
VICTORIA
FILM
FESTIVAL
February 6 - 15, 2026



# VENUES 2026

**Vt** **The Vic Theatre**
808 Douglas St, Victoria BC

**C6** **Capitol 6**
805 Yates St, Victoria BC

**Ry** **Roxy Theatre**
2657 Quadra St, Victoria, BC

**Tr** **Toaster Rocket Cinema**
712 Cormorant St, Victoria, BC

**Ss** **Star Sidney**
9840 Third St, Sidney, BC

**It** **Intrepid Theatre**
1609 Blanshard St, Victoria BC

**Dc** **Destroyed Cinema @ Market Square**
560 Johnson St #41, Victoria, BC

**Dc** **Destroyed Cinema @ Little Fernwood**
1923 Fernwood Rd, Victoria, BC

**Dc** **Destroyed Cinema @ United Commons**
932 Balmoral Rd, Victoria, BC

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## SPECIAL EVENTS


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## FILM PROGRAM



**Buzz+**
These films come with cred – you've heard about them, can't wait to see them and, goodness forbid, you're feeling a smidge of FOMO – and maybe that's a good thing... or is it?



**Coast**
Pacific Rim centric - from as far away as Singapore and as close as an Oak Bay tea party.



**Currents**
So much is going on – current affairs-wise, that is – here's a collection of stories ripped – yes, you read rightly – RIPPED from the headlines. Sorry, didn't mean to shout.



**F1RST**
Presenting contemporary Indigenous filmmaking.



**Olio**
Not just this and that, but also some of the other. Okay, so we wanted to use a more fun word than "miscellaneous." Can you blame us? You try spelling that over and over.



**Pulse**
The intangible, the nuance of life and... oooh please don't make me say the L word... the heartbeat. What drives inspiration, ambition, and moments of craziness. It's the beating heart of life.



**QuirkD**
We love quirky films! A magical director and writer wave some sparkle dust, turn their heads 180 and, baby, you're... quirkD. Think Stopkewich's *Kissed*, Lynch's *Eraserhead*. It's something about a one-word title? – maybe... not. Hang onto your pearls!



**Sketch**
Who is worth getting to know a little better? Artists who create great beauty? Women who have stood up for themselves? Athletes who reach great heights? Or maybe it's just Georgia O'Keeffe– because... well... what a life!



**Short Bursts**
Energetic programs of short films and new voices. Not on a boat.

# THANK YOU DONORS

Whether you donated the price of a double-double or a whole stack of loonies, we want to say a massive thank you for keeping the Victoria Film Festival screen-side up! Running a world-class festival is a bit like trying to drive up a slushy Malahat in January—ambitious, slightly chaotic, and it only works if everyone pitches in. Thanks to your generosity, we've got enough "gas in the tank" to bring incredible cinema to our little corner of the Island without having to sell off our collective toque collection. You're the real MVPs (Most Valuable Patrons), and we promise your donations have been put to much better use than just buying a lifetime supply of Nanaimo bars for the staff.

### Director

June Wing
Lyndsay Green

### Producer

Yves Roberge

### Assistant Director

Anne Macnab
Bruce Gauld
Charles Isherwood
Wendy Moreton

### Art Director

Cathy Auld
Deborah Bricks
Sara Hradecky

### Set Dresser

Audrey McClellan
David Conway
Diana Scheffler
Leslie Kirby
Lisa Marfisi
Lisa Miller
Lori Charvat
Mary Lou Myles
Peter Miller
Teresa Proudlove
William Huzar

### Gaffer

Andrew &
Nola Jackson
Cindy Rodgers
Danielle Furney
Iona Adam
Joan Powell
Kaitlyn Fallow
Lynn Monchamp
Nona Avren
Norah McMurtry
Silvia Vajushi
Sylvia Loewen

# WELCOME

Well, here we are Festival #32. Older, un-wiser, and somehow even more determined to cram as much cinematic mayhem, community magic, and joyful weirdness into ten days as is humanly possible.

First up: the pop-ups. Last year's beloved Toaster Rocket is blasting off again, now joined by Terrifying Toaster, a pair of late-night screenings cooked up for anyone who enjoys their movies with a side of adrenaline and questionable decisions. Bring a friend. Maybe a nightlight.

And while we are on pop-ups: the local DIY legends at Destroyed Cinema are upping the mischief, popping open their Secret Cinema at not one, not two, but three top-secret locations – okay – yeah, we've already spilled the beans – just check the guide. Hot-dog-eating competition diehards, consider this your mating call.

We're also unleashing a brand-new art exhibit—an animatronic, mischievous, horror-kissed playground built by a brilliantly inventive young artist from Squamish. It wiggles. It whirs. It might wink at you. Consider yourself, warned.

On the industry front, our stalwart gathering SpringBoard returns to the iconic Union Club, where filmmakers collide, schemes are hatched, and good ideas pretend they were planned all along.

And this year's gala? Buckle up. We're taking over the stunning Autonomous space at The Powerhouse. Poodle skirts optional but encouraged – I'm talking to you Bob. See – we do love diversity!

Films, parties, pop-ups, robots, art, diners, secrets—we've packed this festival tighter than a late-night Toaster Rocket crowd.  Wander boldly. Have fun.

**Kathy Kay,**
**Festival Director**



# Feature Film by Country


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54 Jimpa

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50 Starwalker
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110 The Art of Adventure
78 The Cost of Heaven (Gagne ton ciel)
95 The Furies (Les furies)
112 The Painted Life of E.J. Hughes
113 The Track
51 Uiksaringitara (Wrong Husband)
35 Vermilion

## COLOMBIA
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## CZECH REPUBLIC
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## DEMARK
40 Mr. Nobody Against Putin
24 The Last Viking

## FINLAND
84 100 Litres of Gold

## FRANCE
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77 Sundays (Los domingos)

## GERMANY
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## ICELAND
59 Odd Fish
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## ITALY
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79 The Mariana Trench

## JAPAN
108 particle dance

## MOROCCO
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## NEW ZEALAND
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## PALESTINE
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## PHILIPPINES
105 Magellan

## POLAND
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## ROMANIA
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119 Short Bursts: You Heard it Here F1RST




# FILM SCHEDULE



| VENUE | FRIDAY - FEBRUARY 6 | SATURDAY - FEBRUARY 7 | SUNDAY - FEBRUARY 8 | MONDAY - FEBRUARY 9 | TUESDAY - FEBRUARY 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Vic Theatre | 6:30 pm Opening Film: Holy Days | 12:00 pm Magellan | 12:15 pm Sirāt | 11:45 am Silent Friend | 11:45 am Franz |
| | 9:15 pm Nirvanna The Band The Show The Movie | 3:30 pm In Conversation With ... | 3:00 pm The Painted Life of E.J. Hughes | 2:45 pm Holy Days | 2:30 pm Calle Málaga |
| | | 4:45 pm Dancing on the Elephant | 5:30 pm Late Shift | 5:15 pm The Last Viking | 5:00 pm Leaving Beringia |
| | | 7:45 pm Pillion | 7:45 pm Uiksaringitara (Wrong Husband) | 8:00 pm Pillion | 7:45 pm Blue Heron |
| Capitol 6 | 6:00 pm 100 Sunset | 1:00 pm particle dance | 1:00 pm The Son and the Sea | 1:00 pm The Blueberry Blues (Les blues du bleuet) | 12:45 pm The Portuguese House |
| | 8:30 pm Blood Lines | 4:00 pm Invisibles | 3:30 pm Vermilion | 3:15 pm Green Valley | 3:15 pm Sk+te'kmujue'katik (At the Place of Ghosts) |
| | | 6:15 pm Odd Fish | 6:00 pm Menopause: Coming in Hot | 5:30 pm Buddha Jumps Over The Wall | 5:45 pm The Cost of Heaven (Gagne ton ciel) |
| | | 8:45 pm Erupcja | 8:15 pm Nika & Madison | 8:00 pm Lollipop | 8:30 pm Mortician |
| Roxy Theatre | | | | 2:30 pm Omaha | 2:30 pm The Track |
| | | | | 5:15 pm Mr Nobody Against Putin | 5:00 pm Jimpa |
| | | | | 7:30 pm Little Lorraine | 7:45 pm Modern Whore |
| Star Sidney | 7:00 pm Dancing on the Elephant | 2:00 pm Hello Betty | 2:00 pm A Life Illuminated | | 2:00 pm Georgia O'Keeffe: The Brightness of Light |
| | | 7:00 pm Blue Heron | 7:00 pm The Love That Remains | 7:00 pm The Blue Trail | 7:00 pm H Is for Hawk |
| Toaster Rocket Cinema | | 7:00 pm By Design | 7:30 pm Beautiful and Neat Room | 7:00 pm Middle Life | 7:00 pm Portal to Hell |
| | | 10:00 pm Lucid | | | |
| Intrepid | | | | | 5:00 pm For the Faint of Heart |
| | | | | | 7:30 pm This Really Happened |
| Pop-up | | | | | |

| VENUE | WEDNESDAY - FEBRUARY 11 | THURSDAY - FEBRUARY 12 | FRIDAY - FEBRUARY 13 | SATURDAY - FEBRUARY 14 | SUNDAY - FEBRUARY 15 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Vic Theatre | 12:00 pm A Life Illuminated | 12:30 pm H Is for Hawk | 12:00 pm The Golden Spurtle | 11:45 am Sundays (Los domingos) | 11:30 am Space Cadet -Jammies and Toons |
| | 2:30 pm Primavera | 3:00 pm A Magnificent Life | 2:00 pm The Art of Adventure | 2:15 pm Palestine 36 | 2:00 pm Hello Betty |
| | 5:15 pm Sirāt | 5:15 pm Rose of Nevada | 5:00 pm Everest Dark | 5:00 pm The Love That Remains | 4:45 pm A Poet |
| | 8:00 pm Nirvanna The Band The Show The Movie | 7:45 pm Mile End Kicks | 7:15 pm The Last Viking | 7:45 pm Carolina Caroline | 7:30 pm H Is for Hawk |
| Capitol 6 | 1:30 pm The Mariana Trench | 1:15 pm Agatha's Almanac | 10:00 pm Lucid | | |
| | 3:45 pm Powwow People | 3:30 pm Kontinental '25 | | | |
| | 6:00 pm To the Victory! | 6:00 pm A Second Life | | | |
| | 8:30 pm Starwalker | 8:00 pm Christy | | | |
| Roxy Theatre | 2:30 pm EMERGENCE: Women in the Storm | 2:30 pm A Wolf Among the Swans | 2:30 pm Shifting Baselines | 2:00 pm A Useful Ghost | 2:30 pm Georgia O'Keeffe: The Brightness of Light |
| | 5:15 pm Miroirs No. 3 | 5:00 pm Baby Doe | 5:00 pm The Blue Trail | 4:45 pm Montreal, My Beautiful | 5:00 pm The President's Cake |
| | 7:30 pm Mildlife | 7:30 pm The Furies (Les furies) | 7:30 pm Steal Away | 7:30 pm The Thing With Feathers | 7:30 pm CineVic Screening |
| Star Sidney | 2:00 pm The Golden Spurtle | 2:00 pm The Art of Adventure | | | |
| | 7:00 pm Calle Málaga | 7:00 pm Jimpa | | | |
| Toaster Rocket Cinema | 7:00 pm 100 Litres of Gold | 7:00 pm Racewalkers | 5:00 pm How Dark My Love | 7:00 pm Dead Lover | |
| | | | 7:30 pm Whistle | 10:00 pm Hunting Matthew Nichols | |
| Intrepid | 5:00 pm You Heard it Here F1RST | 5:00 pm This, That, There and Where | 5:00 pm This Really Happened | 5:00 pm This, That, There and Where | |
| | 7:30 pm Try Not to Freak Out | 7:30 pm You Heard it Here F1RST | 7:45 pm Try Not to Freak Out | 7:30 pm For the Faint of Heart | |
| Pop-up | 6:00 pm Levers | | 6:00 pm Foreigner | | 6:00 pm CAMP |



# OUR NATIVE LAND

with Tchadas Leo

Join Tchadas at the showing of
**LEAVING BERINGIA**
**February 10, 5pm**
**at the Vic Theatre**




chek

chek+

## DIRECTOR

PRINCE of WHALES
WHALE & MARINE WILDLIFE ADVENTURES

## GOVERNMENT

TELEFILM CANADA

CITY OF VICTORIA

BRITISH COLUMBIA Gaming Commission

CREATIVE BC

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Conseil des arts du Canada

Canada Council for the Arts

BRITISH COLUMBIA | COLOMBIE-BRITANNIQUE

CRD Making a difference...together

BRITISH COLUMBIA ARTS COUNCIL
An agency of the Province of British Columbia

BRITISH COLUMBIA
Supported by the Province of British Columbia

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THE UNION CLUB OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

GAGE GALLERY ARTS COLLECTIVE

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HON YBON

NOFRILLS

10 ACRES

Dirty Laundry

BARREL HOUSE BRINE

smoke 2 SNACK VICTORIA

Fairmont EMPRESS

milestones

Hey Happy

YALLA

MAHZ

PERFECT MATCH

Singing Bowl By Nicola Grannis

HiFive CHICKEN

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Tractor EVERYDAY HEALTHY FOODS

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Second Slice PIZZA

LOCAL Pizza

## SUPPORTING

University of Victoria Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives

University of Victoria Germanic & Slavic Studies

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ONF NFB

CMPA Canadian Media Producers Association BC Producers Branch

Destroyed

GARDENWORKS

ICG 669

Sidney BIA

TOURNÉE QUEBEC CINEMA

FERNWOOD COFFEE COMPANY VICTORIA, BC, CANADA

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golf for kids

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Pedersen's EVENT RENTALS

IATSE LOCAL 891

UBCP/ACTRA

VICTORIA REGENT WATERFRONT HOTEL & SUITES

ISTITUTO italiano DI CULTURA TORONTO

YYJ

Good Things

SANCTUARY

Switzerland. PRODUCTIONS

MALAHAT SKYWALK

CONSUMER PROTECTION BC

## MEDIA

CBC

TIMES COLONIST

chek

# Festival Info

## TICKETS 2026

| | |
|---|---|
| VFF Membership<br>(Needed for VFF screenings) | **$2.00** |
| Film Tickets | **$14.29** |
| Gold Pass<br>(Access to guaranteed seating at regular film screenings up to 10 minutes before showtime) | **$350.00** |
| 5 Films Vouchers | **$69.00** |
| 10 Films Vouchers | **$129.00** |
| Student Rush Tickets | **$8.00** |
| Opening Gala Film & Party<br>(Include film, party, drinks and food) | **$89.00** |
| In Conversation with...+ Film Screening | **$29.00** |
| Jammies and Toons | **$9.00** |

**These prices do not include taxes**



## Buy tickets @ our BOX OFFICE

**714 Fort St, V8W 2B7, Victoria BC**

**Starting January 9 and ending on February 7.**
**Wednesday - Saturday, 11 am - 4 pm only.**

We are not able to take phone orders.
Tickets are sold at the door 30 minutes before showtime and FilmFest pros know how quickly films sell out so purchase in advance at:

**www.victoriafilmfestival.com**
**Advance tickets on sale online midnight January 9 – February 15.**

## VFF Membership

In British Columbia, the B.C. government requires that you be a member of a society and over the age of 18 in order to see unclassified films. 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.**



## Festival Awards

Several of the films juried and accepted into the Festival are selected to receive awards. Watch for the announcement of the winners by February 17, 2026.

BEST FEATURE FILM
BEST CANADIAN FEATURE
BEST CANADIAN FIRST FEATURE
BEST DOCUMENTARY
BEST SHORT FILM
AUDIENCE FAVOURITE FEATURE
CULTURAL CURRENTS AWARD

# The Team

## Behind the Scenes

### Festival Team

Festival Director: Kathy Kay
General Manager: Guillermo Rossi
Program Manager: Mark Hoyne
Operations Manager: David Allen
Development & Volunteer Coordinator: Nina Yang
Community Engagement: Alejandro Lema
Communications & Marketing Coordinator: Robin Wark
Vic Theatre Manager: Kiana Karimkhani
Seasonal Graphic Designer: Pia Marecki
Box Office Assistant: Alice Huzar

### Board of Directors

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

### Pre-Screening Committee

Tony Ruffolo, Sheena Macdonald, Yves Roberge, Christopher Cross, Brenda Canitz, Nathan Treble, Scott Treble, Jeremy Balliston, Charlotte McCrae, Alison Cartan, Jeff Harvey, Stacey Short, Brian Fraser, Maria Nunn and VFF Team

### Advisory Committee

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

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



**Lexi Amoriello** is a writer, editor, and content creator. You can find her on social media under the name Movie Recs By Lex, where she provides customized movie recommendations based on people's Letterboxd accounts.
She also reviews new releases, does deep dives about classic films, and creates a variety of film-related content.
Her focus is on recommending movies, not criticizing them. She's a member of the HCA, IFSC, OAFFC, and Film Independent.

**Joanna Duncombe** is based between the UK and France; Jo manages new talent and film programs 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 program. 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 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 Vancouver, Nanaimo and Victoria. He was the 2020-21 Artist in Residence at Raycam Cooperative Centre as part of the Artists in Communities Program.



**John Debono** is a Toronto-based documentary programmer and arts administrator. He was previously the programming manager for the JAYU Human Rights Film Festival and worked with the TIFF Docs team.
He has also worked as an accessibility consultant with organizations like Hot Docs and Inside Out Toronto, helping to make film festivals a welcoming place for people living with disabilities. In between, he is mentoring young film students at the University of Toronto and Humber Polytechnic College.

**Liam Lacey** was a film critic for The Globe and Mail from 1995-2015, writing reviews, profiles, and covering the Cannes and Toronto and Sundance film festivals. He has contributed to Variety, Cinema Scope, Screen, Entertainment Weekly, CBC, 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.



**Megan Leonard** a creative producer, and festival programmer based in Seattle, WA. Her projects have premiered at top-tier festivals around the world, including Sundance, SXSW and Fantasia. Leonard started working for film festivals in 2010 and currently leads the New American Cinema and Shorts teams at the Seattle International Film Festival. She has also programmed for Indie Memphis and DOC NYC, served on juries at Fantastic Fest, Cleveland International Film Festival and Palm Springs ShortFest, and provided programming mentorship at SXSW and the Film Independent Forum.



**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. Currently she programs with Seattle International Film Festival, Victoria Film Festival, Vancouver Latin American Film Festival, and Frameline. For 9 years, Kathleen was the Artistic Director leading the programming and operations Seattle Queer Film Festival (SQFF). Other festivals Kathleen works with include the Whistler Film Festival and Skoden Indigenous Film Festival at Simon Fraser University. Kathleen has also programmed for Toronto International Film Festival, Hot Docs, Vancouver Queer Film Festival, 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.





**Dan Russek** is Professor in 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.

**Maarten Stoltz** is the Senior Programmer at Movies that Matter, Sales Manager at the Dutch film distributor Reveal Films, and a board member of the Alumni Circle Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam. He holds a BA and MA in History, as well as a BA in Media and Culture. Active in the film industry since 2011, Maarten has participated in numerous international film festival juries, panels, workshops, and pitching sessions. Renowned for his expertise in providing guidance and feedback during rough-cut screenings, he is also a skilled host and moderator for Q&As and industry events.





**Randy Waldie**
Randy Waldie is a lifelong film afficionado who started doing international programming in 2003 for the Victoria Film Festival. Waldie began his love of film when at age 15 he worked at Famous Players Theatre before going on to a degree in Fine Arts from U of A. Having worked in both film and television, he brings his deep passion for European cinema to the Victoria Film Festival.



**Jacob Crepeault** is a Toronto-based film programmer, writer, and creator of the film publication GLEANING. Since 2019, Jacob has programmed films at several Canadian film organizations such as TIFF Cinematheque, Inside Out 2SLGBTQ+ Film Festival, Pleasure Dome, and Victoria Film Festival. Jacob has programmed films by and about legendary artists like Charli XCX, William Basinski, and Kenneth Anger.



## A message from PREMIER DAVID EBY

**As Premier of British Columbia, I would like to welcome everyone to the 32nd Victoria Film Festival (VFF).**

For over three decades, VFF has been a platform to showcase incredible local and international films. British Columbia is proud to be one of the largest filmmaking hubs in North America, and VFF provides an important platform for both established and emerging artists. With a commitment to inclusion, this festival uplifts diverse and underrepresented voices to share narratives that resonate with audiences and shape our cultural landscape. VFF is the longest-running film festival on Vancouver Island and continues to be a highlight on Victoria's arts and culture calendar. I would like to recognize the hard-working organizers, volunteers and sponsors who make this festival possible. To the talented filmmakers and everyone involved in the productions, congratulations and thank you for sharing your unique perspectives and stories with us.

I wish everyone a wonderful experience at this year's Victoria Film Festival!

**Honourable David Eby, KC**, *Premier of British Columbia*
***David Eby, c. r.**, premier ministre de la Colombie-Britannique*

## A message from Marianne Alto



**On behalf of the City of Victoria, it is my great pleasure to welcome you back to the 32nd Victoria Film Festival. Once again, its an impressive line up of events!**

The Victoria Film Festival is nationally and regionally recognized for its impact on filmmaking. The festival has made its mark in the community by shining a spotlight on local creators and emerging artists, providing a platform for often underrepresented voices.

Film allows us to spend time thinking about, and being challenged by diverse perspectives. Congratulations to the VFF Team for putting on a wonderful event that allows our community to do just that.

Thanks to Festival organizers and volunteers, enjoy the show!

Sincerely,

**MARIANNE ALTO**
**VICTORIA MAYOR**

## Message from Julie Roy Telefilm



Festivals like the Victoria Film Festival play a vital role in connecting Canadian cinema with audiences at home and abroad. They showcase our stories, our artists and our creativity, while strengthening the bond between filmmakers and audiences around the world. Canadian cinema plays a key role in shaping and promoting our cultural identity. As audiences seek out stories that resonate with them, festivals bring us together.

At Telefilm Canada, our core mission is to invest in and highlight the importance of film. We support productions every step of the way, from development to distribution, so that Canadian stories are seen and celebrated. By working with our industry partners, we contribute to a strong and vibrant film ecosystem.

Beyond their screenings, festivals are places of dialogue, collaboration and exchange. They bring together professionals, emerging and established talent, as well as film lovers and audiences of all kinds. In pursuing our mission to support Canadian cinema, we recognize that festivals are essential to the vitality of our industry.

We're proud to partner with Victoria Film Festival to celebrate the unifying power of cinema. Enjoy the festival!



JULIE ROY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CEO, TELEFILM CANADA

## A Message from The Honourable Anne Kang, Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport



**On behalf of Premier David Eby and the Government of British Columbia, I'm thrilled to welcome you to the 32nd annual Victoria Film Festival.**

For more than three decades, this festival has been a place where stories come to life and people come together. It's not just about watching movies, it's about sharing ideas, celebrating creativity, and giving local talent a chance to shine. It's also a chance to see incredible films from around the world right here in B.C.
To the organizers, you don't just run a film festival, you build bridges for filmmakers, spark our imagination, and provide space for creativity to thrive.
To the volunteers and donors, your hard work behind the scenes makes all of this possible. And to the filmmakers, your stories remind us why films matter — they make us laugh, cry, and see the world in new ways.
Our government is proud to support the Victoria Film Festival through the Destination Events Program, and through our partners, Creative BC and the BC Arts Council. These investments help strengthen our creative sector and ensure that festivals like this continue to thrive.

Thank you for helping make British Columbia a vibrant and welcoming place for the arts. Enjoy the festival!

Sincerely,



ANNE KANG
MINISTER OF TOURISM, ARTS, CULTURE AND SPORT

# Film program

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**Buzz+** These films come with cred – you've heard about them, can't wait to see them and, goodness forbid, you're feeling a smidge of FOMO – and maybe that's a good thing... or is it?

**Coast** Pacific Rim centric - from as far away as Singapore and as close as an Oak Bay tea party.

**Currents** So much is going on – current affairs-wise, that is – here's a collection of stories ripped – yes, you read rightly – RIPPED from the headlines. Sorry, didn't mean to shout..

**F1RST** Presenting contemporary Indigenous filmmaking.

**Olio** Not just this and that, but also some of the other. Okay, so we wanted to use a more fun word than "miscellaneous." Can you blame us? You try spelling that over and over.

**Pulse** The intangible, the nuance of life and... oooh please don't make me say the L word... the heartbeat. What drives inspiration, ambition, and moments of craziness. It's the beating heart of life.

**QuirkD** We love quirky films! A magical director and writer wave some sparkle dust, turn their heads 180 and, baby, you're... quirkD. Think Stopkewich's *Kissed*, Lynch's *Eraserhead*. It's something about a one-word title? – maybe... not. Hang onto your pearls!

**Sketch** Who is worth getting to know a little better? Artists who create great beauty? Women who have stood up for themselves? Athletes who reach great heights? Or maybe it's just Georgia O'Keeffe– because... well... what a life!

