Melbourne International Film Festival
71st edition
Program
August 2023
03–20 Cinemas
18–27 Online
The Melbourne International Film Festival acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we live, learn and work, and pays respect to their Elders past and present, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. MIFF celebrates the history and contemporary creativity of the world's oldest living culture.
Enjoy the festival.

to the organisers, workers, volunteers—and creatives—work to provide a platform for First Nations storytellers and notables. An event every Victorian can enjoy. And the festival's reach extends from Castlemaine to the Capitol in Warrnambool, plus a cinema right here on our shores.

Today, it's better than ever before. Like MIFF drawing in thousands of visitors from across Melbourne, the city is buzzing with energy. And the joy of MIFF can be seen here, even if the figure isn't as impressive as in previous years. Such is the joy of a festival. Think and see for yourself. Such is the joy of MIFF. It's once again taking over the month of August, drawing in visitors from across the country Victorian centres, as part of MIFF Regional. Or wherever you are in Australia, the magic of MIFF is yours via a terrific array of festival features and shorts playing in the latter part of our festival dates on our at-home platform, MIFF Play.

In 2023, with wall-to-wall hurling and algorithms comprising over 50% of the festival's programming, MIFF is flying the flag for the survival, for the thriving, of cinema that matters. We celebrate that festivals such as ours are rare, special places—communities built on top of an intimate, familiar, and unfamilial; an alternative to the bold-stroke brush lines of the art world; a space, a time, a place where you can lean forward, to make meaning from everything on offer. Thank you for your support. We can't wait to share what's in store for you this year, at the 71st edition of the Melbourne International Film Festival!

Al Cossar
Artistic Director

Welcome back to the welcome page of our much-missed and newly restored print Program Guide for 2023—that familiar place where we reintroduce and ready ourselves for the remarkable cinematic feats of a Melbourne taken over by MIFF each August. Highlights at the ready, all?

If you've paused to look at our cover art this year on the way through, you will have seen a figure—or something approaching one, perhaps—colourful, unfocused. For me, the joy of MIFF can be seen here, even if the figure cannot be clearly seen. It is a space to celebrate the uncertain, and the unfamiliar; an alternative to the bold-stroke brush lines of the art world; a space, a time, a place where you can lean forward, to make meaning from everything on offer. Thank you for your support. We can't wait to share what's in store for you this year, at the 71st edition of the Melbourne International Film Festival!

Andrews MP

MIFF is once again taking over the month of August, with over 50% of its programming dedicated to filmmakers; a space, a time, a place where you can lean forward, to make meaning from everything on offer. Thank you for your support. We can't wait to share what's in store for you this year, at the 71st edition of the Melbourne International Film Festival!

The Hon. Daniel Andrews MP
Premier of Victoria

It's my pleasure to welcome you to the 71st Melbourne International Film Festival. Victoria is the cultural capital of Australia. In no small way, that's because of internationally celebrated events like MIFF drawing in thousands of visitors from across our state—and the country.

Every year, MIFF breaks new ground. Since 1952, the festival has showcased the finest local and international cinema right here on our shores. Today, it's better than ever before. And the joy of MIFF can be seen here, even if the figure isn't as impressive as in previous years. Such is the joy of a festival. Think and see for yourself. Such is the joy of MIFF. It's once again taking over the month of August, drawing in thousands of visitors from across Melbourne, the city is buzzing with energy. And the joy of MIFF can be seen here, even if the figure isn't as impressive as in previous years. Such is the joy of a festival. It's once again taking over the month of August, drawing in thousands of visitors from across Melbourne, the city is buzzing with energy. And the joy of MIFF can be seen here, even if the figure isn't as impressive as in previous years. Such is the joy of a festival.

The Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP
Minister for Creative Industries

The Melbourne International Film Festival illuminates our city each year, enticing cinephiles and the film industry to Melbourne's unique venues and theatres. The brilliant and diverse program offers audiences access to world-class films.

MIFF is a highlight on our city's arts and culture calendar and contributes to Melbourne's reputation as the home of powerful and creative events.

The City of Melbourne is proud to be a long-time supporter of the festival, which celebrates Melbourne's reputation as a global screen city, home to a vibrant calendar of world-class screen events.

