



MARYLAND FILM FEST

MAY 8-12, 2019

Festival Lead-Up Events

Join us for this exciting complement of events leading-up to the 21st annual Maryland Film Festival, composed of Festival alums and beloved stalwarts.

MAY 2 – 6, 2019



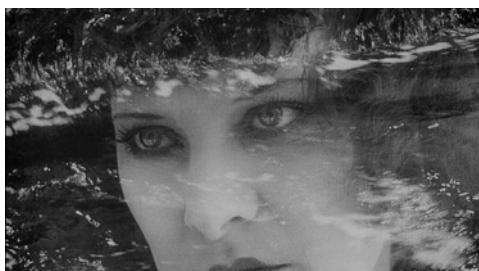
SWEATY EYEBALLS PRESENTS

Tux and Fanny

THURSDAY, MAY 2 • 7:00 PM

DIRECTOR/HOST *Albert Birney*

A feature film about two friends who get into all sorts of wild adventures. From getting stuck inside a computer to getting carried away by a gust of wind, you never know what will happen next.



THE SNF PARKWAY PRESENTS

Alloy Orchestra Live Score

FRIDAY, MAY 3 • 7:00 PM

FILM *Cœur Fidèle (The Faithful Heart)*

The Alloy Orchestra returns to the Parkway with a new, original live score to a classic silent film, *Cœur Fidèle (The Faithful Heart)* — an innovative tale of love, violence and resignation.



CONTEMPORARY WOMEN FILMMAKERS

Madeline's Madeline

SATURDAY, MAY 4 • 7:00 PM • FREE!

DIRECTOR/HOST *Josephine Decker*

Maryland Film Festival-favorite Josephine Decker—a filmmaker said to be ushering in a “new grammar of narrative” by *The New Yorker*—returns to the Parkway to host her latest feature, starring Molly Parker and Miranda July.



Festival Lead-Up Events

MAY 2 – 6, 2019



MAKING CINEMA MATTER IN BALTIMORE

Masterclass with Director Josephine Decker

SUNDAY, MAY 5 • 10:00 AM • FREE!

HOST *Josephine Decker*

A *FREE* artist-led workshop and screening series featuring distinguished visiting filmmakers.



BALTIMORE WOMEN'S MEDIA ALLIANCE PRESENTS

Shakedown

MONDAY, MAY 6 • 7:00 PM


DIRECTOR/HOST *Leilah Weinraub*

The story of Los Angeles' black lesbian strip club scene and its genesis. Owned and operated by women, underground and illegal in nature, the club is the darker, faster iteration of this dance culture.



THU MAY 9	PARKWAY ONE	PARKWAY TWO	PARKWAY THREE	MICA FALVEY HALL	MICA GATEWAY	MICA LAZARUS STUDIO CENTER
4:00	4:00 PM BALTI- SHORTS	4:15 PM MIDNIGHT TRAVELER	4:30 PM DONBASS	5:00 PM LOST HOLIDAY	4:45 PM RAY & LIZ	5:00 PM NARRATIVE SHORTS
5:00						
6:00						
7:00	7:00 PM MILES DAVIS: BIRTH OF THE COOL	6:45 PM BEING IMPOSSIBLE	7:15 PM ONE MAN DIES A MILLION...	7:30 PM FRANCES FERGUSON	7:15 PM ANBESSA	7:30 PM ALTERED STATES SHORTS
8:00						
9:00		9:00 PM TITO				
10:00	10:15 PM GREENER GRASS		9:45 PM MICKEY & THE BEAR	9:45 PM PREMATURE	9:45 PM RECORDER	10:15 PM COMEDY SHORTS
11:00		11:15 PM WTF SHORTS				
12:00						
1:00						

 First Screening

 Only Screening

mdfilmfest.com

 Second Screening

 Panel

[#MdFF2019](https://twitter.com/MdFF2019)

 Third Screening

 Family-Friendly

[@MdFFParkway](https://twitter.com/MdFFParkway)



FRI MAY 10	PARKWAY ONE	PARKWAY TWO	PARKWAY THREE	MICA FALVEY HALL	MICA GATEWAY	MICA LAZARUS STUDIO CENTER	PANELS
11:00							
12:00	11:45 AM MIKE WALLACE IS HERE	11:15 AM MANTA RAY	11:00 AM DONBASS	11:15 AM RAY & LIZ	11:30 AM LOST HOLIDAY	11:30 AM CHARACTER STUDY SHORTS	12:00 A
1:00							
2:00	2:15 PM ONE MAN DIES A MILLION...	1:45 PM CHARGED SPACES SHORTS	1:30 PM THE HOTTEST AUGUST	1:45 PM FIG TREE	1:45 PM COLD CASE HAMMAR- SKJÖLD	2:15 PM DOC SHORTS	1:30 B
3:00							3:00 C
4:00							@IMPACT HUB
5:00	4:45 PM FRANCES FERGUSON	4:30 PM SWARM SEASON	4:00 PM RECORDER	4:00 PM THE MOUNTAIN	4:45 PM MICKEY & THE BEAR	4:45 PM ANIMATED SHORTS	
6:00							
7:00	7:00 PM John Waters Presents MOM & DAD	7:15 PM CHANCE ENCOUNTERS SHORTS	6:30 PM OTHER MUSIC	6:45 PM AMERICAN FACTORY	7:15 PM PREMATURE	7:15 PM UNORTHO- DOCS SHORTS	
8:00							
9:00							
10:00	9:45 PM WHO LET THE DOGS OUT	10:00 PM WTF SHORTS	9:00 PM HAM ON RYE	9:45 PM BOY HOWDY!	9:45 PM QUEEN OF LAPA	9:45 PM COMEDY SHORTS	
11:00							
12:00			11:30 PM IN FABRIC				
1:00							



First Screening



Only Screening

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Panel

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SAT MAY 11	PARKWAY ONE	PARKWAY TWO	PARKWAY THREE	MICA FALVEY HALL	MICA GATEWAY	MICA LAZARUS STUDIO CENTER	PANELS
10:00	★ 10:00 AM BIG BAD FOX & OTHER...						
11:00		11:00 AM DOC SHORTS	11:15 AM MANTA RAY	11:00 AM COLD CASE HAMMAR- SKJÖLD	11:30 AM BOY HOWDY!	11:30 AM UNORTHO- DOCS SHORTS	12:00 D
12:00	12:00 PM DECADE OF FIRE						1:30 E
1:00							
2:00	★ 2:15 PM WELL GROOMED	1:30 PM CHARGED SPACES SHORTS	1:45 PM BEING IMPOSSIBLE	2:00 PM FOR SAMA	1:45 PM PAHOKEE	2:00 PM DIVERGING FORMS SHORTS	3:00 F
3:00							@IMPACT HUB
4:00							
5:00	4:45 PM THE MOUNTAIN	4:15 PM QUEEN OF LAPA	4:00 PM SWARM SEASON	4:30 PM BALTI- SHORTS	4:30 PM MIDNIGHT TRAVELER	4:30 PM NARRATIVE SHORTS	
6:00							
7:00		6:45 PM SOUTH MOUNTAIN	6:30 PM ANBESSA	7:15 PM MIKE WALLACE IS HERE	7:00 PM AMERICAN FACTORY	7:00 PM CHARACTER STUDY SHORTS	
8:00	7:30 PM THE ART OF SELF- DEFENSE						
9:00		9:15 PM ALTERED STATES SHORTS	9:00 PM HAM ON RYE				
10:00	10:15 PM GREENER GRASS			9:45 PM IN FABRIC	10:00 PM KNIVES & SKIN	9:45 PM WTF SHORTS	
11:00			11:30 PM TITO				
12:00							
1:00							

 First Screening

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SUN MAY 12	PARKWAY ONE	PARKWAY TWO	PARKWAY THREE	MICA FALVEY HALL	MICA GATEWAY	MICA LAZARUS STUDIO CENTER	PANELS
10:00							
11:00							12:00 G
12:00	11:15 AM DON'T BE A DICK ABOUT IT	11:30 AM CHANCE ENCOUNTERS SHORTS	11:45 AM FIG TREE	11:15 AM MILES DAVIS: BIRTH OF THE COOL		11:30 AM DIVERGING FORMS SHORTS	1:30 H
1:00							
2:00	1:30 PM GOSPEL ACCORDING TO AL GREEN	2:15 PM OTHER MUSIC	2:00 PM THE HOTTEST AUGUST	★ 2:15 PM WELL GROOMED	2:00 PM SOUTH MOUNTAIN	2:00 PM ANIMATED SHORTS	3:00 I
3:00							@IMPACT HUB
4:00							
5:00	4:15 PM BEFORE YOU KNOW IT	4:45 PM PAHOKEE	4:30 PM KNIVES & SKIN	4:45 PM WHO LET THE DOGS OUT	4:45 PM DECADE OF FIRE	4:30 PM COMEDY SHORTS	
6:00							
7:00							
8:00	7:00 PM Closing Night: LUCE						
9:00							

 First Screening

 Only Screening

mdfilmfest.com

 Second Screening

 Panel

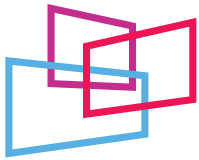
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The Maryland Film Festival is proud of its continued partnerships with supporters worldwide and in our community who have made our 21st annual event possible.

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SPECIAL THANKS

The William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund

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Festival Map ON INSIDE BACK COVER →



Photo Credit: Jason Putsché Photography, LLC

Welcome to the 21st annual Maryland Film Festival!

Whether you are joining us for the first time or come frequently to MdFF, you have an opportunity over the next five days to experience more than 100 films and exchanges with some of the most talented emerging, established and iconic filmmakers of our time.

Festivals, whether outdoors, indoors, seasonal, year-round, in a variety of formats, locations, lengths and timeframes, are long-established, centuries old celebrations of community—gathering people together; connecting us with our most cherished traditions; and providing ways for us to share our stories and explore the boundaries of creativity.

Festivals in the arts have provided an important platform for artists and their collaborators to present a wide array of creative expressions and experiences, offering audiences and communities an introduction to new, risk-taking work; established, indigenous and emerging voices; and cultural and historic events and icons. For more than two decades Maryland Film Festival has fulfilled this role by uniting a diverse array of storytellers and their stories with audiences from Baltimore and beyond, making it one of the most important stops on the festival circuit for independent film.

On behalf of the MdFF staff, our Board of Directors and festival team, I want to dedicate this festival to our founding executive director, Jed Dietz, who stepped down from his role last fall. With his bold, audacious vision and sheer force of will, Jed brought this festival into being and established our year-round home for film at the SNF Parkway. Jed, we thank you for your extraordinary contributions and commitment to filmmaking in Baltimore and to filmmakers everywhere. You have inspired us to do even more to support the independent film movement.

I look forward to participating with you in the screenings and events taking place over the days ahead and give my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the MdFF staff, volunteers, our sponsors and partners, whose passion for film and deep love of Baltimore ensures this festival is accessible for thousands of you to enjoy every year.

Sandra L. Gibson
Interim Executive Director



Photo Credit: Jason Putsché Photography, LLC

As I enter my 12th festival with MdFF, I can't help but reflect on the decade-plus journey I've had with the organization, working my way from seasonal employee that first year, to Director of Programming of both the Parkway Theatre and the MdFF. This time has afforded me the opportunity to grow with the organization as it moved from annual four-day event, to year-round world class arthouse theater with a lauded five-day film festival.

Over the years I've had the honor and pleasure of working with many wonderful folks whose passion and dedication has propelled us forward—the warm and zealous Jed Dietz, whose love of film and drive to bring a world-class film festival to Baltimore is the reason we're sitting here today. I also worked side by side with the brilliant programmer Eric Allen Hatch, whose devotion to cinema, discerning tastes and incredible film writing helped to guide and elevate the festival to the next level. Before Eric, it was Skizz Czyzk, a tireless champion of indie film who helmed the programming ship, gifting the festival an at once fun, rigorous, and uniquely Baltimore sensibility that established its reputation among filmmakers as one of the best fests going. There are countless others that have helped the festival along its journey with their dedication and passion for film. Unfortunately, I can't list them all here, but I can say that we as an organization and I as a programmer certainly wouldn't be here without them. I want to take a moment to thank them all for their incredible efforts and commitment over the years.

In my second year as Director of Programming, I find myself as excited as I was that very first year I worked with the festival in 2008—eagerly anticipating the opportunity to share an incredible slate of films that offer a diverse complement of viewing experiences. There's plenty here for those who want to fully immerse themselves and be challenged and changed by their viewing experiences at MdFF, and also plenty for those that just wanna have fun, dipping a toe in the film festival waters. We have the distinct pleasure of continuing to present incredible new work from those we've tracked over numerous festivals, and vibrant new voices, all of whom are doing their part to push film forward and challenge the status quo. This slate—comprised of those many outstanding and prescient voices—represents the culmination of countless hours of work, countless cups of coffee and a very countable, small-but-dedicated team of folks that love to share their passion for film with you.

I am beyond thrilled to present our 2019 MdFF lineup and share this joyous five-day celebration of the artform with you. Thank you for all you do to support MdFF, and as the late, great film critic Roger Ebert would say, "I'll see you at the movies!"

Cine-cerely,
Scott Braid, *Director of Programming*



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2018–2019 Supporters of MdFF

Donors to MdFF support the annual Maryland Film Festival and the year-round SNF Parkway, enabling us to bring film, filmmakers, and audiences together. We thank our generous donors for their ongoing support.

If you would like to make a tax deductible contribution, please visit: mdfilmfest.com/donate

\$100,000 +

Anonymous

Johns Hopkins University

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Young Audiences of Maryland



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Steve Schwartzman

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Maryland Filmmaker Fellowship

UNDERWRITTEN BY THE CHARLESMEAD FOUNDATION

Since 1997, each year MdFF has awarded pre-production funding to a script developed at the Sundance Labs. Thanks to this early-career support for emerging filmmakers, 16 films have been made and distributed, often launching a distinguished film career. Marielle Heller's *The Diary of a Teenage Girl* was released in 2015. Jeremiah Zagar's *We the Animals* premiered at Sundance and showed at the Maryland Film Festival in 2018. Olivia Newman's *First Match* premiered at SXSW in 2018 and is now available on Netflix. MdFF is proud to support filmmakers and their artistic visions.



Friends of MdFF

GOLD MEMBERS

Stephanie Czyryca	Andrew Schuleman	Jodi Schuleman	Connie Wheeler
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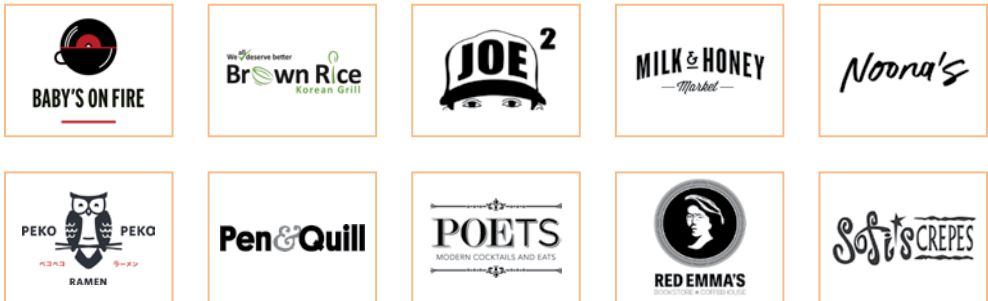
SILVER MEMBERS

Gregory Bergey	Martha Glenn	Qayum Karzai	Jerry Schaefer
Marc Chidester	Tad Glenn	Fred Lazarus	Barry Vaughan
Suzanne Cohen	Al Honick	Jonna Lazarus	Sevil Yasar
Francesca Compagnone	Patricia Karzai	Paula Rome	

BRONZE MEMBERS

Taunya Banks	Daniel Cronin	Jack Hollon	Jackie Noller
Don Bartling	Dorothy Cronin	Jane Hollon	Gary Plotnick
Jay Berg	Michele Dibbern	Terry Hollon	Leslie Plotnick
Thomas Blanpied	Jed Dietz	James Hood	Michele Pucak
Frank Bruno	Julie Dietz	Jacob Hovind	Siddartha
Yolanda Bruno	Robert Dietz	Roslyn Jaffe	Sanathanamurthy
Brad Cartwright	Richard Fairman	Susan Katzenberg	Brian Schmidt
Joel Cohen	Steven Foster	Ann Koch	Emily Sienicki
Norma Cohen	Sheila Frank	David Koch	Douglas Stone
Jim Coleman	Joel Gaydos	Donna Ledbetter	Paul Tramonte
Ruth Coleman	Bethan Haaga	Christine Matias	Andrew Whiteside
Anita Criswell	Laura Hall	Kenneth Moore	Tricia Whiteside
			Lauren Williford

PARKWAY PERKS PARTNERS



Friends of MdFF Membership

Join Friends of MdFF and support our mission to bring films, filmmakers, and audiences together. Members enjoy special access at our annual festival, year-round discounts at the Parkway and nearby dining partners, and members-only events and materials!

Support the work of the Maryland Film Festival by joining Friends of MdFF today! Stop by the Information Table at Festival HQ and sign up for a new membership to get the best MdFF experience. We look forward to meeting you!

	\$1500 GOLD	\$500 SILVER	\$250 BRONZE	\$135 DUAL	\$75 SINGLE
YEAR-ROUND PARKWAY PERKS					
Discounts on Tickets (locked at 2017 prices)*	X	X	X	X	X
Members-Only Events	X	X	X	X	X
Exclusive Preview Screenings	X	X	X	X	X
Early Admittance & Early Tickets to Special Events	X	X	X	X	X
Advance All-Access Pass & Online Ticket Sales	X	X	X	X	X
Free Screening Vouchers**	10	6	4		
Private Blu-Ray Screening for up to 50 Guests	X				
Discounts on Event Rentals	X				
Parkway Perks Discounts at Local Businesses***	X	X	X	X	X
Discounts on Merchandise	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
FESTIVAL ACCESS					
Exclusive Sneak Preview Event	2 +6 GUESTS	2 +4 GUESTS	2 +2 GUESTS	4	2
Discounts on All Festival Tickets (locked at 2017 prices)****	X	X	X	X	X
Discounts on All-Access Passes	X	X	X	X	X
Access to Filmmaker Lounge	4	2			
Program Recognition	LOGO/ NAME	NAME	NAME		
Website Recognition	LOGO/ NAME	LOGO/ NAME	NAME		

* Friends of MdFF receive \$3 off regular films and \$1 off regular matinees at the Parkway. Special events not included.

** Screening Vouchers are valid for regular and matinee Parkway films. Special events not included.

*** Friends of MdFF must show valid membership card to receive discounts at Parkway Perks Partners.

**** Friends of MdFF receive \$4 off regular price admission to Festival films. Specially priced events not included.

Opening Night Shorts

82 MINUTES

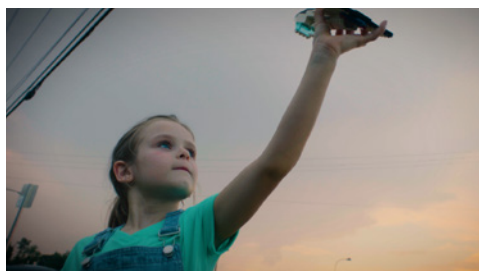
The Maryland Film Festival has devoted its Opening Night program to short films for the last 15 years! The program has been host to many a great filmmaker, from its first edition, which featured fantastic shorts from the likes of *Mr. Show/Better Call Saul* star Bob Odenkirk, *Full Metal Jacket* star Matthew Modine, and legendary animator Bill Plympton, among others.

Later editions have seen the MdFFF among the earliest adopters of such fantastic filmmaking talents as Bobcat Goldthwait, Madeleine Olnek, David Lowery, Ali Asgari, Riley Stearns (who's back this year with his second feature), Augustine Frizzell, Lauren Wolkstein, Frances Bodomo, Pippa Bianco, Bridey Elliott, Yen Tan, and Terence Nance, who have all gone/are going on to bigger projects, building off the momentum they established with their incredible short films.

