle has been altered, seemingly forever. Ortega's latest film is a weirdly spiritual, fun, sexy, heartfelt, and wholly unforgettable thriller.

DIANA CADAVID

Luis Ortega is a writer and director from Argentina. His credits include *Dromómanos* (12), *Lulu* (14), and the Festival selections *Monobloc* (05), *Los santos sucios* (09), and *El Ángel* (18). *Kill the Jockey* (24) is his latest film.

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## Hemda Bliss (Hemda)

Shemi Zarhin

ISRAEL, 2024  
Hebrew, Arabic  
INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE  
125 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **United King Films**  
Executive Producer:  
Producer: **Moshe Ederly**  
Screenplay: **Shemi Zarhin**  
Cinematographer: **Itzik Portal**  
Editor: **Einat Glaser Zarhin**  
Production Designer: **Ehud Guterman**  
Costume Designer: **Inbal Shuki**  
Sound: **Aviv Aldema, Moti Hefetz**  
Original Score: **Gal Lev**  
Principal Cast: **Sasson Gabay, Asi Levi, Maor Levi, Adi Alon, Shadi Mar'i, Lital Schartz, Roy Assaf**

Canadian Distributor:  
US Distributor:  
International Sales Agent:  
US Sales Agent:

Sassi (Sasson Gabay) is more than 20 years older than his wife Effi (Asi Levi) and worried about his declining powers. Surgery has left him seeking treatment for impotence, but Effi insists she's content with their emotional closeness. In her work as a physical therapist, though, Effi sees every day the link between body and heart. The biggest challenge to their loving relationship has been the gambling debts Sassi's adult son keeps running up. But the couple's fragile understanding, compounded by the presence of two young men, introduces new threats.

Their teenage grandson, Omri, returns from living with his father in Europe, at loose ends and clearly in need of guidance. For one thing, he can barely stand to wear a shirt. Then a young patient turns up at the swimming pool where Effi conducts therapy sessions. He comes to confront her about something from their past, something complicated, contested, and clearly painful to them both.

Novelist and filmmaker Shemi Zarhin (*The Kind Words*, TIFF '15) brings characteristic insight and observational humour to *Bliss*. Written and shot before the current war, certain scenes touch lightly on interactions between Jewish and Arab culture and language in Israel.

Zarhin directed Gabay and Levi years ago in *Aviva My Love*; the two have an ease and chemistry that allows both love and tension to flow. As Zarhin reveals more about the couple and the people disrupting their bliss, motivations and contradictions form a complex narrative where the idea of bliss itself becomes a prism, reflecting each character in a whole range of colours.

CAMERON BAILEY

**Shemi Zarhin** was born in Tiberias, Israel, and is now based in Tel Aviv. He's a director, screenwriter, and novelist. He has directed *Passover Fever* (95), *Aviva, My Love* (06), *The World Is Funny* (12), and *The Kind Words* (15), which played the Festival. *Bliss* (24) is his latest film.

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## Anywhere Anytime

Milad Tangshir

ITALY, 2024  
Italian, Wolof  
INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE  
80 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Vivo film srl, Young Films**  
Producer: **Marta Donzelli, Gregorio Paonessa, Roberto De Paolis, Carla Altieri**  
Screenplay: **Giaime Alonge, Daniele Gaglianone, Milad Tangshir**  
Cinematographer: **Giuseppe Maio**  
Editor: **Enrico Giovannone**  
Production Designer: **Leonie Heys Cerchio**  
Costume Designer: **Silvia Nebiolo**  
Sound: **Roberto Gambotto Remorino, Alessandro Feletti, Francesco Mauro, Cristiano Ciccone**  
Principal Cast: **Ibrahima Sambou, Moussa Dicko Diango, Success Edemakhiota**

International Sales Agent: **Fandango**

Issa (Ibrahima Sambou) is a young undocumented immigrant from Senegal living in Turin, Italy. He is doing his best to survive — and send money home — in a bustling city that in countless ways renders him invisible. Moreover, he's living in a hostile land, in which Brothers of Italy, a national-conservative and far-right party with neo-fascist roots — widely known to be especially unfriendly to migrants, refugees, and outsiders — gained an absolute majority in the 2022 Italian parliamentary elections.

Fired by his previous employer, Issa finds work as a food-delivery rider, thanks to a kind friend (Moussa Dicko Diango). The arduous job requires employees to provide their own means of transport, and soon Issa's newly gained stability collapses when, during a drop-off, the bicycle he has just spent all his money on is stolen. Determined to overcome yet another challenge, Issa immediately embarks on an uphill odyssey through the city streets to recover his means of transport and subsistence. Luckily, moments of reprieve find tenderhearted Issa, as he moves through the metropolis with distinguished grace, including an encounter with a fellow migrant (Success Edemakhiota) that brings glimmers of beauty and reminds the viewer of the best of humanity.

For his powerful debut fiction feature, Tehran-born director Milad Tangshir shows us that for many, something as simple as a bike can guarantee or raze someone's survival. Shattering and unforgettable, *Anywhere Anytime* is a bold nod to Vittorio De Sica's 1948 classic *Bicycle Thieves*, and heralds a courageous and striking cinematic voice.

DOROTA LECH

**Milad Tangshir** is a musician and filmmaker born in Tehran who now lives in Italy. He has directed short films including *13 Seconds* (18) and *Hydrocosmos* (21) as well as the feature documentary *Star Stuff* (19). *Anywhere Anytime* (24) is his fiction feature debut.

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## Une part manquante A Missing Part

Guillaume Senez

**BELGIUM/FRANCE, 2024**  
French, Japanese  
**WORLD PREMIERE**  
98 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Les Films Pelléas, Versus Production**  
Producer: **Jacques-Henri Bronckart, David Thion**  
Screenplay: **Guillaume Senez, Jean Denizot**  
Cinematographer: **Elin Kirschfink**  
Editor: **Julie Brenta**  
Production Designer: **Takeshi Shimizu**  
Costume Designer: **Julie Lebrun**  
Sound: **Nicolas Paturle, Virginie Messaïen, Sabrina Calmels, Franco Piscopo**  
Original Score: **Olivier Marguerit**  
Principal Cast: **Romain Duris, Judith Chemla, Mei Cirne-Masaki, Tsuyu, Shungiku Uchida, Yumi Narita, Patrick Descamps, Shinnosuke Abe**

International Sales Agent: **Be For Films**

Reuniting with director Guillaume Senez after their very successful collaboration on 2018's *Our Struggles*, Romain Duris gives a wonderfully lived-in performance as Jay, a French man now living in Tokyo and making a living as a driver for a private car service. Through Jay's encounters with Jessica (Judith Chemla), another French expat, and his conversations with others sympathetic to his predicament, Senez's film gradually reveals the circumstances that have kept him in the country. Like others who share his plight, Jay is subject to a legal system that provides few rights to foreign parents in custody conflicts. As a result of Japan's "clean break" approach to family law, a parent may be unable to even contact their child after a divorce. After nine painful years, Jay is on the verge of giving up on the possibility he might ever see his daughter Lily again. But then one morning, a new passenger in his car takes his story in another direction.

By grounding the narrative in small details and never resorting to easy sentimentality, even in its most charged moments, Senez imbues his film with great authenticity and humanity. Likewise, the director's emphasis on the quotidian helps it avoid exoticizing Jay's experience or perspective as an outsider in Japan. Through these quiet, careful

methods, Senez has crafted an unusually thoughtful family story that contains a rare wealth of feeling.

JASON ANDERSON

**Guillaume Senez** was born in Brussels and has directed several short films. His debut feature *Keeper* premiered at the 2015 Festival. He also directed *Our Struggles* (18). *A Missing Part* (24) is his latest film.

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## 捆绑上天堂

### Bound in Heaven

Huo Xin

CHINA, 2024  
Mandarin  
WORLD PREMIERE  
109 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Shanghai Such A Good Film Co.  
Executive Producer: Nan Gao  
Producer: An Hanjin, Justine O.  
Screenplay: Huo Xin  
Cinematographer: Piao Songri  
Editor: Matthieu Laclau, Zhang Zhao, Yann-shan Tsai  
Production Designer: Zhai Tao  
Costume Designer: Dora Ng  
Sound: Fu Kang  
Original Score: ZHI16, radiax  
Principal Cast: Ni Ni, Zhou You, Liao Fan

In her debut feature film, renowned scriptwriter Huo Xin brings together some of China's most sought-after actors, including Ni Ni, known for her role in Zhang Yimou's *The Flowers of War*; Zhou You, who also appears at this year's Festival in Jia Zhang-Ke's *Caught By The Tides*; and Liao Fan, recognized for his intense performance in *Black Coal, Thin Ice*.

Ni Ni plays Xia You, a successful finance professional with a seemingly perfect life. Beneath this glittering facade, however, lies a dark secret: she has an abusive partner (Liao Fan) who subjects her to severe physical and psychological violence.

Desperate to see her favourite star Faye Wong in concert, Xia's search for scalped tickets leads her to a fateful encounter with Xu Zitai (Zhou You), a terminally ill man. Their chemistry is immediate, and their first sexual encounter in a dark alley is unforgettable. When Xia later meets Xu Zitai by chance during a business trip in the city, where he runs a small noodle shop, she may never leave him again.

Deeply touching, *Bound in Heaven* addresses important issues such as domestic violence and the challenges of terminal illness within China's healthcare system.

Huo's assured direction and nuanced and emotive script allow her leads to

excel in their portrayals of two characters bound together by inevitable death and star-crossed love.

A romantic yet unflinchingly honest portrayal of affection and resilience, the film marks the welcome arrival of a bright new talent in China's world of auteur filmmaking.

GIOVANNA FULVI

Huo Xin is a screenwriter and filmmaker. She has written or co-written films including *Shower* (99), *Kung Fu Hustle* (04), *Full Circle* (12), and *Crimes of Passion* (13). *Bound in Heaven* (24) is her directorial debut.

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## Happy Holidays

Scandar Copti

PALESTINE/GERMANY/FRANCE/ITALY/  
QATAR, 2024  
Arabic, Hebrew  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
123 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Fresco Films, Red Balloon Film, Tessalit Productions, Intra Movies  
Executive Producer:  
Producer: Tony Copti, Dorothe Beinemeier,  
Jean Bréhat, Marco Valerio Fusco  
Screenplay: Scandar Copti  
Cinematographer: Tim Kuhn  
Editor: Scandar Copti  
Production Designer: Stella Rossié  
Costume Designer: Hamada Attalah  
Sound: Maximilien Gobiet, Pierre Tucat,  
Matthias Schwab  
Original Score: Pascal Lemercier  
Principal Cast: Manar Shehab, Wafaa Aoun,  
Meirav Memoresky, Toufic Danial

International Sales Agent: Indie Sales

A minor car accident in Jerusalem threatens major problems for Fifi (Manar Shehab), unless she can stay one step ahead of her intuitive mother. Studying away from home has afforded her a new sense of autonomy — a chance to be her own person — but after waking up in a hospital room surrounded by her family, she will have to decide quickly how much of her new self she will let them see.

Back in Haifa, Fifi's headstrong brother Rami (Toufic Danial) is harbouring his own secrets. His girlfriend's recent epiphany has rocked his casual faith in the future, leaving him in a tense battle between ego and paranoia. Not knowing where to turn, Rami fixates, trying to assess his ability to sway an outcome that may be, ultimately, beyond his control.

In this panoramic family drama, there are no perfect characters, but everyone's opinion matters. Structured like a vine of interior portraits, a ruinous mixture of personal quests, poor choices, and intractable social pressures test the stamina of cherished relationships, both well-worn and still blooming.

Bit by bit, the fractured foundation of one lie gives way to another until all that's left is the truth.

An incisive second feature from Oscar-nominated director Scandar Copti (*Ajami*, TIFF '09), containing abundant memorable

performances, *Happy Holidays* traces the cracks of compounding social divides down to their most intimate and insidious fault lines.

NATALEAH HUNTER-YOUNG

**Scandar Copti** is a Palestinian filmmaker and visual artist, originally from Yafa, now based in Abu Dhabi. His debut feature, *Ajami* (09), played the Festival. *Happy Holidays* (24) is his latest film.

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## Ljósprot When The Light Breaks

Rúnar Rúnarsson

ICELAND/NETHERLANDS/CROATIA/France, 2024  
Icelandic  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
82 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Compass Films, Halibut, Revolver Amsterdam, MP Film, Eaux Vives Productions, Jour2Fête**  
Executive Producer: **Þórður Jónsson, Lilja Ósk Snorradóttir, Claudia Hausfeld**  
Producer: **Heather Millard, Rúnar Rúnarsson, Raymond Van der Kaaij, Igor A Nola, Mike Downey, Xenia Maingot, Sarah Chazelle, Etienne Ollagnier**  
Screenplay: **Rúnar Rúnarsson**  
Cinematographer: **Sophia Olsson**  
Editor: **Andri Steinn Guðjónsson**  
Production Designer: **Hulda Helgadóttir**  
Costume Designer: **Helga Rós. V. Hannam**  
Sound: **Ranko Paukovi**  
Original Score: **Jóhann Jóhannsson**  
Principal Cast: **Elín Hall, Katla Njálisdóttir, Mikael Kaaber, Baldur Einarsson, Ágúst Wigum, Gunnar Hrafn Kristjánsson**  
International Sales Agent: **The Party Film Sales**

Preceded by:

**O**

Rúnar Rúnarsson

ICELAND/SWEDEN, 2024, Icelandic  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
19 minutes | Colour/DCP

An affecting portrait of grief in its rawest form, Rúnar Rúnarsson's fourth feature demonstrates the Icelandic filmmaker's ability to convey the stormiest and subtlest emotions of characters in crisis. Sharply focused and intimately scaled, his latest begins on a note of great happiness, as two students in their early twenties — Una (Elín Hall) and Diddi (Baldur Einarsson) — enjoy a spring sunset in Reykjavik and talk of their future together, a future that's even brighter now that Diddi is about to break up with his girlfriend back home.

With the next day comes a tragedy. Reeling from grief, Una navigates a series of charged interactions with others dealing with their own welter of emotions, all while struggling to decide whether to share a truth that could leave someone else shattered.

Having already made an impression on Festival audiences in Baldvin Zophoníasson's *Let Me Fall* (TIFF '18), Hall establishes herself as one of European cinema's most compelling young actors with an astonishing and deeply felt performance. She's matched at every turn by a cast who are equally fearless and a filmmaker able to emphasize the value of love and connection and show how they may be found even in grief's darkest moments.

The Festival is thrilled to present a second new film by Rúnarsson within the same programme. A short that was crafted in the same period as *When The Light Breaks, O* serves as another affecting study in human frailty with its story of a man struggling to keep his demons at bay for the sake of his daughter's wedding day.

JASON ANDERSON

Rúnar Rúnarsson was born in Reykjavik. He has directed short films including the Oscar-nominated *The Last Farm* (04), *Two Birds* (08), and *Anna* (09), as well as the features *Volcano* (11), *Sparrows* (15), and *Echo* (19). *When The Light Breaks* (24) is his latest film.

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## Measures for a Funeral

Sofia Bohdanowicz

CANADA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
142 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: Greenground Productions, Maison du Bonheur Films Inc  
Executive Producer: Simone Urdl, Ryan Krivoshey, Mustafa Uzuner  
Producer: Andreas Mendtritzki, Aonan Yang, Sofia Bohdanowicz, Priscilla Galvez  
Screenplay: Sofia Bohdanowicz, Deragh Campbell  
Cinematographer: Nikolay Michaylov  
Editor: Pablo Alvarez-Mesa, Sofia Bohdanowicz  
Production Designer: Jessica Hart  
Costume Designer: Mara Zigler  
Sound: Lucas Prokaziuk, Stefana Fratila, Ian Reynolds  
Original Score: Olivier Alary  
Principal Cast: Deragh Campbell, Maria Dueñas, Melanie Scheiner, Mary-Margaret O'Hara, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Maxim Gaudette, Eve Duranceau, Eileen Davies, Rosa Johan-Uddoh, Grace Glowicki, Kieran Adams, Anni Spadafora, Fan Wu, Heidi Galvez, Julia Beyer, Darrah Teitel, Aaron Danby

Canadian Distributor: Vortex Media

Sofia Bohdanowicz's latest pieces together the extraordinary story of real-life early 20th-century Canadian violinist Kathleen Parlow — who by rights should be a household name — blending fact with a fictionalized family history.

The director's frequent collaborator, actor Deragh Campbell (also at this year's Festival with Kazik Radwanski's *Matt and Mara*), plays Audrey Benac, a woman on a single-minded mission to learn more about Parlow, who has slipped away from collective memory. Melding her own personal history into the film, Parlow was Bohdanowicz's grandfather's violin mentor and teacher.

Parlow is the subject of Audrey's PhD thesis and her research takes her from Toronto to London to Oslo and far away from her dying mother, who is bitter that she never got to pursue her own violin dreams while her husband did, a legacy that haunts Audrey.

Discovering a once-lost composition dedicated to Parlow, Audrey shoves aside her own personal problems to restage the opus.

Culminating in a beautiful final concerto — of Opus 28, written for Parlow by Johan Halvorsen and performed for the first time in Canada by María Dueñas — that is layered in meaning and importance, this film brings to

light a forgotten icon, while simultaneously reflecting on loss, regrets, and closure.

More ambitious than anything Bohdanowicz has previously made, *Measures for a Funeral* is still very much in line with her body of work. Fans will recognize her emotional precision and collaborative spirit while also appreciating her decision to stretch herself in new directions, adding new notes to her established melodies.

KELLY BOUTSALIS

Sofia Bohdanowicz is a filmmaker from Toronto and an alumni of the TIFF Talent Accelerator. She's the director of short films including *Point and Line to Plane* (20), as well as the features *MS Slavic 7* (19) and *A Woman Escapes* (22). *Measures for a Funeral* (24) is her latest film.

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## To a Land Unknown

Mahdi Fleifel

UNITED KINGDOM/France/Germany/Netherlands/Greece/Qatar/Saudi Arabia/Palestine, 2024

Arabic, Greek, English  
 North American Premiere  
 105 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Inside Out Films, Nakba FilmWorks, Salaud Morisset, Salaud Morisset Deutschland, Homemade Films, Studio Ruba  
 Executive Producer: Elisa Van Waeyenberge, François De Villiers, Frank Barat, Sawsan Asfari  
 Producer: Geoff Arbourne, Mahdi Fleifel, Maria Drandaki, Layla Meijman, Maarten van der Ven, François Morisset  
 Screenplay: Mahdi Fleifel, Fyzal Boulifa, Jason McColgan  
 Cinematographer: Thodoris Mihopoulos  
 Editor: Halim Sabbagh  
 Production Designer: Ioanna Soulele  
 Costume Designer: Konstantina Mardiki  
 Sound: Martín Hernández, Steve Bond  
 Original Score: Nadah El Shazly  
 Principal Cast: Mahmoud Bakri, Aram Sabbagh, Angeliki Papoulia, Mohammad Alsurafa, Mouataz Alshalton, Mohammad Ghassan, Monzer Reyahnah

International Sales Agent: Salaud Morisset

Already a Festival veteran, Mahdi Fleifel — widely celebrated for *A World Not Ours* (TIFF Docs '12) and *A Drowning Man* (TIFF Short Cuts '17) — returns with his narrative feature debut, an intuitive thriller about displaced cousins who will stop at nothing for a reliable path out of purgatory. Emerging first as a loose adaptation of Ghassan Kanafani's 1962 novella *Men in the Sun*, Fleifel's latest project is effectively a narrative extension of his 2012 documentary, which ends with the film's subjects in Greece.

Stranded in a bleak, overcrowded neighbourhood in Athens, cousins Chatila — played by a transformed Mahmoud Bakri (*Alam*, TIFF '22; *The Teacher*, TIFF '23) — and Reda (newcomer Aram Sabbagh) are endlessly plotting their escape. Coming from a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon, the best friends, raised more like brothers, search for a life that offers more than displacement.

To save money for fake passports, the men carry out petty scams, their intention to get to Germany where Chatila aspires to open a café and Reda dreams of protecting it. But when Reda dumps their savings on his opiate addiction, Chatila is forced to escalate, concocting a high-risk heist that will have them posing as smugglers.

Filed weightlessly by Thodoris Mihopoulos (known for his work on TIFF '19 selection *Entwined*), *To a Land Unknown* lends a transformed quality to stories about forced migration, where exile takes new shapes and gives “killing time” renewed meaning.

NATALEAH HUNTER-YOUNG

**Mahdi Fleifel** is a Palestinian-Danish filmmaker who graduated from England's National Film and Television School. His credits as director include the feature documentary *A World Not Ours* (12) and the short film *A Drowning Man* (19), both of which screened at the Festival. *To a Land Unknown* (24) is his latest film.

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## The Legend of the Vagabond Queen of Lagos

### The Agbajowo Collective

NIGERIA/GERMANY/SOUTH AFRICA/  
USA, 2024

Other, English  
WORLD PREMIERE

101 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Slum Dwellers International, Justice & Empowerment Initiatives, Nigerian Slum / Informal Settlement Federation, Die Gesellschaft DGS, Raconteur Productions

Producer: Mathew Cerf, James Tayler, Megan Chapman, Andrew Maki, Mohammed Zanna, Michael Henrichs, Mustapha Emmanuel, Bisola Akinmuyiwa, Chioma Onyenwe

Screenplay: Agbajowo Collective

Cinematographer: Leo Purman

Editor: Khalid Shamis, Mathew Cerf, Yiqing Yu

Production Designer: Bola Belo

Costume Designer: Yahaya Muyinat, Victor Eniola

Sound: Pius Fatoke, Sadiq Adebayo

Original Score: Michael "Truth" Ogunlade

Principal Cast: Temiloluwa Ami-Williams, Debo Adedayo, Kachi Okechukwu, Gerard Avlessi

International Sales Agent: Rushlake Media

Drawn from the headlines and charged with outrage, the debut from Nigeria's Agbajowo Collective is a riveting indictment of the unchecked development and forced evictions besetting Africa's largest city. Anchored by a stunning performance from Temi Ami-Williams (*Eyimofe [This Is My Desire]*), *The Legend of the Vagabond Queen of Lagos* is a work of blazing urgency.

Jawu (Ami-Williams) bears the mark of a warrior king but lives humbly, selling swallows at the local market, saving up for the better future she's determined to build for herself and her son. The pair reside in the Agbojedo community, a floating slum planted in the lagoon that gives Lagos its name.

Just as rumours begin circulating regarding government plans for new developments that would raze their homes, Jawu spies a corrupt politician (Adebowale Adedayo, also at the Festival in *Freedom Way*) burying a nest egg of cash. Struck by her good fortune, she takes the money for herself, thinking this might be her way out. Jawu doesn't know that she is destined for a bigger battle that is yet to come.

The product of radical collaboration at every stage of development and production, *The Legend of the Vagabond Queen of Lagos* represents the culmination of a

seven-year journey to expose the ways poverty is criminalized to excuse unjust police raids and the destruction of entire communities. Alternating in tone between terse thriller, documentary-like observation, and wondrous magical realism, this gorgeously rendered film is a vibrant portrait of people struggling to protect their community and the place they call home.

NATALEAH HUNTER-YOUNG

*The Legend of the Vagabond Queen of Lagos* is directed by The Agbajowo Collective: James Tayler, Ogungbamila Temitope, Okechukwu Samuel, Mathew Cerf, Tina Edukpo, Bisola Akinmuyiwa, and A.S. Elijah.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

MARRIOTT  
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## Los Tortuga The Exiles

Belén Funes

SPAIN/CHILE, 2024  
Spanish  
WORLD PREMIERE  
110 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Oberon Media, La Claqueta PC, Quijote Films, Los Tortuga La Película AIE, La Cruda Realidad  
Producer: Antonio Chavarrías, Olmo Figueredo González-Quevedo, Giancarlo Nasí, Alba Bosch-Duran, Sara Gómez, Carlos Rosado Sibón  
Screenplay: Marçal Cebrian, Belén Funes  
Cinematographer: Diego Cabezas  
Editor: Sergio Jiménez  
Production Designer: Paula Espuny  
Costume Designer: Lourdes Fuentes  
Sound: Diana Sagrista, Abraham F. Apresa  
Original Score: Paloma Peñarrubia  
Principal Cast: Elvira Lara, Antonia Zegers

International Sales Agent: Film Factory Entertainment

The second feature from Belén Funes (*A Thief's Daughter*) confirms the Spanish director's remarkable gift for channelling overwhelming emotions into finely detailed narratives. Focusing on a mother-daughter relationship complicated by unprocessed grief and financial strife, *The Exiles* depicts familial love as a force in constant need of reckoning.

Delia (Antonia Zegers, *Too Late to Die Young*, TIFF '18) is a Chilean who has resided for many years in Spain, where she met Julián, the love of her life, and had Anabel (Elvira Lara), her only child. Since Julián's untimely death, Delia seems trapped in a cycle involving punishingly long hours spent driving a taxi in Barcelona, followed by the shortest possible route to oblivion. Now in university, Anabel leaves her extended family's roadside hostel to live with Delia in the big city.

Delia tries to play the role of mother, yet in some ways Ana seems the more mature of the two, particularly when it comes to managing their precarious housing situation. Underneath the women's urgent questions of where to live and how to earn money lies a deeper, more troubling question regarding how to accept a devastating loss and move on.

Celebrated for her electrifying performances in *The Club* and *No*, Zegers brings a special gravitas to Delia, a formidable woman who cannot help the fact that her life is partly defined by her foreign origins. Zegers' captivating combination of brash charisma and vulnerability is beautifully matched by young Lara, whose Anabel must summon preternatural strength and courage to forge a path into adulthood without leaving her mother behind.

DIANA CADAVID

Belén Funes studied directing at Escola Superior de Cinema i Audiovisuals de Catalunya in Barcelona, and is an alumnus of the 2018 TIFF Talent Lab. She has directed the short films *Sara a la fuga* (15) and *La inútil* (17), and the feature *A Thief's Daughter* (19). *The Exiles* (24) is her latest film.

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## The Mother and the Bear

Johnny Ma

CANADA/CHILE, 2024  
English, Korean  
WORLD PREMIERE  
100 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Rhombus Media, Fabula, Thin Stuff Productions  
Executive Producer: Fraser Ash, Kevin Krikst, Andrew Hevia, Pablo Larraín, Adrian Love, Omar Chalabi, Joe Simpson, Simon Williams, Andy Wang, Matthew Chausse, Jonathan Bross, Joe Jenckes, Constanza Muñoz, Evan Johnson, Galen Johnson  
Producer: Juan de Dios Larraín, Niv Fichman  
Screenplay: Johnny Ma  
Cinematographer: Inti Briones  
Editor: Valeria Hernández  
Production Designer: Craig Sandells  
Costume Designer: Stephanie Maureen Petkau  
Sound: Claudio Carrasco  
Original Score: Marie-Hélène L. Delorme  
Principal Cast: Kim Ho-jung, Won-Jae Lee, Jonathan Kim, Susan Hanson, Samantha Kendrick, Amara Pedroso Saquel, Leere Park

Canadian Distributor: Elevation Pictures  
International Sales Agent: FilmNation Entertainment  
US Sales Agent: FilmNation Entertainment

In a snow-swept Winnipeg, school teacher Sumi (Leere Park) is hospitalized after a fall. On hearing the news, her anxious mother, Sara (Kim Ho-jung), flies over from Seoul to be with her comatose daughter — and once Sara sets herself up in the young woman's apartment, she discovers she doesn't really know Sumi at all.

In a departure from his previous films *Old Stone* (TIFF '16) and *To Live, to Sing*, which were serious-minded studies of life in contemporary China, Chinese-Canadian filmmaker Johnny Ma embraces a new mode here, using suburban Winnipeg as the stage for a stylized, whimsical narrative of crossed wires, secret lives, and conflicting agendas.

Sara despairs about her daughter's single status, so she immediately starts catfishing the pleasant Min (Jonathan Kim) to be Sumi's boyfriend — once she wakes up, of course — and also gets unwittingly entangled with Min's estranged father, Sam (Won-Jae Lee), who runs a Korean restaurant in the city. As Sam and the widowed Sara connect over their mutual melancholies, a chance meeting with Sumi's co-worker Amaya (Amara Pedroso Saquel) leads Sara to learn more about the life from which her daughter has chosen to exclude her.

A unique mash-up of genres that boasts TIFF favourites Evan Johnson, Galen Johnson and Pablo Larraín as executive producers, *The Mother and the Bear* marks a bold new direction for Ma. And if you were wondering about that eponymous bear... well, you'll just have to see the film.

NORM WILNER

Johnny Ma was born in Shanghai and raised in Toronto. He studied film at Columbia University. He has directed short films including *The Robbery* (10) and *A Grand Canal* (13). His debut feature *Old Stone* (16) screened at TIFF '16, where it won Best Canadian First Feature. *The Mother and the Bear* (24) is his latest film.

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## Julie Zwijgt Julie Keeps Quiet

Leonardo van Dijl

BELGIUM/SWEDEN, 2024  
Dutch, French  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
100 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **De Wereldvrede, Les Films du Fleuve (BE), HOBAB, Film i Väst**  
Executive Producer: **Leonardo van Dijl, Nicolas Karakatsanis, Roxanne Sarkozi, Florian Zeller, Federica Sainte-Rose, Martien Uyttendaele, Olivier Mortagne, Dirk De Lille, Edgar Daarnhouwer, Jan Naszewski, Marcin Łuczaj, Naomi Osaka, Stuart Duguid**  
Producer: **Gilles Coulier, Gilles De Schryver, Roxanne Sarkozi, Delphine Tomson, Nima Yousefi, Anthony Muir, Kristina Börjeson**  
Screenplay: **Leonardo van Dijl, Ruth Becquart**  
Cinematographer: **Nicolas Karakatsanis**  
Editor: **Bert Jacobs**  
Production Designer: **Julien Denis**  
Costume Designer: **Ellen Blereau**  
Sound: **Boris Debackere, Gustaf Berger, Arne Winderickx**  
Original Score: **Caroline Shaw**  
Principal Cast: **Tessa Van den Broeck, Ruth Becquart, Koen De Bouw, Claire Bodson, Laurent Caron**

International Sales Agent: **New Europe Film Sales**

This perfectly poised debut feature by Belgium's Leonardo van Dijl opens with the stirrings of a newly emerging scandal. Julie (Tessa Van den Broeck), a highly promising 15-year-old player at a tennis academy, nervously faces changes in her training program after her longtime coach is put on leave. The reason: allegations about his relationship with a former player who has recently committed suicide.

Despite mounting pressure on Julie to share her own experience with her mentor, the taciturn teen directs her focus where she's always been conditioned to: her game. Yet, whether Julie acknowledges it or not, the unfolding crisis gradually compels her to emerge from the isolation that's been imposed on her.

While so many sports-themed dramas give short shrift to actual matters of athletics, van Dijl's film generates tremendous nuance and verisimilitude by emphasizing the discipline and physicality of its protagonist. An elite player herself, Van den Broeck gives an utterly compelling performance. Indeed, such is the feature's authenticity as a representation of the experience of young players, tennis superstar Naomi Osaka was moved to serve as an executive producer.

Van Dijl crafts his film with the same

degree of care, clarity, and rigour that marked early shorts such as *Stephanie*, a Short Cuts selection at TIFF 2020. But for all the precision in its execution, *Julie Keeps Quiet* also develops surprising warmth as the deeply empathetic story of a teenager coming to grips with trauma and rediscovering her connections to the people in her world.

JASON ANDERSON

**Leonardo van Dijl** is a writer-director based in Belgium. He's directed the short films *Get Ripped* (14), *Umpire* (15), and the Festival selection *Stephanie* (20). *Julie Keeps Quiet* (24) is his feature debut.

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## L'Histoire de Souleymane Souleymane's Story

Boris Lojkine

FRANCE, 2024  
French, Foulah, Malinke  
INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE  
93 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **UNITÉ**  
Producer: **Bruno Nahon**  
Screenplay: **Boris Lojkine, Delphine Agut**  
Cinematographer: **Tristan Galand**  
Editor: **Xavier Sirven**  
Production Designer: **Géraldine Stivet**  
Costume Designer: **Marine Peyraud**  
Sound: **Marc-Olivier Brullé**  
Principal Cast: **Abou Sangare, Nina Meurisse, Younoussa Diallo, Alpha Oumar Sow**

International Sales Agent: **Pyramide International**

Boris Lojkine's fourth film follows an undocumented Guinean immigrant, Souleymane (Abou Sangare), through the bustling streets of Paris over two days as he makes bike courier food deliveries while preparing for his asylum interview. Part of an underground economy of couriers who rent verified accounts, Souleymane works morning to night, piecing together a life between the strict schedule of the homeless shelter he stays at with other immigrants, fitting in as many deliveries as possible to avoid penalties from the app, and somehow finding time to call his girlfriend back at home.

All of this leaves Souleymane with little opportunity to assemble the payment and necessary paperwork for his well-meaning but harried immigration broker or to commit all the details of his revised asylum narrative to memory. Despite the pressing nature of his obligations, Souleymane's personality shines through in his brief moments of respite — joking with other immigrant couriers, helping an elderly customer, and connecting with a kebab vendor. First-time actor Sangare (winner of Un Certain Regard Best Actor prize for this film at Cannes) gives a commanding performance, radiant in its vulnerability and empathy, and culminating in the emotionally raw scene

of the interview that will ultimately decide Souleymane's fate.

Drawing inspiration from classic social-issue dramas, but adding the driving urgency of a thriller, Lojkine crafts a topical and emotionally immersive portrait of a young man whose story is simultaneously singular yet shared by the many undocumented labourers who urban centres rely on, yet constantly seek to restrict.

ROBYN CITIZEN

**Boris Lojkine** is a writer and director from Paris. His films include the documentary *Les Âmes errantes* (05), and the fiction features *Hope* (14) and *Camille* (19). *Souleymane's Story* (24) is his latest film.

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## Haft Rooz Seven Days

Ali Samadi Ahadi

GERMANY, 2024

Farsi

WORLD PREMIERE

113 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Brave New Work GmbH**

Producer: **Mohammad Farokhmanesh, Armin Hofmann,**

**Ali Samadi Ahadi, Frank Geiger**

Screenplay: **Mohammad Rasoulof**

Cinematographer: **Mathias Neumann**

Editor: **Andrea Mertens**

Production Designer: **Anonymus**

Costume Designer: **Negar Nemati**

Sound: **Nico Berthold, Sönke Strohark**

Original Score: **Ali N. Askin**

Principal Cast: **Vishka Asayesh, Majid Bakhtiari,**

**Tanaz Molaie, Sam Vafa, Melika Foroutan**

International Sales Agent: **Goodfellas**

In Ali Samadi Ahadi's latest, 46-year-old Iranian human rights activist Maryam (depicted by the brilliant and commanding Vishka Asayesh), who has spent the last six years in prison, has been granted a rare seven-day medical leave. Unbeknownst to the authorities, her brother Nima (Sina Parvaneh) and her husband Behnam (Majid Bakhtiari) have devised a daring plan to smuggle her out of Iran and reunite her with her family. Maryam's long-suffering partner and their children, now living in exile in Germany, are preparing for a last-minute, clandestine trip to Turkey, where they hope Maryam will find them.

Assisted by Zanyar (Zanyar Mohammadi), a teacher involved in underground escape networks, Maryam's journey begins with a treacherous two-day hike through snow-covered mountains. Once there, with time already slipping, Maryam must decide whether to take the opportunity of escaping to freedom with her family or returning to her prison cell and continuing her uphill battle for equality and democracy.

Written by Mohammad Rasoulof — also at the Festival with *The Seed of the Sacred Fig* — and shot by Mathias Neumann, *Seven Days* perfectly captures the personal costs of the struggle for human rights.

A gripping portrayal of resistance, sacrifice, and the power of family ties that bind us, it is a testament to the enduring spirit of those brave individuals who fight for a better future, even at the expense of their own freedom.

Impeccably crafted and concerning the most noble and universal of all causes, Samadi Ahadi's film is critical viewing for citizens and cinephiles alike.

DOROTA LECH

**Ali Samadi Ahadi** was born in Tabriz, Iran, and is now based in Cologne, Germany. He's an award-winning filmmaker, with directorial credits including *Lost Children* (05) and *The Green Wave* (10). *Seven Days* (24) is his latest film.

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## Den Svenska Torpeden The Swedish Torpedo

Frida Kempff

SWEDEN, 2024  
Swedish, Danish, English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
120 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Momento Film, Amrion, Inland Film Company, Velvet Films, SVT, TV4, Film i Väst, RTBF (Belgian Television), Proximus**  
Executive Producer: **Frida Kempff**  
Producer: **Erik Andersson, David Herdies, Michael Krotkiewski**  
Screenplay: **Frida Kempff, Marietta von Hausswolff von Baumgarten**  
Cinematographer: **Hannes Krantz**  
Editor: **Julie Naas**  
Production Designer: **Elle Furudahl**  
Costume Designer: **Eugen Tamberg**  
Sound: **Louis Storme**  
Original Score: **Martin Dirkov**  
Principal Cast: **Josefin Neldén, Mikkel Boe Følsgaard, Arthur Sörbring, Lisa Carlehed, Gunnel Fred**

International Sales Agent: **Urban Sales**

Many fascinating and inspirational stories can be found in the history of sports. Even so, the story portrayed in Frida Kempff's beautifully textured period drama is very special.