The Melbourne International Film Festival is flying the flag for the survival, for the thriving, of cinema that matters. We celebrate that festivals such as ours are rare, special places—communities built on top of an intimate, familiar, and unfamilial; an alternative to the bold-stroke brush lines of the art world; a space, a time, a place where you can lean forward, to make meaning from everything on offer. Thank you for your support. We can't wait to share what's in store for you this year, at the 71st edition of the Melbourne International Film Festival!

Sally Capp
Lord Mayor of Melbourne

Australia's longest-running film festival returns for its 71st year with a show-stopping program celebrating the very best of international and local film.

From the internationally acclaimed Opening Night film Shyboy by Victorian filmmaker Noora Niasari to the world premiere of Ego by the City of Melbourne International Film Festival will celebrate local stories and place our local talent firmly in the spotlight.

The Victorian Government is proud to once again support the festival, which celebrates Melbourne's reputation as a global screen city, home to a vibrant calendar of world-class screen events.

This year's festival also sees the return of the Bright Horizons Award, a substantial cash prize as part of the MIFF Awards, honouring the work of up-and-coming filmmakers.

Congratulations to the entire team at MIFF on another fantastic festival—and see you at the movies!

The Melbourne International Film Festival is once again taking over the month of August, with over 50% of its programming dedicated to filmmakers; a space, a time, a place where you can lean forward, to make meaning from everything on offer. Thank you for your support. We can't wait to share what's in store for you this year, at the 71st edition of the Melbourne International Film Festival!

The Sun Foundation
The Pratt Foundation
The Sun Foundation
Ricci Swart AM

Gold Patrons
Ying Ang & Michael Chazan
Greg Bassey (Gentle Giant Media Group)
Paul & Samantha Cross
Constellation Creatives
Zahava Elenberg & Justin Abrahams
Rosemary Forbes & Ian Hocking
Konfir Kabo & Monica Lim
Joel & Yael Pearlman
Anna Schweitzer AM
Dreay Storm
Krista Vandy & Brett Rogers
Paul & Sarah Wiegart

Silver Patrons
Jane Albou
Mike Baard
Sally Caplan
Kath Chambers & Ken Connor
Ian & Chapman
Josh Chye
Claire Dobbins AM
Nils Endres
Iona Elenberg
Adeline Hiew
Gilda Howard & Bill Beck
Greg Hugan
Dr Andrew Lu AM & Dr Geoffrey Lancaster AO
Brad MacDonald
Pamela Goodwin & Vic Zbar
Nancy Margaret
Vlad Mijic
Natalie Miller AO
Traidi Moon OAM
Evan Mynard
Jo Plank
Vic Pope
Joel Rembach
Sage Foundation
Martina Schafer
Anne & Michael Smith
Pinky Watson
Lou Weis & Kim Kneipp
Teresa Zoliniewicz
And all those who wish to remain anonymous.

miff.com.au/patron

The Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP
Minister for Creative Industries

The Melbourne International Film Festival illuminates our city each year, enticing cinephiles and the film industry to Melbourne's unique venues and theatres. The brilliant and diverse program offers audiences access to world-class films.

MIFF is a highlight on our city's arts and culture calendar and contributes to Melbourne's reputation as the home of powerful and creative events.

The City of Melbourne is proud to be a long-time supporter of the festival, which celebrates Melbourne's reputation as a global screen city, home to a vibrant calendar of world-class screen events.

This year's festival also sees the return of the Bright Horizons Award, a substantial cash prize as part of the MIFF Awards, honouring the work of up-and-coming filmmakers.

Congratulations to the entire team at MIFF on another fantastic festival—and see you at the movies!

The Melbourne International Film Festival is once again taking over the month of August, with over 50% of its programming dedicated to filmmakers; a space, a time, a place where you can lean forward, to make meaning from everything on offer. Thank you for your support. We can't wait to share what's in store for you this year, at the 71st edition of the Melbourne International Film Festival!

The Melbourne International Film Festival illuminates our city each year, enticing cinephiles and the film industry to Melbourne's unique venues and theatres. The brilliant and diverse program offers audiences access to world-class films.

MIFF is a highlight on our city's arts and culture calendar and contributes to Melbourne's reputation as the home of powerful and creative events.

