



30
YEARS

VICTORIA
FILM
FESTIVAL

Feb 2 - 11 . 2024

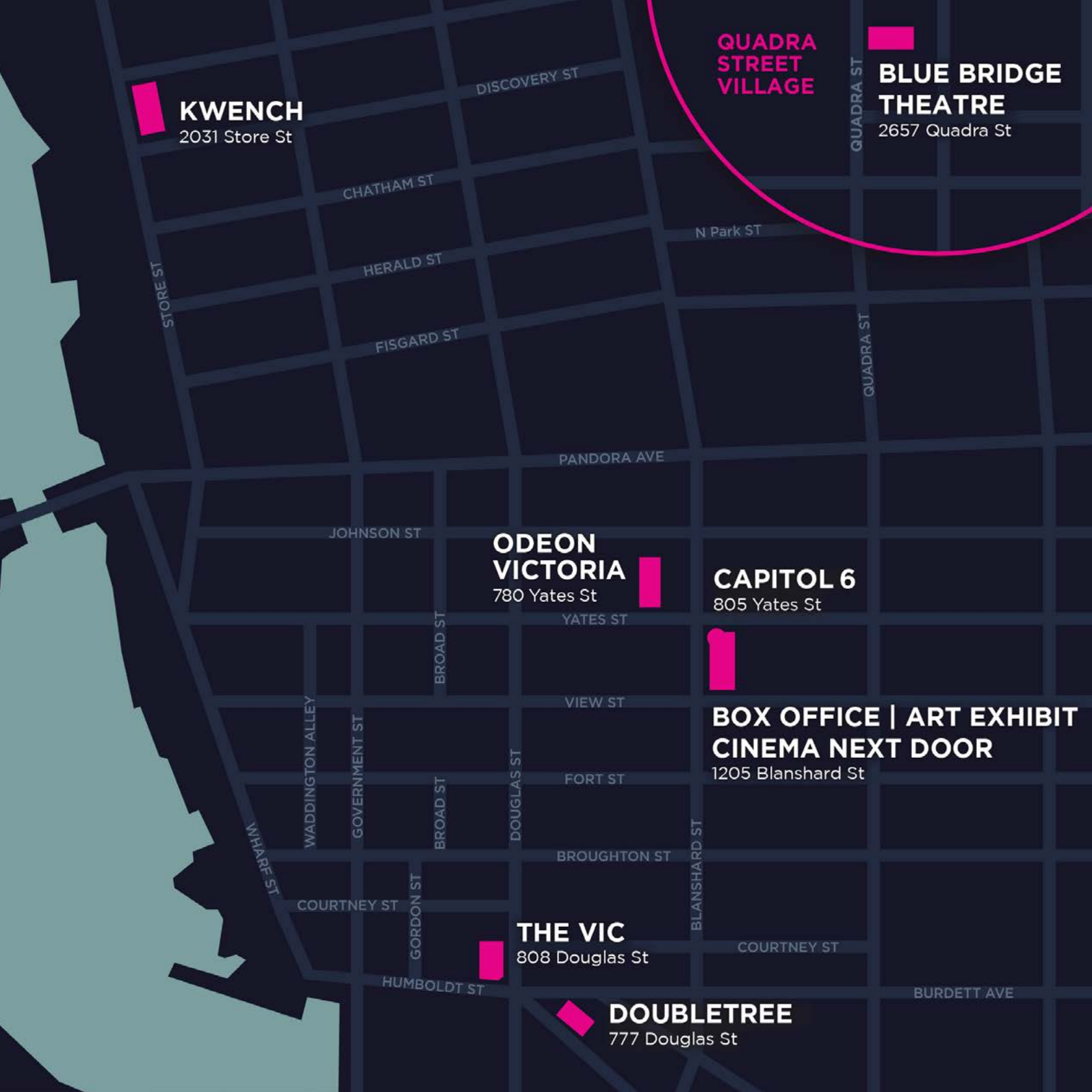


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FESTIVALINFO

All screenings are in-person.

We are not able to take phone orders.


Tickets are sold at the door 30 minutes before showtime, but FilmFest pros know how quickly films sell out so purchase in advance at www.victoriafilmfestival.com.

Advance tickets on sale online midnight January 5 – February 11.

In Person Box Office: There will be no in-person sales at the VFF office BUT we are doing in-person sales at 1205 Blanshard (yes, just at the corner of View & Blanshard) weekly from:

Wednesday – Friday, 12 – 4pm
January 10 – February 9

TICKETS 2023

Buy your » 
tickets here

VFF Membership	\$ 2.00
Film Tickets	\$ 13.33
Gold Pass <i>(guaranteed seating at regular film screenings)</i>	\$325.00
5 Film Vouchers	\$ 64.00
10 Film Vouchers	\$120.00
Student Rush Ticket <i>(ages 19–30 with student ID On sale 10 minutes prior to screening)</i>	\$ 6.00
In Conversation With.... Eric McCormack	\$ 29.00
Jammies and Toons	\$ 9.00
Opening Gala Film & Party	\$ 82.00
Opening Gala Film Only <i>(limited tickets)</i>	\$ 25.00
Art Exhibit	Free

The VFF goes anti-inflation again – no increase in the film ticket price this year! You're welcome!

VFF MEMBERSHIP

In British Columbia, the government requires that you be a member of a Society showing unclassified films and you must be over the age of 18. The Victoria Film Festival screens unclassified films. Membership is only \$2.

Once you are a member you can see the films at the Festival and The Vic Theatre until the end of July.

Buy your \$2
Membership
here »

*Tickets & passes are subject to GST – #883954026RT0001.
No exchanges. No refunds. Program subject to change.
Visa, Mastercard accepted.*

FESTIVAL AWARDS

Several of the films that are juried and accepted into the Festival are selected to receive an award. Watch for the announcement of the winners on February 14.

The categories please...

Best Feature Film
Best Canadian Feature
Best Canadian First Feature \$1000 cash prize
Best Documentary
Best Short Animation \$500 cash prize
Audience Favourite Feature
Cultural Currents Award \$1000 cash prize



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UNITED STATES

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	FRIDAY – FEB 2	SATURDAY – FEB 3	SUNDAY – FEB 4	MONDAY – FEB 5	TUESDAY – FEB 6	
THE VIC		12:00 pm Physician, Heal Thyself	12:00 pm I Used to be Funny	12:00 pm L'Océan vu du coeur	12:00 pm Last Dance	THE VIC
	3:15 pm 500 Days in the Wild	2:45 pm In Conversation With: Eric McCormack	2:45 pm The Old Oak	2:45 pm Starring Jerry as Himself	2:45 pm Varvara	
	Opening Gala: Seven Veils 6:30 pm	4:15 pm Free Enterprise	5:30 pm Seven Veils	5:30 pm Cannes Uncut	5:30 pm Four Daughters	
		Hey, Viktor! 7:45 pm	With Love and a Major Organ 7:45 pm	La Chimera 7:45 pm	Perfect Days 7:45 pm	
CAPITOL 6		1:00 pm A Strange Path	1:00 pm Jess Plus None	1:00 pm Sandtown	1:00 pm With Peter Bradley	CAPITOL 6
		4:00 pm Polara	4:00 pm Seagrass	4:00 pm No Right Way	4:00 pm How to Have Sex	
	How to Have Sex 6:30 pm	The Judgment 6:30 pm	Wild Goat Surf 6:30 pm	Smoke Sauna Sisterhood 6:30 pm	4:00 pm Sweetland	
	The Blue Star 9:00 pm	The Accident 9:00 pm	Working Class Goes to Hell 9:00 pm	The Veil 9:00 pm	The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde 9:00 pm	
ODEON VICTORIA		12:30 pm Manufacturing the Threat	12:30 pm The Michoacan File			ODEON VICTORIA
		3:00 pm Solitude	3:00 pm The Boy in the Woods	3:00 pm Hey, Viktor!	3:00 pm Stolen Time	
	Café Daughter 6:00 pm	I Used to be Funny 6:00 pm	6:00 pm WaaPaKe	6:00 pm Last Dance	6:00 pm Silent Roar	
	Robot Dreams 8:30 pm	Backspot 8:30 pm	Silvicola 8:30 pm	Evil Does Not Exist 8:30 pm	The Rapture 8:30 pm	
BLUE BRIDGE THEATRE				6:00 pm Stolen	6:00 pm Join or Die	BLUE BRIDGE THEATRE
				Lynx Man 8:30 pm	After Work 8:30 pm	

	WEDNESDAY – FEB 7	THURSDAY – FEB 8	FRIDAY – FEB 9	SATURDAY – FEB 10	SUNDAY – FEB 11	
THE VIC	12:00 pm The Blue Star	12:00 pm Smoke Sauna Sisterhood	12:00 pm Wicked Little Letters	12:00 pm Wicked Little Letters	11:30 am Jammies & Toons: Ernest & Celestine: A Trip to Gibberitia	THE VIC
	2:45 pm In Camera	2:45 pm Perfect Days	2:45 pm Tautuktavuk (What We See)	2:45 pm The Floating Man	2:45 pm Tótem	
	5:30 pm They Shot the Piano Player	Wicked Little Letters 5:30 pm	5:30 pm Suze	The Feeling That the Time for Doing Something ... 5:30 pm	5:30 pm Wilding	
	The Taste of Things 7:45 pm	Our Time to be Kind 7:45 pm	7:45 pm Ru	A Difficult Year 7:45 pm	The Taste of Things 7:45 pm	
CAPITOL 6	1:00 pm Four Daughters	1:00 pm Mademoiselle Kenopsia				CAPITOL 6
	4:00 pm This Time	4:00 pm Till Love Do Us Part				
	Close to You 6:30 pm	The Smell of Money 6:30 pm				
	Wolves 9:00 pm	All You Need is Death 9:00 pm				
ODEON VICTORIA						ODEON VICTORIA
	3:00 pm Evil Does Not Exist	3:00 pm Robot Dreams				
	6:00 pm Mami Wata	High & Low: John Galliano 6:00 pm				
	Restore Point 8:30 pm	The Driven Ones 8:30 pm				
BLUE BRIDGE THEATRE	We Are Guardians 6:00 pm	6:00 pm 940 Caledonia	The Great Salish Heist 6:00 pm	6:00 pm Citizen Sleuth		BLUE BRIDGE THEATRE
	Sultana's Dream 8:30 pm	Crows are White 8:30 pm	Leilani's Fortune 8:30 pm	CineVic Showcase 8:30 pm		
CINEMA NEXT DOOR	Short Bursts: Secrets and Lies 7:30 pm	Short Bursts: Returning 7:30 pm	Short Bursts: Funny How? 7:30 pm	Short Bursts: Indigenous Voices 7:30 pm		CINEMA NEXT DOOR

THANK YOU VFF DONORS

The Victoria Film Festival is ecstatic to celebrate its 30th year as a not-for-profit charitable arts organization! Without the support of our donor's, we would never have the opportunity to showcase all the talented and unique independent filmmakers at the various venues in the heart of downtown Victoria. Our donors have enabled us to bring important and engaging cinema to Vancouver Island, and for that we express our deepest gratitude.

A very special thanks to the donors below.

DIRECTOR

Lyndsay Green

PRODUCER

June Wing

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

BC Select Homes Team,
Newport Realty
Bruce Gauld
Rain Li

ART DIRECTOR

Anne Macnab
Cathy Auld
Charles Isherwood
Kathy Kay
Lois Klingbeil
Ted McLachlan
Wendy Moreton
Zita Conway

SET DRESSER

Audrey McClellan
Cris Forrest
Dave Lang
Deborah Dergousoff
Nancy Adrian Hall
Patricia Page
Ron Cox

GAFFER

Andrew & Nola
Denis Farling Jackson

WELCOME

Such a milestone, the 30th Annual Victoria Film Festival.

Thirty years of storytelling, innovation, and a celebration of creativity that has evolved, highlighting cultures, touching souls, and reflecting our city.

The Festival is a melting pot of narratives, each film a testament to the artistry and vision of storytellers worldwide. We've created a platform where the established mingle with the emerging, a synergy of experience and fresh perspectives.

The audiences, oh the audiences, it's a pleasure to bring you undiscovered films, first peaks at buzz films, prominent filmmakers as well as shy retiring ones. It's a wonderful mosaic that can ignite discussions, create new friends and stimulate, always stimulate.

Thirty years of people coming, going and even staying on. People who helped to create a Festival that has evolved into an important annual event in the life of the city, in particular Donovan Aikman, Sheena Macdonald, David Simmonds, Michael Reid, Gerald Hartwig, Robert Jawl, Paul Hadfield, Joanne Fraser, Mike Murphy and Paul Wilson all contributed their magic or resources to help the Festival flourish. Along the way there have been supportive Board of Directors, thousands of volunteers, and the team who work on the Festival and its other activities year-round.

I hope to see you all at the cinema, now and for many years to come.

Kathy Kay,
Festival Director



THE TEAM

Behind the Scenes

Festival Team

Festival Director: Kathy Kay
Program Manager: Bryan Skinner
Operations Manager: David Allen
Development & Volunteer Coordinator: Aimee Somerville
Community Engagement: Alejandro Lema
Communications Coordinator: Rikhita Nair
Industry & Event Manager: Guillermo Rossi
Vic Theatre Manager: Kiana Karimkhani
Tech Meister: Mark Hoyne
Graphic Designer: Pauline Gallinat

Board of Directors

President: Dan McDonagh
Vice President: Ruby Della Siega
Treasurer & Secretary: Joel Cave
Directors at Large: Rain Li, David Simmonds, David Parfit

Pre-Screening Committee

Tony Ruffolo, Maria Nunn, Jeremy Balliston, Sheena MacDonald, Christopher Cross, Alison Cartan, VFF team

Advisory Committee

Richie Mehta – Canadian filmmaker known for *Amal*, *Siddharth*, *India in a Day*
Larry Weinstein – Canadian filmmaker known for *Mozartballs*, *Hannah's Suitcase*, *Beethoven's Hair*

Programmers

The VFF Festival Director and Program Manager select the films along with:



Joanna Duncombe is based between the UK and France; Jo manages new talent and film programmes in the MENA region at British Council. She is passionate about championing underrepresented voices in world cinema. Jo was creative producer at Birds' Eye View, championing women's cinema, and launched their Reclaim the Frame programme. She has previously worked in curatorial roles with the Independent Cinema Office and London Short Film Festival. Jo is the UK programmer for Victoria Film Festival in Canada and curates films for CASA Festival of Latin American Arts. She has worked as an impact strategist on documentaries including *A Syrian Love Story*.



Bracken Hanuse Corlett is an interdisciplinary artist hailing from the Wuikinuxv and Klahoose Nations. He began working in theatre and performance in 2000 and eventually transitioned towards his current practice that fuses sculpture, painting and drawing with digital-media, audio-visual performance, animation, and narrative.

He is a graduate of the En'owkin Centre of Indigenous Art and went to Emily Carr University of Art and Design for Visual Arts. He is the Co-founder of the Vancouver Indigenous Media Arts Festival and recently sat on the VIFF Canadian Features Jury. He has studied Northwest Coast art, carving and design from acclaimed Heiltsuk artists Bradley Hunt and his sons Shawn Hunt and Dean Hunt. He was a recipient of the 2014 BC Creative Achievement Award for Aboriginal Art and has recently received public art commissions from Cities of Vancouver, Nanaimo and Victoria. He is currently the 2020-21 Artist in Residence at Raycam Cooperative Centre as part of the Artists in Communities Program.

Ammar Keshodia is a filmmaker and curator based in Toronto, Canada. He has worked on the programming teams for festivals such as TIFF, SXSW, and Overlook. Ammar has written for publications like Bright Wall/Dark Room, NANG Magazine, and Peephole Journal. He is also the co-host of the Three Course Cinema Club, a podcast dedicated to constructing unorthodox triple bills of famous films and hidden gems. Ammar graduated from the University of Toronto with a degree in Political Science & Cinema Studies and his work has been supported by the Canada Council for the Arts.





Liam Lacey was the film critic for The Globe and Mail from 1995-2015, writing reviews and profiles, and covering the Cannes, and Toronto and Sundance Film Festivals. He has contributed to Variety, Cinema Scope, Screen and Entertainment Weekly, CBC and National Public Radio and served on several film juries. He currently contributes to the film review site, Original-Cin.ca and writes for POV Magazine, a Canadian magazine focusing on documentary films.



Kathleen Mullen For the past 20+ years, Kathleen has contributed to the planning and execution of film and art festivals nationally and internationally as curator, programmer, and artistic director. Since 2014, she has been involved with the Seattle Queer Film Festival (SQFF) as the Artistic Director

leading the programming and operations of the 28-year-old festival. Along with SQFF, Kathleen works with the Whistler Film Festival, Vancouver Latin American Film Festival, Skoden Indigenous Film Festival, and is an instructor at Simon Fraser University. Kathleen has also programmed for TIFF, Hot Docs, Inside Out Toronto LGBT Film Festival, Planet in Focus, Vancouver International Film Festival, and Boston Museum of Fine Arts.



Alex Rogalski is the senior Canadian programmer for Hot Docs. Past programming work includes the Toronto International Film Festival, Calgary International Film Festival, Gimme Some Truth, and the Human Rights Watch Film Festival. He is the former Executive Director of PAVED Arts and New Media, and currently a Program Consult with SK Arts in Saskatoon.



Prof. Dan Russek is Professor in the Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies at the University of Victoria. His fields of research are Latin American literature, film, visual arts, and aesthetics. He is the President of the Hispanic Film Society of Victoria and he coordinates the Annual Latin American and Spanish Film Week at Cinecenta, which will turn thirteen in 2023.

Kimber Sider is a documentary filmmaker and the Artistic Director/Lead Programmer for the Guelph Film Festival, one of the oldest documentary film festivals in the world. She holds a PhD in theatre and performance from the University of Guelph and is a lecturer in Communication Arts at the University of Waterloo.



Randy Waldie A lifelong film aficionado, Randy's first job at age 15 was with Famous Players Theatres. He has worked in television and video production and has a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Drama. Randy's brings his deep passion, love, and commitment to quality cinema to the Victoria Film Festival.



Letay Williams is the creator and screenwriter of Traytown (2020), Creators of Colour's 2021 Big Pitch at TIFF Audience Choice award winner. She has served as a narrative shorts programmer for the Slamdance Film Festival, and on the CineSpark Pitch Competition jury. Letay is a University of Victoria MFA in Writing alum, 2022 BIPOC TV & Film Episodic Writers' Lab participant, and attended the 2023 European Film Market as an Emerging Producer in UNESCO's Transcultura Program and the EFM's Diversity Toolbox Program. Letay is intentional about telling stories that reflect her Jamaican heritage and the multicultural aspects of Canada.

GREETING MESSAGES

A MESSAGE FROM PREMIER DAVID EBY

As Premier of British Columbia, I am pleased to welcome everyone to the 2024 Victoria Film Festival (VFF).

VFF is renowned for its eclectic mix of local and international cinema, showcasing diverse and underrepresented voices, while providing a platform for emerging artists to gain recognition. As Vancouver Island's oldest and largest film festival, VFF is an important contributor to British Columbia's flourishing arts and culture scene. This festival is a highlight in Victoria's cultural calendar, and I am sure that this will be a rewarding experience for all in attendance.

Thank you to the organizers, volunteers and sponsors for your hard work and dedication in coordinating this year's festival. I would also like to congratulate all the visionary filmmakers and talented individuals behind each production.

Enjoy the films!

UN MESSAGE DU PREMIER MINISTRE DAVID EBY

En tant que premier ministre de la Colombie-Britannique, j'ai le plaisir d'accueillir chacune et chacun de vous au Festival du film de Victoria 2024.

Le Festival du film de Victoria est reconnu pour son mélange éclectique de films locaux et internationaux et fait entendre des voix diverses et sous-représentées, tout en offrant une plateforme pour faire connaître les artistes émergents. À titre de plus ancien et plus important festival du film de l'île de Vancouver, le Festival du film de Victoria a grandement contribué à la scène artistique et culturelle florissante de la Colombie-Britannique. C'est un moment fort du calendrier culturel de Victoria, et je suis convaincu qu'il s'agira d'une expérience enrichissante pour toutes les personnes présentes.

Merci aux organisateurs, aux bénévoles et aux commanditaires pour votre excellent travail et votre dévouement dans la coordination du festival de cette année. Je félicite également tous les cinéastes visionnaires et les gens talentueux qui ont contribué à chaque production.

Bon cinéma!

HONOURABLE DAVID EBY, K.C., PREMIER OF BRITISH COLUMBIA / L'HONORABLE DAVID EBY, K.C. PREMIER MINISTRE DE LA COLOMBIE-BRITANNIQUE



A MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE / L'HONORABLE PASCALE ST-ONGE MINISTER OF CANADIAN HERITAGE

Welcome to the 2024 Victoria Film Festival!

Once again this year, this festival will let us discover films that transform us, expand our horizons and help us better understand the lived experiences of people in our communities. Our government is proud to support Vancouver Island's largest film festival, which is giving movie lovers the opportunity to enjoy arts and culture experiences that educate, enlighten and entertain — as it has done for the past three decades.

As Minister of Canadian Heritage, I would like to thank all the organizers, volunteers and filmmakers who helped bring this event to life. Congratulations on the festival's 30th anniversary. Together, let's celebrate the diverse voices behind the works being presented. Enjoy the films!

Bienvenue au Victoria Film Festival de 2024.

Cette année encore, le festival nous fait découvrir des films qui nous transforment, élargissent nos horizons et nous aident à mieux comprendre la réalité des gens dans nos communautés. Notre gouvernement est fier de soutenir le plus grand festival de film de l'île de Vancouver. Comme il le fait depuis maintenant trois décennies, ce rendez-vous permet aux cinéphiles de vivre des expériences artistiques et culturelles qui les renseignent, les éclairent et les divertissent.

À titre de ministre du Patrimoine canadien, je remercie tous les organisateurs, organisatrices, bénévoles et cinéastes qui donnent vie au festival. Toutes mes félicitations en ce 30e anniversaire! Célébrons ensemble les diverses voix derrière les œuvres qui seront présentées. Bon cinéma!

THE HONOURABLE / L'HONORABLE PASCALE ST-ONGE



**MESSAGE FROM THE HON. LANA POPHAM
MINISTER OF TOURISM, ARTS, CULTURE AND SPORT**

On behalf of Premier David Eby and the Government of British Columbia, welcome to the 2024 Victoria Film Festival.



Every year, the Victoria Film Festival celebrates the work, talent and diversity of filmmakers and their teams from around the world. We know that film has the power to tell new and different stories, create connections, build bridges among people and inspire us all. As the largest film festival on Vancouver Island, the Province is pleased to support the Victoria Film Festival through Creative BC, the BC Arts Council and the BC Fairs, Festivals and Events Fund.

Thank you to the organizers of this festival for their strong leadership in promoting diversity, inclusion, and creativity. Your efforts have brought this vibrant festival to life, and it's truly appreciated. I also want to extend my gratitude to all the donors and volunteers who have given their time, talent, and resources to make this event a success. Without your unwavering dedication, this festival would not be possible.

Lastly, congratulations to everyone involved in creating and producing the pieces featured in this year's festival. We are truly impressed by your talent and are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to witness such amazing works of art. I can't wait to see what you achieve next!

Sincerely,

HON. LANA POPHAM,
MINISTER OF TOURISM, ARTS, CULTURE AND SPORT

A MESSAGE FROM MARIANNE ALTO

Greetings from Mayor Marianne Alto

On behalf of the City of Victoria, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 30th Annual Victoria Film Festival.



The festival's unique line up of events, such as the Gala and Springboard - designed to connect film and media players -continue to showcase the best in Canadian and International films, providing a platform for local, emerging, and often underrepresented communities.

Over the coming days some of the best International, Canadian and local films will screen - including the local documentary **940 Caledonia**. How lucky we are to have this festival to introduce us to such a diverse range of filmmaking.

Congratulations and a big thank you to the committed organizers and volunteers for their work not just on the second largest film festival in the province, but for coordinating year-round screenings events and workshops.

Thank you for supporting the Victoria Film Festival. Enjoy the Show!