This year's collection of shorts promises to be our most vibrant yet, with a cross section of filmmakers who are already making waves and who we're certain will continue to contribute to the cinema dialogue in a big way. Featuring the Best Documentary Short at Sundance 2019, a beautifully crafted World Premiere, a searing U.S. Premiere, a hilarious dark comedy featuring a bizarre final request, wunderkind Helena Howard from last year's *Madeline's Madeline* as beleaguered worker trying to get home after her shift, and the homecoming of an International Film Festival Rotterdam selection from Baltimore's own Marnie Ellen Hertzler.

Sit back, relax and let this fantastic collection of short films engage, engross, and enlighten you.

-Scott Braid, *Director of Programming*



DRYER

14 MINUTES • USA • WORLD PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *Connor Hurley*

On a summer day, a group of unattended kids pass on a dangerous initiation ritual, incapable of understanding its life-changing potential. *Dyer* is a film about the instances that remind us of life's fragility, the vicious cycle of bullying, and the magic and horror of childhood.



Father Figurine

18 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Matt Kazman*

When the wealthy patriarch of a family dies, they discover a rather unusual request in his will...

Opening Night Shorts

82 MINUTES



Ghosts of Sugar Land

21 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Bassam Tariq*

In Sugar Land, Texas, a group of young Muslim American men ponder the disappearance of their friend "Mark," who is suspected of joining ISIS.



Hi I Need To Be Loved

11 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Marnie Ellen Hertzler*

Actors from Craigslist audition for a film by reading spam emails from a teleprompter. Three are cast: A Dancer, A Chef, and A Milkmaid. Is it poetry or malware?



JIM

7 MINUTES • USA • U.S. PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *Christopher Black*

In an overwhelmingly white classroom, an isolated Black middle school student struggles with the pressure of being the only Black voice during an uncomfortable in-class reading activity.



Twist

11 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Aly Migliori*

No choice but to walk home alone, Hannah sees an opportunity for a ride, but others see an opportunity in her.

Balti-Shorts

105 MINUTES

Each year the Maryland Film Festival features a number of incredible Baltimore-made shorts and features across its many programs. This year is no exception with a variety of very strong local shorts peppered across our dozen or so programs. What is exceptional about this year is that we found ourselves compelled to make the first ever Balti-Shorts program, comprised of five incredible Baltimore-made films (3 documentaries and 2 narratives).

Our inaugural Balti-Shorts program finds these five exceptional films in conversation with one another about our beloved city. Looking at issues great and small that impact the lives and livelihoods of those living in Charm City, the Balti-Shorts program showcases the incredible diversity of talented artists that choose to tell Baltimore's story and call our fair city home.



BodyMore

15 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Darren Mallett*

BodyMore follows activist, Carrie Cook, as she returns home to Baltimore to protest the police in a brutal killing and a wild party sets off a series of intimate betrayals that complicate her quest for justice.



Deserted

20 MINUTES • USA • WORLD PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *Emily Stubb*

In the world's wealthiest country, access to healthy food should be a basic human right. In Baltimore City, many neighborhoods offer limited nutritious options for residents. This film attempts to raise awareness through the stories of people working to make a difference.

Balti-Shorts

105 MINUTES



Finding Phoebe

20 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Sade Clacken Joseph*

A 17-year-old girl struggles to find her way in the streets of West Baltimore, while balancing the toxicity of an unstructured home and falling in love for the first time.



Gun Show

30 MINUTES • USA • WORLD PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *Richard Chisolm*

After assembling mock assault rifles out of everyday found objects, sculptor David Hess goes on the road to explore America's obsession with guns. *Gun Show* is a film about the power of art to advance a conversation.

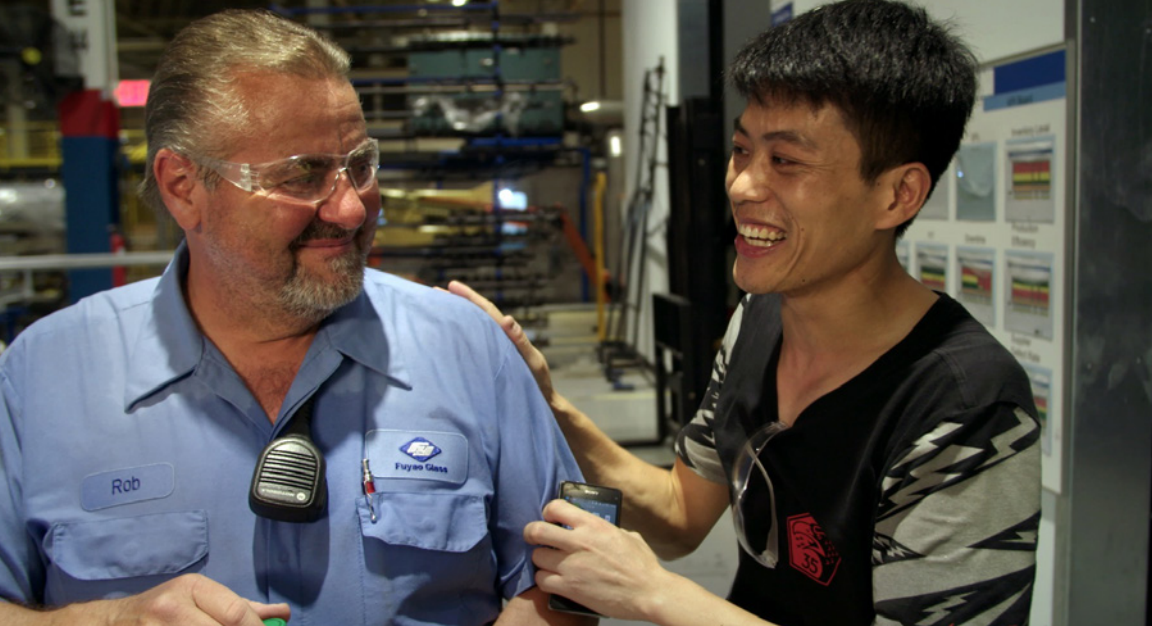


SAGE

20 MINUTES • USA • WORLD PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *Gabe Dinsmoor*

How one woman is changing the violence prevention movement one homicide at a time.



FRI. MAY 10, 6:45 PM MICA FALVEY HALL • SAT. MAY 11, 7:00 PM MICA GATEWAY

American Factory

USA • 2019 • 115 MINUTES • ENGLISH AND MANDARIN WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

DIRECTOR *Steven Bognar and Julia Reichert* • **HOST** *Producer Jeff Reichert*

DOCUMENTARY SUBJECTS *The employees and management of Fuyao Glass America*

SYNOPSIS The Great Recession of 2008 nearly signaled the death knell of auto manufacturing in the U.S. rust belt. The small town of Moraine, Ohio was hit particularly hard when their GM assembly plant was one of three GM facilities closed, with little warning, that very year. The Moraine closure evaporated the remaining 1,000 jobs from a plant that had once employed 3,000, and for the better part of the next 6 years, that facility sat vacant—a painful reminder of livelihood lost and a spiraling economy.

The dark cloud of those austere days looked as though it might never lift when an unlikely investor stepped in with a plan to get the plant working again. In 2014, Chinese company Fuyao Glass purchased the plant and sought to retrofit it to produce automotive safety glass and bring thousands of jobs back to the region. Fueled by the prospect of work and renewed hope for the region's economic future, beleaguered locals lined up for first crack at the new wave of imported jobs.

The honeymoon is short lived however, as the expectations of extreme efficiency and quick profitability on the part of Chinese management, clash with the realities of American regulatory concerns and a beaten and bruised local labor force returning to work for a smaller paycheck and greater demands on their time.

American Factory is one of those rare documentaries that creates an indelible portrait of the particular moment in which it's made, while also revealing something more essential about the world in which it exists. Emmy winning filmmaking team, Julia Reichert and Steven Bognar expertly explore the wild culture clash that ensues when this distinctly Chinese company sets up shop in the heart of middle America. (Scott Braid)

BIOGRAPHY *Jeff Reichert* is a filmmaker, critic and distributor who lives in Brooklyn. His award-winning films include *Gerrymandering* (Tribeca '10), *Remote Area Medical* (Full Frame '13), and *This Time Next Year* (Tribeca '14). He is the co-founder and co-editor-in-chief of the NEA-sponsored film journal *Reverse Shot*, which is the in-house publication of the Museum of the Moving Image, and has written for numerous publications, including *Film Comment*, *Filmmaker Magazine*, and *IndieWire*.



THU. MAY 9, 7:15 PM MICA GATEWAY • SAT. MAY 11, 6:30 PM PARKWAY 3

Anbessa U.S. PREMIERE

ETHIOPIA, ITALY, USA • 2019 • 85 MINUTES • AMHARIC WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

DIRECTOR/HOST *Mo Scarpelli*

DOCUMENTARY SUBJECTS *Asalif Tewold, Alem Sebisibe Ayitenfsu*

SYNOPSIS Outside Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, at the border where one of Africa's largest condominium developments abuts farmlands over a thousand years old, the ever-inventive Asalif dwells in an earthen-walled tool shed with his mother. Observing him through the perceptive lens of documentarian Mo Scarpelli (MdFF 2015's *Frame by Frame*), who began her lasting relationship with the ten-year-old when the identical complexes were still new and uninhabited, we discover a boy with unwavering curiosity and imagination. Adorning a costume mane, he transforms into Anbessa ("lion" in Amharic) and searches for ways to fend off the march of "progress" that threatens to displace him and his mother, again.

On most days, Asalif sports a pointy blue hoodie and splits his time between the refuse piles at the neighboring condos and the hyena-filled mountains opposite. Venturing between the two locales, Asalif stops occasionally for conversations with birds, to eavesdrop on bar chatter, or to get to know children from the condominiums on one side and the farms on the other. What quickly becomes apparent, is the significance of his status between. Among the new and old, Asalif utilizes his engineering skills to resurrect and repurpose discarded tech—stunning inventions from the grounds of ancient tradition, but minor ones in the shadow of globalism's manufactured offerings. As modern development encroaches, he must shed the mane of Anbessa and confront the world as Asalif.

It is MdFF's immense honor to present the U.S. Premiere of this stunning coming-of-age documentary, which vibrantly mirrors its subject's imagination with a creative approach to non-fiction filmmaking. With *Anbessa*, Scarpelli has crafted an urgent and caring portrait of those cast aside by the processes of modernization. (Mitchell Goodrich)

BIOGRAPHY *Mo Scarpelli* is a Director and Cinematographer of non-fiction cinema. Her work explores human identity and the forces that inform, conflict, or construe it. Mo's debut feature *Frame By Frame* World Premiered at SXSW before screening at 100+ other festivals around the world. Mo's work has been published with *The New Yorker*, the BBC, CNN's *Great Big Story*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Guardian* and *Africa Review*.



SAT. MAY 11, 7:30 PM PARKWAY 1

The Art of Self-Defense

USA • 2019 • 104 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTOR/HOST *Riley Stearns*

CAST *Jesse Eisenberg, Alessandro Nivola, and Imogen Poots*

SYNOPSIS Riley Stearns' emergence as one of the most promising and unique directors working today, should come as no surprise to those that have been following him at MdFF over the past 6 years. His grimly hilarious 2013 breakout short film, *The Cub* and his acclaimed feature debut, the acerbic comedy-drama *Faults* (both of which played the festival) established him as one of the most exciting up-and-coming talents in indie film. With his sophomore effort, *The Art of Self-Defense*, Stearns cements his status as auteur, continuing to create a cinematic universe all his own.

Stearns finds his film's center in Casey Davies (Jesse Eisenberg), a nebbish accountant and a virtual cipher whose existence has little to no impact on those around him. He plods along in his day-to-day, harassed by his co-workers and ignored by those from whom he seeks attention. His only true friend is his adorable dachshund. Late one evening, returning from a grocery run to pick up dog food, Casey is brutally assaulted. Although he survives this severe beating, he is shaken to his core and left fearing for his safety. To reclaim his sense of security, he decides he must arm himself, but complications arise at the gun store and the instant gratification of a new firearm is not to be had. Walking home dejected, Casey stumbles across a rundown dojo in a vintage storefront. Inside he finds a charismatic leader known as Sensei (Alessandro Nivola), whose spell he quickly falls under. Intrigued by this masculine role model and the opportunity to leave his victimhood behind, Casey signs up and quickly ingratiates himself to Sensei. As he immerses himself in the world of the dojo, Casey begins to suspect that the Sensei and his acolytes may not be quite the exemplars that they seem.

The Art of Self-Defense is a darkly comic and at times disturbing exploration of what lies at the extremes of machismo, a logical terminus which finds reassurance in conquest and security in violence. Stearns' film thrusts us into the abyss of toxic masculinity, exploring the shortcomings of aggression as a life strategy and managing to find plenty of uncomfortable laughs along the way. (Scott Braid)

BIOGRAPHY *Riley Stearns* grew up in Pflugerville, TX. His short *The Cub* played at Sundance and his feature debut *Faults* premiered at SXSW, before being released theatrically. He is a purple belt in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu under Renzo Gracie black belt Shawn Williams.



SUN. MAY 12, 4:15 PM PARKWAY 1

Before You Know It

USA • 2019 • 98 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTOR *Hannah Pearl Utt* • **HOSTS** *Hannah Pearl Utt and Co-writer/Actor Jen Tullock*

CAST *Hannah Pearl Utt, Jen Tullock, Judith Light, Mandy Patinkin, Mike Colter, and Alec Baldwin*

SYNOPSIS Superb performances drive this dry-witted comedy about the disorganized lives of a family struggling to revive the failing performance theater tucked away in the basement of their Greenwich Village brownstone. During the stressful run-up to an opening night, adult sisters Rachel and Jackie suddenly find out their long deceased mother is, in fact, alive and starring in a successful soap opera. As the sisters' lives catapult into an existential disarray—on par with the crises of any worthwhile soap—director Hannah Pearl Utt shapes a playfully circuitous dramedy, wherein sisters, daughters, and mothers all come of age at drastically different stages in their lives. Featuring the excellently utilized Alec Baldwin, Mandy Patinkin, and Judith Light, *Before You Know It* boasts plentiful charm, right up to its final quips.

Has-been playwright and patriarch Mel (Patinkin) is obsessed with mounting his newest script. A script that manic performer Jackie (Tullock) touts as brilliant, while the restrained and control-seeking Rachel (Utt) feels it could use some substantial revisions. When an abrupt turn of fate puts the play on hold and causes the sisters to look into the theater's accounting, they unearth the truth about their mother, Sherrell (Light), and her second life. Then, with Jackie immediately racing to confront their estranged mother, Rachel is forced to follow behind, expressing hesitancy at every stage, before becoming enraptured by the talented mother she missed out on in her youth. With the sisters busy courting the attention of Sherrell, Jackie's 12-year-old, Dodge (Oona Yaffe with a performance that rivals any of the adults') seeks guidance from her aloof therapist (Baldwin) and tries out an alternative family unit.

Utt's debut feature is a showcase of fantastic performances not to miss. Each cast member tidily affords their character an individual wit and humor, resulting in an ensemble, and a film, easy to love. (Mitchell Goodrich)

BIOGRAPHY *Hannah Pearl Utt* is best known for directing and starring in the series *Disengaged*, which she created and wrote with Jen Tullock. Utt and Tullock's short film *Partners* premiered at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival. *Before You Know It*, which received a 2018 Adrienne Shelly Foundation Women Filmmakers Grant, marks Utt's feature directorial debut.





THU. MAY 9, 6:45 PM PARKWAY 2 • SAT. MAY 11, 1:45 PM PARKWAY 3

Being Impossible

VENEZUELA, COLOMBIA • 2018 • 97 MINUTES • SPANISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

DIRECTOR *Patricia Ortega*

CAST *Lucía Bedoya, Belkis Avilladares, and María Elena Duque*

SYNOPSIS Growing up in a world that offers strong incentives to fit into societal, sexual and gender “norms” forces many to feel conflicted over their bodies and sexual identities. Many more than will ever admit it publicly, grow up confused and left with the feeling that they don’t fit into strict one-or-the-other categories placed upon them by a society hellbent on enforcing “norms”—and often meting out brutal punishments for deviation from them. Only in recent years have discussions come to the fore on how this conflict unnecessarily burdens (or worse destroys) people, diverting lifelong journeys of self discovery into a lifelong traumatic defense of one’s right to be themselves. Even though those that are born somewhere between gender poles make up roughly 2% of the population, many societies still treat intersexuality as a problem to be surgically altered out of existence wherever possible.

For Ariel (Lucía Badoya in an incredible performance of smouldering intensity) something doesn’t feel quite right. As she has her first sexual experiences with a penis-having partner, she finds that intercourse is often painful and that it offers little in the way of fun or fulfillment. Repeated visits to her OB/GYN yield little satisfaction until one day the doctor lets fly that Ariel may have had a surgery early in life to “correct a problem.” Upon hearing this news she confronts her bedridden mother and finds out the truth of her past and a life-altering decision her mother and her doctors made before Ariel was able to speak for herself. Now she must decide whether to continue to live as she has, facing the world as a young woman (which sadly has its own burdens) or facing the societal consequences of living a life openly non-binary.

Patricia Ortega’s sharp and evocative feature film which premiered in October at Spain’s Valladolid Seminci is truly one of the discoveries of the year. Beautifully lensed, expertly directed and featuring an incredible anchor performance, *Being Impossible* offers audiences an urgent glimpse into the life of a young person already struggling to find her place in a harsh world, whose journey has been forever altered by the social pressure to conform her physical being to one of the gender extremes. (Scott Braid)





SAT. MAY 11, 10:00 AM PARKWAY 1

The Big Bad Fox and Other Tales

PRESENTED BY SWEATY EYEBALLS

FRANCE • 2017 • 83 MINUTES • ENGLISH • RATED G

DIRECTOR *Benjamin Renner and Patrick Imbert*

SYNOPSIS Family-friendly film seekers take note: Building on last year's Generation Parkway presentation of *The Land Before Time*, the Maryland Film Festival is proud to host **Sweaty Eyeballs Animation's** presentation of *The Big Bad Fox and Other Tales*, a Saturday morning cartoon for festival-goers of all ages!

From the creators of the Academy Award®-nominated *Ernest & Celestine* comes another hilarious, heartwarming tale of animal misfits destined to become a classic.

The countryside isn't always as calm and peaceful as it's made out to be, and the animals on this farm are particularly agitated: a fox who mothers a family of chicks, a rabbit who plays the stork, and a duck who wants to be Santa Claus. If you think life in the country is a walk in the park, think again! Directors Benjamin Renner and Patrick Imbert adapt Renner's own acclaimed graphic novel into a delirious, delightful triptych of interlocking stories, with a pacing and visual spontaneity that harkens back to classic Looney Tunes shorts and slapstick two-reelers. But underneath the gags (and there are plenty of them), the three stories offer a sensitive and beautiful portrayal of family and the anxieties of modern life. (GKIDS)

Sweaty Eyeballs is an animation series curated by Phil Davis (Towson University). In 2019, Sweaty Eyeballs expands its annual invitational into a three-day juried festival of the world's most cutting-edge, quirky, and boundary-pushing animation being made today. The Sweaty Eyeballs Animation Festival takes place October 18-20 at the historic SNF Parkway and is a collaboration with the Maryland Film Festival. For more information, visit: sweatyeyeballs.com





FRI. MAY 10, 9:45 PM MICA FALVEY HALL • SAT. MAY 11, 11:30 AM MICA GATEWAY

Boy Howdy! The Story of Creem Magazine

USA • 2019 • 73 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTOR *Scott Crawford* • **HOSTS** *Scott Crawford and Editor Patrick Wright*

DOCUMENTARY SUBJECTS *Alice Cooper, Joan Jett, Cameron Crowe, Michael Stipe, Chad Smith, Kirk Hammett, Thurston Moore, Gene Simmons, Paul Stanley, and Wayne Kramer*

SYNOPSIS Detroit, 1969: the “Music Capital of the World.” It was a perfect time and place for writers who cared desperately about music to start an underground magazine devoted to the rock ‘n’ roll explosion. This effervescent film, directed by Scott Crawford, tells the story of *Creem* during the heydays of the 70s and 80s when the staff called themselves “America’s Only Rock ‘n’ Roll Magazine” —unfiltered and unapologetic. The dedicated, talented, crazy crew of *Creem* journalists, led by Barry Kramer, founder and publisher, were ready to challenge propriety and the mainstream conventions expected of music critics at that time. Barry and his wife, Connie, led notorious rock critic Lester Bangs, editor Dave Marsh, writer Jaan Uhelszki, and the rest of the raucous newsroom crew, taking *Creem* from the Motor City underground to a national powerhouse second only to *Rolling Stone*.