The City of Melbourne is proud to be a long-time supporter of the festival, which celebrates Melbourne's reputation as a global screen city, home to a vibrant calendar of world-class screen events.

This year's festival also sees the return of the Bright Horizons Award, a substantial cash prize as part of the MIFF Awards, honouring the work of up-and-coming filmmakers.

Congratulations to the entire team at MIFF on another fantastic festival—and see you at the movies!

Gold Patrons
Ying Ang & Michael Chazan
Greg Bassey (Gentle Giant Media Group)
Paul & Samantha Cross
Constellation Creatives
Zahava Elenberg & Justin Abrahams
Rosemary Forbes & Ian Hocking
M & Johnston
Konfir Kabo & Monica Lim
Joel & Yael Pearlman
Stephen & Sheryle Rogerson
Anna Schweitzer AM
Dreay Storm
Krista Vandy & Brett Rogers
Paul & Sarah Wiegart

Silver Patrons
Jane Albou
Mike Baard
Sally Caplan
Kath Chambers & Ken Connor
Ian & Chapman
Josh Chye
Claire Dobbins AM
Nils Endres
Iona Elenberg
Adeline Hiew
Gilda Howard & Bill Beck
Greg Hugan
Dr Andrew Lu AM & Dr Geoffrey Lancaster AO
Brad MacDonald
Pamela Goodwin & Vic Zbar
Nancy Margaret
Vlad Mijic
Natalie Miller AO
Traidi Moon OAM
Evan Mynard
Jo Plank
Vic Pope
Joel Rembach
Sage Foundation
Martina Schafer
Anne & Michael Smith
Pinky Watson
Lou Weis & Kim Kneipp
Teresa Zoliniewicz
And all those who wish to remain anonymous.

miff.com.au/patron

Contents

Introduction 3
Your Guide to MIFF 4
Campari Cinema Lounge 5
Gala & Special Events 6
MIFF Awards 9
Bright Horizons Competition 10
Headliners 14
Australian 16
MIFF Premiere Fund 17
Asia Pacific 18
Africa & Middle East 20
Director in Focus: Safi Faye 20
Europe & UK 22
North America 24
Latin America 26
Critical Condition 28
Restorations 29
Documentaries 30
Music on Film 33
Night Shift 34
Director in Focus: Argento Restored 35
Experiments 36
Animation 36
MIFF Schools 36
MIFF Shorts 38
MIFF XR 40
MIFF Talks 42
MIFF Industry Public Events 42
MIFF Play Highlights 43
Regional Screenings 43
Food and Film 44
Film Index 46
Access 47
Credits 47

Available on MIFF Play From 18 August

For accessible session info, visit miff.com.au/access.

Book now online or using the MIFF 2023 App

MIFF Guest
Selected sessions may feature festival guest introduction or Q&A

For full program details including session times, extended film descriptions and the complete festival schedule, visit miff.com.au.
Your Guide to MIFF

Cinemas
03–20 August
Tickets to MIFF sessions in cinemas are strictly limited. Book ahead to avoid missing out.

Regional
11–13 and 18–20 August
MIFF returns to select cinemas in Bendigo, Bright, Castlemaine, Echuca, Geelong, Rosebud and Warrnambool.
See page 43 for more information.

Online
18–27 August
Extend your festival with MIFF Play. Catch up on titles you missed and enjoy a selection of free programming, including the winners of the MIFF Shorts Awards. Bundle up and save with a MIFF Play Flexi-pass!
Be sure to book ahead, as capacity is strictly limited.
See page 43 for more information.

Stay updated
Follow us to keep up to date with program announcements, late additions, encores and surprise screenings.
#MIFF2023

Tickets and Passes

Classification
The Classification Board has granted MIFF special customs and censorship clearances. Except where indicated, anyone under 18 (including infants) cannot attend sessions. For MIFF Schools films (page 36), no-one under the age of 15 will be admitted unless in the company of an adult guardian.
For more detailed information, visit miff.com.au/classification.