Sincerely,

MARIANNE ALTO
VICTORIA MAYOR

MESSAGE FROM JULIE ROY TELEFILM



Showcasing and celebrating the works of Canadian creators is at the heart of what we do at Telefilm. That is why we are proud to partner with the Victoria Independent Film Festival to further boost our support for Canadian creatives at home and around the world.

In this ever-evolving cultural landscape, festivals continue to play an important role in the film industry, growing the talent pool, as well as allowing audiences to celebrate and connect with distinctive Canadian films and the talent behind them.

We encourage you to keep supporting Canadian talent in theatres and on digital platforms!

JULIE ROY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CEO, TELEFILM CANADA



DIRECTOR

PRINCE of WHALES
WHALE & MARINE WILDLIFE ADVENTURES

golf for kids

GOVERNMENT

TELEFILM CANADA

CREATIVE BC

BRITISH COLUMBIA

CITY OF VICTORIA

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Making a difference...together

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An agency of the Province of British Columbia

BRITISH COLUMBIA
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BRITISH COLUMBIA
Gaming Commission

SUPPORTING

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Pedersen's
EVENT RENTALS

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DIRECTORS GUILD OF CANADA
BRITISH COLUMBIA

FERNWOOD
COFFEE COMPANY
VICTORIA, BC, CANADA

University of Victoria | Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives

University of Victoria | Germanic & Slavic Studies

Consulate General of Switzerland in Vancouver

TOURNÉE
QUÉBEC CINÉMA

GMPA
Canadian Media Producers Association
BC Producers Branch

SLF saanichlegacyfoundation
Supporting Your Vision... is Our Mission

FNO

Jawl Properties

HARBOUR AIR

Chateau Victoria
HOTEL & SUITES

PASSION SPORTS
CUSTOM

modo

Monk Office

GARDENWORKS

Robbins

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CAPITOL 6

CINEPLEX
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HOSPITALITY

10 ACRES
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spinnakers
BREW PUB & GUEST HOUSES

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OPENING GALA

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FEBRUARY 2

Have you missed going to the Opening Gala Parties of yore?
WE HAVE!!!

Remember the three storeys of New York – Tiffany’s, Central Park and Andy Warhol’s Factory. The Speakeasy that managed fireworks, a secret entrance, a blind pig and an Art Deco swing. The Supper Club with the Naden Band, swing dancers and chandeliers. So, can we top it? You might ask. Of course, we say.

Think tropical – flowers, waterfall, fish and of course, palm trees - ‘cause we’re 30 and we want to get jiggy with it!

At the theatre, the night will begin with a complimentary cocktail from the award-winning Spinnakers Distillery. Then after the Gala Film, Atom Egoyan’s *Seven Veils*, it’s off to Kwench @ 2031 Store Street for 9:00 PM where food, drinks, music and visuals will stimulate more than the appetite.

Food from

10 Acres
Spinnakers Gastro Brewpub
Ooh La La Cupcakes
Barrel House Brine

Sonora Bar & Grill
Kahuna Burgers
Cinnaholics
Ooh La La Cupcakes

Drinks from

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KWENCH

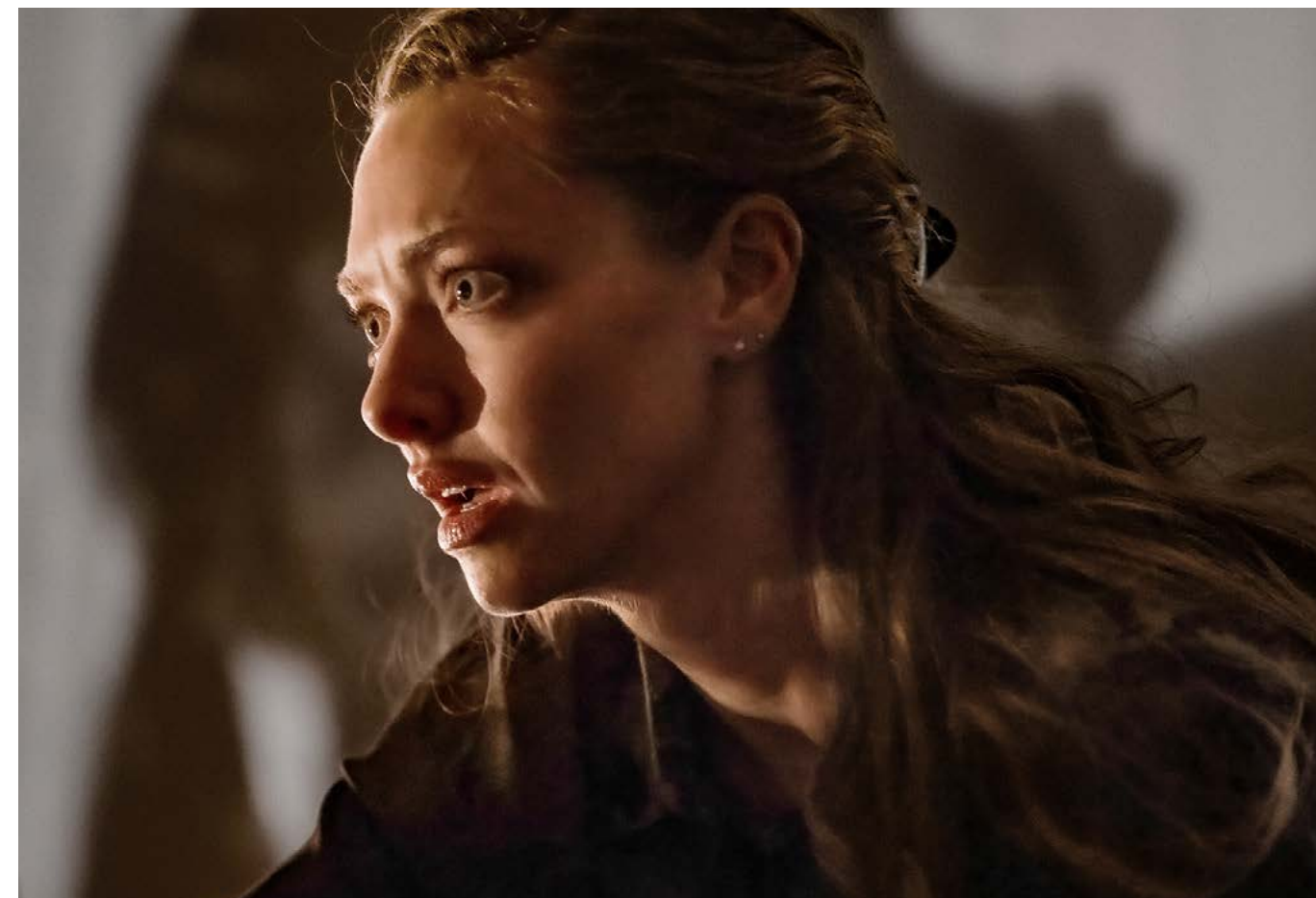


OPENING FILM

SEVEN VEILS | 6:30 PM | THE VIC THEATRE

Jeanine (Amanda Seyfried) is tasked with remounting her former mentor’s most infamous opera production, *Salome*, in Atom Egoyan’s intense behind-the-scenes drama set in the world of theatre.

Atom Egoyan expected to attend



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43	How to Have Sex	73	A Strange Path (Estranho Camino)	104	SHORT BURSTS <i>Energetic programmes of short film.</i>
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BUZZ+

TRENDING FILMS THAT BRING ON FOMO.





BUZZ+

EVIL DOES NOT EXIST

RYŪSUKE HAMAGUCHI

Japan | 2023 | 106 min

ODEON VICTORIA
FEB 5 | 8:30 PM
FEB 7 | 3:00 PM

Winning top awards at the Venice and London Film Festivals, *Evil Does Not Exist* is Hamaguchi's follow up to the acclaimed Academy Award-winning, *Drive My Car*.


At the centre of the story is Takumi (Hitoshi Omika), the area's local handyman, his 8-year-old daughter Hana (Ryo Nishikawa) and representatives from Tokyo who are wanting to develop a glamping site (glamorous camping) in this quiet mountain area.

The Tokyo developer schedules a last-minute meeting to discuss the project with the community but it's soon obvious that they haven't done their homework. In a phenomenal and humorous scene, they discover the environmental hazard they could create for the village when the locals push back. The Tokyo duo are fully realized characters as they find themselves questioning the path they've taken, much to their boss's consternation.

Evil Does Not Exist is a delicate film with subtle ironies that intricately explores ways that personal interactions can still matter in a world where money so often counts more than people. This is a director who has created an insightful body of work along with his team, who work together to augment the director's vision, with Eiko Ishibashi creating an evocative score and Yoshio Kitagawa's cinematography paying homage to the forest and the land. - *KK*

Quiet + Unsettling + Mesmerizing

Movie Trailer
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BUZZ+

FOUR DAUGHTERS

KAOUTHER BEN HANIA

Tunisia, France, Saudi Arabia, Germany,
Cyprus | 2023 | 107 min
Documentary-Hybrid

THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 6 | 5:30 PM
CAPITOL 6
FEB 7 | 1:00 PM


Four Daughters is a hybrid documentary that tells the story of Olfa, a Tunisian single mother of four daughters. Her two eldest daughters, after a series of rebellious phases, become deeply religious and disappear, presumably to become wives of ISIS fighters. How did they get there and what becomes of them?

What is absolutely remarkable about this film is the way director Kaouther Ben Hania uses professional actors to re-enact the story of Olfa and her daughters, with Olfa acting as a character consultant and director to the actors portraying her and the missing daughters. Layers of meaning and family dynamics are revealed, and it is through this process that Olfa and her two younger daughters reveal their story in an honest reappraisal of their past.

It is exhilarating to see non-artists becoming involved with what becomes a great work of art. Themes of rebellion, women's social roles, religion, and patriarchal oppression are strongly drawn out, and the rewards of this beautiful film are multitude. Kaouther Ben Hania walked away with three awards from the 2023 Cannes festival, and has since netted many other well deserved international awards. - *BS*

Women + Disappearance + Innovative

Movie Trailer
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BUZZ+

PERFECT DAYS

WIM WENDERS

Germany, Japan | 2023 | 123 min

THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 6 | 7:45 PM
FEB 8 | 2:45 PM


Wim Wenders' *Perfect Days* celebrates the little things in life, the simple, minute pleasures that add up to something more. It's a film that creeps up on you, sweeping you along for an enjoyable and relaxing ride. It's a kinder world, a simpler one, where all it takes for it to be a perfect day is for the sun to be shining and a Lou Reed cassette playing in the car.

The film follows Hirayama as he moves through his day. It's a subtle and gracious performance by Kôji Yakusho, who picked up the well-deserved best actor prize at Cannes. His routines truly make him happy, doing his job well, finding the perfect song for the perfect moment, or capturing a photo as light hits the trees just right; he finds joy in the everyday and the feeling is infectious.

Wenders, who has always been long on vibe, offers us a chance to come and find the joy in a well-observed life. - *KK*

Movie Trailer

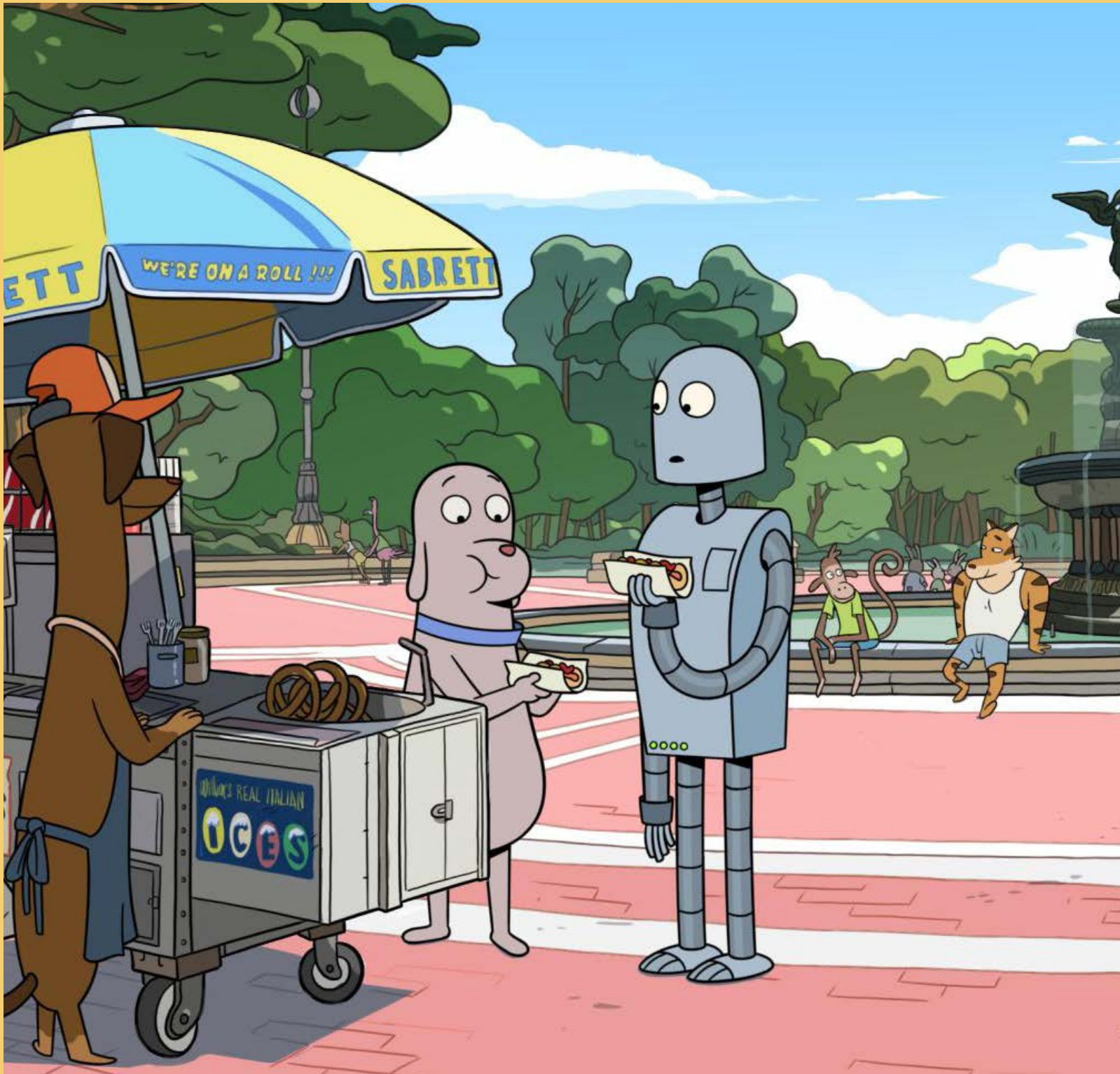
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Gentle + Engrossing + Subtle

Presented by:

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BUZZ+

ROBOT DREAMS

PABLO BERGER

Spain, France | 2023 | 102 min

ODEON VICTORIA
FEB 2 | 8:30 PM
FEB 8 | 3:00 PM

Best Film Annecy Animated Film Festival
Grand People's Choice Award Winner Sitges Film Festival

Robot Dreams is one of those off-beat discoveries that you wish you would find more often. As a beautiful tribute to warm, deep friendship, this delightful, animated movie is an entirely dialogue-free story set in the 1980s in New York City, following a dog character known simply as Dog as he builds a relationship with his new robot friend, Robot.


Together they unleash themselves on everything New York has to offer. A sad turn of events separates them, and so begins the saga of Dog's intrepid attempts to reunite with his friend. The story takes a melancholy turn and invites us to reflect on how connections with people drift apart and how we find new places in our hearts.

Ironically, Dog and Robot celebrate the simple joy of being human and what it means to love and trust and forgive and support and, most importantly, to connect with one another. Fueled by a joyous Earth, Wind and Fire soundtrack and adept visual storytelling, it is so whimsical with strong comedic elements worked into every scene.

Destined to be an animated classic. - *RW*

Joy + Whimsy + Connection

Movie Trailer
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BUZZ+

SEVEN VEILS

ATOM EGOYAN

Canada | 2023 | 107 min


THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 2 | 6:30 PM 
FEB 4 | 5:30 PM 

Atom Egoyan expected to attend at both screenings


Jeanine (Amanda Seyfried) is a young director who has spent her life surrounded by the theatre and is thrust into the spotlight with the daunting task of remounting her recently deceased mentor's infamous production of Richard Strauss' sexually charged opera Salome. The repressed trauma of her past begins to resurface amidst the creative pressures of her position, as the opera's familial themes of loss and disconnection begin to merge with the unraveling threads of her personal life.

Academy Award-nominated director Atom Egoyan was inspired by his own experience directing the Canadian Opera Company's production of Salome, and collaborating once again with Seyfried whom he previously directed in *Chloe* (2009). Blending his signature visual style of layering mediums and screens, a device he's employed since his earliest films, Egoyan and Seyfried never lose focus on the narrative, delivering an intense and authentic behind-the-scenes look at a complex web of modern relationships laid bare on stage and screen. - AR

Feb 2 (Gala Film)

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Feb 4

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Opera + Emotional + Intense

Presented by:





BUZZ+

SMOKE SAUNA SISTERHOOD

ANNA HINTS

Estonia, Iceland, France | 2023 | 89 min

Documentary

CAPITOL 6
FEB 5 | 6:30 PM
THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 8 | 12:00 PM

From the film's beginning, it's easy to see why *Smoke Sauna Sisterhood* won the Sundance Film Festival's Best Director Award for documentary.


This gentle documentary by first-time director Anna Hints celebrates sauna ritual and the women who practice this cathartic and communal experience which has become a place to share their lives and intimate experiences.

There is a softness to the light inside the shed situated in an Estonian forest, no doubt the result of the smoke, but it feels like it is another character in the film - obscuring the view, softening the revelations and moving the viewpoint from one to another. The camera hangs in the air with the smoke and when the admissions are too intimate it moves away, unwilling to expose the women. Once inside the sauna it's almost as if the cold, outside world does not exist.

This is a special documentary that allows us into such a cherished and private space, with ritual once again being the grounding force that unites a community to reflect and care for one another. - *KK*

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Gentle + Nuanced + Experiential



BUZZ+

THE OLD OAK

KEN LOACH

UK | 2023 | 113 min

THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 4 | 2:45 PM


“When you eat together, you stick together.” This motto, about human connection, recurs amongst members of the northern village community at the centre of Ken Loach’s (potentially) last piece of parablistic, unadorned cinema. TJ Ballantyne (played by Dave Turner) is the landlord of The Old Oak pub, and daily sees his regular punters embittered and despairing at the rising cost of living, often blaming immigrants for the lack of work. When a bus of frightened Syrian refugees arrives in the village, the tension is palpable.

To the anger of many locals, TJ opens up the backroom of his pub as a foodbank supporting the refugees, and in doing so, sparks a friendship with Syrian photographer Yara (Ebla Mari), a young female refugee. Together with aid worker Laura (Claire Rodgerson), they devise a plan to bring the two traumatised communities together.

Shot by *I, Daniel Blake* collaborator Robbie Ryan in simple daylit fashion, using first-timer and non-professional actors, this is inclusive and moral cinema without cynicism. As we have come to expect of one of Britain’s most respected and prolific filmmakers, Loach is driven to storytelling through an unquenched idealism that begets on screen moments of blistering power.
- JD

Political + Uplifting + Hopeful

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THE RAPTURE (LE RAVISSEMENT)

IRIS KALTENBÄCK


France | 2023 | 97 min

BUZZ+

ODEON VICTORIA
FEB 6 | 8:30 PM

After a bad breakup, a young midwife named Lydia (Hafsia Herzi) is buoyed only by her best friend Salomé (Nina Meurisse), who's progressing much quicker through life. With a baby on the way and a steady relationship, Salomé becomes a reminder of just how lonely Lydia is. One day, while holding Salomé's baby in her arms, Lydia bumps into an old fling named Milo (Alexis Manenti). He assumes the baby is hers - perhaps even his - and Lydia neglects to correct him.

It becomes a way for them to reconnect, but soon you begin to wonder how far she'll let this go, as what starts almost like a comedy of errors morphs into something much more serious. Lydia quickly begins to tangle herself in knots trying to keep this lie together in a character study that's beguiling and complex. Completely engrossing, *The Rapture* is a rare feature debut that serves as an unsettling fairytale. - AK

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Complex + Surprising + Revealing



THE TASTE OF THINGS (POT-AU-FEU)

ANH HUNG TRAN

France, Belgium | 2023 | 165 min

BUZZ+

THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 7 | 7:45 PM
FEB 11 | 7:45 PM


Set in the late 19th century, *The Taste of Things* tells the story of a renowned gourmand named Dodin Bouffant and his esteemed cook, Eugénie, as they plan an unorthodox meal for a prince.

Played by French darlings Benoît Magimel and Juliette Binoche, they make an exquisite couple on-screen, matched only by the rich meals they prepare for themselves and their friends. Despite having worked together for decades, Dodin remains in awe of Eugénie's intuitive understanding of everything that goes into the culinary arts. They maintain a unique romance, almost in secret, as he desires to get ever closer, while she worries that it will change the way he looks at her.

With its long and lavish cooking scenes, director Anh Hung Tran builds a unique filmic rhythm that pulls you in - a confidence of craft that earned him the Best Director award at last year's Cannes Film Festival. *The Taste of Things* isn't just a tender love story, but it's also a reminder that there are different ways for cinema to be. Whether it's the art you make or the relationships you build, you can go at your own pace. If you really want to, you can create your own time signature. - AK

Exquisite + Romantic + Engrossing

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BUZZ+

TÓTEM

LILA AVILÉS

Mexico, Denmark, France | 2023 | 95 min


THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 11 | 2:45 PM

Tonatiuh is a young father in the midst of a battle against cancer. In this delicate family drama, we watch the preparations for a party held in his home in his honour. What could be a run-of-the-mill, sappy melodrama, surprises us as a heartfelt portrait of a family in crisis. The story gives voice to Tonatiuh's father and sisters, but it is focused on Sol, his seven-year-old daughter.

Director Lila Avilés skillfully maintains a respectful, understated approach, leaving it to the audience to interpret the events. Filmed in close quarters and privileging the close-up, the film allows us to observe otherwise mundane tasks and each character's emotions. Action and dialogue flow naturally in a subdued atmosphere of expectation. One of the best films coming out of Mexico in the last few years, *Tótem* is Mexico's entry for the Best International Feature Film at the upcoming 96th Academy Awards. - DR

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Intimate + True to life + Engrossing



BUZZ+

WICKED LITTLE LETTERS

THEA SHARROCK

UK, France | 2023 | 100 min

THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 8 | 5:30 PM
FEB 9 | 12:00 PM
FEB 10 | 12:00 PM


In the 1920s in the beautiful seaside town of Littlehampton, trouble is brewing. Edith Swan (Olivia Colman) has just received her nineteenth profanity-strewn letter in the mail. Her parents (Gemma Jones, Timothy Spall) are beside themselves. Edith is a person of virtue and morality but generally well-liked in the town. So, when these letters arrive spewing the most foul-mouthed insults at Edith, action must be taken.

So off to the police they go and after a short investigation, the police decide it must be that rowdy Irish migrant Rose (Jessie Buckley) especially since she's well-known for cussing around town, drinking at the pub and generally being unladylike.

Jessie Buckley and Olivia Colman are fantastic together. Director Thea Shamrock - whose third feature is well-composed, shot and scored - has a steady hand at the helm, giving her two leads and wonderful supporting cast the room to have the time of their lives while turning in some of their best work. - *KK*

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Hilariously fun + Energetic + Light-hearted

COAST
PACIFIC RIM CENTRIC






940 CALEDONIA

KRISTA LOUGHTON

Canada | 2023 | 52 min

Documentary

BLUE BRIDGE THEATRE
FEB 8 | 6:00 PM 

Filmmaker expected to attend

For those experiencing homelessness, encampments have unfortunately become an increasingly common recourse across Canada, indicative of a systemic housing crisis that demands attention and action. In Victoria, one unsanctioned city park encampment flooded in December 2020, forcing the evacuation of its residents into a self-managed and supported site in a city parking lot. Viewed through the experiences of one of its residents and leaders, Tina Dawson, the newly formed community weathers storms and their own personal struggles, taking ownership over their circumstances and advocating for meaningful change to help address a number of crises they face.