Creem, named and re-spelled from favorite band, Cream, had a mascot designed by famed artist R. Crumb, of a milk jar with a smiling face and expressive arms and legs, shouting “Boy Howdy.” The writers saw their mascot as an exclamation of excitement—and excited they were for nearly two decades of unforgettable publishing. Using a mixture of archival footage and newly discovered videos found in Connie Kramer’s house, that excitement bursts forth in this totally fun documentary that will transport you back to those wild times—the music, the clothes, the parties, the communal living, and the drugs. New interviews with some of the remaining staff, personalities and legendary musicians like Alice Cooper, Peter Wolf, MC5, Kiss, R.E.M., Metallica, Red Hot Chili Peppers, and more, help bring the *Creem* story to life.

This rock-magazine-documentary, created by a popular Kickstarter campaign, tells a fascinating story of the early days of big rock and one of its most important print media outlets. As *Variety*’s Dennis Harvey noted, “This compact, well-crafted documentary will no doubt make viewers comb eBay and garage sale print stacks for all the old *Creem* issues they can find.” (Amy Grace)

BIOGRAPHY *Scott Crawford* has spent much of his life documenting indie culture. He launched *Harp Magazine* in 2001 and served as EIC for 7 years. His critically acclaimed debut doc, *Salad Days: A Decade of Punk in Washington, DC*, was named Dazed’s #1 doc of 2015 and won multiple festival awards.



FRI. MAY 10, 1:45 PM MICA GATEWAY • SAT. MAY 11, 11:00 AM MICA FALVEY HALL

Cold Case Hammarskjöld

DENMARK, NORWAY, SWEDEN, BELGIUM • 2019 • 128 MINUTES • ENGLISH AND FRENCH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

DIRECTOR *Mads Brügger*

DOCUMENTARY SUBJECTS *The mysterious death of Dag Hammarskjöld*

SYNOPSIS While the mysterious death of UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld is the purported subject of this enthralling documentary, the film actually revolves around the unconventional approach and surprise findings of its maker: Danish enfant terrible, Mads Brügger. Together, Brügger and Swedish private investigator Göran Björkdahl travel to Zambia to investigate the theory that the 1961 plane crash that killed Hammarskjöld was, in fact, an assassination. When the pair is forced to broaden their course of inquiry, Brügger and his film get reflexive, resulting in a true-crime roller coaster that's as captivating and formally whimsical as it is culturally devastating.

In his hotel room turned makeshift office in the Congo, Brügger dictates chapter by chapter the story of his documentary to a local secretary for hire. She sits at a clunky typewriter, poking away at the keys, as he recounts the theory that Hammarskjöld's plane was shot down by those who felt threatened by his advocacy for decolonization in Africa. Brügger stops occasionally, sometimes losing track after digression, sometimes asking for his secretary's opinion, sometimes deciding to head in a different direction entirely, but always building toward a deconstruction of the appeal of the conspiracy genre. So when one investigative lead dries up, another blossoms, and the director's freewheeling movement between them toys with our hunger for twists, whilst delivering on the promise of revelations.

Within the true crime genre, *Cold Case* succeeds at a level known more popularly to the world of podcasts than to cinema because of the stylized narration that takes centerstage (avoiding comparisons to Herzog, as the overlap is merely their gonzo journalist style). Brügger becomes an obsessive and persuasive storyteller like those on *Serial*, *S-Town*, or *You Must Remember This*. *Cold Case* is crucially cinematic though, which the director reminds us every step of the way. Whether he's searching for half-century-old fragments from the crash with a consumer metal detector or casually challenging a possible assassin face-to-face, Brügger delivers an unexpectedly playful documentary that holds legitimate, fascinating, horrifying implications. (Mitchell Goodrich)



SAT. MAY 11, 12:00 PM PARKWAY 1 • SUN. MAY 12, 4:45 PM MICA GATEWAY

Decade of Fire

USA • 2018 • 75 MINUTES • ENGLISH AND SPANISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

DIRECTOR *Gretchen Hildebran and Vivian Vazquez Irizarry* • HOST *Vivian Vazquez Irizarry*

DOCUMENTARY SUBJECTS *South Bronx in the 1970s*

SYNOPSIS The U.S. didn't always need armchair conspiracy theorists to rewrite reality—for most of the 20th century, it had TV news to do just that.

While block after block of New York's South Bronx was destroyed by fire during the 1970s, gradually displacing nearly half of the borough's 1.5 million residents, news headlines proclaimed junkies, vandals, landlords for profit, and tenants for revenge as to blame—but *Decade of Fire* sets the record straight. The film reckons that often-simplified (if not outright ignored) narrative of the borough's destruction with the inconvenient truth of systemic discrimination, displacement and devastation that was to blame. The result is a film of untold insight, patience, and a scrutinious recounting that only comes from reexamining a catastrophic event that one has experienced firsthand.

"How could city government allow this to happen? Who was in charge? Why?" While asking elemental questions and drawing parallels between local and national policies, then and now, co-director and narrator Vivian Vázquez Irizarry draws on momentum-building historical hindsight and inside-out personal analysis of the neighborhood where she was raised. In so doing she and co-director Gretchen Hildebran draw a damning blemish from New York's modern-day past back into the foreground.

With eye-opening archival footage (including home movies and vintage news broadcasts) that captures the ways that regulatory missteps and revisionist commentary could distort a close-knit community into redlined rubble, *Decade of Fire* reveals how history is most prone to repeating itself when we are blind to the faults in how it is retold. (Jared Earley)

BIOGRAPHY *Vivian Vázquez Irizarry* ran educational and youth leadership development programs at the Coro Foundation, Bronxworks, and is currently the director of community-school partnerships at the New Settlement Community Campus. Vázquez Irizarry managed educational youth development models in GED completion and college access programs across New York City. A former member of the National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights, she is a member of 52 People for Progress, a community organization that saved her childhood playground and revitalized the South Bronx for the last 35 years.



THU. MAY 9, 4:30 PM PARKWAY 3 • FRI. MAY 10, 11:00 AM PARKWAY 3

Donbass

GERMANY, UKRAINE, FRANCE, NETHERLANDS, ROMANIA • 2018 • 121 MINUTES • UKRAINIAN AND RUSSIAN WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

DIRECTOR *Sergei Loznitsa*

CAST *Boris Kamorzin, Valeriu Andriuta, Tamara Yatsenko, Liudmila Smorodina, and Olesya Zhurakovskaya*

SYNOPSIS The central delight of film programming is the chance to come across a voice that resonates deeply with you, and that you'd like the opportunity to amplify and share with others. I was lucky enough to first encounter the prescient and urgent work of Ukrainian (by way of Belarus) filmmaker Sergei Loznitsa at the 2010 Toronto International Film Festival, with his sobering first narrative feature *My Joy*. The film had premiered at Cannes—the first Ukrainian film to compete for the coveted Palme d'Or—earlier that year and I had the honor of bringing the film to Baltimore within our 2011 Festival. We've continued to track his incredible body of work over the near-decade since and had the equal pleasure of sharing his 2016 film *Austerlitz*, a meditative documentary on the problematic aspects of bustling and at times shockingly informal tourism at venerated Holocaust sites.

Loznitsa, originally trained as a mathematician, started his cinematic journey as a documentarian in the 1990s, having produced a variety of verité films throughout the mid-90s into the late aughts. With *My Joy* the director began a period of seamlessly toggling between narrative film and documentary, a gift few but the great Werner Herzog possess. With *Donbass*, Loznitsa finds himself back on the narrative side of the fence, using the conflict pitting Ukrainian nationalists against supporters of the Russia-sponsored Donetsk People's Republic in eastern Ukraine as a framework.

Through a series of startling vignettes, *Donbass* examines the caustic nature of armed conflict and the increasing indifference of a world overwhelmed by its own brutality. Loznitsa sees a world that is sinking deeper into the morass of moral decline, as humankind finds itself in the precarious position of accepting each new low ebb in war, murder, injustice, inhumanity, etc. with a sense of helplessness, a shrug, and a flick of the thumb across a social media feed. In fashioning a scathing indictment of a post-truth world and the moral ambiguity it necessarily propagates—a theme the director returns to time and again in various works—he seems intent on sounding the alarms, hoping the world might wake from its collective slumber. (Scott Braid)



SUN. MAY 12, 11:15 AM PARKWAY 1

Don't Be a Dick About It NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

USA • 2018 • 69 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTOR/HOST *Ben Mullinkosson (via Skype)*

DOCUMENTARY SUBJECTS *Peter and Matthew Mullin*

SYNOPSIS Winner of the IDFA (International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam) Audience Award back in December—beating out stiff competition in the form of mega-doc hit *Free Solo* and a handful of others—*Don't Be A Dick About It* follows the brothers Mullin, Peter and Matthew, who are living under the roof of their parents' Chevy Chase, Maryland home. Growing up in the affluent DC suburbs with their other siblings, their daily lives are focused mostly around the goings on of their family homestead.

As the opening sequences unfold, the two brothers reveal their quirky and endearing yin and yang personalities. Peter is a boisterous, Cheerio-phobic young man who is absolutely obsessed with the *Survivor* reality TV show. He has a ritual of reenacting the elimination rounds of that show each day, particularly when he has a family member he's frustrated with and wishes to "vote off the island" of their suburban home. One particularly memorable squabble finds Peter directing the titular phrase at his sister Kerry, who may be the next to earn "the council's" expulsion. The quieter Matthew is working through a severe case of cynophobia, by reluctantly following his mother to the neighborhood dog park to attempt to confront his fears. He's also working through his feelings about his brother's behavior which he sometimes finds mortifying. Throughout the course of the summer-long span of the film, the siblings laugh, horseplay and fight frequently. *Don't Be A Dick About It* is joyously minor key cinema. It's not built around any looming family crises or life-altering events, but rather the tiny dramas of everyday life as two brothers who love each other deeply and also drive each other crazy, work their way through the ups and downs of their young lives.

Don't be fooled by the tongue-in-cheek title; this intimate, often hilarious and ultimately moving doc is one of the finest portraits of sibling dynamics ever committed to digital film. MdFF is proud to host the North American Premiere of this warmly humorous and heartfelt documentary. (Scott Braid)

BIOGRAPHY *Ben Mullinkosson* is a DP and director based in Los Angeles. He has worked with brands such as Facebook, Samsung, Yelp, HBO, and Home Depot. His short films have been NYT Op-Docs, Vimeo Staff Picks and shown at Tribeca, Slamdance and over fifty other film festivals.



FRI. MAY 10, 1:45 PM MICA FALVEY HALL • SUN. MAY 12, 11:45 AM PARKWAY 3

Fig Tree

ETHIOPIA, ISRAEL, GERMANY, FRANCE • 2018 • 93 MINUTES • AMHARIC WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

DIRECTOR *Aäläm-Wärqe Davidian*

CAST *Betalehem Asmamawe, Yohannes Musa, Weyenshiet Belachew, Mitiku Haylu, and Mareta Getachew*

SYNOPSIS Aäläm-Wärqe Davidian's virtuosic first feature *Fig Tree* is set during the 1989 Ethiopian civil war. The story finds Mina, a 16-year-old Ethiopian-Jewish teenager, hatching a plan to keep her Christian boyfriend, Eli, from being conscripted into military service under the monstrous Mengistu Haile Mariam's army. As Mina and her family make preparations to flee war-torn Addis Ababa for Israel, Mina and her boyfriend while away their remaining days together sitting in the shady arms of a large fig tree. Eli can only partake of this time with Mina whenever he is afforded the opportunity to come out of his hiding place in the nearby woods. Mina relishes their moments together but fears the imminence of her departure, hoping she can somehow find a way to get Eli on that plane and start their young lives anew in the relative safety of Israel.

Based in part on the director's own life and experiences living in Ethiopia during this time of bloodshed, *Fig Tree* is a stirringly authentic account of a young woman coping with the insanity of war, while trying to protect, in anyway she can, the things that she holds dear. Davidian knows these feelings all too well, having seen first hand that war is not some abstract that exists elsewhere. It is thorough in its depredations and remains present in its devastating effects on those whose lives it touches.

Davidian's camera quietly observes the effects of the ongoing conflict on the bonds of family, on young love, and on a society struggling to continue, under harrowing conditions. She even touches on the lasting fallout for those that fight, in a particularly emotional passage where Mina and Eli come across a soldier, who can no longer cope with what the conflict has made of his life and his body. This moving and expertly crafted drama garnered a well-deserved Best Picture Ophir nomination (the Israeli equivalent of an Oscar) and signals the arrival of a striking new voice in the world of international cinema. (Scott Braid)



SAT. MAY 11, 2:00 PM MICA FALVEY HALL

For Sama

UK • 2019 • 93 MINUTES • ARABIC WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

DIRECTORS *Waad al-Kateab and Edward Watts*

DOCUMENTARY SUBJECTS *Waad, Hamza, and Sama al-Kateab*

SYNOPSIS This film should be required viewing for every living person who has existed comfortably outside the pernicious effects of armed conflict. For any of us afforded the luxury to go about our day-to-day lives in relative safety, it's hard to fathom the violence and perilous insecurity many areas of the world experience daily—unless we actively engage with the stories of those who have survived.

Citizen journalist and documentarian Waad Al-Kateab has lived through and witnessed atrocities that many of us cannot begin to imagine. As a student at the University of Aleppo she became swept up in the revolt against the Russian-backed Assad regime in 2011. During Aleppo's darkest days of violence, as the Assad government repeatedly displayed their willingness to stoop to any depth of depravity—even decimating their own people—to maintain their fragile grip on power, Al-Kateab kept her cameras rolling. Through these grim years, Al-Kateab refuses to put her life on hold. She meets a young doctor and in the midst of daily bombings, the two find themselves operating a makeshift hospital to tend to the wounded, and even falling in love. As the wartorn months progress, the two find the will to get married and give birth to a beautiful and healthy daughter, Sama, who quickly becomes their *raison d'être*. Al-Kateab and her family display a defiant will to live that propels them, as they face the heinous, near-daily assaults of Assad's minions.

For Sama is a film that does not shy away from capturing the most hideous aspects of war, at times making this one of the most difficult viewing experiences this seasoned programmer has ever had. Ultimately though, it is a story that must be seen and what emerges from the rubble of this awful, senseless carnage is an incredible affirmation of life. Al-Kateab shows us that even in the face of the most heinous and inhuman of circumstances, the drive to motherhood, to liberty, and to self-determination can and will triumph. This love letter from a mother to her infant daughter—sharing the family's struggle for freedom and will to survive under the most perilous of conditions—vividly affirms that even in the most terrible destruction, there is no greater force than love. (Scott Braid)





THU. MAY 9, 7:30 PM MICA FALVEY HALL • FRI. MAY 10, 4:45 PM PARKWAY 1

Frances Ferguson

USA • 2019 • 75 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTOR *Bob Byington* • **HOSTS** *Bob Byington and Co-writer/Actor Kaley Wheless*

CAST *Kaley Wheless, Nick Offerman, Keith Poulson, David Krumholtz, and Martin Starr*

SYNOPSIS So Frances is really bored. Like, bored (and miserable) in the way only privileged ex-cheerleader suburbanites, with access to all the tools necessary to aspire to something greater in life, can be bored (and miserable). Fran is so bored, in fact, that she's willing to ruin her entire life just for a passing bit of guilty pleasure, not even substantial enough to be considered momentary bliss. And it's hilarious that she does. Out of this deranged bout of ennui, the small-town substitute teacher (who can't even be bothered to remember what subject she's meant to be covering) decides courting her muscled, phone-fiddling student seems like, well... fun?

In this darker-than-most comedy, directed by Bob Byington, *The Highwaymen's* Kaley Wheless confidently channels a brew of disturbing humor and witty discontentedness, delivering the titular Frances as simultaneously abhorrent and scarily relatable. Each and every performance here hits. Nick Offerman lends narration that's always perfectly dry, semi-legitimizing Fran's behavior, even when we can seemingly hear his eyes rolling at some of her dumber displays of self-centeredness. MdFF perennial, Keith Poulson plays Fran's frumpy, mouth-breathing husband, who quickly makes it clear she's married down. Dissatisfied with their marriage, but too lethargic to do anything about it, Fran instead focuses on one of her students—from afar, as she does something particularly illegal in her car.

As Fran negotiates her newfound sex-offender status and begins to feel a modicum of regret, Byington's new film lands somewhere between the careful calibration of *Arrested Development* and the grotesque humor of *Happiness*. For lovers of black comedy, this little tale of statutory rape should just delight. (Mitchell Goodrich)

BIOGRAPHY *Bob Byington* is best known for his role as the checked out older brother in a film he wrote and directed, *Harmony And Me*. A film from last year, *Infinity Baby*, a comedy about babies that won't age, won Best Narrative Feature at the Woodstock Film Festival in 2017. His *Somebody Up There Likes Me* won a Special Jury Prize at the Locarno Film Festival in 2012.



SUN. MAY 12, 1:30 PM PARKWAY 1

Gospel According to Al Green

35TH ANNIVERSARY

USA, UK • 1984 • 94 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTOR/HOST *Robert Mugge*

DOCUMENTARY SUBJECTS *Al Green*

SYNOPSIS This indelible portrait of soul-music-sensation-turned-gospel-singer Al Green, catches up with the legendary musician in the early 80s, during the 7th anniversary of the Memphis Pentecostal Church he established and where he serves as reverend. The film, commissioned by Britain's Channel 4, sits down with a serene and at times ecstatic Green, who has found a renewed sense of self in gospel music. He details the traumatic events that turned him away from a lucrative career as one of soul music's most popular performers and toward his conversion to full-time gospel—leading both the ministry and the music for his Memphis-based congregation.

Director Robert Mugge—widely considered one of the all-time great music documentarians—crafts a beautiful and moving portrait of this music titan and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee. Mugge skillfully interweaves the many revelatory moments from his intimate talk with Reverend Al, with soul-stirring gospel performances, and interviews with close associate Willie Mitchell—who produced all of Green's early hits for the fabled Hi Records—and pop culture critic Ken Tucker. Mitchell and Tucker offer background and context for the life and career of Green up to this point, while outlining the connections between soul and gospel music.

Inspiring, deeply moving, and frequently euphoric *Gospel According to Al Green* is a miracle of a film. We're so proud to have the opportunity to celebrate the film's 35th anniversary and its incredible director at MdFF 2019, as we share the magic of Reverend Al's gospel with you. (Scott Braid)

BIOGRAPHY *Robert Mugge's* 30+ films feature a variety of music and non-music subjects. He has made works on bluegrass, jazz, gospel reggae and most frequently the blues. They have earned him high praise from publications including *The Village Voice* and *The New York Times*, with *The Hollywood Reporter* writing: "Mugge has, during the past 25 years, established himself as the cinema's foremost music documentarian."



THU. MAY 9, 10:15 PM PARKWAY 1 • SAT. MAY 11, 10:15 PM PARKWAY 1

Greener Grass

USA • 2019 • 101 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTORS *Jocelyn DeBoer and Dawn Luebbe*

CAST *Jocelyn DeBoer, Dawn Luebbe, Beck Bennett, Neil Casey, Mary Holland, D'Arcy Carden, Dot-Marie Jones, Janicza Bravo, Jim Cummings, and Lauren Adams*

SYNOPSIS Comedy done right is so absurdly satisfying to experience in a theater, and for the demented sensibilities of Baltimoreans—raised on the work of John Waters, with houses and bridges in polychrome, and who know a red-striped sugar stick penetrating a lemon wedge as a casual summer treat—this year's absurdist comedy of choice, *Greener Grass*, is honestly just perfect. Watching Jocelyn DeBoer and Dawn Luebbe's debut feature in our historic main theater will undoubtedly tease giggles, before laughter becomes a contagion, and then acts as mundane as drinking water turn out to be utterly hilarious. Oft confusing in the best, most WTF ways, this delirious, 90s-tinged satire shows what happens when one secludes oneself in the bubble of the cul-de-sac for far, far too long.