**Short Bursts** Energetic programs of short films and new voices. Not on a boat.



# Buzz+




# A MAGNIFICENT LIFE

**SYLVAIN CHOMET**

France/Belgium/Luxembourg
2025 | 90 min

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 12, 3:00 PM

**Buzz+**

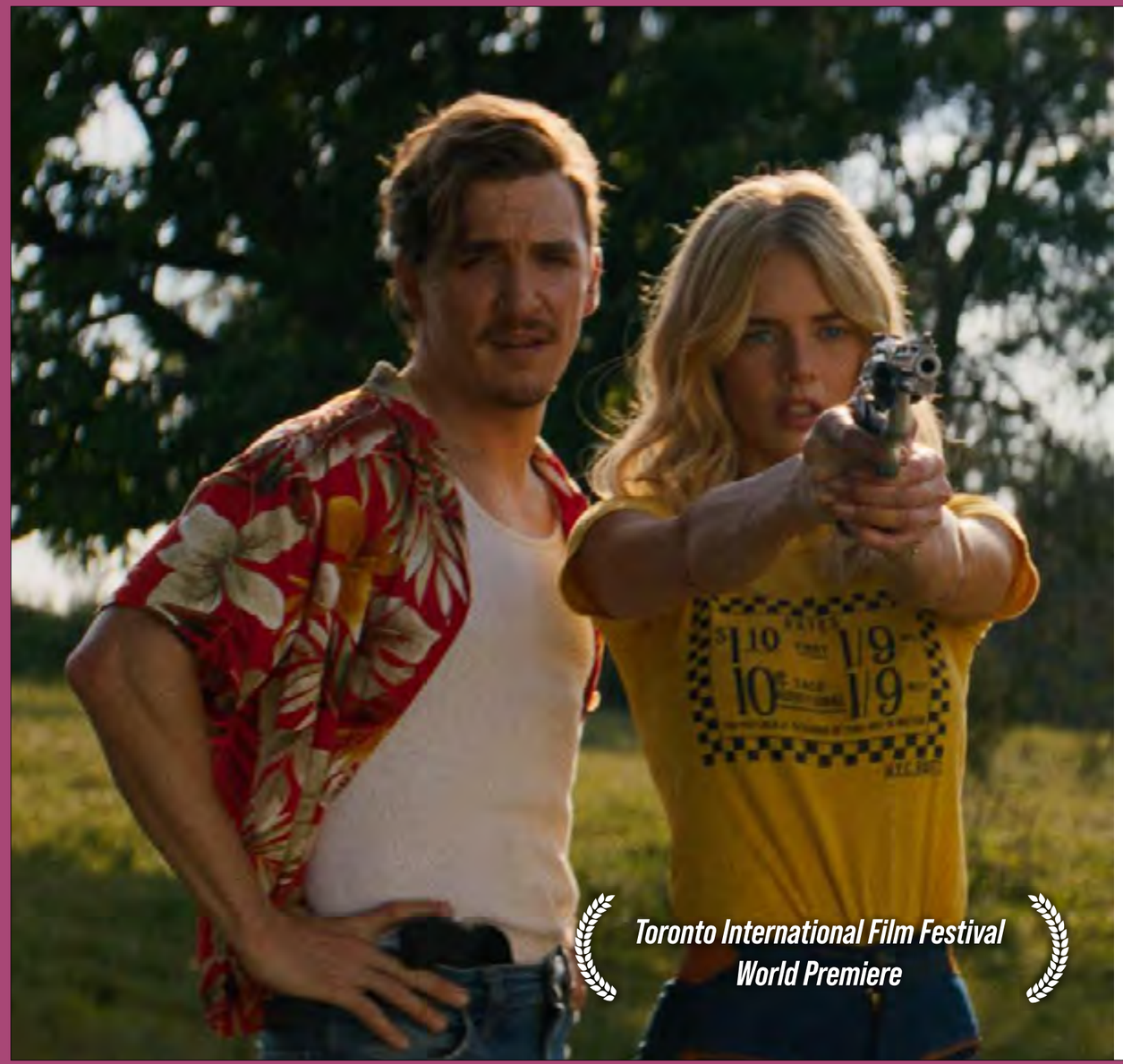
In 1955, at the height of his fame, acclaimed playwright and filmmaker Marcel Pagnol is commissioned by the editor-in-chief of ELLE magazine to write a weekly column about his life. Pagnol considers this offer a great opportunity to return to his artistic roots of writing. However, with a failing memory and a sense of hesitation resulting from the failure of his recent work, Pagnol doubts that he will be able to write anything substantial. As his first deadline approaches, Pagnol is visited by Little Marcel, the youthful spirit of his childhood self, who encourages him to recount his younger years and find inspiration in his life's work. Together, they explore Marcel Pagnol's past, spanning decades and countless achievements.

During his busy life, Pagnol ascends to artistic heights in Paris, marking significant milestones during the dawn of sound cinema, the first major film studio in France, and turbulent times during World War II when artistic freedom was under siege. In a film as vibrant as the person it's about, *A Magnificent Life* crafts an engaging animated story of one of France's greatest writers from Academy Award-nominated director Sylvain Chomet (*The Triplets of Belleville*). - *JC*

**Engaging + Biography + Films about Film**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# CAROLINA CAROLINE

**ADAM CARTER REHMEIER**

USA | 2025 | 105 min

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 14, 7:45 PM

Buzz+

Adam Carter Rehmeier's *Carolina Caroline* is a stylish tale of young lovers on the run that easily joins the ranks of *Bonnie and Clyde* and *Badlands* while breathing new life into the classic formula. The film follows Caroline (Samara Weaving), a young woman yearning to escape her small-town life and find her estranged mother. She crosses paths with Oliver (Kyle Gallner), a charming and unpredictable con man who teaches her the tricks of his trade. What begins as small swindles quickly escalates into a full-blown crime spree across the southeast United States. As the stakes rise, so does the heat of their romance.

Weaving and Gallner share sizzling chemistry in this sleek, sexy crime caper that packs plenty of thrills and a surprising amount of heart. Their dynamic gives the story an emotional undercurrent that elevates it beyond a standard outlaw adventure, balancing the chaos with sweet moments of tenderness and connection. Country music needle drops perfectly underscore their escapades, giving the film a soulful, distinctly Southern personality while reflecting Caroline's longing and the bittersweet rush of life on the run. *Carolina Caroline* is irresistibly charming, romantic, and an absolute blast from start to finish. - *LA*

BUY TICKETS




# H IS FOR HAWK

**PHILIPPA LOWTHORPE**

UK | 2025 | 114 min

**Star Sidney**
Feb 10, 7:00 PM

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 12, 12:30 PM, Feb 15, 7:30 PM

Buzz+

This beautifully realized and emotionally charged adaptation of Helen Macdonald's acclaimed memoir is anchored by an exceptional performance from Claire Foy. Foy portrays Helen Macdonald in 2007, during her tenure as a fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, where she taught the history and philosophy of science. When her beloved father, the award-winning photographer Alisdair Macdonald (portrayed with grounded warmth by Brendan Gleeson), passes away suddenly, the profound love of the natural world that he had instilled in her since childhood, comes into sharp focus.

Overwhelmed by grief, Helen retreats into intense solitude. Driven by an impulse that initially seems random and clouded by the mists of her own sorrow, she eventually conceives an audacious plan: to acquire and train a Northern goshawk from a local dealer. As the story unfolds, it becomes powerfully clear that the rigorous, all-consuming discipline of training the fierce bird, whom she names Mabel, forges a unique and demanding bond. The intensity of her relationship with this wild and uncompromising creature unravels a surprising path towards healing and a renewed connection with the world she had abandoned.

Foy navigates this complex emotional landscape with vulnerable precision, deftly handling the demanding falconry sequences with exceptional skill. Director Philippa Lowthorpe and her creative team—including cinematographer Charlotte Bruus Christensen and production designer Sarah Finlay—collaborate to access the profound, almost tactile emotion of this remarkable true story, crafting a visually stunning and deeply affecting film. *-JD*

**Emotional + Cathartic + Transformative**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS @ STAR SIDNEY FEB 10

BUY TICKETS @ THE VIC FEB 12

BUY TICKETS @ THE VIC FEB 15




# MILE END KICKS

**CHANDLER LEVACK**

Canada | 2025 | 111 min

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 12, 7:45 PM

Buzz+

Grace Pine (Barbie Ferreira, *Bob Trevino Likes It, Euphoria*) is an aspiring music journalist who flees the comforts of her parents' suburban nest to find an online roommate in Montreal circa summer 2011. With ambitions to write a book about Alanis Morissette's seminal album *Jagged Little Pill*, it doesn't take long before Pine falls in with the burgeoning indie music scene and works her way into the role of publicist for the up and coming band Bone Patrol, while ill-advisedly getting romantically involved with two of its members. Much like the lyrics of the '90s album she was keen to dissect, Pine is quickly diving into her own journey of self-discovery filled with the regrettable decisions that push us into adulthood. As an updated *Almost Famous* for a new generation, writer/director Chandler Levack's follow up to her breakout hit *I Like Movies* continues to draw from her past as a young woman navigating a male-centric industry, crafting a pop culture portrait with a note perfect performance from Ferreira. *-AR*

**Music + Comedy + Romance**

BUY TICKETS




# NIRVANNA THE BAND THE SHOW THE MOVIE

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 6, 9:15 PM
Feb 11, 8:00 PM

Buzz+

**MATT JOHNSON**

Canada | 2025 | 98min

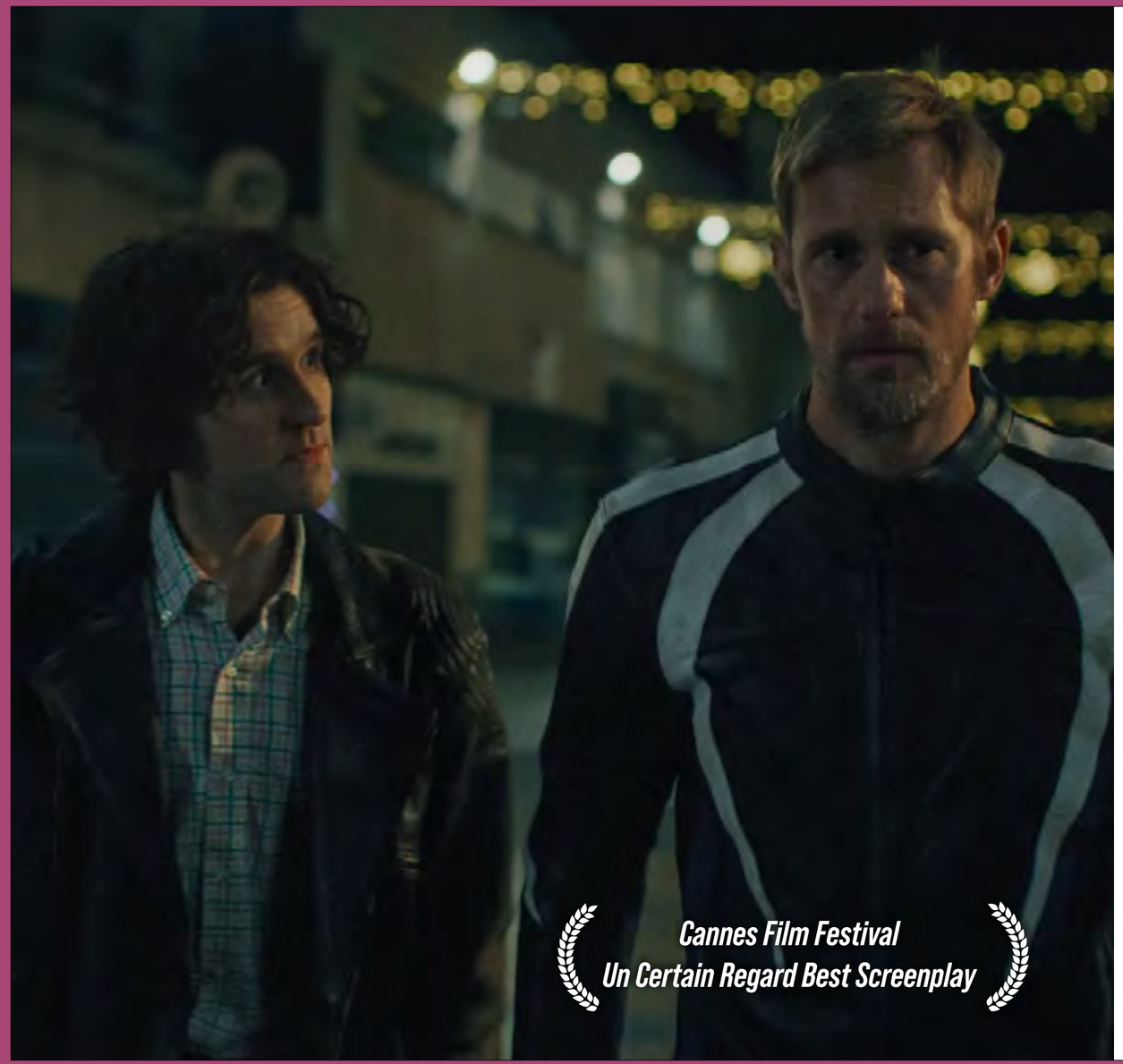
What started as a niche web series, where co-creators Matt Johnson and Jay McCarroll play an altered version of themselves as a musical duo desperate to get a gig at a revered Toronto venue, has morphed along with its cult following into a feature film ridiculously centered around time travel. Exploiting mockumentary's penchant for pitting exaggerated characters against the innocent public, Johnson's increasingly harebrained plans to secure a show and McCarroll's naive willingness to go along with him never make light of their unassuming victims. Rather, the biggest laughs come at the expense of these well-intentioned Canadians' desperate schemes to get attention at seemingly any cost, including an attempt to skydive off the CN Tower into a Blue Jays game. Joining a pantheon of infamous Canadian hosers, *Nirvanna the Band the Show the Movie* raises the stakes in a modern world where being famous for being famous is a talent in and of itself. *-AR*

**Comedy + Hosers + Friendship**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS @ THE VIC FEB 6

BUY TICKETS @ THE VIC FEB 11




# PILLION

**HARRY LIGHTON**

UK | 2025 |103 min

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 7, 7:45 PM
Feb 9, 8:00 PM

Buzz+

Step into the unexpected, seductive world of *Pillion*, a bold debut feature from Harry Lighton, starring Harry Melling and Alexander Skarsgård as two gay men navigating the complexities of a consensual dom–sub relationship.

Colin, a soft-spoken thirty-something parking enforcement officer still living with his warm and supportive parents, is awakened by a chance encounter with Ray, a magnetic biker-gang leader he spots in a local pub. Drawn into Ray's orbit, Colin discovers a thrilling new world—and an enticing version of himself. Their relationship deepens quickly, with Colin embracing a role that brings him joy, confidence, and a sense of belonging within Ray's tight-knit BDSM community.

But as Colin grows more self-assured and begins to articulate his own desires, Ray is forced to question what it means to share control rather than hold it. Their evolving bond becomes a raw, intimate exploration of trust, power, and vulnerability.

Fearless, sexy, and surprisingly tender, winner of the Best Screenplay: Un Certain Regard at Cannes, *Pillion* is a "filthy" love story in the most affectionate sense—one that dives headfirst into queer desire and consensual power dynamics with honesty, and emotional depth. *-KM*

**Power dynamics + Fearless + Seductive**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS @ THE VIC FEB 7

BUY TICKETS @ THE VIC FEB 9




# SIRĀT

## ÓLIVER LAXE

Spain/France | 2025 | 114 min

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 8, 12:15 PM
Feb 11, 5:15 PM

Buzz+

The constant hum of dance music powers a spiritual journey through the Moroccan desert in Óliver Laxe's *Sirāt*. A father's (Sergi López, *Pan's Labyrinth*) search for his missing daughter brings him and his son to a rave in the Sahara Desert, amidst a period of civil unrest. Latching onto the roving convoy of ravers, the travellers slowly find themselves embedded in a new community where music remains a constant release from the world around them.

*Sirāt* deftly moves between metaphysical drama and white-knuckle thriller in a film that evokes Henri-Georges Clouzot's *The Wages of Fear* with shades of Gaspar Noé's *Climax*. A bass-heavy score from French techno musician Kangding Ray reverberates throughout each scene and character of Laxe's film, funneling them through the liminal space between catharsis and conflict.

That Laxe's film feels post-apocalyptic in both its setting and structure complements an otherworldly energy channelled through the film's meditative trek through grief and mourning. Produced by Pedro Almodóvar and winner of the Jury Prize at the 78th Cannes Film Festival, *Sirāt* is a singular and immersive depiction of the end of the world that will leave audiences speechless while its characters desperately seek refuge from the chaos. -*CC*

**Dark + Spiritual + Immersive**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS @ THE VIC FEB 8

BUY TICKETS @ THE VIC FEB 11




# THE LAST VIKING

**ANDERS THOMAS JENSEN**

Denmark | 2025 | 116 min

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 9, 5:15 PM
Feb 13, 7:15 PM

Buzz+

*The Last Viking*, the latest dark comedy by Anders Thomas Jensen (e.g. *Adam's Apples, Riders of Justice*), centres on two estranged brothers whose uneasy yet heartfelt reunion sets off a chain of increasingly absurd and unsettling events.

When Anker (Nikolaj Lie Kaas) emerges from prison after a fifteen-year sentence for bank robbery, his goal is simple: retrieve the loot his brother buried before he was caught. But Manfred (Mads Mikkelsen), the only person who knows the hiding place, has a dissociative disorder and now goes through life as John. Not just any John, but John Lennon of The Beatles. And John Lennon has no idea where the money is.

What follows is a bizarre, darkly humorous road trip in which the brothers chase not only the hidden loot but also their own fractured bond. Along the way, the film explores love, identity, brotherhood, loyalty, and the fragile line between sense and delusion, all delivered with Jensen's unmistakable mix of absurdity and heart. And who knows: perhaps The Beatles will be reunited after all. – MS

**Dark Humor + Mental Health + The "New" Beatles**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS @ THE VIC FEB 9

BUY TICKETS @ THE VIC FEB 13



# THE LOVE THAT REMAINS

## HLYNUR PÁLMASON

Iceland | 2025 | 109 min

**Star Sidney**
Feb 8, 7:00 PM

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 14, 5:00 PM

Buzz+

*The Love That Remains* is Iceland's official submission for the 2026 Academy Awards in the International Feature Film category. At its heart are Magnús, a fisherman, and Anna, an artist—two souls from vastly different worlds bound together by a profound love. The film traces their separation and the evolving lives of their three children over the course of a single year.

Told through a series of vignettes, the narrative delicately portrays how a family navigates change with tenderness and resilience, capturing the bittersweet rhythms of shifting domestic life. Time itself emerges as a central motif: Anna's artwork rusts, while a mannequin repeatedly pierced by the children's arrows becomes a haunting time-lapse of transformation.

Unafraid of the unexpected, the film ventures into surreal territory—a dream sequence where Magnus is pursued by a giant rooster, or a montage of mushrooms torn apart in close detail. The result is a subtle, lyrical meditation that is at once funny, thoughtful, sensitive, and poetic. *The Love That Remains* offers a fresh, intimate perspective on the nuances that define relationships. - *MS*

**Funny + Thoughtful + Nuanced**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS @ STAR SIDNEY

BUY TICKETS @ THE VIC

University of Victoria | School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures

The Richard and Margaret Beck Lectures on Icelandic Literature



# Coast




# BLUE HERON

**SOPHY ROMVARI**

Canada/Hungary | 2025 | 90 min

**Star Sidney**
Feb 7, 7:00 PM

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 10, 7:45 PM



Director Sophy Romvari's debut feature, which won two awards at the Vancouver International Film Festival, delves into her formative years with a beautifully composed and complex family drama that bends cinema conventions and memories' boundaries. For young Sasha (Eylul Guven), idyllic summer days in the late 1990s on Vancouver Island lend themselves to days at the beach, running through sprinklers and enjoying suburban life in the company of her Hungarian-Canadian family. But for her eldest brother Jeremy (Edik Beddoes) and her parents who find themselves at their wits end, life appears more complicated.

As the second act unfolds years later, adult Sasha (Amy Zimmer) rewinds time to give herself a chance to try and reconcile her past. Allowing images to speak as eloquently and honestly as the dialogue, Romvari masters the dynamic range of film as an immersive art form at its best, drawing audiences into the intimate domestic space of a family doing everything in its power to hold its shape, despite greater forces at play. *-AR*

**Riveting + Memories + Family**

BUY TICKETS @ STAR SIDNEY

BUY TICKETS @ THE VIC

Filmmaker expected to attend




# CAMP

## AVALON FAST

Canada | 2025 | 111 min

**Destroyed Cinema**
**@ United Commons**
932 Balmoral Rd, Victoria

Feb 15, 6:00 PM



We are beyond excited to share Fast's new film alongside some of Victoria's best music. Destroyed veritably co-sign *CAMP* as the best movie of 2025; *CAMP* brought me an elated, confused, brooding, psychedelic-like feeling I've yearned for since *Twin Peaks: The Return*. Fast is a bonafide tentpole of a brewing new-queer, DIY scene.

*CAMP* expands Fast's preoccupations with sisterhood, loss, summer, and esoterica through an unorthodox, idiosyncratic punk warmth that invites viewers into a BC-slacker forest scape before revealing a dark, complicated underbelly. I can only imagine how surreal and powerful this will be in the atmosphere of the lovely United Commons Church. *CAMP* is essential B.C. cinema. - *Destroyed Cinema*

With live music from Ghost Darling [Post-Punk/Alt Rock] before film.

**Psychedelic + DIY + Sisterhood**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS

Filmmaker expected to attend



# EMERGENCE: WOMEN IN THE STORM

## NOVA AMI & VELCROW RIPPER

Canada | 2025 | 85 min

**Roxy Theatre**
Feb 11, 2:30 PM



Amidst an undeniable climate emergency, women are on the frontlines. As first responders and change makers, they provide hope in the face of crisis. Zeroing on recent catastrophes in British Columbia and the Northwest Territories, this survival guide and a call to collective imagination is seen through the eyes of those who've survived the wildfires, extreme heat and floods surrounding them. Their perspectives reflect a survival instinct triggered by harrowing encounters with nature's power. With sensitivity and clear sense of purpose, award winning directors Nova Ami and Velcrow Ripper add to their impressive body of documentary films by interweaving poet Meghan Fandrich's reflective prose from her collection *Burning Sage – Poems from the Lytton Fire* with powerful examples of community resilience, healing through expressive arts, and youth preparing for future challenges. As the land we depend upon continues to radically react to our impact, the evidence is clear: we must take a new path forward to ensure our shared survival. *-AR*

**Environment + Women + Resilience**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS

Filmmaker expected to attend




# FOREIGNER

**AVA MARIA SAFAI**

Canada | 2025 | 80 min

**Destroyed Cinema**
**@ Little Fernwood**
1923 Fernwood Rd, Victoria
Feb 13, 6:00 PM



*Foreigner* is the directorial debut by Vancouver musician, actor, and choreographer Ava Maria Safai that melds coming-of-age, horror, and themes of assimilation and cultural erasure.

In 2005, fifteen-year-old Yasamin Karimi has immigrated from Iran to a quiet town in British Columbia. Determined to fit in, she falls under the influence of Rachel Stanford, the school's reigning queen bee, reshaping her hair, her voice, and her behavior in pursuit of the ideal Canadian identity. Yet with each step away from her heritage, Yasamin unwittingly stirs forces far older and darker than the world she is trying to enter.

Safai's partly-autobiographical debut explores the undersung experiences of Canadian-Iranians and diaspora alike with a staunch critical lens unafraid to lean into genre. Critics have likened *Foreigner* to *Mean Girls, Jennifer's Body, The Exorcist* and *Smile*. - *Destroyed Cinema*

With live bands Savy [Indie/Pop Punk] and Niloo [Singer-Songwriter/Persian Pop].

**Diaspora + Terror + Assimilation**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS



# GREEN VALLEY

**MORGAN RHYS TAMS**

Canada | 2025 | 83 min

**Capitol 6**
Feb 9, 3:15 PM

**Coast**

Nestled deep in the forest on an island off the Pacific coast, 65-year-old Henry Verschuur is the reclusive yet welcoming founder of a fertile farm he cultivated from a once ravaged clear cut landscape. As he enters his later years, he's opened up his property to a new generation of back-to-the-land homesteaders keen to be more responsible with their imprint on the earth. This multi-generational farm thrives off grid, yet their methods are far from extreme. If anything, they demonstrate how far removed many people have become from how their food is produced and the true cost of their commercial consumption. Director Morgan Rhys Tam lives on the farm, and his intimate portrait of this communal project doesn't shy away from the hard labour and collective struggles needed to live in harmony with the seasons as they tend to their crops, chickens, cows, goats, and ducks. *-AR*

**Farming + Ethics + Community**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS

Filmmaker expected to attend




# HUNTING MATTHEW NICHOLS

## MARKIAN TARASIUK

Canada | 2025 | 96 min

**Toaster Rocket Cinema**
Feb 14, 10:00 PM

**Coast**

On the rugged edge of Vancouver Island, teenagers Matthew Nichols and Jordan Reimber - inspired by *The Blair Witch Project* - vanish while investigating a legend about 19th-century Scottish trapper Roy Mackenzie.

Twenty-three years later, Matthew's sister, Tara Nichols, still haunted by his disappearance, uncovers a disturbing piece of evidence hidden among his old, abandoned VHS tapes. The questions she's carried since childhood surge back to the surface. Determined to uncover the truth, she joins forces with documentary filmmaker Markian Tarasiuk. Together, they retrace Matthew's final steps into the unforgiving forests where he was last seen, following a trail toward a truth that was never meant to be uncovered.