Born in Helsingborg, Sweden in 1908, Sally Bauer began swimming competitively in her teens, soon developing a passion for long-distance swims. Yet by the time of the events in *The Swedish Torpedo* in the late 1930s, pursuit of her athletic dreams is taxing her both financially — since backers for her costly swims are always scarce — and personally. As a single mother, Bauer also faces burdens and stigmas that threaten her ability to achieve her goal: to swim the English Channel, a feat that will keep her in icy and treacherous waters for upwards of 15 hours.

The spread of war across Europe adds complications and urgency to Bauer's mission. To accomplish it requires her to push down her fears, curb her sometimes stubborn ways, and gather much-needed allies, including her young son's father, a married sports reporter whom she still loves.

Brought to life by Josefin Neldén with great sensitivity and even greater tenacity, the woman at the centre of Kempff's stirring second feature proves to be as extraordinary as her accomplishment.

JASON ANDERSON

**Frida Kempff** is a Swedish writer and director. Her credits include the short films *Micky Bader* (10) and *Cirklar* (15), the documentary *Winter Buoy* (15), and the fiction feature *Knocking* (21). *The Swedish Torpedo* (24) is her latest film.

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## Çaf el-aouel

### Front Row

Merzak Allouache

Algeria/Saudi Arabia/France, 2024  
Arabic  
WORLD PREMIERE  
86 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Baya Films, Les. Asphofilms.,  
Alpha Tango Studio  
Producer: Merzak Allouache, Bahia Allouache,  
Amina Salem Castaing  
Screenplay: Merzak Allouache  
Cinematographer: Mohamed Tayeb Laggoune  
Editor: Merzak Allouache, Samir Lezzoum  
Sound: Hocine Mellal, Frédéric Le Louët,  
Alexandre Poirier, Victor Pierre, Julien Perez  
Original Score: David Hadjadj, Jérôme Perez  
Principal Cast: Nabil Asli, Bouchra Roy, Idhir  
Benaïbouche, Fatiha Ouared, Kader Affak,  
Hichem Benmesbah

Up bright and early with their pet in tow, Zohra Bouderbala (Fatiha Ouared) and her five children are heading to the beach. This is not a drill! In Algiers, the coveted front row spot waits for no one, but it's not this family's first time having to beat the summer seaside crowds. The unmotivated and out-of-luck masses who arrive too late will be left to a viewless laze in the sun, the alleged horizon blocked by a fortress of parasols and flowing canopies.

With their site secured, and their watermelons buried, relaxation is a near promise. That is, until Hakim (Nabil Asli), the uptight though easily influenced beach attendant, dares to place the late-arriving Kadouri family right in front of the Bouderbals. This absolute declaration of war sends Zohra and her neighbourhood nemesis, Safia Kadouri (Bouchra Roy), into a passive-aggressive tailspin. Meanwhile, right under their noses, the schemes of star-crossed teenagers will test the waters of emerging independence.

For his 19th feature film — marking 62 years of cinema in an independent Algeria — prominent writer-director Merzak Allouache (*Divine Wind*, TIFF '18) opts this time for an upbeat dramedy about rival matriarchs behaving badly at the beach. *Front Row* celebrates Allouache's adept

imagination for eclectic characters in a heartwarming overture to the quirks and quandaries of shoreline social life.

NATALEAH HUNTER-YOUNG

**Merzak Allouache** studied film in Algiers and Paris and now works between France and Algeria. His credits include *Omar Gatlato* (76), *Un amour à Paris* (87), *Hi Cousin!* (96), *Harrahas* (09), and the Festival selection *Divine Wind* (18). *Front Row* (24) is his latest film.

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## Flow

Gints Zilbalodis

LATVIA/FRANCE/BELGIUM, 2024  
No Dialogue  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
84 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Sacrebleu Productions,  
Take Five, Dream Well Studio  
Producer: Matiss Kaža, Gints Zilbalodis, Ron Dyens,  
Gregory Zalczman  
Screenplay: Gints Zilbalodis, Matiss Kaža  
Animator: Léo Silly-Pélissier  
Sound: Gurwal Coïc-Gallas  
Original Score: Gints Zilbalodis, Rihards Zalupe

Canadian Distributor: Films We Like  
US Distributor: Sideshow, Janus Films  
International Sales Agent: Charades

For anyone who ever considered their ultimate dream cast to be a cat, a dog, a lemur, a secretary bird, and a capybara, those hopes will finally be fulfilled in *Flow*. Thrown together by circumstance in an eerily depopulated world, now submerged in ever-rising waters, the furry and feathered characters in Gints Zilbalodis' imaginative, astonishing, and thoroughly engaging animated feature must find common ground if they hope to survive an unforgettable journey.

One of the many reasons *Flow* and its cast are so memorable is that the animals here remain animals. In place of the quippy banter and zany antics of the anthropomorphized critters family-film viewers may be used to comes a more naturalistic-minded approach that allows for more authentic forms of behaviour, movement, and communication. (That last matter is especially important for the characters who'd rather not get eaten.) And thanks to the level of nuance and detail that Zilbalodis and his team create, the individual personalities of these unlikely travelling companions still shine through, especially in the case of the ever-intrepid feline protagonist.

That emphasis on naturalism also adds great richness and wonder to Zilbalodis' film, a richly visual blend of adventure tale

and ecological parable that will enchant and enthrall viewers no matter what their age or animal preference.

JASON ANDERSON

Gints Zilbalodis was born in Latvia. His films include the shorts *Aqua* (12), *Priorities* (14), *Inaudible* (15), and *Oasis* (17), and the feature *Away* (19). *Flow* (24) is his latest film.

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## Boku No Ohisama My Sunshine

Hiroshi Okuyama

JAPAN/FRANCE, 2024  
Japanese  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
90 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Tokyo Theatres Co., LTD,  
Commes Des Cinémas  
Producer: Toshikazu Nishigaya, Masahiro Handa,  
Masa Sawada  
Screenplay: Hiroshi Okuyama  
Cinematographer: Hiroshi Okuyama  
Editor: Tina Baz, Hiroshi Okuyama  
Original Score: Humbert Humbert  
Principal Cast: Sosuke Ikematsu, Keitatsu Koshiyama,  
Kiara Nakanishi

International Sales Agent: Charades

Following his auspicious 2018 debut, *Jesus*, Hiroshi Okuyama's latest feature, *My Sunshine*, is a beautifully crafted tale centred on two adolescent figure skaters who swirl through budding emotions and never-before-experienced motions of the soul with the same grace and trepidation that characterize their movements on the ice. This touching and simple story, set on a small Japanese island, follows young hockey player Takuya (Keitatsu Koshiyama), proficient skater Sakura (Kiara Nakanishi), figure-skating tutor Arakawa (Sôsuke Ikematsu), and his boyfriend (Ryûya Wakaba).

Takuya, a shy boy with a stutter, doesn't feel at ease playing hockey with his schoolmates but is completely taken by Sakura's graceful figure skating and decides to start following her coach, former champion Arakawa, just to be near her. As the story unfolds against cold and beautiful winter scenery, it strays away from typical sports movie clichés and focuses on the bond of friendship that forms between its three protagonists.

Capturing interpersonal dynamics and the subtle sensitivities typical of adolescence with insight and empathy, the film often recalls the cinema of Kore-eda Hirokazu and establishes Okuyama as a

rising talent in Japanese cinema.

As director, writer, cinematographer, and editor, Okuyama delivers a work of simple elegance. His exquisite and rigorous aesthetic sense is applied with precision to the composition of each frame, rendering the snowy landscapes and indoor ice rinks with a delicate and ethereal beauty, much like his narrative.

A testament to Okuyama's evolving artistic voice, *My Sunshine* underscores the relevance of quiet, introspective storytelling.

GIOVANNA FULVI

**Hiroshi Okuyama** is a director, screenwriter, cinematographer, and editor from Tokyo. He has directed the short films *The Swan Smiles* (18) and *Tokyo 21st October* (18) and the feature film *Jesus* (18). *My Sunshine* (24) is his latest film.

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## Matt and Mara

Kazik Radwanski

CANADA, 2024  
English  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
80 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: MDFF, Zapruder Films, Arbitrage Pictures  
Executive Producer: Kazik Radwanski, Dan Montgomery, Matt Johnson, Matthew Miller, Neil Mathieson  
Producer: Dan Montgomery, Candice Napoleone  
Screenplay: Kazik Radwanski  
Cinematographer: Nikolay Michaylov  
Editor: Ajla Odošić  
Costume Designer: Mara Zigler  
Sound: Ian Reynolds  
Principal Cast: Deragh Campbell, Matt Johnson, Mounir Al Shami, Emma Healey, Avery Nayman, Marlowe Granados

Canadian Distributor: MDFF  
US Distributor: Cinema Guild  
International Sales Agent: MDFF

In *Matt and Mara*, Toronto writer-director Kazik Radwanski reunites Deragh Campbell and Matt Johnson — the stars of his prize-winning *Anne at 13,000 ft* (TIFF '19) — for another precise, incisive drama. But this one's a little different. It's looser and even a little silly, the better to distract you from the heaviness in its heart.

Matt (Johnson) and Mara (Campbell) were friends in university. But that was years ago. Now, Mara is a creative-writing professor in Toronto, married to Samir (Mounir Al Shami) and raising a toddler (Avery Nayman). And when Matt, now a successful author who moved to New York, wanders into her classroom, they pick up exactly where they left off — hanging out for hours on end, sharing dumb jokes, and generally being each other's escape valve. Old friends reconnect all the time. It's harmless, right?

*Matt and Mara* is all about that question, and what can happen when people refuse to confront it directly. Campbell — who's also at this year's Festival with Sofia Bohdanowicz's *Measures for a Funeral* — once again applies her electric screen presence to a character who's opaque to others but open wide to Nikolay Michaylov's camera. And with Johnson, who demonstrated surprising dramatic chops opposite Campbell in *Anne*,

Radwanski finds a new context for the *BlackBerry* director's distinctive screen presence, seeding hidden complexities into his goofball charisma.

It's a new and specific take on a familiar narrative, leaving room for unexpected humour and warmth. You might even see yourself in the characters. Or possibly the locations.

NORM WILNER

**Kazik Radwanski** was born in Toronto. His shorts include the Festival selections *Princess Margaret Blvd.* (08), *Green Crayons* (10), and *Scaffold* (17). His feature credits include *Tower* (12), *How Heavy This Hammer* (15), and *Anne at 13,000 ft* (19), all of which played the Festival. *Matt and Mara* (24) is his latest film.

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## Une Langue Universelle Universal Language

Matthew Rankin

CANADA, 2024  
Farsi, French  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
89 minutes | Colour / DCP

Production Company: **Metafilms**  
Executive Producer: **Pirouz Nemati, Ila Firouzabadi, Matthew Rankin, Dan Berger, Aaron Katz**  
Producer: **Sylvain Corbeil**  
Screenplay: **Ila Firouzabadi, Matthew Rankin, Pirouz Nemati**  
Cinematographer: **Isabelle Stachtchenko**  
Editor: **Xi Feng**  
Production Designer: **Louisa Schabas**  
Costume Designer: **Negar Nemati**  
Sound: **Pablo Villegas, Sacha Ratcliffe, Bernard Gariépy Strobl**  
Original Score: **Amir Amiri, Christophe Lamarche-Ledoux**  
Principal Cast: **Rojina Esmaeili, Saba Vahedyousefi, Pirouz Nemati, Mani Soleymanlou, Sobhan Javadi, Matthew Rankin**

Canadian Distributor: **Maison 4:3**  
US Distributor: **Oscilloscope**  
International Sales Agent: **Best Friend Forever Sales**

Winner of the inaugural Directors' Fortnight audience award at Cannes this year, Matthew Rankin's follow-up to his eccentric, surreal *The Twentieth Century* (TIFF '19) is a gentler sort of comedy, settling us down in a reimagined Canada where Persian and French are the two official languages... and loneliness is the common currency.

In Winnipeg, children set themselves on eccentric quests — or dress like Groucho Marx — to flummox the adults around them, occasionally disrupting a tour group led by the flustered Massoud (Pirouz Nemati) as he does his best to explain the city's curious landmarks.

Meanwhile, in Montreal, government wonk Matthew (played by Rankin himself) quits a job he hates and catches the first bus home to Manitoba to see his mother, only to find his family is not what he thought it was.

The films of Abbas Kiarostami and his New Iranian Cinema contemporary Mohsen Makhmalbaf are Rankin's most obvious touchstones here, but Festival audiences will also recognize the influence of the Swedish absurdist Roy Andersson and the 'Peg's own Guy Maddin, all filtered through Rankin's deadpan comic sensibility. He's traded the gleeful depravity of *The Twentieth Century* for something kinder and softer, an

affectionate look at a diasporic nation trying to fit itself into a box that can't contain it.

Don't worry, people still congregate at Tim Hortons (Always Fresh!). It's just that their idea of a double-double is a little different.

NORM WILNER

**Matthew Rankin** was born in Winnipeg. His films include the shorts *Negativepeg* (10), *Tabula Rasa* (11), *Mynarski Death Plummet* (14) and *The Tesla World Light* (17) and the feature *The Twentieth Century* (19), all of which screened at the Festival. *Universal Language* (24) is his latest film.

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## Pimpinero: Sangre y Gasolina

Pimpinero: Blood and Oil

Andrés Baiz

COLOMBIA, 2024  
Spanish, Wayuu  
WORLD PREMIERE  
132 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Dynamo**  
Executive Producer: **Andrés Baiz, Andrés Calderón**  
Producer: **Andrés Baiz, Andrés Calderón**  
Screenplay: **Andrés Baiz, María Camila Arias**  
Cinematographer: **Mateo Londoño**  
Editor: **Luis Carballar**  
Production Designer: **Angélica Perea**  
Costume Designer: **Camilo Barreto**  
Sound: **Alejandro Uribe-Holguín**  
Original Score: **Pedro Bromfman**  
Principal Cast: **Laura Osma, Alejandro Speitzer, Alberto Guerra, Juanes**

US Distributor: **Amazon MGM Studios**

Set in the early 2010s, this gripping thriller by director Andrés Baiz — who has helmed shows including *Griselda* and *Narcos* — takes place in the treacherous desert bordering Colombia and Venezuela, where gasoline smugglers known as *pimpineros* risk their lives transporting illegal fuel from one country to another.

Colombian music icon Juanes plays Moisés, the eldest of three brothers plying this perilous trade and the linchpin of the operation, while Alberto Guerra delivers a compelling performance as Ulises, a man paralyzed by conflicting decisions and haunted by fear and grief.

When Juan (Alejandro Speitzer) — the youngest of the brothers — is coerced into working for a more powerful, rival criminal organization, the shocking underbelly of the business is laid bare and there are tragic consequences.

Corruption, betrayal, and greed rule the day. Still, Juan's girlfriend, the charismatic Diana (Laura Osma, *El Chapo, This Time Tomorrow*, in a star turn) — who wanted to be a *pimpinera* herself — embarks on a dangerous quest for the truth, putting herself in the crosshairs while remaining determined to uncover

the dark secrets that shroud this unforgiving no man's land.

DIANA CADAVID

**Andrés Baiz** is a Colombian filmmaker. He has directed the films *Satanás* (07), *The Hidden Face* (12), and *Roa* (13), as well as episodes of the series *Narcos* (15–17), *Narcos: Mexico* (18–21), and *Griselda* (24). *Pimpinero: Blood and Oil* (24) is his most recent film.

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## Fanatical: The Catfishing of Tegan and Sara

Erin Lee Carr

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
99 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Story Syndicate**  
Executive Producer: **Tegan Quin, Sara Quin, Dan Cogan, Liz Garbus, Jon Bardin, Kate Barry**  
Producer: **Erin Lee Carr, Elyssa Hess, Jenny Eliscu**  
Cinematographer: **Ava Benjamin Shorr**  
Editor: **Tim K. Smith**  
Sound: **Eber Pinheiro, Rafael Benvenuti**  
Original Score: **Chanell Crichlow, Michael Tuller**  
With: **Tegan Quin, Sara Quin, Erin Lee Carr, Jenny Eliscu**

Canadian Distributor: **Disney +**  
US Distributor: **Hulu, Disney+**

With 10 studio albums to their name, Canadian pop duo and twin sisters Tegan and Sara Quin are trailblazers both as openly queer performers and as artists who were quick to embrace social media in its nascent era. Tegan and Sara became known for being accessible to their fans and cultivating a safe space, especially for young LGBTQ+ women, some of whom were seeing themselves reflected in pop music for the first time.

The duo's growing fanbase connected with one another over various online forums and platforms like LiveJournal, sharing concert videos and stories of meeting Tegan in particular, who spent the most time chatting with fans and signing merchandise. Around 2010, social media profiles claiming to be Tegan started popping up. An anonymous, catfishing person — eventually known as Fegan, a portmanteau of “fake” and “Tegan” — connected with people in the fan community, forming friendships, online romances, sharing personal information of Tegan's and fabricating stories of her bad behaviour.

More than just a portrait of Tegan and Sara's global ascent and their influence and advocacy in the music industry, Erin Lee Carr's film charts the evolution of social media's impact on fame and fandom through the duo's years-long victimization

and harassment at the hands of this “fan.” It's a must-see for those familiar with the duo's music and a cautionary tale for everyone about the dangers of parasocial relationships and the vulnerability of our personal information on the internet.

ROBYN CITIZEN

**Erin Lee Carr** is a documentary filmmaker and writer. Her credits include *Mommy Dead and Dearest* (17), *At the Heart of Gold: Inside the USA Gymnastics Scandal* (19), *I Love You, Now Die: The Commonwealth v. Michelle Carter* (19), *Britney vs. Spears* (21), and *The Ringleader: the Case of the Bling Ring* (23). *Fanatical: The Catfishing of Tegan and Sara* (24) is her latest film.

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## Mưa trên cánh bướm Don't Cry, Butterfly

Dương Diệu Linh

VIETNAM/SINGAPORE/PHILIPPINES/  
INDONESIA, 2024

Vietnamese

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

97 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Momo Film Co,  
Adeline Arts & Science, FUSEE, Potato Productions,  
KawanKawan Media, Pupa Films, Kalei Films  
Executive Producer: Des Tan, Alicia Catubay-Watt,  
George K. Sommerrock, Nathaniel Lee,  
Madonna B. Sanchez  
Producer: Tan Si En, Wilfredo C. Manalang,  
Nguyễn Mai Ka, Yulia Evina Bhara  
Screenplay: Dương Diệu Linh  
Cinematographer: Ngô Minh Nghĩa  
Animator: Calleen Koh  
Editor: Daniel Hui  
Production Designer: Phạm Phong Lan  
Sound: Lim Ting Li  
Original Score: Diego Ayala Raffalli  
Principal Cast: Lê Tú Oanh, Nguyễn Nam Linh,  
Lê Vũ Long, Bùi Thạc Phong

International Sales Agent: Barunson E&A

Although Tam works at a wedding hall, she's no romance expert. In truth, her personal life is far from rosy. After another hard working day, her daughter Ha delivers the shocking news that Tam's husband is having an affair. To make matters worse, his misconduct was caught live on TV, and now the whole world knows of Tam's misery. As if to mirror her state, a leak in the ceiling of her aged flat grows out of control. To turn things around, Tam consults the "Master" to find ways of bringing her husband back to her through mystical means.

Following a series of short films centring on middle-aged women, *Don't Cry, Butterfly* is director Dương Diệu Linh's debut feature. An extended study on the role of gender and cultural traditions in Vietnam, the film has a quirky and dreamy facade that is only a mask for deeper inquiries. Like the growing mould on her ceiling, also known as the monstrous House Spirit, these questions continue to loom and manifest over Tam, Ha, and all the women in their realm.

The incorporation of mysticism and surrealism leads to a distinctive and captivating film, one that somehow manages to invoke absurdity, pity, and humour at the same time. As much as Tam seems powerless in the face of her suffering, her determination to take

matters into her own hands is inspiring, no matter how ridiculous her methods might be.

JUNE KIM

Dương Diệu Linh is a Vietnamese filmmaker. She's the director of short films including *Mother, Daughter, Dreams* (18), *Sweet, Salty* (19), and *A Trip to Heaven* (20). *Don't Cry, Butterfly* (24) is her feature debut.

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## The Village Next to Paradise

Mo Harawe

FRANCE/AUSTRIA/GERMANY/SOMALIA, 2024  
Somali  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
133 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **FreibeuterFilm, Kazak Productions, NiKo Film**  
Executive Producer: **Nuh Musse Berjeeb, Abdimalik Yusuf, Ahmed Farah, Osman Hassan Hussein**  
Producer: **Oliver Neumann, Sabine Moser**  
Screenplay: **Mo Harawe**  
Cinematographer: **Mostafa El Kashef**  
Editor: **Joana Scrinzi**  
Production Designer: **Nuur Abdulkadir**  
Costume Designer: **Sarah Ismail**  
Sound: **Willis Abuto, Anne Gibourg, Guadalupe Cassius, Christophe Vingtrinier**  
Principal Cast: **Ahmed Ali Farah, Mohamed Mohamud Jama**

International Sales Agent: **Totem Films**

Mamargade (Ahmed Ali Farah) lives in Paradise — a windswept desert countryside under the constant threat of drone strikes. To support his family, including his gifted son Cigaal (Ahmed Mohamud Saleban), the humble and steadfast single father does what his sister Araweelo (Anab Ahmed Ibrahim) calls “social work” — driving, digging graves, repairing vehicles. But when death comes often from the sky, it is not uncommon for people to simply disappear. After Cigaal’s instructor stops showing up, Mamargade is encouraged to enrol him in a nearby boarding school, against Cigaal’s wishes.

Araweelo dreams of independence, most urgently in the form of a divorce, and then a shop where she can make and sell clothing. But when she learns she cannot get a loan as an unmarried woman, she must hatch a new plan to make her aspirations come true.

In what emerges as a timeless tale about love, sacrifice, and dedication, writer-director Mo Harawe provides political context for an underappreciated and often vilified nation, while placing emphasis on common truths. Lucid and unobtrusive cinematography by Mostafa El Kashef (*19B*) captures the majesty of the Horn of Africa’s vast plains, highlands, shorelines, and interior worlds, lit carefully under the full force of the desert sun.

One of the breakouts from this year’s Cannes Film Festival, Harawe’s feature debut is a sensitive and empathetic work that announces a bold new voice and a new era for Somali cinema.

NATALEAH HUNTER-YOUNG

**Mo Harawe** was born in Mogadishu, Somalia, and now lives in Vienna. He has directed the short films *Life on the Horn* (22) and *Will My Parents Come to See Me* (22). *The Village Next to Paradise* (24) is his debut feature film.

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# DISCOVERY

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## Bonjour Tristesse

Durga Chew-Bose

CANADA/GERMANY, 2024  
English, French  
WORLD PREMIERE  
110 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Babe Nation Films, Elevation Pictures, Barry Films**  
Executive Producer: **Denis Westhoff, Suzanne Court, Fabien Westerhoff, Emily Kulasa, Jesse Weening, Omar Chalabi**  
Producer: **Katie Bird Nolan, Lindsay Tapscott, Christina Piovesan, Noah Segal**  
Screenplay: **Durga Chew-Bose**  
Cinematographer: **Maximilian Pittner**  
Editor: **Amélie Labrèche**  
Production Designer: **François Renaud-Labarthe**  
Costume Designer: **Miyako Bellizzi**  
Sound: **Ludovic Elias**  
Original Score: **Lesley Barber**  
Principal Cast: **Lily McInerny, Claes Bang, Chloë Sevigny, Nailia Harzoune, Aliocha Schneider**

Canadian Distributor: **Elevation Pictures**  
International Sales Agent: **Film Constellation**  
US Sales Agent: **United Talent Agency (UTA)**

At the height of summer holiday, 18-year-old Cécile (Lily McInerny), the apple of everyone's eye, is languishing at the French seaside with her devilishly handsome father Raymond (Claes Bang, also at this year's Festival in *William Tell*) and his bohemian lover Elsa (Nailia Harzoune), whose age is not far from Cécile's.

Other than tending to a budding romance with a local boy (Aliocha Schneider), Cécile has all the time in the world to float and daydream, giving her a front row seat to apéro-laden adult conversations free of morality. Building her sandcastle just as the tide rolls in, Cécile's postcard-perfect world is threatened when a visit from her late mother's friend Anne (Chloë Sevigny) — a celebrated American-born, Paris-based fashion designer who fits the scene like a glove — casts a shadow over her quotidian *belle vie*, despite her longing to connect.

As days turn into weeks and the sun's power fades, Cécile uncovers as many uncouth truisms about the fabulous people around her — who are just human after all — as she does about herself. Stylish, meticulous, and devastating to the core, *Bonjour Tristesse* is a time-marked yet timeless tale of growing up.

An adaptation of Françoise Sagan's unforgettable coming-of-age novel of the same title

(published when Sagan was only 18 years old), this sun-dappled and passion-soaked debut feature by Montreal-based writer-cum-director Durga Chew-Bose (recipient of the 2024 TIFF Emerging Talent Award) heralds a singular artist. Adorned with costuming by Miyako Bellizzi and a score by Lesley Barber, *Bonjour Tristesse* masterfully captures the complexity of relationships among women and ways they can come to wield influence over one another's fates.

DOROTA LECH

**Durga Chew-Bose** was born in Montreal. She is the author of a book of essays, *Too Much and Not the Mood* (17), and has co-produced the film *Shadowboxing* (10) and the short *Mother's Day* (11). *Bonjour Tristesse* (24) is her debut feature.

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## Diciannove

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### Giovanni Tortorici

ITALY/UNITED KINGDOM, 2024  
Italian, English  
INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE  
108 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Frenesy, Pinball London**  
Producer: **Luca Guadagnino, Agustina Costa Varsi, Marco Morabito, Paula Alvarez, Aaron Brookner, Francesco Melzi, Alex Garcia, Gabriele Moratti, Moreno Zani**  
Screenplay: **Giovanni Tortorici**  
Cinematographer: **Massimiliano Kuveiller**  
Editor: **Marco Costa**  
Production Designer: **Marta Morandini**  
Costume Designer: **Maria Antonia Tortorici**  
Sound: **Vito Martinelli**  
Principal Cast: **Manfredi Marini, Vittoria Planeta, Dana Giuliano, Zackari Delmas, Luca Lazzareschi, Sergio Benvenuto**

International Sales Agent: **Playtime**

Eager to escape his overbearing mother and the only life he's known, 19-year-old Leonardo (Manfredi Marini, who gives an exceptional performance), leaves picturesque Palermo to study in bustling London. His landing is buffered by his sister Arianna (Vittoria Planeta) and her roommate Grazia (Dana Giuliano), though the initial excitement of living abroad — and unrestricted partying — wanes quickly, and Leonardo finds himself enrolling at the University of Siena, focusing on Italian literature.

Back in familiar surroundings, he falls in love with the medieval city, but is not so keen on his literature professor. Seeking that indescribable feeling of knowing you've found your place — beyond just geography — Leonardo delves into the classics independently, spawning a soul-searching and deep interest in early modern authors like Pulci, Segneri, and Leopardi. Surrounding himself with beauty, vibrant youth, and new ideas — as well as images he'd previously repressed — his world blooms. A year into his unbound journey, Leonardo travels to Torino where he meets a man who, though much older, may finally be a contemporary — if not the key to unlocking his innermost desires.

Giovanni Tortorici's elegant and heartfelt debut explores what it's like to be young and

open to wherever the road of life may lead.

Shot on 35mm film by Massimiliano Kuveiller and produced by Luca Guadagnino (whose latest film, *Queer*, also screens at this year's Festival), amongst others, *Diciannove* is a youthful plunge into the unknown that perfectly captures the once-in-a-lifetime feeling of surfacing to realize you're exactly where you're meant to be — or at least on your way there.

DOROTA LECH

**Giovanni Tortorici** is an Italian filmmaker. He has worked as a camera operator and assistant director on several of Luca Guadagnino's projects, including the series *We Are Who We Are* (20). *Diciannove* (24) is his feature debut.

#### TIFF Next Wave

Celebrating the highs and lows (and everything in between) of young voices in today's fast-moving world. This film has been selected for the next generation of film lovers by the TIFF Next Wave Committee.

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## Boong

Lakshmipriya Devi

INDIA, 2024  
Manipuri  
WORLD PREMIERE  
90 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Excel Entertainment, Chalkboard Entertainment, Suitable Pictures**  
Producer: **Ritesh Sidhwani, Farhan Akhtar, Vikesh Bhutani, Shujaat Saudagar, Alan McAlex**  
Screenplay: **Lakshmipriya Devi**  
Cinematographer: **Tanay Satam**  
Editor: **Shreyas Beltangdy**  
Production Designer: **Devika Dave**  
Costume Designer: **Arun J Chauhan**  
Sound: **Dipankar Jojo Chaki**  
Original Score: **Ronid Chingangbam (Akhu), Zubin Balaporia**  
Principal Cast: **Gugun Kipgen, Bala Hijam, Angom Sanamatum, Vikram Kochhar, Hamom Sadananda, Jenny Khurai, Nemetia Ngangbam**

International Sales Agent: **Pascale Ramonda**

Schoolboy Boong (Gugun Kipgen) doesn't see long distances and state borders as significant obstacles. At least not when it comes to giving his mother, Mandakini (Bala Hijam), the best surprise gift ever: bringing back his father, Joykumar. After leaving their home city of Manipur, India for the border city of Moreh, near Myanmar, in search of better job opportunities, Joykumar has stopped communications with the family.

With rumours spreading about his father's death, Boong refuses to accept that grim possibility and teams up with his best friend, Raju (Angom Sanamatum), an outsider from Rajasthan, to search for the truth.

The two boys embark on a risky journey, armed only with a photo and a strong belief in the magical power of music to bring Joykumar back. Although they encounter many challenges, their unwavering friendship and determination shine through.

First-time director Lakshmipriya Devi expertly centres themes of enduring friendship within a narrative in which ethno-racial discord is ever-present. Kipgen and Sanamatum give endearing and memorable performances, and the film is filled with laugh-out-loud moments.

Since *Boong's* production, the ethnic tensions referenced have erupted into violence,

making Devi's vibrant portrayal of childhood resilience a poignant and necessary reminder of our taken-for-granted ability to find hope even in the darkest times.

ROBYN CITIZEN

Lakshmipriya Devi has worked as an assistant director on many films, including Farhan Akhtar's *Lakshya* (04) and Rajkumar Hirani's *PK* (14). *Boong* (24) is her feature debut.

### TIFF Next Wave

Celebrating the highs and lows (and everything in between) of young voices in today's fast-moving world. This film has been selected for the next generation of film lovers by the TIFF Next Wave Committee.

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## Biru Unjárga My Fathers' Daughter

Egil Pedersen

SÁPMI (NORWAY/SWEDEN/FINLAND), 2024  
Sámi, Danish, English, Norwegian  
WORLD PREMIERE  
78 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Rein Film, Paasan, Oktober, Bautafilm, Filmpool Nord  
Producer: Mathis Ståle Mathisen, Pål Røed, Aleksander Olai Korsnes  
Screenplay: Egil Pedersen  
Cinematographer: Anna Myking  
Editor: Thomas Grotmol, Toril Strøm, Geir Ørnholt  
Production Designer: Emma Skoog  
Costume Designer: Nina Erdahl  
Sound: Johannes Dekko  
Original Score: Remi Semshaug Langseth, Mathis Ståle Mathisen  
Principal Cast: Sarah Olausen Eira, Ingá Elisá Páve Idivuoma, Aslat Mahtte Gaup, Amund Lode, Ánne Mággá Wigelius, Sara Sofia Mienna, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau

International Sales Agent: Pluto Film

Raised by her single mother in the coastal Sámi village of Unjárga in the far north of Norway, Elvira has never known her father. Mised to believe she was conceived in Copenhagen, the teenager holds on to a childhood fantasy that her father is the Danish acting legend Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, the star of the hit series *Game of Thrones*. When her mother, Beate (Ingá Elisá Páve Idivuoma), announces that her new girlfriend is moving in, a frustrated Elvira holds firm to her belief that her half-Danish ancestry will soon mean an escape from small-town life and all its trappings.

For Elvira, this means the daily trials of being a teenager, including a frenemy/local influencer who becomes temporarily enamoured with Elvira's personal circumstances. Then life, as it's wont to do, throws a new curveball Elvira's way when she unceremoniously meets Terje (Aslat Mahtte Gaup), who has recently been released from a long prison sentence. Much to her shock — and to her mother's horror — Terje reveals that he's her biological father. Devastated to learn a big part of her life was based on a flight of fancy, Elvira struggles to accept that she's "just Sámi" as she's sent into a tailspin of emotions.

Egil Pedersen's delightful and playful debut feature film is an entertaining coming-of-age story. Sarah Olausen Eira charms as the wistful Elvira, who reminds us that home — despite its sometimes mundane realities — can still hold many surprises, including finding one's true self.

JASON RYLE

**Egil Pedersen** studied directing at the Norwegian Film School. He's the director of many music videos and short films, including *Girl with a Fish Necklace* (17), *What we talk about when we talk about fish* (18), *The Handsome in the Mirror* (20), and *Kottepolitiet (Indigenous Police)* (21). *My Fathers' Daughter* (24) is his feature debut.

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## Mother Mother

K'naan Warsame

SOMALIA, 2024  
Somali, English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
107 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Secret Hideout, Potboiler Productions, 25 Stories**  
Executive Producer: **Mario Zvan, Jim Shamoan, Morgan Earnest, Faye Stapleton, K'naan Warsame, Vincent Maraval, Livia Van Der Staay, Jeffrey Soros, Niv Fichman**  
Producer: **Alex Kurtzman, Jenny Lumet, Andrea Calderwood**  
Screenplay: **K'naan Warsame**  
Cinematographer: **César Charlone**  
Editor: **Sabine Hoffman, Geraud Brisson**  
Production Designer: **Christina Moore**  
Costume Designer: **Rayzak Hassan**  
Sound: **Ryan Billia**  
Original Score: **Isobel Waller-Bridge**  
Principal Cast: **Maan Youssouf Ahmed, Hassan Najib, Elmi Rashid Elmi, Ubah Egal**

International Sales Agent: **Republic Pictures, Goodfellas**  
US Sales Agent: **Republic Pictures**

On a lonely farm in rural Somalia, the widowed Qalifo (Maan Youssouf Ahmed) and her college-age son Asad (Elmi Rashid Elmi) raise camels. Asad lives in the shadow of his late father's violent reputation and bristles at Qalifo's strict parenting, escaping to a nearby village whenever he can. And when Asad learns his girlfriend has been seeing another boy, the American visitor Liban (Hassan Najib), a confrontation is inevitable.

This is the first act of *Mother Mother*, and with it Somali Canadian writer-director K'naan Warsame — one of several musicians bringing films to this year's Festival — lays out a tangled narrative of complicated lives, emotional choices, and hard-won understanding.

Beautifully shot by César Charlone, a regular collaborator of Fernando Meirelles, the film is simple but not simplistic, a moral drama that leads us into Qalifo's very small world and shows us how much is going on there.

Co-stars Ahmed and Najib establish an uneasy relationship between two very different characters — neither of whom speaks the other's language, nor particularly wants to be sharing space with them in the first place — while the situation also presses Qalifo to face some unpleasant realities.

What emerges is a tender and even delicate story about two very different people helping one another through a life-changing trauma, even if neither one will admit that's what they're doing.

NORM WILNER

K'naan Warsame is a Somali Canadian artist. His music has earned many awards, including a Grammy, a VMA, and four Juno awards. He has written and produced episodes of the TV series *Castle Rock* (18) and *Extrapolations* (23). *Mother Mother* (24) is his directorial debut.

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## วิมานหนาม

### The Paradise of Thorns

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#### Boss Kuno

THAILAND, 2024  
Thai  
INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE  
131 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: GDH 559 Co., Ltd.  
Executive Producer: Jina Osothsilp, Jira Maligool,  
Boosaba Daorueng, Paiboon Damrongchaitham  
Producer: Vanridee Pongsittisak  
Screenplay: Boss Kuno  
Cinematographer: Tawanwad Wanavit  
Editor: Thammarat Sumethsupachok  
Production Designer: Songsak Kamutira  
Costume Designer: Chayanuch Savekvattana  
Sound: Wiparut Panjawongroj, Narubett Peamyai  
Original Score: Vichaya Vatanasapt  
Principal Cast: Jeff Satur, Engfa Waraha

International Sales Agent: GDH 559 Co., Ltd.

In a remote, mountainous Thai village, there is a durian orchard, a paradise Thongkam and Sek have built for themselves from the ground up. After pouring in five years of hard work and sweat, their trees are blooming. While hand-pollinating the flowers to bear fruit, the two men promise an eternity together.