Greener Grass takes place in a nightmare suburb, where every metal-mouthed inhabitant color-coordinates pastel polos and panties with their partner and competes to be the neighbor who appears most happy. Children are tools in this endeavor, so the faster you can attain or dispense of them—depending on your outlook—the better, but sure as hell don't get caught without at least one. Jill (DeBoer) and Lisa (Luebbe) are best friends, as are their husbands (SNL's Beck Bennett and Neil Casey), but their respective sons Julian and Bob aren't. So when each child suddenly "matures" in his own way, strains of resentment befall Jill and Lisa's friendship. Oh... and also one of them is being stalked by a maniac and there's a murderer on the loose.

Greener Grass delights in the unexpected, and that shouldn't be ruined for you. Don't wait for your friends to come running with spoilers about this movie that's "so weird." See it for yourself, and see it again—especially if you're a fan (or filmmaker) of *Serial Mom*, *House*, or the *Air Bud* trailer. (Mitchell Goodrich)





FRI. MAY 10, 9:00 PM PARKWAY 3 • SAT. MAY 11, 9:00 PM PARKWAY 3

Ham on Rye

USA • 2019 • 85 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTOR/HOST *Tyler Taormina*

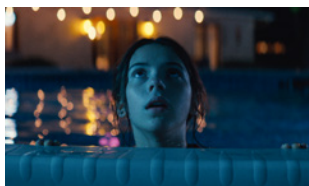
CAST *Haley Bodell, Cole Devine, Audrey Boos, Gabriella Herrera, Gregory Falatek, and Timothy Taylor*

SYNOPSIS Imagine, for a moment, if prom really was the most important night of a person's life, that the night determined the full expanse, or confines, of your future. This is the central premise of *Ham on Rye*, a vivid and surreal dry comedy, where a bizarre gathering at a local deli serves as a pivotal initiation into adulthood for the youth of a seemingly normal suburb. Replete with poop talk, Slim Jims, dueling cliques, and cameos from Nickelodeon stars of yesteryear, Tyler Taormina's debut feature is a patient, mass-ensemble epoch that skillfully conjures the jittery excitement of youth's golden hour, before descending into the mysterious nightfall of adulthood.

Featuring over 100 cast members, *Ham on Rye* tracks a broad multitude of characters, but listless Haley is our primary point of access. While everyone around her is focused on getting to Monty's Delicatessen, Haley is feeling a bit skeptical about the importance of the night ahead. After a comically long stroll to the restaurant, the gaggle of teens begin performing peculiar, synchronized rituals. Then, when Haley dips out, she misses a euphoric rite of passage ceremony and is cast instead into a darker vision of the future.

Expertly choreographed, *Ham on Rye* is a hypnotizing collection of precisely measured scenes. The outcome is a cross between *Slacker*, *Twin Peaks*, and *Pete & Pete*, but one where fans of *Vive L'Amour* may feel at home as well. Everyone's invited, so don't suffer the fate of missing out. (Mitchell Goodrich)

BIOGRAPHY *Tyler Taormina* began his career shooting pilots and developing children's TV shows with the Tom Lynch Company. He later transitioned into filmmaking and has since begun experimenting with the capabilities of a large ensemble cast when approached with philosophical and spiritual curiosity.



Little Waves (SHORT PRECEDING FEATURE)

12 MIN • CANADA • U.S. PREMIERE • **DIRECTOR** *Ariane Louis-Seize*

On family reunion day, Amelie feels out of place and lonely as her favorite cousin brings a lover over for the first time. Noticing their young passionate love, she allows her own fantasies to run wild, although some sensations are a lot more powerful than she thought.



FRI. MAY 10, 1:30 PM PARKWAY 3 • SUN. MAY 12, 2:00 PM PARKWAY 3

The Hottest August

USA, CANADA • 2019 • 95 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTOR *Brett Story* • **HOST** *Producer Danielle Varga*

DOCUMENTARY SUBJECTS *Climate change and citizens of New York City*

SYNOPSIS *The Hottest August* is a curious map of a city's fraught consciousness. With an anthropological conceit, the film offers a survey of humanity on the brink of extinction. The threats of climate change, late capitalism, and newly emboldened hatred and racism loom large over director Brett Story's interviews with New Yorkers from all five boroughs in August 2017. As Story questions her subjects from behind the camera, a vision emerges of a society incapable of processing the changes rapidly besieging it. Existentialism channeled by a detached philosopher-narrator and a score that oozes with anxiety is complimented by the film's playful observations on its human subjects. The film is attune to all their quirks and habits, picking up on their smallest gesticulations. Their eccentricities, preoccupations, and pain come through with warmth and generosity.

Exquisite compositions set off the urban habitat in surprising ways, and Story frequently finds visual interest in large-scale scenes: expansive cityscapes, endless rows of windows and rooftops; skies cloudy with foreboding, yet filled with painterly beauty. This global scope reflects the film's structural methods, which abandon a singular narrative thread for a collage of experience and emotion. It's a time capsule that's observations, cynical and tender alike, will reverberate well into the future. (Julia Gunnison)

BIOGRAPHY *Danielle Varga* co-produced Kirsten Johnson's award-winning film *Cameraperson* which premiered at Sundance and was released by Janus Films. She was consulting producer on *This is Home* and *Charm City* and archival producer on Matt Wolf's *Teenage*. Danielle was recently listed on Doc NYC's inaugural list of "40 Under 40" filmmakers to watch and was a 2016-2017 Sundance Creative Producing Fellow.



FRI. MAY 10, 11:30 PM PARKWAY 3 • SAT. MAY 11, 9:45 PM MICA FALVEY HALL

In Fabric

UK • 2018 • 118 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTOR Peter Strickland

CAST Gwendoline Christie, Marianne Jean-Baptiste, Caroline Catz, Julian Barratt, Hayley Squires, Leo Bill, and Sidse Babett Knudsen

SYNOPSIS In fabric hemmed to perfection and dyed a glorious, radiant rose, is woven a curse that dooms the owner of a particular dress, which fits any wearer as though bespoke, to a fate of terrible and lethal luck. Across a bloody, grin-inducing two hours, British director and Euro-horror obsessive, Peter Strickland produces an immaculate yarn somehow far more satisfying than his already impressive earlier works, *Berberian Sound Studio* and *The Duke of Burgundy*. While *In Fabric* packs an air of fright à la *Suspiria*, the “scares” are balanced to win the hearts of horror fans and fearers alike. Plus, the very nature of its far-fetched premise—that a dress can fly and slither and stalk, intent on murder—will make you laugh in awe along the way. With a charming and measured performance from Marianne Jean-Baptiste, and featuring a devilish turn from *Game of Thrones*' Gwendoline Christie, *In Fabric* is a stunning best-yet from Strickland, a contemporary genre powerhouse.

Split in two, due to events that shouldn't be spoiled, *In Fabric* first tells the story of a romantically dissatisfied single mother, Sheila, before venturing into the lives of couple Babs and Reg—a washing machine repair man who harbors an unexpectedly sensuous proficiency with technical lingo. Sheila heads to her local department store in need of an outfit for an upcoming blind date. The date will unsurprisingly end abruptly, but that utterly bizarre shopping trip beforehand will have lasting effects, just as it does for Babs and Reg. Miss Luckmoore, the saleswoman who assists Sheila and Babs with their respective purchases, has a vampiric stare, floating gait, and weapon-like fingernails. Together with the flock of similarly spooky sales associates and their physically flaky boss, Luckmoore targets buyers of a dress that will haunt them, in search of the psychosexual satisfaction the crew receive in return.

If it isn't already obvious, fans of *The Love Witch* should race to this gothic satire of consumer culture, as should lovers of the giallo hits that inspire Strickland, or those keen on works like *Amer*, from neighboring genre revivalists Cattet and Forzani. *In Fabric* however, remains an original set of tales all its own. (Mitchell Goodrich)



SAT. MAY 11, 10:00 PM MICA GATEWAY • SUN. MAY 12, 4:30 PM PARKWAY 3

Knives and Skin

USA • 2019 • 111 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTOR/HOST *Jennifer Reeder*

CAST *Marika Engelhardt, Kate Arrington, Grace Smith, Ireon Roach, Kayla Carter, Ty Olwin, and Tim Hopper*

SYNOPSIS In a Midwestern town that runs on disappointment and denial, Carolyn Harper, the drum majorette at Big River High, goes missing in the woods down by the lake after a bad date with the football star, who's actually going with the daughter of the sheriff, who's drifting apart from his pregnant wife, who's having an affair with the local clown, whose daughter makes bank selling used panties to town fathers. The serpentine secrets are just the outer layer of the latest from outré Chicago filmmaker Jennifer Reeder, who cross-pollinates John Hughes with lurid Lynchian melodrama, stabs of horror, sparks of magical realism, and a bracing jolt of girl power to cultivate a subversive, deliciously strange teen flick reinvention.

Following her 2017 lesbian romance *Signature Move*, Reeder molds themes and motifs that animated her award-winning short films *A Million Miles Away* and *Blood Below the Skin* — '80s pop culture, a cappella singalongs, coming of age as a lifelong process — into a moody, dreamy, darkly funny feminist teen noir. Carolyn's disappearance sets off a roundelay of revelations and reshuffles relationships among her semi-estranged middle school besties: queer-curious cheerleader Laurel (Kayla Carter), war-painted goth Charlotte (Ireon Roach), and sardonic bookworm Joanna (Grace Smith), whose coping mechanisms are already sorely tested by the daily bruising of high school sexual politics and parents too preoccupied by their own failures and insecurities to navigate genuine trauma for themselves, let alone their kids.

Reeder keeps the weirdness bubbling at just the right low boil while dexterously balancing ominous small-town soap, batty wit, and genuine feeling for both her characters and the genre tropes she's turning inside out. She's abetted by a terrific young cast, lush neon-kitsch production design and, in the movie's most ingenious narrative stroke, a Greek chorus of New Wave hits rearranged for choir. You'll never hear "Our Lips Are Sealed" or "Blue Monday" the same way again. (Andy Markowitz)

BIOGRAPHY *Jennifer Reeder* graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC). Her multi-award-winning feature films have screened at numerous international festivals. In 2015, her film *Blood Below the Skin* screened in Berlinale Shorts; in 2016, *Crystal Lake* featured in the Generation programme.



THU. MAY 9, 5:00 PM MICA FALVEY HALL • FRI. MAY 10, 11:30 AM MICA GATEWAY

Lost Holiday

USA • 2019 • 78 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTORS *Michael Kerry Matthews and Thomas Matthews* • **HOST** *Michael Kerry Matthews*

CAST *Kate Lyn Sheil, Thomas Matthews, William Jackson Harper, Keith Poulson, Joshua Leonard, Isiah Whitlock Jr., and Emily Mortimer*

SYNOPSIS A seemingly normal Christmas break takes a mysterious turn in the feature debut for brothers Michael and Thomas Matthews. High-school friends Margaret (Kate Lyn Sheil, *House of Cards*) and Henry (Thomas Matthews, *The Newsroom*) return home to the D. C. suburbs from New York City and—after a requisite visit with a nearby drug dealer—decide to play detective and investigate a local kidnapping. The inept duo smash windows, fling hot coffee, and tip over portable toilets as they work to close the case. Margaret and Henry celebrate their success on New Year's Eve with a bottle of champagne, four tabs of acid, and a War on Women concert, but are shocked out of their revelry when they discover that there's one very important piece of the mystery left to be solved.

Lost Holiday follows Margaret through the obvious perils of amateur sleuthing, but also touches on her reluctance to grow up, the strength of erstwhile relationships, and the siren call of her hometown. Will she make the same mistakes next year? Probably not all of them, but it's hard to say. In a time when the darkness and mechanics of crime narratives tend to get overemphasized, the Matthews brothers have somehow managed, despite the subject matter, to keep things refreshingly light and character-driven. Their choice to shoot on Super 16mm from Kodak—and pair the resulting grainy comfort with a score that includes pieces from a recorder ensemble—helps to capture the warm spirit of the holiday season without getting overly sweet and sentimental. A movie with a line like “Get in the potty, bitch!” could never air on Hallmark, anyway. (Lucas Cullen)

BIOGRAPHY *Thomas and Michael* are brothers who grew up in our nation's capital. This is their directorial debut. Michael attended NYU's Graduate Film program. He previously produced *Newlyweeds*, winner of the 2014 Film Independent Someone to Watch Award. Thomas's credits include 3 seasons of HBO's *The Newsroom*, *American Hustle*, and *Joy*. He is also a founding member of The Attic Theater Company.





SUN. MAY 12, 7:00 PM PARKWAY 1

Luce CLOSING NIGHT FILM

USA • 2019 • 109 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTOR/HOST *Julius Onah*

CAST *Kelvin Harrison Jr., Naomi Watts, Octavia Spencer, Tim Roth, Norbert Leo Butz, Andrea Bang, and Marsha Stephanie Blake*

SYNOPSIS There's something different about Luce (a virtuosic Kelvin Harrison, Jr.). Steeped in the proprieties of the upper-middle-class community where he serves as the model student-athlete (both on the field and behind a debate podium), Luce enunciates each syllable of his immaculately formed thoughts with an ostensibly humble confidence. Luce was saved from child soldiering in Eritrea and carefully deprogrammed by his adoptive parents, counselors, and school administrators, who now laud his every move because it reinforces their white-liberal-do-gooder notions of self. It seems everyone is projecting on Luce and trying to pigeonhole the young man into perfection, as he's struggling under the weight of their expectations.

Ms. Wilson (a brilliant and complex turn by Octavia Spencer) seems to see the cracks in Luce's facade though, and after suspecting him of harboring ill intentions from a politically radical paper he's written, she searches his locker and finds contraband she interprets as confirming her fears. This appraisal while perhaps not totally unfounded, may reveal some of her own baggage about cultural stereotypes that color her perceptions of both Luce and his fellow minority classmates. Nonetheless, it is this conclusion and Ms. Wilson's pressing of the issue that ignites a slow-burning standoff between the veteran teacher and one of the school's most prized students.

Writer/Director Julius Onah crafts a drama that's tense to the point of shattering, which thrusts viewers into the harrowing story of a young man, whose past is eerily enduring in his present. As the puzzle pieces of Luce's story align, those closest to him may begin to share Ms. Wilson's questioning of the enigmatic young man's intentions. We too are challenged to determine where truth lies as this taut film unfolds, and that frenzied search for answers evidences the excitement of watching *Luce*—a closing night film sure to spark discussion. (Scott Braid & Mitchell Goodrich)

BIOGRAPHY *Julius Onah* is a Nigerian American filmmaker based in New York City. He's currently exploring storytelling around the world through his multimedia project Open Continents.



FRI. MAY 10, 11:15 AM PARKWAY 2 • SAT. MAY 11, 11:15 AM PARKWAY 3

Manta Ray

THAILAND, FRANCE, CHINA • 2018 • 105 MINUTES • THAI WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

DIRECTOR *Phuttiaphong Aroonpheng*

CAST *Wanlop Rungkumjad, Aphisit Hama, and Rasmee Wayrana*

SYNOPSIS In the thick of a forest on the coast of Thailand, a blonde-haired fisherman wields an axe and searches for the luminous gems that will act as bait in his hunt for manta ray. Here, near the sea where thousands of Rohingya refugees have drowned, another man lays face down, half-buried in the muds of the forest floor. Upon discovering the injured man to be alive, the fisherman rushes him home, only to discover the man to be mute and unable to communicate his identity. As their relationship develops, director Phuttiaphong Aroonpheng delivers a debut feature that allegorically interrogates flawed notions of national identity, through a visually lurid story of crime, romance, and betrayal, in this astounding tribute to the persecuted Rohingya population.

Without a home to return to, or any destination either, the fisherman welcomes the mute to stay. He nurses him back to health, finds him work, and shares stories of his personal struggles. Then, when the fisherman suddenly disappears on the job, the mute is left to fend for himself. In doing so, he clings to the routines introduced to him by the fisherman and adopts his home as his own. When an unexpected visitor comes knocking at the door, a new, strange course toward cultural assimilation is opened—one that realizes director Aroonpheng's predilection for images packed with metaphor on a grand scale.

Those metaphors are rigorous and profuse: The fisherman is ostensibly a hunter of manta ray, an animal considered vulnerable on the list of endangered species. He searches for glowing gems buried in a forest alongside countless bodies, their luminous quality mimicked by the cheap plastic lights worn by a Thai soldier. He cares for an injured mute, a representative of a disempowered people, whose voice we've never heard. Infinitely dissectable and intellectually rewarding in the ways great art should be, *Manta Ray* is a vision worth beholding, a rallying cry to echo, and a thoroughly immersive theatrical experience like few others. (Mitchell Goodrich)





THU. MAY 9, 9:45 PM PARKWAY 3 • FRI. MAY 10, 4:45 PM MICA GATEWAY

Mickey and the Bear

USA • 2019 • 88 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTOR/HOST *Annabelle Attanasio*

CAST *Camila Morrone, James Badge Dale, Calvin Demba, Ben Rosenfield, and Rebecca Henderson*

SYNOPSIS Annabelle Attanasio's debut feature is a coming-of-age story with anti-war underpinnings. Mickey Peck (Camila Morrone) is in her last year of high school shouldering way more burdens than a typical 18 year old. Dealing with a boyfriend, who seems only to want to get her pregnant and start a small-town life together, contemplating college on the West Coast, working part time in a taxidermy shop, and most dauntingly, taking care of her very damaged father, Hank (James Badge Dale), a PTSD-afflicted, Oxy-addicted Iraq War veteran.

It's not hard to guess who the bear is in this father-daughter late capitalism melodrama. Hank is trouble in every way: getting into fights, spending countless nights in the drunk tank, an unhealthy obsession with his guns, and he's blowing through his disability checks and Oxy prescription. But these are the least of Mickey's woes regarding her father.

Shot on location in Anaconda, Montana, a small mining town where many folks seem to be dying of cancer or are irreparably damaged by their involvement in U.S. military aggression. At times bleak, the director keeps things from getting predictable and offers a fresh take on the coming of age story. It also helps that the film is beautifully shot in neutral and muted colors by cinematographer Conor Murphy.

No one actor steals the show in this taut indie drama. Standout performances by Morrone and Dale are bolstered by an excellent supporting cast. *Mickey and the Bear* leaves you eager to see what any of them will do next. (Joe Tropea)

BIOGRAPHY *Annabelle Attanasio* is a tired-ass showgirl who began her career in front of the camera. Alas, she got sick of being bossed around and switched sides. Her first feature, *Mickey and the Bear*, had a critically acclaimed world premiere at SXSW. The film was also an Academy Nicholl semifinalist, won the Melissa Mathison award at HIFF, and participated in labs at IFP and Film Independent.





THU. MAY 9, 4:15 PM PARKWAY 2 • SAT. MAY 11, 4:30 PM MICA GATEWAY

Midnight Traveler

USA, QATAR, CANADA, UK • 2019 • 87 MINUTES • AFGHAN PERSIAN WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

DIRECTOR *Hassan Fazili*

DOCUMENTARY SUBJECTS *The Fazili family*

SYNOPSIS After death threats are leveled at director Hassan Fazili by the Taliban, he and his family are forced to flee their home in Afghanistan and begin a three-year journey toward western Europe. Wielding camera phones and bags of SD cards—newly erased since their last meeting with editor Emelie Mahdavian’s contact on the ground—the Fazili family traverses the notorious Balkan smuggling route in search of a safe harbor. They record over 300 hours of startling home video footage along their way, capturing the route’s dangers and delays, but also their deep bonds and interstices of joy. Through this footage, *Midnight Traveler* witnesses a family of filmmakers who cling to their art in a time of duress, producing a first person account of life as a refugee that’s both intimate and unforgettable.

The story of *Midnight Traveler* begins in 2015, with Hassan’s documentary *Peace in Afghanistan*, which profiled a Taliban commander who decided to lay down his arms. After the film aired on national television, its subject was assassinated by the Taliban, who also put a price on Hassan’s head. The director fled to Tajikistan with his family, where they spent 14 months submitting applications for asylum that were all rejected. Then, together with his daughters Nargis and Zahra, and wife Fatima, who is also a filmmaker, Hassan decided to return to Afghanistan momentarily, before setting out on a 3,500 mile journey toward Germany. Over the course of the film that follows, we watch as the Fazili family endures threats of violence, racism, and degrading living conditions. Their perseverance through these ordeals exposes the strength of their relationship. Looking on as Nargis dances to songs on YouTube and Fatima teases Hassan, we forget, momentarily, about their confines and remember *Midnight Traveler* is also a warm and captivating home movie.