*Hunting Matthew Nichols* blurs the line between true crime, documentary storytelling, and slow-burn horror. Shot on Vancouver Island in the dead of winter, the film immerses viewers in a world where the island becomes a living presence - heavy, dark, and foreboding. With a raw, visceral aesthetic, the story unfolds as a haunting descent into obsession, memory, and the cost of knowing too much.
*- DR*

**Horror + Found Footage + Cult**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS



# LUCID

**DEANNA MILLIGAN AND RAMSEY FENDALL**

Canada (Victoria)
2025 | 110 min

**Toaster Rocket Cinema**
Feb 7, 10:00 PM

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 13, 10:00 PM



Mia (Caitlin Acken Taylor) is a ’90s art student stuck in a creative muck, on the brink of being kicked out of art school and watching her life-long dreams shatter. Desperate to return to who she once was, she seeks out a magical Lucid Dreaming Elixir that promises inspiration but instead hurls her into a psychedelic whirlwind where the boundaries of reality, art, and identity dissolve.

In this dream-soaked universe, Mia - a fierce rebel-rouser with more attitude than direction - confronts surreal demons, fractured memories, and the long-buried traumas she’s spent years running from. The farther she runs, the deeper she falls into a chaotic subconscious labyrinth where monsters wear familiar faces and creativity demands a sacrifice she never expected.

Shot on lush 35mm and gritty Super 8, *Lucid* pulses with a visually salient, handcrafted aesthetic - equal parts punk, poetry, and nightmare. As Mia battles through dreams and delusions, she slowly discovers that becoming an artist isn’t about escaping the hole she’s fallen into, but understanding how it has shaped her. - *DR*

**Horror + Cult + Surreal**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS @TOASTER ROCKET

BUY TICKETS @ THE VIC

spinnakers
BREWPUB & GUESTHOUSES

Filmmaker expected to attend



# MILDLIFE

**CORY THIBERT**

Canada | 2025 | 85 min

**Roxy Theatre**
Feb 11, 7:30 PM

**Coast**

*Mildlife* is a raw, heart-thumping coming-of-age story about music, family, and finding your voice—literally. Lawrence just wants to drum his depression away in his hardcore band with his best friend. But he's introverted, they haven't booked a single show, and his girlfriend wants them to leave the only town he's ever known. Meanwhile, he navigates a complicated, co-dependent relationship with his parents, both living with cerebral palsy.

Written and directed by Cory Thibert, who grew up exactly like Lawrence, *Mildlife* offers a story rarely seen on screen: a realistic, unflinching look at a family living with disability. The film rejects tired clichés of over-inspirational or sympathetic portrayals, instead showing Lawrence's parents as fully realized, flawed human beings. In a deliberate act of authenticity, the roles are played by actors who also live with cerebral palsy, bringing lived experience to every scene.

Hilarious, chaotic, and deeply heartfelt, *Mildlife* celebrates resilience, love, and the messy, imperfect ways families survive. It's a loud, honest, and unforgettable story that will resonate with anyone who's ever struggled to find their place in the world—or their band.

*Mildlife* is a coming-of-age film that follows Lawrence, as he navigates every (not so) simple decision... one scream at a time. *-MH*

**Heartfelt + Raw + Offbeat**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS

Filmmaker expected to attend



# VERMILION

**AMY TREFRY**

Canada | 2025 | 78 min

**Capitol 6**
Feb 8, 3:30 PM



Tree-planters Darcy and Alex share a hard-won sense of freedom, and on the heels of a season in the bush, an unexpected romantic connection begins to form. What starts as an easy camaraderie deepens into something more as the two set off on a summer road trip through the sweeping landscapes of British Columbia. United by their love of van life and the outdoors, they traverse 1,600 kilometres in a vintage 70s Volkswagen camper, discovering each other through unguarded conversations, quiet moments, and the wild beauty that surrounds them.

*Vermilion* is a queer, character-driven mumblecore gem, blending an improvised script with naturalistic, intimate performances. Shot over eight days with a tiny crew and filmed in real time from Prince George to Vancouver, the film captures the raw spontaneity of a journey where the road shapes the story. Both tender and adventurous, *Vermilion* invites audiences into a romance born not of grand gestures, but of shared space, open skies, and honesty only found through conversation. *-KM*

**Road-trip + Scenic + Heartfelt**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS

Filmmaker expected to attend



# Currents




# BABY DOE

**JESSICA EARNSHAW**

USA | 2025 | 100 min

**Roxy Theatre**
Feb 12, 5:00 PM

Victoria-born photo-journalist director, Jessica Earnshaw, earned rave reviews and a Tribeca Festival award for her 2021 documentary, *Jacinta*, an empathetic portrait of intergenerational mother-daughter prisoners against a background of addiction and trauma.

Her latest, *Baby Doe*, which premiered at the South by Southwest Film Festival, again proves Earnshaw's talent for achieving deep access with her subjects in this exploration of a harrowing true crime story, set against the background of the psychological phenomenon of pregnancy denial.

Gail Ritchey, a devout middle-aged Christian woman living with her family in suburban Ohio, had a baby when she was 22 years old in 1993. In 2019, Ritchey, now a grandmother, was arrested for murder when DNA evidence tied her to an infant's corpse found in the woods. When confronted with the evidence by the police, Ritchie said she was unaware that she was pregnant until she gave birth, and had no memory of how she disposed of the baby after it was born, though she asserts it was stillborn.

Earnshaw developed a close trust with Gayle, her husband Mark, and three grown children, before the trial took place, and this close rapport helped give Earnshaw access to police interrogations, consultations with lawyers and family reactions in a story that proceeds with a series of jaw-dropping twists. Unlike too many non-fiction films that exploit crime stories for vicarious thrills, Earnshaw is open to compassion and questioning the usefulness of punitive justice. - *LL*

**True crime + DNA + Motherhood**

BUY TICKETS

Filmmaker expected to attend




# EVEREST DARK

**JEREME WATT**

Canada | 2025 | 90 min

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 13, 5:00 PM

Mount Everest continuously attracts climbers from around the world, keen to ascend its peak and join an elite group who have surveyed the top of the world. On the cusp of a world record, legendary climber Mingma Tsiri Sherpa had a prophetic dream that if he climbed Everest again he would die on the 'highest graveyard on Earth' joining over 200 frozen corpses, including many fellow guides.

As years passed and tragedies claimed more lives, Mingma's Buddhist beliefs led him to be convinced that the mountain gods were furious and he felt compelled to complete a mission of atonement. He would make a final climb to retrieve a fallen climber from the notorious Death Zone.

Filmed over eight years, this Best Canadian Documentary winner at the 2025 Planet in Focus film festival is a visually breathtaking and emotionally heartbreaking story that explores the commercialization of pinnacle chasing and the spiritual toll on the guides who call this natural wonder of the world home.
*-AR*

**Breathtaking + Adventure + Mountains**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# LATE SHIFT

**PETRA BIONDINA VOLPE**

Switzerland | 2025 | 92 min

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 8, 5:30 PM

By 2030, Switzerland is expected to face a shortage of 30,000 nurses, as more than a third of newly trained nurses leave the profession within four years. Globally, the deficit may reach 13 million. With *Late Shift*, writer-director Petra Volpe sounds the alarm, portraying a healthcare system stretched to its limits by following one nurse through one night in a single Swiss hospital.

Floria is working the late shift — and she knows the drill. Experienced, steady and resourceful, she navigates constant understaffing with a level of multitasking that borders on superhuman. Between administering treatments, coordinating emergencies and keeping the ward moving, she somehow still manages to offer comfort, presence, and emotional support. Because a nurse, the film reminds us, is never “just” a medical professional.

As the night unfolds, the pressure mounts, tasks multiply, tempers rise, and the emotional weight of the job intensifies. The smallest complaints and sharpest remarks from patients land heavily. What begins as a routine shift gradually becomes a portrait of a profession pushed far beyond what any one person can reasonably endure.

*Late Shift* offers an urgent, deeply human look at the realities of modern nursing. It’s a film that may just change the way you see the next nurse you meet. - *MS*

**Nurses + Shift Work + Chaos**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS

Switzerland.



# MR NOBODY AGAINST PUTIN

**DAVID BORENSTEIN & PAVEL TALANKIN**

Denmark | 2025 | 90 min

**Roxy Theatre**
Feb 9, 5:15 PM



*Mr. Nobody Against Putin* is a revealing feature-length documentary by David Borenstein and Pasha Talankin, following Pasha, a primary-school teacher in a small Russian town who becomes an unexpected chronicler of his country's expanding state control over education. In today's Russian schools, political expectations are woven into everyday routines through history lessons mandated from Moscow, patriotic assemblies and activities meant to shape a sense of national duty in even the youngest pupils, steering them toward a worldview aligned with the ongoing war.

As the school's designated videographer, Pasha is tasked with filming these activities as proof that the mandated curriculum is being carried out. Through his camera, he witnesses how pressure filters down from administrators to teachers and, ultimately, to the children themselves, who are increasingly pressured to accept military involvement as an expected part of their lives. Troubled by what he sees, Pasha continues filming as an act of rebellion.

When the consequences of disobedience grow sharper, he makes the dangerous decision to smuggle his recordings to Europe. The film that follows is a rare, unvarnished look at everyday life inside a system tightening its grip. It is told through the eyes of a man who risks everything to make that reality visible. - *MS*

**Dictators + Frontline Educators + Propaganda**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# PALESTINE 36

**ANNEMARIE JACIR**

Palestine/UK/France | 2025
115 min

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 14, 2:15 PM



Annemarie Jacir, the acclaimed Palestinian director known for intimate dramas like *When I Saw You* (2012) and *Wajib* (2017), delivers her most ambitious feature yet with *Palestine 36*. This epic historical work broadens her scope to rigorously explore the legacy of British colonial activity and the events leading up to the Arab Revolt of 1936.

The film incorporates a large and impressive cast, including renowned Palestinian actors Hiam Abbass and Saleh Bakri as passionate rebels, and Jeremy Irons as the high commissioner Sir Arthur Wauchope. The narrative follows various characters as villages across Mandatory Palestine rise against British rule. Central to this is Yusuf, who drifts between his rural home and the restless energy of Jerusalem, longing for a future beyond the growing unrest. As Jewish immigrants arrive seeking refuge from antisemitism in Europe, the Palestinian population unites in the largest and longest uprising against Britain's 30-year dominion. All sides spiral towards an inevitable collision—a decisive moment for the British Empire and the future of the entire region.

Ambitious in both scale and scope, *Palestine 36* offers context, humanity, and complexity to the history that continues to unfold today. The film serves as a powerful warning of how the events of 1936, and the preceding decades of British colonial rule, would permanently mark the region's future. As Jacir stated in an interview with the Financial Times, this history is at "the origin of where we are today." - *JD*

**Gripping + Historical + Epic**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# SHIFTING BASELINES

**JULIEN ELIE**

Canada | 2025 | 100 min

**Roxy Theatre**
Feb 13, 2:30 PM

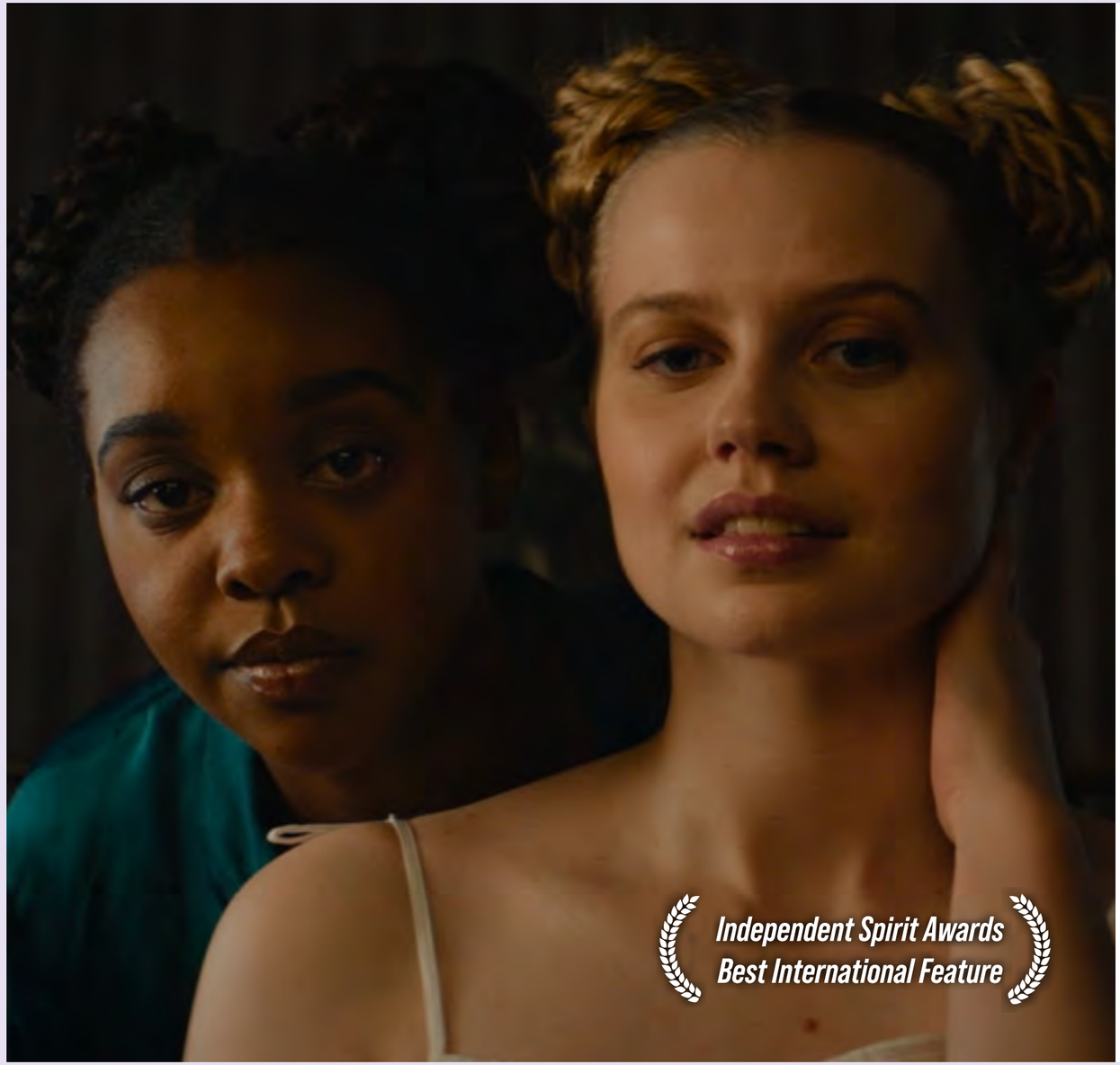
The modern space race is not between nations but between public and private investment. As SpaceX continues to expand its domain under its controversial and outspoken leader, an increasingly long shadow of its 50-storey tall rockets looms large over an ecologically sensitive area at Texas' southern tip. Boca Chica is a quiet coastal town on the Gulf of Mexico that may one day become a bustling spaceport. The earth-trembling launches risk devastating the endangered sea turtles and ocelots that find shelter in the dunes. Curious onlookers have migrated there to witness what the future may hold amidst the search for a new inhabitable environment, all the while we have forsaken the only planet we can rely upon.

Recorded in black and white, with humanity's many shades of gray on display, this observational essay follows its eclectic range of subjects through this testament to our times. *-AR*

**Space + Curiosity + Environment**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# STEAL AWAY

**CLEMENT VIRGO**

Canada/Belgium | 2025 | 113 min

**Roxy Theatre**
Feb 13, 7:30 PM

Cécile (Mallori Johnson) is a teenage African refugee who finds herself adopted into the entrenched hierarchies of a grand estate and befriended by Fanny (Angourie Rice), whose innocent adolescent world has been confined to the boundaries of the lavish property she shares with her benevolent mother Florence (Lauren Lee Smith). As Cécile and Fanny pursue personal motivations, the intensity of their relationship grows along with their sexual desires, while mysteries unfold and identities morph. With allusions to Ingmar Bergman and David Lynch's empowered female lead characters, Johnson and Rice deliver captivating portrayals of young women coming of age, simmering with passion and power.

Imaginatively framed as a fairytale erotic thriller inspired by Karolyn Smardz Frost's historical non-fiction *Steal Away Home*, veteran director Clement Virgo crafts a fantastic world visually steeped in the past, present and future to reveal a captivating allegory about race, class and gender. *-AR*

**Young Adult + 2SLGBTQIA+ Thriller**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS

# F1RST






# BLOOD LINES

**GAIL MAURICE**

Canada | 2025 | 89 min

**Capitol 6**
Feb 6, 8:30 PM

F1RST

Beatrice, a Two-Spirit person, spends her days working at the local corner store in her tight-knit Métis community, trading stories and laughs with her best friend Jaz. Their routine is often interrupted by visits from “The Grannies” — a lively group of older women who keep the town’s gossip flowing and the younger generation in line. But everything shifts when Chani, a newcomer searching for her biological family, arrives in town. Beatrice is instantly drawn to her and becomes determined to help in any way she can.

Yet Beatrice’s own life is far from simple. Her estranged mother Léonore (played by director Maurice) suddenly returns, stirring long-buried wounds and igniting community expectations that forgiveness should come easily. As Beatrice and Chani grow closer and an intimate relationship begins to take shape, revelations about Chani’s past emerge, intertwining their stories in unexpected ways.

*Blood Lines* is a heartfelt tale of kinship, identity, and the complex bonds that hold communities together. Blending warm humour—thanks in large part to the irrepressible Grannies—with moments of emotional reckoning, the film explores how love and truth can reshape even the most painful histories. *-KM*

**Family Drama + Two Spirit + Love**

BUY TICKETS



# LEAVING BERINGIA

**BARBARA TODD HAGER**

Canada | 2025 | 86 min

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 10, 5:00 PM

F1RST

The origins of the first people in the Americas is one of the greatest mysteries of modern times. Some people claim the ancestors of today's Indigenous people walked here across an ancient land bridge that once connected Asia and North America until about 13,000 years ago. Others say they paddled here by canoe along the Pacific coastline, then dispersed to every corner of the Americas more than 30,000 years ago. Indigenous people in every part of the Americas have origin stories that describe how their ancestors came from the sky, the water or the land below. There's one thing that all of these concepts of arrival have in common - they all begin with a journey.

In the feature documentary *Leaving Beringia*, Métis Cree filmmaker Barbara Todd Hager embarks on a life-changing journey to eight of the oldest Indigenous archaeological sites in North and South America, where she'll discover that studying ancient tools is not the only way to uncover the ways of life of her ancestors. Filmed on location at sites that were once occupied tens of thousands of years ago, her ground-breaking conversations with Indigenous knowledge keepers and culturally aligned archaeologists will reveal a compelling new narrative of the first people of the Americas drawn from origin stories and Indigenous ways of knowing. *-MH*

**Origins + Journey + Discovery**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS

chek

Filmmaker expected to attend




# NIKA & MADISON

**EVA THOMAS**

Canada | 2025 | 87 min

**Capitol 6**
Feb 8, 8:15 PM

F1RST

In her solo directorial debut, Eva Thomas (*Aberdeen*), brilliantly weaves the intertwined stories of title characters Nika and Madison, played by Ellyn Jade and Star Slade. Nika comes back to the Rez from Toronto to see if she can mend her friendship with Madison, who prefers life in the community and in the bush. There is visible tension when they see each other again, and it is not going to be healed quickly because Nika rebuked Madison's offer to go to the local pub.

After being assaulted by an officer, Madison is saved by Nika who, despite her misgivings, still keeps a protective eye out for their best friend and relative. Feeling the panic of the moment and a healthy distrust of the system, Nika and Madison go on the run, from the Rez, then to the bush, and finally to the big city with the police on their trail. They work through the hard parts of their relationship and find moments of levity and a powerful resolve to stay free.

This film emerges from the director's previous short *Redlights*, where she exposes the euphemistic practice of "Starlight Tours," where Indigenous people are left outside to freeze after being picked up by the police. This film fearlessly aims the lens back at the system that Indigenous people are forced to encounter, while focusing on the resilience and integrity needed to fight back. - *BC*

**Reconnection + System + Loyalty**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# POWWOW PEOPLE

**SKY HOPINKA**

USA | 2025 | 88 min

**Capitol 6**
Feb 11, 3:45 PM

F1RST

Unfolding under the passage of daylight to night, *Powwow People*, is a striking documentary from director Sky Hopinka of the Ho-Chunk Nation. We are invited in to witness a Powwow that was organized by the filmmaking team. This community collaboration enables us to see intimate moments between generations of dancers, singers, and audience members, without the burden of an outsider's lens. Shot on the grounds of the Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center in Seattle, Washington, Hopinka creates the film in a cinéma vérité style that remains true to the essence of the culture and the protocols of the Powwow, while also offering a look into its future.

The film opens with the familiar sound of a Powwow MC, Ruben Little Head, who keeps the ceremony moving with humour and guidance for the participants. He operates outside of the conventions of a typical documentary narrator. We also hear from Gina Bluebird, one of the organizers who sets the foundation of the Powwow; Jamie John, a non-binary jingle dress dancer who offers wise thoughts on the present and potential future of the Powwow; and singer/elder Freddie Cozad, who connects us to the past and traditions rooted in the ceremony.

The film culminates in a stunning continuous shot of a Northern Traditional dance special, which captures all of the vivid joy and spirit of the dance as well as the quiet moments in between. As the night wraps up, handshakes, hugs, laughter and the comforting voice of the MC welcome the next day. - *BC*

**Dance + Culture + Vérité**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# SK+TE'KMUJUE'KATIK (AT THE PLACE OF GHOSTS)

**Capitol 6**
Feb 10, 3:15 PM

F1RST

## BRETTEN HANNAM

Canada | 2025 | 89 min

Estranged brothers, Mise'l (Blake Alec Miranda) and Antle (Forrest Goodluck) come together after they are confronted with malignant spirits connected to their past. Haunted by their shared trauma and the ghosts that cling to these lived memories, they must travel through Sk+te'kmujue'katik, a vast ancestral forest where ghosts linger and time and space warp into the past, present and future.

On this journey, the brothers, who were once very close, encountered the violent vestiges of their past that led them to grow apart. They also experience chaos endured by their ancestors and a glimpse of the love that can exist in their future.

A film 11 years in the making, *Sk+te'kmujue'katik (At the Place of Ghosts)*, is the most recent genre-breaking offering from L'nu Director, Bretten Hannam (*Wildhood*). The film is a deeply personal offering from the director/writer who comes from the land, language and culture of the territory being filmed. Hannam takes great care and the time needed to develop a cyclical story that represents community, language, the supernatural, and the unknown.

Driven by a mesmerizing score by acclaimed Wolastoqiyik composer, Jeremy Dutcher, and paired with stunning visual vignettes on a landscape that is very much alive and part of the story, *At the Place of Ghosts*, stands out as an enduring experience for the viewer. *- BC*

**Ghosts + Brothers + 2Spirit**

BUY TICKETS



# STARWALKER

**COREY PAYETTE**

Canada | 2025 | 116 min

**Capitol 6**
Feb 11, 8:30 PM

F1RST

The House of Borealis—led by the formidable and fiercely loving Mother (Stewart Adam McKensy)—is a sanctuary for drag artists seeking community, creativity, and a place to belong. Into this vibrant world steps Star (Dillan Chiblow), an Indigi-Queer Two-Spirit call boy who has become captivated by the transformative power of drag. As Star is welcomed into the house by Mother, they begin to explore their voice, their craft, and the sense of family they've long been missing.

Star's journey becomes one of reclamation and healing after long-buried trauma seeps up to the surface. Through a blossoming relationship with another drag performer Levi (Jeffrey Michael Follis) and the entire Borealis family, Star finds a new identity through performance, kinship, and the rediscovery of their cultural roots.

*Starwalker* is a bold and heartfelt musical drama from Oji-Cree writer and director Corey Payette, known for his groundbreaking work with the Indigenous theatre company Urban Ink. Blending drag spectacle, Indigenous storytelling, and soaring emotion, the film celebrates chosen family and the liberating magic of performance. *-KM*

**Musical + Drag + Two-Spirit**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS

Filmmaker expected to attend




# UIKSARINGITARA (WRONG HUSBAND)

**ZACHARIAS KUNUK**

Canada | 2025 | 100 min

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 8, 7:45 PM

F1RST

Internationally renowned Inuk director, Zacharias Kunuk (*Angakusajaujuq: The Shaman's Apprentice*), offers his latest award-winning feature, *Uiksaringitara (Wrong Husband)*, which retells an oral story about two lovers who were promised to each other since birth. The boy, Sapa (Haiden Angutimarik), and a girl, Kaujak (Theresia Kappianaq) grow up around each other in camp and eventually they fall in love and begin building a future together. Shot in a direct style, we see tender family moments in camp as they harvest food and visit with each other on the melting shoreline.

All is not a peaceful as it seems. A Monster trolls the water's edge looking to pull in its next victim. There is a thick spiritual energy around the camp after the sudden death of Kaujak's father, which forces her and her mother to leave to become part of a neighbouring camp. Her "future husband" Sapa is out on a hunt while this all happens and he comes back to camp distraught that she has left. Over in their new camp, Kaujak struggles to fend off suitors and take care of her sick mother. Sapa hatches a plan to get her back, and spirits emerge to help and hinder this mission.