The encampment's story is shared from the inside, demonstrating that change is possible when barriers are removed and cooperative efforts are supported. Director Krista Loughton also serves as a city councilor in Victoria, providing another dimension of access to government ensuring those who most directly require assistance are in contact with those who can enact policies. With incredible access and trust, Loughton compassionately conveys that the success of *940 Caledonia* is one step of many to the permanent and positive change so urgently needed. - AR

Screening with: My Journey Home | Rose Patterson, Priyanka Desai, Avinash Bujhuwan | Victoria | 2023 | 26 min

My Journey Home follows a bi-racial (Indigenous and African) woman. Born in British Columbia, Canada she was adopted by a white family through the 60s scoop and taken to the U.S. losing her connection to her Indigenous identity. Her journey home reconnects her to her roots with the Nisga'a Nation.

Housing + Community + Local

Movie Trailer
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Presented by:






MANUFACTURING THE THREAT

AMY MILLER

Canada | 2023 | 85 min

Documentary

ODEON VICTORIA
FEB 3 | 12:30 PM 


Filmmaker expected to attend

On Canada Day 2013, a plot to bomb the BC legislature was diffused. The husband and wife duo who allegedly planned the attack were arrested as suspected terrorists. Ana Carody and Omar Nuttall struggled with poverty and addiction before their conversion to Islam gave them a sense of hope and purpose. Unknowingly, they were sabotaged when federal agents, posing as radical jihadists, took advantage of the vulnerable couple and coerced them to carry out a plan formulated and enabled by law enforcement.

This thrilling and shocking exposé on the nefarious world of police infiltration, incitement and agent provocateurs highlights the dangers of unchecked power and the lengths to which it will go to make the ends justify the means. The damage to the couple is unfathomable and the years of their lives wasted by this unforgivable, but director Amy Miller crafts a stark reminder that without oversight and accountability the systems designed to keep us safe can also put us in jeopardy. - AR

Movie Trailer

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Power + Justice + Activism




OUR TIME TO BE KIND

ADRIAN BUITENHUIS

Canada | 2023 | 83 min


Documentary

THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 8 | 7:45 PM 

Filmmaker expected to attend

Prior to March 2020, Provincial Health Officers were able to work in relative obscurity, focused on public safety while advising governments on a wide range of issues. But much like her colleagues across the country, Dr. Bonnie Henry was thrust into the spotlight with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and rapidly became a household name. In the midst of the largest public health crisis of the century, Dr. Henry had the onerous duty of providing clear information based upon the best available evidence, and doing so in a social climate unlike any other. With incredible behind-the-scenes access, director Adrian Buitenhuis follows Dr. Henry from closed-door briefings to high stakes press conferences, revealing a dedicated public servant doing their best to prevent the spread of the virus while never losing sight of the concurrent opioid crisis devastating British Columbians.

In the midst of recording daily decisions about an unpredictable future, Buitenhuis weaves in reflections on Dr. Henry's past work around the globe during stints with the Royal Canadian Navy and World Health Organization that prepared her for the biggest challenge of her career. An insightful portrait of leadership, *Our Time to be Kind* thoughtfully captures a historical moment and its impact that will resonate for decades to come. - AR

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Biography + Pandemic + Local

Presented by:





PHYSICIAN, HEAL THYSELF

ASHER PENN

Canada | 2023 | 78 min

Documentary

THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 3 | 12:00 PM

Filmmaker expected to attend

Doctor. Activist. Author. It's impossible to assign a singular title to Dr. Gabor Maté. A familiar public figure for decades, his best-selling books and media appearances have given the physician a platform to share his views on a wide range of subjects including his controversial support for unorthodox treatments. In this biographical documentary, Maté reflects on his life in his own words. As the descendant of Hungarian Holocaust survivors, his immigration to Canada and eventual path toward a medical practice help fill in the details to his theories on trauma-informed care and empathy for those suffering from addiction.

Never one to shy away from difficult subjects, Dr. Maté openly discusses his own struggles, complicated behaviors and strained relationships that have helped inform his holistic approach to healthcare. An early advocate for safe injection sites stemming from his experience as a family physician in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, to his numerous books that have made him a sought-after public speaker, this member of the Order of Canada has charted his own unconventional but fascinating path, shared in intimate detail. - AR

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Biography + Health + Activism

Presented by: **DGC**
DIRECTORS GUILD OF CANADA
BRITISH COLUMBIA



COAST

SEAGRASS

MEREDITH HAMA-BROWN

Canada | 2023 | 115 min


CAPITOL 6
FEB 4 | 4:00 PM

In an effort to salvage their relationship and more openly communicate with each other, Judith (Ally Maki) and her husband Steve (Luke Roberts) sign up for a weeklong retreat on the Pacific Coast. It will allow their two young daughters a chance to roam freely within the resort's confines while the couple attempt a breakthrough in group therapy. Judith's Japanese Canadian background and recent passing of her mother add to the marital strain with her Caucasian spouse, while their 11-year-old, Stephanie (Nyha Breitzkreuz), gets a taste of adolescent drama and their youngest daughter, Emmy (Remy Marthaller), is certain she can feel her departed grandmother watching over them.

As Judith and Steve work through various exercises, encouraged and interrupted by overzealous bi-racial couple Carol (Sarah Gadon) and Pat (Chris Pang), Judith begins to question what she's really trying to save. Winner of the International Film Critics Award prize at TIFF, director Meredith Hama-Brown's feature film debut captures the delicate nuances of a family on the brink as tension hangs like a looming storm. - *AR*

Movie Trailer

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Marriage + Cultures + Local

Presented by:

Monday
MAGAZINE

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DIRECTORS GUILD OF CANADA
BRITISH COLUMBIA




SILVICOLA

JEAN-PHILIPPE MARQUIS

Canada | 2023 | 80 min

Documentary

ODEON VICTORIA
FEB 4 | 8:30 PM 


Filmmaker expected to attend

There are trees that have stood for thousands of years in Canada's Pacific Northwest. These old-growth forests have a priceless value economically, culturally, and environmentally, yet their existence is in peril. In the past one hundred years, reckless forestry practices have decimated these towering pillars and now our dependence on lumber has reached a point of reckoning.

From seedlings to cedar shakes, every facet of this industry is patiently revealed in stunning detail. Travel deep into the woods and listen to those who have invested their lives in so many unique ways with these trees, from loggers to carvers, tree planters to conservationists. Each perspective helps make clear what is at stake in this beautifully composed observation of one of nature's greatest gifts. The one thing they all share is a fundamental belief that there is a better way to go forward and there's not a moment (or tree) to waste. - AR

Movie Trailer

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Beauty + Environment + Local

Presented by:





WILD GOAT SURF

CAITLYN SPONHEIMER


Canada | 2023 | 100 min

COAST

CAPITOL 6
FEB 4 | 6:30 PM

In the midst of another sweltering Okanagan summer, 13-year-old Goat Anderson (Shayelin Martin) and their single mom Jane (Caitlyn Sponheimer) return to an RV park beside Skaha Lake after illegally subletting their rental home to vacationers. While Jane's doing her best as a hairdresser by day and waitress at night to provide for the two of them, Goat is left to their own devices and befriends Nate, another awkward kid living in the campground. Together they kill time scrounging spare change and shoplifting while cruising between the skatepark and the beach.

Despite the still waters that surround them, Goat fantasizes about becoming a world-class surfer, undeterred by their circumstances and the hundreds of kilometres between them and the closest coast. An authentic and sensitively crafted coming-of-age tale, Caitlyn Sponheimer's debut feature is an homage to the lost summers of youth, full of endless days and possibilities when you gain your independence but lose your innocence. - *AR*

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Youth + Summers + Dreams


Presented by: 
DIRECTORS GUILD OF CANADA
BRITISH COLUMBIA



WITH LOVE AND A MAJOR ORGAN

KIM ALBRIGHT

Canada | 2023 | 100 min

THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 4 | 7:45 PM 


Filmmaker expected to attend

Emily Dickinson wrote, “The heart wants what it wants or else it does not care.” In an alternate reality where pragmatism rules and everyone is more connected to their devices than each other, a lonesome virtual insurance broker Anabel (Anna Maguire) is compelled to find human connection. After too many emotional blows, she rips her ticker from her chest and bestows it to George (Hamza Haq), a mild-mannered but somewhat detached gentleman. After the swap, Anabel is freed from the pain her heart caused, while George is overwhelmed by new sensations, which come as a shock to his overbearing mother.

Anabel soon realizes the cost of her sacrifice and George isn’t keen to return the gift and resume his subdued existence. Director Kim Albright delivers a unique romance that crafts a fantastical world based on very real experiences. What happens when artificial intelligence becomes a substitute for human emotions and matters of the heart are left to algorithms of an app? Anabel and George’s organs may be mechanical objects, but their feelings are all too real. - AR

Movie Trailer

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Romance + Fantasy + Technology

Presented by: 
DIRECTORS GUILD OF CANADA
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CURRENTS

SPLASH AROUND IN THE ZEITGEIST.




500 DAYS IN THE WILD

DIANNE WHELAN

Canada | 2023 | 124 min


Documentary

THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 2 | 3:15 PM 

Filmmaker expected to attend

Winner of the Audience Favourite Award at the 2023 Whistler Film Festival, the film chronicles 50+ filmmaker Dianne Whelan's six-year journey as the only person to complete the Trans Canada Trail. Braving rocky paths, fording rivers, and crossing snow-swept mountain peaks, Dianne pushes herself. Biking, hiking, paddling, snowshoeing, and skiing through all seasons, at one point axing the ice on a frozen lake to canoe it. Through this epic trek Dianne offers personal reflections narrated over incredible wildlife and landscape photography. The soundtrack is pure Canadiana, including music from the Tragically Hip, Joni Mitchell, UHF, and many more.

The travelling sequences are interwoven with Dianne's encounters with the Indigenous communities that intersect the trail, and reconciliation and respect is a constant touchstone for the project. Her strong female support network is always there for her, and the film's highlights often involve her accepting the kindness of strangers. Dianne maintains a cheery spiritual outlook that may be initially chafing to some, but as you spend time with her, her courage and skills will earn the admiration of even the most jaded materialist, especially given the herculean effort this woman has gone through to put it all on the screen. Just try not to be inspired. - BS

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Journey + Reconciliation + Nature

Presented by:  **DGC**
DIRECTORS GUILD OF CANADA
BRITISH COLUMBIA

 **chek**



THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 10 | 7:45 PM

A DIFFICULT YEAR (UNE ANNÉE DIFFICILE)

OLIVIER NAKACHE, ÉRIC TOLEDANO


France | 2023 | 120 min

Albert is deep in debt, waiting for a wake up call as he tries to sell a cheap TV to a suicidal man named Bruno. Saving his life in the process, the two find themselves homeless for different reasons before concocting a scheme to infiltrate a climate activist group that's dedicated to fighting overconsumption. It's a way for them to score some free food and drinks, while also selling the group's salvage for their own profit. Soon though, Albert starts to develop feelings for one of the leaders of the group, a young woman nicknamed Cactus (played by French breakout star Noémie Merlant). He begins to find his heart entangled with the movement, but Albert's unscrupulous motives are just waiting to catch up with him.

Directors Olivier Nakache and Éric Toledano are best remembered for their 2011 hit *The Intouchables*. Their latest is a comedy with a conscience, touching on how burdened modern life feels, with the story of a profiteer who trades in a hollow pursuit for a more sincere connection. *A Difficult Year* is a romp that remembers that protest can be fun. - AK

Movie Trailer

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Satirical + Political + Chucklesome



AFTER WORK

ERIK GANDINI


Sweden, Norway, Italy | 2022 | 81 min
Documentary

BLUE BRIDGE THEATRE
FEB 6 | 8:30 PM

The majority of jobs that exist today will disappear within a few decades. Hundreds of millions of jobs could be lost due to the rapid growth of automation. How will this affect our society? As technology surpasses human capacity, we have an opportunity to rethink the role of work in our lives. Are we ready for an excess of time? What is the relationship between our life's work and the meaning that we long for in life? *After Work* prods these questions as it sweeps across four countries and continents - South Korea, the USA, Italy, and Kuwait - exploring wildly different experiences of how life and work intertwine. Some people barely spend any time outside of work, while others bathe in leisure and explore existential issues of meaning. Attitudes towards work are contradictory. On the one hand, work is a burden and nothing more than a way to earn a living for many people worldwide. On the other, a growing number of people see their jobs as the meaning of life. Where does that leave our employment and how do we define the point of our lives? - KS

Movie Trailer

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Contemplative + Culture + Capitalism



CANNES UNCUT

RICHARD BLANSHARD, ROGER PENNY

UK | 2023 | 86 min

Documentary


THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 5 | 5:30 PM

It's all about the glam! From the movie stars and filmmakers, through to the critics and the hard-nosed, party-loving film executives who have helped set Cannes and the film world alight, this is their story. A story of their highest of highs and lowest of lows. From the protests of 1968 and the recent pandemic to the advent of video, digital and streamers. From shoes and selfies on the red carpet, to #MeToo and an increasing call for diversity in the representation of filmmakers both in and out of competition.

The documentary, beautifully paced and well told, is held together by a band of people who have spent far too many decades pounding the Croisette, sweeping up the red carpet, hiding in the sales bunker, and drinking and carousing late into the night. Cannes veterans, one and all. - *KK*

Movie Trailer

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Glam + Salacious + Fun



HIGH & LOW: JOHN GALLIANO

KEVIN MACDONALD

UK | 2023 | 116 min

Documentary

CURRENTS


ODEON VICTORIA
FEB 8 | 6:00 PM

“I’m going to tell you everything,” says John Galliano, staring directly into the camera, which is all well and good except Galliano himself is an unreliable, but nevertheless compelling, witness.

High & Low: John Galliano examines the career of fashion designer John Galliano and the context, including decades of industry pressure and addiction, that preceded his downfall in 2011.

One of the most exciting designers of all time, his achievements in couture are arguably some of the greatest and they are all on display here, along with the women who still see him as a friend. Penelope Cruz, Charlize Theron, Kate Moss and others believed that the couture world enabled his decline.

But while the fashionistas support Galliano, Macdonald has created a frank portrait that doesn’t let him slip off the hook, but at the same time there is a sense of empathy that makes this documentary the most compelling in recent years. The clothes are beautiful but is the man? After watching *High & Low*, I think Galliano must often ask himself that same question. - KK

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Clear-eyed + Beautiful + Poignant



HOW TO HAVE SEX

MOLLY MANNING WALKER

UK | 2023 | 98 min


CAPITOL 6
FEB 2 | 6:30 PM
FEB 6 | 4:00 PM

Winner of the Un Certain Regard award at Cannes, first-time director Molly Manning Walker has already cemented her place as a rising star of independent British film. Hailing from a successful career as a DOP (did you see *Scrapper* at the Vic?), Walker’s directorial debut glows with all the dizzying lights and lurid sensuality of late adolescence. *How to Have Sex* follows three teenage girls on a post-exams trip to the party island of Crete, Greece. Tara (Mia McKenna-Bruce - a new comer and without a doubt, a star) and her two school friends, Em (Enva Lewis) and Skye (Lara Peake), are committed to excessively drinking to their newfound freedom. Their conversation buzzes with excitement about potential sexual encounters and the teasing of Tara, who happens to be a virgin.

Traversing the exhilarating highs and hung-over lows of flirtation, friendship and drunken bravado, Walker confronts issues of consent and desire with both sensitivity and frankness. Amidst the fuzz of booze-fuelled ambiguity, at the film’s core is a deep concern for the clarity of consent - and the uncomfortable grey areas which are so often swept away by the influence of peers.


Walker has received critical acclaim across the board for a debut that marks her out as a director uniquely skilled in “capturing images that sear themselves into your eyes, while also filling each frame with a sensory overload of energy and movement” - The Guardian. - JD

Movie Trailer
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Luminous + Exciting + Nostalgic



BLUE BRIDGE THEATRE
FEB 6 | 6:00 PM 

JOIN OR DIE

PETE & REBECCA DAVIS

USA | 2023 | 99 min

Documentary

Filmmaker expected to attend


The phrase “Join, or Die” was the caption to a 18th-century cartoon, attributed to Benjamin Franklin, of a segmented snake representing the American colonies, that became a popular symbol of support for the American revolution. Sibling filmmakers Pete and Rebecca Davis have found a fresh importance in those words in their briskly entertaining documentary. The focus is the work of political scientist, Robert D. Putnam, who wrote an influential 1995 essay, followed by a best-selling book, entitled *Bowling Alone* (2000) which noted that while the number of bowlers had increased in the United States, the number of bowling leagues had declined. He chose it as an example of the post-1960s decline of “social capital” as fewer Americans belong to organizations, including clubs, churches and civil associations, where they practiced democracy and conflict resolution at a grassroots level.

The affable, camera-friendly Putnam, now in his eighties, is the central interview subject here. He recalls how he accepted the challenge in John Kennedy’s inaugural address, “Ask what you can do for your country” and committed himself to data-driven analysis of what made successful democracies work. Years later, Bill Clinton paraphrased Putnam’s words in his 1995 inaugural speech. In 2013, Barak Obama, who participated in one of Putnam’s seminars in the nineties, awarded him the Humanitarian Prize.

Other acolytes interviewed here include Hillary Clinton, Pete Buttigieg and economist Glenn Lowry, along with union organizers, church leaders, members of fraternal order and a cycling club. Together, they make the case that, especially now in the wake of the COVID isolation, those face-to-face interactions are more important than ever to keep us grounded in real world reciprocity and keeping the wheels of democracy turning. - LL

Fraternity + Democracy + Community

Movie Trailer
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L'OCÉAN VU DU COEUR

IOLANDE CADRIN-ROSSIGNOL, MARIE-DOMINIQUE MICHAUD

Canada | 2023 | 96 min

Documentary


THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 5 | 12:00 PM

L'Océan vu du cœur immerses viewers in the exploration of the beauty and threats faced by our planet's oceans. The once seemingly boundless and invincible ocean now faces a perilous threat from human activities, jeopardizing its biodiversity and equilibrium. The recently passed and very popular astrophysicist and pop scientist Hubert Reeves, flanked by a cadre of scientists and ardent adventurers, leads a compelling sequel to *La Terre vue du cœur*.

This beautifully shot documentary unveils the stunning resilience of the ocean, emphasizing its awe-inspiring regenerative power, even in the face of the threats human activity is posing. Through breathtaking visuals and impassioned narratives, the film focuses our attention on the vitality of our planet's oceans. Truly amazing images of the oceans' diverse life forms will definitely inspire not only awe but likely action. The recurring themes of environmental responsibility and the imperative to preserve the ocean are well-served by Hubert and the filmmakers, who balance their clear intentions with solid cinematic instincts. - *BS*

Movie Trailer

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Oceans + Beauty + Conservation

Presented by:






LEILANI'S FORTUNE

LOVELEEN KAUR

Canada | 2023 | 80 min

Documentary

BLUE BRIDGE THEATRE
FEB 9 | 8:30 PM 

Filmmaker expected to attend

Queer, Ethiopian-Eritrean artist Witch Prophet (Ayo Leilani) is finally getting the support she needs after years of struggle to put out her album *The Gateway Experience*. *Leilani's Fortune* is an energetic, serious yet playful exploration of Witch Prophet's music and her beliefs and prophecies that are an integral part of it. She is becoming a crucial talent who is reshaping the next era of Canadian artists in this country's music industry and she hopes for more serious validation.

Fun and captivating, and a little trippy, the story of Witch Prophet is told in a chapter by chapter style format with visuals and a mixed-media approach that provides an intimate look into her life, ups and downs, intersecting identities, relationships, and coming of age in the Canadian music industry. The queer, Black, and immigrant experiences Witch Prophet explores is what the director Loveleen Kaur aimed for as a documentarian who seeks to empower the voices of QTBIPOC artists who have been overlooked in the mainstream world. - *KM*

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[ticket here](#)

Energetic + Playful + Creative



SANDTOWN

ISAIAH SMALLMAN

USA | 2023 | 100 min

Documentary

CURRENTS


CAPITOL 6
FEB 5 | 1:00 PM

Named after the trails of sand left by horse-drawn quarry wagons, the West Baltimore community known as Sandtown was one of the settings for HBO's acclaimed crime drama series, *The Wire*. The historically Black area, which was devastated in the 1968 riots in the wake of the assassination of Martin Luther King, has become synonymous with poverty, drugs, unemployment and violent crime. It was also the chosen home for white Christian civil rights activist Pastor Steve Smallman his wife, Mary, who brought their young family, including the then two-year-old Thomas, to live there in the late 1990s. The Smallmans were determined to help, and help they did, establishing an after-school program, leveraging support for new homes and jobs, casting local kids in a movie and creating a middle-school children's choir that toured and signed a record deal. After 13 years, the Smallman family did what many of Sandtown residents could only dream of doing: they moved, leaving the now teen-aged Thomas with residual stress, guilt and grief. Twenty years later, the director returns to Sandtown for a series of frank conversations with his family and neighbours as they explore how naiveté, condescension and privilege were entangled in his family's good intentions. The result is both a case study in the limits of ally-ship, and affirmation of the power of honest friendship. - LL

Activism + Friendship + Reckoning

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STARRING JERRY AS HIMSELF

LAW CHEN

USA | 2023 | 75 min
Documentary-Hybrid


THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 5 | 2:45 PM

A triple winner at last year's Slamdance Film Festival, for best documentary, most popular documentary and best actor, *Starring Jerry as Himself* is a genre-bending combination of dramatic thriller and cautionary documentary. The titular star is Jerry Hsu, a retired, recently divorced Taiwanese man living in Orlando, Florida. After an alarming phone call, Jerry began keeping a secret from his family: accused by the Chinese police of being part of a money-laundering scheme, he has now been recruited to go undercover to clear his name. From their offices, apparently in Shanghai, the policemen instruct him on how to make a series of bank transfers, using savings which were intended to help his son buy a condo.

Viewers who have been pestered with Chinese scam calls will watch these scenes unfold with increasing unease and incredulity, as director Law Chen's film deftly toys with expectations, using dramatic reenactments using both Jerry's family members and actors. Entertaining and poignant, *Starring Jerry as Himself* creates a double vision of a doting dad, as both a dupe and hero. - LL

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Intrigue + Family + Blackmail



STOLEN

KARAN TEJPAL

India | 2023 | 92 min

BLUE BRIDGE THEATRE
FEB 5 | 6:00 PM


There are very few films where the story unfolds and it just gets better and better, but this debut film written and directed by Karan Tejpal certainly fits that category.

Gautam (Abhishek Banerjee) is waiting for his brother Raman (Shubham) who missed his flight and is now travelling by train.

When he finds his brother, he's being falsely accused by Jhumpa (Mia Maelzer) of stealing her baby, but Gautam isn't interested in Jhumpa's plight - they have their mother's wedding to attend. Raman on the other hand has great sympathy for her and forces his brother's hand.

From there, this extraordinarily told tale dips and weaves, pops up surprises and engages throughout; it takes on the class system but also the way information can travel, with footage of Jhumpa accusing Raman finding its way online immediately. The cinematographer, Isshaan Ghosh, doesn't let us down either. Ghosh lets us feel that we are right in there with the protagonists hotly sidestepping the mob.

Soon Gautam, Raman and, yes, Jhumpa are pursued by locals who, based on misinformation, believe them to be child abductors. The film has more in store as Jhumpa also turns out to have several unexpected secrets that see her go from panicked victim to her own self-determination. - *KK*

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Humanity + Chaos + Thrilling



STOLEN TIME

HELENE KLODAWSKY

Canada | 2023 | 85 min
Documentary


ODEON VICTORIA
FEB 6 | 3:00 PM

As a growing part of an aging generation's lives, long-term care in Canada has reached a breaking point. The pandemic shone a spotlight on tragic circumstances that were a long time coming due to government inaction and privatization. It is obvious the elderly population is not receiving the care they desperately need and deserve. Elder rights lawyer Melissa Miller is fighting for systemic change as her clients are grieving in the midst of legal battles their loved ones can no longer fight themselves.