Fans of *Cameraperson* would be remiss not to see this remarkable documentary made in a unique working dialogue between director and editor. Dispensing with establishing shots and embracing the aesthetic flaws of low-grade video, Fazili and Mahdavian have cut a gripping, alarming travelogue from a family whose struggles are representative of so many lives in the balance. (Mitchell Goodrich)





FRI. MAY 10, 11:45 AM PARKWAY 1 • SAT. MAY 11, 7:15 PM MICA FALVEY HALL

Mike Wallace Is Here

USA • 2019 • 94 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTOR *Avi Belkin*

DOCUMENTARY SUBJECTS *Mike Wallace*

SYNOPSIS Journalist and TV personality Mike Wallace had a storied career. With a body of work spanning 7 decades, his no-nonsense approach and candid style of interview set the stage for TV journalism for generations to come. It's unlikely that Wallace could have comprehended the level of his influence on mass media or predicted the darker outcomes of his legacy. It does seem likely, however, that Wallace's pointed questions and gotcha approach may have paved the way for the polemic ranting of dipshits like Sean Hannity and Bill O'Reilly, who he no doubt considered anathema. Wallace's approach had a crucial difference though—no matter how tough or barbed the question, he always wanted to engage with the answer. He wasn't interested in shouting over subjects or bullying them, but he was hellbent on getting to the heart of the matter, without pulling any punches.

Filmmaker Avi Belkin borrows a page from the Wallace playbook with this gritty, warts-and-all portrait of the legendary *60 Minutes* anchor, which makes a pointed inquiry of its own into the life of this complicated man. Wallace's foibles fueled a messy personal life that on occasion brought him under the kind of intense scrutiny he was usually dishing out. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the master interviewer was much more comfortable asking trenchant questions than receiving them. His insecurities reared their head with his peers too. He feared the idea that his fellow reporters did not consider him a "real" journalist—many of them having arrived at the trade through study rather than washing up from the not-so-distant shores of show biz, as Mike did. It was these at-times-crippling insecurities that were a driving force in the man who would become a household name and primetime's grand inquisitor for the better part of a half century.

Mike Wallace Is Here—brilliantly sculpted entirely from a treasure trove of archival footage dating back to Wallace's pioneering days in early TV—reveals a fascinating portrait of this tough cookie of a man whose brash style forever changed the face of journalism, both for better and for worse. (Scott Braid)





THU. MAY 9, 7:00 PM PARKWAY 1 • SUN. MAY 12, 11:15 AM MICA FALVEY HALL

Miles Davis: Birth of the Cool

USA • 2019 • 114 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTOR/HOST Stanley Nelson (*Thursday Only*)

DOCUMENTARY SUBJECTS Miles Davis

SYNOPSIS *Miles Davis: Birth of the Cool* sees the intersection of two colossal talents—the legendary musician who forever changed the face of jazz music and one of the greatest documentary filmmakers of our time.

Documentarian Stanley Nelson's list of awards and accomplishments is far too extensive for the modest confines of our program guide, but among the highlights are 3 Primetime Emmys, a MacArthur "Genius Grant" and the National Humanities Medal. He is also widely considered the preeminent film chronicler of the African-American experience. So who better to delve into the incredible life of a quadruple platinum recording artist, and 8-time Grammy Award-winning Knight of the Legion of Honor, whose near-fifty year journey through jazz music blazed a trail that transformed the genre many times over.

One of Nelson's greatest gifts as a documentary filmmaker is his ability to bring history alive, making it as relevant in the moment you're viewing his carefully crafted frames flicker by, as the events depicted were all those many decades before. *Miles Davis: Birth of the Cool* is bursting with a creativity and vibrance that matches that of its subject, as it chronicles the life of the Jazz titan. Using rare archival footage, present-day interviews with those who knew and loved the man, and an incredibly effective voiceover read by narrator Cal Lumbly, from Davis' own autobiography, the film looks at the man, the myth and the legend, contextualizing the times in which he lived and the ways in which he saw the world. Key moments in his development as a musician, his life as a Black American, and his oft-troubled relationships with the women he loved, are all displayed and dissected in an at once frank and reverent fashion. Nelson peers behind the sunglass-adorned facade of this mysterious superstar to reveal the human being behind the larger-than-life persona. The result is a fascinating portrait of one of our greatest artists and a film that holds plenty of interest for the uninitiated and expert alike. (Scott Braid)

BIOGRAPHY *Stanley Nelson*, a MacArthur fellow, has received numerous honors, including five Emmys and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Academy of Television Arts Sciences, as well as honorary degrees from Duke University and Marymount Manhattan College. In 2013, Nelson received the National Humanities Medal from President Barack Obama.



FRI. MAY 10, 7:00 PM PARKWAY 1

Mom and Dad PRESENTED BY JOHN WATERS

USA, UK • 2017 • 86 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTOR *Brian Taylor* • HOST *John Waters*

CAST *Nicolas Cage and Selma Blair*

SYNOPSIS Each year since the first MdFF in 1999, Baltimore's greatest cultural asset, the legendary artist and filmmaker John Waters, selects a film that he adores—and feels hasn't yet received the attention or accolades it deserves—to share with Baltimore's cinemaniacs. Anyone who attended the sold-out 2017 screening of *Roar* at our first annual Festival in the newly rehabilitated Parkway Theatre, or last year's bracing *I, Olga Hepnarová* knows exactly how special watching a film get the Waters treatment can be. An astute film critic with a wicked sense of humor, Waters' keen observations on the films he selects and the filmmakers behind them create an unforgettable evening of movie mayhem.

Mr. Waters' 2019 pick is truly off the chain. In Brian Taylor's *Mom And Dad*, a mysterious wave of filicide is touched off by a rogue TV signal being broadcast into the homes of unsuspecting families. These murder-inducing waves set off an episode of intergenerational havoc previously unseen on the silver screen. Nicolas Cage delivers an over-the-top performance on par with his unhinged turns in *Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call New Orleans* and last year's mind-melting *Mandy*, as a father-turned-flayer who goes nutzoid in his suburban McMansion. Cage finds his suddenly-psychotic life partner in a truly deranged and wonderfully nuanced performance by actress Selma Blair, who brings literal meaning to the classic quote, "Mothers hold their children's hands for a short while, but their hearts forever." It's just that this mother is willing to use a sawzall to get to them.

Like a zombie apocalypse limited to the confines of the nuclear family, *Mom and Dad* is the kind of bonkers horror, black comedy madness that comes along once in a blood moon. It's also exactly the kind of perverse cult film that Baltimore's adventurous motion picture patrons can't seem to resist. Who but the great John Waters could help us appreciate it to its fullest? Join us for MdFF's most prized annual tradition, and let Baltimore's own Pope of Trash take you on a cinematic journey to the dark side of parenting you won't soon forget. (Scott Braid)

BIOGRAPHY *John Waters* is the writer/director of such iconic films as *Pink Flamingos*, *Female Trouble*, *Polyester*, *Hairspray*, *Cry-Baby*, and *A Dirty Shame*. Waters is also renowned as a visual artist, public speaker, and author, whose books include *Shock Value*, *Crackpot*, *Role Models*, *Carsick*, and *Make Trouble*.



FRI. MAY 10, 4:00 PM MICA FALVEY HALL • SAT. MAY 11, 4:45 PM PARKWAY 1

The Mountain

USA • 2018 • 106 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTOR/HOST *Rick Alverson*

CAST *Tye Sheridan, Denis Lavant, Udo Kier, Hannah Gross, and Jeff Goldblum*

SYNOPSIS Rick Alverson has established himself as one of the finest American film artists of our time. Refusing to make opiate-like entertainments with all of the usual trappings, Alverson instead seeks to provoke the audience, to snap us awake from our catharsis-craving slumber. Viewers must grapple with the work, often leaving the theater questioning and activated by the experience rather than passive and complacent. While a turn off to some, this is exactly what makes his work so valuable. In a too-often same same cine-factory that concerns itself with box office and easy digestibility, it is artists like Alverson who push the boundaries and move the form forward, keeping cinema vibrant. Over the course of 5 features—which defy easy classification—he has astounded those that open themselves up to his vision.

The Mountain details a lackadaisical young ice rink worker named Andy (Tye Sheridan), who falls under the spell of charismatic lobotomist, Dr. Wallace Fiennes (Jeff Goldblum) in the waning days of that horrific practice. With his mother institutionalized and the untimely death of his father (Udo Kier!), Andy sets out on a bleak road trip, accompanying Dr. Fiennes and photographing his controversial “procedures.” Fiennes travels the US poking and severing his way through the frontal lobes of the institutionalized, while Andy looks on, seemingly unphased, but there may be something smoldering inside of this lumbering young man.

The Mountain's impeccable frames and sparse sets, while aesthetically pleasing, unsettle from the outset. Their cold perfection confines the characters within a utopian ideal that clashes with a dark reality. This American Gothic fable unmasks the incongruences of a supposedly apple pie 1950s America, taking to task the notion that somehow things were better back when—that America could be “great again” when that “greatness” is built on a lie. *The Mountain* illustrates a gilded age of economic expansion and technological advancement that was rotten to its core. (Scott Braid)

BIOGRAPHY *Rick Alverson* is an American filmmaker and musician living in Richmond, Virginia. His feature films include *The Mountain*, *Entertainment* (MdFF 2015) and *The Comedy* (MdFF 2012). His work has screened in competition at the Venice Film Festival, Sundance Film Festival, and Locarno.



THU. MAY 9, 7:15 PM PARKWAY 3 • FRI. MAY 10, 2:15 PM PARKWAY 1

One Man Dies a Million Times

USA • 2019 • 95 MINUTES • RUSSIAN WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

DIRECTOR/HOST *Jessica Oreck*

CAST *Alyssa Lozovskaya, Maksim Blinov, Vladimir Koshevoy, Alena Artemova, and Konstantin Malyshev*

SYNOPSIS Writer/Director Jessica Oreck's powerful first work of fiction follows two botanists operating in earnest to protect a Russian seed bank that holds within it the only assurance of the country's ongoing food supply. The story takes place in the future, but recounts the lives of those working at the N. I. Vavilov Institute of Plant Genetic Resources during the Siege of Leningrad. Maksim and Alyssa work at the seed bank and vow to defend the consumable and nourishing specimens from animals, starving citizens, and themselves. Things escalate quickly in war-torn Russia as their city is cut off from food, electricity, and supplies in the dead of winter. The people around them grow increasingly desperate, as Alyssa and Maksim struggle against their own temptations to not only keep their promise, but to survive.

Climates have shifted, entire ecosystems have disappeared, Terminator seeds are a thing now and subsequently countless species of plants no longer exist. The preservation of genetic diversity is even more relevant today than it was during WWII. With increasing populations and food shortages around the globe, the seed bank as vessel for preserving genetic diversity is even more pertinent in our current state. Oreck's filmmaking telegraphs that message to our future selves from the ongoing struggle of conscientious warriors like Maksim and Alyssa. *One Man Dies A Million Times* immerses the audience in the burden of their temptation to sustain their own health by consuming the precious vegetation and their painful deterioration as they continually deny their own well-being for benefit of the whole. These true eco-warrior botanists show tremendous courage when faced with an onslaught of obstacles and immense loss proving yet again the adage, "not all heroes wear capes." Some heroes endure their own peril to collect a bunch of seeds so that future generations may be afforded the opportunity to avoid famine. (Anna Hanson)

BIOGRAPHY *Jessica Oreck* makes projects large and small that hope to re-inspire a sense of wonder about the world of the everyday. Her features include *Beetle Queen Conquers Tokyo*, *Aatsinki: The Story of Arctic Cowboys*, and *The Vanquishing of the Witch Baba Yaga*. She has two animated series for TED and several series for the soon-to-launch, online, educational, children's network.



FRI. MAY 10, 6:30 PM PARKWAY 3 • SUN. MAY 12, 2:15 PM PARKWAY 2

Other Music

USA • 2019 • 83 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTORS/HOSTS *Puloma Basu and Rob Hatch-Miller*

DOCUMENTARY SUBJECTS *The staff and customers of Other Music record store*

SYNOPSIS Sadly in 2016, the iconic and beloved independent record store Other Music closed its doors for the last time. The owners of the New York City based shop realized that their business was destined to become yet another unfortunate casualty of our changing times and tastes.

Over the past two decades, the internet has completely altered how we consume media, offering an incredible wealth of entertainment at our fingertips. This is both a blessing and a curse. Sure you can have an entire library of songs in your pocket, but at times it feels like we've lost touch with what it means to really appreciate music. The physical records, tapes and CDs that we used to hold dear have been replaced by a seemingly endless digital stream. Face to face interactions that once led to mind blowing musical discoveries are becoming a thing of the past. Why get curated recommendations from a real human being with an encyclopedic knowledge of prog rock when Spotify can just make a personalized algorithm-based playlist for you? But where's the heart?!

Other Music wasn't just another record store, it was THE record store for up and coming musicians, artists and music lovers from all walks of life. It was a buzzing hub of creative energy, a place where people found brand new music and unearthed hidden gems. In this heartfelt documentary, filmmakers Puloma Basu and Rob Hatch-Miller pay homage to the influential record store and the community that formed around it. Their personal connection to the store is palpable; Rob is an ex-staff member and Puloma was a longtime customer and friend. Together, they document the store's final two months, filming co-founders Josh Madell, Chris Vanderloo and their staff as they navigate the store's final days. Through interviews with employees, patrons and musicians, we learn how Other Music opened the eyes and the ears of a generation. Rarely seen early in-store performances from now well-known acts like Animal Collective, the Yeah Yeah Yeahs, and Vampire Weekend, along with an amazing soundtrack, complete the fascinating picture of this record store like no other. (Emily Delano-Slaughter)

BIOGRAPHY *Puloma Basu and Rob Hatch-Miller* are a married couple and directing/producing team. They've helmed music videos for artists including Sharon Jones & The Dap-Kings and Aimee Mann, and directed/produced the first season of *Night Train with Wyatt Cenac* for NBC's Seeso platform.



SAT. MAY 11, 1:45 PM MICA GATEWAY • SUN. MAY 12, 4:45 PM PARKWAY 2

Pahokee

USA • 2019 • 112 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTORS/HOSTS *Ivete Lucas and Patrick Bresnan*

DOCUMENTARY SUBJECTS *Na'Kerria, Jocabed, Junior, BJ, and the community of Pahokee*

SYNOPSIS Bright futures and infectious hope consume this powerful work of community-focused cinema, wherein an observational approach showcases the everyday lives of four high-schoolers from a rural Florida town. Their lives, seldom championed on screen, in which modest aspirations to be crowned Miss PHS, conquer football championships, or balance fatherhood with schoolwork, act as momentous stepping stones in multi-year plans toward self-betterment or higher education. Through a series of shorts filmed in the eponymous town of Pahokee (including MdFF 2017's *The Rabbit Hunt*), filmmakers Ivete Lucas and Patrick Bresnan quickly earned the friendship of community members who would soon become their neighbors. In 2016, the filmmaking couple moved to town to collaborate with their subjects, together producing this stunning documentary, at times tragic, but ultimately uplifting.

Though Pahokee's setup is simple, the year that unfolds is a remarkable one, filled with ecstatic victories, but also financial struggles and sudden tragedies that leave the whole of the community reeling.

Na'Kerria is a cheerleader who dreams of attending FAMU; Jocabed strives to be the very best student at PHS, while helping at her family's taco stand; Junior is father to one-year-old E'Miya and leader of the school's drumline; and BJ is co-captain of the football team, in an area legendary for having produced high numbers of NFL players (including Anquan Boldin, Baltimore!). Across this extraordinary year, we check in with each student intermittently, seeing them through the lens of Lucas and Bresnan, as well as through that of their own phones. They share with us in moments of both stress and excitement, and we can't help feeling emotionally invested every step of the way.

For fans of Wiseman, *Pahokee* is a no-brainer, and as a clear year's-best, the touching doc is for everyone else too. Devoid of clumsy interviews or overbearing soundtracks, *Pahokee* wows with directness and intimacy, letting us forget the camera's there, before remarkably reminding us it is. (Mitchell Goodrich)

BIOGRAPHY *Ivete Lucas* and *Patrick Bresnan* have been making video art and co-directing observational documentaries together for the past 10 years. Their latest short film *Skip Day* won the short film prize at the Directors' Fortnight at Cannes. *The Rabbit Hunt*, their previous film, won over 20 festival prizes and the Cinema Eye Honor. *Pahokee* is their first feature-length film and premiered at Sundance.



THU. MAY 9, 9:45 PM MICA FALVEY HALL • FRI. MAY 10, 7:15 PM MICA GATEWAY

Premature

USA • 2019 • 89 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTOR Rashaad Ernesto Green • **HOST** Co-writer/Actor Zora Howard

CAST Zora Howard, Joshua Boone, Michelle Wilson, Alexis Marie Wint, Imani Lewis, and Tashiana Washington

SYNOPSIS Bursting open on the platform of a hot NYC subway station, *Premature* immediately asserts itself as a rapid coming-of-age saga that, even with its cooled down scenes of patient artmaking and non-verbal conversations, winces with the nostalgia of that special summer that went by way too fast. Shot on 16mm over the course of just three weeks in September of last year, before being edited in only two, the film retains the ecstatic immediacy of its very freshness, whilst feeling fully considered and radically familiar. Director Rashaad Ernesto Green's story of romance speaks to the universality of young love—its carnality, obsession, heartbreak, and enduring effects—through the individual story of a young poet carrying herself through personal struggles during a fleeting summer in a changing Harlem.

In a truly stunning performance where scenes imbued with anger or agony resonate fuller due to the warm tranquility that preceded them, co-writer Zora Howard plays Ayanna; a 17-year-old poet, drifting through her final summer before college. She's one in a pack of friends, who exchange endless, oft hilarious banter, as they saunter through the subway or ogle men at basketball courts. This is where Ayanna first eyes twenty-something Isaiah. He's a musician and jazz connoisseur with smooth, enrapturing candor, who quickly earns her heart on a walk home from the laundromat. Their romance escalates rapidly, enjoying a flash of bliss, before surprises just as suddenly rock the course of their relationship and Ayanna's plans.

Captured on film and composed of brilliant naturalistic dialogue, *Premature* sits among summer-in-the-City independents like *Rhythm Thief*. However, Ayanna and Isaiah's first stroll together feels like the film's core, and that scene instantly recalls the *Before Trilogy* films that influenced Green, or Sara and Duke's walk in *Losing Ground*. They haven't devoted themselves to each other yet, but it becomes obvious they will, and that this compelling romance—theirs and the film itself—is important. (Mitchell Goodrich)

BIOGRAPHY **Zora Howard** is a Harlem-bred multidisciplinary creator. A rising stage and screen performer, Zora completed her master's degree at UCSD / La Jolla Playhouse. Her screen work includes the Emmy-winning short film *Biracial Hair* that she co-wrote with director Lisa Russell. Her work, as performer and writer, has been showcased on HBO, TV One, PBS, and NBC.



FRI. MAY 10, 9:45 PM MICA GATEWAY • SAT. MAY 11, 4:15 PM PARKWAY 2

Queen of Lapa WORLD PREMIERE

BRAZIL • 2019 • 86 MINUTES • PORTUGUESE WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

DIRECTORS/HOSTS *Carolina Monnerat and Theodore Collatos*

DOCUMENTARY SUBJECTS *Luana Muniz*

SYNOPSIS Husband and wife directorial team, Carolina Monnerat and Theodore Collatos, bring together their rich artistic backgrounds in this illuminating, cinema verite-style documentary about larger-than-life actress, cabaret performer, sex professional and activist Luana Muniz—arguably one of Brazil’s most famous transgender personalities—and some of the young trans women alongside whom she has lived and worked in the Lapa neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Filed largely in the house Muniz established in Rio as a safe space for transgender sex workers, *Queen of Lapa* explores the women’s day-to-day lives, quests for love, the Brazilian political climate, housemate rivalries and notions about body image, all under matriarch Muniz’s watchful and guiding eye. As Founder & President of the Association of Transgender Sex Professionals, Muniz had a decades-long history of lobbying and fighting for human rights on behalf of Brazil’s LGBTQI community.