But their dream life is soon shattered when Sek falls to his death. Unfortunately for Thongkam, coping with the loss of his love is only a part of his misfortune. Without his name on the land deed, Sek's mother — who shows up with her adopted daughter in tow — is entitled to ownership of the orchard. Thongkam must now fight to reclaim the fruits of the couple's love and labour.

*The Paradise of Thorns'* dark, saturated, yet playful colour palette goes hand-in-hand with its soundtrack and narrative, skilfully delivering a catastrophic story with a light touch.

It's hard to believe this is the debut feature of director-writer Boss Kuno. Together with talented musician-actor-model Jeff Satur, Kuno elevates the character of Thongkam, rendering him wholly relatable to anyone who has endured life's often random and cruel injustices.

As with the durian flowers that need an extra touch to pollinate, it's imperative to build the right foundations to bear fruit.

Thailand's recently passed same-sex marriage bill — the first in Southeast Asia — is hopefully the first of many. *The Paradise of Thorns* is a testament to the long struggle ahead.

JUNE KIM

**Boss Kuno** is a Bangkok-based writer and director. He has directed episodes of the popular series *My Ambulance* (20) and *I Told Sunset About You* (21). *The Paradise of Thorns* (24) is his feature debut.

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## Shook

Amar Wala

CANADA, 2024  
English, Hindi  
WORLD PREMIERE  
113 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Scarborough Pictures, Film Forge**  
Executive Producer: **Travis Farncombe, Omar Chalabi, Adrian Love**  
Producer: **Karen Harnisch, Amar Wala**  
Screenplay: **Amar Wala, Adnan Khan**  
Cinematographer: **Peter Hadfield**  
Editor: **Shaun Rykiss**  
Production Designer: **Nicole Simmons**  
Costume Designer: **William Ng**  
Original Score: **Kalaisan Kalaichelvan**  
Principal Cast: **Saamer Usmani, Amy Forsyth, Bernard White, Pamela Sinha, Shomari Downer, Faizan Khan, Sammy Azero, Nina Kiri**

Canadian Distributor: **Elevation Pictures**  
US Sales Agent: **United Talent Agency (UTA)**

Struggling to sell his first novel and slightly adrift after his parents' divorce, Toronto writer Ashish (Saamer Usmani) is thrown for several loops when he falls for downtown barista Claire (Amy Forsyth) and learns his estranged father Vijay (Bernard White) has just been diagnosed with Parkinson's.

Amar Wala's first dramatic feature after a decade of documentaries (including *The Secret Trial 5*) and episodic production (*Witness, Next Stop*) is set in an instantly recognizable environment, a place Ash is proud to call home even as he constantly flees into the city to write in coffee shops or go clubbing with his friends — until his father's health crisis requires him to recalibrate both their lives.

Expanding on his 2018 short film of the same name, Wala sends us pinballing through the different spheres of Ash's life, where he doesn't exactly code-switch, but *does* give a white name when he orders an Americano, and finds publishers asking him to reshape his very personal work as coming from "outside Toronto" because readers are really into exoticism these days.

With charming, complicated characters and an unfailing attention to local detail — the beef patties at Warden station, the Hakka restaurant to which Ash keeps returning, the

misereries of the night bus when you miss the last subway train — *Shook* is a love letter to the polyglot nature of the GTA and the way people come here to figure out who they are.

NORM WILNER

**Amar Wala** is a writer, director, and producer based in Toronto. His many credits include the award-winning documentary *The Secret Trial 5* (14), television series including *In The Making* (18) and *Next Stop* (19–21), and the short film *Shook* (18). *Shook* (24) is his dramatic feature debut.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**AIRFRANCE** /



## Village Keeper

Karen Chapman

CANADA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
83 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Smallaxx Motion Pictures**  
Executive Producer: **Christina Piovesan, Floyd Kane, Jordan Oram, Susana Ferreira, Taj Critchlow, Molly McGlynn, Lora Campbell, d'bi.young anitafrika**  
Producer: **Enrique Miguel Baniqued, Karen Chapman**  
Screenplay: **Karen Chapman**  
Cinematographer: **Jordan Oram**  
Editor: **Christopher Minns, Xi Feng, Jordan Hayles**  
Production Designer: **June Charles**  
Costume Designer: **Charlene Akuamoah**  
Sound: **Maryan P'yatnochka**  
Original Score: **Dalton Tennant**  
Principal Cast: **Olunike Adeliyi, Maxine Simpson, Zahra Bentham, Micah Mensah-Jatoe, Oyin Oladejo, d'bi.young anitafrika, Ethan Burnett, Shiloh O'Reilly**

Canadian Distributor: **LevelFILM,**  
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)

With her first dramatic feature, writer and director Karen Chapman creates an emotionally authentic study of a single mother trying to hold herself together in the face of unimaginable loss.

Beverly-Jean is emotionally paralyzed. Incapable of moving forward after her husband's murder, she is overwhelmed by anxiety and rage and stalked by the terror that she won't be able to keep her children safe in a city awash in gun violence.

Moving her family into her mother's cramped Scarborough apartment, Beverly-Jean goes through her days in a haze — sleepwalking through her job as a caregiver for an elderly white man, barely doing any better at home tending to her daughter's panic attacks, and struggling through her therapy sessions. And then one evening, Beverly-Jean finds the building's elevator splattered with blood. It's the scene of someone else's pain, someone else's tragedy.

So, she cleans it up. And cleaning helps. Not a lot, but it's a way to be of service and a way, perhaps, to start unpacking the trauma she has been carrying for far longer than she realizes. Because this story isn't Beverly-Jean's alone.

Chapman builds a whole world around her beleaguered but unbreakable hero, centring

her, whether she's walking dazedly through Chinatown or losing herself in the exhilaration of a Caribana parade. As Beverly-Jean, Olunike Adeliyi — familiar to Festival audiences from *Tammy's Always Dying* (TIFF '19), *Akilla's Escape* (TIFF '20) and *Backspot* (TIFF '23) — brings her formidable range to play a woman choosing to embrace an unexpected purpose rather than be dragged down into darkness.

KELLY BOUTSALIS

**Karen Chapman** is a Toronto-based filmmaker who's an alumnus of the TIFF Talent Lab. She has directed short films including *Walk Good* (16) and the Festival selection *Measure* (19), as well as episodes of TV shows including *Black Life: Untold Stories* (23–). *Village Keeper* (24) is her narrative feature debut.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**AIRFRANCE** /





## Les Courageux The Courageous

Jasmin Gordon

SWITZERLAND, 2024  
French  
WORLD PREMIERE  
80 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **maximage**  
Producer: **Brigitte Hofer, Cornelia Seitter**  
Screenplay: **Julien Bouissoux**  
Cinematographer: **Andi Widmer**  
Editor: **Jan Mühlethaler**  
Production Designer: **Rekha Musale, Ivan Niclass**  
Costume Designer: **Linda Harper**  
Sound: **Jürg Lempen**  
Original Score: **Mirjam Skal**  
Principal Cast: **Ophelia Kolb, Paul Besnier, Arthur Devaux, Jasmine Kalisz Saurer**

Living in an idyllic town in the stunning Valais region of Switzerland — known for its proximity to the Matterhorn, Alpine resorts, and upper Rhône river valley vineyards — 40-year-old Jule (Ophelia Kolb) is a single mother dreaming of a stable existence for her young family. Her children — 10-year-old Claire, eight-year-old Loïc, and six-year-old Sami — have learned to take care of one another, and, while the whereabouts of their gregarious mother are sometimes a mystery, the siblings know that she always returns to their home with a smile and a fantastic explanation.

However, even countries renowned for their riches do not always share their wealth, and, at the whims of the social welfare system, Jule's struggles to make ends meet appear futile in the face of seemingly unwritten rules, expectations, and hurdles. While in recovery Jule is determined to keep her chin up, employing creative ways to maintain appearances. For her, overcoming adversity may mean going through the motions of thriving — all the while weaving an alternate and likely unattainable reality.

Jasmin Gordon's poignant debut feature rattles our perceptions of motherhood and moral integrity with its intimate and complex portrait of a sort of woman who is rarely

depicted. Further, in exploring the fragility of individual freedom in the face of rigid societal conventions, Gordon highlights the socioeconomic climate of the working poor — who, though often hidden, are present in every society — and invites the viewer to set aside judgements and step into someone else's shoes.

DOROTA LECH

**Jasmin Gordon** is a Swiss American filmmaker who was born in Los Angeles. She holds a master's in documentary film from Stanford. She has directed several short films, including *Framework* (18). *The Courageous* (24) is her debut feature.

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## Aberdeen

Ryan Cooper, Eva Thomas

CANADA, 2024

English

WORLD PREMIERE

83 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Back to Space Productions, Farpoint Films**

Executive Producer: **Kyle Bornais, Eva Thomas, Chris Charney**

Producer: **Kathleen Easton, Ryan Cooper**

Screenplay: **Ryan Cooper, Eva Thomas**

Cinematographer: **Jessie Wicklund**

Editor: **Nathalie Massaroni, Sara Bulloch**

Production Designer: **Madison Summer Bautista**

Costume Designer: **Quita Alfred**

Sound: **Ryan Wall**

Original Score: **Justin Delorme**

Principal Cast: **Gail Maurice, Billy Merasty, Jennifer Podemski, Liam Stewart-Kanigan, Ryan R. Black**

Canadian Distributor: **Farpoint Distribution**

US Distributor: **Farpoint Distribution**

International Sales Agent: **Farpoint Distribution**

US Sales Agent: **Farpoint Distribution**

In their feature directorial debut, *Aberdeen*, Ryan Cooper and Eva Thomas follow the turbulent life of their title character (Gail Maurice, *Bones of Crows*, TIFF '22) as she finds herself fighting for the stability of her grandkids.

An idyllic childhood with her mooshum and kookum, or grandparents, in her community of Peguis First Nation dissipated as Aberdeen's hard-partying and absentee parents distanced her from that haven.

Now an adult, sleeping on public benches, Winnipeg-based Aberdeen is in survival mode. The last remaining stable parts of her life begin slipping away — her reliable brother Boyd (Ryan R. Black, *Dance Me Outside*, TIFF '94) is ill and gives up Aberdeen's grandkids to the foster care system. Then she loses her ID.

Houseless, and without proper identification, she is rebuffed time and again as she seeks out services meant to help her. It's only when she hitches a ride back to her home community that she's treated like a valued person and can see the potential to stop generational trauma.

Though elements of this story have been told before, the film feels extremely personal and raw. Cooper and Thomas make Aberdeen a rich character, not a caricature

and Maurice's performance shows incredible emotional texture.

*Aberdeen's* fantastic supporting cast includes Billy Merasty (*Stellar*, TIFF '22) as Aberdeen's friend Alfred, and Darla Contois (*Little Bird*) as her daughter. Jennifer Podemski (*Akilla's Escape*, TIFF '20) is exceptional as Grace, an old schoolmate, whose warmth smooths Aberdeen's rough edges.

KELLY BOUTSALIS

**Ryan Cooper** is an Ojibwe, two-spirit producer and director from Treaty One Territory Peguis First Nation. His producing credits include the short film *When the Children Left* (19) and the series *Alter Boys* (23). *Aberdeen* (24) is his directorial debut.

**Eva Thomas** is a writer and filmmaker from Ann Arbor, who now lives in Wallaceburg, Ontario. Her production credits include *Night Raiders* (21) and Kaniehtio Horn's *Seeds*, also playing this year's Festival. She has directed the short film *Redlights* (23), which played the Festival. *Aberdeen* (24) is her feature directorial debut.

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## Seeds

### Kaniehtiio Horn

CANADA, 2024  
English, Kanien'kéha  
WORLD PREMIERE  
82 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Carpe Dee Yum Productions Inc.**  
Executive Producer: **Eva Thomas, Kaniehtiio Horn, Laurie Venning**  
Producer: **Jennifer Jonas, Leonard Farlinger**  
Screenplay: **Kaniehtiio Horn**  
Cinematographer: **Jonathon Cliff**  
Editor: **Lindsay Allikas**  
Production Designer: **Matt Ellis**  
Costume Designer: **Ginger Martini**  
Sound: **Renan Deodato, Lucas Roveda, Jonathon St. Clair, Thomas Dube**  
Original Score: **Alaska B**  
Principal Cast: **Kaniehtiio Horn, Dallas Goldtooth, Meegwun Fairbrother, Dylan Cook, Graham Greene**

Canadian Distributor: **LevelFILM**

Imparting lessons of Kanien'kehá:ka food sovereignty within a campy revenge thriller, Kaniehtiio Horn's feature directorial debut takes viewers on a ride unlike any other. In *Seeds*, Horn (*Alice, Darling* TIFF '22) plays Ziggy, a Toronto-based bike courier and budding influencer. Just as she lands a new client, a seed and fertilizer company called Nature's Oath, and starts making content for them, she's called back to her community to house sit for her aunt.

Ziggy's cousin, played by Dallas Goldtooth (*Reservation Dogs*), imparts a few nuggets of wisdom: be wary of the seed company, and creepy things happen around their aunt's house. As a shadowy figure follows her, Ziggy must protect herself, and her aunt's cache of seeds.

Already known as a talented film and television actor and producer, Horn flexes her writing and directing skills in this bloody and intelligent thriller that ties together connections to the land and to reproduction. In *Ziggy*, she has created a layered Indigenous female lead character, motivated by her people's history, relying on her strengths, and not afraid to get violent.

In addition to seeing Horn lead a film for the first time, we also get Goldtooth in a great comic performance, and legendary

actor Graham Greene pulling double duty as a crime show host and an uncle figure to Ziggy who comes alive in her dreams.

KELLY BOUTSALIS

**Kaniehtiio Horn** is a Kanien'kehá:ka actor, writer, producer, and director from Kahnawáke. Her acting credits include roles on the series *Reservation Dogs* (21-23), *Rutherford Falls* (22), and *Letterkenny* (16-23), for which she won a Canadian Screen Award, and in films including the Festival selections *Alice, Darling* (22) and *Redlights* (23). *Seeds* (24) is her feature directorial debut.

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## Freedom Way

Afolabi Olalekan

NIGERIA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
83 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Bluhouse Studios**  
Executive Producer: **Blessing Uzzi**  
Producer: **Blessing Uzzi**  
Screenplay: **Blessing Uzzi**  
Cinematographer: **Kabelo Thathe, Muhammad Atta Ahmed**  
Editor: **Afolabi Olalekan**  
Production Designer: **Kolawole John Adeniji, Azeez Onibiyo**  
Costume Designer: **Opeyemi Adenokun**  
Sound: **Olushola Wilson**  
Original Score: **Ahuurra Andrew, Kehinde 'Louddaaa' Alabi, Cobhams Asuquo**  
Principal Cast: **Adebowale Adedayo, Bimbo Akintola, Jesse Suntele, Meg Otanwa, Femi Jacobs, Mike Afolarin, Jable Ogranya, Teniola Aladese, Taye Arimoro, Tiwalola Adebola-Walter, Akin Lewis**

Software developers Themba (Jesse Suntele) and Tayo (Mike Afolarin) have finally launched their latest venture, Easy Go — a new rideshare app to connect Lagos State’s busy commercial motorcyclists (“Okada riders”) with customers in their area. Riding high on capital investments and credible government assurances, the young South African and Nigerian duo can finally envision the fruits of their labour. But after a night of celebrating, the business partners confront a pernicious roadblock familiar to all Nigerian youth — the police. This routine extortion, however, will turn out to be the least of their concerns.

While Easy Go’s developers are street-taxed out of their success, the app takes off. For Abiola (played by Mr. Macaroni, Adebowale Adedayo, also at this year’s Festival in *The Legend of the Vagabond Queen of Lagos*), a young father and rider, it has been a godsend. That is until the government announces a total ban on Okada, leaving Abiola without his livelihood and the developers feeling as though they’ve been used as political pawns.

Making the leap from music videos to feature film, director Afolabi Olalekan — working with writer and producer Blessing Uzzi — delivers an astute critique and

grounded perspective on the noxious political challenges ensnaring young Nigerians from all walks of life. Tying together the tangled drama and disparate characters is the outsized economic pressure driving a generation to look elsewhere for a future they can build. This is also a narrative born out of love for a city like no other, because in Lagos, “everyone deh full ah hustle,” but corruption still paves the pathways to success.

NATALEAH HUNTER-YOUNG

**Afolabi Olalekan** is a filmmaker, producer, and editor from Lagos, Nigeria. He has directed the short films *Caught Up* (19) and *Without You* (21). *Freedom Way* (24) is his feature debut.

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## Ink Wash

Sarra Tsorakidis

ROMANIA/GREECE/DENMARK, 2024  
Romanian, English, German, Danish  
WORLD PREMIERE  
91 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Mandragora, Bad Crowd, Angel Films**  
Executive Producer: **Anca Puiu**  
Producer: **Anca Puiu**  
Screenplay: **Sarra Tsorakidis, Ilinca Härnuț**  
Cinematographer: **Radu Voinea**  
Editor: **Smaro Papaevangelou**  
Production Designer: **Alma Ungureanu**  
Costume Designer: **Alma Ungureanu**  
Sound: **Alin Zăbrăuțeanu, Ionuț Geadau**  
Principal Cast: **Ilinca Härnuț, Kenneth M. Christensen, Radouan Leflahi**

International Sales Agent: **Shellac**

A mural painter by profession, Lena (played by Ilinca Härnuț, also the film's co-writer) is turning 40 and faced with all the classic questions that come with being a woman of a certain age. Reeling from the dissolution of a long-term relationship (and an ex-partner who has moved on in the blink of an eye), Lena is particularly vulnerable. Disillusioned and heartbroken, Lena leaves Bucharest for a job at a dilapidated brutalist hotel, under new ownership, in south-western Romania. But, to paraphrase Confucius, *wherever you go, there you are*.

Taking refuge in her work, Lena is surrounded by forests and nature. Initially fearing her feelings and what's to come, she leans in and begins to see a new approach to being in this world where — regardless of what is said or presented — no one truly knows what they're doing. But a dark night of the soul, like everything else in life, can be received as a gift. Plus, if your eyes are open, there are new adventures and people to discover around every bend.

*Ink Wash* is the debut of co-writer and director Sarra Tsorakidis. With the tender scope of director of photography Radu Voinea's lens and Härnuț's subtle yet captivating performance, Tsorakidis lays bare a character who discovers her inner strength and moral values

in a country overwhelmed by corruption and, in doing so, paves an uncharted path for people who understand that the only way out of the woods is to go through.

DOROTA LECH

**Sarra Tsorakidis** was born in Bucharest and studied directing at Romania's Caragiale Academy of Theatrical Arts and Cinematography. She has directed the short films *Smoke* (13), *Ivy* (18), and *Kaimos* (20), and worked as an assistant director on several films by Radu Jude. *Ink Wash* (24) is her feature debut.

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## Really Happy Someday

J Stevens

CANADA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
90 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Spindle Films**  
Executive Producer: **J Stevens, Breton Lalama**  
Producer: **J Stevens**  
Screenplay: **J Stevens, Breton Lalama**  
Cinematographer: **J Stevens**  
Editor: **Perrie Voss**  
Production Designer: **Vicky To**  
Original Score: **T. Thomason, Joel Waddell**  
Principal Cast: **Breton Lalama, Khadijah Roberts-Abdullah, Xavier Lopez, Ali Garrison, Katharine King So**

International Sales Agent: **UTA**  
US Sales Agent: **UTA**

Before he transitioned, Z (Breton Lalama) was a rising star in Toronto's musical-theatre scene; his Éponine in *Les Misérables* is still the stuff of local legend. But now, with testosterone injections affecting his voice, Z must figure out how to sing in his new register in order to return to the thing he loves most — and, in the process, integrate his past and present selves.

With the encouragement of his partner Danielle (Khadijah Roberts-Abdullah), Z finds Shelly (Ali Garrison), a vocal coach who can help him retrain his instrument. But until he can get back to auditioning, Z needs a day job — so he winds up as a barback at Squirly's on Queen West, working for Santi (Xavier Lopez), who, as it happens, turns out to be very sympathetic to his situation.

*Really Happy Someday* is a small movie, made by a tiny team. Director J Stevens and Lalama wrote and produced it together; Stevens also acted as cinematographer. The narrative is drawn from Stevens' and Lalama's own lived experiences, told as authentically as possible. Indeed, Z's retraining sessions with Shelly are more or less real: Garrison is a veteran voice coach, and when Z hits a note he didn't think he could reach, the amazement on his face belongs to the performer as much as the character.

But *Really Happy Someday* isn't just about a person learning to sing again. It's about community, and identity, and learning to live in a skin that finally feels like your own.

NORM WILNER

J Stevens is a director and cinematographer who was born in Calgary and is now based in Toronto. They were selected for the 2022 TIFF Filmmakers Lab and as one of TIFF's Every Story Fellows. They've directed short films including *Undone* (19) and *Cons & Pros* (22), and episodes of the series *Slo Pitch* (20–22) and *Sort Of* (22). *Really Happy Someday* (24) is their feature debut.

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**AIRFRANCE** /





## Do I Know You From Somewhere?

Arianna Martinez

CANADA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
79 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Strike Pictures**  
Executive Producer: **Gia Milani**  
Producer: **Gordon Mihan, Lance Kenneth Blakney**  
Screenplay: **Arianna Martinez, Gordon Mihan**  
Cinematographer: **Lance Kenneth Blakney**  
Editor: **Gordon Mihan, Lance Kenneth Blakney**  
Production Designer: **Sharisse LeBrun**  
Costume Designer: **Michelle Duncan**  
Sound: **Mike Wilson**  
Original Score: **Zachary Greer**  
Principal Cast: **Caroline Bell, Ian Ottis Goff, Mallory Amirault, Gillian Salmon**

Canadian Distributor: **Vortex Media**

The debut feature from Fredericton filmmaker Arianna Martinez is easier to experience than describe. It's a multiverse picture without a single visual effect, unless you count the actors.

Several years after their meet-cute — at a wedding, of course — Olive (Caroline Bell) and Benny (Ian Ottis Goff) are spending an entirely ordinary day at their lake house. Until, that is, things start to shift, little by little. At first it's just an apparently misplaced package or some scrambled letters on the fridge. Then, it's more meaningful stuff. And then, almost casually, Olive finds Benny replaced by a woman named Ada (Mallory Amirault), who can't understand why Olive doesn't know her. They've been together for years, after all. Since they met at that wedding.

Working from a script she co-wrote with producer Gordon Mihan, Martinez keeps the storytelling clear and coherent even when her characters don't know what's happening, using a slightly theatrical style and making the most of a very limited budget. And New Brunswick stage actor and playwright Bell is sensational in her first film role as Olive. She glows — sometimes literally — as a woman slowly realizing she might not have been living the life she wants, and grappling

with everything that means. It's slippery and strange, and sort of wonderful. You'll want to hold this one close.

NORM WILNER

**Arianna Martinez** lives in Fredericton, New Brunswick. She has produced several short films as well as directing the short *Maya Eterna* (20), which won CBC's Short Film Face Off in 2021. *Do I Know You From Somewhere?* (24) is her feature debut.

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## Horizonte

César Augusto Acevedo

COLOMBIA/FRANCE/LUXEMBOURG/CHILE/  
GERMANY, 2024

Spanish

WORLD PREMIERE

125 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Inercia Películas**,  
**Ciné-Sud Promotion**, **Unafilm**, **Quijote Films**, **Tarantula**,  
**In Vivo Films**  
Executive Producer: **Lizeth Nieto Castro**, **Giancarlo Nasi**,  
**Donato Rotunno**  
Producer: **Paola Andrea Pérez Nieto**, **Thierry Lenouvel**  
Screenplay: **César Augusto Acevedo**  
Cinematographer: **Mateo Guzmán Sánchez**  
Editor: **Soledad Salfate**, **Camila Beltrán**  
Production Designer: **Marcela Gómez Montoya**  
Costume Designer: **Julián Grijalba**  
Sound: **Camilo Martínez**, **Jean-Guy Véran**  
Original Score: **Harry Allouche**  
Principal Cast: **Claudio Cataño**, **Paulina García**

Canadian Distributor: **Inercia Películas**  
US Distributor: **Inercia Películas**  
International Sales Agent: **Inercia Películas**  
US Sales Agent: **Inercia Películas**

“Hay futuro si hay verdad” (there is a future if there is truth) reads the motto of the Final Report by the Colombian Truth Commission issued in 2022. In the aftermath of a brutal conflict spanning more than five decades and leaving hundreds of thousands dead, disappeared, and wounded, the country still struggles to find its way to lasting peace. Films can make a meaningful contribution to that cherished goal. *Horizonte* does it with a deeply felt cinematic statement, by taking the audience on a harrowing journey.

Paulina García — also at the Festival with *Beloved Tropic* — stars as Inés, mother of Basilio (Claudio Cataño), who has been missing for a long time and has finally returned home to the Colombian countryside to find her. But the pair are actually dead, their souls tied to the many stories they left behind. When they decide to travel through a war-torn landscape to comprehend what their fate might mean, it becomes painfully clear that only through great sacrifice will they achieve the redemption they long for.

Writer-director César Augusto Acevedo — whose 2015 film *Land and Shade* won the *Caméra d’Or* at Cannes — doubles down on the poetics of eerie landscapes, fire, shadows, and precisely orchestrated sounds. The music by Harry Allouche vividly resonates

with chaos, ache, and hope, propelling the characters to face their horror and, hopefully, escape a vicious cycle of violence. Facing truth may break us, or set us free.

DIANA CADAVID

César Augusto Acevedo is a filmmaker who was born in Cali, Colombia. His credits include the feature *Land and Shade* (15) and the short *Water Steps* (16). *Horizonte* (24) is his latest film.

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## Sad Jokes

Fabian Stumm

GERMANY, 2024  
German, English, Swedish, Italian  
INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE  
96 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Postofilm  
Producer: Nicola Heim, Fabian Stumm, Lucie Tamborini  
Screenplay: Fabian Stumm  
Cinematographer: Michael Bennett  
Editor: Kaspar Panizza  
Production Designer: Nele Schallenberg  
Costume Designer: Anna Hellmann  
Sound: Béla Brandes, Andrea Schmidt  
Principal Cast: Fabian Stumm, Haley Louise Jones, Ulrica Flach, Jonas Dassler, Godehard Giese, Marie-Lou Sellem, Anne Haug, Knut Berger

International Sales Agent: Salzgeber & Co. Medien GmbH

Set in Berlin, this tender, tragicomical second feature from writer-director-actor Fabian Stumm (following *Bones and Names*, which premiered at the 2023 Berlin Film Festival and travelled to more than 20 festivals around the world) heralds a filmmaker aware of his strengths and his limits.

A series of autofictional vignettes, ranging from the touching to the absurd, tells the story of Joseph (Stumm) and Sonya (Haley Louise Jones), close friends co-parenting a young child, Pino (Justus Meyer, whom Stumm parents with actor Susie Meyer in real life). While Joseph is wrestling with the concept of a new film — as well as his own ego — on the heels of a fresh breakup with his boyfriend Marc (Jonas Dassler), Sonya is in a clinic, suffering from deep depression. Alongside Sonya's mother (Hildegard Schroedter), Joseph steps in as primary parent and moves to juggle his family and personal life — including delightful attempts at dating — with his ravenous artistic ambition.

Stumm, who studied drama at the Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute in New York and has held roles in dozens of films (including Cate Shortland's *Lore*, TIFF '12, and Sebastian Meise's *Great Freedom*) has a remarkable aptitude for dialogue,

adding tonal touches reminiscent of Charlie Chaplin, Ernst Lubitsch, Robert Altman, Nanni Moretti, and renowned German comedian Vicco von Bülow (known best as Loriot).

A portrayal of modern queer life, Stumm emerges as a poignant storyteller with his thumb on the pulse of what it takes to create and uphold a community while persevering as an artist.

DOROTA LECH

**Fabian Stumm** is a German actor, writer, and director. He studied at Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute in New York, and is now based in Berlin. His credits include the short films *Bruxelles* (20) and *Daniel* (22) and the feature *Bones and Names* (23). *Sad Jokes* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

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## Fin De Fiesta The Party's Over

Elena Manrique

SPAIN, 2024  
Spanish, French  
WORLD PREMIERE  
103 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Perdición Films, S.L.,  
La Claqueta PC S.L., Story Capital A.I.E., Menuetto Film  
Executive Producer: Sara Gómez, Inés Mas  
Producer: Sandra Hermida, Belén Atienza,  
Olmo Figueredo González-Quevedo, Hans Everaert,  
Carlos Rosado Sibón  
Screenplay: Elena Manrique  
Cinematographer: Joachim Philippe  
Editor: Laurent Dufreche  
Production Designer: Vanesa de la Haza  
Costume Designer: Fernando García  
Sound: Miguel de Oliveira e Silva  
Original Score: Argia  
Principal Cast: Sonia Barba, Edith Martínez,  
Beatriz Arjona

International Sales Agent: Goodfellas

A complete rare bird within her own bourgeois milieu in southern Spain, Carmina's lifestyle benefits from inherited wealth. Ensnared in her lofty manor, the divorced empty-nester enjoys respect and power but doesn't much care for anything apart from her fitness routine and frequent soirées with her friends.

Things soon turn upside down with the arrival of young, smart, and sensitive Bilal. The immigrant from Senegal takes shelter in Carmina's toolshed and quickly becomes a (mostly unwilling) personal companion. Carmina's charming, capricious ways entrap not only Bilal but also her housekeeper, Lupe. A stern, salt-of-the-earth local woman, Lupe at first distrusts the newcomer, but ends up finding solidarity with Bilal as they try to help each other escape from the manipulative gilded cage Carmina offers.

Elena Manrique's directorial debut deftly navigates moments of harsh reality, tenderness, vulnerability, humour, and callousness. The perfectly rounded characters, even in their simplicity, let the actors grow into their roles. That is the case especially for Sonia Barba whose tour-de-force performance truly inhabits Carmina, from her clueless irresponsibility to her need for true, human connection. After the sumptuous, chaotic

feast she indulges in for her birthday, will the party be truly over for her?

DIANA CADAVID

**Elena Manrique** has worked as a producer on films including *Pan's Labyrinth* (06), *The Orphanage* (07), and *Blue is the Warmest Colour* (13). She has also directed several short films. *The Party's Over* (24) is her feature debut.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

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## Saba

Maksud Hossain

BANGLADESH, 2024  
Bangla  
WORLD PREMIERE  
95 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Fusion Pictures  
Executive Producer: Gillian Williams, Emma Thorne,  
Andi Matichak  
Producer: Uri Singer, Arifur Rahman, Tamim Abdul Majid,  
Maksud Hossain, Trilora Khan, Mehazabien Chowdhury,  
Barkat Hossain Polash  
Screenplay: Trilora Khan, Maksud Hossain  
Cinematographer: Barkat Hossain Polash  
Editor: Sameer Ahmed  
Production Designer: Konok Titu  
Costume Designer: Bijaya Ratnabali  
Sound: Niraj Gera  
Original Score: Amman Abbasi  
Principal Cast: Mehazabien Chowdhury, Rokeya Prachy,  
Mostafa Monwar

With her father missing, Saba (Mehazabien Chowdhury) is the sole caregiver to her paraplegic mother, Shirin (Rokeya Prachy), who suffers from acute heart disease. Although Shirin's condition binds them together, her frustration with their situation often manifests as bitterness and anger towards her daughter, so they live in their own separate worlds. When Shirin has a heart attack, Saba races against time to sell their home, lowering the price, and even risking her burgeoning romance with her senior co-worker Ankur (Mostafa Monwar) — who dreams of starting a new life abroad — to pay for her mom's heart surgery.

With *Saba*, Maksud Hossain compassionately observes his characters struggling through tragic events and quotidian challenges in a country where “We are breathing to barely survive here,” as one of the characters says of their daily reality. At its core, *Saba* is about those faced with the choice to stay and build a life or leave all their hardships behind — whether that means emigrating to another country or, in an extreme sense, moving to another world.

The astonishing performances of Chowdhury, Prachy, and Monwar are boosted by the dynamic cinematography and vivid colour palette, which illustrates

how Ankur, Saba, and Shirin deal with their potentially bleak outlooks. These characters find joy and reasons to live in small pleasures and rich experiences — savouring good food, enjoying fresh air, music and occasional furtive sips of alcohol, which is restricted both by law and by societal mores.

ROBYN CITIZEN

Maksud Hossain is a writer-director based in Bangladesh. He has directed several short films, including *Three Beauties* (06), as well as many commercials. *Saba* (24) is his debut feature.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**AIRFRANCE** /



## On Falling

Laura Carreira

UNITED KINGDOM/PORTUGAL, 2024  
English, Portuguese  
WORLD PREMIERE  
104 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Sixteen Films, BRO Cinema**  
Executive Producer: **Ama Ampadu, Kieran Hannigan, Sean Greenhorn, Kristin Irving, Claudia Yusef, Noémie Devide, Rebecca O'Brien, Habib Rahman, Ana Paula Catarino, Luis Campos, Bia Tafner, Clarice Laus**  
Producer: **Jack Thomas-O'Brien, Mario Patrocínio**  
Screenplay: **Laura Carreira**  
Cinematographer: **Karl Kürten**  
Editor: **Helle le Fevre**  
Production Designer: **Andy Drummond**  
Costume Designer: **Carole Millar**  
Sound: **Olivier Blanc**  
Principal Cast: **Joana Santos, Inês Vaz**

International Sales Agent: **Goodfellas**

Filmmaker Laura Carreira's debut feature, following her acclaimed shorts *The Shift* and *Red Hill*, is an intimate and clear-eyed portrait of social and financial precarity as Portuguese migrant Aurora struggles to make ends meet over the course of a week in Scotland. Long days spent grabbing packages off shelves and scanning barcodes at the cavernous e-commerce warehouse where she works as a picker leave Aurora exhausted and looking forward to her rides home with a Portuguese co-worker. Together, they dream of landing an office job with regular hours and decent pay.

Set against the drab blues and greys of fluorescently lit industrial spaces and the utilitarian common room of the migrant boarding house where she lives, Aurora's moments of respite and human connection are fleeting. There's a laugh shared in the cafeteria before everyone responds to the siren call of their smartphones and an invitation to join a group at the nearby bar where the crush of bodies on the dancefloor is what passes for physical intimacy.

Joana Santos is a quiet revelation as Aurora, allowing subtle registers of anxiety and resignation to play just beneath the surface of her open expressions. The film's unwavering gaze shows how small setbacks

can so easily derail the lives of shift workers and point towards larger economic forces. But Carreira's light touch lends lyricism and remarkable compassion to Aurora's all-too-familiar plight.

ROBYN CITIZEN

**Laura Carreira** is a Portuguese filmmaker based in Scotland. Her credits include the short films *Red Hill* (18) and *The Shift* (20). *On Falling* (24) is her feature debut.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**AIRFRANCE** /





## De Lydløse The Quiet Ones

Frederik Louis Hviid

DENMARK, 2024  
Danish, English, Swedish, Arabic  
WORLD PREMIERE  
110 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Zentropa Entertainments, Zentropa Sweden, Kazak Productions, Zentropa International France**  
Producer: **Kasper Dissing**  
Screenplay: **Anders Frithiof August**  
Cinematographer: **Adam Wallensten**  
Editor: **Anders Albjerg Kristiansen**  
Production Designer: **Sabine Hviid, Benjamin Salomon**  
Costume Designer: **Emilie Bøge Dresler**  
Sound: **Morten Green**  
Original Score: **Martin Dirkov**  
Principal Cast: **Gustav Giese, Reda Kateb, Amanda Collin, Christopher Wagelin, Jens Hultén, Granit Rushiti, Amin Ahmed**

US Distributor: **Magnolia Pictures**  
International Sales Agent: **TrustNordisk**

Much like the characters preparing for the ambitious heist portrayed in Frederik Louis Hviid's sharp thriller, *The Quiet Ones* is not just lean and mean but meticulous, too. That last quality is of course an essential one for any criminals hoping to pull off the largest robbery ever on Danish soil. It's of a similarly high value for viewers who appreciate the rigour that Jules Dassin, William Friedkin, and Michael Mann have devoted to their iconic movies about the lengths some will go in their quests for not-so-easy money.

The influence of those auteurs is not hard to discern in Hviid's gripping feature, the Danish filmmaker's first solo directorial effort after he and Anders Ølholm delivered a low-budget breakout with *Enforcement*, which played TIFF's Industry Selects in 2020.

Working with a larger canvas and benefiting from Anders Frithiof August's tightly written screenplay — inspired by a real crime in 2008 that netted over US\$10 million and lengthy prison sentences for 14 men — Hviid centres the action on Kasper (Gustav Giese), a charismatic boxer who's reluctant to acknowledge his true talents lie outside the ring. As he plans the job alongside an enigmatic hardcase played by Reda Kateb, Kasper displays the kind of exacting

professionalism that might've taken him far in a more legitimate line of work.