This true crime story is a riveting but horrifying testimony to the dedication of frontline workers who have borne the brunt of negligent corporations that put profits before people. Family members bravely share shocking evidence showing the tragic suffering many seniors needlessly face in their final years. Representing their collective pain, Miller lays bare the facts, demonstrating a lack of transparency and denial of accountability across a wide number of long-term care facilities. The result is an eye-opening exposé that gives voice to the vulnerable and demands immediate action. - *AR*

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Aging + Justice + Healthcare

Presented by: 



SULTANA'S DREAM

ISABEL HERGUERA

Spain, Germany | 2023 | 83 min

BLUE BRIDGE THEATRE
FEB 7 | 8:30 PM

Inés, a Spanish artist, after a failed relationship, heads to India to visit Amar (Manu Khurana), a freedom-loving urban type with whom she has a fluid relationship. While there, Inés stumbles upon Sultana's Dream, a story written by Rokeya Hossain in 1905.


The story describes Ladyland, a utopia in which women rule the country while men live in seclusion because they're considered dangerous and so must be kept isolated. Fascinated by the story, Inés embarks on a journey across the country to search for the one place where women can live in peace.

Here she finds a soulmate in teacher Sudhanya and will learn a lot more about Hossain and her world - a world whose values have remained mostly unchanged for over 100 years.

Herguera's well-paced and witty satire pokes fun at the male-dominated society that still exists. The film's impressive animation uses different techniques that range from watercolor to paper with a surprising use of henna. The result is remarkable richness and visual ambition. Beyond the wonderful story and humour, this tale is enchanting. - *KK*

Romance + Fantasy + Technology

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THE DRIVEN ONES

PIET BAUMGARTNER

Switzerland | 2023 | 92 min
Documentary

ODEON VICTORIA
FEB 8 | 8:30 PM


It's easy to wonder as we've moved into this age of meritocracy, is it a term that fools us into forgetting that the people who get there on "merit" are still mostly from a privileged class that gets ahead with dollars, schooling and advantages from birth.

The Driven Ones' director Piet Baumgartner follows five students, who get accepted into the master's program, Strategy and International Management at the University of St. Gallen in Switzerland. Billed as "The Flagship Management Programme for Tomorrow's Responsible Global Leaders," it is globally ranked as the best overall, according to the annual Financial Times. Those who succeed here are ultimately already part of the future business elite - like Feifei, Sara, Tobias, Frederic and David.

Over the course of seven years, the documentary accompanies the five young men and women, who come from very different countries, from their studies to the first years of their careers. They have different backgrounds, dreams and values. But they all have the same goal: professional success as quickly as possible. The five, who are disarmingly outspoken, are willing to make sacrifices, to subordinate their personal lives to professional advancement. They experience exhilarating triumphs as well as bitter defeats - and repeatedly question many things. But does the hype live up to the reality? The question does turn to whether a balance can be struck. - *KK*

Inspiring + Focused + Reflective

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Presented by:  Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Consulate General of Switzerland in Vancouver



THE FEELING THAT THE TIME FOR DOING SOMETHING HAS PASSED

JOANNA ARNOW


USA | 2023 | 87 min

THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 10 | 5:30 PM

Brooklyn native Joanne Arnow made a splash at Cannes' Director's Fortnight with *The Feeling That the Time for Doing Something Has Passed*, though she was already known for a series of award-winning shorts and had won the admiration of star indie directors such as Andrew Bujalski and Sean Baker, who served as executive producer on her debut feature.

Arnow's filmmaking consists of a mosaic of casually paced but meticulously framed and edited short scenes, suggestive of comic book panels which capture episodes that focus on Ann's professional, family and sexual life. Something of a stereotypically bleak millennial, Ann has the flat emotional and vocal delivery of a young woman who's too bored or disappointed to care but there's a lot of personal exposure here: she's literally and unflatteringly naked for many scenes, in a series of encounters as a submissive, usually with a middle-aged divorced dad.

Arnow channels something of the tragicomic spirit of Samuel Beckett ("Nothing is funnier than unhappiness") in watching the slights and humiliations Ann stoically endures. But there's also a lightness here, both from Arnow's sardonic observational perspective and in the dialogue's frame-worthy punchlines ("Keep your head down and you could be here for a really long time" suggests a fellow office drone). With incremental advances, with some backsliding, her character grows, as Ann struggles to step out of her familiar discomfort zone. - LL

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Humour + Millennial + Exposed




THE MICHOACAN FILE

BERNARDO ARSUAGA

Mexico | 2023 | 91 min

Documentary

ODEON VICTORIA
FEB 4 | 12:30 PM 

Filmmaker expected to attend

The plot of this film follows the quest of Mexican officials to give Mexican food a special worldwide status as “Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity” granted by UNESCO. We witness their efforts to navigate the agency’s bureaucracy and compile a convincing argument. Thus the title of the documentary: Michoacán refers to the state in Central Mexico where many traditional dishes hail from, and where ancestral culinary ways are still practiced. Along the way, we learn about the history of Mexican food. After the Spaniards established their colonial rule beginning in the sixteenth century, Mexico became a crossroads between Europe and Asia. Drawing from commercial and cultural exchanges, Indigenous culinary practices, diverse food staples and local agricultural methods, one of the top cuisines in the world was forged over the centuries.

Featuring cultural historians, government officials, ecological activists, members of indigenous communities, and noted chefs such as Rick Bayless, *The Michoacan File* is a wonderful trip across time, space and culture, and is a feast for the eyes. - *DR*


Presented by:



-
Local Mexican restaurant Maiiz will be on hand to speak to Mexican cuisine and provide delicious samples.

Revealing + Flavourful + Ecologically minded

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THE SMELL OF MONEY

SHAWN BANNON

USA | 2023 | 84 min

Documentary


CAPITOL 6
FEB 8 | 6:30 PM

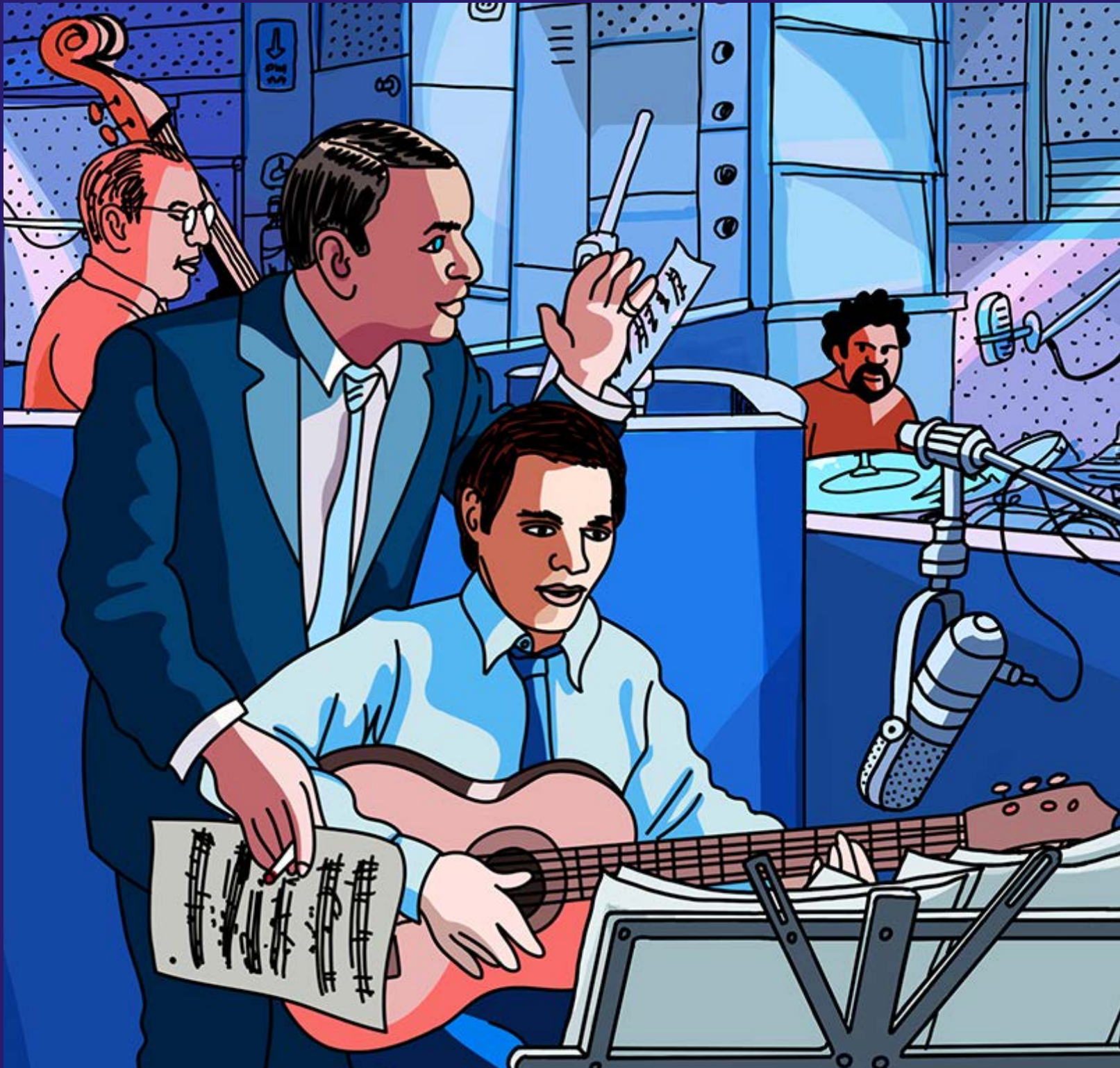
“The smell of money” refers to the stench of pig waste, an estimated 10-billion gallons a year which are produced by factory pig farms or CAFOs (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) in the pork-producing mills of North Carolina. Directed by Shawn Bannon and written by North Carolina native, Jamie Berger, *The Smell of Money* covers a range of perspectives on these facilities, from politicians (notably, Senator Cory Booker), along with scientists, farmers, activists, and lawyers. The unavoidable conclusions are damning: these places stink, literally and ethically. Over the past thirty years, residents in historically Black areas have been engulfed in the pig waste, spoiling their air, water, soil, and physical and mental health.

One of the most prominent organizers in the fight, and the documentary’s heroine, was the late Elsie Herring, the granddaughter of a freed slave, who led a tenacious legal battle against one of the biggest pork corporations, Smithfield Foods (the company that produces Nathan’s Famous hot dogs). As well as stoking some righteous indignation, *The Smell of Money* raises awareness of environmental racism, agricultural pollution and animal rights, but health professionals point out the dangers these farms pose to those of us distant from the stench of the crime. The facilities are virtual laboratories for infectious diseases, including the 2009 swine flu pandemic, the origins of which were traced to a North Carolina factory farm. - LL

Racism + Farming + Environment

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CURRENTS

THEY SHOT THE PIANO PLAYER

JAVIER MARISCOL, FERNANDO TRUEBA

Spain, France, Netherlands | 2023 | 103 min
Documentary

THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 7 | 5:30 PM


Jeff Goldblum is the voice of music journalist Jeff Harris who set out to solve the mystery of what happened to Francisco Tenorio Jr., a Brazilian jazz pianist who disappeared in Argentina in 1976. Hailed as one of the leading bossa nova pianists of his generation, Tenorio was a key player in the intoxicating bossa nova explosion of the 1960s, a cultural landmark that happened to coincide with the rise of totalitarian governments throughout South America.

Through interviews, *They Shot the Piano Player* takes us back to an exciting musical time as the popularity of bossa nova went worldwide, told by the people who were there creating the music. Following the trail to solve the mystery of Tenorio's disappearance uncovers the truth about a very dark time in South American history.

The bright, colourful animation highlights the vibrancy of the music, shifting to grays and shadows as darker themes emerge. - RW

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Intrigue + Mystery + Music



WE ARE GUARDIANS

EDIVAN GUAJAJARA, CHELSEA GREENE, ROB GROBMAN

Brazil, USA | 2023 | 85 min

Documentary

BLUE BRIDGE THEATRE
FEB 7 | 6:00 PM 

Filmmaker expected to attend


In the heart of the Brazilian Amazon, thousands of people are unlawfully encroaching upon protected lands, devastating centuries-old trees for export, and exploiting rare resources. It's a critical issue that impacts the entire planet.

In *We Are Guardians*, we follow indigenous resistance fighters as they struggle to protect their homeland in a variety of ways. It's a complicated issue for someone like an illegal logger, trapped in a desperate struggle to make ends meet, who sees no alternative means of survival, and a determined landowner, committed to preserving the rich ecosystem within his property, relentlessly seeking answers from local authorities. Through this tapestry of perspectives, we see the economic connections to markets that link goods derived in the Amazon region to consumers around the world.

In the end, is there a glimmer of hope? Can people be taught how to earn a living by saving the forest? Can the exit of Bolsonaro bring new hope? And most importantly, will the Indigenous gain political power? It's a subject worth everyone's consideration as this insightful documentary lays out the players and the playing field. - *KK*

Movie Trailer

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Timely + Potent + Insightful



WILDING

DAVID ALLEN

UK | 2023 | 75 min

Documentary

THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 11 | 5:30 PM

Wilding is based on Isabella Tree's 2018 memoir of how she and her husband Charlie Burrell completely overhauled the Knepp estate he inherited in Sussex, taking it from a dying landscape to a thriving environmentally sound and beautiful land.


Tree and Burrell, seeing the degraded state of the land, decide on a radical experiment that proves to be transformative. Beginning with research into how trees interconnect below ground, they proceed to introduce wild native ponies, deer, and native pigs to the land. All the animals including their cows and sheep live outdoors all year long. The idea in itself is simple but very far from current practices - to let every single element from the animals to the microbes in the soil simply do what they were intended to.

When the soil begins to come back to life, it's thrilling. Director David Allen's debut feature strikes just the right balance, helped immeasurably by the cinematography resonating and capturing the romance and golden light of the area.

It's not all easy going: the neighbours are alarmed by the changed conditions; the government is also sticking its nose in, and bringing native beavers back to the area is its own bureaucratic nightmare; and the animals, well, an attempt to rent the property out for weddings and such brings its own kind of chaos.

But the thrill of success sweeps one away as it's impossible not to be caught in *Wilding's* warm and welcoming embrace. - KK

Hopeful + Astonishing + Passionate

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WITH PETER BRADLEY

ALEX RAPPOPORT

USA | 2023 | 85 min

Documentary


CAPITOL 6
FEB 6 | 1:00 PM

Director Alex Rappaport's *With Peter Bradley*, shot during COVID restrictions on the artist's upper-state New York farm, captures the 79-year-old African American abstract painter on the verge of a major comeback after having all but disappeared from the art scene for decades. An irreverent raconteur, Bradley offers a trove of anecdotes and a fresh perspective on art history. Working in his shipping container studio, heated in winter by a wood stove, he preps his canvases and creates vibrant new works while listening to jazz music that is his source of inspiration.

As a child, Bradley was adopted into a family where house guests included some of the elite jazz musicians of the day, including Miles Davis with whom he shared a special bond. A wardrobe full of bespoke shirts and jackets are mementos of his 1970s career high as an art dealer, curator, painter and sculptor. Throughout, Bradley adamantly rejected the prevailing orthodoxy that Black artists should concentrate on figurative painting. After a period in the eighties when he was briefly homeless, Bradley moved to his pastoral retreat, where he continues to paint every day. Accompanied by Javon Jackson's bop-influenced original score, *With Peter Bradley* is an uplifting examination of the creative life. - LL

Movie Trailer

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Painting + Jazz + Struggle

FIRST

PRESENTING CONTEMPORARY INDIGENOUS FILMMAKING.






CAFÉ DAUGHTER

SHELLEY NIRO

Canada | 2023 | 97 min


FIRST

ODEON VICTORIA
FEB 2 | 6:00 PM 

Filmmaker expected to attend

Inspired by the story of Dr. Lillian Eve Quan Dyck, Shelley Niro's latest feature drama, *Café Daughter*, follows 9-year-old Yvette Wong's journey in the small town of Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan. She is the daughter of a Cree mother and Chinese Canadian father and works in their café in the evenings after school. After a brief, tumultuous trip to their reserve, Yvette's mother makes Yvette and her brother Charlie hide their Indigeneity to avoid the prevalent racism in their town.

Yvette dreams of becoming a doctor, but encounters prejudice from her fellow students and teachers. She reluctantly hides her Cree identity throughout high school until she meets Maggie Wolf and is reintroduced to her Aunt Delores. Yvette must make the choice to either hide her identity to protect her scholarship and her own safety within the school or to embrace her Indigenous roots and stand proud in the face of racism. - *BHC*

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60's + Perseverance + Reclamation



HEY, VIKTOR!

CODY LIGHTNING

Canada | 2023 | 102 min

FIRST

THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 3 | 7:45 PM 
ODEON VICTORIA
FEB 5 | 3:00 PM


Filmmaker expected to attend at first screening

In *Hey Viktor!* we track the chaos of Cody Lightning, former child actor most famous for his role as “Young Victor” in the iconic 1998 film *Smoke Signals*. Cody is washed up, burnt out and reeking of desperation. He’s looking to capitalize on what’s left of his previous fame to make *Smoke Signals 2*. With the help of his manager, Kate, played by Hannah Cheesman, and some shady funding, Cody commandeers a crew who were hired to film his intervention in order to make this unauthorized sequel.

They hit the ground stumbling, only managing to enlist one member of the previous *Smoke Signals* cast, Young Thomas, played by the grown-up Simon Baker. Other members of the cast either decline or agree not to press charges in Cody’s pursuit of them. Everything begins to unravel on set, and disaster and confusion ensue around the production. Cody pushes those close to him away and burns any remaining bridges he has. An unredeemable figure, once a hero to his community, this former child star must choose to pick up the pieces or walk away from the spotlight forever. - *BHC*

Movie Trailer

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Parody + Comedy + Celebrity



TAUTUKTAVUK (WHAT WE SEE)

CAROL KUNNUK, LUCY TULUGARJUK

Canada | 2023 | 82 min

FIRST


THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 9 | 2:45 PM

Taking place in the onset of the COVID 19 Pandemic, *Tautuktavuk (What we See)* follows the intersecting stories of two sisters, Saqqinak and Uyarak, who are played by co-directors Carol Kunnuk & Lucy Tulugarjuk. Saqqinak lives in their home community of Igloolik surrounded by family and land-based cultural practice, while younger sister Uyarak lives in the urban centre of Montréal.

Shot in cinéma vérité style that transitions between scenes from their home lives in Igloolik and Montréal and online visits between the sisters as they encounter the realities of the pandemic and isolation, in this solitude, haunting memories of abuse reemerge for younger sister Uyarak. Saqqinak does her best to support her through this and reminds Uyarak she is loved. Saqqinak hosts *Tarriaksuk Live*, a TV show in Igloolik that shows Inuit practicing their cultural dances, songs and harvesting practices under the restrictions of the pandemic. Uyarak makes a trip home to Igloolik to confront her memories and reconnect with her family and land. Saqqinak reveals a secret that brings the sisters closer together. - *BHC*

Movie Trailer

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Sisters + Nunavut + Healing



THE GREAT SALISH HEIST

DARRELL DENNIS

Canada | 2023 | 96 min

FIRST


BLUE BRIDGE THEATRE
FEB 9 | 6:00 PM 

Filmmaker expected to attend

The Great Salish Heist is a local feature from the team behind previous VFF documentary favourites *Tzouhalem* and *A Cedar Is Life* that features many Canadian and international stars, such as Tricia Helfer, Graham Greene, David Lewis, Ashley Callingbull, and Darrell Dennis (doing double duty as director). The story starts with Steve Joe, a traditional archaeologist for the Moquahat people, who faces a personal and community crisis when sacred objects are removed from their burial sites. Convinced that his myriad misfortunes stem from this desecration, Steve rallies a diverse group from the Rez to reclaim the stolen artifacts from a heavily guarded museum. The team includes the troubled Stephanie, gruff single-mother Joanne, faux-British Andrew, and socially stunted Craig. To fund their heist, Steve reluctantly partners with a Russian gangster, Yuri, and his boss Vladimir. As the team plans their daring mission, Steve grapples with the dilemma of whether to give sacred objects to the gangsters. The stakes heighten as they gain unexpected allies and attempt to execute a cunning plan. *The Great Salish Heist* is a journey of redemption, cultural reclamation, and the lengths one man and his heist team will go to outwit their foes and restore sacred artifacts. - BS

Movie Trailer

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Cunning + Community + Capers

Presented by: 




FIRST

WAAPAKE

JULES ARITA KOOSTACHIN

Canada | 2023 | 80 min

Documentary

ODEON VICTORIA
FEB 4 | 6:00 PM 


Filmmaker expected to attend

The last Residential School in Canada was closed in 1997. After being in operation across the country for more than 130 years, the legacy of these institutions continues to resonate across time, space and land. In her feature-length documentary *WaaPaKe*, director Dr. Jules Arita Koostachin interviews intergenerational survivors of these schools, which were meant to assimilate Indigenous children and to punish them for practicing their cultural ways or for merely existing. As the film shows, many of those children did not make it back home.

Through a series of powerful and intimate one-on-one interviews, *WaaPaKe* casts light on the past, while recognizing each survivor's present-day resilience. Koostachin invites the viewer to listen to her own family's story as well, offering a close experience with how the present is still reflected in the past. *WaaPaKe*, which means "tomorrow" in Cree, isn't asking how we can just move forward, it is speaking to how we are going to get there. - *BHC*

Documentary + Intergenerational + Survivance

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Presented by: 

OLIO

NOT JUST THIS AND THAT BUT ALSO THAT AND THIS.





OLIO

CROWS ARE WHITE

AHSEN NADEEM


USA, Ireland, Japan | 2022 | 97 min
Documentary

BLUE BRIDGE THEATRE
FEB 8 | 8:30 PM

After decades of living a secret life, a filmmaker travels to a strict Japanese monastery in search of guidance. How does a good Muslim son tell his devout (but far away) parents that he is intending to marry a white woman, outside of their faith? Struggling to reconcile his desires with his faith, Ahsen searches for answers in religion. For over a thousand years, this secretive Buddhist sect has lived in an isolated monastery performing acts of extreme physical endurance in their pursuit of enlightenment. When Ahsen arrives, his presence is not welcomed and the only monk who will speak with him is an outcast who prefers ice cream and Slayer over meditation. Together they forge an unlikely friendship that leads them to higher truths and, occasionally, a little trouble. Shot over five years on three continents, *Crows are White* is an exploration of truth, faith, and love, from the top of a mountain to the bottom of a sundae.
- KS

Movie Trailer

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Religion + Family + Quirky



OLIO

LYNX MAN

JUHA SUONPÄÄ

Finland | 2023 | 80 min

Documentary


BLUE BRIDGE THEATRE
FEB 5 | 8:30 PM

Hannu's connection to nature surpasses most, so when a dead lynx shows up in his forest, he dons a mask and embarks on a creative journey to protect this most elusive of animals – the lynx. Over years of observing and advocating for the further protection of this species, Hannu falls in love with these cats –so much so that he claims to be able to speak their language. Hauntingly beautiful footage captured by hidden cameras throughout the forest paints an unforgettable twilight picture of the natural world and our role to play in its care and protection.

Through mire and thicket, we follow Hannu as he playfully engages with his mysterious neighbours and tracks their progress. Quirky and creative, with an immersive soundscape, director Juha Suonpää brings viewers on a journey of discovery and connection, as we see the lynx through the eyes of one of the animal's more ardent protectors. - *KS*

Movie Trailer

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Conservation + Quirky + Soundscape



MADemoiselle KENOPSIA

DENIS CÔTÉ

Canada | 2023 | 80 min

OLIO


CAPITOL 6
FEB 8 | 1:00 PM

‘Kenopsia’ is a neologism that means “the eerie, forlorn atmosphere of a place that is usually bustling with people but is now abandoned and quiet.” That director Denis Côté found his inspiration for the film’s themes during the COVID pandemic is unsurprising and appropriate, giving the audience a somewhat familiar shared experience as a point of entry into this spooky world.