Monnerat and Collatos began filming during the 2016 Summer Olympic Games in Brazil, and through interviews with each of the women, with clips of Muniz woven throughout, they masterfully showcase the power of friendship, community, identity and acceptance that binds the women together. Vividly shot, the women’s lives unfold in a kind of glorious, muted technicolor that often operates in startling contrast to the daily struggles that define so much of their reality with Muniz playing to/with the camera as if it were a lover or a client. Her “come hither” aura thoroughly permeates the film and gives it an undeniably seductive atmosphere.

Edgy, humorous, tender and relevant in an easy, effortless way, *Queen of Lapa* provides a rare glimpse into a community that many think they know, but few actually do. Told with incredible grace and humanity, MdFF is thrilled to host the world premiere of *Queen of Lapa*, a film that is truly not to be missed. (Camille Blake Fall)

BIOGRAPHY *Carolina Monnerat and Theodore Collatos’ Queen of Lapa* was a Creative Capital grant finalist in 2018. Their prior work includes *Tormenting the Hen*, produced and starring Monnerat and directed by Collatos, which won the Duncan-Williams Scriptwriting Award at the Indie Memphis Film Festival, as well as *Dipso* (2013), *Time* (2013), and *Albatross* (2014).



THU. MAY 9, 4:45 PM MICA GATEWAY • FRI. MAY 10, 11:15 AM MICA FALVEY HALL

Ray & Liz

UK • 2018 • 107 MINUTES • ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

DIRECTOR *Richard Billingham*

CAST *Ella Smith, Justin Salinger, Patrick Romer, Deirdre Kelly, Tony Way, Sam Gittins, and Joshua Millard-Lloyd*

SYNOPSIS Drawn from stories lived by British director Richard Billingham in his youth, this phenomenal first-feature lends a mesmerizing brand of kitchen sink realism to three chapters from the poverty-stricken lives of his parents, uncle, and younger brother. Billingham, now an internationally recognized photographer once shortlisted for the Turner Prize, has crafted a strikingly personal and immensely affecting family portrait. A portrait brimming with immaculately composed shots that emanate not only the pungent scent of tobacco fermented shag, but also an empathy informed by direct experience—all too rare in arthouse depictions of the underprivileged.

Billingham's opening chapter finds his father, Ray, in near-present day. He is confined to one room of the family's council flat and near-immobile in his elderly age. As flies congregate about the room, he shakily fills glass after glass with homebrew delivered to him daily. Mother Liz lives independently now, but still visits occasionally—notably when provoked by Ray, who shouts down at her from his window near the top of the high-rise. We return to this scene throughout, but as days pass, flashbacks depict the turmoil of their lives during the '80s. As scenes unravel, we witness the moments that led to the parents' semi-estrangement, and infer the ones that inspired Billingham to frequent libraries in his youth as an escape from the confines of home.

As *Ray & Liz* fits the canon of traditional British realism, it's worth recommending to fans of Lynne Ramsay's *Ratcatcher* or, better yet, *Gasman*, but Billingham's film is singular in its rhythm and resonance. With bouts of humor working to counter the overall solemnity, it's a work wherein impoverished lives certainly don't equate to joyless ones, but not fully-lived ones either. Beautifully shot on warm 16mm and featuring a soundtrack every bit as perfect as the rest of the film, *Ray & Liz* is one you'll surely regret passing up. (Mitchell Goodrich)





THU. MAY 9, 9:45 PM MICA GATEWAY • FRI. MAY 10, 4:00 PM PARKWAY 3

Recorder: The Marion Stokes Project

USA • 2019 • 87 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTOR/HOST *Matt Wolf*

DOCUMENTARY SUBJECTS *Marion Stokes*

SYNOPSIS In 1979, Marion Stokes, Philadelphia librarian and cable television personality, realized that her local TV station did not archive copies of their news programs. Shocked and concerned about protecting and preserving the truth, she began recording the local news on a Betamax.

Marion possessed a voracious appetite for knowledge and was always willing to discuss opposing views. Open minded but always quiet and firm in her beliefs, Marion explored Socialism, but eventually identified with the Communist Party, even considering moving to Cuba. Despite her communist leanings, she eventually became a fabulously wealthy and reclusive archivist. Concerned about the inequalities in the media's coverage and an increasing lack of historical perspective, Marion set up a system for recording the news that ultimately expanded to 24/7/365 taping of local and national news and other programs of interest via a bank of multiple VHS machines. At the time of her death in 2012, the Sandy Hook massacre was the last program captured by her recording efforts. Up to that point, Marion had accumulated 70,000 VHS tapes covering thirty years of war, elections, scandal and triumphs. She unknowingly created the most extensive archive of local and national news in the world.

Recorder: The Marion Stokes Project represents one of my favorite types of documentary filmmaking—the chronicling of the singularly focused individual who has an unintended impact on the world that is greater and deeper than they could ever have imagined. The story of Marion Stokes inspires and challenges us to consider our world and the legacy we can create through dedication to our own ideals and principals. (Eric Cotten)

BIOGRAPHY *Matt Wolf's* critically acclaimed and award-winning films included *Wild Combination*, *Teenage*, and his latest, *Recorder: The Marion Stokes Project*. Matt's work in television includes the HBO Documentary *It's Me, Hilary*. In addition to filmmaking, Matt organizes film screenings and public events, and he is the Co-Curator of Film for the 2019 Whitney Biennial. He is a Guggenheim Fellow.





SAT. MAY 11, 6:45 PM PARKWAY 2 • SUN. MAY 12, 2:00 PM MICA GATEWAY

South Mountain

USA • 2019 • 85 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTOR/HOST Hilary Brougher

CAST Talia Balsam, Scott Cohen, Andrus Nichols, Michael Oberholtzer, Naian González Norvind, Midori Francis, Macaulee Rusnak Cassaday, Isis Masoud, Violet Rea, and Guthrie Mass

SYNOPSIS Hilary Brougher's brilliantly directed *South Mountain* is the film Hollywood doesn't want you to see, because at the center of its story is the radical idea that people over the age of 50 actually have lives! They still love, they still have hopes and aspirations, they still have desires—sexual and otherwise—and they are still very much human and working out their stuff.

Brougher's assured third feature is an adept and subtle character study that catches up with middle-aged couple Lila (Talia Balsam of *Mad Men*) and Edgar (Scott Cohen of *The Americans*), as their two-decade marriage is running aground. Lila finds her tranquil Upstate New York existence suddenly upended when her husband Edgar's secret life abruptly comes to light. This swift change in her world sends Lila into a tailspin, forcing her to lean heavily on her close friend GiGi (Andrus Nichols), who is dealing with traumas of her own, but remains a steadfast presence for her wounded friend. As a floundering Lila comes to terms with her husband's double life, she searches out comfort where she can find it—a choice that may serve to complicate matters further.

But, no matter how complicated things get for this earthy family, *South Mountain* steers clear of moral judgements and surprises us with truly complex characters, full of complex emotions and responses to a difficult situation. Writer/director Brougher avoids pointing fingers, even if some of the characters do. She creates a film that feels very much lived in because it respects the people it portrays and affords them the space to show their dimensionality. Any fan of the great British filmmaker Mike Leigh, should find plenty to like here, in a film brimming with incredible performances from an excellent ensemble cast. *South Mountain* is a stirring drama that lingers in the small moments and surprises with earnest emotional expansiveness, allowing its characters to be fully human in both their grace and their flaws. (Scott Braid)

BIOGRAPHY Writer/Director **Hilary Brougher's** first feature, *The Sticky Fingers of Time* was presented at the SXSW, Venice, Rotterdam, and Toronto Film Festivals. Her second feature, *Stephanie Daley*, won the Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award at Sundance and played the Locarno Film Festival. She is the current Film Division Chair in the MFA Film Program at Columbia University School of the Arts.



FRI. MAY 10, 4:30 PM PARKWAY 2 • SAT. MAY 11, 4:00 PM PARKWAY 3

Swarm Season

USA • 2019 • 86 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTOR/HOST *Sarah Christman*

DOCUMENTARY SUBJECTS *Manu and Alison Yahna*

SYNOPSIS Challenging our expectations of how an environmental documentary should look or sound in 2019, Sarah Christman's roving *Swarm Season* draws connections between microscopic views of bees linking arms and the honeycomb-like, hexagonal mirrors that make up the reflective grid of a telescope perched atop one of Hawaii's most prized natural sites. Covering subjects as seemingly disparate as beekeeping, indigenous-led activism, and interplanetary exploration, this utterly unique vision offers up an incredible sensory experience, en route to grand comparisons between the societal structures of bee colonies and those of humans. Christman grounds her ecological meditation in a portrait of a mother-daughter team doing their part to help honey bees survive, and in doing so, composes a vision both rigorous and welcoming.

Filmed on Hawaii's Big Island, *Swarm Season* chiefly follows the lives of ten-year-old Manu and her mother Alison, who together collect wild bees in aim of cultivating disease resistant colonies. As they educate us on the process of swarming and the evolutionary risks of artificial queen rearing, incredible macro shots of bees are intercut with sweeping drone footage of the volcanic landscape that hosts them. Upon meeting Manu's father, we watch as he participates in protests against the construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope on Mauna Kea and glimpse the goings-on inside one of the telescopes that already stands. Finally, as a small team of scientists make their "return to Earth," after practicing in isolation for life on Mars, the film offers room to ponder the similarities between the splitting of bee colonies and NASA's preparation for the colonization of space.

Equipped with a tremendous soundscape to complement its brilliant visual collage, *Swarm Season* is an absorbingly sensorial work, as richly rewarding to experience as it is to interpret. (Mitchell Goodrich)

BIOGRAPHY *Sarah Christman's* work has screened widely, including the Rotterdam, Toronto, and New York Film Festivals. She has received the New Visions Award from the San Francisco International Film Festival and Jury Awards from the Ann Arbor Film Festival. She teaches in the Film Department of Brooklyn College and the Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema/CUNY.



THU. MAY 9, 9:00 PM PARKWAY 2 • SAT. MAY 11, 11:30 PM PARKWAY 3

Tito

CANADA • 2019 • 70 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTOR/HOST *Grace Glowicki*

CAST *Grace Glowicki and Ben Petrie*

SYNOPSIS Grace Glowicki's *Tito* is a manic journey through the paranoid world of Tito, a young man haunted by the ghosts of past traumas. Tito wears a whistle and fears straying too far from his ramshackle house. He lives in a constant state of paranoia that unseen boogymen, perhaps predators of the past, are trying to break into his home, his only sanctuary, and assault him. When he has a fear-induced panic attack, he is only able to reclaim composure by blowing his safety whistle until he feels the danger is gone.

Tito's living nightmare comes true one morning when he awakes to find an intruder in his house. A shocked Tito enters his usually spartan kitchen to find that this intruder is not on the attack but rather in the midst of cooking a tasty breakfast feast and ready to share a few puffs of his sensimilla. As the two break bread (or rather pancakes) together, this boisterous neighbor starts to put Tito at ease (or as close to at ease as Tito gets) and might just begin to bring him out of his shell. While he seems on the up and up, the jovial pothead's sudden appearance raises questions about his motives. Is he truly interested in being a friend to the damaged Tito, or is he harboring darker desires?

Glowicki's *Tito* is reminiscent of an unhinged version of the already unhinged Crispin Glover, while co-star Ben Petrie's over-the-top but seemingly affable token bro brings the laughs in a psychotronic first feature that is a true original. This darkly comedic, mind warper with tinges of horror festers in the viewer's mind long after viewing. Alternately engrossing and repulsing over its succinct running time, its moments of levity give way to social anxiety nightmares, while stoner tropes conceal darker drug-fueled depravities, in a near parallel world to ours, maybe just a few shades darker. (Scott Braid)

BIOGRAPHY *Grace Glowicki* is a Canadian filmmaker & actor. In 2016, Grace was awarded a Sundance Special Jury Award for Outstanding Performance for her role in *Her Friend Adam*, and was later named a 2016 TIFF Rising Star. She has co-created or co-starred in films which have played at Sundance, Slamdance, SXSW, Tribeca & more. *Tito* is her feature-length directorial debut.





SAT. MAY 11, 2:15 PM PARKWAY 1 • SUN. MAY 12, 2:15 PM MICA FALVEY HALL

Well Groomed

USA • 2019 • 88 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTOR *Rebecca Stern* • **HOSTS** *Rebecca Stern and Composer Dan Deacon*

DOCUMENTARY SUBJECTS *Adriane Pope, Angela Kumpe, Cat Opson, and Nicole Beckman*

SYNOPSIS Rebecca Stern's feature documentary debut gives us a look into the dazzling and totally bonkers world of competitive creative dog grooming. A world where pets (mainly poodles) are treated not only as companions, but also as blank canvases to be transformed—through hours of fluffing, dyeing, trimming, and coiffing—into living works of art.

The film follows four women ranging in experience from up-and-coming to top-level groomers. Over the course of a full competition year they prepare for the championships and plan increasingly ambitious and flamboyant designs, all while dealing with the trials of everyday life. Despite the wacky subject matter, the film is earnest in its portrayal of the groomers as they find inspiration, camaraderie and success in this colorful world. While their art form has clearly become a full-blown obsession, and some critics make the incorrect assumption that the animals are being harmed by this practice, the women's dedication to and love for their animals is never in doubt.

Besides offering a charming peek into this curious subculture, *Well Groomed* is a pure visual delight. Several interludes focus solely on the details of the animals' technicolor coats while Dan Deacon's delightful soundtrack takes center stage. It is during these interludes that the viewer is given the space to contemplate the questions that arise from the film. Questions such as how art is defined, how subcultures arise, our relationship to animals and nature, and just how bizarre human beings truly are. (Meredith Moore)

BIOGRAPHY *Rebecca Stern* is a documentary director and producer. She is the producer of *Tre Maison Dasan* (PBS 2019) and *Netizens* (Tribeca 2018), the associate producer of *the bomb* (Tribeca 2016), and the coordinator on the Oscar nominated, *Cartel Land*. She currently works in Brooklyn, NY, when she's not playing with her Australian Cattle dog.





FRI. MAY 10, 9:45 PM PARKWAY 1 • SUN. MAY 12, 4:45 PM MICA FALVEY HALL

Who Let the Dogs Out

CANADA • 2019 • 70 MINUTES • ENGLISH

DIRECTOR *Brent Hodge* • HOST *Subject/Producer Ben Sisto*

DOCUMENTARY SUBJECTS *Ben Sisto and the song "Who Let the Dogs Out"*

SYNOPSIS Who let the dogs out, indeed? A question that humanity has grappled with over and over again since the dawn of... the 21st century. And yet the only answer ever arrived at is: Woof! Woof! Woof! Woof!

In the year 2000, a trio of young Bahamian men recording under the all too apt Baha Men moniker, unleashed on the world an earworm the likes of which was theretofore unseen and arguably has been unmatched since. This ubiquitous anthem became a staple at sporting events, in TV & films, on the radio and in advertisements. And then one day it became so played out that the dogs had to go back in the yard. For many years after, it seemed as though no one wanted to enter the yard. Then one day, not so long ago, a curious man named Ben Sisto stumbled into the yard by coming across an incomplete and poorly footnoted Wikipedia entry for the song. He decided he must heed the siren call of this Wiki stub and solve one of the 21st century's greatest riddles. Sisto became obsessed. He dove deep, tracing the threads of the song back through the years predating its Millenium explosion. Eventually he created a one-man show, a TED Talk of sorts, that outlines the journey of the song through various stages of its development until it morphs into its ultimate form on our Y2K radio waves. And what a journey it is!

Filmmaker Brent Hodge teams up with Sisto—using his talk as a framing device—to build a remarkably fun, engaging, and cinematic documentary around the fascinating story of this irresistible chart topper. What emerges is an engrossing meditation on creativity, the nature of authorship, and a surprisingly riveting inquiry into where ideas come from. Why did the Baha Men succeed where many others failed? Who owns an idea? How does collective consciousness factor in? How did this simple little ditty captivate the world? You'll have to see the film to get answers, but what I can tell you is, whoever did let the dogs out, did us all a huge favor, because it led to this little gem of a film! (Scott Braid)

BIOGRAPHY *Ben Sisto* got his start doing DIY shows in a college classroom and currently oversees public programming for Ace Hotel New York. Ben's given talks at Eyebeam Art+Technology Center, King's College, Yale, the University of Virginia, The American Repertory Theater and many-a-dive-bar. He's shown work at Printed Matter, Artists Space, and Harvard. Ben's also been on a quest for about 8 years to answer one of the most important questions in all of pop history: Who let the dogs out?

Altered States Shorts

MdFF 2019 presents a collection of mind-expanding short films guaranteed to take you on a psychedleic journey through the darkness and the light.

95 MINUTES



Aurore

18 MINUTES • FRANCE

DIRECTOR *Mael Le Mée*

Aurore, a sixteen-year teenage girl, discovers her body with her friends... While they acclimate of the transformation of their teenager body, a supernatural finger will show them a new way to pleasure.



The Follower

12 MINUTES • USA • 16MM • WORLD PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *Stephanie Szerlip*

A misunderstood teen with dreams of escaping her dreary suburban life is tempted by a would-be internet stalker in this Southern Gothic stranger-danger tale. Based on the 1966 Joyce Carol Oates story "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?"



Only Trumpets

10 MINUTES • USA

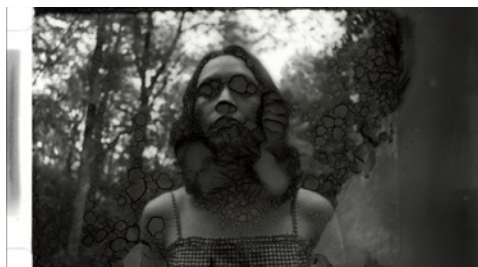
DIRECTOR *Tristan Scott-Behrends*

Longing for a touch the casual encounters section can not satisfy, Tristan, an outsider among outsiders, navigates sex and love in the digital age.



Altered States Shorts

95 MINUTES

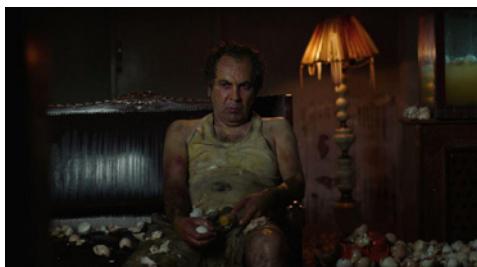


Skin of Man

10 MINUTES • USA • 16MM

DIRECTOR *Jimmy Joe Roche*

When three friends take a road trip to an idyllic forest and drop acid, one is lured into a mystic web of ritual murder and dragged into another dimension.

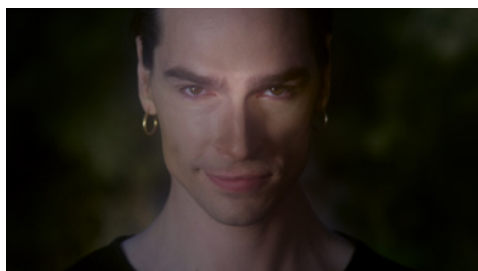


Sluggish Life

11 MINUTES • IRAN

DIRECTOR *Mohsen Mehri Daruei*

A man lives alone in a dark house amongst millions of eggs; he wants to call someone but he does not succeed... until the phone rings.

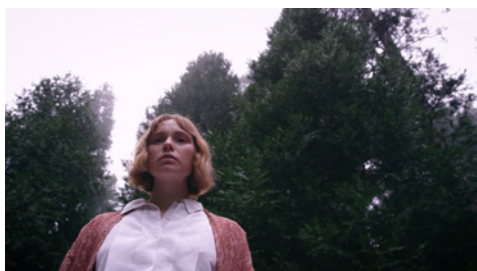


Star Eater

12 MINUTES • USA •
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *David Carpenter*

Stricken with body dysmorphic disorder, Rex is haunted by a Ghoul in the mirror. When the Ghoul's attempts at fear don't work it turns to something more sinister. Can Rex resist the temptation of perfection?