The film takes place thousands of years ago and is shot on the immense landscapes of Igloolik, Nunavut in the summer and fall seasons. The score is provided by a talented team of Inuk composers and musicians, matching perfectly with the film's otherworldly visuals and landscape. *-BC*

**Drama + Horror + Historical**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS

Hosted by CBC

Filmmaker expected to attend

# olio






# THE BLUE TRAIL

**GABRIEL MASCARO**

Brazil/Mexico/Netherlands/Chile
2025 | 85 min

**Star Sidney**
Feb 9, 7:00 PM

**Roxy Theatre**
Feb 13, 5:00 PM

Olio

As the Brazilian government charges toward the future, it seems to have forgotten those who built the past, but Tereza refuses to be put aside. In this incisive social satire, a 75-year-old woman declines retirement 'honours' offered to her by the state. Using any means necessary, including making her getaway with a mercenary boat captain, she heads up the Amazon on a daring journey. Her quest for autonomy becomes both a rebellion and a rediscovery of life's untamed possibilities.

Denise Weinberg delivers a commanding and spirited performance as Tereza, embodying the vitality and defiance that goes with age. Her portrayal anchors the film with emotional depth and humour, inviting audiences to celebrate resilience in the face of obsolescence.

In director Gabriel Mascaro's fourth film, he continues his distinctive exploration of power, identity, and modernity through an imaginative lens. With characteristic wit and visual flair, he reminds us that where there is life, there is hope — and rebellion. – *KK*

**Charming + Thoughtful + Funny**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS @ STAR SIDNEY

BUY TICKETS @ ROXY THEATRE



# JIMPA

## SOPHIE HYDE

Australia/Netherlands/Finland
2025 | 123 min

**Roxy Theatre**
Feb 10, 5:00 PM

**Star Sidney**
Feb 12, 7:00 PM

Olio

Jimpa (John Lithgow) has spent decades living an independent, joyfully gay life in Amsterdam—far from his daughter Hannah (Olivia Colman) and her non-binary teenager, Frances (Aud Mason-Hyde, the director Sophie Hyde's own child). When they arrive for a long-overdue visit, Frances unexpectedly announces they want to stay for a year, eager to build a relationship with the grandfather they've barely known. Hannah, however, remembers Jimpa all too well: brilliant, charismatic, unreliable, and often painfully self-involved.

As the visit unfolds, old wounds begin to surface. Hannah must navigate her own resentments while giving Frances the freedom to form their own impressions of Jimpa. Meanwhile, Jimpa—now aging and feeling increasingly sidelined in his work—grapples with what it truly means to show up for family after years of distance.

Tender, funny, and beautifully observed, *Jimpa* explores the messy imperfections of family and the complexities of parenting at every age. Director Sophie Hyde (*52 Tuesdays, Good Luck to You, Leo Grande*) crafts a deeply human story about forgiveness, the intergenerational nuances of queer experience, and the unexpected joy that can emerge when old resentments are finally set aside. *-KM*

**Nonconformity + Generational Clash + Australia**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS @ ROXY THEATRE

BUY TICKETS @ STAR SIDNEY




# KONTINENTAL ‘25

## RADU JUDE

Romania | 2025 | 109 min

**Capitol 6**
Feb 12, 3:30 PM

Olio

Radu Jude, a Romanian moralist with an anarchic black comic streak, broke through the international film world with his Berlin Golden Bear winning 2021 drama, *Bad Luck Banging* or *Loony Porn*, about a school teacher’s home sex tape gone viral during COVID, followed by the 2023’s film about the gig economy, *Do Not Expect Too Much From The End of the World*. His latest film, which riffs on the title and themes of Roberto Rosselini’s *Europe ‘51*, is set in Transylvanian capital of Cluj-Napoca, where dilapidated Communist era buildings and burnt-out cars sit next to cookie-cutter new office buildings and housing developments constructed by multi-national companies. When a once famous athlete, now homeless, is evicted from his temporary basement shelter, the man takes his life. The bailiff who ordered his eviction, Orsolya (Eszter Tompa), is traumatized with guilt, telling everyone she meets about the gruesome details of the man’s death.

Everyone from her husband, a priest, and a bicycle courier, assure her it was not her fault — and that life must go on. A broad but incisive exploration of the way we live, *Kontinental ‘25* brings both empathy and a wry perspective to the way we live now, from housing shortages, the rise of right-wing politics and the limits of performative charity, while suggesting there are no innocents in a system that is predatory by design. *-LL*

**Satire + Neoliberalism + Guilt**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# LEVERS

## RHAYNE VERMETTE

Canada | 2025 | 95 min

**Destroyed Cinema**
**@ Market Square**
560 Johnson St #41, Victoria
Feb 11, 6:00 PM

Olio

*Levers*, the sophomore feature by award-winning Manitoban filmmaker Rhayne Vermette (*Ste. Anne*), is an astonishing experience that contemplates the reactions of a small-town community when darkness comes calling.

A cannon blast signals the unveiling of a new statue in a Manitoban town. As the crowds gather for the ceremonious occasion, they are unaware of the looming danger that approaches. After the sun disappears for an entire day, residents of the Red River Valley are left shaken by the cataclysmic event. The lives of a sculptor, a security guard, and a civil servant weave together in a surreal series of fractured chapters, each more mysterious than the last. A dreamlike trance shrouds everything as people huddle around the warm glow of the television screen, becoming hazy silhouettes against the unnatural landscape. Levers offers an elegiac reverie on the fragility of life and the slippery relationship humans have with the natural world. Shot in saturated 16mm film on broken Bolex cameras, *Levers* is also a technical marvel that delicately portrays a beautiful concoction of fantasy and familiarity. *-JC*

With live bands Pet Retina [Noise-Rock], Sharon [Prog-Punk/Post-Hardcore] and Griefer [Noise].

**Transformative + Cathartic + Mesmerizing**

BUY TICKETS




# MIROIRS NO. 3

**CHRISTIAN PETZOLD**

Germany | 2025 | 86 min

**Roxy Theatre**
Feb 11, 5:15 PM

Olio

Christian Petzold's hauntingly beautiful *Miroirs No. 3* begins with Laura (Paula Beer), a pianist from Berlin, miraculously surviving a violent car crash during a weekend in the countryside. Though physically unharmed, she is shaken by the ordeal. A mysterious local woman, Betty (Barbara Auer), witnesses the accident and takes Laura in, caring for her in a motherly manner. It's a setup that seems like the start of a horror film, but in Petzold's hands it unfolds into something far more delicate and achingly human.

An air of mystery permeates the film, and a subtle tension gradually builds; yet Petzold is far more interested in the quiet, fragile moments that develop between two strangers brought together by unusual circumstances. The women eventually form a family-like routine, which is disrupted when Betty's estranged husband and son reappear. As traumas resurface and the past and present converge, the household dynamic shifts, adding layers of complexity to Laura's temporary refuge.

Petzold's masterfully minimalist and meditative style is on full display in *Miroirs No. 3* as he guides the story with restrained emotional precision. *Miroirs No. 3* is a beguiling film about survival, grief, and connection that gently washes over you.
*- LA*

**Understated + Mysterious + Beguiling**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS



# MORTICIAN

**ABDOLREZA KAHANI**

Canada | 2025 | 94 min

**Capitol 6**
Feb 10, 8:30 PM

Olio

Mojtaba (Nima Sadr) is far from Iran, an expatriate working in Canada as a specialist in preparation of the deceased following Islamic tradition. When job prospects disappear, he receives an offer from Jana (Iranian-born UK-based pop singer Gola), an exiled singer who requests his services as she intends to end her life in protest, once she's finished recording social media videos for her followers. Motjaba takes the unusual job, as macabre as it might be, since he's still trying to send money home to relatives. As the unlikely circumstances that brought them together due to an oppressive regime unfold, Motjaba and Jana form a unique relationship in this quietly satirical look at the politics of censorship.

Director Abdolreza Kahani, himself a filmmaker in exile, impressively balances multiple roles as producer, writer, director, cinematographer and editor retaining total artistic control that draws standout performances from his leads, who highlight the human need for connection in the midst of their mutual displacement. *-AR*

**Exile + Censorship + Friendship**

BUY TICKETS




# ODD FISH

**SNÆVAR SÖLVASON**

Iceland | 2024 | 104 min

**Capitol 6**
Feb 7, 6:15 PM

Olio

Set against the dramatic coastline of Iceland's West Fjords, *Odd Fish* follows longtime friends Birna and Hjalti as they fight to turn their small, seasonal seafood restaurant into a year-round success. Hjalti, gruff and unlucky in love, leans on Birna—the heart and soul of the kitchen—whose talent keeps the dream alive. But when Birna shares that she is a transgender woman, their partnership is shaken in ways neither of them expected. As Birna steps fully into her truth, her confidence and creativity begin to soar, while Hjalti is pushed to confront the fears he's long kept buried.

Full of tenderness, humour, and unforgettable emotional beats, *Odd Fish* is a vibrant celebration of friendship, authenticity, and the courage it takes to embrace change. Inspired by director Sinaevar Solvason's own upbringing in a small fishing village and co-written with Veiga Grétarsdóttir—herself a trans woman—the film is a heartfelt, crowd-pleasing dramedy that's as nourishing as the dishes Birna serves *-KM*

**Friendship + Humorous + Tender-hearted**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# OMAHA

**COLE WEBLEY**

United States | 2025 | 83 min

**Roxy Theatre**
Feb 9, 2:30 PM

Olio

After a death in the family and the loss of their house, a father loads up his car with his two kids, Ella and Charlie, and embarks on a road trip across the country. Told primarily from the point of view of Ella, with her father's motivations and destination unclear, she packs her belongings and sets off on the adventure. Set amidst the 2008 housing crisis, a layer of dread permeates beneath the surface as "Dad" — John Magaro (*Past Lives, First Cow*) gives an utterly heartbreaking performance — endures a seemingly endless series of woes that lead him to make a truly unimaginable decision out of desperation.

In director Cole Webley's debut feature film *Omaha*, which debuted at the Sundance Film Festival 2025, he deftly crafts an understated drama that sits with you long after the credits roll. Striking landscape cinematography from Paul Meyers captures the ineffable beauty of the land between motel rooms on the drive from Nevada to Nebraska. In stark contrast to the heroes' circumstances, the picturesque setting serves as a powerful reminder of a once-beautiful country that has since lost sight of its values and abandoned its people. - *ML*

**Fatherhood + Road Trip + Sacrifices**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS



# ROSE OF NEVADA

## MARK JENKIN

UK | 2025 | 114 min

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 12, 5:15 PM

Olio

Mark Jenkin, the visionary Cornish filmmaker who mesmerized audiences in Victoria with his abrasive folk horror *Bait* and the enigmatic, time-lapsed dread of *Enys Men*, returns with *Rose of Nevada* - a profound exploration of lost souls, forgotten communities, and the ghosts that linger where the land meets the sea.

The film opens with the inexplicable reappearance of a fishing vessel, *Rose of Nevada*, presumed lost to a savage storm thirty years ago. The local community is stunned. Two disparate men—Nick (a quietly intense George MacKay, star of *1917*) and Liam (Callum Turner of *Masters of the Air*)—sign on to crew the resurrected boat, lured by an unspoken promise of the past. The moment their boots hit the deck, a strange, hallucinatory reality begins to unravel. The spectral ship becomes a conduit, opening a portal into an alternative existence — perhaps the past dragging the present backwards, or a reimagined reality.

Jenkin remains true to his distinctive cinematic language, capturing this eerie, time-slipping journey entirely on grainy 16mm film. The result is not merely aesthetic; it is a raw, tactile, and uncanny visual texture that feels strangely reminiscent of the rocks and sea foam of the Cornish coastline. His meticulous, artisanal approach extends into every corner of his craft: the film is developed entirely by hand, with all ambient sound added later as a dubbed mix. These techniques coalesce to create a deeply textured, almost dreamlike atmosphere that heightens the sinister and sombre mood of the work, inviting the audience into a truly immersive and haunting cinematic world. - *JD*

**Enigmatic + Original + Atmospheric**

BUY TICKETS




# SILENT FRIEND

## ILDIKÓ ENYEDI

Germany/France/Hungary | 2025 | 145 min

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 9, 11:45 AM

Olio

If you have ever had a desire to stare at, touch or tell your secret thoughts to... a tree, *Silent Friend* is the film for you. Hungarian director, Ildikó Enyedi (*On Body and Soul*), brings us a film which stars a majestic ginkgo biloba in a German university's botanical garden. Over a century, in three different eras, the tree observes humans investigating the communicative powers of plants.

Each section of this triptych is rendered with a different technique: In 1908, shot in black and white on 35mm, student Grete (Luna Wedler), finds a reprieve from the school's pervasive misogyny by photographing plants. In 1972, in grainy 16mm colour, a socially awkward farm boy, Hannes (Enzo Brumm), finds a connection with a geranium that belongs to a hippie romantic interest. In 2020, shot in crisp digital, the great Tony Leung (*In The Mood for Love*) in his first European film as Tony, a visiting Hong Kong neuroscientist, who, locked down in COVID, extends his research on infant neurology to the electro-chemical activity in plants, via Zoom talks with a French researcher, Alice (Lea Séydoux). As Tony develops a bond with Alice, he also finds himself drawn to the imposing ginkgo tree, adding digital sensors to its trunk and providing it with "tree sperm" from a sample Alice mails to him; if the tree doesn't actually smile, it definitely lights up in this sexy and enchanting film. *-LL*

**Trees + Communication + Lusciousness**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS



# THE PORTUGUESE HOUSE

**AVELINA PRAT**

Spain/Portugal | 2025 | 114 min

**Capitol 6**
Feb 10, 12:45 PM

Olio

Fernando, a reserved schoolteacher, is left adrift when his wife suddenly disappears. Searching for meaning beyond his loss, he travels to Portugal, where a chance encounter with a stranger leads him to an impulsive decision: to assume the man's identity and take his place as a gardener on a secluded estate. As Fernando settles into this new life, he forms a delicate friendship with the estate's owner, a woman whose presence quietly challenges his notions of self and belonging. But this is just the beginning, and the story takes some interesting turns.

Avelina Prat's *The Portuguese House* is a lyrical exploration of identity, grief, and reinvention. Through exquisite cinematography and a keen sensitivity to character, Prat crafts a story that meditates on the fragile line between who we are and who we appear to be. The film's visual poetry and measured pacing invite audiences into a positive, lighthearted, and engaging journey. - *RW*

**Thoughtful + Surprising + Lighthearted**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# THE THING WITH FEATHERS

**DYLAN SOUTHERN**

UK | 2025 | 104 min

**Roxy Theatre**
Feb 14, 7:30 PM

Olio

Led by Oscar-nominated Benedict Cumberbatch in a performance of blistering and profound invention, this gripping thriller plunges audiences into the heart of a desolate family's trauma following the sudden death of the wife and mother of two young sons. The narrative, adapted from Max Porter's acclaimed 2015 novella *Grief Is the Thing with Feathers*, expertly captures the shapeshifting, magical elements and otherworldliness inherent in the grieving process.

As a dark spiral of grief descends on a once vibrant family home, trauma manifests itself in an unexpected and terrifying form: a looming, half-human Crow. The creature chillingly resembles the birds the unnamed Dad—an animator by trade—has been painting for his current project. What begins as a strange haunting quickly escalates into an intense battle of wills between the grieving family and their unpredictable, uninvited house guest and tormentor.

The film excels in its artistic commitment, depicting the full spectrum of desolation, hope, and the crushing depths of sadness that grief can inflict. Cumberbatch's portrayal of a man teetering on the edge of sanity is a masterclass in emotional vulnerability, grounding the narrative's fantastical elements in raw human experience. - *JD*

**Dark + Gripping + Shapeshifting**

Movie TRAILER

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# Pulse





# 100 SUNSET

**KUNSANG KYIRONG**

Canada | 2025 | 99 min

**Capitol 6**
Feb 6, 6:00 PM



Kunsel is a young Tibetan immigrant living in the Parkdale neighbourhood of Toronto. In a community that simultaneously feels overwhelming, big, and painfully intimate, Kunsel spends her days recording the world around her, hoping to find a connection, until she befriends the mysterious Passang. As their relationship deepens, they plan to leave for a new life and are forced to confront uncomfortable truths.

These questions of identity and discovery are at the centre of Kunsang Kyirong's *100 Sunset*. A confident and deeply personal directorial debut about contemporary immigrant life in Canada. Shot with non-professional actors and working in collaboration with Toronto's vibrant Tibetan-Canadian community, the film has an incredible sense of authenticity that enriches every frame. It is also aided by sharp editing and subtle cinematography that helps to build the film's mystery throughout the story.

For audiences looking for something different and to discover new Canadian voices, *100 Sunset* is a quiet, deeply rewarding experience. Not only allowing Tibetan-Canadians to see themselves in the story, but also providing diverse audiences with a window into a compelling worldview. - *JD*

**Coming of Age + Mystery + Canadian**

Movie TRAILER

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# A SECOND LIFE

**LAURENT SLAMA**

France | 2025 | 77 min

**Capitol 6**
Feb 12, 6:00 PM



*A Second Life* is a tender, quietly moving portrait of two people finding an unexpected connection in a city overflowing with noise. Elisabeth (Agathe Rousselle), a depressed, hearing-impaired woman managing short-term rentals in Paris, is struggling to stay afloat as the city plunges into the chaos of hosting the Olympic Games. Overwhelmed by the constant clamor, she finds brief moments of solace by removing her hearing aids to escape the relentless bustle.

Her outlook begins to shift when she meets Elijah (Alex Lawther), a free-spirited Californian drifting through Paris with no real plan. What starts as a chance encounter between two seemingly opposite personalities unfolds into a day of conversation and surprising vulnerability, as Elisabeth slowly lets down her guard and discovers they have more in common than she imagined. As they wander through cafés, apartments, and crowded streets, their exchanges echo the walk-and-talk rhythm of Richard Linklater's *Before Sunrise*, while the film's lyrical, observational style evokes touches of Terrence Malick's naturalism.

With vibrant cinematography and detailed sound design that immerse us in Elisabeth's world, *A Second Life* offers a warm, life-affirming exploration of friendship, fleeting connections, and the possibility of rediscovering oneself. - *LA*

**Gentle + Life-Affirming + Sweet**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# A WOLF AMONG THE SWANS

**HELENA VARVAKI & MARCOS SCHECHTMAN**

Brazil | 2024 | 110 min

**Roxy Theatre**
Feb 12, 2:30 PM

There have been numerous Hollywood movies in the wake of the 1983 blockbuster, *Flashdance*, about aspiring dancers striving to bridge free-style personal expression with the discipline of ballet. What is different about the Brazilian film, *A Wolf Among the Swans*, is that it is based on a true story:

Thiago Soares, a poor kid and hiphop dancer from the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro won a dance scholarship in his teens and became an international star and principal dancer with the Royal Ballet of London. Set mostly in the 90s, *A Wolf Among the Swans* follows the cocky, homophobic street dancer, Thiago (Matheus Abreu), who uses the scholarship to show off and enjoy the extra-curricular benefit of pas de deux with the ballerinas. When his teacher suspects the brash teenager may be a generational talent, they invite the Cuban dance master Dino Carella to evaluate him. The openly gay, imperious teacher, and the rebellious, macho teenager clash, but they eventually form a deep bond over the joy of dance. The film concludes with a solo performance by Soares himself, in a dazzling demonstration of the fusion of strength and grace. *-LL*

**Ballet + Hip-hop + Biography**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# CALLE MÁLAGA

**MARYAM TOUZANI**

Morocco/France/Spain/
Germany/Belgium
2025 | 116 min

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 10, 2:30 PM

**Star Sidney**
Feb 11, 7:00 PM



Carmen Maura, Spanish cinema icon and frequent collaborator with Pedro Almodóvar, stars in *Calle Málaga*, the latest film from acclaimed Moroccan filmmaker Maryam Touzani (*The Blue Caftan, Adam*).

María Ángeles (Maura) is a passionate senior who enjoys her days in the Spanish quarter of Tangier. When her daughter arrives for an unexpected visit, she confronts María about selling her house to cover the financial burdens that have been put on their family. However, María is comfortable with the life she has where she is cherished by her community and quietly refuses to leave. As tension with her daughter rises, romance unexpectedly blossoms between María and an old rival. In this sensual, heartwarming film about aging gracefully, *Calle Málaga* offers a lesson for all to firmly hold onto what you cherish and make the most of life, no matter how many years you've lived.

Winner of the 2025 Venice Spotlight Audience Award and Morocco's submission for Best International Feature Film at the Oscars, *Calle Málag*a is a crowd-pleasing testament to a life lived fully, with all its joys and hardships. - *JC*

**Tender + Resilience + Aging**

Movie TRAILER

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# CHRISTY

**BRENDAN CANTY**

Ireland/UK | 2025 | 94 min

**Capitol 6**
Feb 12, 8:00 PM

Brendan Canty's debut feature, *Christy*, masterfully subverts expectations. What could have been a grim descent into the struggles of a broken working-class family in suburban Ireland is instead a deeply involving and genuinely funny portrait of resilience and the enduring power of family bonds.

Seventeen-year-old Christy (Danny Power) is at a crossroads. Expelled from his stable suburban foster home, he's forced to relocate to Cork's working-class northside to live with his estranged older brother, Shane (played brilliantly by Diarmuid Noyes). Shane, once himself in care, is finally turning his life around with his wife, Stacey (Emma Willis), a new baby, and a burgeoning painting-and-decorating business.

Christy's arrival, especially after a recent, viral public scrap, threatens to unravel Shane's fragile stability, creating immediate, heartfelt conflict. Yet, through a script that truly earns its moments of comedic sweetness, Canty delivers social realism with great heart. Brimming with integral Irish charm, *Christy* is a touching and essential watch that will undoubtedly win over audiences. *-JD*

**Warm + Familial + Surprising**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# DANCING ON THE ELEPHANT

**JULIA NEILL & JACOB Z. SMITH**

Canada | 2025 | 94 min

**Star Sidney**
Feb 6, 7:00 PM

**The Vic**
Feb 7, 4:45 PM



Shady Pines Retirement Home's newest resident Nora (Sheila McCarthy, *Women Talking*) resents that her children have decided she can no longer live independently. Despondent about the outlook of her remaining years, things seem bleak until she encounters Edna (Mary Walsh, *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*).

Recognizing each other from their school years, a friendship begins to form all these years later over their contempt for chair exercise and cravings for Fat Archie cookies. Nora realizes there may be more joy ahead for this mischievous duo, as Edna hasn't lost her spark or willingness to speak her mind despite the early signs of dementia becoming apparent.

Festival favourites and acting legends. McCarthy (*Cardinals* 2017) and Walsh (*Crackie* 2009, *Sweetland* 2023) return to Victoria with a heartwarming story about friendship and making the most of life's little moments in this winner of Outstanding Performance and Excellence in Editing at the Atlantic Film Festival. *-AR*

**Touching + Aging + Dramedy**

Movie TRAILER

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BUY TICKETS IN CONVERSATION WITH... + FILM @ THE VIC

Filmmaker expected to attend



# ERUPCJA

**PETE OHS**

USA/Poland | 2025 | 71 min

**Capitol 6**
Feb 7, 8:45 PM



Pete Ohs' *Erupcja* is a breezy, colorful film about coincidences, whether it is a chance encounter or a volcano that erupts every time Bethany (Charli xcx) sets foot in Poland. While vacationing in Warsaw with her boyfriend Rob (Will Madden), who has put together a romantic itinerary as part of his plan to propose, a volcano erupts. Bethany takes this as a sign that something in her life needs to implode, so she breaks away and reunites with her old friend Nel (Lena Góra), who runs a local flower shop. The two women share some potentially explosive chemistry, mirroring the volcanic tension brewing beneath the surface.

*Erupcja* has an ethereal, whimsical energy that echoes the characters' spontaneity, as the screenplay was a joint collaboration between the director and the film's stars. It is a poetic portrait of yearning that feels like a modern take on the French New Wave with a sapphic spin. Charli xcx shines in her first major acting role, delivering a magnetic and beautifully restrained performance. *Erupcja* feels like wandering through the streets of Europe in a euphoric haze after a reckless romantic encounter. It's a nostalgic, dreamy film about desire and longing. - *LA*

**Whimsical + Ethereal + Sapphic**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# INVISIBLES (LES INVISIBLES)

**Capitol 6**
Feb 7, 4:00 PM

**JUNNA CHIF**

Canada - Quebec | 2025 | 94 min

Élizabeth, a burlesque dancer and sex worker, practices both professions with passion. But after years of hiding her escort work, she begins to question whether she can keep living this way. Just as she prepares to move on, she agrees to see one last client, a man with a disability. Their encounter unsettles her certainties and draws her into an intimate, transformative journey. *-QC*

Élizabeth, danseuse burlesque et travailleuse du sexe, exerce ses deux métiers avec passion. Malgré tout, après avoir gardé sa vie d'escorte secrète pendant des années, elle se demande si elle peut encore vivre ainsi. Alors qu'elle se prépare à tourner la page, elle accepte un dernier client, un homme en situation d'handicap. Leur rencontre bouleverse ses certitudes et l'entraîne dans une quête intime et transformative. -QC

**Handicap + Sexuality + Disability**

Movie TRAILER

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TOURNÉE QUÉBEC CINÉMA




# LITTLE LORRAINE

**ANDY HINES**

Canada | 2025 | 115min

**Roxy Theatre**
Feb 9, 7:30 PM

**Pulse**

After a tragedy closes a local mine in Cape Breton, devoted family man Jimmy (Stephen Amell) is looking for a means to provide for them. Luck seems to intervene, and in steps Uncle Huey with a lobster boat and a need for crew. With few options to choose from, Jimmy and his buds jump at the opportunity. Before they know it, they're out at sea and things get fishy. They find themselves immersed in an international drug smuggling ring using caskets as carriers for shipments of cocaine destined for a network of funeral homes on the mainland.