As the title reveals, this atmosphere is personified by Larissa Corriveau (*Viking*) in a wonderful performance as Mademoiselle Kenopsia. A “Guardian of Spaces”, she is a woman who is obsessed with watching over and occupying empty spaces. We witness her inspecting empty spaces, taking calls from mysterious others, and living out a wraith-like existence. Hardly Netflix fodder, *Mademoiselle Kenopsia* is without a doubt a “vibes-based” film, and certainly one for the more accomplished cineastes with experimental tastes. For those willing to step into its almost supernatural world, it certainly offers ample rewards. - BS

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Meditative + Lonely + Mysterious

Presented by:


TOURNÉE
QUEBEC CINÉMA



THE ACCIDENT

GIUSEPPE GARAU


Italy | 2023 | 72 min

CAPITOL 6
FEB 3 | 9:00 PM 

Filmmaker expected to attend

Marcella loses her job and custody of her daughter on the same day. In the middle of a tenuous separation with her husband and barely able to balance her parental duties, she finds herself alone as the one sincere person in an uncaring city. Trying to get back on her feet, she pursues an odd new job before discovering a mysterious device that miraculously allows her to weaponize her kindness and to pay off her debts, if she chooses to use it...

Shot on film, director Giuseppe Garau's debut feature shows a rare commitment to the camera's perspective. *The Accident* is partly a cinematic experiment, challenging the desire to see more while surprising us with just how much storytelling potential is held by its locked gaze. At the same time, its sardonic humour and relatable lead (played by Giulia Mazzarino) makes it easy to become invested in Marcella's singular drive, where the film reveals itself as a modern fable about the dark risks we're willing to take to hold onto our families. - AK

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Surprising + Unique + Absorbing




THE FLOATING MAN

MICHAEL V. SMITH

Canada | 2023 | 77 min

Documentary

OLIO

THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 10 | 2:45 PM 


Filmmaker expected to attend

An intimate self-portrait essay-style documentary by self-described writer, performer, filmmaker, uni prof, radical faerie, and very queer Michael V. Smith. This unique blend of documentary, archival footage from past performances, road trip, video poems, interviews, and public performance art examines Smith's provocative art and lifetime of stories about his body. Channeling the essay-style films of Agnès Varda, Smith interweaves past footage of a "failed" documentary that was never completed where he travels by ferry to the Sunshine Coast in BC dressed as Peanut the Clown to search out singer-songwriter Joni Mitchell, with a contemporary meditation on gender and Michael's own gender journey from body shame to a more radical acceptance.

Through eclectic interweaving of stories from their life and interviews with their present-day students at the university where Smith teaches, *The Floating Man* is a deeply personal and uplifting documentary that explores issues and ideas around the body, gender, and the relationship we have with ourselves and others with whom we work, play, and love. - KM

Movie Trailer

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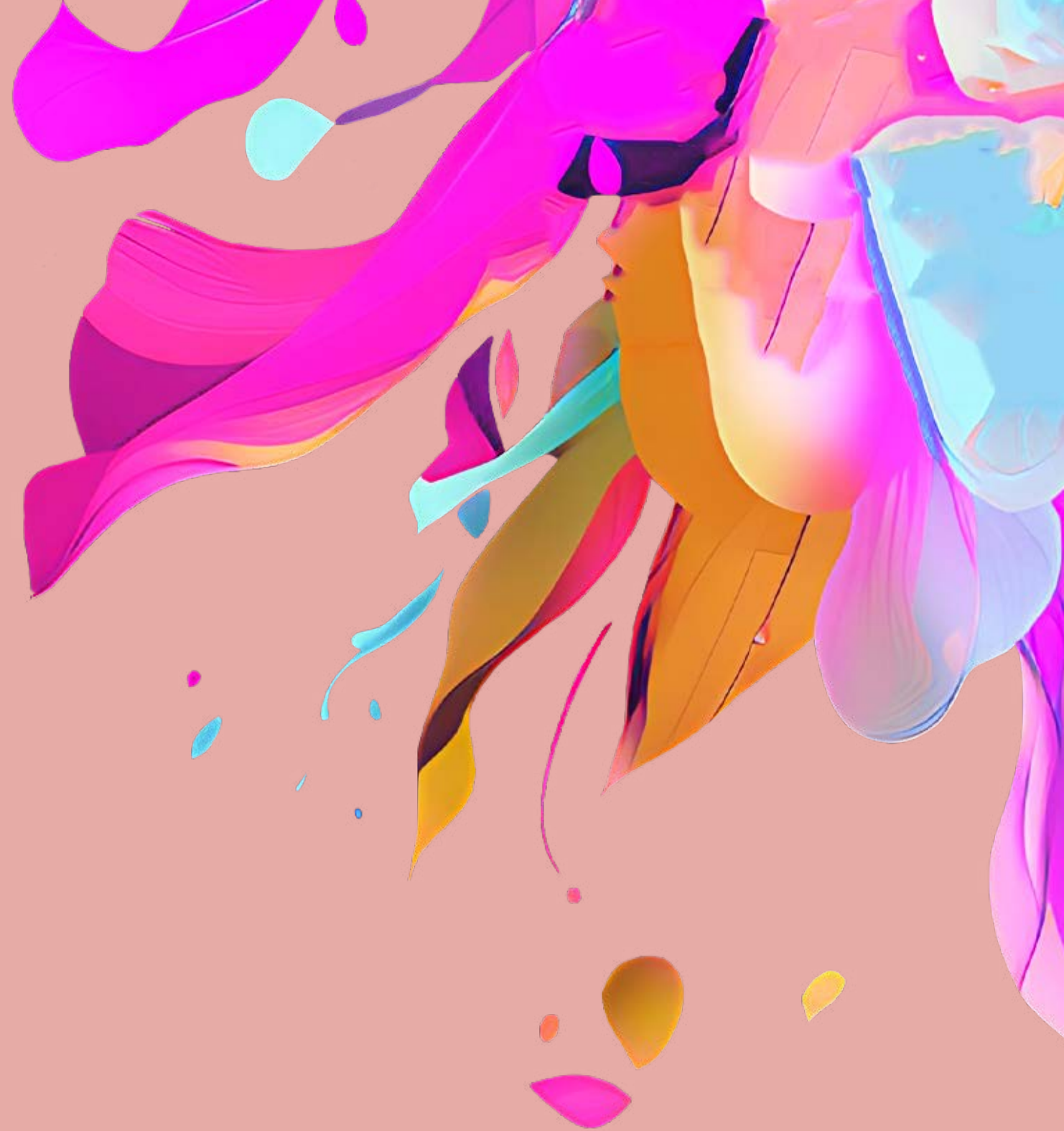
Uplifting + Reflective + Humorous

Presented by:



PULSE

THE VISCERAL BEAT THAT MAKES US... ? HUMAN.





A STRANGE PATH (ESTRANHO CAMINO)

GUTO PARENTE

Brazil | 2023 | 84 min


CAPITOL 6
FEB 3 | 1:00 PM

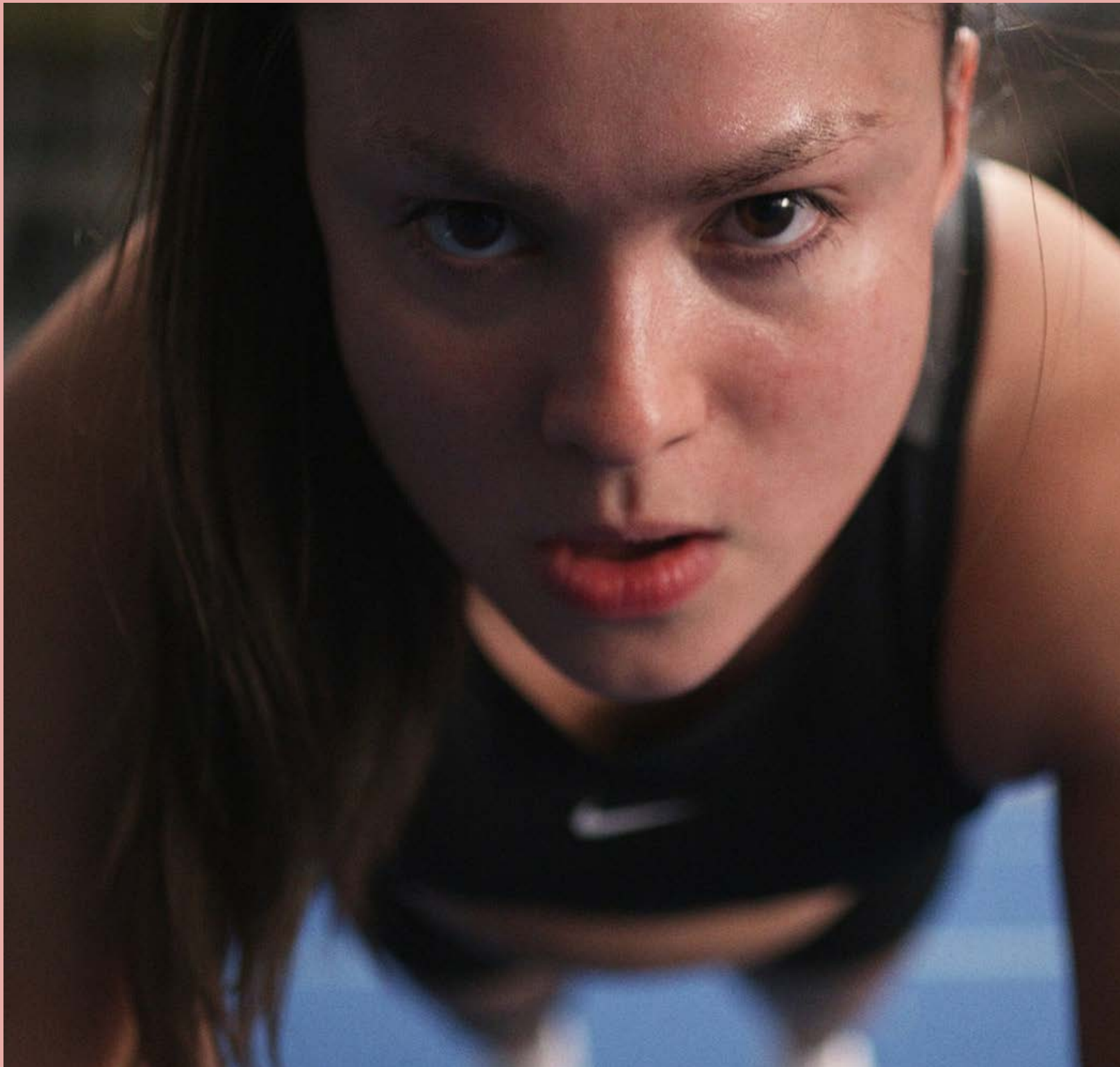
Winning four top Awards at the Tribeca Film Festival, director/screenwriter Guto Parente approaches the story in fresh and exciting ways, pushing conventions and layering cinematic textures, breaking new ground in this engaging tale.

A Strange Path is the story of filmmaker David who is returning to Brazil after 10 years to premiere his film at a film festival. His arrival coincides with the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown and David is forced to be isolated in the shabby accommodation the festival has provided for him. The isolation of lockdown starts to influence David's emotional health and he begins to dwell more on thoughts of his estranged father who lives in the city. Catching a glimpse of his father on the street propels David to take the initiative and reconnect with him. Circumstances change, David and his father become roommates and so begins an awkward, strained and emotionally rocky cohabitation. Parente skillfully explores the dynamics of father-son rivalry and the deep need for parental approval in a thoughtful and engaging way. Funny, absorbing and beautifully shot with touches of experimental filmmaking that enhance the mood and style without interfering with the story, *A Strange Path* is a unique and entertaining vision. - RW

Introspective + Life-affirming + Engaging

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BACKSPOT

D.W. WATERSON

Canada | 2023 | 93 min

ODEON VICTORIA
FEB 3 | 8:30 PM 

Filmmaker expected to attend

Charismatic Riley (Devery Jacobs, *Reservation Dogs*, *Rhymes for Young Ghouls*) loves the gravity-defying sport of cheerleading and she's on a mission to prove to the world that it is all about the grit no matter if you have to wear a bow in your hair.


Riley and her girlfriend Amanda (Kudakwashe Rutendo) are on the verge of cheerleading stardom and their focus is to make an elite cheerleading squad and dedicate themselves to the competition. The two young lovebirds run around with the other cheerleaders partying, working at the local cinema, and training with their perfectionist coach, played by Evan Rachel Woods, and her friendly assistant, played by Thomas Antony Olajide. All seems like it's going according to plan except that Riley's anxiety is getting worse and worse as the pressure mounts and Amanda is deciding whether the stress is worth it.

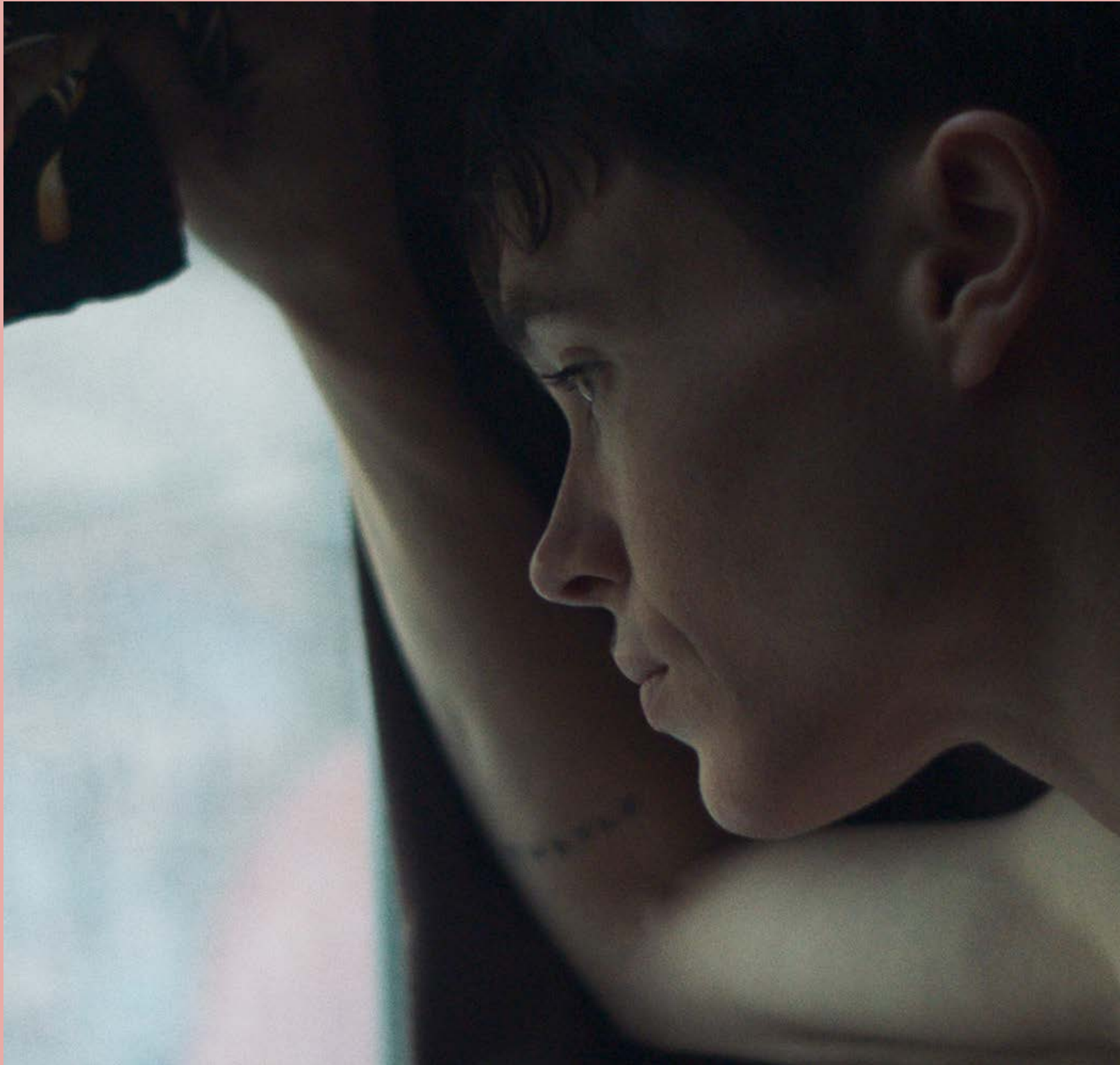
Questions arise for Riley and her team whether cheerleading is about the sport or the glamour, and the drive for perfectionism in all sport is definitely part of the argument. These close-knit teammates understand that to win at cheerleading is all about the commitment, strength, and athleticism mixed in with style and pure grit.

D.W. Waterson's directorial debut *Backspot* (executive-produced by Elliot Page) is a visceral fast-paced coming-of-age drama set in the thrilling world of cheerleading! - *KM*

Fast-paced + Thrilling + Sporty

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CLOSE TO YOU

DOMINIC SAVAGE


Canada, UK | 2023 | 100 min

CAPITOL 6
FEB 7 | 6:30 PM

Trans masculine Sam (Elliot Page) has found home in the bustling and bohemian Kensington Market area of Toronto. His dad's birthday is coming up so he decides it's finally time to go visit after four years, as he hasn't been to see his family since transitioning. Sam reluctantly hops on a train to small town Cobourg, ON and unexpectedly runs into Katharine (Hillary Baack), his best friend from high school whom he always had a crush on. Sam realizes he still has feelings for her and he starts to see the trip in a whole different light. What Sam doesn't know is that Katherine has her own struggles with her decision to stay in their hometown and lead a more traditional life raising her children with her nice and steady husband.

As Sam navigates his transphobic brother-in-law and well-meaning but awkward family, the stress of being home becomes too much for him and he must decide whether to stay or not. With Katherine, he finds a like-minded soul and they help each other discover a way forward. Ultimately it becomes clear that despite his family's attitudes Sam will be okay, as he knows who he is and how to live the life that will make him happy.

Close to You explores the complexities of being true to yourself and the queer joy that comes with that truth, and the reality that not everyone will come along for the ride. Producer and star Elliot Page shines as Sam in this emotional journey, love story, and family drama. - *KM*

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Powerful + Touching + Relevant



I USED TO BE FUNNY

ALLY PANKIW


Canada | 2023 | 105 min

ODEON VICTORIA
FEB 3 | 6:00 PM 
THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 4 | 12:00 PM

Filmmaker expected to attend at first screening

Spending her days employed as an au pair for Brooke, a teenager struggling with the recent death of her mother, and her nights doing stand-up sets in Toronto's comedy clubs, Sam Cowell's (Rachel Sennott) comical observations on her life come to a halt as she suffers PTSD symptoms resulting from an unseen event. When she finds out Brooke has run away from home, Sam must make the difficult decision to either try and find the missing teen, or protect herself and bury the past.

Weaving seamlessly between past and present, the events leading to Sam's current emotional state are revealed as director Ally Pankiw's debut feature finds a balance in Sam's struggle that is both darkly hilarious and heartbreaking. Sennott's brilliant and dynamic performance delivers the dramatic weight of Sam's story, interlaced with her real-world stand-up performances and seemingly improvised conversations with her friends (and fellow comics), bringing an undeniable authenticity to the film. - *DR*

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Laughs + Drama + Trauma



IN CAMERA

NAQQASH KHALID


UK | 2022 | 95 min

THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 7 | 2:45 PM

Aden (played by the extraordinary Nabhaan Rizwan) is a young actor who's been struggling through audition after audition with little to show for it. When we meet him, he is playing a dead body on a TV cop show. Aden is drawn to the control of acting - "someone tells you exactly what do" - but unfortunately, as he quickly discovers, the world around acting is anything but ordered. Toying with levels of realism and artifice, performance and fantasy, this striking, formally playful debut from Naqqash Khalid moves at an electrifying pace.

As Aden tumbles through auditions, surreal gigs and odd role-playing sessions, he attempts to build a career and discover himself. With remarkable, almost elastic creative originality, Khalid confronts the strangeness of the modern world head-on, and explores what it feels like to try and survive within it, as a jobbing artist. It's a satirical, sometimes scathing, oftentimes hilarious, take-down of modern Britain and all the systems of power, celebrity, class, ethnicity and identity politics that swirl within it.

A remarkable debut, from an exciting new voice in British cinema. - *JD*

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Original + Satirical + Elastic



JESS PLUS NONE

MANDY FABIAN

USA | 2023 | 101 min


CAPITOL 6
FEB 4 | 1:00 PM

Queer quirky Jess (Abby Miller, *The Sinner*, *Justified*) is dreading her best friend Melanie's wedding happening off the grid, in the middle of the woods with no cell phone service! Jess has been given the high-pressure job of maid of honour which she has reluctantly agreed to but to make matters worse her ex-girlfriend (Scout Durwood, *Youtopia*) will be attending and all her seemingly perfect coupled friends from college including her gay friend and his new partner. She's horny and lonely and trying to figure out where she fits in, making a mess of everything along the way, alienating the group and putting her foot in her mouth constantly. But Jess is also a loveable misfit trying to figure out life and love and be a good friend despite her reservations about Melanie's beau. A chance meeting with a ranger in the woods challenges Jess to think about the road forward and how to get there, all the while making a royal mess! With a stellar ensemble cast, everyone in *Jess Plus None* is having their own epiphanies and are so perfectly flawed and totally relatable characters that are just trying to live their lives.

Jess Plus None is a delightful comedy that employs the formula of the bygone screwball genre so well with its witty dialogue, sarcasm, slapstick movement, and fantastically hilarious Jess at its centre. - KM

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Engaging + Witty + Insightful



LA CHIMERA

ALICE ROHRWACHER

Italy, France, Switzerland | 2023 | 130 min

THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 5 | 7:45 PM


Released from an Italian prison, Arthur has difficulty moving past a faded romance.

A band of tomb-robbing rascals - the very same that led to his arrest - immediately attempt to re-enlist him and his preternatural ability for finding buried artifacts so that they can continue their money-making scheme. As they try to sell their finds to a feared art trafficker and Arthur begins to fall back into the group's old ways, a young woman named Italia prompts him to reconsider both the ethics of mining these treasures for personal profit, as well as his deep ache for a lost lover.

With Josh O'Connor (*The Crown*) as the young Englishman, *La Chimera* features an illustrious and charming cast that includes no less than the legend herself: Isabella Rossellini. Director and co-writer Alice Rohrwacher intelligently weaves a commentary on Italy's sociopolitical relationship with its art and history while continuing her streak as one of Europe's most creative contemporary cinematic voices. She makes distinct use of film grammar, pairing images and actions to tease out new meaning, grasping at ideas and emotions that are often as elusive as the memories her characters are chasing. - AK

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Artful + Scrappy + Dreamlike



LAST DANCE

DELPHINE LEHERICEY

Switzerland, Belgium | 2023 | 84 min

ODEON VICTORIA
FEB 5 | 6:00 PM
THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 6 | 12:00 PM

Audience Award Best Film Locarno Film Festival

When you make a pact with your wife, well, you must keep it. So, at the age of 75, Germaine steps in for his wife when she passes away. The thing is that she was in the middle of rehearsing with a dance troupe, something contemplative Germaine would never think of doing and so the stage is set for this quiet widower to find his groove.


His family meanwhile soon becomes intrusive – scheduled visitations, meals, and phone calls – and Germaine decides to keep his dancing a secret as he wants to keep his independence going.

Adding to his commitments is a young girl who needs tutoring, and they make a bargain to keep his secret while he does her homework. Life is funny as one discovers busy is better for a rich life.

Director Delphine Lehericey directs her witty insightful script with a mature hand and the performances are strong on all accounts. There are laughs in this deadpan tongue-in-cheek story about a man who refuses to mourn, in the conventional sense, after a lifetime of happiness with his lost love. - *KK*

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Witty + Amusing + Touching

Presented by:  Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Consulate General of Switzerland in Vancouver



MAMI WATA

C.J. "FIERY" OBASI


Nigeria, France, UK | 2023 | 107 min

ODEON VICTORIA
FEB 7 | 6:00 PM

Nigeria's official entry into the 96th Academy awards, *Mami Wata* is an intensely stylish film rooted in West African folklore, and the tension between traditional lifeways and modernity. The titular "Mami Wata" refers to the West African water goddess that serves as the central organizing focus for a fictional village called Iyi, headed by wisewoman Mama Efe. Mama Efe and her daughters, Zinwe and the adopted Prisca, derive their status, and their living, from the healing powers Mama Efe can channel from the sea goddess. As these powers seemingly wane, one night the sea itself delivers Jasper, a mysterious man claiming a past as a revolutionary. Change is afoot. The villagers' beautiful traditional white makeup is wonderfully reinforced with the sumptuous high-contrast black-and-white imaging that netted Brazilian DP Lilis Soares her Best Cinematography award at the African Academy Awards and Sundance World Cinematic Dramatic Special Jury Award. This film is a very accessible entry point to the exciting developments in Nigerian film, and a unique and rewarding experience. - *BS*

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Tradition + Struggle + Folklore



NO RIGHT WAY

CHELSEA BO

USA | 2023 | 103 min


CAPITOL 6
FEB 5 | 4:00PM

In her debut feature, director-writer Chelsea Bo co-stars as Harper, an L.A. ad campaign director who becomes the temporary guardian for her 13-year-old half-sister, Geordie (Ava Akers), who has been living in squalor in Las Vegas with her drug-using mother, Tiffany, and her younger brother.