Last seen at TIFF in 2023 in Nikolaj Arcel's *The Promised Land*, Amanda Collin stars as a security guard who plays a key part in the carefully composed symphony of mayhem that Hviid has prepared. It would be a crime for thriller fans to miss out.

JASON ANDERSON

**Frederik Louis Hviid** is a Copenhagen-based filmmaker. His credits include the film *Enforcement* (20), which played Industry Selects, and episodes of *Temple* (21) and *Huset* (23). *The Quiet Ones* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**AIRFRANCE** /



## Kreas Meat

Dimitris Nakos

GREECE, 2024  
Greek, Albanian  
WORLD PREMIERE  
104 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Fantasia Ltd, Greek Film Centre, ERT S.A. Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation, Foss Productions, Dimitris Nakos, EKOME**  
Executive Producer: **Stella Theodoraki**  
Producer: **Thanos Anastopoulos**  
Screenplay: **Dimitris Nakos**  
Cinematographer: **Giorgos Valsamis**  
Editor: **Lampis Haralampidis**  
Production Designer: **Kyriaki Tsitsa**  
Costume Designer: **Vasileia Rozana**  
Sound: **Nikos Exarchos**  
Original Score: **Konstantis Pistiolis**  
Principal Cast: **Kostas Nikouli, Akyllas Karazisis, Pavlos Iordanopoulos, Maria Kallimani, Giorgos Symeonidis**

In a village in the Greek countryside, 55-year-old patriarch Takis (Akyllas Karazisis) and his long-suffering wife Eleni (Maria Kallimani) have been fighting with their loudmouth neighbour, who is laying claim to part of the family's land. As Takis prepares for the opening of his new butcher shop, decades of accumulated tensions between the foes bubble to the surface.

On one explosive night, the neighbour is killed by Takis' only son Pavlos (Pavlos Iordanopoulos), a fumbling and hotheaded overgrown child. The only witness to this carnal crime is Christos (Kostas Nikouli), a handsome and hardworking young man from Albania, whom Takis has employed — and in many ways raised — since adolescence.

The murderer and the eyewitness initially bury the evidence of the brutal act, but as rumours swirl and a killer must be named, the truth begins to take many forms. Soon, Takis must face the reality of choosing the fate of both young men.

*Meat* is a gripping and fast-paced feature debut by writer-director Dimitris Nakos, who expertly weaves a tale of power dynamics of historic proportions. Cinematographer Giorgos Valsamis' lens captures the underbelly of a family that had long ago learned to suppress both feelings and secrets.

Like crabs crawling out of a bucket, the men grapple to come out on top, unaware that their futile attempts at dominance will only suppress and crush each other's survival. Rooted in ancient Greek tragedy, *Meat* explores the depths of crime, punishment, betrayal, and much, much more.

DOROTA LECH

**Dimitris Nakos** is a Greek filmmaker. He studied cinema and philosophy at Panteion University in Athens. His credits include the short films *March 4* (15), *Alice in the Cafe* (16), and *Freezer* (17). *Meat* (24) is his feature debut.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**AIRFRANCE** /





## Linda

Mariana Wainstein

ARGENTINA/SPAIN, 2024

Spanish

WORLD PREMIERE

100 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Pampa Films, Gloriamundi Producciones, Bourke Films**  
Executive Producer: **Maximiliano Lasansky, Martín Iraola, Pablo Sahores**  
Producer: **Pablo E. Bossi, Cabe Bossi, Pol Bossi, Rodolfo Lamboglia, Patricio Di Salvo, Juan Lamboglia**  
Screenplay: **Diego Bliffeld, Luciano Cocciardi, Horacio Convertini, Juan Cordoni, Mariana Wainstein, Sabrina Campos, Nancy Gay**  
Cinematographer: **Marcos Hastrup**  
Editor: **Miguel Colombo**  
Production Designer: **Leandro Borrell, Lina Montello**  
Costume Designer: **Jam Monti**  
Sound: **José Caldararo**  
Original Score: **Manu Moreno**  
Principal Cast: **Eugenia "China" Suárez, Julieta Cardinali, Rafael Spregelburd, Minerva Casero, Felipe Otaño, Agustín Della Corte**

International Sales Agent: **Meikincine Entertainment**

For her feature-length debut, Argentinian writer-director Mariana Wainstein (whose credits include TV series such as *Community Squad*) turns the South American story of the mythical Deceased Correa upside down with compelling results.

Legend has it that Deolinda Correa died crossing the desert, baby in tow, in search of her husband who was recruited by force to join the civil war. When some horsemen found her body days later, her baby was still alive, feeding miraculously from her breast. Today, thousands of visitors from across Latin America visit the shrine built in her honour in the town of Vallecito hoping for a miracle of their own.

Self-assured, mysterious, and captivating, Linda (China Suárez) agrees to work at an affluent home in Buenos Aires, covering for her cousin who's recovering from an accident. Her charm sparks strong sexual attraction among all four members of the family, exposing how fragile their externally happy veneer really is.

Turning away from grand gestures, the narrative drills on the mundane to explore Linda's shattering of the male egos involved — all the advances by the men are almost cruelly curtailed — as well as the power dynamic between the female employer and

the "help." Focusing on female desire instead of sacrifice inverts the myth in a way that is deeply rewarding and a joy to watch.

DIANA CADAVID

**Mariana Wainstein** is a writer and director who was born in Buenos Aires. She has directed short films including *Las Hormigas* (17) and *Error 404* (16). *Linda* (24) is her feature debut.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**AIRFRANCE** /



## Gülizar

Belkis Bayrak

TURKEY/KOSOVO, 2024  
Turkish, Albanian  
WORLD PREMIERE  
84 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: Saba Film, Protim V.P.,  
Plan Bee Films  
Producer: Mehmet Bahadır Er, Murat Yaşar Bayrak,  
Valmira Hyseni  
Screenplay: Belkis Bayrak  
Cinematographer: Kürşat Üresin  
Editor: Selin Eren Şahin  
Production Designer: Meral Aktan  
Costume Designer: Yağmur Ergül  
Sound: Alexandru Dumitru  
Original Score: Kanan Rustamli  
Principal Cast: Ecem Uzun, Bekir Behrem,  
Hakan Yufkacıgil, Ernest Malazogu, Aslı İçözü

Twenty-two-year-old Gülizar (Ecem Uzun, who gives an unforgettable performance) was raised in a loving if strict Turkish home full of taboos and expectations for women and men alike. Longing to experience what lies beyond the only world that she and the women around her have ever known, Gülizar believes her forthcoming marriage and the promise of a new beginning over the horizon will herald a brighter future. Betrothed to her beloved Emre (Bekir Behrem), she is eager to leave behind her family and her homeland for Kosovo. Gülizar's fairy tale, however, tragically turns into a nightmare when she is sexually assaulted en route.

There's seemingly little that can be done to obtain justice and, with wedding preparations in full swing, Gülizar's aspirations for happiness appear further and further away. Yet, secrets are hard to keep in close-knit societies. Moreover, there's a veil between Gülizar's past and present self, and she cannot find a moment of peace as the nuptials approach. The young bride suffers in silence, navigating a claustrophobic maze as she begins to suspect the assailant is among the guests.

Following the short films *The Apartment* (2018) and *Cemile* (2021), *Gülizar* is the courageous debut feature of writer-director Belkis Bayrak. Bayrak's vision for her

protagonist as she struggles in the aftermath of the attack is as precise and assured as her filmmaking.

Told through the gaze of a woman yearning for her own internal locus of control, *Gülizar* delves into the complexities of trauma, societal expectations, and the universal search for self-discovery and determination, which — despite all the obstacles — is the only way forward.

DOROTA LECH

**Belkis Bayrak** is a writer and director who received her master's degree in film and television at Istanbul Bilgi University. Her films include the shorts *The Apartment* (18) and *Cemile* (21). *Gülizar* (24) is her feature debut.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**AIRFRANCE** /





## ТІ - КОСМОС U Are the Universe

Pavlo Ostrikov

UKRAINE/BELGIUM, 2024  
Ukrainian, French  
WORLD PREMIERE  
101 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **ForeFilms**,  
**STENOLA PRODUCTIONS**  
Executive Producer: **Charlotte Roustang**,  
**Alexandra Bratyshchenko**, **Alex Gapon**  
Producer: **Anna Yatsenko**, **Volodymyr Yatsenko**,  
**Anton Iffland Stettner**, **Eva Kuperman**  
Screenplay: **Pavlo Ostrikov**  
Cinematographer: **Nikita Kuzmenko**  
Editor: **Ivan Bannikov**  
Production Designer: **Vladlen Odudenko**,  
**Mariia Denysenko**  
Costume Designer: **Mariia Kero**  
Sound: **Sergiy Stepansky**  
Original Score: **Mykyta Moiseiev**  
Principal Cast: **Volodymyr Kravchuk**, **Daria Plahtiy**,  
**Alexia Depicker**, **Leonid Popadko**

International Sales Agent: **ForeFilms**

In the distant future, an average Ukrainian space trucker from Khmelnytskyi named Andriy (Volodymyr Kravchuk, who gives an out-of-this-world performance) is employed by the biggest nuclear waste disposal company in Eastern Europe. After 150 years of using nuclear energy, humanity has accumulated more than three billion tons of waste, held in temporary storage facilities. Unfortunately, due to an increasing number of earthquakes, radiation is destroying life on the planet.

Aboard a cargo ship, Andriy is on a four-year round-trip mission to transport nuclear waste from Earth to Jupiter's moon Callisto. His vessel is equipped with a lounge, gym, kitchen, and bedroom, as well as a robot named Maxim (Leonid Popadko) to keep him company. Maxim has a joke for every occasion, which comes in handy when the Earth explodes in the far distance.

Andriy believes he is the last living person in the universe — until a call from a French woman named Catherine (voiced by Alexia Depicker and played by Daria Plahtiy) reaches him from a faraway space station. Surprisingly, love blossoms in the post-apocalyptic fallout and, without hesitation, Andriy's sole mission becomes to reach her, despite all the obstacles.

Touching the most universal aspects of life — love, loneliness, joy, sadness — *U Are The Universe* is a genre-bending journey into the soul, infinity... and beyond!

Written and filmed during Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine, Pavlo Ostrikov's debut feature is a true wonder and a timely reminder of how important it is to connect with someone who understands us, even during the darkest of times.

DOROTA LECH

**Pavlo Ostrikov** is a writer and filmmaker who was born in Krasyliv, Ukraine, and is now based in Kyiv. His directing credits include the short films *The Stop* (14), *Golden Love* (16), and *Mia Donna* (18). *U Are the Universe* (24) is his feature debut.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**AIRFRANCE**



## Vous n'êtes pas seuls You Are Not Alone

Marie-Hélène Viens,  
Philippe Lupien

CANADA, 2024  
French  
WORLD PREMIERE  
105 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **La Boîte à Fanny**  
Producer: **Fanny-Laure Malo**  
Screenplay: **Marie-Hélène Viens, Philippe Lupien**  
Cinematographer: **Ariel Méthot**  
Editor: **Amélie Labrèche**  
Production Designer: **Éric Barbeau**  
Costume Designer: **Caroline Bodson**  
Sound: **Olivier Houde, Jean-François Sauvé, Luc Boudrias**  
Original Score: **Pierre-Philippe Côté (Pilou)**  
Principal Cast: **Pier-Luc Funk, Marianne Fortier, François Papineau, Sandrine Bisson, Blaise Tardif, Michéline Lanctôt**

Canadian Distributor: **Maison 4:3**  
International Sales Agent: **La Boîte à Fanny**

In Montreal, twentysomething Léo (Pier-Luc Funk) delivers pizza and gets drunk, and that's pretty much it. He's alone and he's sad, and doing nothing about it ... until he meets Rita (Marianne Fortier), a sweet-natured musician who thinks he might be a keeper. The thing is, Léo is already taken; he's just been targeted by an alien (François Papineau) who preys on Montreal's lonely and alienated men and doesn't much care if Léo's luck has turned.

With their first feature film, longtime collaborators (and real-life partners) Marie-Hélène Viens and Philippe Lupien are performing a radical genre experiment, mashing up P.T. Anderson's *Punch-Drunk Love* (TIFF '02) and Jonathan Glazer's *Under the Skin* (TIFF '13) to create a new hybrid lifeform.

Funk finds the wounded heart that Léo hides behind his short fuse, while Fortier is his complete opposite as the open, empathetic Rita, who knows a diamond in the rough when she sees one. It's just weird that this older guy keeps following him around, right?

A strange and gentle study of alienation, redemption, and hope, *You Are Not Alone* is one of the oddest and most daring Canadian movies in a long time... and

maybe one of the best. You'll have to decide that for yourself.

NORM WILNER

**Marie-Hélène Viens** is a writer and director from Quebec. With Philippe Lupien, she has made the short films *Bernard the Great* (13), *Amen* (16), and *We are the Freak Show* (17). *You Are Not Alone* (24) is their latest collaboration.

**Philippe Lupien** is a writer and director from Repentigny, Quebec. With Marie-Hélène Viens, he has made the short films *Bernard the Great* (13), *Amen* (16), and *We are the Freak Show* (17). *You Are Not Alone* (24) is their latest collaboration.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**AIRFRANCE** /



The background of the top two-thirds of the image is black, decorated with numerous red circular patterns. These patterns consist of concentric circles, with the outer ring being red and the inner circle being black. The sizes of these circles vary significantly, with some being very large and others being small. They are scattered across the entire area, creating a dense, abstract, and somewhat hypnotic visual effect.

# MIDNIGHT MADNESS

PRESENTED BY





## The Substance

Coralie Fargeat

UNITED KINGDOM/USA/France, 2024  
English  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
140 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: Working Title Films, Blacksmith  
Executive Producer: Alexandra Loewy, Nicolas Royer  
Producer: Coralie Fargeat, Tim Bevan, Eric Fellner  
Screenplay: Coralie Fargeat  
Cinematographer: Benjamin Kraun  
Editor: Coralie Fargeat, Jérôme Eltabet, Valentin Féron  
Production Designer: Stanislas Reydellet  
Costume Designer: Emmanuelle Youchnowski  
Sound: Valérie Deloof, Victor Fleurant  
Original Score: RAFFERTIE  
Principal Cast: Demi Moore, Margaret Qualley,  
Dennis Quaid

US Distributor: MUBI  
International Sales Agent: The Match Factory

Desperate to secure her fading celebrity status, Elisabeth Sparkle (Demi Moore), a Hollywood actress-cum-TV exercise impresario, undergoes a black-market medical procedure that promises self-actualization, but culminates in the spawning of Sue (Margaret Qualley), a bold and brash clone of her younger self that perpetuates its existence via weekly spinal taps.

The pair are warned to respect their new symbiotic relationship or risk corrosive consequences. But as Sue starts reserving more time in the limelight at the behest of a slimeball executive (Dennis Quaid) and her own growing ambition, Sparkle is soon faced with an existential threat, one that engenders a wicked feud with her tulpa and a knock-down, drag-out battle to reclaim her autonomy.

Taken at its premise, *The Substance* appears to be merely a well-trodden exercise in satirizing Hollywood's contribution to patriarchal beauty standards. But just as her breakout *Midnight Madness* debut *Revenge* (TIFF '17) uniquely reframed its horror sub-genre, Coralie Fargeat once more transforms a familiar feminine allegory by injecting an audacious tone of carnivalesque camp that ratchets its ingredients to perversely mythic heights. Seemingly intermingling bits of Oscar Wilde's *The*

*Picture of Dorian Gray*, Jerry Lewis' *The Nutty Professor*, and Paul Verhoeven's *Showgirls*, Fargeat's stylish execution and deliriously breakneck momentum further cements an identity all her own. The result is an unforgettably twisted parable that features exceptionally embodied performances from Moore and Qualley, and outrageous body-horror on the order of FX legends like *Screaming Mad George*.

PETER KUPLOWSKY

Coralie Fargeat is a French filmmaker. Her debut feature, *Revenge* (17), had its world premiere at the Festival. *The Substance* (24) is her latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## 从21世纪安全撤离 Escape from the 21st Century

Yang Li

CHINA, 2024  
Mandarin  
INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE  
98 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Beijing Scity Films Co., Ltd.  
Executive Producer: Hongwei Wang  
Producer: Lizhou Hu  
Screenplay: Yang Li  
Cinematographer: Saba Mazloum  
Animator: Zhuohong Liang, Yang Li  
Editor: Shang Huang  
Production Designer: Cheng Zhong  
Costume Designer: Ning Tang  
Sound: Xiaozhu Long, Jinyan Zhang, Shuo Zhai  
Original Score: Xiaoou Hu  
Principal Cast: Ruoyun Zhang, Chuxi Zhong, Yang Song,  
Xiaoliang Wu, Chenhao Li

International Sales Agent: Fortissimo Films

Once upon the year 1999, on a planet very much like our own — only 3,000 light years away — three teenagers find themselves plunging into chemical waste that imbues them with a unique ability: when they sneeze their consciousness travels 20 years into the future. With their sinuses now propelling them to and fro in time, they are burdened with two precepts: the future sucks, and they have power to change it. From this punchy absurdist conceit embarks an imaginative adventure, which recalls the high-wire genre acrobatics of a Tsui Hark or Stephen Chow extravaganza, further cross-pollinated with post-modern maximalist comedies like *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World* and *Everything Everywhere All at Once*.

Writer-director Yang Li maintains a breakneck momentum as he thrusts his three adolescent travellers into a disorienting manhood. The trio's leader, Chengyong (Yang Song), discovers he is subservient to a criminal empire; Zha Wang (Ruoyun Zhang) struggles as a journalist for a corrupt media company; and Pao Pao (Li Chenhao) threatens the integrity of their friendship upon learning that he is dating Yi Yang (Yanmanzi Zhu), the girl of Cheng Yong's dreams. Featuring a dizzying array of special effects, and kinetic action that brilliantly integrates

comic-book animation with magnificent martial art prowess from the scene stealing Chuxi Zhong and Xiaoliang Wu — not to mention sublime needle drops that hit like an aural dose of epinephrine — *Escape from the 21st Century* is a transcendent treatise on the power of friendship, the elasticity of fate, and the dream of building a better world.

PETER KUPLOWSKY

Yang Li is a Chinese filmmaker. His credits include the short film *Li Xianji li xian ji* (09), which later became a feature *Lee's Adventure* (11), and *Huai Wei Lai* (13). *Escape from the 21st Century* (24) is his latest film.

### TIFF Next Wave

Celebrating the highs and lows (and everything in between) of young voices in today's fast-moving world. This film has been selected for the next generation of film lovers by the TIFF Next Wave Committee.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## Ick

### Joseph Kahn

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
92 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **ICK, LLC**  
Executive Producer: **Peter Trinh, Robert Abramoff, Ron Kirschhoff, Udaya Sharma, Michael Fisk, D.C. Cassidy**  
Producer: **Steven Schneider, Joseph Kahn, Joe Heath, David Kang, Adi Shankar**  
Screenplay: **Samuel Laskey, Joseph Kahn, Dan Koontz**  
Cinematographer: **David C. Weldon, Jr.**  
Animator: **Ingenuity Studios, Stratostorm, Cameo, Reno, Metaphysics**  
Editor: **Chancier Haynes**  
Production Designer: **Brett Hess**  
Costume Designer: **Jennifer Rade**  
Sound: **Tim Gedemer**  
Original Score: **Brain and Melissa**  
Principal Cast: **Brandon Routh, Malina Weissman, Harrison Cone, Debra Wilson, Mena Suvari, Jeff Fahey**

International Sales Agent: **Creative Artists Agency (CAA)**  
US Sales Agent: **Creative Artists Agency (CAA)**

Joseph Kahn (*Bodied*, TIFFF '17) returns to *Midnight Madness* with a berserkly sardonic creature feature that riffs on classic science-fiction horror films from *The Blob* to *The Faculty*, but with a crucial subversion: what if an invading alien entity was met not with panic and fear, but cavalier indifference?

In the small American town of Eastbrook, nearly two decades after a viscous vine-like growth — colloquially referred to as “the Ick” — began encroaching on every nook and cranny, a nonplussed populus have found their lives seemingly unaffected by the creeping anomaly. The exceptions to this oblivious conformity are Hank Wallace (Brandon Routh), a former high-school football prospect turned hapless science teacher, and his perceptive student Grace (Malina Weissman), who both regard the Ick with a suspicious scrutiny that is soon violently validated. Bursts of bloody bedlam and blasé attitudes ensue, cannily satirizing how a society can grow accustomed to living in a perpetual state of emergency.

Kahn enlivens the pointed irony of this pulp horror scenario with his signature breakneck abandon and pop aesthetics. Dizzying, grotesque, and hysterical in both definitions of the word, *Ick* (co-written

with Sam Laskey and Dan Koontz), points a cultural mirror towards a contemporary ethos that has been fomenting since the turn of this century, a premise crystalized in the film’s deployment of millennial needle drops that are as nostalgic as they are infectious.

PETER KUPLOWSKY

**Joseph Kahn** was born in Busan, South Korea, and grew up in Houston. He’s directed dozens of music videos for artists including Public Enemy, Taylor Swift, Bon Jovi, Britney Spears, and Lenny Kravitz. He’s also directed films including *Detention* (11) and *Bodied*, which premiered at the Festival in 2017, where it won the People’s Choice Award for *Midnight Madness*. *Ick* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## 鬼才之道

### Dead Talents Society

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John Hsu

TAIWAN, 2024  
Mandarin Chinese  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
110 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Activator Co., Ltd.**  
Executive Producer: **Lieh Lee, Aileen Li, Ivy Chen**  
Producer: **Ivy Chen**  
Screenplay: **John Hsu, Kun-Lin Tsai**  
Cinematographer: **Yih-sien Chou**  
Editor: **Meng Ju Shieh, Yi Ning Chiang**  
Production Designer: **Chih Chen Wang**  
Costume Designer: **Lore Shih**  
Sound: **Book Chien**  
Original Score: **The Dead Talents**  
Principal Cast: **Bo-Lin Chen, Sandrine Pinna, Gingle Wang, Yi Ti Yao, Bai Bai, Soso Tseng**

Canadian Distributor: **Sony Pictures**  
US Distributor: **Sony Pictures**

In the spirit of Tim Burton's *Beetlejuice*, but set in a community of East Asian frighteners, *Dead Talents Society* invites you to peer beyond the veil into the secret netherworld of professional spectres as they compete in terrorizing the living to ensure their liminal lifestyle.

You see, souls have a finite shelf life after death, and must regularly spook up the mortal realm as a curse or urban legend in order to secure a "haunter's licence," a renewable reprieve from total oblivion. While such macabre machinations are no sweat for those who lived boldly in life, for the meeker variety of newly dead, it promises a second death sentence.

Co-writer and director John Hsu, who dominated the Taiwanese box office with his 2019 survival horror videogame adaptation *Detention*, swaps that film's provocative scares for this gleefully silly, supernatural satire as he stylishly hones in on the after-life of a shy, recently deceased teen (Gingle Wang) who learns that she has only 30 days left to scare someone.

At the behest of a starry-eyed "ghost" talent agent (Bo-Lin Chen) sympathetic to her desperation to be seen, the rookie falls in with a troupe of misfit haunters, led by a phantom diva (Sandrine Pinna) determined

to revitalize her own fading career. Together, they scheme for screams, and with so much hysterical showmanship and winning sincerity, their blood-curdling feats will not only split an audience's sides, but also inspire a happy tear or two.

PETER KUPLOWSKY

**John Hsu** is a Taiwan-based filmmaker. His feature debut *Detention* (19) was nominated for 12 Taipei Golden Horse Awards and won five, including Best New Director, Best Adapted Screenplay, and Best Visual Effects. *Dead Talents Society* (24) is his latest film.

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PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## Else

### Thibault Emin

FRANCE/BELGIUM, 2024  
French, English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
100 minutes | Colour and Black & White/DCP

Production Company: **Les Produits Frais, Wrong Men**  
Producer: **Damien Lagogué, Benoit Roland**  
Screenplay: **Thibault Emin, Alice Butaud, Emma Sandona**  
Cinematographer: **Léo Lefèvre**  
Editor: **Ariane Boukerche**  
Production Designer: **Gabrielle Desjean**  
Costume Designer: **Catherine Marchand**  
Sound: **Alain Sironval, Renaud Bajeux, Tom Diaz, Matthieu Dallaporta**  
Original Score: **Shida Shahabi, June Ha**  
Principal Cast: **Matthieu Sampeur, Edith Proust**

International Sales Agent: **WTFilms**

Introverted and uncomfortable in his own skin, Anx (Matthieu Sampeur) does not consider himself an obvious partner for Cass (Edith Proust), the feisty whirlwind of confidence he finds himself waking up alongside after a presumed one night stand. And yet a romance begins to bloom. However, the nascent relationship is threatened when a strange disease begins to spread throughout the world, gradually causing the infected to merge with whatever they touch. Finding themselves quarantined to Anx's claustrophobic apartment, the couple is soon besieged by their very surroundings, which have begun coalescing with their neighbours into a spongy new life form that seeks to add the lovers to its mass.

Even before the body-horror emerges in Thibault Emin's mesmerizing debut feature, the film envelopes its characters in an anxious haptic soundscape of sticky, squelchy friction as Anx and Cass navigate each other, be it through probing conversation or intimate consummation. And as an apocalypse encroaches upon them, genre thrills emerge with the appearance of grotesque creatures whose disturbingly fractured depiction is liable to raise the hairs on the arms of the audience — provided they haven't already crawled out of their skin from the eerie foley.

Further mutating towards a philosophical climax that blends existential dread with transcendental awe, *Else* recalls a rather literal interpretation of the Modern English lyric "I'll stop the world and melt with you," as it profoundly articulates a unique vision of the end of everything, and how it may, in fact, just be the start of something new.

PETER KUPLOWSKY

**Thibault Emin** is a French director and screenwriter. He studied film at Paris 8 University and at La Fémis. He has directed several short films, including *Else* (07), which formed the basis for his feature debut, *Else* (24), which is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Friendship

Andrew DeYoung

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
97 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Fifth Season, BoulderLight Pictures**  
Executive Producer: **Paul Rudd, Tracy Rosenblum, Andrew DeYoung, Alexis Garcia**  
Producer: **Nick Weidenfeld, Raphael Margules, J.D. Lifshitz, Johnny Holland**  
Screenplay: **Andrew DeYoung**  
Cinematographer: **Andy Rydzewski**  
Editor: **Sophie Corra**  
Production Designer: **Rocio Gimenez**  
Costume Designer: **Chloe Karmin**  
Sound: **Dimitri Kouri**  
Principal Cast: **Tim Robinson, Paul Rudd, Kate Mara, Jack Dylan Grazer**

International Sales Agent: **Fifth Season, WME, United Talent Agency (UTA)**  
US Sales Agent: **WME, United Talent Agency (UTA), Fifth Season**

When an errant delivery pulls suburban dad Craig Waterman (Tim Robinson) into the orbit of his mysterious and charismatic new neighbour Austin Carmichael (Paul Rudd), a sweet bromance seems to blossom over an innocent evening of urban exploration, punk rock, and a mutual appreciation for paleolithic antiquities. But what should have been the start of a beautiful friendship is soon waylaid as Craig's obsessive personality begins to alienate his new pal, subsequently inducing a spiral that threatens to upend Craig's entire life.

With his cult hit sketch series *I Think You Should Leave*, Robinson has established himself as one of comedy's most consummate conductors of cringe, skilfully exploring the quiet desperation of stubborn individuals who struggle to navigate society's shifting social mores. In *Friendship*, this satirical brand of discomfort is set to simmer across a procession of awkward faux pas as writer-director Andrew DeYoung (whose comedy credentials include episodes of *Our Flag Means Death* and *PEN15*) judiciously crafts the conditions for Robinson to hysterically oscillate between his patented childlike vulnerability and uproariously pathetic rage.

Rudd makes a beguiling foil to Robinson, effortlessly imbuing Austin with an alluring

rugged machismo that is subtly punctured over prolonged exposure to Craig's arrested development. Featuring an absurdist ensemble of eccentrics, including a terrifically deadpan Kate Mara as Tim's increasingly disaffected wife Tami, *Friendship* will also offer *Midnighters* one of the funniest psychedelic trips to ever feature a fast food brand.

PETER KUPLOWSKY

**Andrew DeYoung** is a writer and director. He has directed episodes of TV shows including *The Other Two* (19), *PEN15* (19–21), *High Fidelity* (20), and *Our Flag Means Death* (22–23). He directed and wrote on Kate Berlant and John Early's comedy special *Would It Kill You to Laugh?* (22). *Friendship* (24) is his feature debut.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## ザ・ゲスイドウス

### The Gesuidouz

Kenichi Ugana

JAPAN, 2024

Japanese

WORLD PREMIERE

93 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Rights Cube**, METEORA, Vandalism

Executive Producer: **Yusuke Suzuki**

Producer: **Riku Sumida**

Screenplay: **Kenichi Ugana**

Cinematographer: **Koichi Furuya**

Editor: **Masashi Komino**

Production Designer: **Takashi Matsuzuka**

Costume Designer: **Moyashi Nakamura**

Sound: **Kanshi Iwasaki**

Original Score: **Kyono**

Principal Cast: **Natsuko**, Leo Imamura, Yutaka Kyan,

Rocko Zevenbergen, Yuya Endo

International Sales Agent: **Rights Cube**

Hanako (Natsuko) has a dream: her horror-themed punk band The Gesuidouz will perform at Glastonbury Festival and that, just like her heroes Jim Morrison and Kurt Cobain, she will die at 27. With a year left until her deadline, Hanako makes a desperate appeal with a power drill to her apathetic manager's cranium, and he offers the band a rural farm in the Japanese countryside where they can buckle down and focus on writing a bonafide hit song that will let them realize their ambition.

Proceeding with a measured but steady momentum that recalls the deadpan humour and vignette structures of an Aki Kaurismäki film (*Leningrad Cowboys Go America* in particular), this inspiring lo-fi celebration of the creative process hypnotically fixates on the agonizing labour that Hanako and her bandmates exert towards songwriting. It is a little like watching The Rolling Stones recording sessions featured in Jean-Luc Godard's *Sympathy for the Devil*, only the political rhetoric is replaced with punk aphorisms spoken by a dog named John Cage.

Prolifically working on the fringes of Japanese genre cinema for the past decade, writer-director Kenichi Ugana is gradually emerging as one of the country's most auspicious cult filmmakers and, with *The*

*Gesuidouz*, his assured direction brings an unflinching sincerity that is well met by his endearing and idiosyncratic ensemble of players. But it is Natsuko's breakout performance as Hanako that will have your heart in your throat as she belts a sublime anthem that is sure to stir the soul of any Midnighter who lives on a diet of horror movies and punk rock.

PETER KUPLOWKY

**Kenichi Ugana** is a Japanese filmmaker and actor. He has directed the feature films *Ganguro Gal's Riot* (16), *Goodbye Silence* (18), *Wild Virgins* (19), and *Rolling Marbles* (20), as well as the short film series *Extraneous Matter* (20). *The Gesuidouz* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Dead Mail

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Joe DeBoer,  
Kyle McConaghy

USA, 2024  
English  
CANADIAN PREMIERE  
106 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Alarmist Entertainment**  
Executive Producer: **Roy Lee, Steven Schneider, Susan Priver**  
Producer: **Zachary Weil, Brett Arndt**  
Screenplay: **Joe DeBoer, Kyle McConaghy**  
Editor: **Kyle McConaghy**  
Production Designer: **Payton Jane**  
Costume Designer: **Kerri Anne Savastano**  
Sound: **Justin Lebens**  
Original Score: **Joe DeBoer, Kyle McConaghy**  
Principal Cast: **Sterling Macer Jr., John Fleck, Tomas Boykin, Susan Priver, Micki Jackson, Nick Heyman**

US Sales Agent: **Bridge Independent**

When an ominous cry for help on a blood-stained scrap of mail is clocked by the staff of a county post office in the American Midwest, it spurs an investigation that circuitously reveals the sordid story of a struggling synthesizer engineer (Sterling Macer Jr.) and his possessive benefactor (John Fleck). Shrewdly set at the precipice of the digital age — that nebulous twilight between the late 1970s and the early 1980s — this analogue-textured thriller borders its central psychodrama within an idiosyncratic community of amateur gumshoes who all keenly contribute to cracking the case.

The most immediately prominent sleuth is Jasper (Tomas Boykin), a diligent mail-room clerk with a knack for rectifying “dead letters,” to use the parlance of the postal service. Aided by his two plucky colleagues (Micki Jackson, Susan Priver) and a Scandinavian hacker (Nick Heyman) thus ensues a genre-bending caper spun with the fetishistic minutiae of a Peter Strickland film and the askew Americana of the Coen Brothers.

Acclaimed for its auspicious premiere at South by Southwest, *Dead Mail* distinguishes filmmaking duo Joe DeBoer and Kyle McConaghy as consummate stylists who imbue their characters with a

disarming sense of authenticity. Though the ruinous conflicts that emerge in their take on archetypal trajectories are reminiscent of thrillers like *Misery* and *Silence of the Lambs*, their project is as much a study on human loneliness as it is a meticulous synth-laden amalgamation of patented genre delights.

PETER KUPLOWSKY

**Joe DeBoer** is a writer, director, cinematographer, and composer. With Kyle McConaghy, he has directed the short film *Rubies* (14) and the feature *BAB* (20). *Dead Mail* (24) is their latest film.

**Kyle McConaghy** is a writer, director, and cinematographer from Missouri. He has directed the short film *Ayana* (21) and the feature *Sheeps Clothing* (24). With Joe DeBoer, he has directed the short film *Rubies* (14) and the feature *BAB* (20). *Dead Mail* (24) is their latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## It Doesn't Get Any Better Than This

Rachel Kempf, Nick Toti

USA, 2023  
English  
CANADIAN PREMIERE  
84 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **DieDieVideo**  
Producer: **Rachel Kempf, Nick Toti**  
Screenplay: **Rachel Kempf, Nick Toti, Christian**  
Editor: **Rachel Kempf, Nick Toti, Ryan McDuffie**  
Original Score: **Nicholas Naioti**  
Principal Cast: **Rachel Kempf, Nick Toti, Christian**

International Sales Agent: **Art Brut Films**  
US Sales Agent: **Art Brut Films**

Nick Toti and Rachel Kempf live and breathe horror movies. So when the couple begin to observe that the dilapidated duplex they just bought exhibits all the telltale signs of having a haunted history, they can barely believe their luck.

While most new homeowners would blanch at the sight of walls strewn with satanic graffiti, a basement littered with seemingly cursed objects, and more doors torn from their hinges than there are door frames, Nick and Rachel are gleefully inspired to conduct and document a seance within their abnormal abode. Even eerier, their Missouri manor begins to attract enigmatic, entranced strangers who creepily convene on the front lawn in increasing numbers with every passing day. Things only get weirder and scarier from there.

What sets this found-footage horror apart from other indies of its ilk is its remarkable verisimilitude. Utilizing two decades of archival footage that detail Nick and Rachel's real-life relationship, the divide between documentary and nightmare blurs throughout as the encroaching supernatural phenomena is contrasted with the genuine vulnerability of its subjects.

The infectious camaraderie among these ghost hunters, who include Christian,

Rachel's true-life bestie, rings as authentic as the fear that Nick captures with his obsessive, voyeuristic camerawork.

Already amassing acclaim on the festival circuit as one of the scariest films of its sub-genre since *The Blair Witch Project*, this doom-laden diary, which the filmmakers claim will never be exhibited outside a movie theatre, lives up to its deeply sardonic title.

PETER KUPLOWSKY

**Rachel Kempf** grew up in St. Louis, Missouri, and holds an MFA in screenwriting from the University of Texas at Austin. *It Doesn't Get Any Better Than This* (24) is her directorial debut.

**Nick Toti** was born in the Midwest and studied literature at Truman State University in Missouri. *It Doesn't Get Any Better Than This* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## The Shadow Strays

Timo Tjahjanto

INDONESIA, 2024  
Indonesian  
WORLD PREMIERE  
144 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Frontier Pictures**  
Executive Producer: **Nick Spicer, Todd Brown**  
Producer: **Wicky V. Olindo, Timo Tjahjanto**  
Screenplay: **Timo Tjahjanto**  
Cinematographer: **Batara Goempar**  
Editor: **Dinda Amanda**  
Costume Designer: **Victoria Anastasia**  
Sound: **Hiro Ishizaka**  
Original Score: **Fajar Yuskemal**  
Principal Cast: **Aurora Ribero, Hana Pitrashata Malasan**

Canadian Distributor: **Netflix**  
US Distributor: **Netflix**  
International Sales Agent: **Netflix**  
US Sales Agent: **Netflix**

Stripped of her past and trained in the deadly art of fucking your shit up, adolescent assassin Codename 13 (Aurora Ribero) works diligently for a clandestine collective of killers known as The Shadow. After a mission goes sideways in Japan, her mentor, Umbra (Hana Malasan), picks up the fumble, but boots her to Indonesia on a disciplinary probation. While laying low in the slums of Jakarta, a chance encounter with a young boy who has run afoul of a local crime syndicate soon embroils the restless and rebellious 13 in an unsanctioned crusade, inciting a bevy of bloody battles that paint the town every shade of red, as well as drawing the ire of her merciless management.