As an Interpol agent closes in on the illicit enterprise, tensions rise and life in the coastal village is set to get a lot rockier. Inspired by an incredible true story from the 1980s, Andy Hines, the Juno and Grammy award-nominated music video director, who has worked with Missy Elliot, Alicia Keys, Coldplay and Lizzo, returns home to direct his first feature film with a fantastic ensemble cast. *-AR*

**Crime + Family + Fishing**

BUY TICKETS

Filmmaker expected to attend




# LOLLIPOP

**DAISY-MAY HUDSON**

UK | 2024 | 100 min

**Capitol 6**
Feb 9, 8:00 PM

Director Daisy-May Hudson, known for her powerful documentary work on personal homelessness, makes a striking transition to fictional narrative with *Lollipop*. Drawing from a profound understanding of Britain's social care bureaucracy, Hudson delivers a remarkably accurate and impassioned testimony of the human struggle within a broken system.

The film follows the plight of Molly, a young single mother brilliantly portrayed by Posy Sterling. Recently released from prison, Molly battles desperately to find secure housing for herself and her children. To her growing horror, her domestic precarity creates a systematic barrier to accessing her kids, who are subsequently placed into the care system against her will. This decision creates a nightmarish paradox: without her children, Molly is pushed down the housing priority list, trapped in a relentless loop of "sorry but No" responses from a system that cannot account for real-world lived realities.

While the subject matter is heavy and often deeply infuriating, Hudson skillfully avoids mere misery porn, always leaving space for joy, friendship, and solidarity. A beacon of light and positivity is provided by Molly's best friend from school, who is navigating a similar housing dilemma. Their bond reminds us that even in moments of darkest despair, community support can help forge new paths when the established systems show only blocked roads. *-JD*

**Friendship + Hope + Homelessness**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# MONTREAL, MY BEAUTIFUL

**Roxy Theatre**
Feb 14, 4:45 PM

**XIAODAN HE**

Canada | 2025 | 118 min

Feng Xia—played by legendary actress Joan Chen (*Saving Face, The Wedding Banquet*)—runs a small dépanneur in Montreal with her husband, where they've spent years building a stable life for their two children after immigrating from China. But at 53, Feng Xia feels a quiet ache beneath the surface of her orderly routine. Trapped in an unfulfilling marriage and longing for something more, she begins to explore the desires she has kept buried for decades.

Online, she discovers Camille (Charlotte Aubin), a free-spirited young Québécoise who works at a nearby café.

Their connection is immediate, drawing Feng Xia into a world of possibility she's never allowed herself to imagine. As their connection deepens, Feng Xia experiences a profound late-in-life awakening—one that challenges everything she thought she knew about herself, her marriage, and the obligations she carries as a mother and wife.

Caught between family expectations and the pull of her own truth, Feng Xia steps cautiously toward a new kind of freedom, creating space for a love that feels both terrifying and exhilarating. This intimate, character-driven drama explores desire, identity, and the possibility of reinventing one's life at any age. *-KM*

**Longing + Desire + Drama**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# SUNDAYS (LOS DOMINGOS)

**ALAUDA RUIZ DE AZÚA**

Canada | 2025 | 115 min

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 14, 11:45 AM



*Los Domingos* marks a compelling new chapter from Spain's rising auteur Alauda Ruiz de Azúa, whose films *Lullaby* and *Querer* have earned her acclaim for their tender, character-driven storytelling. Set in her native Bilbao, the film follows 17-year-old Ainara (Blanca Soroa, in a stunning debut performance), a bright and thoughtful teenager on the cusp of deciding her university future. But Ainara's life takes an unexpected turn when she begins to feel a divine calling and chooses to enter a cloistered convent, leaving her family grappling with shock, confusion, and a profound sense of loss.

Ruiz de Azúa, who was raised outside the Catholic faith, approaches the story with a unique outsider's perspective, exploring both the intensely personal spiritual journey of Ainara and the ripple effects on her family. The result is a deeply empathetic portrait of faith, choice, and familial bonds, where tension and tenderness coexist in equal measure. Soroa's nuanced performance anchors the film, providing a quiet yet gripping sense of mystery as religion increasingly shapes Ainara's life.

Shot on location in Bilbao and informed by years of observation of real-life convents and religious schools, *Los Domingos* is visually striking, emotionally resonant, and intellectually provocative. Combining Ruiz de Azúa's signature sensitivity with a thought-provoking exploration of belief, adolescence, and family, the film is a profound meditation on the power of faith and the costs of following one's own path. - *DR*

**Intimate + Thought-provoking + Poignant**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# THE COST OF HEAVEN (GAGNE TON CIEL)

**MATHIEU DENIS**

Canada - Quebec | 2025 | 116 min

**Capitol 6**
Feb 10, 5:45 PM



On the brink of collapse after a series of risky investments, a family man devises a desperate plan to save himself. Over the years, Nacer Belkacem has built an enviable position: loving father, happy husband, model employee, and respected citizen of his community. But under the clean surface, something is cracking. Nacer has racked up expenses, made some questionable investments, and fallen deep into debt. As his world unravels, he hatches a desperate plan to stay afloat. One life, one shot at heaven. But you must pay the price. *-QC*

Nacer Belkacem s'est bâti, au fil des années, une situation enviable aux yeux de tous : père de famille aimant, mari heureux, employé modèle et citoyen respecté de sa communauté. Mais sous cette surface en apparence parfaite, le vernis craque. Nacer a accumulé les dépenses, fait des investissements douteux et il croule sous les dettes. Au bord du gouffre, il élabore un plan désespéré pour tenter de se sortir la tête de l'eau. On n'a qu'une vie pour gagner son ciel… *-QC*

**Materialism + Obsession + Lies**

Movie TRAILER

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TOURNÉE QUÉBEC CINÉMA




# THE MARIANA TRENCH

**Capitol 6**
Feb 11, 1:30 PM

## EILEEN BYRNE

Luxembourg/Italy/Austria | 2025 | 97 min

In the middle of the night, two strangers unexpectedly meet as they visit a cemetery that holds their loved ones. Paula, a young woman shattered by the death of her younger brother, has come seeking solace at his grave. Helmut, an aging man with a stubborn streak and a sweetheart, is there on a highly unusual mission: to unearth the urn of his ex-wife, Helga.

What begins as an unlikely encounter soon becomes an unexpected friendship across generations. United by loss—Helmut, too, once lost a child in circumstances that echo Paula's—they set off together in Helmut's camper van. Their comedic and emotional journey will take them across breathtaking landscapes of Northern Italy, from the rugged beauty of South Tyrol, where Helga's ashes belong at the house they once shared together, to Paula's destination of Trieste, where she hopes to honor her brother's birthday.

As the two clash, connect, and slowly let one another in, their road trip becomes a passage through the stages of grief towards the ability to laugh again. Metaphorically echoing the ocean's deepest trench, *The Mariana Trench* explores the profound depths of sadness—and the unexpected connections and healing that can help us rise again. *-KM*

**Intergenerational friendship + Road Trip + Dramedy**

Movie TRAILER

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# THE PRESIDENT'S CAKE

**HASAN HADI**

Iraq | 2025 | 105 min

**Roxy Theatre**
Feb 15, 5:00 PM



Two days remain before Saddam Hussein's birthday.

Nine-year-old Lamia's name is drawn from a tin, sealing her fate: she must bake a celebratory cake for her teacher and classmates in honor of Hussein's birthday. Equal parts funny and poignant, the determined girl sets out to find rare goods—flour, sugar, and eggs—in sanctioned Iraq.

Armed with her shopping list, her grandmother (Waheed Thabet Khreibat), and her pet rooster, Lamia steps forward with unwavering courage. Navigating a world of vendors, police officers, wounded soldiers, con men, and more, her moral compass is tested as she barters for the crucial ingredients.

Director Hadi's engrossing and charming debut film insightfully reveals the nuances of a child's world under a dictatorship.

## Dictator's Birthday + Rationing

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# THE SON AND THE SEA

**STROMA CAIRNS**

UK | 2025 | 102 min

**Capitol 6**
Feb 8, 1:00 PM

Jonah has burned through London's nightlife with reckless abandon, but the pace is beginning to take its toll. When the chance arises to visit his great aunt—now living in a dementia care home on Scotland's remote Northeast coast—Jonah seizes the opportunity for change. Accompanied by his filmmaker friend Lee, he journeys to a windswept village where time moves differently, and the rhythms of life are shaped by the sea.

Settling into his aunt's house, Jonah and Lee encounter a cast of locals, including deaf twins Luke and Charlie, whose presence adds unexpected depth to their experience. Yet even here, far from the chaos of the city, shadows linger; the darker currents of human existence are never fully out of reach.

Against this backdrop, the film revels in the rugged beauty of the Scottish seaside. Nature itself becomes a character—an exhilarating, restorative force that frames Jonah's search for renewal. - *RW*

**Inspiring + Hopeful + Restorative**

BUY TICKETS




# TO THE VICTORY!

**VALENTYN VASYANOVYCH**

Ukraine/Lithuania
2025 | 105 min

**Capitol 6**
Feb 11, 6:00 PM



A very meta comedy-drama set in Ukraine in the post-war future, *To the Victory!* is a film about a film director, Roman (played by writer-director, Valentyn Vasyanovych), trying to return to filmmaking, working with his 18-year-old son, while his wife and daughter, who fled to Vienna during the Russian invasion, won't return to the damaged country. Roman's producer, Volodymyr Yatsenko (the film's real producer) and friend Vlad (Vladen Odudenko) persist in making their micro-budget, largely improvised film about men who are pining for their families in exile.

The winner of the juried Platform Prize for distinctive, creative direction at the Toronto International Film Festival, *To the Victory!* was made with a skeleton crew, who both acted in the film and took turns behind the camera. Rather than a conventional narrative, the film unfolds as a series of long-take scenes, some funny, some melancholic, about life in the future of the new abnormal. Several scenes turn out to be part of the movie-within-the-movie, as if concepts such as "reality" and "future" may be ephemeral. ("The only thing foreigners knew about Ukraine before was Chernobyl," laments one character. "And now the whole country is Chernobyl.") Yet, *To the Victory!* is also filled with affection and defiance. The jaunty, ironic title underscores that "victory" in this case, is not about vanquishing the foe, but continuing to persist. *-LL*

**Ukraine + War + Absurdist**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS

# QuirkD





# 100 LITRES OF GOLD

**TEEMU NIKKI**

Finland/Italy | 2025 | 88 min

**Toaster Rocket Cinema**
Feb 11, 7:00 PM

QuirkD

The Finnish farmhouse beer called “sahti” is a sweet, malty, robust ale with a touch of bitterness from juniper berries. Those tasting notes could easily apply to *100 Litres of Gold*, Finland’s nomination for the Oscar’s Best International Film.

This poignant village comedy follows two middle-aged sisters, the irrepressible Pirkko (Elina Knihtilä) and the slightly more sensible, Taina (Pirjo Lonka), who share a house and a gift for making the best sahti in town. Unfortunately, they share a fondness for over-sampling their product and a casual attitude toward collecting payment from their customers. When their other sister, Päivi (Ria Kataja) asks them to make 100 litres of their best sahti for her wedding, they dedicate themselves to making the best brew they can; but they are so impressed by their product that they end up drinking it all. Chagrined and hungover, they strike out on a quest to replenish the supply.

Prolific Finnish director Teemu Nikki has styled the film in the warm colours and the widescreen of a vintage Western, with slapstick confrontations and rough humour tempered by authentic performances from the two stars and a realistic, non-judgmental recognition of the impact of family trauma and alcoholism. - *LL*

**Female Entrepeneurs + Beer + Finland**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# A POET

## SIMÓN MESA SOTO

Colombia | 2025 | 120min

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 15, 4:45 PM

QuirkD

Set in the humble outskirts of Medellín, Colombia, *Un Poeta (A Poet)* features scruffy, hapless Oscar Restrepo, a fifty-plus-year-old high school teacher and poet. He is poor, his family is broken, and his literary career, never too promising, is going nowhere. Things seem to change when he finds a young student, Yurlady, who writes poetry. Oscar takes her under his wing, wants her to share her writings, and invites her to participate in a literary contest. During a dinner celebrating the occasion, Yurlady ends up drinking too much… and a comedy of errors ensues.

Both poignant and endearing, director Simón Mesa skillfully pairs lofty aspirations and ridiculous outcomes in a dark comedy that shows that even in the worst of circumstances, there is heart and a ray of hope that may finally shine.

*Un poeta* was awarded the Jury Prize in the section Un Certain Regard of the 2025 Cannes Film Festival and was the Colombian entry for the Best International Feature Film at the 98th Academy Awards. - *DR*

**Poetry + Colombia + Dysfunctional Families**

Movie TRAILER

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# A USEFUL GHOST

**RATCHAPOOM BOONBUNCHACHOKE**

Thailand | 2025 | 130 min

**Roxy Theatre**
Feb 14, 2:00 PM

QuirkD

March is a lonely factory owner rebuilding his life after the tragic death of his wife, Nat. At his lowest moment, March finds companionship where he least suspects it: in a possessed vacuum cleaner. As March explores this new relationship, he discovers dark secrets of who else might haunt the family business.

From exciting first-time filmmaker Ratchapoom Boonbunchachoke, *A Useful Ghost* is a wild trip of a genre bending satire. Don't let the presence of a haunted vacuum cleaner fool you. This is a film that works all at once as a love triangle, dark comedy, horror, and biting commentary on Thailand's political landscape. It is a film that keeps you on the edge of your seat, unsure where it will go next. Yet, throughout all the twists are the two great central performances of Witsarut Himmarat and Davika Hoorne that give the film an emotional core that grounds all the chaos around it.

There are very few films that you must see to believe and *A Useful Ghost* can be added to that list. Pure filmmaking magic that balances all the different elements perfectly. *-JD*

**Satirical + Funny + Political**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# BEAUTIFUL AND NEAT ROOM

## MARIA PETSCHNIG

United States | 2025 | 118 min

**Toaster Rocket Cinema**
Feb 8, 7:30 PM

QuirkD

*Beautiful and Neat Room* is a strikingly original film by Austrian-born, NYC-based filmmaker Maria Petschnig that blends fiction and documentary with exceptional clarity and sensitivity. Following a fiercely artistic woman navigating life in Brooklyn, the story explores her decision to cohabitate with a succession of seemingly harmless—but secretly unhinged—roommates in order to afford a small apartment. Each bizarre, boundary-pushing encounter forces her to confront not only the quirks and extremes of human behavior but also her own norms and limits.

Drawing from Petschnig's own experiences sharing her living space with over 60 roommates across 22 years, the film achieves an autofictional resonance that feels both intimate and universally relatable. Through spatial minimalism, carefully chosen camera angles, and natural light, Petschnig creates an atmosphere that heightens the shared experience of fundamental existential questions while reflecting the precarious, often surreal life of a contemporary visual artist.

With a career spanning more than twenty experimental films and the acclaimed documentary *Uncomfortably Comfortable*, Petschnig has earned recognition for her deeply original, Kafkaesque sensibilities. *Beautiful and Neat Room* is a visually compelling, intellectually provocative meditation on cohabitation, creativity, and survival in the modern city. It's a film that challenges perceptions, sparks reflection, and lingers long after the credits roll—a masterclass in how autofiction can illuminate the human psyche. - *ML*

**Kafkaesque + Inventive + Provocative**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS



# BY DESIGN

## AMANDA KRAMER

United States | 2025 | 91 min

**Toaster Rocket Cinema**
Feb 7, 7:00 PM

QuirkD

When Camille swaps bodies with a chair, she discovered that people like her more as a chair. The infinitely endearing Juliette Lewis (*Yellowjackets, Natural Born Killers*) stars as Camille, a woman who amidst a luncheon with her girlfriends finds herself satisfied with her surroundings. But when she encounters a piece of furniture so stunning, she finds herself envious of its beauty and usefulness.

With *By Design*, the never low-key Amanda Kramer (*Please Baby Please, Give Me Pity*) returns to the directorial chair with another playful, absurdist satire that mixes movement and dream logic into a feminist fable about the perceived value of women in society. The ensemble cast includes performances from Mamoudou Athie (*Kinds Of Kindness*) as the chair's new owner, the legendary Udo Kier (*Suspiria, Bacarau*) in one of his final roles as the chair's creator, and Samantha Mathis (*American Psycho*) and Robin Tunney (*The Craft*) as Camille's doting friends, who all pair perfectly with the craftz of this otherworldly vision. Major points for production design, hairstyling and wardrobe, but specifically shoes and hats. *-ML*

**Avant-garde + Fashion + Chair**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# DEAD LOVER

**GRACE GLOWICKI**

Canada | 2025 | 84 min

**Toaster Rocket Cinema**
Feb 14, 7:00 PM

QuirkD

A lonely woman spends her nights gravedigging, unable to rid herself of the stench of death and longing for the day she finds true love. Of course, the day she finally meets the man of her dreams, he drowns at sea. So, what else can you do besides resurrect him from the dead?

The result is the wild ride that is Grace Glowicki's *Dead Lover*, a delightfully bizarre and funny take on gothic horror. Lovingly crafted with handmade sets and shot on 16mm film, it is a strangely film that only the director/co-writer could have envisioned. The story is also brought to life by the four-person cast (including Glowicki's real-life partner Ben Petrie), whose members play off each other perfectly. With the added experience of Smell-O-Vision, the film has an infectious energy that has to be sniffed to be believed.

Mixing the surrealism of Guy Maddin with the campiness of John Waters, *Dead Lover* is a future midnight classic that will disturb, entertain and maybe even make you believe in love in equal measures. - *JD*

**Surreal + Horror + Cult**

BUY TICKETS



WITH SMELL-O-VISION




# HELLO BETTY

**PIERRE MONNARD**

Switzerland | 2025 | 110 min

**Star Sidney**
Feb 7, 2:00 PM

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 15, 2:00 PM

QuirkD

*Hello Betty*, a feature film by Swiss director Pierre Monnard, is a warm and spirited portrait of the woman behind one of Switzerland's most beloved culinary icons, Betty Bossi. Though "Betty" was never a real person, generations grew up believing she existed, a trusted companion who made cooking modern, simple, and reliable. Monnard takes us back to the 1950s to meet Emmi Creola, the real creative force behind the legend.

Balancing a demanding home life with three children and a husband who expects the familiar routine, together with her job at an advertising agency, Emmi constantly finds herself underestimated. In a workplace ruled by men, her ideas are dismissed long before they are heard. But with resourcefulness, nerve, and a bit of bold bluffing, she fights her way into copywriting. She invents Betty Bossi, an approachable home cook who delivers foolproof recipes for a new generation of Swiss households. What begins as a modest paper quickly grows into a nationwide phenomenon, with Betty even appearing on television.

With its polished, comedic charm, *Hello Betty* shines a light on the everyday struggles of women in the past — and quietly echoes how much of that fight still resonates today. - *MS*

**Cooking Icon + Women Empowerment + 1950's**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS @ STAR SIDNEY

BUY TICKETS @ THE VIC

Switzerland.



# HOLY DAYS

**NAT BOLTT**

Canada/New Zealand | 2025 | 97 min

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 6, 6:30 PM
Feb 9, 2:45 PM

QuirkD

*Holy Days* is a wildly charming, big-hearted adventure that sends three defiantly spirited nuns (Miriam Margolyes, Judy Davis, and Jacki Weaver) on the road in search of a miracle—only to discover they're far better at raising a little hell. When the sisters of St. Suzanne's convent face forced retirement, they stage a last-ditch escape to New Zealand's breathtaking South Island, hoping an ex-nun-turned-lawyer can save their home. Their journey takes an unexpected turn when a young Māori boy joins them, carrying a secret mission of his own: reaching the summit of Mt. Cook to find his recently departed mother before she crosses into the spirit world.

As a sudden snowstorm threatens their plans, this unlikely band of companions is pushed to the limits of faith, courage, and friendship. With echoes of *Little Miss Sunshine, Wonder*, and *The Peanut Butter Falcon*, the film blends humor, heartfelt emotion, and adventure into a story that celebrates love, loss, and the resilience that keeps us moving forward.

Backed by a powerhouse team of international producers, *Holy Days* delivers stunning landscapes, unexpected connections, and an ensemble of unforgettable characters finding exactly what they need—just not in the way they expect. Uplifting, tender, and delightfully offbeat, it's a crowd-pleasing odyssey destined to charm audiences of all ages. *-MH*

**Uplifting + Whimsical + Adventurous**

Movie TRAILER

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@ THE VIC FEB 6 & OPENING GALA

BUY TICKETS
@ THE VIC FEB 9



# MIDDLE LIFE

**PAVAN MOONDI**

Canada | 2025 | 84 min

**Toaster Rocket Cinema**
Feb 9, 7:00 PM

QuirkD

Through an unexpected encounter, Andie and Ryan (Leah Fay Goldstein and Peter Dreimanis, lead singers of July Talk) form a unique bond that makes them both question their current life paths. Ryan, single, is a plumber (with questionable skills) who cares for his aging father, while Andie is a high-strung wedding planner with a newborn and a distant husband. As she juggles these demanding roles, Ryan's carefree ways provide a tempting escape from the pressures of adulthood.

With natural chemistry Goldstein and Dreimanis' performances capture the euphoric YOLO moments of early relationships where personal baggage takes a back seat to unplanned adventures like afternoon pedicures and bowling, or last minute flights to sunny LA. Pavan Moondi's smart script and keen direction give the cast flexibility to make the story feel very relatable, providing enough moments of levity to land its dramatic punches. Like a millennial version of *When Harry Met Sally*, this modern romance is a refreshing take on a classic genre. *-AR*

**Relationships + Adulting + Escapes**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# PORTAL TO HELL

**WOODY BESS**

United States | 2025 | 93 min

**Toaster Rocket Cinema**
Feb 10, 7:00 PM

QuirkD

Medical bill collector Dunn stumbles upon an unsettling secret: his neighbourhood laundromat conceals a portal to hell. Strangely, the other patrons seem unfazed by this infernal gateway. Before long, Dunn encounters a demon obsessed with bargaining for souls, who offers him a grim deal — save his dying neighbour by delivering three replacement souls. Haunted by guilt from a past transgression, Dunn must decide whether this twisted act of redemption could absolve him. A colourful cast of potential candidates emerge, each seemingly fit for damnation. But who will Dunn choose, and at what cost?

*Portal to Hell* proves that audacity and imagination can thrive even on a shoestring budget. Woody Bess transforms a hilariously absurd premise — a laundromat doubling as a gateway to the underworld — into a surprisingly poignant meditation on guilt, redemption, and the human need for connection. The film balances its campy humour with weightier themes of grief and isolation, creating a unique blend of horror and heart. With its inventive style and offbeat charm, *Portal to Hell* is a testament to how bold storytelling can elevate micro-budget filmmaking into something unforgettable. - *RW*

**Quirky + Provocative + Deadpan**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# RACEWALKERS

**KEVIN CLAYDON & PHIL MONIZ**

Canada | 2025 | 82 min

**Toaster Rocket Cinema**
Feb 12, 7:00 PM

QuirkD

*Racewalkers* may be the epitome of underdogs in the sports film genre. Matt is a washed-up baseball player living in his van, but his raw talent is spotted by racewalking enthusiast and physiotherapist Will, whose positivity outshines his diminutive stature. The odd couple team up with high hopes, but first they'll have to overcome the local racewalking club's overzealous bureaucracy and bravado. Writer/director team Kevin Claydon and Phil Moniz star while committing to their characters with a very heartfelt story about beating the odds and the benefit of always having someone in your corner. Winner of the Unstoppable Feature Grand Jury Prize at the 2025 Slamdance Film Festival and Audience Choice award for Canadian feature at the 2025 Calgary International Film Festival, this buddy comedy goes for the gold with plenty of laughs along the way. *-AR*

**Friends + Comedy + Exercise**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# THE FURIES (LES FURIES)

**MÉLANIE CHARBONNEAU**

Canada | 2025 | 107 min

**Roxy Theatre**
Feb 12, 7:30 PM

QuirkD

Pour venger leur temps de glace perdu, une joueuse de hockey impulsive et une impitoyable octogénaire — ancienne championne de derby — ont un plan: recruter les laissées-pour-compte de la ville et mettre sur pied une équipe de roller derby clandestine. Avec la complicité du Cercle de fermières, elles prouveront que le sport féminin peut aussi soulever les foules et que la sororité est l'ultime acte de résistance.

To avenge the loss of their ice time to a new men's semi-pro team, an impulsive hockey player and a ruthless former derby champion octogenarian recruit the town's misfits to form a secret roller derby team. With help from the local Women's Circle, they'll prove that sisterhood is the ultimate act of resistance.

**Grit + Sisterhood + Heart**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS

TOURNÉE QUÉBEC CINÉMA




# THE GOLDEN SPURTLE

**CONSTANTINE COSTI**

UK | 2025 | 75 min

**Star Sidney**
Feb 11, 2:00 PM

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 13, 12:00 PM

QuirkD

Every year, the sleepy Scottish village of Carrbridge welcomes a global parade of hopeful porridge makers, all seeking to win the coveted ‘Golden Spurtle’ for the best bowl of steaming oats and milk. This annual porridge making championship is lovingly documented by filmmaker Constantine Costi - whose whimsical, at times Wes Anderson-esque approach captures the irresistibly quirky humanity of village life, all against the breathtaking backdrop of the Scottish Highlands.