In a script that moves fluidly between comedy and drama, *No Right Way* has fun in odd-couple scenes between the perfectionist Harper, whose ideas of parenting are apparently derived from aspirational lifestyle magazines, and Geordie, a brash skater girl who isn't keen on health food, regular showers or therapy speak. Their getting-acquainted L.A. interlude is abruptly interrupted when Harper and Geordie must return to Las Vegas, and *No Right Way* gains emotional complexity as it deals with the hard questions of what constitutes good parenting. Harper's well-intended but high-handed plans clash with Geordie's real life, and her improvised support structure, consisting of close friends, her dysfunctional but loving mother and younger half-brother. Leading the largely female cast, Ava Acres (*American Horror Story*) is a standout as Geordie, as a young but worldly survivor, with Eliza Coupe as Geordie's manic mum and Sufe Bradshaw (*Veep*) as the acerbic, no-nonsense mother of two of Geordie's friends, whose chaotic home is an example of a family that prioritizes sharing over good housekeeping. - LL

Judgement + Family + Intentions

Movie Trailer
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POLARA

CHAYSEH BEACHAM

USA | 2023 | 93 min

CAPITOL 6
FEB 3 | 4:00 PM 


Filmmaker expected to attend

Though it's set in the present, there's a hopeful 1980s vibe to Chayseh Beacham's coming-of-age road trip movie, *Polara*. In the summer between high school and college, on his 18th birthday, TJ (Finn Haney, who cowrote the script with his father Bill) receives a mysterious gift. A grizzled stranger knocks on his door and presents him with the key to a car to be picked up at a local garage. The car is a cobalt antique Dodge Polara convertible, a present from his estranged father, James, who includes an invitation to meet him in California. The last time TJ had seen his dad, a one-time rock star, was when James was hauled off to jail on a drug bust. Is his father a bad person? Is the car even driveable? After getting some avuncular advice from garage owner, Billy (Paul Guilfoyle), TJ sets off on the road with the antique gas guzzler, along with his best friend, Jake (William Chris Sumpter). College can wait until fall, and though his mom disapproves, this is TJ's journey into adulthood.

There's a possibly sinister mystery to the car: a metal coffin affixed inside the trunk, which contains what? A body? Drugs? As the journey progresses through the American south and southwest, TJ finds himself alone until he runs into another stray on the road, a young Irish woman, Maeve (Katherine Laheen), who's leaving a short bad marriage, with her dog and her pickup truck. As they camp out, star gaze and compare stories, there's a sweet companionable warmth to their relationship. By the end of his trip, TJ has developed the emotional reserve to face his father, and to discover the secret in the trunk of the Polara. - LL

Romance + Secrets + Adventure

Movie Trailer
≈ [click here](#)


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RU

CHARLES-OLIVIER MICHAUD

Canada | 2023 | 117 min

THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 9 | 7:45 PM 

Filmmaker expected to attend


This 1970s period film charts the refugee experience of young Tinh and her family from Vietnam to Quebec. Working from a script adapted from the Governor General's award-winning novel by national treasure Kim Thuy, *Ru* captures the genuine warmth and solidarity extended to Tinh's family from many in Quebec society, while examining the awkwardness of their downward socio-economic status and cultural chauvinism with a light touch.

Director Charles-Olivier Michaud uses linear jumps from their life in Quebec back to the truly harrowing times of the family's war experiences, escape, and sea journey to fully illustrate the traumas that haunt Tinh to good effect. It is the small touches in the film that really make it feel grounded in its time and place, with set decoration and wardrobe assisting the great camera work in creating a believable and fully lived-in 1970s Quebec.

Tinh's interactions with her grandfather, a judge traumatized by prisoner-of-war camps, are touching and insightful. This is a story of a budding writer using their experiences to find their voice, and the exploration of the heroism of common people is edifying and wonderful to behold. - *BS*

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Immigration + Art + Trauma

Presented by:

TOURNÉE
QUEBEC CINÉMA



SILENT ROAR

JOHNNY BARRINGTON

UK | 2023 | 90 min


ODEON VICTORIA
FEB 6 | 6:00 PM

This year's Edinburgh Film Festival opener, *Silent Roar* is a confident and spry debut from filmmaker Johnny Barrington. Dondo is a teenage surfer on the Isle of Lewis, in Scotland, who is struggling to process his emotions after his father's disappearance at sea. When he finally returns to school, his days are spent with his new crush Sas, a very oddly behaved new minister on the island, and some rather alarming cosmic visions...

This is a coming-of-age debut adorned with impressive craft inputs from Barrington's collaborators. Shooting on 16mm, Director of Photography Ruben Woodin Dechamps captures a gentle softness in compositions of the wild and beguiling Hebridean island setting, while remarkable underwater footage by Jon Frank adds further depth to the film's mystical dimensions. Hannah Peel's soaring score infuses the film with a youthful charisma. Featuring a scene-stealing performance by Ella Lily Hyland as Sas, and a stellar turn from Louis McCartney, who superbly conveys the sadness and melancholy of a teenager suffering the loss of a parent, this is a touching portrait of an adolescent confronted by very grown-up emotions. - *JD*

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Playful + Lively + Fresh



SOLITUDE

NINNA PÁLMAÐÓTTIR

Iceland, Slovakia | 2022 | 75 min

ODEON VICTORIA
FEB 3 | 3:00 PM


In the opening moments of the film we meet Gunnar, a kindly (if socially inept) older man, who extends a hand to a functionary who has come to let him know that his idyllic farmstead in the Icelandic wilds is being expropriated. Gunnar moves to the city, where his initially rocky dealing with his 10-year-old neighbour Ari turns into a bond founded on their shared loneliness.

Director Ninna Pálmadóttir has a talent for allowing small moments to unfold into revelations. While the film clocks in at a breezy 75 minutes, the pacing is perfect, allowing an unrushed telling of the development of an interesting and mutually valuable friendship.

A misunderstanding by Ari's feuding and neglectful parents soon threatens their bond. If the filmmakers were less talented than Pálmadóttir and screenwriter Rúnar Rúnarsson, this could become melodrama. Instead, they create a heartfelt triumph. - *BS*

Movie Trailer

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Presented by:



University
of Victoria

Germanic &
Slavic Studies



The Richard and Margaret
Beck Lectures on
Icelandic Literature

Change + Friendship + Loneliness



SUZE


LINSEY STEWART, DANE CLARK

Canada | 2023 | 93 min

THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 9 | 5:30 PM

Suze (Michaela Watkins) is a single mom whose entitled daughter has just left home for college. As a fresh empty-nester, she barely has a moment to enjoy her newfound freedom before she suddenly finds herself trapped into caring for her daughter's heartbroken ex-boyfriend Gage (Charlie Gillespie), who she can barely tolerate at best. As this odd couple form an unlikely bond, Suze finds herself on a path of self-discovery and realizes what living for herself is actually about.

Drawing out laughs from very relatable circumstances on both sides of the generational gap, real-life couple Linsey Stewart and Dane Clark's script and assured direction deliver a funny and heartwarming drama about familial relationships and the unexpected friendships that help you become your true self. Re-inventing the coming-of-age film for those hitting mid-life, *Suze* captures the zeitgeist of parents who invested so heavily in setting their children up for success they lost track of their own needs and desires in the process. - AR

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Comedy + Women + Mid-Life



SWEETLAND

CHRISTIAN SPARKES


Canada | 2023 | 105 min

PULSE

CAPITOL 6
FEB 6 | 6:30 PM

Retired fisherman Moses (Mark Lewis Jones) has spent his entire life in the Newfoundland and Labrador coastal village of Sweetland and sees no reason to spend the remainder of his life anywhere else. In the midst of a government relocation program that requires all residents to accept their offer, Moses finds himself at odds with his neighbours who see no future for themselves if they remain. Director Christian Sparkes adapts best-selling author Michael Crummey's novel into a beautifully composed reflection on the land which sustains us and the difficulty of letting go.

Jones' masterful performance as Moses embodies the resilience of a man steadfast in his refusal to leave and at peace with the reality that his only company may be the graves of his ancestors. His identity is so tied to his surroundings he could exist nowhere else. Featuring a brief yet touching performance by *22 Minutes* legend Mary Walsh, *Sweetland* revels in the details of its location and characters while it reveals universal truths in the lingering moments and languid pace of a more peaceful and disappearing way of life.
- AR

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Literary + Atlantic + Drama



THE BLUE STAR (LA ESTRELLA AZUL)

JAVIER MACIPE


Argentina, Spain | 2023 | 129 min

CAPITOL 6
FEB 2 | 9:00 PM
THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 7 | 12:00 PM

Based on a true story, *The Blue Star* chronicles fading Spanish rock star Maurizio and his search to find peace and musical reinvention in Argentina. His journey leads him by chance to a rural Argentinian folk music called chacarera and its greatest player, Carlos Carabajal. Chacarera is a musical cousin of the tango and is danced in rural areas of Argentina. It is propelled by a steady, deep drumbeat.

Carlos has fallen into hard times and Maurizio sees an opportunity to introduce chacarera music to a broader European audience in the way Ry Cooder brought the Buena Vista Social Club to the world. Is this a quixotic pursuit or a salvation for both men?

At another level, through the relationship of Maurizio and his brother, *The Blue Star* explores the need of artists for external validation and celebrity balanced with finding the sense of personal artistic connection and confidence in self. Maurizio's brother is a hugely talented musician who has not chosen the limelight and the road to fame. He is both supportive of his brother and his struggles and concerned by the toll that chasing stardom can bring. - *RW*

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Honest + Beautiful + Stirring

Presented by:  **CBCRADIOONE**




THE BOY IN THE WOODS

REBECCA SNOW

Canada | 2023 | 96 min


PULSE

ODEON VICTORIA
FEB 4 | 3:00 PM 

Filmmaker expected to attend

Adapted from Maxwell Smart's eponymous memoir, director Rebecca Snow recounts Max's story that starts in Buczacz in the spring of 1943 as Nazis forced Jews into ghettos while continuing their mass execution.

After Max and his family are discovered by German soldiers, his mother helps him escape to the woods of Eastern Europe before she is captured. Left with only his wits and a will to survive, Max finds refuge with a kind peasant farmer Jasko (Richard Armitage) who shelters the boy until mounting pressure from police threatens the farmer's family and Max must escape again. Continuing his perilous journey, he meets Yanek (David Kohlsmith), another young boy on the run, and the two find kinship in hiding, as their heroic adventure shows hope in the darkest moments and kindness when surrounded by hate. Like a familiar fable, but grounded in the horrors of history, Max's tale is a timely survivor's story that is an inspiring reminder of the enduring human spirit.
- AR

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Survival + Memoir + Holocaust



THIS TIME

SEBASTIAN TOBLER

USA | 2023 | 88 min


CAPITOL 6
FEB 7 | 4:00 PM

Colin (Ken Kirby) and Laela (Leila Perry) were teen-agers at an international school in Indonesia before their families fled Jakarta, because of the 1998 anti-Chinese riots. Twenty-three years later, they meet by chance in a Los Angeles video store, where Colin is selling off old videos while cleaning house before moving. Laela, a professional sculptor, is a footloose risk taker, who spends her time between Sidney, Australia, New York and London, and is in town doing a philanthropic commission. After travelling the world with his diplomat father (as did director Sebastien Tobler), Colin has settled for a safe marketing job. While they talk and reminisce, Laela decides to join him at his almost empty house, where he's doing the final packing before moving to Philadelphia to join his wife and young son. The two tease, debate and reminisce, and uncover emotional connection that is a confusion of attraction and nostalgia: "It's not every day you run into someone from 20 years ago," says Laela. "Someone who doesn't ask where you're from, why did you move around so much. What mix are you?"

Though couched in the familiar form of a romantic adventure, *This Time* is about a social phenomenon all around us that rarely makes it to movie screen, the phenomenon of "third culture kids," people raised in two or more cultures with complicated mixed identities. Tobler's script is permeated with different concepts of home — architecture, real estate, gentrification — and references to the memory machine of movies, from their first meeting in a video store. The two are closest while watching old home videos and photographs from their youth, bonded by shared images of a time and sense of home that can never be retrieved. - LL

Love + Memory + Culture

Movie Trailer
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TILL LOVE DO US PART

RAN LI

China | 2022 | 110 min

PULSE

CAPITOL 6
FEB 8 | 4:00 PM


Ran Li's poignant debut navigates the tension a millennial Chinese woman faces in her choice between the traditional safe female role expected of her and following her awakening passions.

The film begins in Xiamen, China, where Shu, a 30-year-old urban planning lecturer, grapples with a loveless engagement to finance manager Hu. Shu embarks on an academic sojourn to Prague, where an unexpected romance with the bohemian Chinese theatre director Fan blossoms. The naturalistic and breezy camerawork and grounded performances really elevate a confident film that obviously draws heavily from the writer/director's own life.

Till Love Do Us Part subtly subverts expectations, particularly in Shu's self-awareness about the very real risks a woman with a lot to lose faces in rejecting her material interests by embracing the unconventional. The film seems to critique and reinforce differing elements of traditional marriage, and the ending will certainly be the starting point of many conversations about the interesting themes in this self-assured, tender, and beautiful work. - *BS*

Movie Trailer

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Love + Tradition + Risk



VARVARA

ANATOL DUBULĂ


Moldova, Romania | 2023 | 93 min

THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 6 | 2:45 PM

Would you compromise your principles for cash? That's the question in this humorous look at Sasha who, although he has good reason to accept bribes, would rather get in trouble with his boss and co-workers than abandon his morals. The situation comes to a head when his boss gives him an ultimatum: install a furnace in the local church, which means defacing a religious fresco on the church wall, or lose your job. The movie plays with whether Sasha can maintain his scruples in a crooked world where morality has become almost a fault. Director Anatol Dubulă creates a remarkable second feature that is right in step with the changing values of the modern world. - *KK*

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Thoughtful + Humour + Pensive

TINGLE

SOMETHING TO MAKE THE EYEBROWS GO UP.
SCI-FI, MYSTERIES & THRILLERS





ALL YOU NEED IS DEATH

PAUL DUANE

UK | 2023 | 93 min

TINGLE


CAPITOL 6
FEB 8 | 9:00 PM

All You Need is Death marks Paul Duane's fearsome directorial debut that seeps into the mind of its audience with the musicality of Irish folk songs that ensnare everyone involved.

The mysterious narrative follows Anna (Simone Collins) and Aleks (Charlie Maher) in their pursuit of folk songs from Ireland's past that they translate to a digital format and sell to collectors with unique appetites. The film offers a fresh take on all-consuming love, lust, and passion underscored by a pervasive look at the history of Ireland through its musical folklore.

The performances are stellar - Olwen Fouéré dominates the screen in her role as Rita Concannon - and the dialogue is rich in subtext, pulling you in as the narrative flits between time. Duane's film is a heady experience that interconnects past and present in ways that are seamless and raise questions about lineage, memory, and history.

The tone of the film borders on ominous and the score is achingly haunting. It lingers in the mind long after the credits have rolled, which is testament to Duane's commitment to his craft as a storyteller. - LW

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Scary + Romantic + Gripping




TINGLE

CITIZEN SLEUTH

CHRIS KASICK

USA | 2023 | 82 min

Documentary

BLUE BRIDGE THEATRE
FEB 10 | 6:00 PM 


Filmmaker expected to attend

When Emily Nestor, true crime podcaster from Appalachia, begins to conduct an amateur murder investigation into the death of Jaleayah Davis – teasing a cover-up by the Sheriff’s Department – the lines between fact and entertainment become blurred. Emily makes a compelling case for murder, lies, inconsistencies, nepotism, and mystery, as she investigates the mysterious death of this local young woman. Her podcast becomes a hit, drawing in an audience of millions, which makes uncovering the truth more complicated. The stakes become personal.

In an intimate portrait of a narrator struggling to tell the truth and understand the ethical tightrope of the modern media landscape, both journalist/subject and filmmaker become implicated in a conversation about power, conscience, and profit. In a dissection of our obsession with true crime podcasts, *Citizen Sleuth* examines the ethics of the genre and how the power of narrative affects truth, victims, and communities. In pursuing the truth, do we really understand how easily the truth can be compromised? - KS

Movie Trailer

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Crime + Podcast + Ethics



RESTORE POINT

ROBERT HLOZ

Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Serbia | 2023 |
111 min

TINGLE

ODEON VICTORIA
FEB 7 | 8:30 PM


In Central Europe in the year 2041, life has taken a surreal turn. Citizens possess a new constitutional right - the guarantee of a full natural lifetime. Death has become merely a temporary setback due to Restore Point, a groundbreaking technology controlled by the enigmatic Institute of Restoration.

For those who've diligently backed up their brain data every 48 hours, a second chance at life awaits. In this high-stakes world of resurrections, young detective Emma Trochinowska ("Em") investigates a gripping mystery. A clandestine group known as the "River of Life" rebels against what they deem "unnatural" resurrection technology. As she delves deeper into the shadows of this techno-dystopian landscape, Em must navigate a web of intrigue, betrayal, and ambiguity to unravel the truth behind the River of Life's vendetta and the shocking demise of a scientist who once held the key to immortality.

If you like your sci-fi to engage you with interesting concepts and wrestle with philosophical questions, while injecting mystery, great special effects, and interesting characters, *Restore Point* will more than fit the bill. - BS

Movie Trailer

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Mystery + Dystopic + Cyberpunk



THE JUDGMENT

MARWAN MOKBEL

Egypt, Lebanon, USA | 2023 | 111 min

TINGLE


CAPITOL 6
FEB 3 | 6:30 PM

The Judgement is a thrilling queer horror gay relationship story set in Egypt that will captivate you at every turn. Mo and his boyfriend Hisham live in LA together and are deeply in love. They set off to visit Hisham's family in Egypt. They are "just friends" to their families and to society at large as they aren't safe in the homophobic environment of Egypt. Mo and Hisham are both afraid that people will discover their secret. Mo is especially susceptible as his mother has rejected him and he is dealing with memories of a traumatic childhood that he needs to heal from. Witchcraft in the form of religious fervour is laid at his door and a spell is cast on him and Hisham.

As Mo's internalized homophobia seeps into their relationship and external forces are forcing them apart, they both must fight to survive and to make love conquer all. Winner at Tallgrass Film Festival of the Special Jury Prize for Courage In Filmmaking and the 2023 Palm Springs Cinema Diverse Festival Favorite and Director's Choice Awards, *The Judgement* is a unique gay thriller exploring homophobia, religious zealotry, and family ties. - KM

Movie Trailer

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Dramatic + Mysterious + Intimate



THE STRANGE CASE OF DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE

HOPE DICKSON LEACH


UK | 2023 | 120 min

TINGLE

CAPITOL 6
FEB 6 | 9:00 PM

It doesn't get more classic than Jekyll and Hyde - two of cinema's most infamous characters. But here, director Hope Dickson Leach trades the grimy, soot-soaked streets of London for the atmospheric chill of a distinctly gothic Edinburgh. Shot in black-and-white, Leach's vision, infused by gothic cinema influences, is a Scottish retelling of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic novella. Besides Stevenson's book, Leach's source material is also a live, hybrid performance with the National Theatre of Scotland. This unusual blend of theatrical performance and cinematic tradition creates a creeping, intimate experience of this classic tale of good and evil, told through a lawyer's investigation of a series of macabre murders.

Traversing themes of capitalistic greed and unscrupulous social ascension, Leach's interpretation is an astute critique of the modern world, where Edinburgh itself is an imposing, shadowy character - a beautiful, elusive refuge for all the world's contradictions, misfits and misfortunates. - *JD*

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Gothic + Atmospheric + Macabre



TINGLE

THE VEIL

CAMERON BEYL

USA | 2023 | 69 min

CAPITOL 6
FEB 5 | 9:00 PM

From the mind of Cameron Beyl comes a microbudget mysterious horror film that captivates its audience with stunning visual displays of the Northern Lights set as backdrop to an eerie farmhouse that becomes refuge in unexpected ways.


Set in rural Pennsylvania where a retired priest enjoys the solitude of his farmhouse, a young and frantic Amish woman fleeing an abusive marriage ends up on his doorstep bringing with her a ghost of a chance at reconciliation.

Stirring performances from Sean O'Bryan (Douglas) and Rebekah Kennedy (Hannah) help to convey the film's overarching message of redemption and the many forms that can take.

The Veil's depiction of fear coupled with an eerie longing to make things right compels its audience to consider how one's own search for answers can meet you where you are. Beyl's clear direction and succinct approach to storytelling paints a unique picture of past traumas coming to bear fruit in the present, and what that means for the way forward. - LW

Movie Trailer

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Captivating + Insightful + Creepy



WOLVES

DANNY DUNLOP

Canada | 2022 | 103 min

TINGLE

CAPITOL 6
FEB 7 | 9:00 PM

Wolves is an intriguing character study of the human consciousness and marks the feature directorial debut of London, Ontario filmmaker Danny Dunlop. Inspired by true events from Dunlop's hometown, *Wolves* challenges its audience to consider the extremes one will go to in search of connection.

Wolves follows a nameless, loner protagonist who suddenly becomes unemployed and further isolates himself from society. He fills his aimless days by cruising random dating sites and hanging out with his adorable pet tortoise.


When the body of a mutilated animal is discovered, the loner becomes fixated on the gruesome nature of the crime and spirals on his way down a rabbit-hole of cold cases, having convinced himself that human victims may be next on the killer's radar.

The loner's obsession with the killings injects new meaning into his life and raises questions about what happens when obsession spawned from fixating on dark, discomforting events starts to consume one's everyday reality? When will you know it's time to take a step back? How much more will it take to fill the void of loneliness and overwhelming urge to connect by any means necessary?

Wolves is a tightly contained slow build with a tone that entralls the mind of its audience and turns any previous perception of loneliness on its head. - LW

Engrossing + Crime + Psychological

Movie Trailer
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WORKING CLASS GOES TO HELL

MLADEN DJORDJEVIC

Serbia | 2023 | 127 min

TINGLE

CAPITOL 6
FEB 4 | 9:00 PM

Working Class Goes to Hell is a socio-horror film by Serbian writer-director Mladen Djordjevic that delves into the socio-economic challenges plaguing a grief-stricken community, and offers an intriguing, ritualistic twist on the horror genre.


Set in an economically depressed small Balkan town, the film introduces us to residents who have unionized while mourning the loss of both the town's factory and their relatives who tragically died in a fire while working there.

When the local church seems to have deserted them, the group's alternative is to tap into the supernatural which clumsily invokes power, strength, and sexual inclinations that none of them knew they possessed.

Djordjevic's poignant social commentary on Serbia's political issues is underscored by the cinematography and moving performances of Tamara Krcunovic (Svetlana) and Lidija Kordi (Danica). Djordjevic delivers a reflective, gory, and sometimes sombre film that seeks to explore issues of loss, politics, and religion through an emotional lens that challenges its audience to reshape ideas of what community justice can look like. - *LW*

Movie Trailer

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SHORT BURSTS

ENERGETIC PROGRAMMES OF SHORT FILM
AND NEW VOICES.



SECRETS AND LIES

SHORT FILMS THEMED AROUND THE EFFECTS OF DECEPTION AND REVELATION.

93 min

CINEMA NEXT DOOR
FEB 7 | 7:30 PM

SHORT BURSTS



Tied To A Lie | Mia Golden | Victoria | 2023 | 27 min

Documentary looking at the impact of sexual exploitation, sex trafficking and gang recruitment on today's youth.