That Doe Zone

7 MINUTES • USA • WORLD PREMIERE

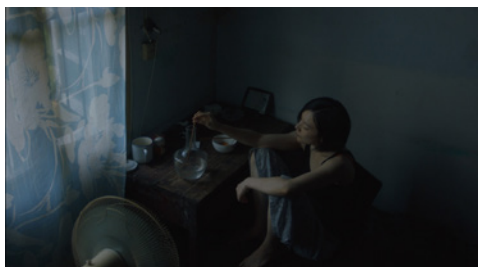
DIRECTOR *Harrison Atkins*

I have to tell you something but I'm not sure how you're going to react.



Altered States Shorts

95 MINUTES



What Do You Know About the Water and the Moon

15 MINUTES • CHINA

DIRECTOR *Jian Luo*

During an attempted abortion, a girl gives birth to a live jellyfish.



Animated Shorts

A rich collection of animated shorts produced using a broad range of techniques, from the painstakingly handmade to the meticulously digital. These films bring visual pleasures and splendors unique to their respective mediums.

91 MINUTES



Buena Vista

2 MINUTES • USA • WORLD PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *Zoe Friedman*

This animation is a celebration of love. It was created by printing out individual frames of a video and having my family and friends draw all over them. I recorded the sound on a trip to Mexico.

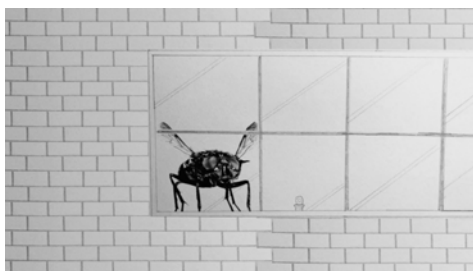


Bug Bite

8 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Emily Ann Hoffman*

A millennial woman and a female bed bug form an unlikely bond while contending with toxic masculinity.



Buzzer

9 MINUTES • USA

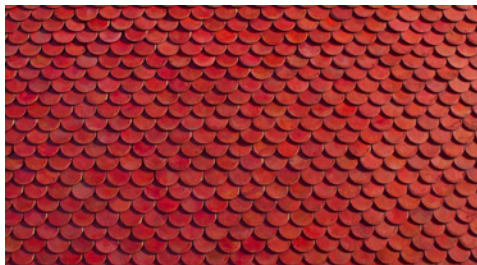
DIRECTOR *Albert Birney*

A fly is trying to have a quiet morning at home but the buzzer won't stop ringing.



Animated Shorts

91 MINUTES



MEDIUM RARE

5 MINUTES • USA, ITALY

DIRECTOR *Luca Cioci*

Functional and aesthetic values in recurrent, yet questionable domestic scenarios.



The Moon's Milk

14 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Ri Crawford*

Set between the gravities of two heavenly bodies, *The Moon's Milk* is a handmade stop motion short about a time when the moon was close enough to be reached by ladder. Longing, missed signals, and mishaps lead to the enchantment of the heavens with music.

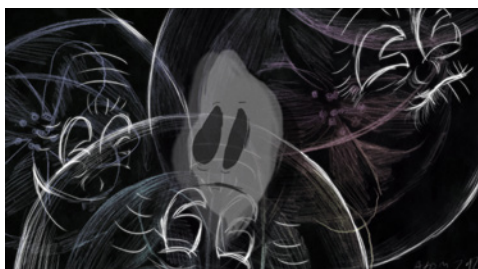


The Phantom 52

8 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Geoff Marslett*

Loneliness is a trucker who calls out on his CB radio waiting for a reply that never comes; a ghost that haunts the deserted highways; and a whale that sings at a frequency no other whale can even hear.



Smoke's Last Thought

16 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Miranda Javid*

A wisp of smoke rises through Los Angeles while mourning her imminent disappearance. In the midst of her nervous breakdown, she encounters other disenfranchised beings, the Other bodies of the city, and the intervening self of a form that is no longer singular.



Animated Shorts CONTINUED

91 MINUTES



Under Covers

7 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Michaela Olsen*

On the night of a lunar eclipse, we uncover the sweet, salacious, and spooky secrets of a small town. From a pigtailed psychopath to naughty nuns and everything in between, this stop motion animated film conjures a comforting thought: that weird is relative.



Wave

5 MINUTES • USA • U.S. PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *Evie Metz*

In this saturated plasticine vignette, all unfolds intuitively as the main character experiences shifting degrees of pleasure.

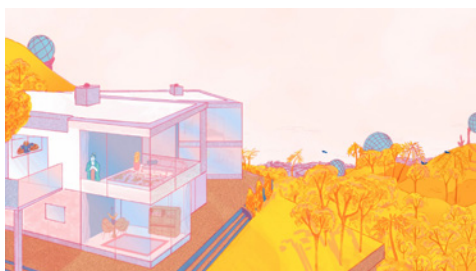


The Wheel Turns

13 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Sang Joon Kim*

The jaded subway operator in NYC finds his life repetitive and tedious. Once he and fellow passengers turn into toads, the operator explores through portals to find what causes the transformation.



Yours

4 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Maggie Brennan*

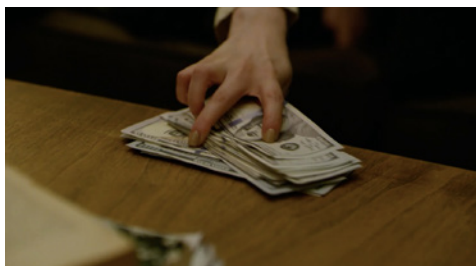
In the bittersweet, 2D-animated *Yours*, an elderly woman falls for a romance scammer on a dating site for seniors.



Chance Encounters Shorts

A program of shorts revolving around the random nature of life—the way chance encounters can effect change and create unintended consequences.

103 MINUTES



DIME

14 MINUTES • USA • WORLD PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *Jessica Garrison*

Etta returns home from a work trip in Vegas with a pile of cash in her purse, and needs to explain to her boyfriend how she got it.



Hannahs

14 MINUTES • USA • 16MM • WORLD PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *India Donaldson*

A woman cons her way into another woman's apartment, resulting in a strange and intimate encounter.



Kampung Tapir

17 MINUTES • MALAYSIA

DIRECTOR *AW See Wee*

The struggles of making a living and searching for a better life plagues Anne, leaving her in a dilemma on where she should settle down with her family.



Chance Encounters Shorts

103 MINUTES

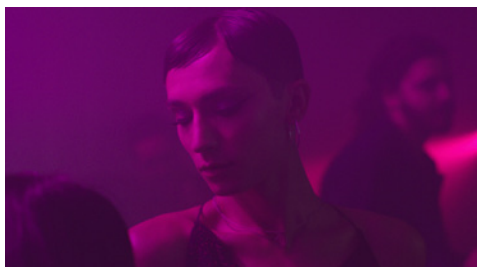


MAY

10 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Julian Turner*

A weary French professor and a young drug dealer share an impalpable connection on a single night in Philadelphia.

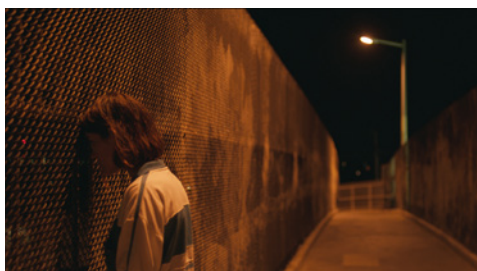


Miller & Son

21 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Asher Jelinsky*

A transwoman mechanic lives between running her family's auto shop during the day and expressing her femininity at night, until an unforeseen event threatens the balance of her compartmentalized life.



Palm Trees and Power Lines

15 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Jamie Dack*

Sixteen year old Charlotte ambles through a listless summer day when she's followed home by Tommy, an older guy. Tommy helps her escape her loneliness, but after betraying her trust, Charlotte must decide what matters to her most.



Whiteout

12 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Lance Edmands*

When a young couple encounters a strange old man wandering in a snowstorm, they must decide if he needs help, or if he has more sinister intentions.



Character Study Shorts

This captivating assortment of shorts focuses on incisive, character-driven narratives, showcasing an array of personalities and varied lives on screen.

106 MINUTES

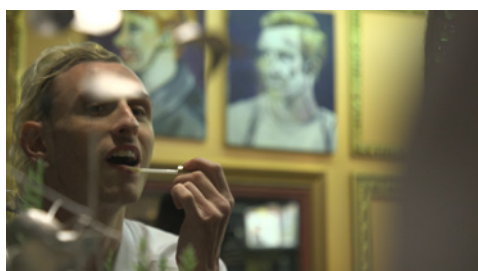


Atarraya

15 MINUTES • COLOMBIA •
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *Esteban García Garzón*

Maryuri, a young woman from the outskirts of Cartagena, must take the decision to put her life at risk or return to her fisherman boyfriend.



Bubblegum

12 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Kelly Turner*

A young artist works toward his future during a transitional period in his life.



Charmer

12 MINUTES • NEW ZEALAND

DIRECTOR *Judah Finnigan*

A single woman in her fifties has a rocky first date with a disagreeable bachelor. Over the course of the evening, she's forced to decide what's more important to her: companionship or compatibility.

Character Study Shorts

106 MINUTES



East of the River

13 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR Hannah Peterson

When Teonna (Ayiana T. Davis) is unexpectedly suspended from school, she encounters a girl from her past who takes her on an adventure through the city.

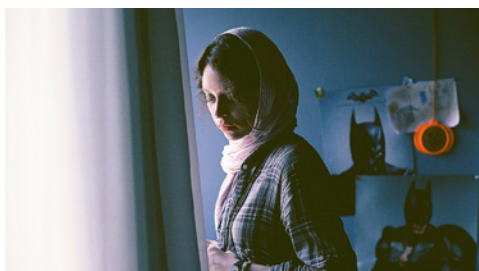


Farewell Winona

14 MINUTES • CANADA • SUPER 16MM •
WORLD PREMIERE

DIRECTOR Daiva Zalnierunas

Farewell Winona is a coming-of-age story about a girl, Winona (14), on the last day of summer before entering high school.



Like A Good Kid

20 MINUTES • IRAN

DIRECTOR Arian Vazirdaftari

Sara, a 22-year-old girl is babysitter to 7-year-old Matin. One day Matin tells a story that makes Sara plan to steal something from the house.



THE MINORS

10 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR Robert Machoian

A slice of life film about a Grandpa and his Grandsons, the future and the past.



Character Study Shorts

106 MINUTES



Now You Know

10 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Molly Gillis*

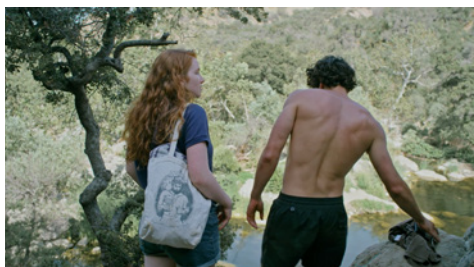
An uninhibited 10 year old girl faces the fallout of flashing her class at her strict Catholic school.



Charged Spaces Shorts

These dramatic gems envelop characters within contentious and powerfully resonant scenes. In them, figures combat physical threats, rehased memories, and awkward exchanges. Punctuated by dashes of laughter, Charged Spaces is high on drama, but also vibrantly human.

109 MINUTES

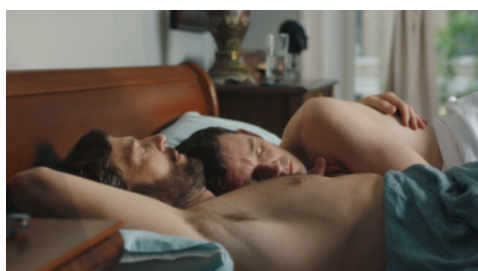


Furlong

11 MINUTES • USA • WORLD PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *Adam Meeks*

A teenage girl and her older brother's best friend find themselves alone at a cliff jumping spot in the California mountains.

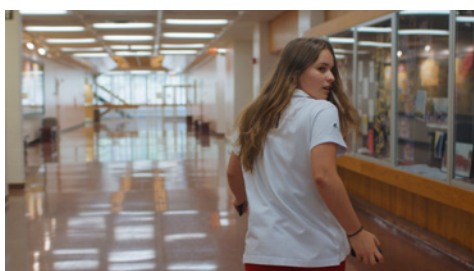


Lavender

11 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Matthew Puccini*

A young gay man grows increasingly entangled in the marriage of an older couple.



Lockdown

12 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Celine Held and Logan George*

Struggling with feelings for her best friend, 14 year-old Marie stages an almost perfect plan.



Charged Spaces Shorts

109 MINUTES



Mahalia Melts in the Rain

11 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Emilie Mannering and Carmine Pierre-Dufour*

Mahalia, a timid 9-year-old Black girl, feels different from the other girls in her ballet class. Hoping to boost her confidence, her mother brings her to the hair salon to get her hair straightened for the very first time.

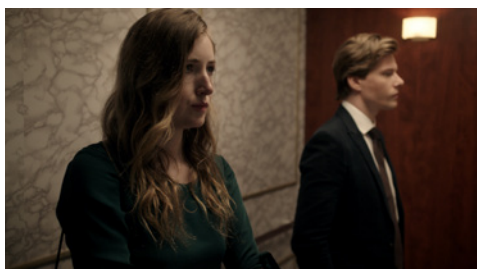


The Rat

12 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Carlen May-Mann*

It's Halloween night, and Renee is madly in love with Jim. On their way to a party, Jim detours to a haunted house, where Renee is forced to confront a terrifying situation.



Relations

11 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Hallie Cooper-Novack*

Two adult cousins have different views on a secret sexual encounter from their youth.



The Role

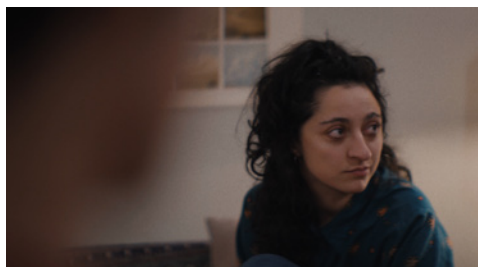
12 MINUTES • IRAN

DIRECTOR *Farnoosh Samadi*

A woman accompanies her husband for an audition. The thing that happens there leads her to an important decision...

Charged Spaces Shorts

109 MINUTES



Space

16 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Jesse Thurston*

Space is an intimate portrait of three friends in orbit around each other, each struggling to find balance between the forces that draw them together and the desire to fly off on their own.



Things That Happen in the Bathroom

13 MINUTES • USA • 35MM

DIRECTOR *Edward Hancox*

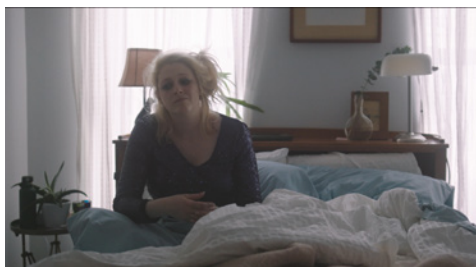
In the intimate sanctuary of the bathroom, a lonely young queer yearns for love, and learns how to survive heartbreak.



Comedy Shorts

After the laughter comes tears. Sometimes those tears are from laughing so hard you cry, and sometimes they're from crying so hard you eventually have to laugh. Whether fueled by chuckles found in the absurd, or the painful truths hidden in dark humor, these shorts are sometimes funny haha and sometimes funny oh no!

81 MINUTES

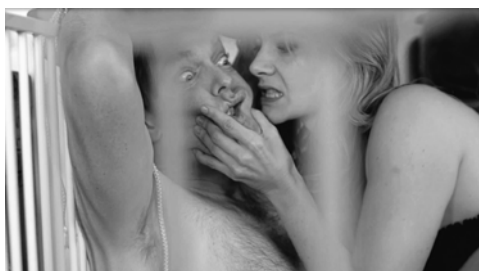


Amazing Bagel

15 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Dara Katz and Betsy Kenney*

In this gentle comedy, Devin, a single, 30-year-old woman learns—unbeknownst to her—she's had a miscarriage, and like everything else in her life, she has no idea how to feel about it.

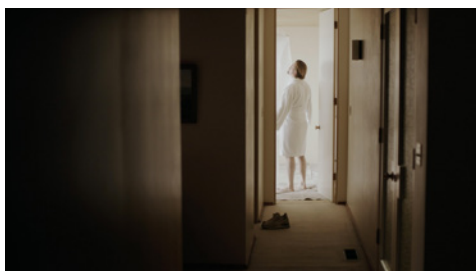


Brett Kavanaugh is Ruining My Sex Life

7 MINUTES • USA • WORLD PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *Kristin Slaysman*

A couple struggles to make a kinky sex tape in the wake of the Kavanaugh hearing.



Bronzed

12 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Mike Egan*

Neo-sun worshiper Martin prepares to appease the solar Gods with ritual human sacrifice. But first he needs a spray tan.

Comedy Shorts

81 MINUTES



Damage

8 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Matt Porter*

Mitch & Emma's breakup is interrupted by Ryan, a stranger looking to buy Mitch's bass amp.



Gopherit

12 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Bryan Poyser*

A freelancer working for a job-matching website gets hired to help a dominatrix with her invoices, but finds out there's more to the job than he thought.

- ★ Sep 22 - *Become a model earn \$1000 today* - (manhat)img
- ★ Sep 22 - *Dog Walker Needed- (Upper East Side)*img
- ★ Sep 22 - *Occasional Marijuana Smokers* - (Inwood / Wash Hts)
- ★ Sep 22 - *Seeking Spanish Speaking Nanny* - (Williamsburg Brc)
- ★ Sep 22 - *Make \$25-\$60 part or full-time* - (Upper East Side)
- ★ Sep 22 - *Brain & Metabolism Study (ages 16-21)* - (NYC)
- ★ Sep 22 - **DISCREET EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT** - (Anywhere)
- ★ Sep 22 - *Lead Bike Mechanic Supervisor - BKLYN* - (Bay Ri)
- ★ Sep 22 - *Seeking Experienced, Loving Nanny for Adorable*
- ★ Sep 22 - *PAID Online Survey on Health and Disease* - (new y)
- ★ Sep 22 - *Busy doggie daycare center seeks cleaner* - (Brooklyn)
- ★ Sep 22 - *CNA & HHA Class 100% Job Placement* - (manhat)

Executive Assistant

14 MINUTES • USA • WORLD PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *Kate Reed Petty*

A recent college graduate struggles to complete a freelance job for a cryptic client.



KING WAH (I THINK I LOVE YOU)

8 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Horatio Baltz*

A disgruntled delivery man, a woman with chronic déjà vu, Pat Sajak, and a slow dance in a Chinese takeout restaurant.



Comedy Shorts

81 MINUTES



Passive Aggressive Dads

5 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Jim Picariello*

Two middle-aged dads just want to spend a quiet day with their daughters at the park. But when an obnoxious group of teens drive by, too fast and too loud, it spurs these aging, disgruntled dads into a self-righteous act of passive-aggression.



Diverging Forms Shorts

A progressive program of short films that boldly eschew the traditions of form, time and content; Diverging Forms shorts push the boundaries of cinematic creativity into breathtaking new directions.

96 MINUTES

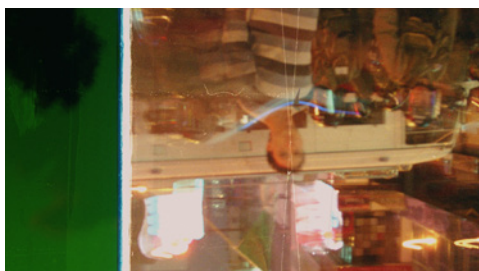


The Air of the Earth in Your Lungs

11 MINUTES • USA • 16MM

DIRECTOR *Ross Meckfessel*

Drones and GoPros survey the land while users roam digital forests, oceans, and lakes. Those clouds look compressed. That tree looks pixelated. A landscape film for the 21st century.



E-Ticket

13 MINUTES • HONG KONG, UK, USA • 35MM

DIRECTOR *Simon Liu*

16,000 splices in the making, *E-Ticket* is a frantic (re)cataloguing of a personal archive and rebirth to forgotten images. 35mm snaps sputter from view after being obsessively spliced frame by frame. Dante's Inferno for the streaming age; freedom of movement for the modern cloud.



every dog has its day

7 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Alison Nguyen*

An archival work which explores the porous visual relationships between domestic intimacy, terror and technology in consumer-produced media.