At the heart of this crowd-pleasing documentary, is Charlie Miller - a local porridge aficionado, who has dedicated his life to organizing the championship. With his health failing, this year will be the last under Charlie’s tenure before he hands on the golden spurtle to the next generation of porridge lovers. The documentary intimately follows Charlie and a cast of deeply dedicated, often eccentric, competitors in the anxious weeks leading up to, and during, the main event.

Much like the humble bowl of porridge, this film isn’t flashy or even particularly enticing on paper, but with only the simplest ingredients, Costi infuses this film with great comfort, humour and warmth. - JD

**Quirky + Wholesome + Nourishing**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS @ STAR SIDNEY

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# WHISTLE

## CHRISTOPHER NELIUS

Australia | 2025 | 84 min

**Toaster Rocket Cinema**
Feb 13, 7:30 PM

QuirkD

As the world seems increasingly hostile and negative, there are few things that can bring people together like music, with nothing being as universal and wholesome as a good whistle. This is what inspires Carole Anne Kaufman to bring fellow whistle enthusiasts together for the Masters of Musical Whistling competition.

Audiences get the privilege of meeting Carole and the delightful professional whistlers in Christopher Nelius' *Whistle*. A real-life Christopher Guest film, where audiences meet a wide range of eccentric characters from a former circus performer to a professional whistler who appeared in the *Barbie* movie. We see them through the emotional highs and lows of the competition, as well as the personal pressure that the event imposes on Carole herself. Throughout it all, Nelius never loses sight of the sincerity of everyone involved and the sense of pure joy that whistling brings to their lives. It pulls off a delicate balance of being funny without making fun of the film's stars.

As funny and sweet as any documentary you'll see, *Whistle* will have you humming a merry tune for a long time afterwards. - *JD*

**Quirky + Heartfelt + Community**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS



# Sketch




# A LIFE ILLUMINATED

**TASHA VAN ZANDT**

USA | 2025 | 89 min

**Star Sidney**
Feb 8, 2:00 PM

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 11, 12:00 PM

**Sketch**

Dr. Edie Widder is a true trailblazer. A committed marine biologist, Dr. Widder is responsible for developing the camera system that captured giant squids in their natural habitat for the first time and her innovative research in bioluminescence. Her perseverance is an inspiration to many around the world.

Audiences get to learn more about Dr. Widder's accomplishments and personal drive in Tasha Van Zandt's *A Life Illuminated*. As the film follows Dr. Widder during her most recent advancements in submersible vessels, it mixes the scientific wonder of David Attenborough with the inspirational drama of the best biopics. We follow the journey that it takes to not only develop scientific theories, but all the factors that need to come together to make a breakthrough. All this is supported with stunning cinematography that highlights the beauty found in all the corners of the world.

A real-life Avatar that is gripping for both science and cinema nerds, *A Life Illuminated* is the type of film experience that has to be seen on the big screen.
*- JD*

**Exploration + Empowerment + Inspirational**

Movie TRAILER

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# AGATHA'S ALMANAC

**AMALIE ATKINS**

Canada | 2025 | 83 min

**Capitol 6**
Feb 12, 1:15 PM

**Sketch**

"You can have a life with joy and hope and love, but it's not always easy." This is one of many nuggets of wisdom 90-year-old Agatha Bock offers from her solitary slice of paradise in southern Manitoba. Her aging ailments are reflected in the sprawling maples and rustic buildings on her 54-acre family farm, which requires constant maintenance. Meanwhile, abundant crops, pickles, and jellies signal optimistic preparations for the future. Efficiently cultivating a garden with heirloom seeds, methodical processes of sowing, harvesting, and preserving by hand easily fill her days. In 16mm detail, delicious pops of red and green showcase seasons of simple living sprinkled with tips on planting potatoes and picking watermelons. With a handcrafted aesthetic perfectly matching its subject, Amalie Atkins's marvellous debut documentary honours her aunt with a guide to living in harmony with nature through honest work, where nothing's wasted and self-sufficiency is a necessity. *-AR*

**Women + Gardening + Aging**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS



# BUDDHA JUMPS OVER THE WALL

**PEDRO PEIRA**

Spain | 2025 | 83 min

**Capitol 6**
Feb 9, 5:30 PM

**Sketch**

The title of *Buddha Jumps Over the Wall* refers to a Chinese traditional story according to which the emperor's cook made a dish so deliciously fragrant that a nearby monk leapt over a wall to try to taste it. In Pedro Peira's documentary, it refers to jumping over culinary walls, particularly between the Basque country cuisine of chef David Yárnoz of the Michelin-ranked restaurant, El Molino de Urdániz, in Navarre, Spain, and the cuisine of Taipei, where Yárnoz opened a second restaurant in 2019.

The documentary begins with Yárnoz's return to Taipei for the first time in three years following the COVID pandemic. After ensuring the Taipei restaurant is maintaining its quality standards, Yárnoz goes on a tour of the local culinary scene, meeting local masters including French-trained Yu-chung Li, who became Taiwan's first woman chef to achieve a prestigious Michelin ranking, and Chef Kai Ho, founder of the country's first three-star Michelin restaurant, Taïroir (a portmanteau of Taiwan and terroir).

An easy-going foodie hangout film, *Buddha Jumps Over the Wall* does a lot of jumping about, visiting restaurants and vineyards, farms and open-air night markets. Buddha brings to mind a favourite Basque culinary tradition: pintxo bar hopping, in which food enthusiasts go from establishment to establishment, sampling a variety of tasty bite-sized mini-snacks called pintxos (literally "spikes") with combinations of food stacked on a piece of bread and held together with a toothpick. When Chef Kai comes to visit Navarre, Chef Ho sits at the bar counter with a glass of beer, demolishes a pintxo in a single bite, smiles and asks his friend, Yárnoz, "How do you say 'yummy?'" *-LL*

## Cuisine + Spain + Taiwan

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS




# FRANZ

## AGNIESZKA HOLLAND

Czech Republic | 2025 | 127 min

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 10, 11:45 AM

**Sketch**

*Franz* is a captivating dive into the inner world of literary legend Franz Kafka, brought to life by German actor Idan Weiss in his first feature film role. Under the masterful direction of Polish filmmaker Agnieszka Holland, Weiss delivers a performance that has earned him a European Film Award nomination for Best Actor and made the film Poland's submission for the International Oscars.

Weiss approached Kafka not by imitation, but through empathy, exploring the writer's profound sensitivity and sense of isolation. Drawing from Kafka's diaries, he crafted a nuanced portrayal that feels both intimate and universally human.

Holland, renowned for politically charged films like *Europa Europa* and *Green Border*, fostered an energetic, improvisational set that allowed Weiss to push the boundaries of his theatrical experience. The result is a performance that is raw, immersive, and unforgettable.

*Franz* is more than a biopic; it's a journey into the mind of one of the 20th century's most enigmatic writers, rendered with empathy, intelligence, and artistry. Weiss's dedication, combined with Holland's visionary direction, makes this film a compelling festival entry destined to resonate with audiences worldwide.

**Surreal + Tragicomic + Inventive**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS



**Star Sidney**
Feb 10, 2:00 PM

**Roxy Theatre**
Feb 15, 2:30 PM



# GEORGIA O'KEEFFE: THE BRIGHTNESS OF LIGHT

**PAUL WAGNER**

United States | 2024 | 116 min

Celebrated for her bold, larger-than-life flower paintings and fiercely original artistic vision, Georgia O'Keeffe carved out a place as one of the most influential figures in modern art. Defying the expectations of her era, she insisted on defining herself—both as a painter and as a woman—on her own terms.

This richly textured documentary weaves together interviews, archival footage, photographs, and O'Keeffe's luminous artwork. Tracing her journey from New York City to the desert landscapes of New Mexico and her beloved Ghost Ranch, the film reveals O'Keeffe's inner world—her independence, her sensuality, and her lifelong pursuit of creative freedom. Central to the portrait is her complex, decades-long relationship with photographer and gallerist Alfred Stieglitz. Through the hundreds of intimate letters they exchanged, O'Keeffe's evolving ideas about art, love, and identity come vividly to life.

Voiced by Claire Danes, Georgia O'Keeffe's words anchor this immersive portrait of a visionary—offering a powerful look at a remarkable artist and the enduring legacy she fought to create. *-KM*

## Artistic Life + Bold + Woman

Movie TRAILER

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BUY TICKETS @ ROXY THEATRE




# HOW DARK MY LOVE

**SCOTT GRACHEFF**

United States | 2025 | 109 min

**Toaster Rocket Cinema**
Feb 13, 5:00 PM

**Sketch**

In *How Dark My Love*, director Scott Gracheff offers an intimate portrait of Brooklyn artist Joe Coleman, a figure whose life and work blur the line between art and obsession. Coleman resides in his self-styled Odditorium, a cabinet of curiosities filled with medical relics, macabre artifacts, and outlaw memorabilia. From this surreal sanctuary, he has built a reputation for creating painstakingly detailed paintings that surround infamous figures—outlaws, serial killers, and eccentrics—with the iconography of their lives.

The film follows Coleman as he embarks on his most ambitious project yet: a seven-foot portrait of his wife, Whitney, a labor of love that consumes more than three years. What emerges is not only a testament to artistic endurance but also a meditation on devotion, independence, and the unconventional bonds that sustain a creative life.

With energy and style, *How Dark My Love* explores themes of love, mortality, and the compulsion to create. It is a close-up look at an artist who values expression over commerce, and a celebration of a partnership rooted in shared passion for the extraordinary. - *RW*

**Fascinating + Provocative + Inspiring**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS

Filmmaker expected to attend




# MAGELLAN

**LAV DIAZ**

Philippines/Portugal/Spain/
France/Taiwan
2025 | 160 min

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 7, 12:00 PM

**Sketch**

Filipino director, Lav Diaz (*Norte, The End of History*) is known as a key figure in slow cinema, an arthouse genre characterized by minimalism, long takes, and little narrative. Yet his latest film is relatively mainstream, in vibrant colours and far-flung locations, as it explores the history of the famous explorer, Ferdinand Magellan, played by globally recognized star, Gael García Bernal, who plays the role with a distant reserve.

After setting out from Spain in 1519 on a mission to circumnavigate the world, Magellan was killed by natives two years later in the Philippines, a country named after the Spanish king who financed the journey, and the director's homeland. First impressions aside, no one could confuse this haunting, meditative study with a conventional biopic.

Set over 15 years, sweeping in scope but tautly disciplined, *Magellan* unfolds in a series of transfixing painterly wide shots that set the actors against the natural landscape. There is no musical score, and devastating battles are not shown onscreen, instead represented by their aftermath with corpses strewn about the landscape, reminiscent of Francisco Goya's images of the devastation of war.

Like Werner Herzog's *Aguirre, The Wrath of God* (1972) and Lucretia Martel's *Zama* (2017), *Magellan* probes the violent legacy of colonialism, through the biography of a schoolbook hero who embodied the Age of Discovery's lethal blend of religious conviction, avarice, and European supremacy. *-LL*

**Adventure + Biography + Colonialism**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS



# MENOPAUSE: COMING IN HOT

## KATE GREEN

Canada | 2025 | 86 min

**Capitol 6**
Feb 8, 6:00 PM

Sketch

What if you were told you were about to develop a condition that could make you bald, sweaty, moody, sleepless, and slightly homicidal for up to ten years and that nobody, not even your doctor, could really tell you why? Welcome to menopause.

Filmmaker Kate Green, a strong-willed, sharp-tongued problem solver, isn't taking it lying down. As she hits 49, she's on a mission to uncover the truth about one of the most misunderstood and under-researched stages of a woman's life. Armed with humour, curiosity and a camera, she dives into the world of hormones, hot flashes, and health misinformation, seeking real answers from doctors, scientists and fellow women who are rewriting the narrative.

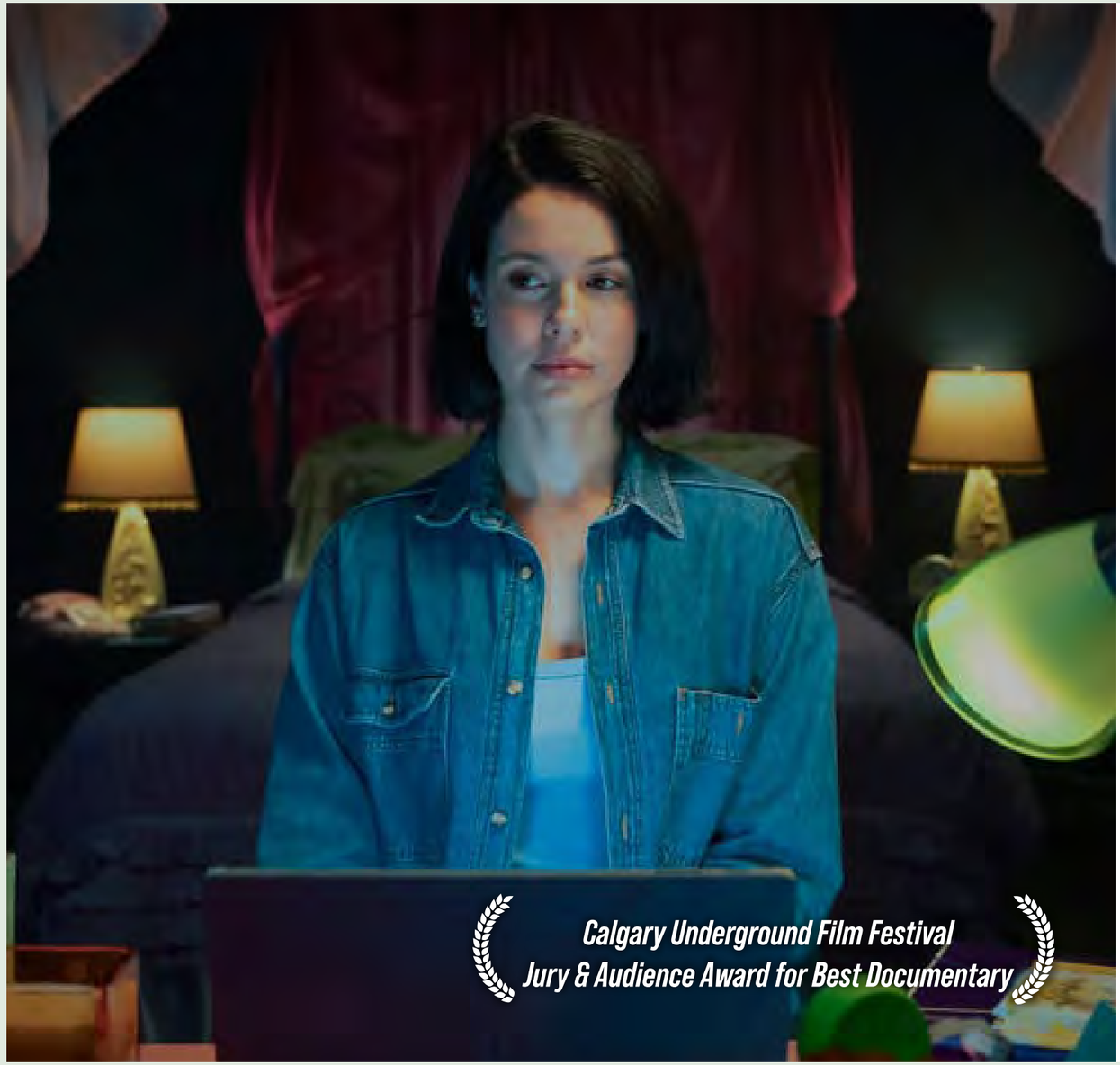
Blending comedy with candid conversation, *Menopause: Coming in Hot* takes audiences on a smart, irreverent and deeply relatable journey through the physical, emotional, and societal chaos of "the change." At once hilarious and empowering, the film reframes menopause not as an ending, but as a second coming of age - one that's long overdue for the spotlight. *-MH*

**Empowering + Candid + Irreverent**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS

Filmmaker expected to attend




# MODERN WHORE

**NICOLE BAZUIN**

Canada | 2025 | 80 min

**Roxy Theatre**
Feb 10, 7:45 PM

**Sketch**

Traditionally, sex workers have been portrayed in one of two ways: victims or villains. Rarely have audiences seen an authentic portrayal of sex workers as three-dimensional people or hear real conversations about the institutional failures that allow them to be exploited.

Wanting to bring these stories to light, Andrea Werhun shares her experiences in director Nicole Bazuin's *Modern Whore*. Expanding on Werhun's 2020 memoir, the film is a frank and insightful look into sex work that never loses Werhun's distinct sense of humour. Using fourth wall-breaking reenactments and interviews with people from all facets of the industry, the film provides a wide range of perspectives that give audiences a clear understanding. Through Werhun's unique voice and passionate call for safe workspaces, the film finds a great balance of informing without lecturing and entertaining without sensationalism.

*Modern Whore* explores the realities of the world's oldest profession while highlighting the dynamic personalities that finally get to talk about the industry on their terms. - *JD*

**Funny + Thought-provoking + Insightful**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS

Filmmaker expected to attend



# PARTICLE DANCE

## HIROMOTO OKA

Japan | 2025 | 145 min

**Capitol 6**
Feb 7, 1:00 PM

**Sketch**

Step inside the world of Kengo Kuma, one of Japan's most visionary architects, in *particle dance*, a 15-year cinematic journey capturing the genius of a master who turns wood, light, and space into poetry. From intimate student pavilions to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Stadium, Kuma's work is a delicate choreography between nature, humanity, and material—a dance that this film brings to life.

Director Hiromoto Oka, Kuma's former student, traveled across 17 countries with a single camera to document over 80 projects, witnessing not just architecture, but history: the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, a global pandemic, and the escalating climate crisis. Through fragmented, haiku-like sequences, *particle dance* weaves jazz-like montages with quiet, contemplative moments, revealing the philosophy behind Kuma's designs.

The film celebrates architecture as more than buildings—it's a bridge between people and nature, tradition and innovation. Whether exploring reconstruction efforts, sustainable student projects, or monumental international works, audiences experience the humility, elegance, and wisdom that make Kuma's architecture universally compelling.

*particle dance* is not just a film about buildings—it's a meditation on how human creativity can harmonize with the world around us, one particle at a time - MH.

**Architect + Natural Materials + 15 Year Journey**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS

University of Victoria | Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives

Filmmaker expected to attend




# PRIMAVERA

**DAMIANO MICHIELETTO**

Italy/France | 2025 | 110 min

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 11, 2:30 PM



In early 18th-century Venice, Cecilia struggles to survive in a secluded and cold orphanage for abandoned girls, where she and her peers are trained to perform in a renowned all-female musical ensemble. Hidden behind screens and convent walls, the girls play for tourists, dignitaries, and wealthy male patrons whose support keeps the institution afloat. Under the strict rule of unsympathetic nuns and with little hope for their futures, many cling to dreams that their mothers will return—or that an arranged marriage to a benefactor might offer a way out.

Cecilia, a gifted young virtuoso, knows that her only chance at freedom lies beyond the walls that confine her and hopes that her mother will come to get her out. When the brilliant and unconventional Antonio Vivaldi arrives as the ensemble's new instructor, he immediately recognizes her extraordinary talent.

*Primavera* draws inspiration from the real history of Vivaldi's nearly three decades teaching at the Ospedale della Pietà and from Tiziano Scarpa's novel Stabat Mater. Lush, atmospheric, and deeply moving, the film offers a powerful portrait of creativity blossoming against the odds and a young woman's fight to claim her place in a world determined to silence her. *-KM*

**Music + Powerful + Period Drama**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS

ISTITUTO italiano DI CULTURA TORONTO




# THE ART OF ADVENTURE

**ALISON REID**

Canada | 2025 | 87 min

**Star Sidney**
Feb 12, 2:00 PM

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 13, 2:00 PM

**Sketch**

Armed with 3000 feet of film, a like-minded passion for nature, and a customized Land Rover nicknamed the “Grizzly Torque”, wildlife artist Robert Bateman and ecologist Bristol Foster have a story that would permanently cement any friendship. These two kindred spirits not only travelled the world together but also maintained a relationship that is admirable both in its longevity and strength.

*The Art of Adventure* compiles archive footage of Bateman and Foster’s 18-month trek around the globe and contextualizes it within a world that has changed dramatically since. While Foster’s footage from the trip remains a time capsule of a bygone era, Reid’s compilation of it showcases a transformation in society as the two drove through geopolitical conflicts and civil unrest to uncover a natural world that was quickly being closed off from civilization.

Now settled on Salt Spring Island with their families, Alison Reid’s latest documentary sees Bateman and Foster recount their incredible journey alongside memories - from friends and family - of their accomplishments since then. An endearing testament to the power of friendship and pursuing your passions, *The Art of Adventure* celebrates venturing into the unknown and seeing the world with your own eyes. -CC

**Nature + Inspirational + Adventure**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS @ STAR SIDNEY

BUY TICKETS @ THE VIC

Filmmaker expected to attend



# THE BLUEBERRY BLUES (LES BLUES DU BLEUET)

**Capitol 6**
Feb 9, 1:00 PM

**Sketch**

## ANDRÈS LIVOV

Canada - Quebec | 2025 | 90 min

In Lac-Saint-Jean, summer means blueberry season. Once the fields paint themselves blue, fruit gatherers of all kinds rush to pick these precious boreal berries before the first frost. *The Blueberry Blues* celebrates a territory and the people who return to this hardy little fruit each summer, connecting generations and cultures. Together, like blueberries emerging from the ashes of a forest fire, they learn the power of resilience. -*QC*

Au Lac-Saint-Jean, l'été amène avec lui la saison des bleuets. Au moment où les champs se teintent de bleu, les cueilleurs et les cueilleuses de tout acabit s'empressent de ramasser ces précieux petits fruits avant le premier gel d'automne. Dans un ballet de gestes répétés, les langues se délient, tissant une toile où se mêlent confidences, rires et larmes. *Les blues du bleuet* célèbre un territoire et les personnes qui s'y relient à travers les générations et les cultures. Ensemble, elles apprennent à se réinventer, comme les bleuets renaissent des forêts brûlées. -*QC*

**Agriculture + Local Traditions + Cultural diversity**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS

TOURNÉE QUÉBEC CINÉMA



# THE PAINTED LIFE OF E.J HUGHES

**JENN STROM**

Canada | 2025 | 82 min

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 8, 3:00 PM



British Columbia comes alive in Jenn Strom's inquisitive portrait of one of the province's most accomplished painters, Edward John Hughes. Immersing the viewer in archive footage, tapes, and news clippings that chart Hughes's determination to find success in the art world, *The Painted Life of E.J. Hughes* does more than just spotlight an artist whose works are increasingly being celebrated today. It highlights the tactile, transportive qualities of his paintings and reveals the beauty hiding within our own backyard.

Strom's feature directorial debut is also a touching glimpse into the intersection of isolation and creativity. Following Hughes's life on Vancouver Island to the cultivation of Vancouver's art scene to his time serving as a war artist during World War II, his creative urges drove him across Canada, painting landscapes and documenting the transitional periods of a country with meticulous detail.

*The Painted Life of E.J. Hughes* is a delightful journey through the life of an artist who found something uniquely Canadian and preserved it through his art. Strom reveals an artist whose works have not only stood the test of time but continue to endure as paintings emblematic of British Columbia's serene majesty. *-CC*

**Arts + Biographical + Appreciation**

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS

Filmmaker expected to attend




# THE TRACK

**RYAN SIDHOO**

Canada | 2025 | 91 min

**Roxy Theatre**
Feb 10, 2:30 PM



As a jewel of the 1984 Olympic Winter Games and symbol of the city's success, Sarajevo's once famous 1.2 km long bobsleigh, luge, and skeleton track is now covered in weeds, graffiti, and bullet holes.

Seasoned Olympic coach Senad Omanovic remains hopeful he can resurrect a luge training program and rehabilitate the track that's become a tourist attraction of contemporary ruins. He recruits young athletes Hamza, Zlatan, and Mirza, giving the teenage boys a dream that they can somehow escape post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina's struggles with poverty and high unemployment.

Despite the lack of government support, the boys dedicate themselves to a sport that is high risk but gives them a chance to perform on an international stage.

Winner of the Best Canadian Documentary at the 2025 Vancouver International Film Festival, *The Track* is an immersive coming of age story that captures the thrill of racing into the unknown. - *AR*

## Athletes + Youth + Olympics

Movie TRAILER

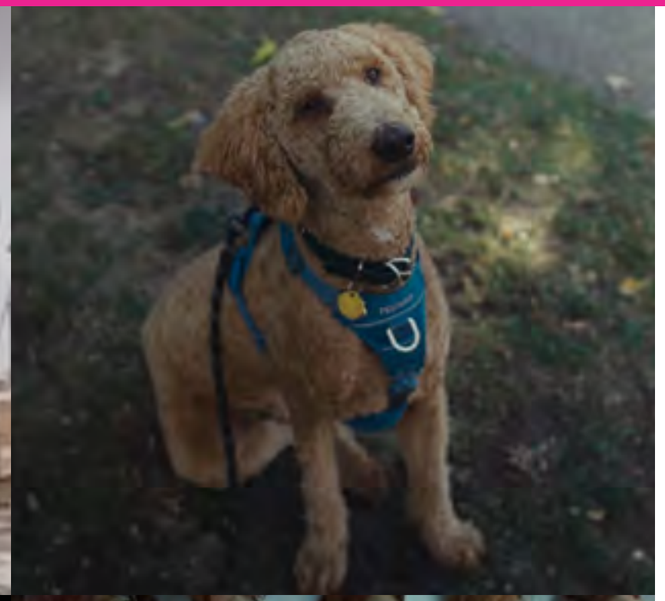
BUY TICKETS

Filmmaker expected to attend

# Short Bursts









**Intrepid**
Feb 10, 5:00 PM
Feb 14, 7:30 PM

# Short Bursts For The Faint of Heart

86 min

**Even though these films might make you feel a little, they won't scare, stress, or make you cry. Well, no guarantees — but we promise no jump scares.**

**On a Sunday at Eleven** – 9 mins, Director: Alicia K. Harris
"*On a Sunday at Eleven*" follows the Sunday routine of a young Black ballerina, 7-year-old Angel. Angel arrives at ballet class, to discover she is the only Black girl in her class. Feeling isolated, she escapes to a dream world where Black ballerinas with elaborate hairstyles dance around her, in this jubilant celebration of Black women's unique beauty.