The Dog - A Rapidly Condensed Guide to Treading Water | Michael Makaroff | Victoria | 2023 | 14 min

An underwriter recounts his career in body part insurance sales in an attempt to affirm his life choices.

About Me | Ali Asgari | Netherlands | 2023 | 15 min


Young Fatima is rushed to the hospital by her father. She has a secret that she can only tell the doctor. Fatima holds a secret that could change her fate so she must place her trust in a doctor to make a tough decision between cultural tradition and medical ethics. The tension builds. What will the doctor say to her father?

Animal Transport | Iván Bustinduy | Argentina | 2023 | 19 min

A man returns to his job in a company that transports animals. On his first trip, one of the cages doesn't seem to be carrying what it should. The mystery lurking in his truck pushes him to the limit of his own sanity.

Baba | Anya Chirkova, Meran Ismailsoy | Canada | 2022 | 13 min

A middle-aged Iranian man makes a desperate bid to keep his apartment, as his relationship with his son unravels.

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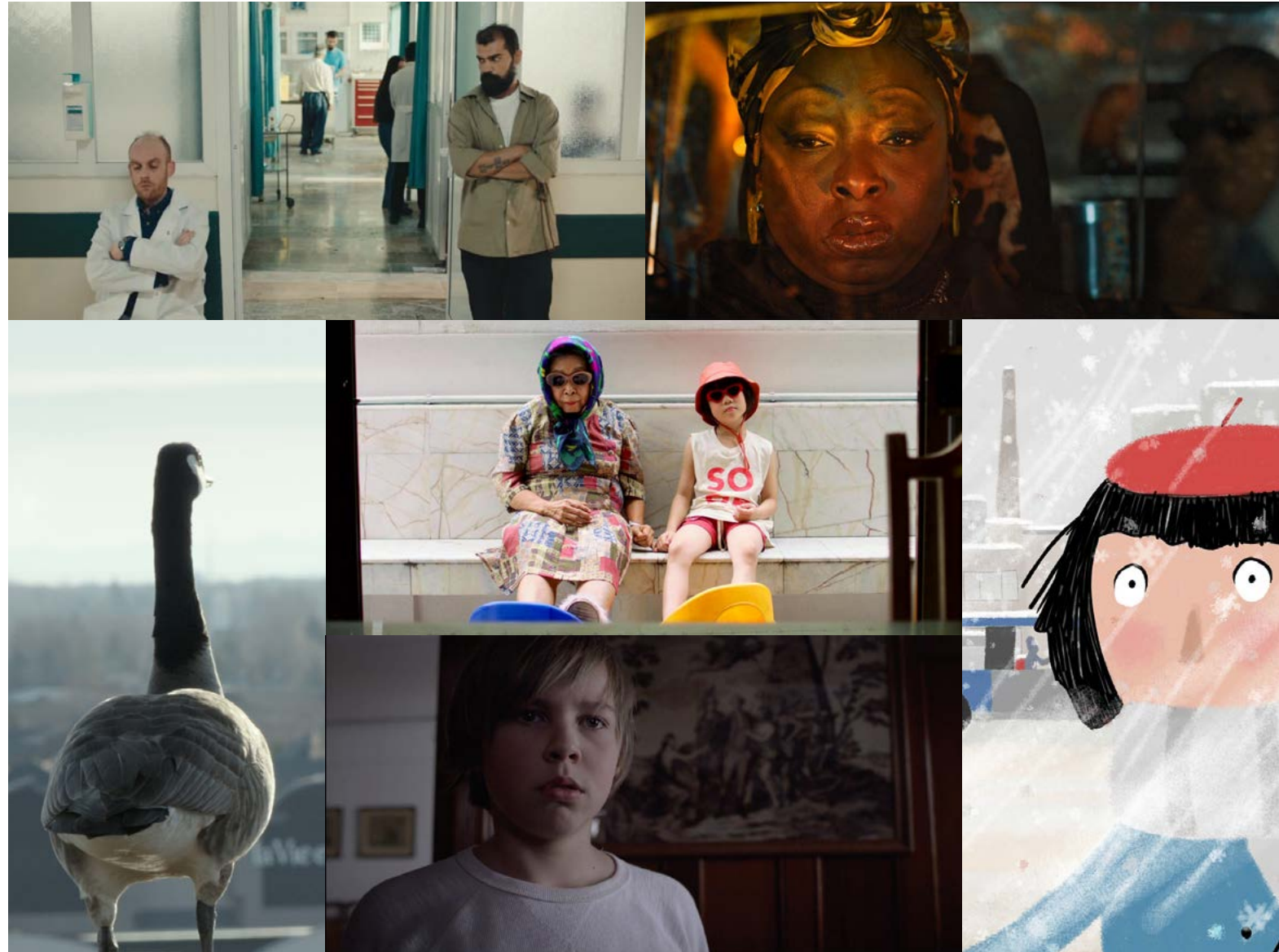
RETURNING

COMING HOME, GOING BACK, AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

92 min

CINEMA NEXT DOOR
FEB 8 | 7:30 PM

SHORT BURSTS



Modern Goose | Karsten Wall | Canada | 2022 | 23 min

Able to navigate by reading the Earth's magnetic field, at home on land, air and water, geese straddle the territory between ancient instincts and the contemporary world. This short documentary embeds in the daily life of these iconic animals to reveal a deeper message of continuity and connection.

The Cameraman - Chapter 2 | Connor Gaston, Vaughn Gaston | Victoria | 2023 | 17 min

Two teenage brothers get tested for Huntington's Disease while struggling to reconcile different worldviews on their potential illness, the future, and what living a meaningful life entails.

Young People, Old People & Nothing in Between | Parida Tanti | USA | 2022 | 20 min

7-year-old Juice has one mission this year: to help Grandma Lovely retain as many memories as possible in order to halt the onset of her early dementia.

Triangle | Zhino Hadi Hasan | Iraq | 2023 | 14 min


Two women are sexually harassed in two separate incidents, but their problems get more complicated when fate brings them together.

The Girl with the Red Beret | Janet Perlman | Canada | 2023 | 6 min

A girl takes a wild ride on the metro in Montreal. Travelling from station to station, she encounters an array of colourful characters in a bizarre musical journey that's peppered with hilarious and unexpected incidents.

Lemon | Tala Nahas | UK | 2023 | 13 min

Miss Coco Lemon, A taxi driver dreaming of a different life faces a chaotic night of business around the streets of London with her less-than-ideal customers who drive her to absolute insanity.

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FUNNY HOW?

FROM BROAD GUFFAWS TO DARK MIRTHFUL CHUCKLES, THESE SHORT FILMS HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOUR.

75 min

CINEMA NEXT DOOR
FEB 9 | 7:30 PM



SHORT BURSTS

The Comics | Karen Knox | Canada | 2023 | 13 min

When Annie and Mark's controversial comedy video goes viral, they make a run for the country. There, they hide out in a worn down, under the radar motel - hoping to stay out of the public eye while their video rapidly makes its rounds on social media.

Spag Bol | Brick | UK | 2023 | 12 min

Following a double homicide, two crime scene cleaners find themselves entangled in an unlikely romance. Who said romance is dead.

Ashes | Georgina Haig | Australia | 2023 | 13 min

Bereft after the loss of her beloved Dad James, Frances misses the appointment to pick up his ashes. Through a bizarre posthumous prank, can James rectify his daughter's habitual lateness, even after he's gone? A darkly comedic story about grief, tough love and the unexpected ways those who have passed continue to influence us.

Steakhouse | Oliver Brooks, William Wilkinson | Victoria | 2023 | 8 min

When his internet goes out, a conspiracy buff welcomes a man claiming to be from the cable company into his home...

When Life gives you Lemons | Rafeh Mahmud | Canada | 2022 | 15 min


A satirical fable about a Little Girl who uses clever capitalism and market manipulation to take a sad lemonade stand to terrifyingly amazing heights.

Cream | Kenny Heintz, Mark Hoyne | Victoria | 2023 | 4 min

Buck Money, an aspiring rap star with lactose intolerance, finds his dreams hindered by his tummy troubles.

Hunger | Gillian Berrie | UK | 2023 | 9 min

Hunger is a road movie, about a bickering couple who go looking for a place to eat.

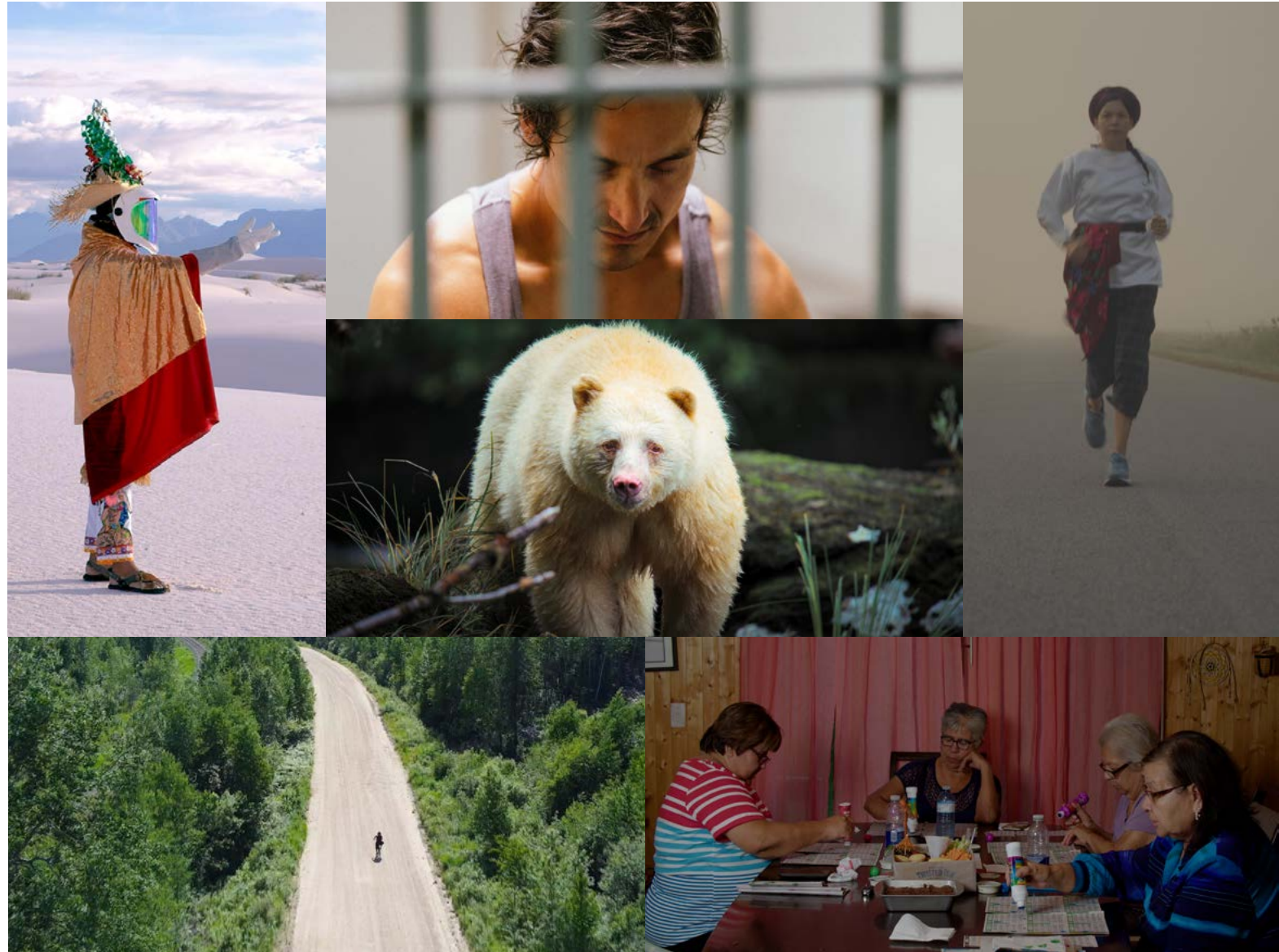
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INDIGENOUS VOICES

A SELECTION OF SOME OF THE BEST SHORT FORM STORIES AND PERSPECTIVES FROM INDIGENOUS FILMMAKERS.

69 min

CINEMA NEXT DOOR
FEB 10 | 7:30 PM



SHORT BURSTS

La chasse aux grenouilles de la rue Wemotaci | Samélia Newashish Dubé | Canada | 2023 | 4 min

Thirteen-year-old Sami loves animals of all types and sizes. In this intimate short, she shares her frog hunting technique and favourite place to get away to find these small amphibians.

Conviction | Bruce Thomas Miller | Canada | 2023 | 13 min

After Joseph is released from jail, he faces inner demons that stand in the way of true freedom.

Radio Bingo | Shelby Adams | Canada | 2023 | 8 min

To help revitalize the Mohawk language, a local reservation radio station incorporates the Mohawk language into a game of Radio Bingo.

6 minutes per kilometer | Catherine Boivin | Canada | 2023 | 3 min

In rhythm with the footsteps of her Atikamekws ancestors, Catherine immerses us in the dreamlike universe of her morning runs.

Timekeepers of the Anthropocene: TEWAME TIYOLICHA KAWITL |


Federico Cuatlacuatl | Mexico, USA | 2023 | 11 min

A message from interdimensional Nahua travellers is delivered across time, space and imposed borders, centring indigenous flourishing and resilience.

Keepers of the Land | Deirdre Leowinata, Douglas Neasloss | BC - Canada | 2023 | 29 min

PRINCE of WHALES

In the heart of British Columbia's Great Bear Rainforest, one Nation is reclaiming the power they held for millennia. As the impacts of colonial exploitation and mismanagement take an increasing toll on their territory, the Kitasoo Xai'xais Nation finds strength in its stories and culture, emerging as a stewardship leader in a new age of reconciliation in Canada.

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SPECIAL EVENTS

IN CONVERSATION WITH... ERIC MCCORMACK

FREE ENTERPRISE

ART EXHIBIT

JAMMIES & TOONS

CINEVIC NIGHT

FILMCAN & CINEKIDS

SPRINGBOARD — INDUSTRY EVENT

IN CONVERSATION WITH...ERIC MCCORMACK

THE VIC | FEB 3 | 2:45 PM

Will & Grace

Travelers

Drinkwater

Free Enterprise

Slasher

Perception

Guiding Emily


The Other Black Girl

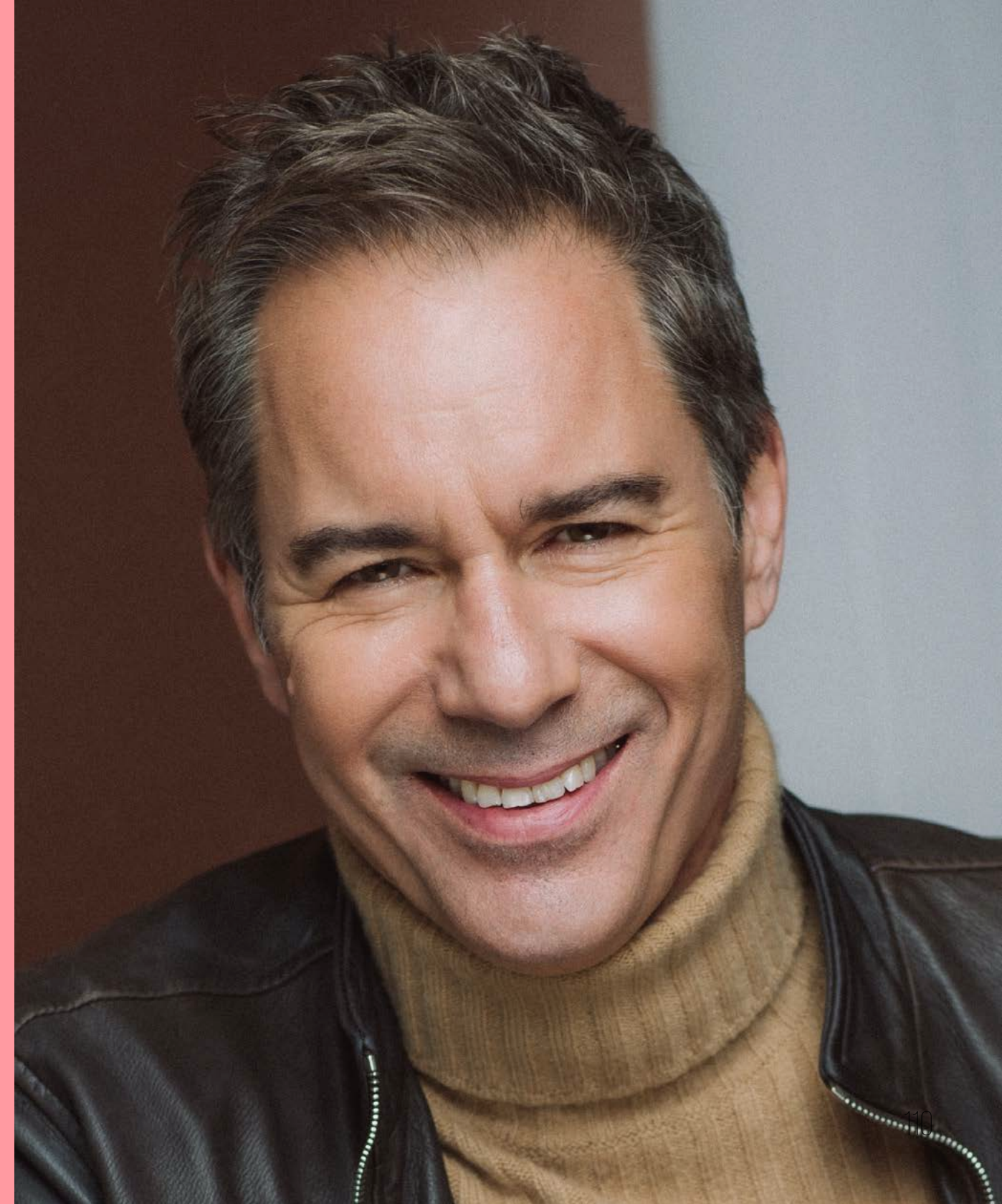
Best known for his eleven seasons as Will Truman on NBC's *Will & Grace*, Toronto-born Eric McCormack was nominated for four Emmy Awards and six Golden Globes, receiving the Emmy for Lead Actor in a Comedy in 2001. He served as a producer, director and leading actor on three seasons of *Perception*, and for three seasons of the Netflix sleeper hit *Travelers*, produced in Vancouver. He currently stars in *Slasher: Ripper* for AMC+ and in Hulu's *The Other Black Girl*. On Broadway, McCormack starred in Tony-nominated productions of *The Music Man* and Gore Vidal's *The Best Man* and spent the summer in the new hit comedy, *The Cottage*, directed by Jason Alexander. Films include *Holy Man*, *The Architect*, *Free Enterprise* and the new Canadian comedy, *Drinkwater*, for which he won last year's UBCP/ACTRA Award. He can also be heard weekly on *Just Jack & Will*, his popular podcast with his *Will & Grace* pal, Sean Hayes.

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UBCP/ACTRA

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FREE ENTERPRISE

ROBERT MEYER BURNETT

USA | 1998 | 113 min

THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 3 | 4:15 PM 

Filmmaker expected to attend

Winning Best New Writer and Director at AFI, this cult classic with Eric McCormack sees two less-than-successful film producers, clinging to their nerdy sci-fi obsessions, suddenly meet their idol: William Shatner.


The movie references are flying here. The joys of being a geek, the passion and the clarity of purpose are undeniable and so much fun to watch. The writers are so authentic they've used their own names for the main characters. Both men share a love for Star Trek that started in childhood, though they soon discover that the insightful Shatner of their youth is in reality a lecherous old cod. The finalé offers up Shatner doing a rap version of Julius Caesar. Yes, you read that correctly!

Was this William Shatner's first attempt at sending up his persona? I think so!

This witty comedy is rife with self-deprecating humour. Plain and simple, *Free Enterprise* is a hoot - there's no other word for it. - *KK*

Movie Trailer

[≈ click here](#)

Buy your » 
ticket here

ART EXHIBIT

1205 BLANSHARD ST.

FEB 2 — 10 | NOON — 7 PM

2053: A Screen Odyssey

Evolving technology has shaped the way we experience and share the cinematic world. As screens get smaller, more immersive and individualized, what does the future of cinema look like? To celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Victoria Film Festival, artist Scott Amos travelled 30 years into the future - to 2053 - and returned with a collection of artifacts that explore the intersection of technology and motion-picture art and look at the whimsical and potentially frightening possibilities of the imagined screens of science fiction.

Bio:

Artist Scott Amos. Whether it's a strange and whimsical musical instrument like the Bubble Organ, a giant motion-responsive LED cube sculpture, a house-music-looping mutant cash register, or a 5-story-tall musical stairwell, Amos' public art installations and interactive sculptures have amused and delighted countless people in their hometown of Victoria, BC, and at numerous festivals and events across North America.





JAMMIES & TOONS

Stay in your pajamas for a fun time at The Vic!
There is cereal for the kids and coffee for the adults. Or is it the other way around?

THE VIC THEATRE
FEB 11 | 11:30 AM

ERNEST & CELESTINE: A TRIP TO GIBBERITIA

JULIEN CHHENG, JEAN-CHRISTOPHE ROGER


France, Luxembourg | 2023 | 79 min

In the heartwarming sequel to their Academy Award®-nominated debut, Ernest and Celestine, the lovable bear and plucky mouse duo, embark on a musical journey to Ernest's homeland, Gibberitia. When Celestine accidentally breaks Ernest's cherished violin, the two set off on a poignant adventure to seek repairs from Gibberitia's renowned artist. To their astonishment, upon reaching Gibberitia, they find a once-vibrant land of extraordinary musicians now silenced by a longstanding ban on music – a ban that was decreed by Ernest's own father! Determined to restore music, the two comrades (and some newfound friends) join forces to challenge the oppressive decree and rekindle the spirit of music in the hearts of bears.

As Ernest and Celestine navigate their differences, the film's real heart beats, showcasing that even in a world where music is forbidden, the harmony of true friendship (and a little bit of organized resistance) can win the day. Recommended for ages 5 and up.

Bear + Mouse + Music

Movie Trailer
≈ *click here*

Buy your »
ticket here 


Presented by: **FERNWOOD**

COFFEE COMPANY
VICTORIA, BC, CANADA

CINEVIC SCREENING @ VFF 2024

Total runtime: 91 minutes

BLUE BRIDGE THEATRE
FEB 10 | 8:30 PM

Buy your » 
ticket here

CineVic Society of Independent Filmmakers is thrilled to return to the Victoria Film Festival's 30th edition with a screening that showcases the diverse work created by our amazing members. Please join us for a presentation of local short film highlights from the past year.

CineVic is an artist-run society supporting independent filmmakers and media artists with accessible programming, affordable equipment, professional development resources, and cinematic exhibition opportunities since 1991. We acknowledge and respect the long and continuing history of the Ləkʷəŋən-speaking people, now known as the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations, on whose traditional and unceded territory we carry out our creative activities.



Unsettled | Taylor Hanley | 2023 | 17 min

After seeking refuge on an island with a mysterious past, a draft dodger finds more than treasure amongst the wealth left behind.

Washer | Emanuel Foucault | 2023 | 15 min

Documentarian James Talbot is sent to persuade Dr. Robert Heist, a recently-retired professor and former psychotherapist, to be the subject of an in-depth interview. But upon arrival, this pretence quickly falls apart and underlying motives begin to surface.

Ginny's Enterprise | Suzanne Moreau | 2023 | 18 min

An imaginative young 'Trekkie' escapes the oppression of her dysfunctional, blindly patriarchal family in her own fantasy version of Star Trek in the sixties' Cold War, white man's world.

Closing Walls | Mia Golden | 2023 | 21 min

A vibrant woman in her 50's has her life turned upside down when she receives a life altering diagnosis that will leave her unable to function. No longer able to live without support, she is committed to a care home where she makes new friendships and plots her escape.

Going Home | Trent Peek | 2023 | 9 min

After seeking refuge on an island with a mysterious past, a draft dodger finds more than treasure amongst the wealth left behind.