Not since *The Night Comes for Us* has Indonesia's pre-eminent architect of ultra-violent action, Timo Tjahjanto, conducted such a meticulous martial arts massacre.

Opening with a bravura set piece that lays waste to dozens of yakuza, his latest proceeds as a kind of taxonomy of the action genre with a string of sword fights, shoot-em-ups, and old-fashioned fisticuffs, as 13 is pitted against a murderer's row of, well... murderers.

Stuffed with palpable nods to action classics, as well as Tjahjanto's prior bonafides (*Headshot*, TIFF '16), the whole extravaganza

recalls the excess of John Woo's *Hard Boiled*, right down to the warehouse showdown that goes to hell in a parade of pyrotechnics. Woo's epic was made on the precipice of his arrival in Hollywood, and, given Tjahjanto's impending studio assignments (a sequel to *Nobody* and a US remake of *Train to Busan*), *Midnighters* will appreciate *The Shadow Strays* as a bid for a similar milestone.

PETER KUPLOWSKY

**Timo Tjahjanto** is an Indonesian filmmaker, writer, and producer. His credits include the features *Headshot* (16), a *Midnight Madness* selection at the Festival, *May the Devil Take You* (18), and *The Night Comes For Us* (18). *The Shadow Strays* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY



The image features a large, abstract graphic design on a black background. Two large, overlapping blue circles are positioned in the upper half. The left circle contains the text "TIFF DOCS" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. A horizontal blue bar connects the two circles. Below the blue circles, there is a red, teardrop-shaped graphic element pointing downwards. The overall aesthetic is modern and minimalist.

# TIFF DOCS

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**A&E INDIE FILMS**





## Vice Is Broke

### Eddie Huang

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
102 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **QC Entertainment, CASH ONLY**  
Executive Producer: **Edward H. Hamm Jr.**  
Producer: **Raymond Mansfield, Sean McKittrick, Eddie Huang, Maya Rodrigo**  
Cinematographer: **Luke Geissbühler**  
Editor: **George Mandl**  
Original Score: **Chrome Canyon, Jordan Chini**  
With: **Eddie Huang, Gavin McInnes, Jesse Pearson, Lesley Arfin, Fat Jew, Dave 1, David Choe, Amy Kellner, Simon Ostrovsky, Dr. Woo, Santiago Stelley, Justin Pichetrungsri, Miles Skinner, Taylor Lorenz, Sasha Hecht, Natashia Huang, Nick Walker**

US Sales Agent: **United Talent Agency (UTA), QC Entertainment**

Eddie Huang is an American iconoclast who has made his mark as a chef, author, host, and more. For a time, the place he felt most at home was working for Vice Media where he hosted his own travel show, *Huang's World*. He befriended Vice co-founder Shane Smith and witnessed the company's meteoric rise to become valued at \$5.7 billion in 2017. Last year, it crashed into bankruptcy, owing Huang substantial royalties, just one of its countless casualties.

"It didn't have to end like this," says Huang, who adapts a Vice style of first-person reporting to investigate how the Montreal indie magazine became a media goliath. We hear from contributors who helped establish its coolness and credibility including magazine editor Jesse Pearson, writer Amy Kellner, and TV journalist Simon Ostrovsky. Huang keeps tabs on the people who did the hard work versus those who took the credit. He interviews Vice co-founder Gavin McInnes whose sexist and racist pranks eventually got him fired (only to re-emerge as the Proud Boys founder).

The stories behind the scenes are alternately hilarious and appalling. Huang details how media moguls poured millions into Vice desperately hoping to unlock the youth market. A former Vice ad executive explains the

company's key tactic: "Make the cool guy feel rich and the rich guy feel cool." As Vice alumni try to process the good from the bad, the interviews turn unexpectedly poignant. What did the company mean culturally, journalistically, morally, financially? They explore the many meanings of the title *Vice Is Broke*.

THOM POWERS

**Eddie Huang** is a filmmaker, actor, chef, and TV personality. His memoir *Fresh Off the Boat* was adapted into a comedy series (15–20), and he has hosted food shows such as *Cheap Bites* (12) and *Huang's World* (17). He made his directorial debut with *Boogie* (21). *Vice Is Broke* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## Patrice: The Movie

Ted Passon

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
102 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: All Ages Productions  
Executive Producer: Ted Passon, David Dunn, David Sloan, Claire Weinraub, Poh Si Teng, Jennifer J. Pritzker, Chandra Jessee, Rebecca Lichtenfeld, Ruth Ann Harnisch, Jim LeBrecht  
Producer: Kyla Harris, Innbo Shim, Emily Spivack  
Screenplay: Patrice Jetter, Kyla Harris, Lee Getty  
Cinematographer: Ted Passon, Aly Spengler  
Editor: Ephraim Kirkwood, John Tarquinio  
Production Designer: Patrice Jetter  
Sound: Stephen Sklarow  
Original Score: Molly Joyce  
With: Patrice Jetter, Garry Wickham, Elizabeth Dicker, Milanni Mines

US Distributor: ABC News Studios/HULU  
International Sales Agent: Outlook Filmsales

Meet Patrice Jetter, a beloved school crossing guard in her New Jersey town. She carries herself with uncommon optimism and vigour despite, as a disabled person, constantly having to navigate a world that was not built with her in mind. She has a passion for figure skating, model trains, and making art of all kinds.

She's planning to finally get married to her partner Garry, who is a wheelchair user. They come to learn that US law has an unexpected penalty: when two people receiving Social Security disability benefits or Medicaid want to get married or even move in together, their financial support is cut. Patrice and Garry fight to stay together in a system designed to keep them apart.

Filmmaker Ted Passon has known Patrice for 20 years, witnessing both her creativity and her battles against government bureaucracy. For *Patrice: The Movie*, he works closely with an all-star group of collaborators including disabled team members: producer Kyla Harris (*We Might Regret This*), executive producer and sound designer James LeBrecht (*Crip Camp*), composer Molly Joyce, and others.

The film is largely observational, but it does include playful theatrical sequences in which Patrice recreates memories, playing

herself alongside a cast of children. She co-wrote the scenes and designed the sets.

The film strikes a well-judged balance between confronting systemic failures and foregrounding joy through the energy of Patrice and her friends. It's a vital call to action that leads with care and love.

THOM POWERS

**Ted Passon** is a director, writer, producer, and video artist based in Philadelphia. His many credits include the docuseries *Philly D.A.* (21) and *Worn Stories* (21), and music videos for artists including St. Vincent, Kurt Vile, Kimya Dawson, and The National. *Patrice: The Movie* (24) is his debut feature film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## The Last of The Sea Women

Sue Kim

USA, 2024  
Korean, English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
87 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **A24, Extracurricular**  
Executive Producer: **Nicole Stott, Emily Osborne, Harry Go, Marissa Torres Ericson**  
Producer: **Malala Yousafzai, Sue Kim, Erika Kennair**  
Cinematographer: **Iris Ng, Eunsoo Cho, Justin Turkowski**  
Editor: **Erin Casper, Yeong-a Kim, Stacy Kim**  
Original Score: **Jang Young Gyu**

Canadian Distributor: **Apple TV+**  
US Distributor: **Apple TV+**

Off the coast of South Korea's Jeju Island, a community of fisherwomen called the haenyeo have been harvesting seafood for centuries. They are like real mermaids, trained to free dive by holding their breath for up to two minutes. Because their work is dangerous, the haenyeo aren't eligible for health insurance, but their vocation has historically yielded a good income. In an otherwise patriarchal culture, they maintain an exalted status. Filmmaker Sue Kim gives us a chance to experience their undersea world and confront the forces bringing it to the brink of destruction.

Today, the majority of haenyeo are in their sixties and seventies. Kim puts this generation at the centre of the film while also including a pair of younger women using TikTok to document their dives. The future of haenyeo life is now in peril thanks to ever-increasing amounts of sea garbage and its toxic effect on marine creatures, changing ocean temperatures due to global warming, and the release of water contaminated by the Fukushima nuclear accident into the seas where they ply their trade.

This threat galvanizes the haenyeo to organize politically to sound an alarm. One elderly woman even flies to Geneva to testify before the United Nations. The power of

their story won the support of Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai, who joined the film as an executive producer.

*The Last of the Sea Women* is an emotional journey that will leave you fervently rooting for the preservation of these gutsy and noble warriors of the sea.

THOM POWERS

**Sue Kim** grew up in Detroit and graduated from UC Berkeley with a degree in English literature. She spent two decades in the advertising industry before switching to filmmaking. Her documentary short *The Speed Cubers* (20) was shortlisted for an Academy Award. *The Last of the Sea Women* (24) is her debut documentary feature.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## Blue Road - The Edna O'Brien Story

Sinéad O'Shea

IRELAND/UNITED KINGDOM, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
99 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: SOS Productions Ltd., Tara Films  
Executive Producer: Barbara Broccoli, Katie Holly, Niamh Fagan, Jack Oliver, Kathryn Ferguson  
Producer: Claire Mc Cabe, Eleanor Emptage, Sinéad O'Shea  
Screenplay: Sinéad O'Shea  
Cinematographer: Eoin Mc Loughlin  
Editor: Gretta Ohle  
Original Score: Richard Skelton  
With: Edna O'Brien, Jessie Buckley, Gabriel Byrne, Carlo Gebler, Sasha Gebler, Walter Mosley

Edna O'Brien defied Ireland's patriarchal and religious constraints with her sexually frank 1960 debut novel, *The Country Girls*. She became a literary sensation, writing for *The New Yorker*, delivering provocative interviews, authoring screenplays, and hosting star-studded parties. She was as prolific in conducting love affairs as she was writing novels. She made a fortune and lost a fortune.

Filmmaker Sinéad O'Shea taps into a wealth of material including unpublished diaries, decades of television appearances, and new interviews with O'Brien, in her nineties and as incisive as ever. We hear from her sons Carlo and Sasha about their unconventional upbringing with a divorced mother whose house guests included Marlon Brando, Judy Garland, and Paul McCartney. The actor Gabriel Byrne explains how O'Brien broke taboos while writer Walter Mosley describes how she changed his life as his teacher.

Nothing about her path was easy. Her childhood was overshadowed by an abusive father she escaped by marrying an oppressive older writer, Ernest Gébler. He routinely belittled her writing and once belligerently criticized her for using the expression "blue road," insisting there was no such thing. She found the courage to stand up to him

and many other adversaries, including the government and the Catholic church, which condemned her works as obscene.

The film is as candid and as pleasurable as O'Brien's novels, including a section about her tumultuous affair with a married British politician. She doesn't shy away from any topic. The light may have dimmed on her celebrity, but this documentary is a revelation and especially poignant after her death in July.

THOM POWERS

**Sinéad O'Shea** is a filmmaker and writer who was born in Navan, Ireland, and lives in Dublin. She has made the documentaries *A Mother Brings Her Son to Be Shot* (17) and *Pray for Our Sinners* (22), which premiered at the Festival. She's also a contributing writer to *The New York Times* and *The Guardian*. *Blue Road - The Edna O'Brien Story* (24) is her latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Mistress Dispeller

Elizabeth Lo

CHINA/USA, 2024  
Chinese  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
94 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Anonymous Content, Impact Partners, Marcona Media, After Argos Films**  
Executive Producer: **Nick Shumaker, Jessica Grimshaw, Jenny Raskin, Kelsey Koenig, Geralyn White Dreyfous, David Levine, Dawn Olmstead, Rahdi Taylor, Davis Guggenheim, Steve Cohen, Paula Froehle, Marni E. J. Grossman**  
Producer: **Emma D. Miller, Elizabeth Lo, Maggie Li**  
Cinematographer: **Elizabeth Lo**  
Editor: **Charlotte Munch Bengtson**  
Original Score: **Brian McOmber**  
With: **Wang Zhenx**

International Sales Agent: **The Party Film Sales**  
US Sales Agent: **Anonymous Content, Submarine Entertainment**

A middle-aged wife in China begins to see cracks in her long marriage as her husband pulls back on his affection. She soon discovers he has been texting a younger woman. Coping with heartbreak, but still committed to saving her marriage, she seeks the help of Wang Zhenxi, an established “mistress dispeller,” known for bringing extramarital affairs to an end. What follows is an emotional rollercoaster and a deep meditation on relationships.

Filmmaker Elizabeth Lo gains the trust of everyone in this love triangle and with the mistress dispeller, Teacher Wang. We watch a prolonged intervention take place over the course of several months. Teacher Wang operates far outside the boundaries of conventional couples’ therapy. She fabricates scenarios in order to meet the husband and his mistress so she can understand their points of view. She’s a keen student of emotional triggers and doesn’t hesitate to employ small manipulations towards achieving the larger goal of reuniting the spouses.

The film resists judgement and makes space for candid introspection by all parties involved. It offers a nuanced perspective on the ways romantic attachment shifts through different stages of life. Some of the dynamics are unique to China, where

there’s scant precedent to guide the current generation through changes in the economy, technology, and social mobility. But the film’s overarching exploration of love in all its complexity and messiness will be a conversation starter for audiences anywhere in the world.

THOM POWERS

**Elizabeth Lo** was born in Hong Kong and is based in Los Angeles. She holds a BFA from NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts and an MFA from Stanford. She has directed short documentaries including *Hotel 22* (14) and *Mother’s Day* (17) and the feature *Stray* (20). *Mistress Dispeller* (24) is her latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## A Sisters' Tale

Leila Amini

SWITZERLAND/FRANCE/IRAN, 2024

Persian

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

93 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Mira Film, Docmaniacs**

Producer: **Afsaneh Salari, Vadim Jendreyko, Leila Amini**

Screenplay: **Leila Amini**

Cinematographer: **Leila Amini**

Editor: **Audrey Maurion, Leila Amini, Morteza Payeshenas**

Sound: **Leila Amini, Patrick Becker**

Original Score: **Nasreen Amini**

With: **Nasreen Amini**

In *A Sisters' Tale*, seven years in the making, director Leila Amini creates a stunning portrait of her sister Nasreen. We watch Nasreen pursue her dream of becoming a singer in Iran, a country where women are banned from performing in public.

Nasreen has starlike charisma and gives Leila access to all her highs and lows. We see her striving to fulfill her artistic ambitions while navigating the needs of her two children, her marital tensions, and patriarchal pushback at every turn. Nasreen frequently clashes with her husband over her music and his nighttime absences.

"I want to talk to women with my lyrics," says Nasreen. She writes songs of love and freedom, stealing moments from a boisterous household to sequester herself in a room and record tracks on her phone.

Over the years, we see her assert more independence both as a woman and an artist. *A Sisters' Tale* is the story of two women with great tenacity, both in front of the camera and behind it. The film has a rawness and intimacy that perhaps only a sibling could capture.

When Nasreen sings, her voice radiates beauty, power, and poetry that reshapes the world in her own vision. The film

showcases a splendid inner life shining bright against an embattled outer world.

THOM POWERS

**Leila Amini** is an Iranian filmmaker who has also worked as a film editor. She holds a BA in Cinema and an MA in Dramatic Literature, both from the Art University of Tehran, and is an alumnus of Dok Incubator 2023. She directed the documentary *Hasookhteh* (18). *A Sisters' Tale* (24) is her latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Men of War

Jen Gatien, Billy Corben

USA/CANADA, 2024  
English, Spanish  
WORLD PREMIERE  
98 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: NEON, deerjen, rakontur, Hyperobject Industries  
Executive Producer: Tom Quinn, Dan Omeara, Todd Shulman, Adam McKay  
Producer: Alfred Spellman, Jen Gatien, Billy Corben  
Cinematographer: Hernán Pérez, BJ Golnick, Gogy Esparza, Azahal Hare  
Editor: Andrew Saunderson, David Cypkin  
With: Jordan Goudreau, Major General Cliver Alcalá Cordones, Sebastiana Barràez

US Distributor: NEON  
International Sales Agent: NEON  
US Sales Agent: NEON

In May 2020, a ragtag group of roughly 60 insurrectionists led by American mercenaries attempted to infiltrate Venezuela by boat to overthrow the regime of Nicolás Maduro. Dubbed Operation Gideon, it was a tragicomedy that failed. The film pitch would be “Rambo meets Fyre Fest” only that doesn’t begin to cover the multiple layers of this documentary. The narrative echoes decades of covert US interventions in Latin America, only this time fashioned in the Trump era.

The mastermind at the centre is the complex figure of Jordan Goudreau. Raised in Mississauga, Ontario, Goudreau was immersed in the mythology of war. At the age of 17, he joined the Canadian military, then switched to the US forces because he saw more opportunity for combat. He worked in special ops, receiving three Bronze Stars for bravery on repeat missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. He was medically retired for combat-related injuries. Like many vets, he struggled to adapt to civilian life, so he established Silvercorp, his own security company. His search for clients drew him into the Miami circles of Venezuelan opposition figures including the Trump-favoured politician Juan Guaidó and the influential political strategist J.J. Rendón.

Filmmakers Billy Corben and Jen Gatien do a skilful job of exploring the shadow world of deception and deniability that surrounds these figures. Gatien spent months following Goudreau after the debacle of Operation Gideon. Corben has deep experience covering Miami outlaws in films such as *Cocaine Cowboys*. With *Men of War*, Corben and Gatien raise overarching questions about what happens when governments program soldiers for violence, then set them loose.

THOM POWERS

**Billy Corben** is a documentary filmmaker from Miami. His credits include *Cocaine Cowboys* (06), *Dawg Fight* (15), *Screwball* (18), which played the Festival, *Magic City Hustle* (19), and *God Forbid* (22). *Men of War* (24) is his latest film.

**Jen Gatien** was born in Cornwall, Ontario, and now splits her time between her hometown and New York. She has produced more than a dozen films, including the documentary *Chelsea on the Rocks* (08) and the fiction features *Holy Rollers* (10) and *For Ellen* (12). *Men of War* (24) is her directorial debut.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## Space Cowboy

Marah Strauch,  
Bryce Leavitt

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
98 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Thank You Pictures LLC, REV Entertainment, Inc**  
Executive Producer: **Richard Valenzuela, Chance Wright, Lars Sylvest**  
Producer: **Tyler Measom, Bryce Leavitt, Marah Strauch**  
Cinematographer: **Tony Johannson**  
Editor: **Eric Bruggemann, J. Davis**  
Sound: **Toolshed Audio Post**  
Original Score: **Brooke Blair, Will Blair**  
With: **Joe Jennings**

International Sales Agent: **Submarine Entertainment**  
US Sales Agent: **Submarine Entertainment**

You may not know the name Joe Jennings, but you've surely seen his work. For decades, he has been jumping out of planes with a movie camera to create jaw-dropping moments for extreme sports shows, TV commercials, and Hollywood blockbusters. Now in his early sixties, he looks back on the triumphs and tragedies that shaped his life as he tries to pull off the aerial stunt he has never been able to achieve.

Jennings uses the open air like Dalí used canvas to create surreal and unforgettable images. He's long been possessed by the vision of an open-top automobile falling from the sky. He wants to film it with four passengers sitting in the car, like a comic book scene brought to life. It might sound like lunacy, but the film reveals the poignant life journey that motivates Jennings to bring his dream to reality.

Growing up with ADHD, Jennings preferred the outdoors to school, earning him the nickname "Joe Dirt." In college, he discovered his two great loves: his wife, Sissy, and skydiving. He teamed with Rob Harris and they became the dynamic duo of pioneering aerial tricks for ESPN's X-Games. That led to a continual escalation of what was possible.

Beyond the thrill-seeking, filmmakers Marah Strauch and Bryce Leavitt explore

Jennings' other layers, including how he has coped with his peers' fatal accidents, his clinical depression, and balancing work with family. The film teaches us how to reach for the highest heights and how to deal with the pull of gravity.

THOM POWERS

**Bryce Leavitt** was born in Kennewick, Washington, and is now based in Los Angeles. *Space Cowboy* (24) is his debut film.

**Marah Strauch** is an Austrian American documentary filmmaker born and raised in Portland, Oregon. Her feature debut *Sunshine Superman* was the Opening Night Film for TIFF Docs '14. She's also the director of *Vice Versa: Chyna* (21). *Space Cowboy* (24) is her latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## The Last Republican

Steve Pink

USA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
90 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Media Courthouse Documentary Collective**

Executive Producer: **Kevin Morris**

Producer: **Jason Kohn, Chapin Wilson, Steve Pink, Robb Bindler, Sarafina DiFelice**

Screenplay: **Steve Pink, Ted Feldman**

Cinematographer: **Joshua Salzman**

Editor: **Ted Feldman**

Production Designer: **Beth Goodnight**

Costume Designer: **Yanice Thomas**

Sound: **Gene Martin**

Original Score: **Logan Nelson**

With: **Adam Kinzinger, Steve Pink,**

**Sofia Kinzinger, Austin Weatherford, Maura Gillespie**

International Sales Agent: **Submarine Entertainment**

US Sales Agent: **Submarine Entertainment**

In this age of political division, how can opponents find a starting point for dialogue? For Republican Congressman Adam Kinzinger, the answer is his favourite film, *Hot Tub Time Machine*. During the hardest year of his life, Kinzinger opens up to left-wing Hollywood director Steve Pink, despite their opposing political views. Their shared appreciation for a good laugh bonds the unlikely duo at a time when sectarianism is tearing apart traditional allies.

Kinzinger was elected to the US House of Representatives in 2011 as a Republican committed to upholding the conservative values rooted in his Midwest upbringing. During Donald Trump's administration, he grew dismayed watching the GOP conform to extreme rhetoric. When Trump rallied his followers to besiege the US capital on January 6, 2021, Kinzinger was among 10 Republicans who voted to impeach the president for instigating an insurrection. He then served on the Congressional committee to investigate what had happened on January 6.

Standing up to Trump became a death blow to his congressional career. Members of Kinzinger's own party made him a pariah, while extremists and trolls issued death threats to his family. The film follows

Kinzinger over his final year in office as he withstands these pressures and wrestles with the consequences of staying true to his core values.

*The Last Republican* is bracing to watch in the months before the US votes on its political future. If there's any hope for bipartisan discussion, it may start with a sense of humour.

THOM POWERS

**Steve Pink** was born in Evanston, Illinois and is based in Los Angeles. He co-wrote the screenplays for *Grosse Pointe Blank* (97) and *High Fidelity* (00), and directed *Hot Tub Time Machine* (10) and the Festival selection *The Wheel* (21). *The Last Republican* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## No Other Land

Yuval Abraham, Basel Adra,  
Hamdan Ballal, Rachel Szor

PALESTINE/NORWAY, 2024  
Arabic, Hebrew, English  
CANADIAN PREMIERE  
95 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Antipode Films**  
Producer: **Bård Kjøge Rønning, Fabien Greenberg**  
Cinematographer: **Rachel Szor**  
Editor: **Yuval Abraham, Basel Adra, Rachel Szor, Hamdan Ballal**  
Sound: **Bård Harazi Farbu**

International Sales Agent: **Autlook Filmsales**  
US Sales Agent: **Cinetic Media**

Basel Adra has been documenting the expulsion and decimation of his community in the small mountain village of Masafer Yatta in the southern West Bank since childhood. Adra's early memories as a child are plagued with images of Israeli soldiers raiding his home, witnessing his father Nasser, a Palestinian activist, being arrested, and the ongoing Israeli military occupation and settler aggression. By picking up his camera, Adra continually speaks truth to power as he tirelessly documents his reality: impending forced removals, bulldozers destroying homes, and the violence that inevitably follows. The film takes place prior to October 7, 2023, when attention to the region was in shorter supply.

During Adra's fight to preserve his mountain village community, he forms an unexpected friendship and alliance with Israeli journalist Yuval Abraham, who joins his resistance efforts. It is clear this bond is not one grounded in equity, with Adra living under occupation while Abraham has freedom of movement. Yet the relationship that develops between the two — showing deep care, humanity, and above all how solidarity can break down barriers, even during occupation — is at the heart of this piece.

Made under extreme duress and unimaginable production hardships, this film comes

from a Palestinian-Israeli activist collective formed of Adra, Abraham, Rachel Szor, and Hamdan Ballal. For its world premiere at the Berlin Film Festival, *No Other Land* earned the top documentary jury and audience prizes in the prestigious Panorama section. This film would stand out in any year, but now it feels even more urgent.

THOM POWERS

**Yuval Abraham** is an Israeli filmmaker and journalist who has spent years writing about the Israeli occupation, mostly in Hebrew.

**Basel Adra** is a Palestinian filmmaker who has also worked for various human rights organizations and as a journalist. He has been documenting life in his home community of Masafer Yatta since the age of 14.

**Hamdan Ballal** is a Palestinian filmmaker, photographer, farmer, and human rights researcher.

**Rachel Szor** is an Israeli filmmaker, video journalist, and cinematographer.

*The directors are four journalists and filmmakers who connected through their activism against the mass expulsion of the Masafer Yatta community in the West Bank.*

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## So Surreal: Behind the Masks

Neil Diamond,  
Joanne Robertson

CANADA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
88 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Resolution Pictures Inc.**  
Executive Producer: **Catherine Bainbridge, Ernest Webb**  
Producer: **Daniel Morin**  
Screenplay: **Neil Diamond, Joanne Robertson**  
Cinematographer: **Glauco Bermudez, Yoan Cart**  
Editor: **Rebecca Lessard**  
Sound: **Jesse Dubé-Smith, René Portillo Ruiz**  
Original Score: **Anaïs Larocque**  
With: **Neil Diamond, Bill Cranmer, Juanita Johnston, Chuna McIntyre, John McIntyre, Andrea Cranmer, Lou-ann Neel, Drew Michael, Pamyua, Donald Ellis, Sean Mooney, Fabrice Maze, Fabrice Flahutez, Marie Mauzé**

Illustrating a wildly fascinating connection between the work of some Surrealist artists and Indigenous ceremonial masks from the Yup'ik and Kwakwaka'wakw nations, *So Surreal: Behind the Masks* goes on a journey from Turtle Island to Europe to find them.

Cree director Neil Diamond (*Reel Injun*, TIFF '09), accompanied by a cadre of interested parties including cultural preservation workers and art experts, journeys across the ocean to try to locate the Raven Transformation Mask, an invaluable cultural item that the northwest coastal community has previously had no luck tracking down.

Using illustration and engaging storytelling, Diamond tells how masks like this left their homelands, through trade and sale but also through theft. The documentary traces them from one prolific collector to museums and an antique store in New York — into which the German Surrealist Max Ernst wandered. He subsequently introduced the masks to his artist friends André Breton and Roberto Matta, who, like him, became inspired.

With dreamy Surrealist imagery interspersed with Yup'ik dancers in masks, interviews with current-day carvers and art experts, and one particularly arresting scene in the Louvre with Yup'ik artist, storyteller, and dancer Chuna McIntyre, this film

masterfully weaves together the threads of cultural and artistic histories.

Part detective story and part illuminating history, *So Surreal: Behind the Masks* is a must-see for anyone who loves art, culture, and entertaining docs.

KELLY BOUTSALIS

**Neil Diamond** is a Cree filmmaker and photographer from Waskaganish, Quebec. He has co-directed the short documentaries *Inuit Cree Reconciliation* (13) and *Heavy Metal: A Mining Disaster in Northern Quebec* (14) and features including the Festival selection *Reel Injun* (09) and *Red Fever* (24). *So Surreal: Behind the Masks* (24) is his latest film.

**Joanne Robertson** is a Montreal-based director, researcher, and producer. She has collaborated with Neil Diamond on documentaries including *Cree Spoken Here* (03), *Dab Iyiyuu* (04-06) and *One More River* (05), and was a producer on *Red Fever* (24). *So Surreal: Behind the Masks* (24) is her latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Ernest Cole: Lost and Found

Raoul Peck

FRANCE, 2024

English

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

106 minutes | Colour and Black & White/DCP

Production Company: **VELVET FILM, VELVET FILM INC.,  
Arte France Cinéma**

Executive Producer: **Laurence Lascary**

Producer: **Tamara Rosenberg, Raoul Peck**

Screenplay: **Ernest Cole, Raoul Peck**

Cinematographer: **Raoul Peck, Wolfgang Held, Moses Tau**

Editor: **Alexandra Strauss**

Original Score: **Alexei Aïgui**

With: **Lakeith Stanfield, Leslie Matlaisane**

Canadian Distributor: **Photo Films**

US Distributor: **Magnolia Pictures**

International Sales Agent: **mk2 Films**

US Sales Agent: **Magnolia Pictures**

The South African photographer Ernest Cole won international acclaim for his 1967 book *House of Bondage*, which captured searing images of apartheid from a Black perspective. In his twenties, Cole was exiled in the United States and Europe, bearing witness to other varieties of racism. He lost his bearings and fell out of sync with the photo editors and arts foundations that had supplied his lines of support. He experienced homelessness and died from cancer in 1990, just days after Nelson Mandela was released from prison.

That might have been the end of his story until a revelation in 2017, when 60,000 unknown negatives of his work were discovered in a Swedish bank vault. Through all his adversity, Cole never lost his power to take stunning pictures, trying to see those who spend their lives going unseen. “It’s a matter of survival,” he wrote, “to steal every moment.”

The archive is overseen by Cole’s nephew, Leslie Matlaisane. He reached out to Raoul Peck, whose films *Lumumba* (TIFF ’00) and *I Am Not Your Negro* (TIFF ’16) explore oppression and resistance on a parallel track to Cole’s work. Peck draws upon Cole’s private writings to craft a script voiced by actor Lakeith Stanfield (*Judas and the Black Messiah*) that brings the photographer to life.

*Ernest Cole: Lost and Found* leads the way for a new generation to understand Cole’s work. The film won the Cannes Film Festival documentary prize, L’Œil d’or. And, finally, this year a new book of Cole’s long hidden photography has been published: *The True America*.

THOM POWERS

**Raoul Peck** is a director, screenwriter, and producer. He was born in Haiti and raised in Democratic Republic of Congo, the US, France, and Germany. He taught screenwriting and directing at NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts and was Chairman of La Fémis in Paris. He has also served as Haiti’s Minister of Culture. His films include the Festival Selections *Murder in Pacot* (14), the People’s Choice Documentary Award winner *I Am Not Your Negro* (16), and *Silver Dollar Road* (23).

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## Tata

Lina Vdovii, Radu Ciorniciuc

ROMANIA/GERMANY/NETHERLANDS, 2024  
Romanian, Italian  
WORLD PREMIERE  
82 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Manifest Film, Corso Film**  
Executive Producer: **Hanka Kastelicova, Tereza Bóna Keilová**  
Producer: **Monica Lăzurean-Gorgan**  
Screenplay: **Lina Vdovii, Radu Ciorniciuc**  
Cinematographer: **Radu Ciorniciuc, Lina Vdovii**  
With: **Pavel Vdovii, Lina Vdovii, Liudmila Vdovii, Radu Ciorniciuc**

International Sales Agent: **Autlook Filmsales**

Lina and her father have been estranged for many years. Like countless others, he left their impoverished homeland of Moldova in the 1990s for work abroad. Decades later, she is a journalist and settled with a good partner and a fine life in Romania. When Lina receives a video message from her father, showing bruises on his arms, she is conflicted about her feelings towards a man who is all but a stranger to her.

Travelling to Italy and equipping him with a hidden camera so that he may pursue justice, Lina — pregnant and with a pressing urge to confront the most painful parts of her past so as not to repeat them — finds herself on a parallel journey, uncovering a pattern of domestic violence that has plagued her family for generations. In understanding what was tolerated for survival and challenging what was accepted as normal when it comes to violence, *Tata* (meaning father in many languages including Romanian, which is the official language of Moldova) is an urgent and beautiful push to rewrite the narratives and traumas we inherit and — for our own good — must work to heal and release.

Co-directed by Lina Vdovii and Radu Ciorniciuc, who are partners and parents in real life, and filmed across Italy, Moldova, and Romania, *Tata* is a raw portrait of a

family locked in a relentless struggle against toxic masculinity and the tale of a daughter's poignant quest to break the cycle for herself, the next generation, and even for the one who hurt her.

DOROTA LECH

**Radu Ciorniciuc** is a Romanian filmmaker, cinematographer, and investigative journalist. He co-founded the independent media organization Casa Jurnalistului and has reported for outlets including *The Guardian* and Al Jazeera. He made his directorial debut with the documentary feature *Acasa, My Home* (20). *Tata* (24) is his latest film.

**Lina Vdovii** is a writer, journalist, and producer from Moldova who's now based in Romania. She's reported for outlets including *EUObserver* and *The Guardian*, and was the screenwriter for Radu Ciorniciuc's documentary *Acasa, My Home* (20). *Tata* (24) is her feature directorial debut.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## TÍMABUNDIÐ SKJÓL

### Temporary Shelter

Anastasiia Bortuali

ICELAND, 2024  
Ukrainian, Russian  
WORLD PREMIERE  
93 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: IRIS FILM EHF  
Executive Producer: Helgi Felixson  
Producer: Helgi Felixson  
Screenplay: Anastasiia Bortuali  
Cinematographer: Anastasiia Bortuali, Maja Adamska, Helgi Felixson, Olha Yevenko  
Editor: Dmitrii Novoseltsev, Titti Johnson  
Sound: Jacob Felixson  
Original Score: Eðvarð Egilsson  
With: Maksym Prystupa, Oleksandr Prystupa, Julia Poliatska, Svitlana Kuchma, Nikolay Alien, Roman Melnytskiy, Inna Holenko, Tymofei Kalinin, Oleksii Kovalov, Vladyslav Stohnushenko, Yana Stohnushenko, Oleksandr kuznietsov, Dmytro Voloshenko, Nataliia Zhyrnova, Zhenia Litvinenko

An Ukrainian father in Iceland drives through a wintery landscape at night to reunite with his wife at the airport. His chatty young son asks from the back seat: where did the universe come from? Their charming dialogue sets the tone as the film portrays Ukrainian refugees trying their best to grapple with impossible questions.

Filmmaker Anastasiia Bortuali is driven by personal experience. She's one of six million Ukrainians forced to flee from Russia's invasion of her country. She and her family wound up with thousands of others in Iceland, taking temporary shelter in a former NATO base. Despite her modest resources, she skilfully wields her camera to document the fragilities and strengths of the refugees around her as they split their attention between wartime reports from home and adapting to a new world.

While the film is rooted in Ukrainian experiences, many moments express something universal about being dropped into a new culture. We watch the recent arrivals strive to learn a foreign language, seek employment, and snatch moments of joy from adversity.

Bortuali captures epic images of northern lights and volcanic eruptions along with intimate moments of people processing trauma and giving each other comfort. As the war

continues with no end in sight, there will be countless angles for documentary films to take, from the front lines to corridors of power. Bortuali's perspective comes from a geographical distance, but gets straight to the heart of our times.

THOM POWERS

**Anastasiia Bortuali** is a screenwriter, director, and cinematographer who studied at Saint Petersburg State University of Film and Television. She was working on her diploma film when the war in Ukraine began and currently lives in Iceland. *Temporary Shelter* (24) is her latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY





## Cohabiter Living Together

Halima Elkhatabi

CANADA, 2024  
French  
WORLD PREMIERE  
75 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **National Film Board of Canada**  
Executive Producer: **Nathalie Cloutier**  
Producer: **Nathalie Cloutier**  
Screenplay: **Halima Elkhatabi**  
Cinematographer: **Josué Bertolino**  
Editor: **Yousra Benziane**

Canadian Distributor: **National Film Board of Canada**

Looking for the ideal roommate can feel like an epic quest. You have to sit down with one stranger after another trying to convince them it'd be fun to have you around for an unknown amount of time.

Halima Elkhatabi's documentary *Living Together* is all about the negotiation.

Simple in form but full of life, the film sets us down in various Montreal kitchens, living rooms, and dens to watch a wide range of people test the waters of compatibility, divulging things about themselves and their lives they might hesitate to share with friends or even lovers.

Eccentricities are pre-emptively shared ("I look like a raccoon in the morning, and you can't talk to me"), house rules are laid down ("We have lots of debates about the patriarchy"), and, in a few lucky cases, friendships begin to form. Elkhatabi — who also has a short film, *Fantas*, in this year's Festival — captures it all with an uncomplicated visual approach, some very clever editing rhythms, and a subtle sense of humour.

In moments that really show the kids being alright, the younger subjects are refreshingly frank about questions of sexuality and mental health, reframing potential vulnerabilities as statements of strength.

*Living Together* is about the risks inherent in putting your security (and possibly your sanity) in the hands of a stranger, and the glee that comes with making an immediate connection. In other words, it's about how to be human. Take notes.