**Rocco** – 8 mins, Director: Luke Gallagher
Rocco is a spirited 1-year-old rescue dog navigating the sensory overload of the big city. Brief glimpses into the daily rhythm of his life reveal an ailment, and the growing concerns of his new owners.

**Cycles** – 21 mins, Director: Alex Eskandarkhah
After the death of his best friend, a troubled mechanic confronts his past in a laundromat where he meets a young woman grappling with her own demons, forcing both to navigate their realities in a dance of redemption and renewal.

**Animals** – 7 mins, Director: Michael Makaroff
The story is a coming-of-age centred on Lucas (Jett Klyne - *Doctor Strange, Boy in the Woods* & 2026's *Malcolm in the Middle*), a high school student grappling with the realization that he crossed a partner's boundaries during an intimate encounter. Opening with a confrontation between Lucas and a long-time friend (Mark), the question is posed of- "What Happened?"

**Bisou Sauvage** – 3 mins, Director: Bahij Jaroudi
As world tragedies pile up, a bored couple is looking for their next distraction. This explosive dark comedy is a blunt take on the privilege of boredom and the dissonance that is needed to pretend everything is okay. Lebanese-Canadian illustrator and animator Bahij Jaroudi compels us to recognize our own apathy in this relatable black-and-white animated short.

**The Girl Who Cried Pearls** – 17mins, Director: Chris Lavis, Maciek Szczerbowski
A haunting fable about a girl overwhelmed by sorrow, the boy who loves her, and how greed leads good hearts to wicked deeds.

**Grape Maestro** – 20 mins, Director: Alla Kovgan
In the vineyards of Northern Italy, at harvest time, cultures clash, and a wine commercial shoot goes astray, until dance, music, comedy — and the magic of a harlequin — intervene.

BUY TICKETS FOR FEB 10

BUY TICKETS FOR FEB 14

Filmmakers expected to attend









**Intrepid**
Feb 10, 7:30 PM
Feb 13, 5:00 PM

# Short Bursts
# This Really Happened

113 min

**Reel stories of real people. From mountaintops to the open sea, you might find it on the news, but this will be an extra-extra, see-all-about-it headline.**

**Field Notes From An Apocalypse** – 25 mins,
Director: Brett Gaylor
In *Field Notes From An Apocalypse*, filmmaker Brett Gaylor and his friends join science fiction writer Christopher Brown on adventures through Austin's urban fringes, where forgotten spaces offer visions of tomorrow. As Brown writes a story about a world where animals hold rights as legal persons, the film weaves live action and animated sequences to meditate on the boundaries between nature and civilization, and the futures that might still be possible.

**Sisters** - 24 mins, Director: Maria Munro
To gain some peacefulness during the stress of the pandemic, a filmmaker has a sudden unlocking of buried memories from the past while meditating and is confronted with an intense recollection that she may have a sister somewhere that she has never met.
Determined to investigate this possibility, she undertakes a journey to the centre of the truth as she examines her family history growing up in Venezuela by shedding new light on her mother and father as she uncovers the existence of this mystery sister.

**Send and Receive** - 13 mins, Director: Dominique Keller
A documentary about the relationship between international postal workers and their clients.

**Beauty In A Fall** - 27 mins, Director: Nat Segal
From a young age, Julianna didn't feel like she belonged. However, upon finding the weird and wonderful world of rock climbing, she dedicated her life to mountain sports and becoming an IFMGA guide. Despite her love for the work, existing in the mountain guiding industry led her to feel unsafe publicly expressing her true gender identity. It was only after a life changing accident and a series of serious wake up calls that she took time off guiding and started to seek support and therapy for CPTSD.
Join Julianna on her journey to self-discovery in the face of an industry that struggles to accept folks who currently fall into the margins of mountain culture. Visiting the mountain-scapes that were her livelihood, she confronts her past experiences and her journey's cost.

**Lobster Queen** – 24 mins, Director: Alix Buck
They say women are bad luck on a boat. Captain Gail Atkinson never gave a damn. She's spent the last 30 years proving everyone wrong—and taking chances on people nobody else would hire.
But Gail's convictions are put to the test as she faces the storm of the year and an emotional upheaval that shakes her to her core. As she grapples with identity, loneliness, and legacy, Gail finds unexpected purpose providing others the very opportunities that she was once denied.

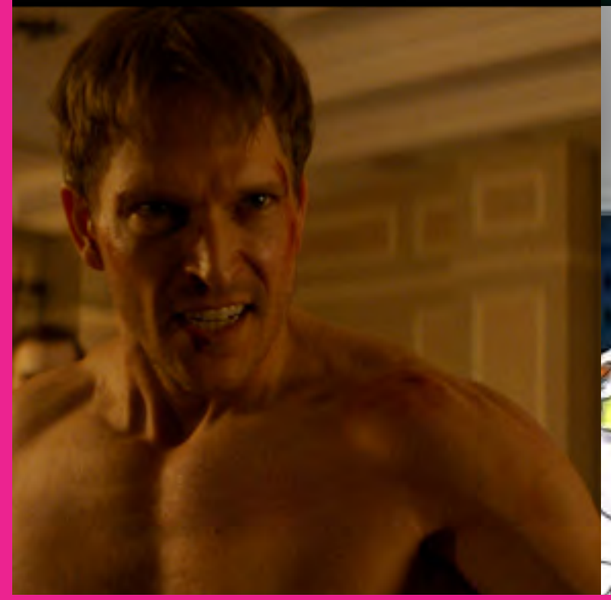
BUY TICKETS FOR FEB 10

BUY TICKETS FOR FEB 13

Filmmakers expected to attend









**Intrepid**
Feb 12, 5:00 PM
Feb 14, 5:00 PM

# Short Bursts
# This, That, There, and Where

82 min

**From the island to the far edges of the world — stories born here, yet capable of carrying you anywhere. Lose yourself in these journeys, where the place you stand becomes entwined with the person you are.**

**Daisy is Gone** - 13 mins,
Director: Ziyao Liu
An absurdist sci-fi with comedic overtones, *Daisy is Gone* follows an anthrophobic Chinese poet, Meng, as he tries to return a cloned Goldfish, which he believes to be a botched imposter of his lost pet and best friend.

**Paradaïz** - 9 mins, Director: Matea Radic
Welcome to a place where the houses have holes, tomatoes are ticking time bombs and snails wander the streets in search of a safe space. In *Paradaïz*, Sarajevo-born artist Matea Radic uses absurdist animation, archival images and her own slippery childhood memories to explore the real meaning of home.

**Chicken** - 15mins
Director: Bill Chen
Set against suburban South Africa, twin brothers Peter and Paul grapple with identity, belonging, and silent expectations at an elite boys' school — until one's reckless bid for acceptance triggers a rupture with devastating, irreversible consequences for them both.

**Noodle** - 10 mins, Director: Connor Gaston
A depressed mukbang influencer "eats her feelings" in attempt to overcome her grief. Through a highly specific character lens, *Noodle*, exposes a shared human experience that transcends cultural boundaries

**Legend Has It** – 16 mins, Director: Thomas Lorber
A male stripper has to pull a few new moves to get out of trouble when he shows up to a kind of party he did not expect.

**Weeping Fig** – 18 mins, Director: Sohee Hong
*Weeping Fig* is a reverse fairytale, a cautionary tale not for children, but for adults. This mystical and eerie psychological drama follows a father and a daughter whose relationship is drifting apart. The father has been making his own decisions about raising his child in the midst of trouble, unaware of how deeply his emotions shape her world.

BUY TICKETS FOR FEB 12

BUY TICKETS FOR FEB 14

Filmmakers expected to attend









**Intrepid**
Feb 11, 7:30 PM
Feb 13, 7:45 PM

# Short Bursts
# Try Not to Freak Out
96 min

**This collection of genre-bending, out-of-this-world films will have your heart racing at maximum speed and your mind going a mile a minute. Seat belts won't be provided, so you'll need to hold on tight.**

**The Palace** - 9 mins
Director: Lauren Marsden
At a secret forest hideout, suburban teen Dani meets up with her crush Jayde, only to discover an otherworldly presence has joined them.

**Halfway Haunted** - 17 mins
Director: Sam Rudykoff
A tenant in a haunted house teams up with a ghost to stop a real estate developer from demolishing the home they share.

**Honey Honey** - 20 mins
Director: Emma Eng
When Josie's amateur scam goes instantly wrong, she has to juggle her smarmy mark and gullible boyfriend.

**Friends Like Us** - 11 mins
Director: Ray Savaya
A dark comedic thriller where two sitcom actors have to re-enact a new version of their show's series finale after a crazed fan keeps them hostage. Taking place in a unique backdrop of a comedic television set, "Friends Like Us" contrasts a fictional world through the eyes of an individual who blurs it with reality.

**Platanero** – 15 mins
Director: Juan-Sébastien Hernandez Francoeur
Two brothers of Haitian origin, live in a shantytown in the Dominican Republic. Undocumented, they face relentless violence and the ever-present threat of deportation. Gran-Frè looks after Ti-Frè by working on a banana plantation and resorting to petty theft. But when the plantation denies him work, desperation forces him to take Ti-Frè along to steal what they need to survive. That night, under the glow of a full moon, a mysterious beast prowls in the shadows of the banana trees.

**Bread Will Walk** – 11mins
Director : Alex Boya
A devoted sister flees with her brother, a benevolent, bread-turned zombie. A mob pursues, mouths agape. Streets twist into mazes, reason dissolves, hunger reigns. Can love defy appetite?

**Less Than Nothing** – 13 mins
Director : David Michán Hernandez & Reagan Henderson
In a world where luxury comes at a hidden cost, a wealthy woman discovers the dark truth behind her opulent lifestyle, forcing her to confront the true value of her privilege and the sacrifices made for her comfort.

BUY TICKETS FOR FEB 11

BUY TICKETS FOR FEB 13

Filmmakers expected to attend









**Intrepid**
Feb 11, 5:00 PM
Feb 12, 7:30 PM

# Short Bursts
# You Heard it Here F1RST

84 min

**Mesmerizing stories by Indigenous artists and tales that need to be told. You heard it here F1RST, and it won't be the last you hear from these artists.**

**The Last Battle** - 27 mins,
Director: Jeremy Williams
The St'at'imc and Tsilhqot'in First Nations once made war, but have buried the hatchet and come together to honour their warriors and ongoing collective struggle to protect their lands.

**Wolverine and Little Thunder: An Eel Hunting Adventure** – 9 mins, Director: Alan Syliboy
*Wolverine and Little Thunder* is a heartwarming tale of bravery, problem-solving, and the enduring bond between the Mi'kmaq and one of their most sacred food sources, rooted in traditional knowledge and deep cultural connection to land and water.

**Tthebatthie: The People at the Head of the Rapids** – 20 mins, Director: Ryan David Lee Dickie
In Canada's north, an Indigenous community reflects back on a monumental land claim agreement it settled with the government of Canada, asserting their treaty, and reclaiming their sovereignty as a Nation.

**Little Orange Bandages** – 4 mins
Director: Kile M. George
An experimental short film presenting a spoken word performance by a young Indigenous person expressing their frustration with the lack of meaningful reconciliation.

**In the Wake of Our Ancestors** – 24 mins
Director: Dustin McGladrey
*In the Wake of Our Ancestors* invites audiences to participate in the strength of Ancestral knowledge and the hope for a shared tomorrow. "What does it mean to be Indigenous right now?" Through personal stories and a shared tapestry of traditions, the series paints an inspiring portrait of individuals and communities weaving together the threads of past, present, and future.

BUY TICKETS FOR FEB 11

BUY TICKETS FOR FEB 12

Filmmakers expected to attend




## Roxy Theatre
Feb 15, 7:30 PM

**CineVic**
102 min

**CineVic is an artist-run society supporting independent filmmakers and media artists on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands with accessible programming, affordable equipment, professional development resources, and cinematic exhibition opportunities since 1991. We are always thrilled to continue a shared history alongside the Victoria Film Festival with our annual screening of local short films, showcasing the diversity of work created by our amazing members – from comedy to drama, documentary, sci-fi, music video, and even some celluloid experimentation.**

**The Ballad of Sloth Shot** - 20 mins.
Director/Producer/Writer - Simon Rasmussen
A sharp-shooting cowgirl must stop a time-travelling supervillain from destroying her town.

**Quiet Witness** - 8 mins.
Director/Producer - Johnny Cole
Writer - Sarah Nicole Faucher
A hard-of-hearing child experiences an international tragedy through the lens of her quiet family home in Canada.

**Clusterf*ck** - 6 mins.
Director/Producer/Writer - Dave Goossen
You just can't trust anyone anymore.

**Mammoth** - 5 mins.
Director/Producer/Writer - Rachel Evans
A theory of dreams for the dogs of Dawson City, filmed on 16mm, processed with tundra flora, colored and scratched by hand.

**Buddy Check for Jesse** - 17 mins.
Director/Producer - Michael Anthony
After losing his incredible son, Jesse Short-Gershman, at age 22 to suicide, Dr. Stu Gershman made a decision: to talk openly about mental health in an unlikely place — the locker room.

**MEMBA x Łaszewo - Things I Do 4U** - 3 mins.
Director - Shiraz Higgins
Thought it'd be us two.

**BOSS SAINT B - Shapeshifter** - 3 mins.
Director/Producer - Lesley Marshall
Animated bouffant baddie.

**Up In The Spotlight** - 25 mins.
Producers/Writers - Marianne Yelle, Atticus Cohen-Yelle
Quill, a young man with a difference and a unique perspective attempts to enter the world of acting through the quirky Izza Grande Acting Academy.

**Knots** - 15 mins.
Director/Writer - Justin F. Lee
Producer - Brian Globus
While restoring her derelict sailboat, an old mariner unleashes a storm from the past.

BUY TICKETS

Filmmakers expected to attend 120

2026

6-15 February

# SPECIAL EVENTS

- Art Exhibit
- In Conversation With... Sheila McCarthy & Mary Walsh
- Toaster Rocket Cinema
- FilmCAN
- Destroyed Cinema
- Jammies & Toons
- Opening Gala Film & Party
- Springboard



# ART EXHIBIT

## FEB 7-14 | 1:00 PM - 7:00 PM | @1200 BROAD STREET

**Faz-Cade by Elias Lazenby**

The Animatronic Arcade is a surreal, retro-inspired art installation that merges nostalgia with unease. Visitors step into a distorted arcade where reality “glitches,” and animatronics awaken in unexpected ways. The space evokes the eerie charm of abandoned game halls, blending vibrant neon aesthetics with unsettling mechanical life.The installation explores themes of nostalgia, decay, and the uncanny—inviting audiences to question the boundaries between play and fear, technology and life from a Gen Alpha perspective. Medium: Refurbished animatronics, retro arcade props, multimedia screens.

**Artist Bio**

Elias is a young emerging creator whose work focuses on bringing fictional creatures and characters into real, physical motion. Influenced by childhood puppet fascination, the creations of Jim Henson, and classic practical-effects films like *Gremlins* and *Alien*, he builds animatronic figures from found materials such as old toys, thrift-store parts, and cardboard. His pieces are designed to provoke curiosity through unexpected movement and stylized designs that transform familiar objects into something alive. Elias recently showcased his work at the Brackendale Art Gallery Haunted House, where audience reactions fueled his passion for building even more ambitious creations.

# IN CONVERSATION WITH...

## FEB 7 | 3:30 PM | THE VIC THEATRE

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS

The VFF goes all in with elbows up as we present three of Canada's greatest gems, Sheila McCarthy in conversation with Richard Crouse. Following the live-on-stage conversation, we present the BC premiere of their latest film, ***Dancing on the Elephant***.

Sheila McCarthy



Decades after establishing herself as one of Canada's great actresses in ***I've Heard the Mermaids Singing***, Sheila McCarthy is having a long-earned international moment with her riveting performance opposite Rooney Mara, Claire Foy, Jessie Buckley, Judith Ivey and Frances McDormand in Sarah Polley's ***Women Talking***. She and her castmates were the recipients of the Robert Altman Award for Best Ensemble at the 2023 Film Independent Spirit Awards.
Other recent film credits include starring roles in Helen Shaver's psychological thriller ***Happy Place, All the Lost Ones*** with Douglas Smith, and ***Dancing on the Elephant***.



Richard Crouse

Richard Crouse is a prominent Canadian film critic, broadcaster, and author who has been a fixture in Canadian entertainment media for decades. He is the regular film critic for CTV News Channel.




Sheila McCarthy and Mary Walsh play Nora and Edna - two women who form an unlikely alliance over a shared distaste for their nursing home. Soon they are plotting one last rebellious adventure.

# TOASTER ROCKET

Back for its second year, you can find Toaster Rocket Cinema in a new location - the Print Hole at 712 Cormorant Street. This unique pop-up theatre is the spot to watch quirky films in an intimate, casual setting.

Late night on Saturdays, things get spooky as the venue transforms into the “Terrifying Toaster” for new horror films. Starting at Victoria’s “midnight” (10:00 PM), you’ll want to be there for *Lucid* on February 7 and *Hunting Matthew Nichols* on February 14. What better way to say I love you.






# FILMCAN

**What is 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.

**What happens to the films?**
The winning films, based on a juror selection, will screen at the 32nd Annual Victoria Film Festival in front of the feature film, *Space Cadet* at *Jammies and Toons*.

### 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.

**Junior Category (Grade 8 and under):**
2 Tickets for a Whale Watching Tour courtesy of Prince of Whales.

Entries are open every October – late December

## YOUTUBE PLAY LIST CLICK HERE

# 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**

# DESTROYED CINEMA



Destroyed Cinema is a local events company and film distributor focused on DIY, underground, genre, and off-beat movies founded by Nick Workman and JP Meldrum in October 2024.

Destroyed is excited to host three Music + Movie nights in collaboration with Victoria Film Festival, as well as a Microcinema Market.

**Microcinema Market, 11 AM - 5 PM, Feb 10th - 12th**

Destroyed's Microcinema Market is a pop-up in Market Square (Unit #29) offering goods from local creatives, vendors, and collectors alongside a free DIY microcinema screening cult gems all day -- Art, knick-knacks, zines, jewelry, DVDs, and other local gems galore!

**Film & Events:**

**Levers @ Market Square,** 560 Johnson St #41, Victoria, BC
6:00 PM, Wednesday Feb 11th, with Pet Retina [Noise-Rock], Sharon [Prog-Punk/Post-Hardcore], and Griefer [Noise]

**Foreigner @ Little Fernwood,** 1923 Fernwood Rd, Victoria, BC 6:00 PM, Friday Feb 13th, with Savy [Indie/Pop Punk] and Niloo [Singer-Songwriter/Persian Pop]

**CAMP @ United Commons**, 932 Balmoral Rd, Victoria, BC
6:00 PM, Sunday Feb 15th, with Ghost Darling [Post-Punk/Alt Rock]




## Jammies & Toons

**The Vic Theatre**
Feb 15, 11:30 AM

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?

# SPACE CADET

Canada | 2025 | Kid Koala | 86 min

Based on the award-winning graphic novel by Canadian musician Kid Koala and wonderfully animated by Canadian artists in Toronto and Montreal, *Space Cadet* is a dialogue-free film for the whole family about the connection between an ambitious space traveler and the robot who raised her.

For as long as she can remember, Celeste has been obsessed with space. Her mom worked as an astronaut, exploring new frontiers while Celeste stayed at home in the care of her thoughtful Guardianbot. This robot raised Celeste as her mother dedicated her life to her career, sparking Celeste's passion for galactic quests. When she grows up, Celeste preps for her first solo space expedition, leaving her Guardianbot behind with only tender memories of their past to keep him company. As Celeste is completing her first mission to harvest extraterrestrial plant samples, her Guardianbot's technical systems begin to shut down. Will Celeste be able to make it back to Earth before the robot's memory files are gone forever? - *JC*

**Cozy + Family + Emotional**

golf for kids
FERNWOOD
COFFEE COMPANY
VICTORIA, BC, CANADA
NOFRILLS

Movie TRAILER

BUY TICKETS

# Opening Gala

**32nd Victoria Film Festival**

BUY TICKETS

## FEBRUARY 6 | FILM AT 6:30 | PARTY AT 9:00 PM

## PARTY @ AUTONOMOUS 2110 STORE ST, (POWERHOUSE BUILDING)

Step into the 1950s that just went off it's meds. Grab a 'soda', shake it off, and roam through a cosmic-sized space filled with cocktails, local eats, games of questionable merit, and the occasional psychic twitch. Yahtzee? Mandatory. Dominoes? Absolutely. And who said 'milkshake' – must have been us! Berry, Presley and Charles will be there in spirit. They're prepared. Are you?

**Opening Film: Holy Days**
Three rebellious nuns (Miriam Margolyes, Jacki Weaver, Judy Davis) and a determined young Māori boy (Elijah Tamati) go on a wildly funny, heart-tugging road trip across New Zealand in search of miracles, justice, and a way home. When a fierce snowstorm derails their plans, this unlikely crew must summon faith, grit, and each other to survive a journey. **QuirkD**

Hi Five Chicken
A&W
Barrelhouse Brine
10 Acres
Dirty Laundry Winery
Autonomous Furniture
Pedersen's Event Rentals
spinnakers Brewpub & Guesthouses
Tofino Distillery



# Opening Film: Holy Days

## FEBRUARY 6 | FILM AT 6:30 PM
## THE VIC THEATRE 808 DOUGLAS ST.


SPRINGBOARD
FEBRUARY 6, 7, 8 - 2026
ONE ON ONE MEETINGS
INDUSTRY PANELS
MASTERCLASS
NETWORKING

# SPRINGBOARD – INDUSTRY PROGRAM

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

## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6

**The Vic Theatre | 808 Douglas St**

### GETTING STARTED - Free talks

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM | TELUS STORYHIVE Session for Indigenous Creators

2:30 PM – 3:30 PM | Breaking In: Paths to a Career in Film

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7

**The Union Club - 805 Gordon St.**

### 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM | ONE ON ONE MEETINGS

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

### 12:15 PM – 1:15 PM | NETWORKING LUNCH

### 1:30 PM – 4:15 PM | INDUSTRY PANELS

1:30 PM | The State of the Market

2:30 PM | Co-Pros & Collaboration: Finding Partners

3:30 PM | Behind the Camera: How Crew Shape Great Films

### 4:30 PM – 5:15 PM | MEET THE PROGRAMMERS

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7

**1200 Broad Street**

### 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM | COCKTAIL RECEPTION

## SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8

**Prince Of Whales Boat | 812 Wharf St**

### 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM | NETWORKING BRUNCH

## SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8

**The Union Club - 805 Gordon St.**

### 1:00 PM – 3:30 PM | MASTERCLASSES

1:00 PM | From Pitch to Screen: Financing and Distributing Impactful Docs

2:30 PM | The Art of the Tight Cut: Editing for Clarity, Rhythm and Producers

# PRICES

**Full SpringBoard Pass** — $365.00 + TAX
Opening Gala Film & Party Feb 6th, three one-on-one meetings, All Panels, Meet the Programmers, Lunch Feb 7th at the Union Club, Cocktail Reception Feb 7th, Five Regular Film Tickets, Networking Brunch Feb 8th, One Masterclass Feb 8th

**Full-day Pass Feb 7th** — $190.00 + TAX
Three one-on-one meetings, All Panels, Meet the Programmers, Lunch at the Union Club, Cocktail Reception

**All Panels Pass** — $85.00 + TAX
All Panels, Meet the Programmers, Cocktail Reception Feb 7th

**Masterclass Documentary** — $49.00 + TAX
Masterclass, Cocktail Reception Feb 7th

**Masterclass Editing** — $49.00 + TAX
Masterclass, Cocktail Reception Feb 7th

**Student All Panels Pass** — $20.00 + TAX
All Panels, Meet the Programmers, Cocktail Reception Feb 7th (ages 19 – 30 with student ID)

**Lunch Feb 7th at the Union Club** — $40.00 + TAX
Limited spots are available.

***CineVic and CMPA-BC Members receive a 10% discount on the Full SpringBoard Pass, Full-day Pass and All Panels Pass. Please contact CineVic and CMPA-BC for discount codes.**

TELEFILM CANADA

creativeBC
BRITISH COLUMBIA
Supported by the Province of British Columbia

IATSE 891 LOCAL 891

CMPA
Canadian Media Producers Association
BC Producers Branch

UBCP/ACTRA

ICG 669

THE UNION CLUB OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

PRINCE of WHALES
WHALE & MARINE WILDLIFE ADVENTURES

FERNWOOD
COFFEE COMPANY
VICTORIA, BC, CANADA

YYJ

PERFECT MATCH
WEDDING

DEER & DOUGH
BAKERY CAFE

SCAN THE QR-CODE TO BUY PASSES AND FOR MORE INFO ON THIS YEAR'S INDUSTRY EVENT.