The Mighty Pen | Michael Korican | 2023 | 11 min

Two screenplay writers, her popular with romance film fans and him acclaimed for his film noir scripts, clash over who is spying on who.



FILMCAN

What is FilmCan? I was just asking myself that. An online Video Competition for Students. Youth interested in content creation make short films and upload them to the VFF Vimeo channel.

What happens to the films?

The winning films, based on a combination of likes and juror input, will screen at the 30th Annual Victoria Film Festival in front of the feature film *Ernest & Celestine: A Trip to Gibberitia* playing at Jammies and Toons.

Please visit the VFF website for the names of the filmmakers and films.

THE WINNING ENTRIES RECEIVE:

Senior Category (Grade 9-12):

GoPro HERO8 Black Bundle – courtesy of Prince of Whales Whale Watching
An opportunity to go out filming on a Whale Watching trip
London Drugs Gift Cards

Junior Category (Grade 8 and under):

MOZA Nano SE Foldable Extendable Selfie Stick Stabilizer
Frankie's Gift Cards
Dutch Bakery Gift Cards

Entries are open every October – mid-December

PRINCE of WHALES
WHALE & MARINE WILDLIFE ADVENTURES

 **saanichlegacyfoundation**
Supporting Your Vision... is Our Mission

CINEKIDS

VFF WORKING WITH YOUTH

Filmmakers Into Schools

Guests of the Victoria Film Festival, including writers, directors, composers, producers and musicians who attend the festival, visit local classrooms to talk about their art, offering advice about careers in the film industry and inspiring a new generation of filmmakers.

School Screenings

Year-round at The Vic Theatre, and during the Victoria Film Festival, the VFF offers special screenings of great independent films and documentaries for local schools, inviting filmmakers and actors involved in these films for interactive Q&As.

Snapshots

Bite size sessions with a classroom of students. A local filmmaker spends the hour on a specific filmmaking topic: Creating a Story Arc, Editing, Lighting.

To book sessions for your class please reach out to festival@victoriafilmfestival.com





SPRINGBOARD – INDUSTRY EVENT

FEB 2, 3, 4

A three-day industry event with a focus on taking your work to the next level.

WORKSHOP ON APTN SESSION – FEB 2 | 1:30 – 2:30 PM | THE VIC | FREE

Everything you need to know to work with and submit projects to APTN.

ONE ON ONE MEETINGS – FEB 3 | 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM | KWENCH

Opportunities to pitch to decision makers and get your project moving ahead.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Participants and industry guests will be matched based on the decision makers requested scope of work. Please submit a one page project description when sending in meeting requests. Three meetings guaranteed.

INDUSTRY PANELS (50 MIN EACH) – FEB 3 | 1:00 – 4:00 PM | KWENCH

Moderated by Teri Snelgrove

STATE OF THE MARKET: CANADIAN CONTENT DISTRIBUTION

An in-depth conversation about the current state of Canadian Content Distribution. Opportunities, strategies and challenges.

HONING THE STORY ARC

If you've made short films, the next step is to sharpen your feature writing skills. Learning the craft of creating a strong story arc is the key.

INDEPENDENT FILM FINANCING AND WHAT DOORS CAN BE KNOCKED ON.

Join us for this insightful panel discussion as producers and funders discuss the many diverse funding sources for independent films, and strategies to get them.

NETWORKING HOUR – FEB 3 4:00 – 5:00 PM | KWENCH

NETWORKING BRUNCH INNER HARBOUR TOUR – FEB 4

11:00 AM – 1:00 PM | PRINCE OF WHALES BOAT – 812 WHARF ST


MASTERCLASS (90 MIN) – FEB 4 | 2:00 PM | KWENCH

Moderated by Teri Snelgrove

ATOM EGOYAN MASTERCLASS

In-depth Conversation on filmmaking with one of the most celebrated contemporary filmmakers on the international scene. Hear from the creator of works such as *Exotica*, *Chloe*, and *Seven Veils* about his directorial process, from screenwriting to casting to working with composers to create works in Canada that stand toe to toe in Cannes with the very best.

PRICES:

[Buy your »
ticket here](#) 

Full SpringBoard Pass \$299.00

(Panels, Masterclass, Industry Lounge access Feb 3 – Kwench, Three one-on-one meetings, Opening Gala Film & Party, five regular film tickets, Networking Prince of Whales Brunch Feb 4)

Full-day Pass \$139.00

(Three one-on-one meetings + panels + Industry Lounge access Feb 3 – Kwench)

All Panels Pass \$79.00

(Panels + Industry Lounge access Feb 3 – Kwench)

Masterclass Atom Egoyan \$49.00

Student All Panels Pass \$20.00

*(Panels + Industry Lounge access Feb 3 – Kwench)
(ages 19 – 30 with student ID)*



WORKSHOP ON APTN SESSION – FRIDAY | FEB 2

1:30 PM – 2:30 PM | THE VIC | FREE (REGISTRATION REQUIRED)

Everything you need to know to work with and submit projects to APTN.

ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS (IN-PERSON) – SATURDAY | FEB 3

10:00 AM – 1:00 PM | KWENCH

Tom Hastings, Head of Original Programming, Paramount+ Canada

Paige Murray, Executive in Charge of Development, CBC Drama

Georgia Shearman, Manager, Digital Development, Original Programming, Bell Media

Teri Snelgrove, Producer, BC & Yukon Studios, National Film Board of Canada

Mathew Parry, Manager Creative Industry Programs, Creative BC

Jennifer Chen, Head of Studios, VP of Content, Channel Zero Studios

Patrice Ramsay, Producer, Independent Productions, Knowledge Network

Hilary Hart, Co-President, Game Theory Films

Adam Garnet Jones, Director of TV Content and Special Events, APTN

Lauren Davis, Director of Program Modernization, Telefilm

Kajsa Erickson, Manager of the Talent Fund, Telefilm

Kevin Eastwood, Producer, Optic Nerve Films

James Weyman, Producer, Barn 12 Inc.

One-on-One Meetings notes:

Participants and industry guests will be matched based on the decision makers requested scope of work. Please submit a one page project description when sending in meeting requests.

Three meetings are guaranteed. If there are extra slots after everyone is booked, then we can offer more meeting opportunities on a last-minute basis.

Once you purchase a pass you will receive an email directing you where to send an email with up to 5 names of people you would like to pitch – in order of preference.



Tom Hastings | Head of Original Programming
PARAMOUNT+ CANADA

Based in Toronto, Tom leads the commissioning strategy for Paramount+ Canadian originals. An industry veteran and former Director of Drama at Bell Media, Tom has extensive and long-standing relationships with Canada's independent production and literary communities and is especially known for his respected relationships with Canadian writers, producers and agents. Tom also holds a doctorate degree, having obtained his Ph.D. in English Literature.

Paramount+ is a global digital subscription video streaming service from Paramount that features a mountain of premium entertainment for audiences of all ages. Internationally, the streaming service features an expansive library of original series, hit shows and popular movies across every genre from world-renowned brands and production studios, including SHOWTIME®, BET, CBS, Comedy Central, MTV, Nickelodeon, Paramount Pictures and the Smithsonian Channel™, in addition to a robust offering of premier local content. The service is currently live in the U.S., the U.K., Canada, Latin America, the Caribbean, Australia, Italy, Ireland and South Korea.



Paige Murray | Executive in Charge of Development
CBC DRAMA

Paige Murray has worked at the CBC for over twelve years within the television content areas. She is currently Executive in Charge of Development, Drama on the Scripted Content team. In this role, Paige oversees the development of one-hour drama series and actively looks for creators and stories that reflect the spectrum of the Canadian experience to entertain and enlighten CBC audiences. Additionally, Paige currently sits on the board of Regent Park Film Festival and the advisory board of The Future of Film Showcase.



Georgia Shearman | Manager, Digital Development,
BELL MEDIA | Original Programming, Bell Media

Georgia Shearman is a Development Executive for Bell Media’s Original Programming department in Toronto, Canada. Georgia works with industry writers and partners on the development of new scripted projects for Bell Media’s Original Programming slate.

Previously, Georgia was the lead development and production executive for Circle Blue Entertainment where she developed a slate of both scripted and unscripted TV projects, features and documentaries, and served as the production executive on three seasons of *Diggstown* (CBC/BET+), as well as several feature films. Prior to that, Georgia has worked in a variety of roles both across physical production and development.



Teri Snelgrove | Producer, BC & Yukon Studios
NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA

Teri Snelgrove is a producer at the BC & Yukon Studio. Most recently, she produced *WaaPaKe* (Tomorrow) (Jules Arita Koostachin), *A Motorcycle Saved My Life* (Lori Lozinski) and *Into Light* (Sheona McDonald). With Shirley Vercruysse, Teri co-produced *Someone Like Me* by Steve J. Adams and Sean Horlor, and the animated projects *Two Apples* (Bahram Javahery) and *Zeb’s Spider* (Alicia Eisen and Sophie Jarvis). She is currently working with Brishkay Ahmed on the feature doc *In the Room*, and with Wahid Ibn Reza on the animation *The Last Glacier*. She is the co-producer on Lyana Patrick’s feature doc, *Nechako* and she has a number of excellent documentary projects in development. Teri is a Newfoundlander, and a graduate of the film/video program at Emily Carr University. She holds a Master’s Degree from the GLS program at Simon Fraser University.



Mathew Parry | Manager Creative Industry Programs
CREATIVE BC

Mathew’s primary responsibilities lie within the Development Team where he oversees a number of programs including the Project Development Fund, and other partnership programs with external organizations supporting film and TV development. Mathew has a Master’s degree in history, and is also a graduate of the Documentary Film Production program at Langara College.



Jennifer Chen | Head of Studios, VP of Content
CHANNEL ZERO STUDIOS

Jennifer Chen is the head of Channel Zero Studios, managing international series and feature-length content from script to screen. She was formerly the VP of Programming for the suite of Channel Zero’s networks managing acquisitions, scheduling and original programming (*Wynonna Earp* S1, *Tiny Talent Time* S1-3, *Spin Off* S1) for CHCH, Silver Screen Classics and Rewind. She began her film and television career in international sales at the CFC and then at Ouat Media, specializing in the acquisition and sale of short films including Oscar-winning titles.

Jennifer currently sits on the board of Women in Film and Television - Toronto (WIFT-T). She’s an avid Francophile since her cinema studies at the Sorbonne, where her love for the culinary arts in many cuisines flourished. She holds a joint MBA from Kellogg at Northwestern and York’s Schulich.



Patrice Ramsay | Producer, Independent Productions
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK

Patrice Ramsay is the Senior Manager of Independent Production at British Columbia's Knowledge Network. Her portfolio includes the pre-licensing of documentary productions and managing Knowledge Network's broadcaster envelope from the Canada Media Fund. Recent Executive Producer credits include *Subterranean*, *Part of the Pack*, *Dancing with Mom*, and *Search and Rescue North Shore*.



Hilary Hart | Co-President
GAME THEORY FILMS

Hilary's career in film began in short film distribution at Ouat Media, before moving onto the Canadian Film Centre (CFC), working in development, administration and distribution. While at the CFC she contributed to an online film magazine, *The Seventh Art*, where she managed a Live Directors Series, which brought prominent directors to Toronto to screen and discuss their work. She then worked for three years in talent management, before partnering in 2018 with Will Woods to create Game Theory Films, a Toronto based independent film distribution company where she serves as Co-President. To date Game Theory's catalogue includes over 50 titles released theatrically and on VOD in the Canadian marketplace, including last year's TIFF Platform Prize winner *Riceboy Sleeps* and upcoming TIFF 2023 titles *Seagrass*, *In Flames*, and *Humanist Vampire Seeks Consenting Suicidal Person*. Hilary is a Berlinale Talents alumnus, voting member of the Academy Of Canadian Cinema & Television, and in 2022 was named one of *The Globe and Mail's* 22 Most Influential People in Canadian Film.



Adam Garnet Jones | Director of TV Content and Special Events
APTN

Adam Garnet Jones is Cree-Métis from Edmonton, although he attended High School in Victoria. For 14 years, Adam worked as a writer/director/producer of feature films and TV. In 2018, he shifted toward content development and advocacy for Indigenous creators founding the role of Indigenous Initiatives Lead at Telefilm Canada and the Canada Media Fund (CMF.) In that role, Adam helped Telefilm and the CMF implement Indigenous Pathways and Protocols into their funding systems, and guided the creation and implementation of a historic new fund for Indigenous feature filmmakers.

Now, Adam is delighted to lead his team as Director of TV Content and Special Events at APTN. In his role, Adam is responsible for setting the direction of the network's programming, and helping to nurture Indigenous TV series and feature films. This year, he has been proud of his work on *Little Bird* (winner of the audience award at Series Mania in Cannes) *Bones of Crows* and the live National broadcast commemorating the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.



Lauren Davis | Director of Program Modernization
TELEFILM

Lauren has held a number of management positions within the television, feature film, business affairs and process management teams. Using her industry knowledge and experience across departments, Lauren works with internal and external industry stakeholders to improve program performance in terms of equitable access, sustainability, and authentic storytelling.



Kajsja Erickson | Manager of the Talent Fund
TELEFILM

As Manager of the Talent Fund with Telefilm Canada, Kajsja Erickson works with companies, family foundations, and philanthropists – those who wish to make private investments in support of emerging Canadian filmmakers from diverse backgrounds – all across Canada. Before starting with Telefilm in 2021, she spent the past 20 years in arts leadership roles with organizations such as the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Vancouver 2010 Winter Games, and the Toronto International Film Festival. Kajsja was born and raised in Victoria, and now lives and works in Calgary.



Kevin Eastwood | Producer
OPTIC NERVE FILMS

Kevin is an award-winning writer, director and producer. His credits as a producer include the award-winning documentaries *Part of the Pack* (VFF 2022), *Haida Modern* (VFF 2020), *Haida Gwaii: On The Edge Of The World*, and *Eco-Pirate: The Story Of Paul Watson*, the feature films *Preggoland*, *Fido*, and *The Delicate Art of Parking*, the Gemini Award-winning CTV movie, *Elijah*, and the CBC series *The Romeo Section*. Other credits include being the series director on two critically-acclaimed, award-winning documentary series, *British Columbia: An Untold History* and *Emergency Room: Life + Death At VGH*, as well as writing and directing the CBC documentaries, *Humboldt: The New Season* and *After The Sirens* (both nominated for Best Documentary Program at the Canadian Screen Awards).



James Weyman | Producer
BARN 12 INC.

James Weyman is a veteran producer, filmmaker, consultant and production executive with a track record for supporting new creative and entrepreneurial talent. As President of Barn 12 Inc., he is developing and producing a slate of film and TV projects in partnership with like-minded creators for a global audience. Currently in the market is the award-winning *I Used To Be Funny* starring Rachel Sennott (*Shiva Baby*; *The Idol*), the feature debut of writer/director Ally Pankiw (*Feel Good*; *Black Mirror*) that premiered at SXSW in March, 2023 and will be released in 2024 by Utopia and Level Film in North America, with world sales by Magnify. Projects in development include the psychological thriller *Walled In* with Valerie Buhagiar (*Carmen*) attached to direct, and Michael McNamara's feature music documentary *On Bass*, a celebration of the electric bass guitar and the bass players who changed popular music. In association with Markham Street Films, James was Co-Producer on TV documentary *A User's Guide to the Voice* for the CBC, and Executive Producer on *Level 16* with writer/director Danishka Esterhazy (*Ginny and Georgia*; *I Was Loreena Bobbitt*). In his previous career as Manager of Industry Development at the OMDC/Ontario Creates, James managed a \$20 million portfolio of funds to support the cultural industries in Ontario, created programs and initiatives to grow independent business in the sector, and invested over \$100 million in film development and production, including titles such as Oscar-nominated *The Breadwinner* and Oscar winner *Room*.

INDUSTRY PANELS (50 MIN EACH) — SATURDAY | FEB 3

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

STATE OF THE MARKET: CANADIAN CONTENT DISTRIBUTION

1:00 PM | KWENCH

An in-depth conversation about the current state of Canadian Content Distribution. Opportunities, strategies and challenges.



Christine Haebler | Producer
SCREEN SIREN PICTURES

In the film business since 1983, Christine Haebler started off in production on various big-budget US studio films. She then moved into producing in 1995 and earned a Best Motion Picture Genie nomination for *Hard Core Logo*. The film was picked up by Quentin Tarantino for distribution through Miramax. She teamed up with Trish Dolman and Screen Siren Pictures to produce *Daydream Nation* (2010) starring Kat Dennings, Josh Lucas and Andie MacDowell, followed by *Hector and the Search for Happiness* (2014) with Simon Pegg, Rosamund Pike, Christopher Plummer, Jean Reno and Stellan Skarsgård. She developed and produced the multi-award-winning feature film *Indian Horse* (2018), an adaptation of Richard Wagamese's own award-winning novel. The film was executive produced by Clint Eastwood. Christine also produced the 10-part TV mini-series *Terminal City* for Channel 4 and the 5-part kids miniseries *Clue for Hasbro*. She recently produced *French Exit*, the feature adaptation of Canadian author Patrick DeWitt's acclaimed novel with Elevation Pictures and Sony Pictures Classics, starring Michelle Pfeiffer and Lucas Hedges. She produced Dev Patel's directorial debut that he also stars in for Netflix entitled *Monkey Man*, which will be released in Dec 2022.

Her latest project that she produced and developed entitled *Bones of Crows*, is a dramatic miniseries and feature film from Indigenous filmmaker and playwright Marie Clements, for the CBC and Fifth Season which premiered at TIFF 2022. The film has won 32 awards to date. The series Premiered on CBC on Sept 20th 2023. She is also currently Exec Producing a feature Doc entitled *500 Days in the Wild* by Dianne Whelan for Paramount + to be distributed in 2025.



Hilary Hart | Co-President
GAME THEORY FILMS

Hilary's career in film began in short film distribution at Ouat Media, before moving onto the Canadian Film Centre (CFC), working in development, administration and distribution. While at the CFC she contributed to an online film magazine, *The Seventh Art*, where she managed a Live Directors Series, which brought prominent directors to Toronto to screen and discuss their work. She then worked for three years in talent management, before partnering in 2018 with Will Woods to create Game Theory Films, a Toronto based independent film distribution company where she serves as Co-President. To date Game Theory's catalogue includes over 50 titles released theatrically and on VOD in the Canadian marketplace, including last year's TIFF Platform Prize winner *Riceboy Sleeps* and upcoming TIFF 2023 titles *Seagrass*, *In Flames*, and *Humanist Vampire Seeks Consenting Suicidal Person*. Hilary is a Berlinale Talents alumnus, voting member of the Academy Of Canadian Cinema & Television, and in 2022 was named one of *The Globe and Mail's* 22 Most Influential People in Canadian Film.



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INDEPENDENT FILM FINANCING AND WHAT DOORS CAN BE KNOCKED ON.

2:00 PM | KWENCH

Join us for this insightful panel discussion as producers and funders discuss the many diverse funding sources for independent films, and strategies to get them.



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HONING THE STORY ARC

3:00 PM | KWENCH

If you've made short films, the next step is to sharpen your feature writing skills. Learning the craft of creating a strong story arc is the key.



Don McKellar | Actor-Director-Writer

ROADKILL, THE SYMPATHIZER

Don McKellar was born on 17th August 1963 in Toronto, Canada. Beginning his career in the theatre he moved into feature films writing the screenplay for Bruce McDonald's film *Roadkill* (1989).

McKellar made his directorial debut in 1992 with two short films, *Blue* (starring David Cronenberg) and *Bloody Nose*, then in 1998 completed *Last Night*, his feature directing debut (which he also wrote and starred in), for which he won the Prix de la Jeunesse at the Cannes Film Festival. He has continued directing with his TV series *Michael: Tuesdays and Thursdays* and *Michael: Every Day*, and 2 series of *Sensitive Skin* (in which he also starred) and the films *The Grand Seduction* and *Through Black Spruce*.

He has numerous screenwriting credits to his name including the screen adaptation of *Blindness* from Nobel Prize-winning author José Saramago's novel, co-writing the critically acclaimed *Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould*, and *Red Violin*. He has currently returned to writing, adapting the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel for HBO's drama series *The Sympathizer*, starring Robert Downey Jr and Sandra Oh and directed by Park Chan-wook.

Image credits: Canadian Film Centre



Cody Lightning | Actor-Director-Writer

HEY VIKTOR!

Cody Lightning is a world-class, generation-defining actor, iconic for his performance as Little Viktor in 1998's *Smoke Signals*.

Hailing from Samson Cree Nation in Maskwacis, Alberta, Canada, Cody began acting at age 5 in the film *Geronimo*. Since, he has become one of Hollywood's most active Indigenous actors, best known for his roles in *Smoke Signals*, Johnny Depp's directorial debut *The Brave*, Rian Johnson's *Brick*, and many, many more.

In 2023, Cody will star in Marvel's upcoming ECHO series. His debut feature film as a writer/director, *Hey Viktor!* will debut on CRAVE in 2024. In recent years, Lightning has taken on greater creative responsibilities, including producing, directing, and writing, focusing on projects that highlight how fucking hilarious Indigenous people are.



Dianne Whelan | Director-Writer-Producer

500 DAYS IN THE WILD

Dianne Whelan is an award winning Canadian Documentary filmmaker, and accomplished photographer, artist, storyteller, author and public speaker.

Dianne is the first person ever to complete a five-year, 24,000 km ecological and reconciliation pilgrimage on the world's longest trail. In August of 2021, she completed the land and water trails of the Trans Canada Trail spanning from coast to coast to coast. Traversing on land and water, using only her own strength in snowshoes, cross country skis, bike, canoe, and of course walking.

500 Days in the Wild is the journey for her latest documentary film and upcoming book. In partnership with Elevation Pictures, 500 Days in the Wild will have a Canadian theatrical release beginning in March 2024, and will be available to view on Paramount+ Canada.

Other work from Dianne, is her feature length documentary, and book, 40 Days at Base Camp shot on Mt Everest. You can also find her 3 part series on CBC Gem entitled The Beacon Project, a series of multimedia creations in collaboration with Indigenous communities along The Great Trail. A companion piece to the feature documentary 500 Days in the Wild.

MASTERCLASS (90 MIN) – SUNDAY | FEB 4

2:00 PM | KWENCH

ATOM EGOYAN MASTERCLASS

In-depth Conversation on filmmaking with one of the most celebrated contemporary filmmakers on the international scene. Hear from the creator of works such as *Exotica*, *Chloe*, and *Seven Veils* about his directorial process, from screenwriting to casting to working with composers to create works in Canada that stand toe to toe in Cannes with the very best.



Atom Egoyan | Director-Writer

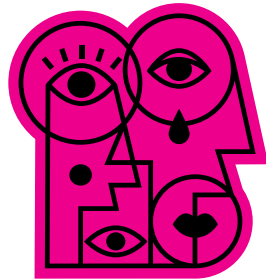
EXOTICA, CHLOE, SEVEN VEILS

Atom Egoyan is one of the most celebrated contemporary filmmakers on the international scene. His body of work – which includes theatre, music, and art installations – delves into issues of memory, displacement, and the impact of technology and media on modern life.

Egoyan has won numerous prizes at international film festivals including the Grand Prix and International Critics Awards from the Cannes Film Festival, two Academy Award® nominations, and numerous other honours. His films have won twenty-five Genies – including three Best Film Awards – and a prize for Best International Film Adaptation from The Frankfurt Book Fair. Egoyan's films have been presented in numerous retrospectives across the world, including a complete career overview at the Pompidou Centre in Paris, followed by similar events at the Filmoteca Espagnol in Madrid, the Museum of The Moving Image in New York, and the Royal Cinematek in Brussels.

Adoration won the Ecumenical Jury Award after premiering in Competition in Cannes, and *Chloe* was selected as Opening Night Premiere at the San Sebastian Film Festival in Spain. With three major prizes at Cannes, two Academy Award® nominations, and unanimously positive reviews, *The Sweet Hereafter* is widely regarded as the most acclaimed English-Canadian film ever made. *Devil's Knot* premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2013. *The Captive*, starring Ryan Reynolds, Mireille Enos, Scott Speedman, and Rosario Dawson, was released to great box-office success. Egoyan's feature, *Remember*, starring Christopher Plummer premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and was released worldwide in 2015/16.

Thank you!



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