NORM WILNER

**Halima Elkhatabi** is a writer, filmmaker, and producer who graduated from the Institut National de l'Image et du Son in Montreal. She has directed the short films *Nina* (15) which was part of TIFF's Canada's Top Ten Shorts, and *Fantas* (24), also screening at this year's Festival. *Living Together* (24) is her feature debut.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**AE INDIE FILMS**





## Your Tomorrow

Ali Weinstein

CANADA, 2024  
English, Somali, Portuguese, Chinese  
WORLD PREMIERE  
94 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Naiad Productions, Big Cedar Films**  
Executive Producer: **Robin Smith, Alexandra Roberts, Natasha Negrea**  
Producer: **Geoff Morrison, Ali Weinstein**  
Screenplay: **Ali Weinstein**  
Cinematographer: **Andrew Moir**  
Editor: **Caitlin Durlak**  
Sound: **Matt Beckett, Samuel Rodgers, Ali Weinstein**  
Original Score: **Joseph Shabason**

Canadian Distributor: **Blue Ice Docs**

It's unlikely there's a single Torontonian who doesn't have an opinion about Ontario Place. Either the massive waterfront park is a failed attraction, its historic buildings crumbling from years of neglect, or it's a still-vibrant green space that's been serving the public ever since it opened in 1971.

There's no middle ground, which became very obvious in recent years as the provincial government leased a large section of the park to the European spa company Therme and a group of concerned citizens formed Ontario Place for All in the hopes of stopping the redevelopment.

Ali Weinstein's *Your Tomorrow*, which takes its title from the park's own mission statement, captures the final year of Ontario Place as we know it, shifting between the protest actions and the efforts of staff to keep Ontario Place going for what's almost certainly its final hurrah. Through it all, ordinary folks keep showing up to enjoy the park, to walk its trails, enjoy the lake, or check on the tomatoes they're cultivating near the shore.

If this really is the end of Ontario Place, Weinstein captures it for posterity, demonstrating that the park was still doing exactly what it was designed to do for

Canadians, and anyone else who stopped by: give them a place to stand, and a place to grow.

NORM WILNER

Ali Weinstein is a documentary filmmaker and producer who holds an MFA in documentary media studies from Toronto Metropolitan University. She's the director of *Mermaids* (16) and *#Blessed* (20). *Your Tomorrow* (24) is her latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY







## La Libertad de Fierro The Freedom of Fierro

Santiago Esteinou

MEXICO/CANADA/GREECE, 2024

Spanish

WORLD PREMIERE

96 minutes | Colour and Black & White/DCP

Production Company: **Santiago Esteinou, IMCINE - Mexican Film Institute**

Executive Producer: **Sofía Maciel, Marco Gastine**

Producer: **Axel Pedraza, Santiago Esteinou,**

**Javier Campos López, José Miguel Díaz Salinas**

Screenplay: **Santiago Esteinou, Javier Campos López**

Cinematographer: **Axel Pedraza (AMC)**

Editor: **Javier Campos López (AMEE)**

Sound: **Axel Muñoz Barba, Liliana Villaseñor,**

**Pablo Tamez, Pablo Cruz Villalba, Misael Hernández,**

**Pablo Fernández**

Original Score: **Galo Durán**

With: **César Fierro**

At 63, Mexican-born César Fierro has just become a free man, and must rebuild his life after being wrongfully convicted and sentenced to death in Texas. Fierro spent 40 years in the Polunsky Unit, a “super-max” prison that keeps inmates in isolation for decades, depriving them of contact with other human beings.

Santiago Esteinou’s latest documentary is a sequel to his 2014 TIFF selection, *The Years of Fierro*. In this carefully observed film, Esteinou chronicles Fierro’s transition back to freedom in Mexico City and the unforeseen challenges he encounters along the way, from catching up with everyday technology to assuming a new relationship with self-accountability.

Fierro’s unexpected release during the pandemic poses difficulties to the filmmaking team, and they use these allegorically. As he emerges from isolated confinement, Fierro enters a society under lockdown, with Esteinou assuming the role of a new sort of guard. Through this lens, the documentary delves into the true essence of freedom and critiques the time, opportunities, and skills lost to incarceration.

In their conversations, Fierro and Esteinou discuss not only the harrowing abuses Fierro endured, but also the dreams

he cherished, and how he maintained his mental and physical commitment to survival.

The audience accompanies Fierro on his journey, observing his often painful transition while being given the fuel to reconsider rights most of us take for granted.

DIANA CADAVID

**Santiago Esteinou** is a Mexico City-based documentary filmmaker and producer. He studied cinematography at Mexico’s Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica and Temple University in Philadelphia. He’s the writer and director of films including *The Years of Fierro* (14) and *Muki Sopalirili Aligué Gawichí Nirúgame* (23). *The Freedom of Fierro* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**AE INDIE FILMS**





## Soudan, souviens-toi Sudan, remember us

Hind Meddeb

FRANCE/TUNISIA/QATAR, 2024  
Arabic, English  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
76 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Echo Films, Blue Train Films,  
My Way Productions Tounès  
Producer: Abel Nahmias, Michel Zana, Alice Ormières,  
Taoufik Guiga  
Screenplay: Hind Meddeb  
Cinematographer: Hind Meddeb  
Editor: Gladys Joujou  
Sound: Damien Tronchot, Hind Meddeb  
With: Shajane Suliman, Ahmed Muzamil, Maha Elfaki,  
Khatab Ahmed

In April 2019, the Paris-based filmmaker Hind Meddeb travelled to Sudan's capital, Khartoum, at a jubilant moment in the country's history. The longtime dictator Omar Al-Bashir had recently been overthrown after a 30-year regime marked by genocidal violence in Darfur. Meddeb began filming with young activists rallying for a citizen's government by staging sit-ins, making music, reciting poetry, and painting murals. Their hopes are expressed in signs that read "Sudan free from tribalism" and "religious pluralism."

For Meddeb, who has family roots in Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria, the movement brings to mind the aspirations of her late father: "the dream of an Arab country with its customs shaken up by a feminist revolution." She captures demonstrations going late into the night with a celebratory atmosphere. The activists are defiant against backlash. "Bullets don't kill," says one young man. "What kills is people's silence."

*Sudan, remember us* enshrines this moment, but also documents the descent into war that followed. Today, Sudan is engulfed in violence between internal factions in collusion with external arms suppliers driven to gain control over the country's wealth of minerals. The war has

displaced more than 8 million people and killed over 14,000, but is largely ignored by international news.

No single film can explain a nation's complex history or politics. Instead, Meddeb simply bears witness to courageous people receiving scant coverage, just as she did in her portrait of a Darfur refugee in *Paris Stalingrad* (TIFF '19). Meddeb is always attuned to the power of language. Dictators may come and go, but as one activist asserts, "poems are eternal."

THOM POWERS

**Hind Meddeb** is a Paris-based filmmaker who grew up between France, Morocco, and Tunisia. She has directed the documentaries *De Casa au paradis* (08), *Electro Chaabi* (13), *Tunisia Clash* (16), and *Paris Stalingrad* (19), which screened at the Festival. *Sudan, remember us* (24) is her latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**A&E INDIE FILMS**



## Wishing on a Star

Peter Kerekes

ITALY/SLOVAKIA/CZECH REPUBLIC/  
AUSTRIA/CROATIA, 2024  
Italian  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
99 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Videomante, Kerekesfilm, Artcam Films, Mischief Films, Restart  
Producer: Erica Barbiani, Lucia Candelpergher, Peter Kerekes, Ralph Wieser, Vit Schmarc, Vanja Jambrović, Stefano Centini  
Screenplay: Erica Barbiani, Peter Kerekes  
Cinematographer: Martin Kollar  
Editor: Marek Šulík  
Sound: Michal Gábor  
Original Score: Lucia Chut'ková  
With: Luciana de Leoni d'Aspardo, Valentina Angeli, Alessandra Fornasier, Barbara Lutman, Giovanni Rugo, Adriana Vangone, Giuliana Vangone

International Sales Agent: Films Boutique

Whether or not you believe in astrology, odds are you've sneaked a peak at your horoscope at least once or twice.

Inside a crumbling castle called Aiello del Friuli, situated in a quaint town not too far from the Venetian Lagoon, lives 63-year-old Luciana de Leoni d'Aspardo, a Neapolitan astrologer with a very special technique.

For their wishes to come true, all Luciana's clients – women looking for love, confused teens, and entrepreneurs on the verge of mental breakdowns, among others – need to do is take a special trip on their birthdays in order to be reborn under a new sky. By triangulating latitudes, longitudes, and ephemerides on maps, the destination – whether Beirut, Cres, or Taipei – is chosen by Luciana, whose role is partly that of an esoteric strategist and partly that of a travel agent (with her eye on the best offers available on Skyscanner). Meanwhile, the aging astrologer has her own struggles, doubts, and desires and, like all of us, wishes of her own.

For his sixth feature film, which is full of star-crossed charm and earthly delights, veteran filmmaker and master of the hybrid form Peter Kerekes brilliantly combines the cinematic feel of a fiction film with cleverly captured real emotions from real people.

With an emphasis on coincidence, which plays as significant a role in his film as it does in life, *Wishing on a Star* is a journey into the human soul, the cosmos, and beyond.

DOROTA LECH

Peter Kerekes is a director and producer who was born in Košice, Slovakia. His credits as director include *Cooking History* (09), *Velvet Terrorists* (13), and *107 Mothers* (21). *Wishing on a Star* (24) is his latest film.

PROGRAMME PRESENTED BY

**AE INDIE FILMS**



The background features several overlapping, curved shapes in bright yellow and light pink, set against a white background. The shapes are smooth and organic, creating a modern, abstract aesthetic.

# **WAVELENGTHS**



## Qing Chun (Ku) Youth (Hard Times)

Wang Bing

FRANCE/LUXEMBOURG/NETHERLANDS, 2024  
Mandarin  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
226 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: House on Fire, Gladys Glover,  
CS Production, Les Films fauves, Volya Films  
Executive Producer: Yang Wang  
Producer: Sonia Buchman, Mao Hui,  
Nicolas R. de la Mothe, Vincent Wang  
Cinematographer: Shan Xiaohui, Song Yang, Ding Bihan,  
Liu Xianhui, Maeda Yoshitaka, Wang Bing  
Editor: Dominique Auvray, Xu Bingyuan  
Sound: Ranko Paukovic

US Distributor: Icarus Films  
International Sales Agent: Pyramide International

*Youth (Hard Times)* is the second chapter of Wang Bing's monumental opus on the diminished youth of China, who work seemingly endless hours and have traded life for financial exploitation. Making low wages, they view earning money as their sole horizon.

Here, Wang Bing broadens his exploration of lives in the garment district from the cramped, overcrowded workshops of Zhili to the Yangtze Delta region's unique and complex economy. Drawing around 300,000 workers annually from China's poorest regions, the local textile industry is made up of thousands of small, self-managed individual or family enterprises. This system bypasses traditional banking and contrasts sharply with China's formerly state-run economy. But it also creates a work environment beyond legal control, allowing for unchecked abuses.

These are hard times for Xu Wanxiang, who can't find his notebook, without which his boss refuses to pay him; for Hu Siwen, with his experiences of police brutality; and for Fu Yun, who constantly makes mistakes and has to redo her work. We follow the protagonists through these difficulties, rooting for them, anxious to know what will be their destinies. Zhili's system has left its

young workers at the mercy of bosses made ruthless by a cyclical system of small loans bordering on usury, impoverishing both employers and workers.

Throughout, Wang Bing's impassive gaze engages us in a tactile experience of life in the workshops filled with noise, pollution, and abuse, delivering an epic, unsparing — yet devoid of miserabilism — portrait of the indomitable spirit of youth.

GIOVANNA FULVI

**Wang Bing** was born in Xi'an, China, and lives in Paris. He studied photography and cinema at the Beijing Film Academy. His documentaries that have played the Festival include *West of the Tracks* (03), *The Ditch* (10), *Ta'ang* (16), *Dead Souls* (18), and *Youth (Spring)* (23). *Youth (Hard Times)* (24) and the third installment of the series, *Youth (Homecoming)* (24), also playing the Festival, are his latest films.

### Luminaries

The latest from the world's most influential art-house filmmakers. A designated subsection of films within Centrepiece, Wavelengths, and TIFF Docs sections.





## Qing Chun (Gui) Youth (Homecoming)

Wang Bing

FRANCE/LUXEMBOURG/NETHERLANDS, 2024  
Mandarin  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
152 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: House on Fire, Gladys Glover,  
CS Production, Les Films fauves, Volya Films  
Executive Producer: Yang Wang  
Producer: Sonia Buchman, Mao Hui,  
Nicolas R. de la Mothe, Vincent Wang  
Cinematographer: Liu Xianhui, Song Yang, Ding Bihan,  
Shan Xiaohui, Maeda Yoshitaka, Wang Bing  
Editor: Dominique Auvray, Xu Bingyuan  
Sound: Ranko Paukovic

US Distributor: Icarus Films  
International Sales Agent: Pyramide International

The third and final chapter of Wang Bing's latest opus, *Youth (Homecoming)*, continues his exploration of China's socio-economic landscape, solidifying his reputation as one of the greatest artists of our time.

The garment industry in Zhili in the Yangtze Delta region is seasonal. Production usually halts in February and resumes in July. It's winter now, and the workshops are nearly deserted. The few remaining workers are desperate to get paid so they can buy their tickets to travel back home and spend the Lunar New Year festivities with their families. It's time for us to follow them as they board trains crammed with people, or travel in buses along perilously icy mountain roads, heading upriver to their home villages in Anhui or Yunnan.

With a sense of relief, we leave the maze of claustrophobic workshops and gradually discover the families — and the natural environments — that the young workers left behind. It's a joy to see them celebrate the New Year and perform prosperity rituals amid bursts of fireworks, far from the droning hum of the sewing machines. For some, homecoming also marks the occasion to get married, as it does for Fang Lingping, whose newlywed husband, a former IT specialist, will follow her to Zhili after the ceremony.

*Youth* stands as a significant contribution to contemporary documentary cinema, resonating with both heart and intellect. Wang Bing's unwavering commitment to his subjects lets him capture the essence of their lived experiences in a film that is an unprecedented record of the young labour force that fuels the global economy.

GIOVANNA FULVI

**Wang Bing** was born in Xi'an, China, and lives in Paris. He studied photography and cinema at the Beijing Film Academy. His documentaries that have played the Festival include *West of the Tracks* (03), *The Ditch* (10), *Ta'ang* (16), *Dead Souls* (18), and *Youth (Spring)* (23). *Youth (Homecoming)* (24) and the second installment of the series, *Youth (Hard Times)* (24), also playing the Festival, are his latest films.

### Luminaries

The latest from the world's most influential art-house filmmakers. A designated subsection of films within Centrepiece, Wavelengths, and TIFF Docs sections.



## Viet and Nam

Trương Minh Quý

PHILIPPINES/SINGAPORE/FRANCE/  
NETHERLANDS/ITALY/GERMANY/  
VIETNAM, 2024

Vietnamese

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

129 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Epicmedia Productions,  
Deuxième Ligne Films, E&W Films, An Original Picture,  
Volos Films, Scarlet Visions

Producer: Brad Liew, Bianca Balbuena

Screenplay: Trương Minh Quý

Cinematographer: Son Doan

Editor: Félix Rehm

Production Designer: Trung Đạo Trương

Costume Designer: Nguyễn Phương Thảo

Sound: Vincent Villa

Principal Cast: Phạm Thanh Hải, Đào Duy Bảo Định

Canadian Distributor: Strand Releasing

US Distributor: Strand Releasing

International Sales Agent: Pyramide International

A group of soot-covered men stand chest to chest as they descend on a shabby lift down to near-complete darkness, where they toil away like machines. Though the mine feels like a space of confinement at first, it's a place of liberty for Viet and Nam. Here, the pair can freely express their romantic feelings in intimacy. But regrettably, the young men are due to part as Nam prepares to move abroad for better opportunities. Fortunately, there is some time before they separate. First, Nam intends to accompany his mother who is set on finding the remains of Nam's father, who never returned from the war in the 1970s.

Set during a time of change and healing in the aughts, the aftermath of war haunts Việt and Nam while shaping their futures. Their exchanges of bodily secretions seem to merge them into one being, while their uncanny resemblance visually mirrors the pain, longing, and uncertainty of the past, present, and future.

Just before its premiere at Cannes, *Viet and Nam* was banned by Vietnam's Cinema Department for its "gloomy, deadlocked, and negative view" of the country. Although it tells a story specific to the place and its history, the film's ambiguity and artistic approach render it an emotional, universal, and timeless exploration of the senses.

Beautifully shot on 16mm by filmmaker Trương Minh Quý, *Viet and Nam* is like panning for gold. Its true value surfaces after you dig and let the water wash away the dirt.

JUNE KIM

Trương Minh Quý is a filmmaker from Buon Ma Thuot in the central highlands of Vietnam. He is an alumnus of the 2012 Asian Film Academy and the 2016 Berlinale Talents. His directorial credits include *The Tree House* (19) and *Les Attendants* (21). *Viet and Nam* (24) is his latest film.





## exergue - on documenta 14

Dimitris Athiridis

GREECE, 2024  
English  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
848 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Faliro House Productions**  
Executive Producer: **Christos V. Konstantakopoulos, Andreas Zoupanos Kritikos, Caroline von Kühn**  
Producer: **Dimitris Athiridis, Yorgos Tsourgiannis, Ioanna Kontogeorgou**  
Screenplay: **Dimitris Athiridis**  
Cinematographer: **Dimitris Athiridis**  
Editor: **Dimitris Athiridis, Vanessa Zeri, Giorgos Kravaritis**  
Sound: **Dimitris Athiridis, Vanessa Zeri**  
Original Score: **Ted Regklis**

International Sales Agent: **Kino Rebelde**  
US Sales Agent: **Kino Rebelde**

Hosted every five years in the German city of Kassel since 1955, *documenta* is one of the pre-eminent international exhibitions of contemporary art, though recent events have posed existential threats to its future. In 2013, Polish curator Adam Szymczyk was appointed artistic director of the 14th edition, sharing the title “Learning from Athens” and a concept that split the event with the Greek capital – then still in the throes of EU-mandated austerity. Bold and visionary, *documenta 14* also proved to be complex, controversial, and costly.

For two years leading to its presentation, Greek documentary filmmaker Dimitris Athiridis was granted near total access to the behind-the-scenes labour of Szymczyk and his team (including Paul B. Preciado, director of TIFF ’23’s *Orlando, My Political Biography*, and 2019 and 2022 Toronto Biennial Senior Curator Candice Hopkins), as they tirelessly and passionately worked to realize an experimental mega-exhibition driven by themes of colonialism, indigeneity, and migration.

Structured into 14 compulsively watchable episodes (screening over three consecutive days), *exergue - on documenta 14* follows artist studio visits, negotiations with partners, historical excavations, and the

rising ideological tension between creative expression and economic demands. With Athiridis’s fly-on-the-wall approach, both an astonishing transparency and suspense attend the proceedings, especially when things get messy. Szymczyk cuts a fascinating figure in his unbounded determination to question the value and limits of political art within a publicly funded institution.

Humble in its construction and less daunting than its 840-minute runtime might suggest, *exergue* is nonetheless an epic, unprecedented, and ultimately non-judgemental record, provoking debates about efforts to pursue and advance art at the highest level within increasingly conservative contexts.

ANDRÉA PICARD

**Dimitris Athiridis** is a documentary filmmaker and photographer from Thessaloniki, Greece. His film credits include *T 4 Trouble and the Self Admiration Society* (09) and *One Step Ahead* (12). *exergue - on documenta 14* (24) is his latest film.



## Drama 1882

Wael Shawky

EGYPT, 2024  
Arabic  
FESTIVAL PREMIERE  
45 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: Wael Shawky, MASS Alexandria, Sfeir-Semler Gallery, Lisson Gallery, Lia Rumma Gallery, Barakat Gallery

Executive Producer: Wael Shawky, Osama Al-Hawary

Producer: Wael Shawky, Mark Lotfy

Screenplay: Wael Shawky

Cinematographer: Wael Shawky, Mina Nabil

Editor: Mark Lotfy

Production Designer: Wael Shawky

Costume Designer: Wael Shawky, Nahla Morsy

Sound: Wael Shawky, Michael Fawzy

Original Score: Wael Shawky

Principal Cast: Wael Shawky

One of the leading Egyptian artists of his generation, Wael Shawky has repeatedly employed elements of performance, sculpture, and film to interrogate key moments and attendant gaps in his region's history, including the acclaimed *Cabaret Crusades* series (2010–2015). His latest triumph, a luminous, mesmerizing highlight of this year's Venice Biennale, *Drama 1882* (re) stages a conflict laden with treason and exploitation as a libretto across eight chapters and 45 hypnotic minutes.

Centred on the intrigue of the self-made Colonel Ahmed Urabi and his efforts to oppose British imperialists, the film explores not just the dynamics between competing armies, but among the Egyptian soldiers themselves, as well as the brutality those with power are willing to exert to maintain their hold.

A fraught rebellion preceded by a mythic café fight, the Urabi uprising of 1879 to 1882 was crushed, resulting in the colonial occupation of Egypt until 1956. With a plot that extends from Cairo to Malta, but all shot on an Alexandrian sound stage designed like a painting come to life, the piece — directed, choreographed, and composed by Shawky himself — invokes questions of colonialism, collaboration, resistance, narrative, and history.

Sung entirely in classical Arabic by a cast of 150 professionals and amateurs, with sensational costumes and expressionist sets, photography, and colours — so much glorious pink — *Drama 1882* is equally transfixing and timely.

Originally staged as a musical play, the filmed rendition not only explores notions of revisionist history and cautions about the futility of war, but also probes the implications of drama itself, which, according to Shawky, “conjures a sense of entertainment, of catastrophe, and our inherent doubt in history.”

ANDRÉA PICARD & JESSE CUMMING

**Wael Shawky** is an Egyptian artist known for the *Cabaret Crusades* film trilogy (10–15). His art has been exhibited widely, including at the Louvre Abu Dhabi, MoMA in New York, and the 2013 Kino der Kunst in Munich. He won the inaugural Mario Merz Prize (2015) and the Award for Filmic Oeuvre (2013). He has written and directed *I am Hymns of the New Temples* (23). *Drama 1882* (24) is his latest film.





## Pepe

Nelson Carlo de los Santos Arias

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC/GERMANY/  
FRANCE/NAMIBIA, 2024

Spanish, Afrikaans, German, Mbukushu  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

123 minutes | Colour and Black & White/DCP

Production Company: Monte & Culebra

Producer: Tanya Valette, Pablo Lozano,

Nelson Carlo de los Santos Arias

Screenplay: Nelson Carlo de los Santos Arias

Cinematographer: Roman Lechapelier, Camilo Soratti,

Nelson Carlo de los Santos Arias

Animator: Manuel Barenboim, Ovni Vaca, Cuadra Post

Editor: Nelson Carlo de los Santos Arias

Production Designer: Daniel Rincón Zapata,

Melania Freires

Costume Designer: Erick Paredes Machado,

Laura Guerrero

Sound: Nahuel Palenque,

Nelson Carlo de los Santos Arias

Original Score: Nelson Carlo de los Santos Arias

Principal Cast: Jhon Narváez, Matjila Fareed,

Harmony Ahalwa, Shifature Faustinus,

Jorge Puntillón García, Sor María Ríos

The deep voice guiding the latest film by inventive Dominican filmmaker Nelson Carlo de los Santos Arias (*Santa Teresa and Other Stories*, TIFF '15 and *Cocote*, TIFF '17) claims to belong to a hippopotamus — or rather, the ghost of one. That this hippo may have belonged to notorious Colombian drug lord Pablo Escobar, whose lavish displays of opulence included plans for a private zoo of exotic species, opens onto wider, yet concomitant themes of identity, migration, and troubling legacies.

The first and last hippopotamus killed in the Americas, the beautiful beast nicknamed Pepe by the media was controversially shot by authorities in Colombia after it was deemed an invasive and dangerous threat to the community. Elliptical and exploratory (and not a little gonzo!) — executed with the filmmaker's signature mix of styles incorporating 16mm, digital, black and white, colour, archival invocations, and more — *Pepe* traces the creature's destabilizing journey. Moving from Southern Africa to South America, with multiple asides and diversions, the film's migratory movements and observations are interwoven with several oral histories — many imbued with resistance to violence.

Exhuming facts, mythologies, lore, even hippo consciousness, *Pepe* is cinema of the

imagination, while at the same time evoking questions of forced movement — both historic and contemporary — the ramifications of colonialism, disrupted ecosystems, and the interconnectedness of human and animal worlds. Its wraithlike musings seem unaware of time's constructs, yet its story is utterly remarkable. Derved winner of the Silver Bear for Best Director at this year's Berlin Film Festival, de los Santos Arias continues to probe the possibilities of cinematic language.

ANDRÉA PICARD

Nelson Carlo de los Santos Arias was born in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. He studied at the Edinburgh School of Art and the California Institute of the Arts. His films include the shorts *Le Dernier des bonbons* (11) and *Lullabies* (14), and the features *You Look Like a Carriage That Not Even the Oxen Can Stop* (13) and the Festival selections *Santa Teresa and Other Stories* (15) and *Cocote* (17). *Pepe* (24) is his latest film.



## The Damned

Roberto Minervini

ITALY/USA/BELGIUM, 2024  
English  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
88 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: Okta Film, Pulpa Film, Rai Cinema, Michigan Films

Executive Producer: Teresa Mannino, Jean-Alexandre Luciani, Annette Fausboll

Producer: Paolo Benzi, Denise Ping Lee, Roberto Minervini, Alice Lemaire, Sébastien Andres

Screenplay: Roberto Minervini

Cinematographer: Carlos Alfonso Corral

Editor: Marie-Hélène Dozo

Production Designer: Denise Ping Lee

Sound: Bernat Fortiana Chico

Original Score: Carlos Alfonso Corral

Principal Cast: Jeremiah Knupp, René W. Solomon, Cuyler Ballanger, Noah Carlson, Tim Carlson

International Sales Agent: Les Films du Losange

In a moment where war seems to permeate every element of our lives, celebrated Italian-born, American-based filmmaker Roberto Minervini upends both the historical war genre and the western with a quiet and spare approach, at once philosophical and radically humane. Informed by his previous films made in the American South, where he lived for a decade — in which dramatized and observational elements are compellingly entangled — *The Damned* embeds itself within a troupe of volunteer Union soldiers dispatched by the US Army to the western territories during the winter of 1862. A pivotal year for the gold rush as well as the ongoing Civil War, these uncharted borderlands were rife with historical significance, promise, and unseen menace.

Shot in the wilds of Montana with a small ensemble of non-professional actors — many cast from within the vicinity — whose extemporized dialogue largely stems from personal experience, *The Damned* portrays war as a profoundly intimate and disorienting journey. Stripping conflict to its essence, with lonely, anxiety-inducing stretches of waiting to kill or be killed set against great, gorgeous expanses, Minervini captures with stunning immediacy an intense sense of physicality and the attendant psychological strain.

From their largely marginal positions, these intergenerational mercenaries enter into deep reflection about their mission, raising questions about religion, masculinity, individual hopes, and governance with disarming candour and bracing contemporaneity. While *The Damned's* narrative framework is rooted in a major turning point in American history, its meditation on nation-building and human agency, as well as its uncanny and ruptured sense of time, speak to our loaded present.

ANDRÉA PICARD

**Roberto Minervini** was born in Italy and holds a master's in media studies from the New School in New York. He has directed films including *The Passage* (11), *Low Tide* (12) and the documentaries and Festival selections *Stop the Pounding Heart* (13), *The Other Side* (15), and *What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire?* (18). *The Damned* (24) is his latest film.





## Monólogo Colectivo Collective Monologue

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Jessica Sarah Rinland

ARGENTINA/UNITED KINGDOM, 2024  
Spanish  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
104 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: Trapecio Cine,  
Jessica Sarah Rinland  
Executive Producer: Melanie Schapiro  
Producer: Melanie Schapiro, Jessica Sarah Rinland  
Screenplay: Jessica Sarah Rinland  
Cinematographer: Jessica Sarah Rinland  
Editor: Jessica Sarah Rinland  
Sound: Philippe Ciompi  
Principal Cast: Macarena Santa María Lloyd,  
María Jose Micale, Alicia Delgado, Juanita,  
Franco Elio Itri

While most visitors to a zoo are assumed to leave with a greater understanding of the animals housed within, such spaces can reveal just as much about the humans who design and manage them. With *Collective Monologue*, Wavelengths alumna Jessica Sarah Rinland pursues her ongoing concerns with the relationship between humans and the natural world — particularly as mediated by institutions. At the film's core are the animals and staff in various Argentinian zoos and shelters — including the Buenos Aires Ecopark, established as a zoo in the late 19th century — capturing not just tender moments of interspecies interaction but also administrative and infrastructural details. Zookeeper Maca provides around-the-clock dedication to the animals enclosed in one of these increasingly polemical spaces, a job she has held for over 20 years, while forming meaningful bonds transcendent of language and the imagined boundaries between humans and animals.

Beyond its fascinating portrayal of interspecies care, *Collective Monologue* features remarkable 16mm footage of the resident creatures — and some amazing surveillance camera glimpses of nocturnal anteaters — as well as archival detours, which reveal a parallel inquiry into questions of labour,

gender, and colonial conquest over the natural world. With a form that is intricate and precise, while pleasingly fragmented and open in construction, Rinland's hypnotic approach invites questions about how we not only look at animals, but also share the world with them.

ANDRÉA PICARD

Jessica Sarah Rinland is an Argentine-British filmmaker who also holds a Master of Science from MIT. She has directed many short films, including the Festival selection *Puerta a puerta* (22) and the feature *Those That, at a Distance, Resemble Another* (19), which also played the Festival. *Collective Monologue* (24) is her latest film.



## The Ballad of Suzanne Césaire

Madeleine Hunt-Ehrlich

USA, 2024  
English, French  
CANADIAN PREMIERE  
75 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Madame Negritude**  
Producer: **Sophie Luo, Mike Ryan**  
Screenplay: **Madeleine Hunt-Ehrlich, Marina Magloire**  
Cinematographer: **Alex Ashe**  
Editor: **Emily Packer, Nicole Otero**  
Production Designer: **Terry Watson**  
Costume Designer: **Mumbi O'Brien**  
Sound: **Travis Coleman, Andrew Tracy**  
Original Score: **Sabine McCalla**  
Principal Cast: **Zita Hanrot, Motell Foster, Josué Gutierrez, Reese Antoinette, Melisa Lopez**

Following a number of captivating shorts that have variously explored questions of history, the creative process, and the inner worlds of Black women, *The Ballad of Suzanne Césaire* is the sumptuous, beguiling feature debut from US artist and filmmaker Madeleine Hunt-Ehrlich.

Born in Martinique, Suzanne Césaire was an anti-colonialist activist and writer who contributed — alongside her husband Aimé Césaire — to the Négritude movement, and whose limited but forceful writings resonate to the present day. Less biopic than critical deconstruction and inviting reverie, Hunt-Ehrlich's evocations of the words and life of Suzanne Césaire provoke rich and fragmentary reflections on art, love, politics, and even the nature of filmmaking.

As a group of actors gather to embody the roles of Suzanne (Zita Hanrot), Aimé (Motell Foster), and their famed Surrealist friend André Breton (Josué Gutierrez) who was inspired by her work, vintage-tinged staged sequences bleed into reflexive considerations about the essence of Suzanne's writing, her reputation, her desires, and her intersectional identity. That there are several interpretations of Suzanne is indicative of her prismatic and elusive legacy.

Shot on lush 16mm, with equally hypnotic sound and music, *The Ballad of Suzanne Césaire* is part of a multifaceted project that has been presented in gallery contexts — including, most recently, the 2024 Whitney Biennial — offering at once a tropical romance, a political treatise, a work of literary analysis and recuperation, and a manifesto.

ANDRÉA PICARD

**Madeleine Hunt-Ehrlich** is a Brooklyn-based visual artist and filmmaker. Her work has been exhibited at the Guggenheim Museum, the Tate Modern, and the Whitney Museum of Art. She has directed short films including *Spit on the Broom* (19) and *Conspiracy* (22). *The Ballad of Suzanne Césaire* (24) is her feature debut.





## Moattar Binanaa Perfumed with Mint

Muhammed Hamdy

EGYPT/FRANCE/TUNISIA/QATAR, 2024

Arabic

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

111 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Supernova Films**

Producer: **Fares Ladjimi**

Screenplay: **Muhammed Hamdy**

Cinematographer: **Muhammed Hamdy**

Editor: **Thomas Glaser**

Production Designer: **Ammar Abo Bakr**

Sound: **Mostafa Shaaban, Antonin Dalmasso,**

**Aymeric Dupas**

Principal Cast: **Alaa El Din Hamada, Mahdy Abo Bahat,**

**Abdo Zin Eldin, Hatem Emam Moustafa**

International Sales Agent: **REASON8**

Once alive with the promise of change, Muhammed Hamdy's Cairo is a sweet-smelling city of ghosts. The Emmy-winning Egyptian cinematographer of *The Square* (TIFF '13 winner of the People's Choice Documentary Award), makes his directorial debut with a dark and formally rich poetic ode to the walking dead and those cursed to remember them.

Bahaa (Alaa El Din Hamada), a broken-hearted physician, sits in a daze awaiting his next patient when his friend Mahdy (Mahdy Abo Bahat) appears. Sprouting mint leaves peek out from behind his curls as he explains to the doctor that smoking hashish is the only thing that stops it from growing. If left unattended the sprouts fortify into full-blown plants, their aroma beckoning to the moving shadows that chase people throughout the city's deteriorating streets and into forsaken buildings. Now that Mahdy's stash has run out, he'll have nowhere to hide. The two men together drift in and out of haunted homes, freshly scented, with last rites and lingering fears, looking for one more reprieve with their former companions, unprepared for what they might find.

The work of a skilled painter with light and shadow, *Perfumed with Mint* is thick with atmosphere and allegory marking a

fascinating new voice in African and Arab cinema. Sedated and nearly non-narrative, Hamdy's film captures the tranquilized paranoia of a wounded generation tormented by what they cannot forget and what they refuse to surrender.

NATALEAH HUNTER-YOUNG

**Muhammed Hamdy** is a filmmaker, director of photography, and producer from Cairo. He was a cinematographer on *The Square* (13), which played the Festival, *We Are the Giant* (14), and *Olmo and the Seagull* (15). *Perfumed with Mint* (24) is his directorial debut.



## Lázaro de noche Lázaro at Night

Nicolás Pereda

CANADA/MEXICO, 2024  
Spanish  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
76 minutes | Colour/DCP

Producer: Nicolás Pereda  
Screenplay: Nicolás Pereda  
Cinematographer: Nicolás Pereda  
Editor: Nicolás Pereda  
Sound: Pablo Cervera  
Original Score: Natalia Pérez Turner, Gonzalo Gutiérrez,  
Leonardo Chávez  
Principal Cast: Lázaro G. Rodríguez, Luisa Pardo,  
Francisco Barreiro, Teresita Sánchez, Gabriel Nuncio,  
Clarissa Malheiros

International Sales Agent: Kino Rebelde  
US Sales Agent: Kino Rebelde

Prolific Mexican Canadian auteur Nicolás Pereda delivers a sly, pleasurable, and provocative meditation on desire as manifested through roles, identity, and representation, working with an inspired efficiency of scale.

Continuing his long-standing and evolving collaboration with the Mexican theatre collective Lagartijas Tiradas al Sol (founded by Luisa Pardo and Gabino Rodríguez, a.k.a. Lázaro Rodríguez), the film follows a trio of forty-something friends in Mexico City enmeshed in a tepid yet tender love triangle. As Lázaro, Luisa, and Francisco undertake auditions for a coveted role in the same film, the project director's unorthodox casting methods lead the friends and lovers to question their aspirations and the roles they inhabit in their daily lives. Lázaro has, after all, changed his name, much to the irritation of his mother (Pereda regular Teresita Sánchez).

Boundaries further blur at a dinner party when a voice from the past points to an unexpected, wondrous fissure, and a fantastical twist. Perhaps with some inspiration from Argentinean literary avant-gardist César Aira and his "flight forward" writing technique, *Lázaro at Night* moves in mysterious ways, from disaffection to enchantment to fabulation, but always with

a deft touch. A summoned Aladdin is a fine (and funny) example of humility in a world of plenty (with Tupperware). For Pereda, there is nothing trivial about the seemingly insignificant, and, to quote from Aira, "The gifts of magic are enjoyed in a reality, in a less magical world, an everyday reality. Perhaps, if we were to prolong enchantment, we would lose all the pleasure of its benefit."

ANDRÉA PICARD

Nicolás Pereda was born in Mexico City and holds an MFA in film from York University in Toronto. His films include the features *Perpetuum Mobile* (09), *Summer of Goliath* (10), *Greatest Hits* (12), *Killing Strangers* (13), *The Absent* (14), *Minotaur* (15), *My Skin*, *Luminous* (19), and *Fauna* (20) all of which have played the Festival. *Lázaro de noche* (24) is his latest film.