**BUY PASSES**
**CLICK HERE**

## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6

**The Vic Theatre | 808 Douglas St**

# GETTING STARTED - Free talks

## 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM | TELUS STORYHIVE Session for Indigenous Creators

Everything you need to know about working and submitting projects to Telus STORYHIVE.

**Moderated by Barbara Todd Hager**



**Erin Shaw |** Program Manager

### TELUS STORYHIVE

Erin Shaw is a Program Manager at TELUS STORYHIVE, where she champions emerging filmmakers and content creators through STORYHIVE programs. Erin provides hands-on mentorship and production support to first-time creators as they bring their stories to the screen.

Erin honed her craft in broadcast journalism at CBC and Global BC, where she developed a keen eye for compelling visual narratives. Her work spans documentary, corporate storytelling, and audio production, giving her a versatile understanding of the medium. Prior to STORYHIVE, she worked as a content and communication strategist at the University of British Columbia, where she helped shape how stories are told in educational spaces.

# FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6

**The Vic Theatre | 808 Douglas St**

## 2:30 PM – 3:30 PM | Breaking In: Paths to a Career in Film

Every film career begins somewhere; this panel explores paths for aspiring actors and crew to enter the industry.

**Moderated by Sano - IATSE 891**

**UBCP/ACTRA**

ICG 669

IATSE LOCAL 891



**Serina Ram** | Membership Services and Trainee Coordinator

### ICG 669

has worked for the International Cinematographers Guild, Local 669 (ICG 669) since 2021 and is ICG 669's Membership Services and Trainee Coordinator, and your go-to contact for all things membership-related. From joining the union to upgrading classifications, Serina guides members through each step of the process. She also oversees the Trainee Program, supporting the next generation of ICG 669 members as they begin their careers in the film industry and work toward full membership.



**Heather Doerksen** | Actress

has been working steadily in film, television, stage and voice for the past 20 years. She received her BFA degree in Theatre from SFU and has since accumulated over 90 acting credits on her IMDB page, including Sasha Kaidanovsky in Academy Award winner Guillermo del Toro's "Pacific Rim", Gryla in "Chilling Adventures of Sabrina", and the mother vampire Michaela in "Van Helsing". Her voice credits include Princess Leia in "Lego Star Wars", the orange ninja Skylor in "Ninjago", the clumsy pterosaur Hegan in Dreamworks' "Gigantosaurus", and Kristen in the Emmy award winning series "Molly of Denali". Most recently, she was seen on stage with local Victoria company Atomic Vaudeville in their show "Doppelgänger", and just wrapped up shooting tv series Blue Skies which will be airing later this year.



**David Parfit** | Music Composer

David Parfit is an award-winning composer with a Master in Music Technology degree from New York University and a passion for exploring non-traditional sounds. Known for his easy-going demeanour, technological expertise, and creative approach, David has created scores that have been heard around the world in theatres, on TV (CBC, BBC, ABC, PBS, ESPN, National Geographic, and others), in podcasts, and all over the Internet.



**Chris Fraser** | Grip & Rigger

Chris Fraser is a Vancouver-based Grip and Rigger whose journey in film and live events began through a high school co-op in 1998. Starting out in Victoria, Chris learned the ropes and steadily progressed from a clumsy technician to a seasoned professional who values learning, growth, and sharing knowledge.



**Tamara Tulloch**

### IATSE LOCAL 891

Tamara Tulloch has been a proud member of IATSE Local 891 since 2014, with a career in film and television production that began in 2010. Her credits include a range of notable projects such as G*racepoint, The Boy, Reginald the Vampire, The Mountain Between Us*, and most recently *Easton Prep (Crew Girl).*

# SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7

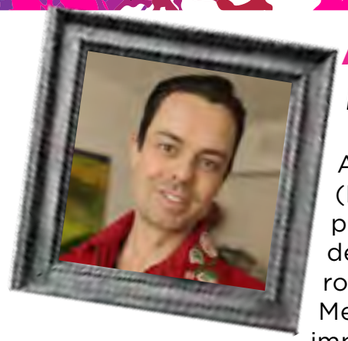
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**Adam Garnet Jones -** Director of TV Content and Special Events, APTN
**Brad Danks -** CEO of OUTtv
**Brian Hamilton -** Partner and CEO Omnifilm Entertainment
**Debora Patz -** English Program Business Affairs, Telefilm
**Erin Shaw –** Program Manager, TELUS STORYHIVE
**Jennifer Chen -** Head of Studios, VP of Content, Channel Zero Studios
**Jessica La Grassa -** Director of Sales & Distribution, Vortex Media
**Ken Tsui -** Production Executive, TELUS originals
**Kevin Eastwood –** Producer, Optic Nerve Films
**Kim Ball -** Chief Content & Communications Officer, SuperChannel
**Lauren MacKinlay -** Development Executive, Scripted, Original Programming, Bell Media
**Mathew Parry -** Manager, Creative Industry Programs, Creative BC
**Michelle McCree -** Executive In Charge of Production, CBC Docs
**Michele Wilson -** International Sales & Festivals Coordinator, Epic Pictures Group
**Robin Smith -** CEO of Blue Ice Docs Inc - Director of Programming for the Whistler Film Festival
**Sarah Jane Flynn -** Director of Independent Production & Business Affairs, Knowledge Network
**Tanya Mason -** Head of Sales and Digital Strategy, Photon Films
**Tanya Preyde** - Producer, Gorgeous Mistake Productions



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

### APTN

Adam Garnet Jones is Cree-Métis from Amiskwacîwâskahikan (Edmonton, AB) 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. Recently, he has been particularly proud of his work on *Little Bird, Bones of Crows* and the live national broadcast commemorating the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Adam is also a novelist and beadworker.



**Brad Danks** | CEO of OUTtv

### OUTTV

Brad Danks, J.D. is the CEO of OUTtv Network Inc. and OUTtv Media Global Inc. (collectively OUTtv), the world's leading streamer and commissioner of LGBTQ2S+ content. A former entertainment lawyer with a distinguished practice representing U.S. and international studios, broadcasters, distributors, and financiers, Brad joined OUTtv as COO in 2006 and became CEO in 2016 with a mandate to globalize the business.

Since then, he has led OUTtv's international expansion, securing strategic partnerships across AVOD, SVOD, and FAST platforms in more than 14 countries. These include Amazon, Apple, Roku, YouTube Prime Channels, Comcast (Xumo), Samsung, PlutoTV, Google TV, Freevee, Vizio, Tivo+, Plex, Netgem, the UK's Freeview, South Africa's eMedia, Allente in Scandinavia, and Chung Wa in Taiwan.



**Brian Hamilton |** Partner and CEO

## OMNIFILM ENTERTAINMENT

Brian Hamilton is the CEO of Omnifilm Entertainment, one of BC's leading independent producers and distributors of television series and feature films. He moved to BC in 1992 as a freelance editor and over the last three decades has become a passionate advocate for the provincial film & television industry. Brian produced his first project in 1994, a TV pilot that was then ordered to series through a unique "audience vote" process where viewers sent in their votes by fax. Soon after, he joined Omnifilm Entertainment, where he has executive produced more than 90 television and feature projects in both scripted and non-scripted genres, becoming a partner in 2001 and CEO in 2025. In addition to providing strategic oversight, Brian leads Omnifilm's original development and service production slates and actively seeks out coproductions with local and international partners. Brian is the founding Chair of the Pacific Screenwriting Program, a non-profit that provides professional development and mentorship to BC-based screenwriters. Brian serves as co-Vice Chair of the national board of the CMPA and is a past chair of CMPA's BC Branch, in addition to serving on multiple other non-profit boards and advisory committees in the film/TV sector. Brian holds a BASc in Systems Design Engineering from the University of Waterloo and received his television training from the Banff Centre for the Arts.



**Debora Patz |** English Program Business Affairs

## TELEFILM

Deborah Patz: (she/her) is an Investment Analyst for feature film on the Business Affairs team at Telefilm Canada. Her 25 years of experience at Telefilm in all sectors (feature film, TV, digital media), and prior experience in production since the mid-80s gives her a depth of knowledge on finance and production at all budget levels. She is a keen behind-the-scenes supporter of Canadian storytellers telling their stories for Canada and the world. She works out of the Vancouver office and respectfully on the unceded lands of the Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of the Kwantlen and Katzie peoples.



**Erin Shaw |** Program Manager

## TELUS STORYHIVE

Erin Shaw is a Program Manager at TELUS STORYHIVE, where she champions emerging filmmakers and content creators through STORYHIVE programs. Erin provides hands-on mentorship and production support to first-time creators as they bring their stories to the screen.

Erin honed her craft in broadcast journalism at CBC and Global BC, where she developed a keen eye for compelling visual narratives. Her work spans documentary, corporate storytelling, and audio production, giving her a versatile understanding of the medium. Prior to STORYHIVE, she worked as a content and communication strategist at the University of British Columbia, where she helped shape how stories are told in educational spaces.



**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.



**Jessica La Grassa |** Director of Sales & Distribution

## VORTEX MEDIA

Jessica La Grassa is a seasoned film distribution executive with years of experience across domestic and international markets. She has held key roles at leading companies including eOne, Mongrel Media, and Vortex Media, where she currently serves as Director of Sales & Distribution. With a PMP certification and a strong foundation in marketing, sales, and acquisitions, Jessica combines strategic insight with a passion for championing independent film.



**Ken Tsui |** Production Executive

## TELUS ORIGINALS

Ken Tsui is a Production Executive for TELUS originals, a Western Canadian documentary and docuseries funding program that focuses on impactful health, environmental, community and connectivity stories. Our films reach audiences on TELUS Optik TV, Paramount+, CBC, TVO and at film festivals including Hot Docs, VIFF, IMAGINEnative, Doc NYC, BFI Flare, Big Sky and Tribeca Film Festival. Recent TELUS originals titles include *House Special, Curl Power, Ari's Theme, Aitamaako'tamisskapi Natosi: Before the Sun* and *Handle with Care.*

Beyond his role at TELUS originals, he remains an active member of Vancouver's film community with his work as a Curator for the Vancouver International Film Festival, a Board Member of The Cinematheque and was the former Board Chair of The Documentary Media Society (DOXA Film Festival).



**Kevin Eastwood |** Producer

## OPTIC NERVE FILMS

Kevin is an award-winning writer, director and producer. Most recently he wrote, directed and produced The Society Page, for which he won a 2024 Leo Award for Best Direction. 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). His credits as a producer include the documentaries *Part of the Pack* (VFF 2022), *Haida Modern* (VFF 2020), and *Eco-Pirate: The Story of Paul Watson*, the feature films *Preggoland, Fido,* and *The Delicate Art of Parking* (VFF 2005), and the CBC series *The Romeo Section*. Kevin is currently the showrunner on *Wildfire*, a new documentary series for Knowledge Network and serves on the board for DOC Northwest and the Vancouver International Film Festival.

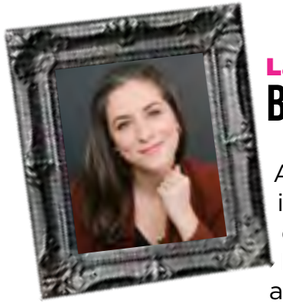


**Kim Ball |** Chief Content & Communications Officer

## SUPERCHANNEL

Kim joined Super Channel in 2012 and currently serves as the company's Chief Content & Communications Officer. In this role, Kim leads the programming strategy for the company's suite of four channels (Fuse, Heart & Home, Vault, Quest) including pre-licensing of Canadian productions and acquisition of foreign content. Her portfolio also includes oversight of media relations, programming publicity, corporate communications and industry outreach.

Prior to joining Super Channel, Kim was Director of Marketing, Publicity & Promotion at 20th Century Fox / Incendo Television Distribution for over a decade. She holds a Bachelor of Commerce Degree from McMaster University and a post-grad certificate in PR from Humber College. She is also a graduate of the WIFT-T Media Leadership Program and Vice-Chair of the Foundation for WIFT-T Board.



**Lauren MacKinlay |** Development Executive, Scripted, Original Programming,

## BELL MEDIA

As a Development Executive for Bell Media, Lauren works with independent production partners, writers, and creatives on the development of new scripted projects for Bell Media's Original Programming slate. Prior to joining Bell Media, Lauren's career as an award-winning producer included tenures at Neshama Entertainment and Sphere Media, with producing credits on *THE WAY HOME* (Hallmark), *TRANSPLANT* (CTV/NBC), *BAD BLOOD* (Netflix), *19-2* (CTV/Acorn) and more. She was a co-founder of the non-profit organization, Women On Screen, and in September 2022, she was named one of ten women on the Canadian Power List Of Women in Film.



**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.



**Michelle McCree |** Executive In Charge of Production,

## CBC DOCS

Michelle McCree is an Executive In Charge of Production at CBC Docs. The team commissions broadcast hours, features and documentary series. In addition to select features and series, Michelle oversees The Passionate Eye, which is home to an internationally-renowned playlist of documentaries from Canada and around the world. Recent projects include Breaking Idol, Lilith Fair: Building a Mystery, Yintah, Don't Come Upstairs, Snow King: From Olympian to Narco and Black Lives: Untold Stories. Prior to joining CBC, Michelle worked across genres as a director, writer and producer.



**Michele Wilson |** International Sales & Festivals Coordinator

## EPIC PICTURES GROUP

Originally from the Canadian prairies, Michele moved to Montreal to study Costume Design for Film and Television. Her love of film drew her to North America's largest genre festival, Fantasia International Film Festival where she worked for five years. As the Director of Hospitality, she had the opportunity to meet many film industry professionals which is where she was first introduced to the Epic Pictures team. After moving across Canada to Vancouver and she joined Epic Pictures Group as an International Sales Agent. Michele focused on sales in Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe and traveled to film markets around the world. Since the pandemic, she has settled into Victoria with her family and her primary focus has shifted from sales and travel to festival submissions and acquisitions. Michele has an eye for original, stirring content, and enjoys being a part of a team who shares her love of cinema, and the challenges of the ever-changing market.

Epic Pictures is an independent producer, financer and distributor of genre films, including *EXTRA ORDINARY, SEA FEVER, DARK NATURE, BEEZEL* and *LUCKY.*

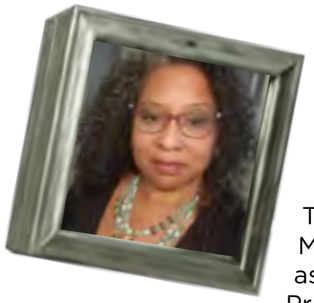


**Robin Smith |** CEO

## BLUE ICE DOCS

Robin Smith is currently the Director of Programming for the Whistler Film Festival and the CEO of Blue Ice Docs Inc. – a distribution and equity funding company dedicated to funding, acquiring and distributing the best non-fiction work from around the world.

Robin brings a strong background of over 30 years of film, video and arts-related work to the marketplace having worked at a variety of distribution companies including The National Film Board of Canada, Alliance Films, Lions Gate Film Entertainment, Seville Pictures, Capri Releasing and levelFILM. Robin has recently also been brought aboard to advise a variety of companies such as the Vancouver International Film Festival and Vortex Media. Robin also programmed the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema for its first 10 years of operation.



**Tanya Mason |** Head of Sales and Digital Strategy

## PHOTON FILMS

Tanya Mason is the Head of Sales and Digital Strategy at Photon Films Media but previously worked at Sinking Ship Entertainment starting as a Distribution Coordinator in 2021, before also taking on Consumer Product Manager role in 2022. Prior to that she served as Manager of Content Programming at Landmark Cinemas Canada, Business Development Manager at Sony Pictures Entertainment and Sales Director at Paramount Vantage.



**Sarah Jane Flynn |** Director of Independent Production & Business Affairs,

## KNOWLEDGE NETWORK

Sarah Jane is a leading media executive with two decades of experience in developing, producing and programming hit content for television and digital platforms. Sarah Jane has held senior roles in large production companies and at Canada's leading broadcasting entities. She is currently leading commissioning for BC's Knowledge Network as Director of Independent Production & Business Affairs.



**Tanya Preyde |** producer, writer and story editor

## GORGEOUS MISTAKE PRODUCTIONS

Tanya Preyde is a Nova Scotian producer, writer and story editor. She produced the narrative feature DANCING ON THE ELEPHANT, the feature documentary THE HANDS THAT FEED US for Super Channel and the short documentary, THE LAST WALT, for CBC. She is in production on the feature doc, A LIFETIME IN PHOTOBOOTHS, a co-production with EyeSteelFilm.

# SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7

**The Union Club - 805 Gordon St.**

## INDUSTRY PANELS

## 1:30 PM | The State of the Market

Distribution Companies and broadcasters discussing the current state of the market.

**Moderated by Kevin Eastwood**



**Ken Tsui |** Production Executive

### TELUS ORIGINALS

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**Michelle Morris |** CEO

### LILY PICTURES

Michelle Morris is a feature film producer and the founding CEO of Lily Pictures, based in Vancouver. She is a former Chair of the CMPA BC Council and currently serves on the CMPA National Feature Film and Member Development Committees.

With a background as a DGC First Assistant Director, Michelle has built a 30+ year career across more than 70 projects worldwide, including films such as A Map of the World with Kathleen Kennedy and Frank Marshall, and Guillermo del Toro's Mimic. She has earned international recognition for feature films including Red Snow, The Beehive, FSM, Conceiving Clara, and most recently Holy Days, the Victoria Film Festival Opening Gala Film.



**Jessica La Grassa |** Director of Sales & Distribution

### VORTEX MEDIA

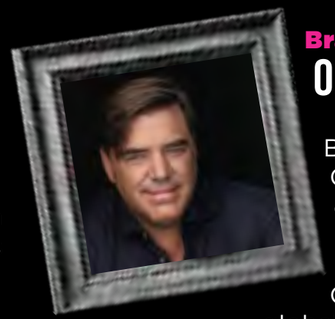
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## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7

**The Union Club - 805 Gordon St.**

## INDUSTRY PANELS

## 2:30 PM | Co-Pros & Collaboration: Finding Partners

This panel explores partnerships and co-productions as a way of moving projects forward.

**Moderated by Kevin Eastwood**



**Brian Hamilton** | Partner and CEO

### OMNIFILM ENTERTAINMENT

Brian Hamilton is the CEO of Omnifilm Entertainment, one of BC's leading independent producers and distributors of television series and feature films. He moved to BC in 1992 as a freelance editor and over the last three decades has become a passionate advocate for the provincial film & television industry. He joined Omnifilm Entertainment, where he has executive produced more than 90 television and feature projects in both scripted and non-scripted genres, becoming a partner in 2001 and CEO in 2025. In addition to providing strategic oversight, Brian leads Omnifilm's original development and service production slates and actively seeks out coproductions with local and international partners.



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**Niobe Thompson** | Director-Producer

### HANDFUL OF FILMS

Two decades after leaving academic research to make documentaries, Niobe Thompson has become one of Canada's most successful science and nature filmmakers. His latest feature documentary – Hunt for the Oldest DNA – won the 2025 Emmy Award for Outstanding Science and Technology and was named one of PBS NOVA's "Top 10 Best Documentaries" over its 50-year history. Niobe's broadcast films include The Great Human Odyssey, The Perfect Runner, Equus – Story of the Horse, Vital Bonds and Carbon – The Unauthorized Biography. He produced the Sundance-winning short film Fast Horse, and he is a three-time Emmy nominee and winner of the Canadian Screen Award for Best Science and Nature Documentary. Niobe is the founder of Victoria-based Handful of Films.

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7

**The Union Club - 805 Gordon St.**

ICG 669 | IATSE LOCAL 891

## INDUSTRY PANELS

### 3:30 PM | Behind the Camera: How Crew Shape Great Films

Discover how cinematographers, editors, and set designers elevate a film's quality.

**Moderated by Kevin Eastwood**



**Taize Powell |** Artist, Videographer

My name is Taize Powell. I am a father, husband, artist, and entrepreneur. I am currently working as the Paint Coordinator for Season 1 of Easton Prep. I come from an art and sports background with formal training as a decorative painter. After overcoming several early life challenges as a young man, I found my way to the film industry in 2012 and have been a member of IATSE 891 since 2014. During my time in the union, I have worked in all the categories within the paint department. Over the last six years most of my time has been spent in leadership roles, coordinating several shows and now coordinating *Easton Prep*. I am very passionate about scenic artistry as well as the amazing people I work with side by side in our film industry every day. I am proud to have worked with the IATSE 891 human rights department on several initiatives over the years combatting racism and sexism. I'm committed to supporting Diversity growth and development of our beautiful local film industry.




**David Bercovici-Artieda |** Cinematographer

is a seasoned Cinematographer with an illustrious career spanning over three decades. As a cherished member of esteemed organizations such as the International Cinematographers Guild in both the USA and Canada, the Canadian Academy of Film and TV, the Canadian Society of Cinematographers, and the Directors Guild of Canada, David's influence in the world of cinematography is profound.



**To be Confirmed...**

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7

**The Union Club - 805 Gordon St.**

### 4:30 PM – 5:15 PM | MEET THE PROGRAMMERS

Festival programmers outline what they're looking for and offer insights for filmmakers.

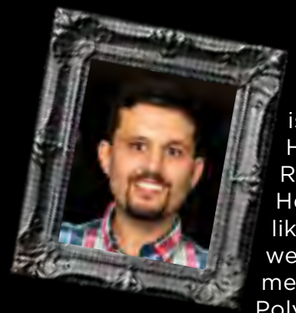


**Robin Smith** | Director of Programming

### WHISTLER FILM FESTIVAL

Robin Smith is currently the Director of Programming for the Whistler Film Festival and the CEO of Blue Ice Docs Inc. – a distribution and equity funding company dedicated to funding, acquiring and distributing the best non-fiction work from around the world.

Robin brings a strong background of over 30 years of film, video and arts-related work to the marketplace having worked at a variety of distribution companies including The National Film Board of Canada, Alliance Films, Lions Gate Film Entertainment, Seville Pictures, Capri Releasing and levelFILM. Robin has recently also been brought aboard to advise a variety of companies such as the Vancouver International Film Festival and Vortex Media. Robin also programmed the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema for its first 10 years of operation.



**John Debono** | Programmer

is a Toronto-based documentary programmer and arts administrator. He was previously the programming manager for the JAYU Human Rights Film Festival and worked with the TIFF Docs team. He has also worked as an accessibility consultant with organizations like Hot Docs and Inside Out Toronto, helping to make film festivals a welcoming place for people living with disabilities. In between, he is mentoring young film students at the University of Toronto and Humber Polytechnic College.

**Kathleen Mullen** | Programmer



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. Currently she programs with Seattle International Film Festival, Victoria Film Festival, Vancouver Latin American Film Festival, and Frameline. For 9 years, Kathleen was the Artistic Director leading the programming and operations Seattle Queer Film Festival (SQFF). Other festivals Kathleen works with include the Whistler Film Festival and Skoden Indigenous Film Festival at Simon Fraser University. Kathleen has also programmed for Toronto International Film Festival, Hot Docs, Vancouver Queer Film Festival, Inside Out Toronto LGBT Film Festival, Planet in Focus, Vancouver International Film Festival, and Boston Museum of Fine Arts.



**Jacob Crepeault** | Programmer

### TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

is a Toronto-based film programmer, writer, and creator of the film publication GLEANING. Since 2019, Jacob has programmed films at several Canadian film organizations such as TIFF Cinematheque, Inside Out 2SLGBTQ+ Film Festival, Pleasure Dome, and Victoria Film Festival. Jacob has programmed films by and about legendary artists like Charli XCX, William Basinski, and Kenneth Anger.

## SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8

**The Union Club - 805 Gordon St.**

# 1:00 PM – 3:30 PM | MASTERCLASSES

### 1:00 PM | From Pitch to Screen: Financing and Distributing Impactful Docs

**Moderated by Kevin Eastwood**

Join Robin Smith, CEO of Blue Ice Docs, for insights into the world of documentary filmmaking—from funding and co-productions to navigating broadcasters and streamers and reaching local and global audiences.



**Robin Smith**
CEO | Blue Ice Docs

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### 2:30 PM | The Art of the Tight Cut: Editing for Clarity, Rhythm and Producers

Join Daria Ellerman to discover how smart editorial decisions can strengthen your film's narrative and meet producers' expectations. A practical session for filmmakers looking to sharpen their vision and unlock the full potential of their rough cut.



**Daria Ellerman**
Storyteller / Editor

IATSE | LOCAL 891

Daria (she/her) is a storyteller with decades of experience editing television series, MOWs, documentaries and feature films. Her credits include the Netflix Christmas movie *My Secret Santa*, feature films *Meditation Park* and *The Birdwatcher* and hundreds hours of episodic television including *Virgin River, Wild Cards, My Life With the Walter Boys, Alert* and most recently the critically acclaimed *Allegiance.* Daria's versatility comes from the variety of projects she has been involved in across genres and platforms including 140 episodes of sitcom that included a live audience. Daria has been nominated for 10 Leo Awards, A DGC Award, a Southhampton International Film Festival Award, a Gemini Award and a CCE Award as picture editor and won 5 Leo Awards for her work on the television series *Virgin River, Malibu Rescue, Take Two* and *The Collector.*

VICTORIA FILM FESTIVAL

# Thank you!