Diverging Forms Shorts

96 MINUTES



Eyes at the Specter Glass

12 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Matthew Wade*

An otherworldly vision of the power of light and the weight of planets.



FOREIGN QUARTERS

15 MINUTES • SRI LANKA, CHINA, USA

DIRECTOR *Rajee Samarasinghe*

The condition of distance, genetic to the ethnographic image, traces the elusive qualities of my mother's past and persona as a woman of partial Chinese heritage.

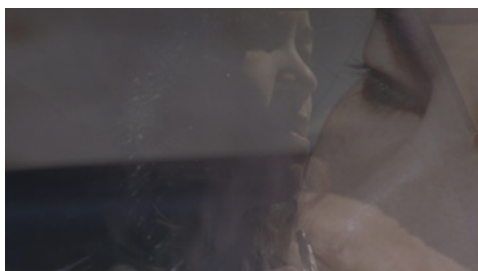


July Test

9 MINUTES • USA • WORLD PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *Karen Yasinsky*

A woman is invited to interpret the silent diva Lyda Borelli in Rapsodia Satanica on a hot day.



Life After Love

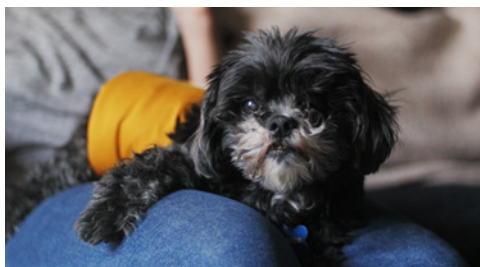
8 MINUTES • USA • 16MM

DIRECTOR *Zachary Epcar*

A shifting in the light of the lot, where parked cars become containers for a collective estrangement.

Diverging Forms Shorts CONTINUED

96 MINUTES



Norman Norman

7 MINUTES • CANADA

DIRECTOR *Sophy Romvari*

A young woman grapples with the declining health of her beloved dog in this film about mortality, cloning, and Barbra Streisand.



Realms

8 MINUTES • USA • WORLD PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *Benjamin Rinehardt*

A journey through dark and hallucinatory worlds.



The Reunion

6 MINUTES • USA • U.S. PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *Suneil Sanzgiri*

An uncanny vision of power in the age of climate disaster, a narrator reconciles the radical possibilities of resilience and creation out of the ruins of a former utopian society in 1850's Texas, sparking questions of what becomes of our dreams for a better world.



Documentary Shorts

An eclectic array of short-form non-fiction films encompassing a variety of vérité — the difficulties of expressing intimacy, century-old unexploded ordnance, street photography in the age of social media, obsessive audiophiles, wildfire fallout and the triumph of trauma survival.

92 MINUTES



After the Fire

17 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Derek Knowles and Spencer Seibert*

After the Fire follows three residents of Sonoma Valley as they struggle to find their places in a community that has been reshaped overnight by the historic Northern California wildfires.



I Think I'll Make It

17 MINUTES • USA, CANADA

DIRECTOR *Dara Bratt*

When Kat Hurley was five years old, her father murdered her mother. This is her struggle to be more than just another victim of a gruesome crime.



I've Never Been A Fisherman

5 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Joe Stankus*

An Instagram street photographer recounts the creation of a particularly interesting photograph.

Documentary Shorts

92 MINUTES

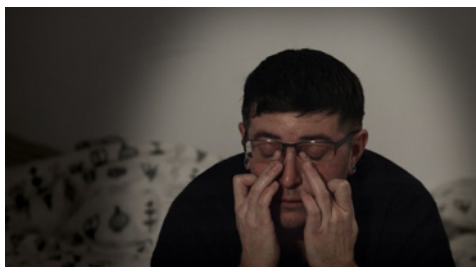


Once & Again

25 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Isabel Dunn*

"How can I get closer to the past, which moves farther and farther away?" So begins *Once & Again*, a film about early recorded sound and the hunger for connection across time that marks each of us.



Something to Cry About

12 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Jules Roskam*

Something to Cry About is a touching and humorous short documentary that explores the difficulty of expressing intimacy between men, the complexities of desire, and the gift of a good cry.



Zone Rouge

16 MINUTES • CANADA, FRANCE •
WORLD PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *Dominique van Olm*

Seasoned Minesweeper Guy Momper and his team of French De-miners extract unexploded munitions from the First and Second World War, their mission is estimated to take 300 years to complete.



Narrative Shorts

This dynamic, globetrotting collection of shorts offers supremely enjoyable episodes of storytelling in brief. Those on the hunt for engaging tales told from beginning to end, need not look beyond this showcase of narrative skill and rigor.

93 MINUTES



Acid

18 MINUTES • FRANCE

DIRECTOR *Just Philippot*

A troubling cloud is taking shape somewhere out west. It's now slowly moving inland, forcing the population to run away. As the cloud keeps on moving forward inescapably, panic strikes. That cumulus is acid.

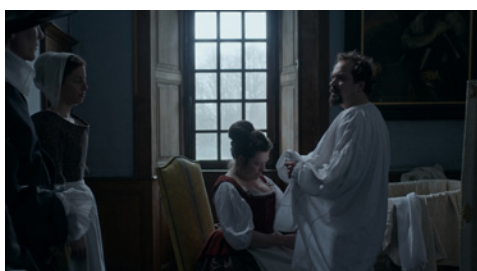


All These Creatures

13 MINUTES • AUSTRALIA • 16MM

DIRECTOR *Charles Williams*

An adolescent boy attempts to untangle his memories of a mysterious infestation, the unravelling of his father, and the little creatures inside us all.



CONGRESS

19 MINUTES • FRANCE • U.S. PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *Virginie Berthier*

August 1661. Henriette de Coligny, Comtesse de la Suze, solicits from the ecclesiastical justice the holding of a Congress.

Narrative Shorts

93 MINUTES



Dios Nunca Muere

15 MINUTES • USA, IRELAND

DIRECTOR *Barbara Cigarroa*

Living in hidden America, Paula, a Mexican farmworker, struggles to raise two children on her own. When a new caravan arrives on the cramped lot they live on, Paula allows herself to imagine the home is theirs—a fantasy highlighting the fragility of her reality and her family.



Good Boy

11 MINUTES • CANADA • 35MM

DIRECTOR *Fantavious Fritz*

A K9 officer trainee and his partner train for their first day on patrol. Play, repetition and positive re-enforcement reveal the casual nature of manufacturing violence on command.



The Outsider

17 MINUTES • INDIA

DIRECTOR *Yudhajit Basu and Prithvijoy Ganguly*

Against the mountainous terrain and misty landscape, this is about a contemplative return of a man to his village after a decade.



One WTFs, the Other Doesn't... Shorts

Hilarious, perplexing, and boldly transgressive in equal measure, MdFFs signature WTF Shorts offer a uniquely invigorating ride that won't easily be forgotten. As is our tradition, the block adapts its name from a cinematic landmark which celebrates the equally singular and frequently unclassifiable films within.

80 MINUTES



Black Dog

15 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Joshua Tuthill*

A dark family drama set during the space race of the 1960's, utilizing stop-motion animation and archival footage to elucidate a time of heated social and political tension.

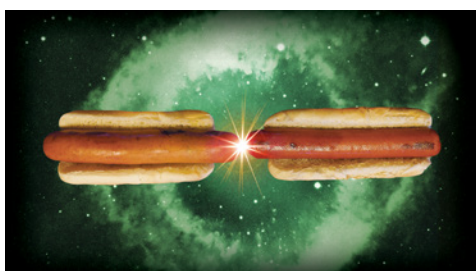


Deep Tissue

9 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Meredith Alloway*

A girl orders a special massage.



Docking

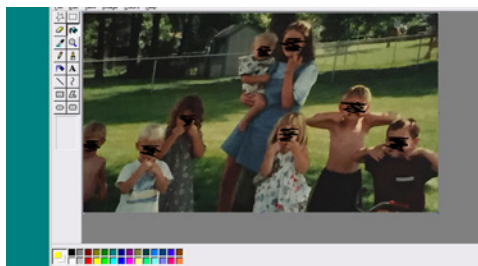
5 MINUTES • CANADA • 35MM

DIRECTOR *Pierre Brouillette-Hamelin*

Trevor reflects on his fear of dating.

One WTFs, the Other Doesn't... Shorts

80 MINUTES



Five Secrets to Mom

2 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR Charles Dillon Ward

Inspired by a teenager's online confession on Quora, *Five Secrets to Mom* is a surreal and darkly comedic short that uses the filmmaker's actual family photos, Microsoft Paint 95, and an automated voice to tell a story about the comfort and vulnerability in anonymity.



The French Toast Man

3 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR Alix Tobey Southwick and Skizz Cyzyk

Rev. Fred Lane's classic children's tale, about a man who delivers French toast to neighborhood children, is brought to life as an animated musical storybook.



Help

3 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR Lola B. Pierson & Cricket Arrison

A woman asks for helps.



It's the Knees!

7 MINUTES • USA • VHS

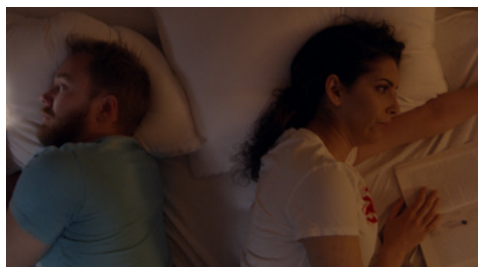
DIRECTOR Grace Sloan

It's not the singularity that brings forth the robotic annihilation of the human race, *It's the Knees!* (A Found Footage Sci-Fi VHS Glitch Tape)



One WTFs, the Other Doesn't... Shorts

80 MINUTES



Lukewarm Liquids

4 MINUTES • USA • WORLD PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *Paul K. Oh*

A young couple experiences tensions surrounding a back scratch. The unreciprocated commitment between the two will lead to a gory end.



The Procedure Part 2

3 MINUTES • CANADA

DIRECTOR *Calvin Lee Reeder*

A man is forced to endure another strange experiment.



Technology Lake: Meditations on Death and Sex

8 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Brandon Daley*

A man and his dog navigate the perils of modern technology.



Toilet Tale

6 MINUTES • USA • SUPER 8MM

DIRECTOR *James Hollenbaugh*

A traumatic experience in 1964 causes a family to experience a lifetime of bathroom related predicaments.

One WTFs, the Other Doesn't... Shorts

80 MINUTES



Wakey Wakey

4 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Mary Dauterman*

Blood n' guts, the deep blue sea, tooth decay, and her lazy (but weirdly menacing?) boyfriend add up to a really rough night of sleep for Alex. Which results in disaster. And... more blood.



Who's a Good Boy

11 MINUTES • USA • U.S. PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *Alex Phillips*

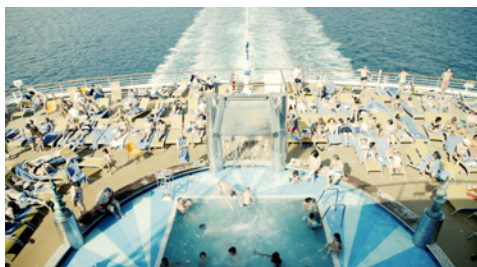
A creepy park urinator is kidnapped by his victims and becomes their pet dog.



Unorthodox Shorts

This innovative collection plays in the gray, showcasing works on the cusp of multiple genres. Beyond mere documentary, these works astutely blend aspects of narrative, animation, comedy, or the avant-garde into markedly nontraditional frameworks.

84 MINUTES



All Inclusive

10 MINUTES • SWITZERLAND

DIRECTOR *Corina Schwingruber Ilić*

Under the spell of mass entertainment on the high seas.



Carlotta's Face

5 MINUTES • GERMANY

DIRECTOR *Valentin Riedl and Frédéric Schuld*

Through art, Carlotta overcomes a rare brain condition that prevents her from recognizing faces.



Cuba Scalds His Hand

4 MINUTES • USA • WORLD PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *Abby Sun & Daniel Garber*

Behind the scenes of the annual high school rodeo championship, Naudy Exposito, a.k.a. 'Cuba,' feeds the bucking horses and bulls. When an accident befalls him, he does what cowboys do best: work through the pain.

Unorthodox Shorts

84 MINUTES



Deborah Harry Does Not Like Interviews

17 MINUTES • USA • WORLD PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *Meghan Fredrich*

Blondie's Debbie Harry endures years of superficial, tedious, and demeaning questions from journalists until she devises a brilliant way to turn interviews on their head.



Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sudden Birth* (*but were afraid to ask)

11 MINUTES • UK, GERMANY, USA

DIRECTOR *Scott Calonico*

The amazing origin story of one of the most unintentionally hilarious and disturbing educational films ever created. In color.



Gone Sale

5 MINUTES • USA • SUPER 8MM

DIRECTOR *Matt Meindl*

Faceless forms inhabit the shadow-sprayed remnants of an electronic shopping mall board game. Slumber party capitalism, now a bargain bin of lost dreams.



Pelourinho: They Don't Really Care About Us

9 MINUTES • GHANA • SUPER 8MM

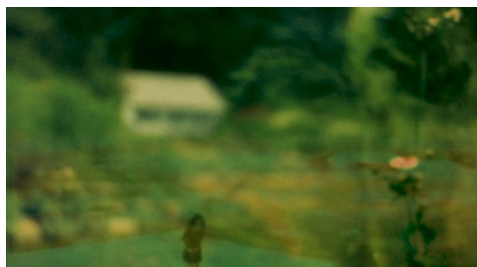
DIRECTOR *Akosua Adoma Owusu*

Freely inspired by a letter in 1927 from Pan Africanist W.E.B. Du Bois to the American embassy in Brazil.



Unorthodox Shorts

84 MINUTES



pink carnations

10 MINUTES • USA • 16MM & HD •
WORLD PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *Nadia Hironaka & Matthew Suib*

An experimental reflection of a Japanese American family's history at an internment camp during World War II.

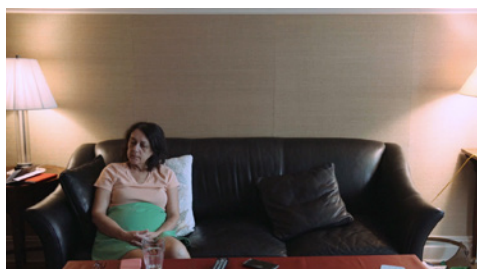


Quarterbacks

6 MINUTES • USA

DIRECTOR *Jason Giampietro*

On the eve of the 2018 NFL draft, a conversation about the top quarterback prospects available turns toward the league's tendencies of racial bias at its most prestigious position.



Safari Video

7 MINUTES • USA • WORLD PREMIERE

DIRECTOR *Artemis Shaw*

After returning home from a family safari, an aspiring filmmaker turns her lens away from wild animals and onto her mother.

Panels & Events

TUESDAY, MAY 7		WEDNESDAY, MAY 8		THURSDAY, MAY 9	
+	<p>7:00 – 9:30 PM • PARKWAY 2</p> <p>Baltimore Filmmaker Collective Pitch Competition</p> <p>Open to the public. Individuals interested in taking part in the competition should go to: baltimorefilmmakerscollective.com</p> <p>Cash prizes will be awarded at the completion of the event.</p>				
FRIDAY, MAY 10		SATURDAY, MAY 11		SUNDAY, MAY 12	
A	<p>12:00 – 1:00 PM</p> <p>Tech & Genre Experiments in Narrative Filmmaking</p>	D	<p>12:00 – 1:00 PM</p> <p>Baltimore Screenwriters Competition Announcement & Screenwriter Panel Discussion</p> <p><small>Sponsored by Baltimore Film Office/BOPA</small></p>	G	<p>12:00 – 1:00 PM</p> <p>Filmmaking as Community Making</p>
B	<p>1:30 – 2:30 PM</p> <p>Focus on Marginalized Filmmakers & Cinema of the Global South</p>	E	<p>1:30 – 2:30 PM</p> <p>Baltimore Women's Media Alliance Gathering</p>	H	<p>1:30 – 2:30 PM</p> <p>Collaboration in Filmmaking</p>
C	<p>3:00 – 4:00 PM</p> <p>Creative Non-Fiction</p>	F	<p>3:00 – 4:00 PM</p> <p>Documentary Ethics</p>	I	<p>3:00 – 4:00 PM</p> <p>Filmmaker/Educator: Wearing Two Hats</p>

Unless otherwise noted, all panels are hosted at:

A Corresponding Panel Letter on Film Schedule Grid

IMPACT HUB BALTIMORE
10 E North Ave

+ Affiliated Event





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TO OUR
VOLUNTEERS!

MARYLAND
FILM FESTIVAL

MARYLAND
FILM FESTIVAL



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Bri Merkel
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Screening Committee Coordinator

Scott Braid

Special thanks to Eric Cotten for the hundreds of hours of viewing and invaluable feedback he gives the screening committee each year.

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Scott Braid
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Reuben Hess Webber Braid	Angie Elliott	Kate Khatib	Zez Ready	Megan Webber
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Festival Program Credits

Editors

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Mitchell Goodrich

Program Design

Post Typography

Program Layout

Mitchell Goodrich

Laurels Design

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Jared Earley
Sandra Gibson
Amy Grace

Julia Gunnison
Anna Hanson
Andy Markowitz
KJ Mohr
Meredith Moore

Ginevra Shay
Joe Tropea
Andy Winegrove

Festival Venues

SNF PARKWAY *5 W. North Ave.*

The recently restored and expanded 3-screen, year-round home of MdFF at the SW corner of Charles & North. (Seats 412, 80, 80)

IMPACT HUB (FESTIVAL HQ & MAIN BOX OFFICE) *10 E. North Ave.*

In the Centre Theatre on north side of North, east of Charles.

FALVEY HALL AT MICA BROWN CENTER *1301 W. Mt. Royal Ave.*

Our largest venue. Located on the MICA campus. (Seats 520)

BBOX AT MICA GATEWAY *1601 W. Mt. Royal Ave.*

At SE corner of W. North & W. Mt. Royal. (Seats 200)

MICA LAZARUS STUDIO CENTER *131 W. North Ave.*

On south side of North, 1 block west of Parkway. (Seats 135)

WINDUP SPACE (FILMMAKER/VIP LOUNGE) *12 W. North Ave.*

Directly across from Parkway on north side of North.

YNOT LOT (GENERAL INFO & FOOD VENDORS) *4 W. North Ave.*

At NW corner of Charles & North.

For general information please call 410-752-8083 or visit mdfilmfest.com

ADMIT

Tickets for all venues will be available from the film festival box office at the Tent Village. Tickets for individual screenings can also be purchased at the venue.



The free Charm City Circulator bus runs between downtown Baltimore and 33rd St. via Charles St. and Saint Paul St.

Monday–Thursday:

7am–8pm

Friday: 7am–Midnight

Saturday: 9am–Midnight

Sunday: 9am–8pm

Download the app or see charmcitycirculator.com for full schedules and routes.

Approximate Venue Walking Times

TIMES IN MINUTES	PARKWAY	FESTIVAL HQ/ MAIN BOX OFFICE	MICA BROWN CENTER	MICA GATEWAY	MICA LAZARUS STUDIO CENTER	WINDUP SPACE	YNOT LOT
PARKWAY		2	10	11	3	2	1
FESTIVAL HQ/ MAIN BOX OFFICE	2		11	12	4	2	1
MICA BROWN CENTER	10	11		6	4	8	8
MICA GATEWAY	11	12	6		8	10	10
MICA LAZARUS STUDIO CENTER	3	4	4	8		2	2
WINDUP SPACE	2	2	8	10	2		1
YNOT LOT	1	1	8	10	2	1	

2019 Festival Map



Recommended Walking Routes

- WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE
- NOT WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE

Stairs

Charm City Circulator Stop (PURPLE ROUTE)

Light Rail Station

Food / Dining

Parking

VIP / Staff / Volunteer Parking
METERED STREET PARKING ALSO AVAILABLE NEAR MOST LOCATIONS



1000 FEET

1/4 MILE

**4 DAYS +
5 NIGHTS
WITH
100+ FILMS
FOR
EVERYONE**

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