## Grand Tour

Miguel Gomes

PORTUGAL/ITALY/France/GERMANY/  
JAPAN/CHINA, 2024

Portuguese

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

129 minutes | Colour/Black & White/DCP

Production Company: Vivo Film, Uma Pedra no Sapato,

Shellac Films, Cinéma Defacto

Executive Producer: João Miller Guerra

Producer: Filipa Reis

Screenplay: Mariana Ricardo, Telmo Churro,

Maureen Fazendeiro, Miguel Gomes

Cinematographer: Rui Poças, Sayombhu Mukdeepram,

Gui Liang

Editor: Telmo Churro, Pedro Filipe Marques

Production Designer: Thales Junqueira, Marcos Pedroso

Costume Designer: Sílvia Grabowski

Sound: Vasco Pimentel, Li Kelan

Principal Cast: Crista Alfaiate, Gonçalo Waddington,

Cláudio da Silva, Lang Khê Tran

Canadian Distributor: MUBI

US Distributor: MUBI

International Sales Agent: The Match Factory

US Sales Agent: The Match Factory

Awash in romantic melancholia and feverish longing, *Grand Tour* is the latest feature by Portuguese auteur and TIFF favourite Miguel Gomes (*Tabu*, TIFF '12; *Arabian Nights*, TIFF '15; *The Tsugua Diaries*, with Maureen Fazendeiro, TIFF '21). The film's titular expedition begins in 1917 in the Burmese capital of Rangoon, where downbeat British diplomat Edward (Gonçalo Waddington) is due to meet his fiancée Molly (Crista Alfaiate), arriving after a protracted, long-distance betrothal. Instead, he panics and flees, hopping a ship to Singapore and setting off a series of Asian peregrinations, each increasingly laden with doubt, hangovers, and existential anguish. Meanwhile, the more sanguine Molly responds to her sudden abandonment with good faith, humour, and Katharine Hepburn-like brio, determined to track down and marry her bashful beau. Sending Edward missives along the way, Molly's continental pursuit reveals both a burning ardour, and the sway of the lingering vestiges of certain colonial empires.

Wedding contemporary documentary fragments with dazzling, painstakingly detailed sequences shot on a soundstage, the kaleidoscopic images toggle eras, cultures, and styles in a bifurcated, wildly ambitious travelogue. Situated between artifice and

actuality, *Grand Tour* is a feat of visionary filmmaking whose sooty expressionism harkens back to the golden age of silent cinema and rightly garnered Gomes the Best Director award at Cannes. It's a magnificent excursion that reminds us of cinema's singular ability to interrogate and refine our positions in the world.

ANDRÉA PICARD

**Miguel Gomes** was born in Lisbon, where he studied at the Lisbon Theatre and Film School. His credits as a director include the Festival selections *Tabu* (12), *Arabian Nights* (15), and *The Tsugua Diaries* (21), co-directed with Maureen Fazendeiro. *Grand Tour* (24) is his latest film.





Archipelago of Earthen Bones — To Bunya

## Wavelengths 1: Eye & Ear Control

### Revolving Rounds

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Johann Lurf, Christina Jauernik | Austria  
11 minutes | 3D DCP

### The Diary of a Sky

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Lawrence Abu Hamdan | Lebanon  
45 minutes | DCP

### Octubre al mediodía

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October Noon

Francisco Rodríguez Teare | Chile/France  
12 minutes | DCP

### A Black Screen Too

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Rhayne Vermette | Canada  
2 minutes | DCP

### Archipelago of Earthen Bones — To Bunya

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Malena Szlam | Canada/Australia/Chile  
20 minutes | DCP 4K

Gazing up, down, backward, and forward, the films in this programme recast not just the world around us through different perspectives, but interrogate history and speculative futures. Deep time meets recent pasts, while untouched corners of the natural world are experienced alongside those manipulated — and at times menaced — by human intervention.

A collaboration between Wavelengths alum Johann Lurf and artist-academic Christina Jauernik as part of an experimental research project, *Revolving Rounds* incorporates the vintage Cyclostéréoscope apparatus in an oblique, dizzying immersion into the act of plant growth and cultivation. By turns graceful and incensed, *The Diary of a Sky* artist — and self-described “private ear” — Lawrence Abu Hamdan employs collaboratively sourced smartphone videos and his typically lucid analysis to examine the sonic terrorism routinely effectuated over the citizens of Lebanon.

In Francisco Rodríguez Teare’s sly, tender, and unsettled *Octubre al mediodía*, a group of friends in a forest enclave on Santiago’s central mountain reimagine the 2019 protests that rocked Chile as a speculative future.

A sequel to her earlier *Black Rectangle*, and reminiscent of Evelyn Lambart and

Norman McLaren’s groundbreaking animations, Rhayne Vermette’s buzzing miniature *A Black Screen Too* is a burst of colour and movement undercut by darkness. Forming part of a film constellation that stretches from Chile across the Pacific, in which Malena Szlam trains her camera on far-flung volcanic landscapes — by turns barren and verdant — the dazzling in-camera multiple exposures of *Archipelago of Earthen Bones — To Bunya* evoke the layered histories of the titular Bunya Mountains in eastern Australia’s Beerwah region, further deepened by sonified atmospheres from artist Lawrence English.

JESSE CUMMING

Total runtime: 90 minutes





**“NOT TORRENTIAL RAIN,  
BUT A CONSTANT MIST.”**

*The Sojourn*

## Wavelengths 2: Ride the Wave

### Someplace in Your Mouth

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Beatrice Gibson, Nick Gordon | Italy  
5 minutes | DCP

### Notes of a Crocodile

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Daphne Xu | Cambodia/China/Canada  
18 minutes | DCP

### Potenciais à deriva

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Adrift Potentials

Leonardo Pirondi | Brazil/USA  
12 minutes | DCP

### Go Between

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Chris Kennedy | Canada/Australia  
6 minutes | 16mm

### 暫棲

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The Sojourn

Tiffany Sia | USA  
32 minutes | DCP

A programme of drifts and dérives and discoveries, oscillating between movement and moments of restful contemplation. Various pushed and pulled, guided by forces at once explicit and elusive, these works are exploratory in every sense, advancing into unknowns with curiosity and conviction.

Pulsating and sensual, *Someplace in Your Mouth*, the latest collaboration between Beatrice Gibson and Nick Gordon, recasts the machismo of a subculture though nocturnal footage of hotshot moto and sound system enthusiasts from the periphery of Palermo, set to the words of American poet Magdalena Zurawski. Shot in Cambodia and borrowing a title and a punk sensibility from Qiu Miaojin’s classic queer novel, in Daphne Xu’s kinetic *Notes of a Crocodile* an unnamed woman roams the streets of a Phnom Penh in flux, encountering humans and animals in her search for a lost friend.

With *Potenciais à deriva*, Brazilian filmmaker Leonardo Pirondi reflects on questions of (lost) history and colonialism by way of an unfinished film, invoked through deft, fleeting fragments. As archival traces and other elements emerge that might push towards some sort of resolution, they instead only foreground an ultimate sense of unknowability.

Elegant and rigorous, while surprisingly playful, Chis Kennedy’s *Go Between* observes the Brisbane River, passing boats, and cars on the William Jolly Bridge through an intoxicating play of masking and superimpositions. At once a treatise on landscape, translation, and indigeneity, *The Sojourn*, by recent Baloise Art Prize winner Tiffany Sia, responds to the work of wuxia legend King Hu by way of his collaborators and the misty mountain panoramas of rural Taiwan.

JESSE CUMMING

*Total runtime: 73 minutes*



Being John Smith

## Wavelengths 3: Exposé(s) - Jean-Luc Godard/John Smith

### Scénarios

Jean-Luc Godard | France/Japan  
18 minutes | DCP

### Exposé du film annonce du film "Scénario"

Jean-Luc Godard | France/Japan  
36 minutes | DCP

### Being John Smith

John Smith | United Kingdom  
27 minutes | DCP

This programme brings together the work of two true luminaries of modernist cinema, whose late style is defined by an approach at once refined and raw. Seen together, these three pieces reveal not just a shared sense of autobiographical, retrospective probing and political commitment, but a shared formal approach that works pointedly with image, voice, text, citation, and more.

Completed the day before his assisted death in September 2022, *Scénarios* is the final film by the veteran Jean-Luc Godard, folding together many of his recurring inquiries into a precise, sober treatise on art, cinema, language, and death.

This is presented alongside *Exposé du film annonce du film "Scénario"*, conceptualized by Godard and shot by his trusted collaborator Fabrice Aragno. Here, the maestro — cigar in hand — presents a guided tour of a scrapbook-meets-storyboard for a film left unfinished. Employing images and motifs echoed throughout *Scénarios*, and further posing questions about media and the limits of a Western gaze, the film above all offers an intimate, precious look at the working process of a lifelong creative mind.

From a TIFF regular to an artist making his belated Wavelengths debut, *Being John Smith* is a deceptively wry and deeply felt work by

the English avant-garde legend, in which Smith reflects on his life and career by way of his generic name. Grappling with his own mortality and legacy, through a minimal, unassuming deployment of text, image, and voice, the resulting film is a major work by a major artist.

JESSE CUMMING

Total runtime: 81 minutes





**PRIMETIME**



## The Tragically Hip: No Dress Rehearsal

Mike Downie

CANADA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
240 minutes | Colour and Black & White/DCP

Production Company: Fully and Complete Productions Inc.  
Executive Producer: **Jake Gold**  
Producer: **Bryn Hughes, Kim Creelman, Dave Wells, Kalin Moon, Mike Downie, Rob Baker, Johnny Fay, Paul Langlois, Gord Sinclair**  
Cinematographer: **Chris Romeike**  
Editor: **Peter Denes**  
Sound: **Sanjay Mehta, Jason Perreira**  
Original Score: **The Tragically Hip**  
Principal Cast: **Gord Downie, Gord Sinclair, Rob Baker, Paul Langlois, Johnny Fay**

Canadian Distributor: **Amazon MGM Studios**  
US Distributor: **Amazon MGM Studios**

*The Tragically Hip: No Dress Rehearsal* is a definitive four-part documentary series about a bunch of scrappy kids from Kingston, Ontario — Gord Downie, Rob Baker, Johnny Fay, Paul Langlois, and Gord Sinclair — who went on to make music that defined Canada to the world and, more importantly, Canada to Canadians.

Throughout the series, producer-director Mike Downie — brother of the band's singular frontperson — interweaves never-before-seen archival footage with new interviews with the band, family, friends and famous fans including Will Arnett, Dan Aykroyd, Jay Baruchel, Sarah Harmer, Geddy Lee, and Justin Trudeau.

Downie pushes past the usual platitudes of the rock doc by exposing sentiments other, more detached directors might omit. The audience is with the Hip playing those early bars, in the studio as they hone their material, and in the stands as they graduate to stadiums across Canada while struggling to break through in the US. We're also with them as they experience personal tragedies that influence their music, bonding them as a found family.

We are always aware of the greatest tragedy still to come, yet Downie doesn't shy away from grief over his brother's death. It

colours every conversation about the band even as their inimitable songs — joyful, raucous, tender, touching — structure his series.

The Tragically Hip wrote Canada's history in words and music, showing us who we had been, and who we could be. But, as Baruchel points out, "There's not a single moment of nationalism in *any* of it. It's just portrayal."

— GEOFF MACNAUGHTON

**Mike Downie** is a writer, director, and producer of numerous documentaries and co-founder of the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund. His credits include *The Hockey Nomad* (03), *Invasion of the Brain Snatchers* (13), *Finding the Secret Path* (18), and *The Covid Cruise* (20). *The Tragically Hip: No Dress Rehearsal* (24) is his latest project.





## Trolösa Faithless

Tomas Alfredson

SWEDEN, 2024  
Swedish  
WORLD PREMIERE  
270 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: Miso Film Sweden AB, SVT, ARTE France  
Executive Producer: Göran Danasten, Anna Croneman, Tomas Alfredson  
Producer: Peter Bose, Jonas Allen, Christian Rank  
Screenplay: Sara Johnsen  
Cinematographer: Monika Lenczewska  
Editor: Dino Jonsäter  
Production Designer: Catharina Nyqvist Ehrnrooth  
Costume Designer: Kicki Ilander  
Sound: Ludwig Ronquist  
Original Score: Hans Ek  
Principal Cast: Frida Gustavsson, Gustav Lindh, August Wittgenstein, Lena Endre, Jesper Christensen, Poppy Klintonberg Hardy

Canadian Distributor: Fremantle  
US Distributor: Fremantle  
International Sales Agent: Fremantle  
US Sales Agent: Fremantle

In 2000, actress-director Liv Ullmann (*Scenes from a Marriage*) helmed her fourth feature, working from a previously unproduced screenplay by her frequent collaborator Ingmar Bergman (*The Seventh Seal*). *Faithless*, Bergman's piercing tale of lust, adultery, and the agony of desire, earned Ullman a Palme d'Or nomination and became essential to the marital drama canon.

Adapted as a limited series, written by Sara Johnsen (*July 22*) and directed by Tomas Alfredson (*Let the Right One In*, *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*), *Faithless* once again blends the best of Norwegian and Swedish cinematic talent. We are drawn back into the world of Marianne (Frida Gustavsson, *Vikings: Valhalla*), a young actress in a happy marriage to Markus (August Wittgenstein, *The Crown*). When Markus's best friend David (Gustav Lindh, *Queen of Hearts*) spends a summer visiting, an attraction blooms between Marianne and David, triggering a decades-long emotional fallout.

Given the breathing room of an episodic treatment, *Faithless* expands on the lifelong stakes of the affair. Forty years later, David and Marianne — still grappling with the consequences of their passion — reunite. Here, David is played by veteran Danish actor Jesper Christensen (*Casino Royale*) while

Swedish actress Lena Endre plays Marianne as she did in the original film.

*Faithless* strikes at the core of what makes the heart ache. The echoes of Bergman and Ullman's original film, handled so capably by Johnsen and Alfredson, ripple out to create new, unanticipated waves of feeling. Elongated across time, Marianne and David's emotional entanglement reveals passion, remorse, and inevitability.

GEOFF MACNAUGHTON

**Tomas Alfredson** is a filmmaker from Sweden. His directing credits include *Let the Right One In* (08), *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (11) and *the Snowman* (17) *Faithless* (24) is his latest project.



## The Listeners

### Janicza Bravo

UNITED KINGDOM, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
88 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Element Pictures**  
Executive Producer: **Ed Guiney, Andrew Lowe, Chelsea Morgan Hoffmann, Rachel Dargavel**  
Producer: **Ed King**  
Screenplay: **Jordan Tannahill**  
Cinematographer: **Jody Lee Lipes**  
Editor: **Jonathan Alberts, George Cragg, Nathan Nugent**  
Production Designer: **Katie Byron**  
Costume Designer: **Arielle Cooper-Lethem**  
Sound: **Steve Fanagan**  
Original Score: **Devonté Hynes**  
Principal Cast: **Rebecca Hall, Prasanna Puwanarajah, Gayle Rankin, Amr Waked, Mia Tharia, Ollie West, Franc Ashman, Samuel Edward-Cook, Karen Henthorn, Lucy Sheen, Ian Mercer**

Canadian Distributor: **Fremantle**  
US Distributor: **Fremantle**  
International Sales Agent: **Fremantle**  
US Sales Agent: **Fremantle**

Claire (Rebecca Hall, *Professor Marston and the Wonder Women*, TIFFF '17) is perfectly contented, if sometimes slightly underwhelmed, by the tranquil life she leads. As an English teacher with a loving husband (Prasanna Puwanarajah, *The Crown*, *Patrick Melrose*) and daughter, Claire's life holds few surprises. When she suddenly begins hearing a low, persistent humming sound — which, it appears, no one else around her can hear or account for — Claire begins to withdraw into herself, suddenly knocked off-balance by the bizarre shift in her life.

In her search for answers, Claire comes to learn that her student Kyle (Ollie West, *The Sparrow*) can also hear the sound. They embark on a tentative, faltering journey together, leading them towards a neighbourhood support group led by a mysterious but compelling couple, and away from their own respective families. As Claire and Kyle each navigate their own experiences of the sound, and its impact on their lives, they begin to unravel its meaning — is it a hoax? A curse? A gift?

Director Janicza Bravo (*Zola*, *Poker Face*, *Mrs. America*) deftly manages the complexities and doubts that come with Claire and Kyle's explorations. Canadian author and playwright Jordan Tannahill adapts his own

bestselling novel, and brings to vivid life this haunting story of isolation, faith, mysticism, and longing. The effects of this heady mixture stay with you long after the screen has gone dark — like a persistent, low hum that you can't quite get out of your head.

GEOFF MACNAUGHTON

**Janicza Bravo** is a writer and director who studied theatre at New York University before transitioning to filmmaking. Her credits include the short film *Eat* (11), episodes of TV including *Atlanta* (16), *In Treatment* (21), and *Poker Face* (23), and the features *Lemon* (17) and *Zola* (20). *The Listeners* (24) is her latest project.





## Disclaimer

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### Alfonso Cuarón

UNITED KINGDOM, 2024  
English, Italian  
CANADIAN PREMIERE  
141 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Esperanto Filmoj, Anonymous Content**  
Executive Producer: **Gabriela Rodríguez, Alfonso Cuarón, Cate Blanchett, David Levine, Steve Golin, Emmanuel Lubezki, Carlos Morales**  
Producer: **Donald Sabourin**  
Screenplay: **Alfonso Cuarón**  
Cinematographer: **Emmanuel Lubezki, Bruno Delbonnel**  
Editor: **Adam Gough**  
Production Designer: **Neil Lamont**  
Costume Designer: **Jany Temime**  
Sound: **Skip Lievsay, Craig Henighan**  
Original Score: **Finneas O'Connell**  
Principal Cast: **Cate Blanchett, Kevin Kline, Sacha Baron Cohen, Lesley Manville, Louis Partridge, Leila George, Kodi Smit-McPhee, Indira Varma**

Canadian Distributor: **Apple TV+**  
US Distributor: **Apple TV+**

In *Disclaimer*, celebrated journalist Catherine Ravenscroft — played by two-time Academy Award winner and TIFF Share Her Journey Groundbreaker Award recipient Cate Blanchett (also at this year's Festival in *Rumours*) — has made a career out of exposing the transgressions of others. One day, she receives a mysterious book in the mail. Reading it, she soon realizes the novel's protagonist is based on her younger self, and the plot reveals her deepest, darkest secret.

Who sent it? What do they want? And how will Catherine protect her husband Robert (Sacha Baron Cohen), her son Nicholas (Kodi Smit-McPhee, *The Power of the Dog*, TIFF '21), and her own reputation if others connect the novel to her past?

These are the questions Alfonso Cuarón explores in his seven-part psychological thriller adapted from Renée Knight's 2015 novel of the same name. In his first foray into chaptered storytelling, Cuarón takes full advantage of the format, jumping from past to present, exploring how perceptions, even flawed ones, can be unwavering, and how love can obscure truth.

Matching Blanchett's brilliance is Kevin Kline, who plays Stephen Brigstocke, one of many characters wrestling with the implications of the mysterious book. Rounding

out the incredible cast is Lesley Manville, also at this year's Festival in *Queer*, Louis Partridge, Leila George, and Indira Varma, all at their absolute best. The moral trajectory of their characters and the complexity of the narrative illustrate the best aspects of a 21st-century novel. Luckily, it's also in the meticulous hands of one of cinema's greatest filmmakers.

GEOFF MACNAUGHTON

**Alfonso Cuarón** was born in Mexico City and studied film at the Centro Universitario de Estudios Cinematográficos. His films include *A Little Princess* (95) and *Children of Men* (06), as well as the Festival selections *Y tu mamá también* (01), *Gravity* (13), and *ROMA* (18). *Disclaimer* (24) is his latest project.



## The Knowing

Courtney Montour,  
Tanya Talaga

CANADA, 2024  
Cree, English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
88 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Makwa Creative**  
Executive Producer: **Tanya Talaga, Stuart Cox, Siobhan Sinnerton**  
Producer: **Jordan Huffman, Geoff Siskind**  
Screenplay: **Courtney Montour, Tanya Talaga**  
Cinematographer: **Jon Elliott, Rodrigo Michelangeli**  
Editor: **Andres Landau, Eui Yong Zong**  
Sound: **Brendan Mitchie, Ramsay Bourquin, Joseph Redbreast, Zoe Gordon, Lynne Trepanier, Stephen Dranitsaris**  
Original Score: **Justin Delorme**  
Principal Cast: **Darrell Boissoneau, Sheila Bowen, Roy Carpenter, Victor Chapais, Shirley Horn, Mkomose (Dr. Andrew Judge), Norma Kejick, Sol Mamakwa, Edmund Metatawabin, Brian Nakogee, Paula Rickard, Stella Schimmens, Madeline Scott, Leona Spence, Martha Sutherland, Tanya Talaga, Gary Williams**

Canadian Distributor: **Makwa Creative**  
US Distributor: **HiddenLight Productions**  
International Sales Agent: **Antica Productions**  
US Sales Agent: **HiddenLight Productions**

With lush cinematography and evocative storytelling, Anishinaabe journalist Tanya Talaga embarks on a deeply personal search to find out what happened to her great-great-grandmother in *The Knowing*.

Co-directors Talaga and Kanien'kehá:ka filmmaker Courtney Montour (*Mary Two-Axe Earley: I Am Indian Again*) use archival footage and intimate interviews to piece together the unknown story of Talaga's family member, Annie Carpenter. In the first two parts of the four-episode docuseries, they skilfully illustrate how hard it is for Indigenous families to get answers from authorities, especially about those who have entered the residential school or Indian hospital systems.

Armed with a collection of historical documents, Talaga meets previously unknown relatives, discovers her new homelands, and deepens her knowledge about her family's history. Journeying from the fly-in Northern Ontario community of Peetabeck (Fort Albany First Nation) to Toronto and beyond, *The Knowing* weaves together residential school history, the Canada-wide recognition of unmarked graves — beginning with Kamloops — and the personal history of Talaga's family.

Understanding that stories like these are not an anomaly, the series makes room for

others also searching for their loved ones. This includes stepping back into painful memories and personal experiences, like when Talaga's friend and Ontario MPP Sol Mamakwa revisits the residential school he once attended.

This beautiful and touching series puts names and faces to an 80-year-old mystery and, in doing so, takes us on an emotional journey of familial reclamation and an exploration of Canada's true history.

KELLY BOUTSALIS

**Courtney Montour** is a Kanien'kehá:ka filmmaker. Her films have screened at Hot Docs, the Vancouver International Film Festival, Big Sky, and Margaret Mead. She has directed the documentary TV series *Skindigenous* (20–21) and *Mohawk Ironworkers* (16). *The Knowing* (24) is her latest project.

**Tanya Talaga** is an Anishinaabe journalist who has reported extensively on Indigenous issues including the Catholic church's efforts to avoid responsibility regarding Indian Residential Schools. She's the author of the bestsellers *Seven Fallen Feathers* and *All Our Relations*, and the new book *The Knowing*.





## Thou Shalt Not Steal

Dylan River

AUSTRALIA, 2024  
English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
90 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Ludo Studio, Since1788**  
Executive Producer: **Charlie Aspinwall, Sophie Miller, Tanith Glynn-Maloney, Daley Pearson**  
Producer: **Sam Moor, Lauren Brown**  
Screenplay: **Dylan River, Tanith Glynn-Maloney, Sophie Miller, Samuel Nuggin-Paynter**  
Cinematographer: **Tyson Perkins**  
Editor: **Chris Plummer**  
Production Designer: **Jonah Booth-Remmers**  
Costume Designer: **Heather Wallace**  
Sound: **Luke Mynott, Nicole Lazaroff, Gavin Marsh, David Tranter**  
Original Score: **Vincent Goodyer**  
Principal Cast: **Noah Taylor, Miranda Otto, Will McDonald, Sherry-Lee Watson**

Canadian Distributor: **DCD Rights**  
US Distributor: **DCD Rights**  
International Sales Agent: **DCD Rights**  
US Sales Agent: **DCD Rights**

Strap in for a 1980s-era Australian road trip like you've never experienced before.

After fleeing juvenile detention, 17-year-old Robyn (Sherry-Lee Watson) breaks her grandfather out of hospital. Though terminally ill, Ringer (Warren H. Williams) is determined to return home to recover a trophy cup belonging to Robyn's late father.

Problem number one is avoiding the police. The second is getting to distant Sunshine Valley with no vehicle or money. A possible miracle arrives in the form of Maxine (Miranda Otto), a taxi driver with a shady side racket, who agrees to drive them home but at a price Robyn is unwilling to pay.

Robyn promptly commandeers the taxi, leaving an angered Maxine determined to track them down. When they finally arrive, Ringer reveals a startling secret as Robyn recovers her father's cup. With the cops — and Maxine — hot on her trail, Robyn reluctantly befriends Gidge (Will McDonald), the abused son of a travelling bootlegger (Noah Taylor) masquerading as a man of god. The two hit the Outback looking for freedom and answers to her family secrets.

Writer-director Dylan River (*Mystery Road: Origin*, TIFF '22), one of Australia's most celebrated new talents, presents an at-times wonderfully raw series packed

with unflinching and occasionally absurd humour, allowing his stars to shine brightly, notably odd couple Watson and McDonald, fresh from their hit *Heartbreak High*.

JASON RYLE

**Dylan River** is a First Nations writer, director, cinematographer, and artist who grew up in Mpartnwe (Alice Springs), Australia. His directing credits include multiple shorts as well as the features *Buckskin* (13) and *Finke: There and Back* (18) and the TV series *Mystery Road: Origin* (22), which screened the Festival. *Thou Shalt Not Steal* (24) is his latest work.





## Familier som vores Families Like Ours

Thomas Vinterberg

DENMARK/NORWAY/France/SWEDEN/  
CZECH REPUBLIC/BELGIUM/GERMANY, 2024  
Danish, English, French, Polish, Russian, Romanian  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
345 minutes | Colour/DCP

Production Company: **Zentropa Entertainments, STUDIOCANAL, CANAL+, TV 2 Denmark, Film i Väst, Sirena Film, Zentropa Sweden, Ginger Pictures, Saga Films**  
Producer: **Sisse Graum Jørgensen, Kasper Dissing**  
Screenplay: **Thomas Vinterberg, Bo Hr. Hansen**  
Cinematographer: **Sturla Brandth Grøvlen**  
Editor: **Anne Østerud, Janus Billeskov Jansen**  
Production Designer: **Sabine Hviid**  
Costume Designer: **Manon Rasmussen**  
Sound: **Hans Møller, Peter Storm Wich, Robert Leib**  
Original Score: **Valentin Hadjadj**  
Principal Cast: **David Dencik, Nikolaj Lie Kaas, Thomas Bo Larsen, Amaryllis August, Albert Rudbeck Lindhardt, Paprika Steen, Helene Reingaard Neumann, Magnus Millang, Esben Smed, Asta Kamma August**

International Sales Agent: **STUDIOCANAL**

What if your country were evacuated? How would you function as a refugee, separated from your friends and family? These are the questions Oscar-nominated director Thomas Vinterberg and co-writer Bo Hr. Hansen pose in *Families Like Ours*, a sweeping series set in a near-future Denmark where the government evacuates all citizens in response to national flooding.

At the centre of the series is Laura (Amaryllis August), a high school student in love with Elias (Albert Rudbeck Lindhardt), both in their graduating year. Laura and her supportive family — successful architect father Jacob (Nikolaj Lie Kaas), stepmother Amalie (Helene Reingaard Neumann), journalist mother Fanny (Paprika Steen), uncle Nikolaj (Esben Smed), and his husband Henrik (Magnus Millang) — must navigate the impacts of the evacuation. These include a housing market crash, widespread denial, and displacement. As the family is torn apart, Laura sets off on a harrowing journey, fuelled by the hope of reconnection.

*Families Like Ours* is less about a disaster than community and our shared fears. It explores the best and worst of ourselves with authenticity. As in his previous work, Vinterberg continues to examine family dynamics, connection, and character, but

with the advantage of having seven episodes at his disposal. Audiences are in luck as TIFF is screening the full series — fitting for the work of a director who has presented multiple films at the Festival over the last 25 years.

GEOFF MACNAUGHTON

**Thomas Vinterberg** was born in Copenhagen and graduated from the National Film School of Denmark. He co-founded the Dogme 95 movement and directed its inaugural film, *The Celebration* (98), which screened at the Festival, as did *Dear Wendy* (05), *The Hunt* (12), *The Commune* (16), *Kursk* (18), and *Another Round* (20). His other features include *Submarino* (10) and *Far From the Madding Crowd* (15). *Families Like Ours* (24) is his latest film.





## M. Son of the Century

Joe Wright

ITALY, FRANCE, 2024

Italian

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

117 minutes | Colour and Black & White/DCP 4K

Production Company: Sky Studios, The Apartment, Pathé, Small Forward Productions, Fremantle, Cinecittà SpA, Sky

Executive Producer: Joe Wright, Nils Hartmann, Erica Negri, Emanuele Marchesi, Ardavan Safaee, Elena Recchia, Simone Gattoni, Paolo Sorrentino, Pablo Larraín, Valerio Bonelli, Mauro Monachini

Producer: Lorenzo Mieli

Screenplay: Stefano Bises, Davide Serino

Cinematographer: Seamus McGarvey

Editor: Valerio Bonelli

Production Designer: Mauro Vanzati

Costume Designer: Massimo Cantini Parrini

Sound: Angelo Bonanni

Original Score: Tom Rowlands

Principal Cast: Luca Marinelli, Francesco Russo,

Barbara Chichiarelli, Lorenzo Zurzolo,

Benedetta Cimagli, Gaetano Bruno, Maurizio Lombardi,

Vincenzo Nemolato, Paolo Pierobon

Canadian Distributor: Fremantle

US Distributor: Fremantle

International Sales Agent: Fremantle

US Sales Agent: Fremantle

Under the shadow of the recent rise of right-wing, populist governments and authoritarian leaders, acclaimed director Joe Wright (*Atonement*, TIFF '07; *The Darkest Hour*, TIFF '17) has adapted Antonio Scurati's novel *M. Son of the Century* into a series of the same name, which, like the original work, draws a clear line between today's political climate and the fascist strongman who started it all – Benito Mussolini.

Wright's Mussolini, played brilliantly by an unrecognizable Luca Marinelli (*Martin Eden*, TIFF '19), narrates his own story, often breaking the fourth wall and speaking directly to the audience. At the end of the First World War, his newspaper *Il Popolo d'Italia* established, Mussolini is now looking to fuel his political agenda by capitalizing on disillusioned veterans, who expected to come home as heroes, but are instead treated as outsiders. These men, desperate to be heard and understood, turned to Mussolini, together forming the Fasci Italiani di Combattimento, a dangerous group of ultranationalists, which would become the National Fascist Party.

Wright has a track record of bringing influential, polarizing historical leaders like Winston Churchill to the screen. Those who loved "Il Duce" regarded him as the greatest

leader that Italy has ever known, while those who despised him feared his political ties with Hitler, xenophobic ideologies, and general arrogance. Humanizing Mussolini is no easy task, and Wright takes on this significant responsibility knowing that demonizing such a leader is too simple, and the more difficult path is to understand why, in 1919, he and many Italians all wanted to Make Italy Great Again.

GEOFF MACNAUGHTON

Joe Wright was born in London and studied fine art and film at Central Saint Martins. His feature film debut, the Festival selection *Pride & Prejudice* (05), was nominated for a number of Academy Awards, as were his follow-ups, *Atonement* (07), *Anna Karenina* (12), and *Darkest Hour* (17), all of which played the Festival. *M. Son of the Century* (24) is his latest project.

# SHORT CUTS

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## Däck 5B

Deck 5B

Malin Ingrid Johansson  
SWEDEN, 2024, Swedish  
WORLD PREMIERE  
15 minutes | Colour/DCP

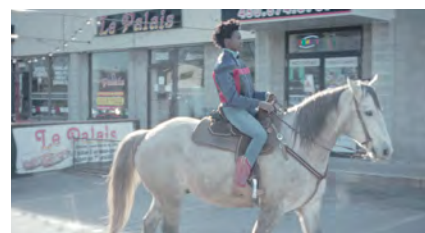
Alma Pöysti delivers a captivating performance in Malin Ingrid Johansson's alternately exhilarating and heart-rending story of a woman torn between the needs of her young son and her own desires.



## Silent Panorama

Nicolas Piret  
BELGIUM, 2024, No dialogue  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
6 minutes | Colour/DCP

Drawn and animated along a single piece of paper by artist and filmmaker Nicolas Piret, this piece combines the real sounds heard by two campers with a stunning visual rendering of the natural world at its most surprising and magical.



## Fantas

Halima Elkhatabi  
CANADA, 2024, French  
WORLD PREMIERE  
12 minutes | Colour/DCP

Worlds and genres collide one summer afternoon as a young woman and her horse make a surprising and eventful odyssey in this richly cinematic drama by Montreal's Halima Elkhatabi (also at the Festival with the TIFF Docs Selection *Living Together*).



## Amarela

Amarela

André Hayato Saito  
BRAZIL, 2024, Portuguese, Japanese  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
15 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

During the World Cup final in 1998, a football-loving Japanese-Brazilian teenager in São Paulo copes with rising tensions in André Hayato Saito's poignant and powerful drama.



## Kanskje det var elefanter

Maybe Elephants

Torill Kove  
NORWAY/CANADA, 2024, English, Swahili  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
17 minutes | Colour/DCP

Drawing once again from her family history, Academy Award-winning animator and filmmaker Torill Kove reflects on an especially rich chapter in her past to create a film that's engaging, delightful and poignant in equal measure.



## Sannapäiv

Sauna Day

Anna Hints, Tushar Prakash  
ESTONIA, 2024, Võro, Estonian  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
13 minutes | Colour/DCP

Shifting their perspective away from the fascinating female-centric spaces the team explored in *Smoke Sauna Sisterhood*, directors Anna Hints and Tushar Prakash offer a thoroughly enthralling view of what goes on between two men who inhabit the same steamy places.



## welima'q

shalan joudry  
CANADA, 2024, Mi'kmaw  
WORLD PREMIERE  
5 minutes | Colour/DCP

The picking of sweetgrass becomes an action — and word — with profound meaning in this gently mesmerizing piece by multidisciplinary writer and artist shalan joudry.



## Julian and the Wind

Connor Jessup  
CANADA, 2024, English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
15 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

A mysterious case of sleepwalking becomes a tentative means of connection between two boarding school students in Connor Jessup's elegantly rendered story of adolescent longing.

Notes by Jason Anderson, Lead Programmer, Short Cuts



## Percebes

Alexandra Ramires, Laura Gonçalves  
PORTUGAL/FRANCE, 2024, Portuguese  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
12 minutes | Colour/DCP

Named for a highly peculiar variety of shellfish with great significance to the people of the Algarve, the latest by the Portuguese team of Alexandra Ramires and Laura Gonçalves combines animation and documentary for an exquisitely rendered rumination on a community's relationship with the sea.



## Fuck Me

Anette Sidor  
SWEDEN/NORWAY, 2024, Swedish  
WORLD PREMIERE  
14 minutes | Colour/DCP

Out clubbing with friends, a woman acts according to the roles and rules she's been taught only to discover that different ones may apply in Anette Sidor's incisive look at gender norms and modern mores.



## One Day This Kid

Alexander Farah  
CANADA, 2024, Dari, Farsi, English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
18 minutes | Colour/DCP

As told by filmmaker Alexander Farah through a deftly composed array of small yet pivotal moments, a first-generation Afghan-Canadian man takes steps toward establishing an identity of his own while always conscious of his father's shadow.



## Every Other Weekend

Mick Robertson, Margaret Rose  
CANADA, 2024, English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
11 minutes | Colour/DCP

A young single mother faces a major challenge in her efforts to find herself a temporary bit of freedom in this engaging and empathetic drama by Mick Robertson and Margaret Rose.



## Mercenaire

Pier-Philippe Chevigny  
CANADA, 2024, French  
WORLD PREMIERE  
15 minutes | Colour/DCP

Marc-André Grondin delivers a searing performance in Pier-Philippe Chevigny's viscerally powerful drama about a recently incarcerated man trying to reintegrate into a society that has little place for him.



## perfectly a strangeness

Alison McAlpine  
CANADA, 2024, No dialogue  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
15 minutes | Colour/DCP

While travelling in an unknown desert, the four-legged characters in Alison McAlpine's delightfully enigmatic and visually sumptuous film come upon a place that may expand their (and our) understanding of the cosmos.



## The Yellow

Maika Monroe, Simone Faoro  
USA, 2024, English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
14 minutes | Colour/DCP

Thrilling performances by Haley Joel Osment and Marin Hinkle help intensify the blend of suburban dread and existential absurdity in directors Maika Monroe and Simone Faoro's skilful adaptation of a story by Samantha Hunt.

Notes by Jason Anderson, Lead Programmer, Short Cuts





## Serve the Country

Fabián Velasco, Miloš Mitrović

CANADA, 2024, English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
8 minutes | Colour/DCP

A fast-talking man claiming to be a former tennis prodigy faces the doubts and derision of the people who cross his path in Fabián Velasco and Miloš Mitrović's acerbically funny character study.



## Who Loves the Sun

Arshia Shakiba

CANADA, 2024, Arabic  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
20 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Enriched by cinematography as remarkable as the filmmaker's work on Zaynē Akyol's *Rojek*, this documentary by director Arshia Shakiba situates viewers amid the oil refineries in Syria's war-ravaged north, a landscape that may seem post-apocalyptic but lives in our ever-more alarming present.



## Čovjek koji nije mogao šutjeti

The Man Who Could Not Remain Silent

Nebojša Slijepčević

CROATIA/FRANCE/BULGARIA/SLOVENIA, 2024,  
Croatian, Serbian  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
14 minutes | Colour/DCP

This year's winner of the Short Film Palme d'Or, Nebojša Slijepčević's spare yet powerful drama situates viewers in the shoes of the people faced with a terrifying choice as they witness a horrific crime just beginning to unfold on a passenger train in Bosnia in 1993.



## Inkwo for When the Starving Return

Amanda Strong

CANADA, 2024, English, Tłıch  
WORLD PREMIERE  
18 minutes | Colour/DCP

Adapted from a story by Richard Van Camp about an Indigenous youth's battle with an ancient evil, this thrilling and visually stunning animation is a tour de force by multi-award-winning filmmaker and animator Amanda Strong.



## Masterpiece Mommy

Dorothy Sing Zhang

UNITED KINGDOM/CHINA, 2024, English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
16 minutes | Colour/DCP

Built around a charismatic and continually surprising performance by singer and actor Leah Dou, this stunning effort by Dorothy Sing Zhang transforms a fraught late-night hospital visit into a modern musical about the complex dynamics between mothers and daughters.



## Loser Baby

Dakota Johnson

USA, 2024, English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
23 minutes | Colour/DCP

Making an indelible impression with her wickedly smart and funny directorial debut, Dakota Johnson shines a spotlight on writer and performer Talia Bernstein, who stars as a queer woman whose friends' expanding conceptions about their relationships gets her wondering about the state of her own.

*Notes by Jason Anderson, Lead Programmer, Short Cuts*



## 1 Hijo & 1 Padre

A Son & a Father

Andrés Ramírez Pulido  
FRANCE/COLOMBIA, 2024, Spanish  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
26 minutes | Colour/DCP

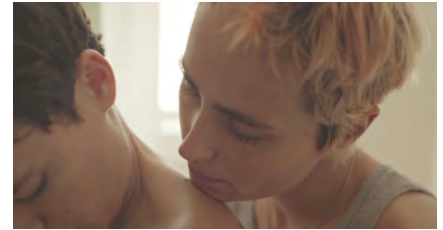
Colombia's Andrés Ramírez Pulido returns with the continually surprising story of a teen who finds an unusual supporter during the latest effort to address his most troublesome tendencies.



## On a Sunday at Eleven

Alicia K. Harris  
CANADA, 2024, English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
9 minutes | Colour/DCP

Facing the pressures to conform to Eurocentric beauty standards, a young Black ballerina finds a powerful source of pride and confidence in Alicia K. Harris' inspiring and visually stunning short.



## Are You Scared To Be Yourself Because You Think That You Might Fail?

Bec Pecaut  
CANADA, 2024, English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
17 minutes | Colour/DCP

Played superbly by Lio Mehiel in Bec Pecaut's deeply affecting drama, Mad wrestles with turbulent emotions while recovering from top surgery at home with their partner and mother.



## Rrugës

On The Way

Samir Karahoda  
KOSOVO, 2024, Albanian  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
15 minutes | Colour/DCP

In this deft and slyly humorous follow-up to the director's 2021 Short Cuts award-winner *Pa Vend (Displaced)*, Kosovo's Samir Karahoda presents the semi-autobiographical story of a father and son searching for reasons for optimism amid a society that seems doomed to disappoint them at every turn.



## Crème à glace

Out for Ice Cream

Rachel Samson  
CANADA, 2024, French  
WORLD PREMIERE  
9 minutes | Colour and Black & White/DCP

The story of two friends on the cusp of adolescence, Rachel Samson's warm-hearted animation is an ode to those special summer days that contain major changes.



## The Best

Ian Bawa  
CANADA, 2024, English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
10 minutes | Colour/DCP

Powerful waves of grief threaten to shatter the confidence of a South Asian bodybuilder in this bold and insightful character study by director Ian Bawa.



## Wrecked a Bunch of Cars, Had a Good Time

James P. Gannon, Matt Ferrin  
USA, 2024, English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
12 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

In their documentary about four highly memorable participants in a demolition derby, directors James P. Gannon and Matt Ferrin justly celebrate the transcendent and communal pleasures to be found in smashing stuff into other stuff.

Notes by Jason Anderson, Lead Programmer, Short Cuts





## Solemates

James Rathbone, Mike Feswick  
CANADA, 2024, English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
12 minutes | Colour/DCP

For the shopper in James Rathbone and Mike Feswick's sly and subversive comedy, an old-school shoe store becomes an irresistibly potent zone full of erotic possibilities.



## Quotum

Quota

Job Roggeveen, Joris Oprins,  
Marieke Blaauw  
NETHERLANDS, 2024, English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
3 minutes | Colour/DCP

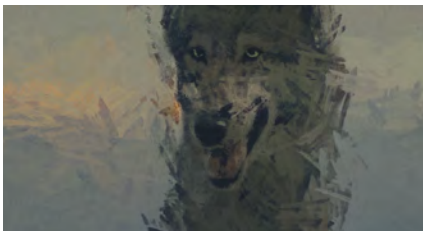
The delightful Dutch animation team of Job, Joris & Marieke returns with a wickedly funny parable that suggests a rather extreme means of getting people to think about their footprint on this world.



## Vox Humana

Don Josephus Raphael Eblahan  
PHILIPPINES/USA/SINGAPORE, 2024, Tagalog  
WORLD PREMIERE  
22 minutes | Colour/DCP

One of Filipino cinema's most remarkable new talents, Don Josephus Raphael Eblahan crafts his boldest vision yet: an utterly distinctive blend of science-fiction allegory and existential drama that yields a profound enquiry into human interconnectedness.

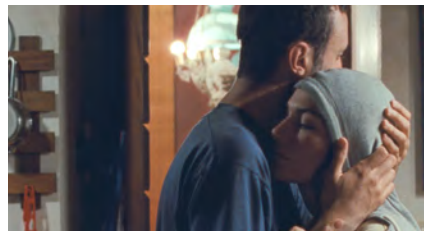


## Le loup

The Wolf

Theodore Ushev  
CANADA, 2024, No dialogue  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
10 minutes | Colour/DCP

Deploying a groundbreaking technique, revered Canadian animator Theodore Ushev returns with a spellbinding reimagining of the ageless conflict between nature and humankind.



## Aïda non plus

Aïda Neither

Elisa Gilmour  
FRANCE, 2024, French  
WORLD PREMIERE  
15 minutes | Colour/DCP

Returning home to Corsica to see her brother and grieve a recent loss, a woman considers the consequences of her choices, in this uncommonly graceful short by Elisa Gilmour.



## Alazar

Beza Hailu Lemma  
ETHIOPIA/FRANCE/CANADA, 2024, Amharic  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
36 minutes | Colour/DCP

In Beza Hailu Lemma's deeply affecting and beautifully performed drama, the mysterious disappearance of a family patriarch's body from his grave raises profound questions for a member of a farming community in Ethiopia.

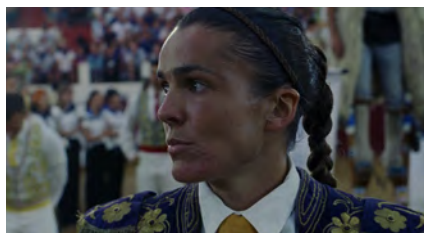
*Notes by Jason Anderson, Lead Programmer, Short Cuts*



## The Cost of Hugging

Louis Bhoose  
UNITED KINGDOM, 2024, English  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
9 minutes | Colour/DCP

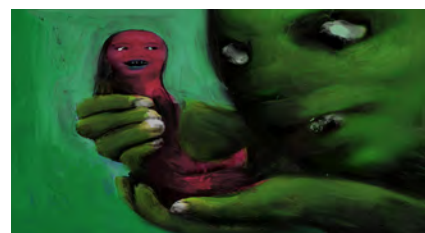
When a smooth-talking gentleman approaches a woman sitting at a resort bar, their interaction yields some very surprising revelations in Louis Bhoose's perfectly pitched comedy.



## Marion

Joe Weiland, Finn Constantine  
France/United Kingdom, 2024, French  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
13 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

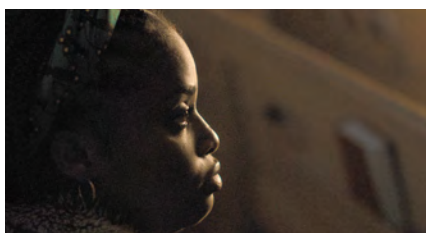
In Joe Weiland and Finn Constantine's stylish and captivating drama, the risks and anticipations couldn't be any higher for the title character: the only female bull-jumper in France.



## La Voix des Sirènes

Gianluigi Toccafondo  
France/Italy, 2024, No dialogue  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
20 minutes | Colour/DCP

A veritable feast for the senses, this music-infused marvel by Italian animator and filmmaker Gianluigi Toccafondo offers a deep dive into a watery world where the plight of a sea matriarch brings forth a transformation and a magnificent creature odyssey.



## After Sunday

Omolola Ajao  
CANADA, 2024, English, Yoruba  
WORLD PREMIERE  
16 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

In Omolola Ajao's enthralling story of the ghosts of migration, a young woman takes a difficult look into her family's past and exposes difficult truths beneath the surface of her African Canadian church community.



## Anotc ota ickwaparin akosiin

Catherine Boivin  
CANADA, 2024, Atikamekw  
WORLD PREMIERE  
6 minutes | Colour/DCP

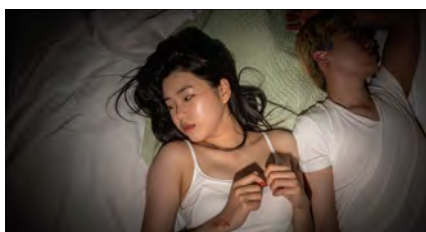
In this elegantly constructed piece by artist and filmmaker Catherine Boivin, the juxtaposed images of a mother performing chores and a child playing happily accompany a deeply felt rumination about the wounds passed between generations.



## Before They Joined Us

Arshile Khanjian Egoyan  
CANADA, 2024, Armenian, Arabic, French, English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
10 minutes | Colour/DCP

Outside dangers and family fears cause tensions to rise for a young woman leaving wartime Lebanon for Montreal, in Arshile Egoyan's terse and affecting drama.



## Tenderness

Helen Lee  
CANADA/SOUTH KOREA, 2024, Korean, English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
28 minutes | Colour/DCP

In a drama conveyed with great astuteness and empathy by director Helen Lee, a 16-year-old's private catastrophe collides with a much larger tragedy off the coast of South Korea in 2014.

Notes by Jason Anderson, Lead Programmer, Short Cuts





## Gender Reveal

Mo Matton

CANADA, 2024, English, French  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
13 minutes | Colour/DCP

When a people pleaser and their two partners end up at a thoroughly obnoxious gender reveal party in Mo Matton's hilariously anarchic satire, the gathering goes in a direction no one could've anticipated.

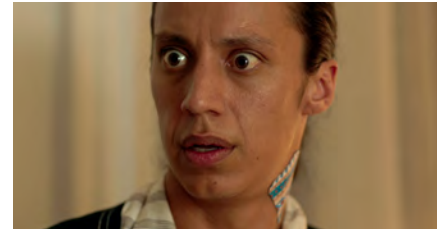


## The Sunset Special 2

Nicolas Gebbe

GERMANY, 2024, English  
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE  
19 minutes | Colour/DCP

A family's lavish experience on a luxury cruise becomes the stuff of a digitized and psychedelized nightmare in Nicolas Gebbe's mind-bending animated satire.



## The Beguiling

ishkwaazhe Shane McSauby

USA, 2024, English  
WORLD PREMIERE  
16 minutes | Colour/DCP

What seems to be a burgeoning romance between two Indigenous people takes an unexpected turn in this bold and thrilling blend of the satirical and the sinister by writer-director ishkwaazhe Shane McSauby.



## Đừng Giỡn Mặt Với Bà

Don't F\*ck With Bà

Sally Tran

USA, 2024, Vietnamese, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin  
INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE  
15 minutes | Colour/DCP

Director Sally Tran delivers an ultra-stylish, multilingual, kickass action spectacular with the tale of a crew of femmes in New York's Chinatown striking back at a gang that threatens their community.

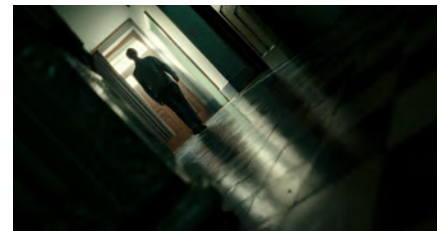


## Stomach Bug

Matty Crawford

UNITED KINGDOM, 2024, English, Mandarin  
WORLD PREMIERE  
15 minutes | Colour/DCP

Struggling to adjust to a lonelier kind of life after his daughter leaves home, a father begins to experience something rather more disturbing in this enthralling and deeply unnerving film by director Matty Crawford.



## Jamais je n'ai

Never Have I Ever

Joyce A. Nashawati

FRANCE, 2024, No dialogue  
WORLD PREMIERE  
19 minutes | Colour/DCP

From its first disorienting moments to its shocking conclusion, Joyce A. Nashawati's film is a brilliantly conceived and absolutely unrelenting experiment in terror.

*Notes by Jason Anderson, Lead Programmer, Short Cuts*

# TIFF CLASSICS

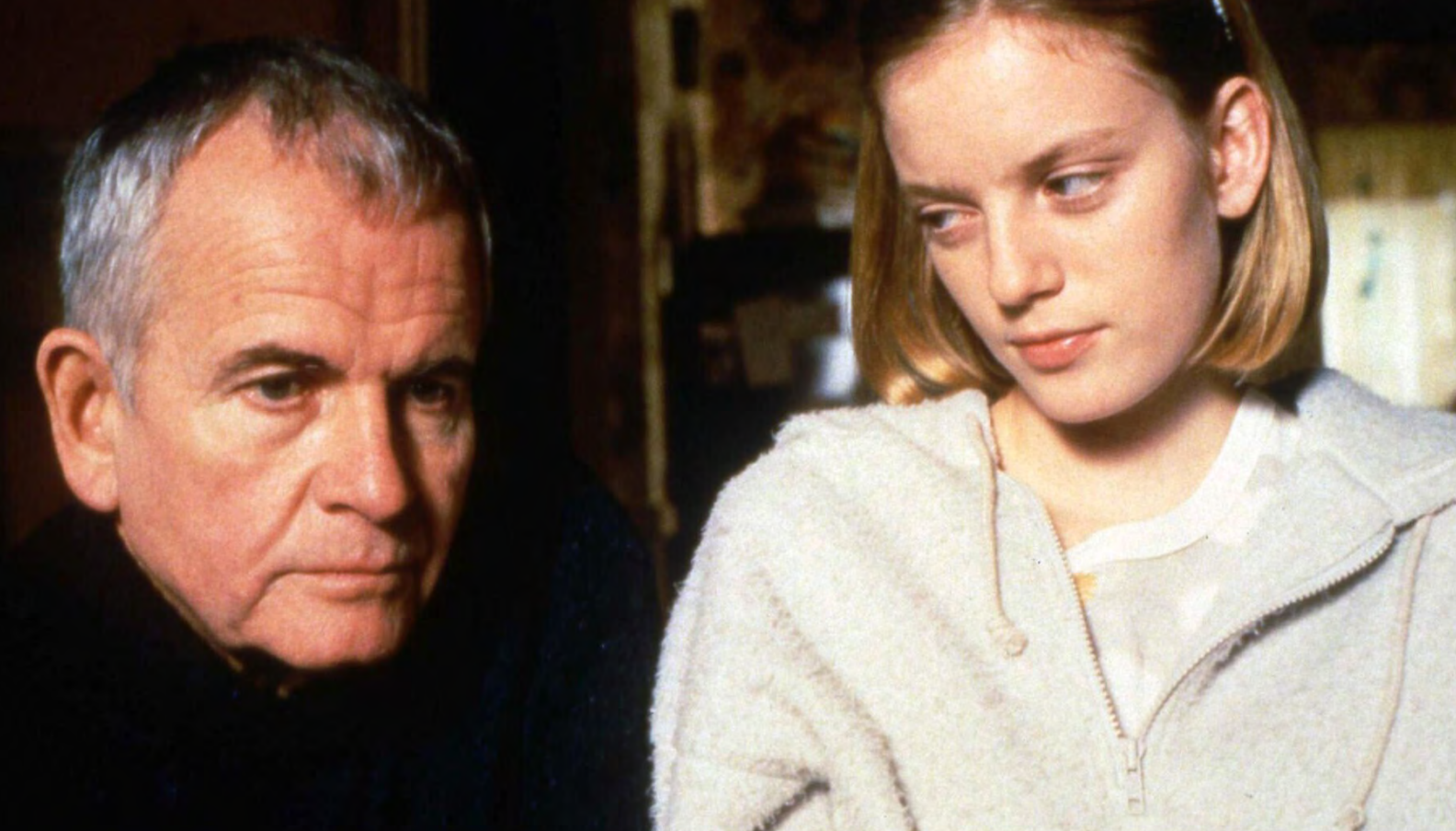
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## The Sweet Hereafter

Atom Egoyan

CANADA, 1997  
English  
112 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **Ego Film Arts**  
Executive Producer: **Andras Hamori, Robert Lantos, David Webb**  
Producer: **Atom Egoyan, Camelia Frieberg**  
Screenplay: **Atom Egoyan**  
Cinematographer: **Paul Sarossy**  
Editor: **Susan Shipton**  
Production Designer: **Phillip Barker**  
Costume Designer: **Beth Pasternak**  
Sound: **Steve Munro**  
Original Score: **Mychael Danna**  
Principal Cast: **Sarah Polley, Ian Holm, Tom McCamus**

Canadian Distributor: **Films We Like**  
US Distributor: **Janus Films**

It's said that every story can be boiled down to one of two narratives: Someone goes on a journey, or a stranger comes to town. Atom Egoyan's *The Sweet Hereafter* is both. Transposing Russell Banks' 1991 novel about a community gutted by the loss of nearly all of its children in a devastating school bus accident from upstate New York to snow-swept rural British Columbia, Egoyan explores themes of community, compassion, and courage in one of the most celebrated Canadian films of all time.

The formidable Ian Holm is Stephens, a lawyer preparing a class-action suit that will prolong the town's suffering, while grappling with parental concerns of his own. In a defining role, Sarah Polley brings an eerie calm to the role of Nicole, the town's sole surviving teenager, who comes to realize she's also the one person who might be able to save her neighbours from their own corrosive grief. They are supported by a sterling cast of Canadian character actors — Bruce Greenwood, Alberta Watson, Tom McCamus, Stephanie Morgenstern, Maury Chaykin, Gabrielle Rose, Arsinée Khanjian and Earl Pastko — as the traumatized parents.

Shot in stark beauty by the masterful Paul Sarossy and elegantly scored by Mychael

Danna, *The Sweet Hereafter* presents an epic narrative in a minor key. Egoyan's adaptation and direction were nominated for Academy Awards, and the film won eight Genies and a score of critical prizes.

TIFF is honoured to welcome *The Sweet Hereafter* back to the Festival in a new 4K restoration, 27 years after first bringing it to Canadian audiences.

ROBYN CITIZEN

**Atom Egoyan** was born in Cairo and raised in Victoria, BC. Many of his features have played the Festival, including *Family Viewing* (87), *The Adjuster* (91), *Exotica* (94), *The Sweet Hereafter* (97), *Felicia's Journey* (99), *Ararat* (02), *Where the Truth Lies* (05), *Adoration* (08), *Chloe* (09), *Devil's Knot* (13), *Remember* (15), *Guest of Honour* (19), and *Seven Veils* (23).

**WORLD PREMIERE OF THE 4K RESTORATION**  
4K digital restoration produced by *Sphinx Productions* and *The Criterion Collection* with financial assistance from *Telefilm Canada's digitization initiative*, *Canadian Cinema - Reignited*.

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## Reifezeit Time of Maturity

Sohrab Shahid Saless

GERMANY, 1976  
German  
108 minutes | Black & White/DCP 4K

Production Company: **PROVOBIS FILM**  
Producer: **O. E. Kress**  
Screenplay: **Sohrab Shahid Saless, Helga Houzer**  
Cinematographer: **Ramin Reza Molai**  
Editor: **Christel Orthmann**  
Production Designer: **Lothar Tropp**  
Sound: **Gunther Kortwich, Max Galinsky**  
Principal Cast: **Mike Henning, Eva Manhardt, Charles Hans Vogt, Eva Lissa, Lothar Köster, Hans Lieven, Sabine Titze, Axel Brehmer**

International Sales Agent: **SHAHID SALESS ARCHIVE**

Among the first films produced by the still-underappreciated Sohrab Shahid Saless after his mid-70s migration from Iran to Germany, *Time of Maturity* is the latest restoration from the Berlin-based Shahid Saless Archive and — as with each title that emerges from the auteur's revered but long-inaccessible body of work — it confirms his position as a major figure of modern and diasporic cinema.

Perhaps appropriately for a filmmaker then finding his place in his new home, his film's narrative is grounded in a tale of belonging and increased awareness of the realities of the world. A young boy (whose name is seldom spoken), age nine, shares an austere room in Berlin's Wedding district with his mother, a sex worker who typically returns late at night, preparing her son's lunch a few hours before he leaves for school. Reinforced by an oppressively ticking clock, charged silences, and the film's formal repetitions, the duo's routine is defined by the precarity of his mother's occupation, which likewise cleaves their life in two: his belonging to the day, hers, the night.

As she hustles to survive, so does he in his efforts to save for a bicycle, an ambition that has him running errands for various

neighbours. Gradually, and subtly, his interactions with those around him expand his understanding of social and cultural dynamics, including their at-times cruel dimensions.

Shot in crisp black-and-white and notable not only for its progressive and non-judgemental depiction of sex work, of childhood, and a then rarely seen, diverse area of Berlin, *Time of Maturity* is a daring film of unwavering clarity.

ANDRÉA PICARD

**Sohrab Shahid Saless** (1944-1998) was born in Tehran and studied film in Paris and Vienna before returning to Iran and then resettling in Germany. His films include *A Simple Event* (73), *Still Life* (74), *Far From Home* (75), *Empfänger unbekannt* (83), *Utopia* (83), and *Roses for Africa* (92). He's widely considered to be among the most significant of Iranian filmmakers.

### INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE OF THE 4K RESTORATION

*The digital restoration of Time of Maturity was carried out with the support of the German Film Heritage funding program and financed by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media (BKM), the federal states, and the FFA. The source material for the 4K scan was the original picture and optical sound negative from the archive of PROVOBIS Gesellschaft für Film und Fernsehen mbH.*

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## Masala

### Srinivas Krishna

CANADA, 1991  
English  
105 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: Divani Films Inc.  
Producer: Camelia Frieberg, Srinivas Krishna  
Screenplay: Srinivas Krishna  
Cinematographer: Paul Sarossy  
Editor: Michael Munn  
Production Designer: Tamara Deverell  
Costume Designer: Beth Pasternak  
Sound: Ross Redfern, Steve Munro, Alan Geldart  
Original Score: The West India Company, Leslie Winston  
Principal Cast: Saeed Jaffrey, Zohra Segal, Sakina Jaffrey, Srinivas Krishna, Herj Johal, Madhuri Bhatia, Ronica Sajnani, Les Porter

“I think there’s a better word than multiculturalism: it’s ‘masala,’” filmmaker Srinivas Krishna told *BOMB* magazine in 1993. “Multiculturalism in a sense assumes that there is an ultimate identity which I’m not sure is true. We have multiple identities, and that’s a basic truth of life.”

Bold, irreverent, and playful with an angry edge, Krishna’s debut, *Masala*, was one of the first Canadian films to display the rich diversity of its South Asian diaspora. A heady blend of narrative genres visualized through the colour-saturated lens of Bollywood aesthetics, the story follows Krishna (played by the filmmaker) — orphaned as a teen when his parents died in the 1985 Air India bombing. Now a disaffected young man and recovering heroin addict, Krishna returns to reconcile with his extended family, but is challenged by his inability to conform to their expectations of respectability.

In supporting turns are the sublime British-Indian actor Saeed Jaffrey from *My Beautiful Laundrette* and *Gandhi* in three vastly different roles: Krishna’s wealthy uncle, a humble postal worker named Mr. Tikkoo, and Lord Krishna, who pops into the story at regular intervals to offer commentary and assistance to the pious; his daughter Sakina Jaffrey as the fiery Rita Tikkoo; and

actor, dancer, and choreographer Zohra Segal as Grandma Tikkoo.

More than three decades after its release, this gorgeous 4K restoration of *Masala* thrums with vitality, managing to be both affecting and wholly unsentimental; it is an underseen classic of Canadian cinema.

ROBYN CITIZEN

Srinivas Krishna is a patented inventor, installation artist, and filmmaker. His directorial credits include *Masala* (91), *Lulu* (96), which played the Festival, and *Ganesh, Boy Wander* (09).

**WORLD PREMIERE OF THE 4K RESTORATION**  
4K digital restoration generously supported by the Toronto International Film Festival and Telefilm and supervised by Srinivas Krishna. This digital restoration was made possible through Canadian Cinema - Reignited, a Telefilm Canada initiative.

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## Awāra

### Raj Kapoor

INDIA, 1951  
Hindi  
177 minutes | Black & White/DCP 4K

Executive Producer: Mamaji  
Producer: Raj Kapoor  
Screenplay: Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, V. P. Sathe  
Cinematographer: Radhu Karmakar  
Editor: G. G. Mayekar  
Production Designer: M. R. Achrekar  
Costume Designer: Om Parkash, Mme Chorosch  
Sound: Allauddin  
Original Score: Shankar Jaikishan  
Principal Cast: Raj Kapoor, Prithviraj Kapoor, Nargis

Canadian Distributor: RK Films,  
NFDC-National Film Archive of India  
US Distributor: RK Films,  
NFDC-National Film Archive of India  
International Sales Agent: RK Films,  
NFDC-National Film Archive of India  
US Sales Agent: RK Films,  
NFDC-National Film Archive of India

In celebration of the centenary of the birth of “The Greatest Showman of Indian Cinema,” auteur Raj Kapoor, TIFF Classics presents the 4K restoration of one of his most acclaimed films, *Awāra*. As star and director of the 1951 crime drama, Kapoor drew inspiration from the Little Tramp persona of Charlie Chaplin in creating this tale about a privileged judge — played by his father, Prithviraj Kapoor — whose presumptions that morality is hereditary and that “criminals are born to criminals” leads him to wrongly convict a man of rape. This sets off a chain of tragic events and leads the judge to cast his pregnant wife out of his house for adultery.

Years later, her son Raj (Raj Kapoor) has reluctantly turned to crime to support his impoverished mother. He seeks to marry a childhood sweetheart, who — unfortunately for Raj — is studying law under the very same judge. Many melodramatic twists and turns of fortune ensue, alongside rousing musical numbers, including the popular song “*Awāra Hoon*,” with passionate but palatable messages of socialist reform threaded throughout the plot.

A highly influential classic of Bollywood cinema, *Awāra* has enjoyed international

popularity (it was nominated for the Grand Prize at the 1953 Cannes Film Festival) and critical praise. This is a vibrant, sensuous, and casually progressive must-see.

ROBYN CITIZEN

**Raj Kapoor** (1924-1988) is an icon of Indian cinema. He was born in Peshawar, and was an acclaimed actor, producer, and filmmaker. He directed and starred in some of his best-known films, including *Awāra* (51), *Sangam* (64), and *Mera Naam Joker* (70), and is also known for starring in *Boot Polish* (54).

**WORLD PREMIERE OF THE 4K RESTORATION**  
*This screening commemorates the 100th anniversary of director Raj Kapoor's birth in 1924.*

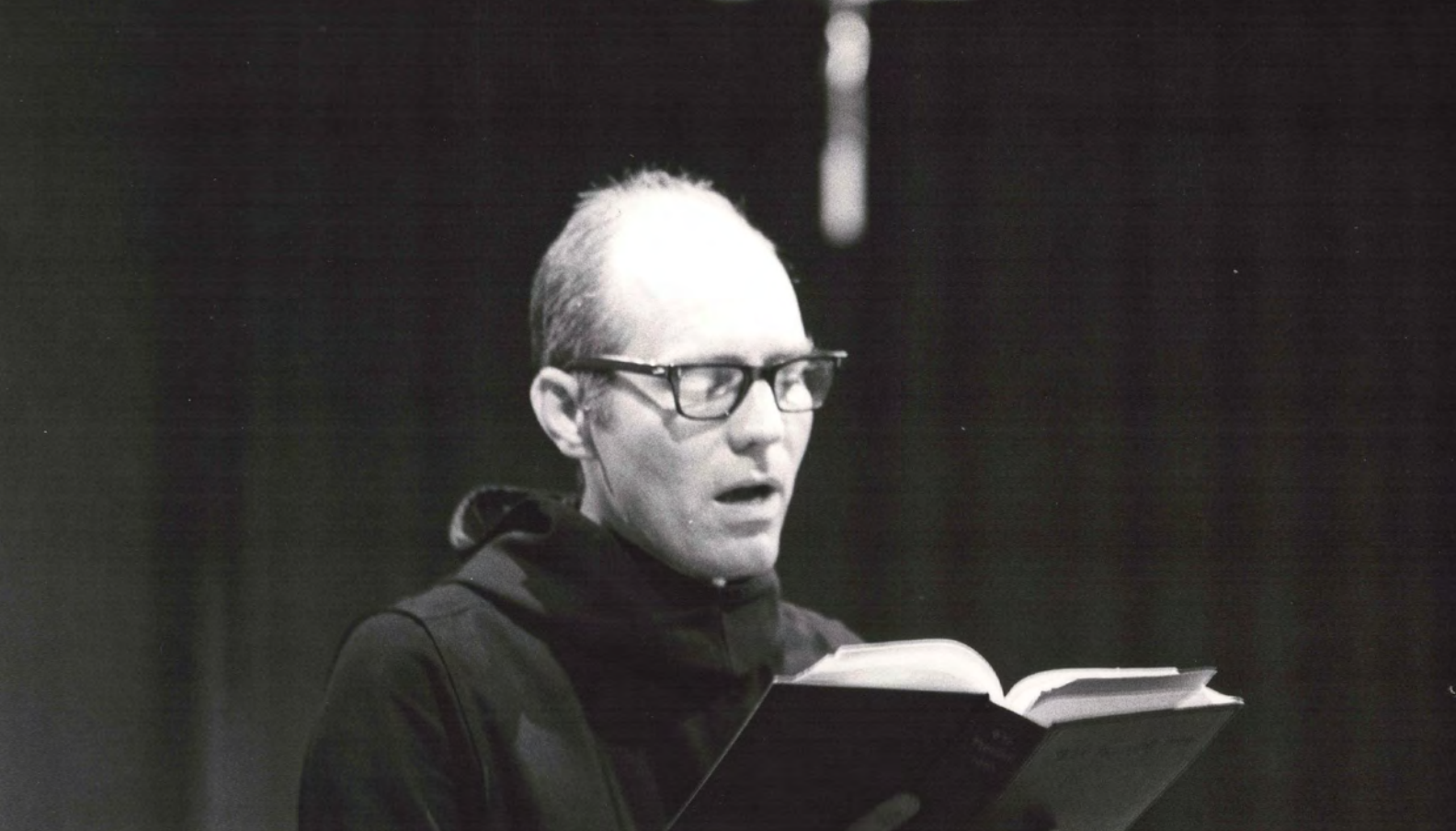
*Awāra* was restored in 4K by NFDC-National Film Archive of India under National Film Heritage Mission, a project undertaken by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.

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## Essene

### Frederick Wiseman

USA, 1972  
English  
89 minutes | Black & White/DCP 4K

Production Company: Zipporah Films  
Producer: Frederick Wiseman  
Cinematographer: William Brayne  
Editor: Frederick Wiseman  
Sound: Frederick Wiseman

US Distributor: Zipporah Films  
International Sales Agent: The Party Film Sales  
US Sales Agent: Zipporah Films

A meditative outlier in the early work of legendary documentarian Frederick Wiseman, *Essene* (1972) closely observes both the esoteric and quotidian activities of a Benedictine monastery. Wiseman begins his film by situating the viewer within the community through a scene, primarily shot in close-ups, of the men discussing the dictates of their order. Soon, the conversation evolves, as the monks share self-reflections and muse on how to support each other and newcomers to their intentional community. The brothers' distinct personalities emerge in the ways they reconcile the tension between the arcane, collectivist traditions of the religion and the modern influences of 1970s American individualism.

This is a thoughtfully drawn portrait of a way of life not often given view — tonally sensitive and fascinating, especially in the logical and emotionally intelligent self-assessment each monk seems to possess. Wiseman, so careful in his construction, reserves judgment — save for in the film's final beat, in which we observe the abbot giving a sermon in which he beseechingly asks us to listen, listen for god with a posture of “controlled, quiet wisdom” in service of a wider community.

As author, activist, and priest Malcolm

Boyd wrote of the film in *The New York Times*, “Wiseman conveys humility without resorting to humble expressions, an awareness of profound piety without mock spirituality... *Essene* raises the question of God urgently and eloquently.”

ROBYN CITIZEN

Frederick Wiseman was born in Boston and studied at Yale Law School. He has received multiple honours, including the Guggenheim and MacArthur fellowships. Many of his films, including *Boxing Gym* (10), *Crazy Horse* (11), *At Berkeley* (13), *National Gallery* (14), *In Jackson Heights* (15), *Ex Libris — New York Public Library* (17), *Monrovia, Indiana* (18), *City Hall* (20), and *Menus-Plaisirs Les Troisgros* (23) have screened at the Festival.

#### WORLD PREMIERE OF THE 4K RESTORATION

*New version restored in 4K from the 16mm image negative and original sound. Digitization and colour grading carried out at DuArt and Goldcrest laboratories in New York. Digital restoration by Jane Tolmachyov, supervised by Frederick Wiseman and produced by Karen Koniceka.*

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## Bona

Lino Brocka

PHILIPPINES, 1980

Tagalog

86 minutes | Colour/DCP 4K

Production Company: **NV Productions**

Executive Producer: **Nora Villamayor**

Producer: **Nora Villamayor**

Screenplay: **Cenen Ramones**

Cinematographer: **Conrado Baltazar**

Editor: **Augusto Salvador**

Production Designer: **Joey Luna**

Costume Designer: **Joey Luna**

Sound: **Cesar Lucas, Levi Prinupe**

Original Score: **Max Jocson**

Principal Cast: **Nora Aunor, Phillip Salvador,**

**Marissa Delgado, Raquel Montesa, Venchito Galvez,**

**Rustico Carpio, Nanding Josef, Spanky Manikan**

Canadian Distributor: **Kani Releasing**

US Distributor: **Kani Releasing**

International Sales Agent: **Carlotta Films**

A major rediscovery and a true must-see, *Bona* is a key work of Filipino cinema and a mythic collaboration between visionary filmmaker Lino Brocka and superstar Nora Aunor, who produced and starred in the film at age 28. Playing against type in a brilliant subversion of her pop-celebrity status in a bid to be considered a serious artist — here indisputable — Aunor portrays Bona, a young woman from humble beginnings who spirals into desperate idolization.

Obsessed with the hunky but dim bit-part actor Gardo (Brocka regular Phillip Salvador), Bona drops out of high school to follow him around like a groupie. Her desire and delusion lead to acts of shocking self-subjugation. When she endures a beating from her father for her reckless behaviour, she moves into Gardo's crammed house, attending to his every narcissistic need in the hope of reciprocation. The chilling ferocity, vulnerability, and abandon exuded by Aunor's performance is so indelibly inscribed on Bona's face that she haunts every scene.

Shot in the densely populated slums of Manila with a dynamic mix of realist immediacy and colour-soaked melodrama, *Bona* is an intoxicating social critique. A cautionary

tale about the dangers of devotion, whether religious or desirous, as well as a remarkable work of feminism, the film has been largely unseen since its release in 1980. Newly available in a miraculous, exquisite restoration, *Bona* further cements Brocka's importance as a major global auteur.

ANDRÉA PICARD

Catalino "Lino" Ortiz Brocka (1939–1991) is widely regarded as one of the foremost filmmakers of the Philippines. He's the director of such acclaimed films as *Manila in the Claws of Light* (75), *Insiang* (76), *Jaguar* (79), *Bayan Ko* (84), *Macho Dancer* (88), and *Orapronobis* (89), which was censored in his home country. Brocka was posthumously named National Artist of the Philippines for Film in 1991.

### NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE OF THE 4K RESTORATION

*This unseen version of Bona has been scanned, restored and colour-graded in 4K, from its original 35 mm camera and sound negative reels, at Cité de Mémoire in Paris. The sound restoration was handled by L.E. DIAPASON.*

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