Tickets and Passes

Standard Admission
Peak (Mon–Fri evening sessions and weekends):
FULL: $26
CONCESSION: $21
MEMBERS: $19.50
Off-peak (Mon–Fri daytime sessions):
FULL: $22.50
CONCESSION: $19.50
MEMBERS: $17

Discovery Pass
See more, save more.
Six (6) standard festival admissions at MIFF 2023
FULL: $115
CONCESSION: $95
MEMBERS: $85

Bright Horizons Pass
See all 11 films in the prestigious Bright Horizons competition at a discounted rate.
FULL: $85
CONCESSION: $70
MEMBERS: $65

U26 Pass
U26 MIFF Member exclusive
Redeemable for three off-peak sessions during the festival.
U26 MEMBERS: $30

Share Pass
The best way to see MIFF with friends.
12 standard festival admissions, which you can enjoy by yourself or share with up to three (3) friends per session.
FULL: $305
CONCESSION: $255
MEMBERS: $210

Festival Passport
Included with a Deluxe MIFF Membership
Admission to every standard session at MIFF 2023.
DELUXE MEMBERSHIP: $290

Passes are valid for standard in-cinema sessions only unless otherwise stated. For full terms and conditions, visit miff.com.au/tickets.

Book Tickets

Online – miff.com.au
MIFF 2023 App
Available for iOS and Android
Proudly supported by Ferve Tickets

Phone – 03 8660 4888
Pre-festival Hours
11am–4pm
Festival Hours
10am–9pm

Box Office – Pre-festival
ACMI Box Office
10am–4pm, Fri–Wed
10am–6.30pm, Thu

Box Office – During Festival
ACMI Box Office
10am until 15 minutes after start of last session.
Box Offices at festival screening venues open one hour prior to the first session and close 15 minutes after start of last session.

Standby queues
MIFF will operate queues for all sessions listed on standby. Please see Front of House or Box Office staff at each venue for details. Standby queues begin no earlier than 30 minutes before sessions commence and may be admitted up to 15 minutes into session time. Admission to sessions is not guaranteed.
Accessibility

MIFF is committed to delivering access for everyone. The festival offers a range of accessible services across our venues, screenings and events in order to facilitate all film lovers’ access to quality cinema experiences.

MIFF is proud to offer a selection of films screening with Open Captions, Audio Description tracks, films that are 100% subtitled, Auslan-interpreted events and sensory-friendly sessions. Step-free and wheelchair access is also available across all metropolitan venues, while MIFF Play offers a curated program of films to stream from the comfort of your home.

See page 47 for more information and visit miff.com.au/access.

If you require any access service that MIFF offers, please advise our Ticketing team on boxoffice@miff.com.au, by phone on 03 8660 4888, or in person at a MIFF Box Office to ensure that MIFF can provide you with the best customer service.

You can also get in touch with MIFF’s Access Coordinator by emailing access@miff.com.au to discuss any services that MIFF offers or for more information.

Get the MIFF App

Browse the program, watch film trailers, make a shortlist of your favourites and access all your tickets in one place with the MIFF 2023 App.

Available on iOS and Android

Schedule your festival

Save a shortlist, compare session times and schedule your festival with the online schedule grid at miff.com.au.

Metro Venues

1. ACMI + MIFF Box Office
   Fed Square
2. Forum Melbourne
   154 Flinders St (cnr Flinders St & Russell St)
3. The Capitol
   113 Swanston St
4. Kino Cinema
   Lower Ground Level, 45 Collins St
5. Hoyts Melbourne Central
   Level 3, cnr Swanston St & La Trobe St
6. Comedy Theatre
   240 Exhibition St
7. IMAX
   Rathdowne St, Carlton
8. The Astor Theatre
   1 Chapel St, St Kilda East

Discount Parking

Pre-book your car parking and save.

Discount parking is available at Secure Parking locations throughout the CBD. Discounted prices only available by pre-booking online.

Apply promo code on booking page: MIFFDAY for $25 Day Rate (Monday to Friday)
MIFF for $12 Night and Weekend
Visit secureparking.com.au/miff for full terms and conditions.

The place to see and be seen at MIFF.

Join us for pre-screening drinks and post-screening tipples.

CAMPARI

CINEMA LOUNGE

ACMI, FED SQUARE
OPEN 5PM – LATE

HAPPY HOUR 5PM – 6PM

Menu by Karen Martini of HERO
Drinks by Wynns, Mountain Goat and Champagne Duperrey
DJs by Skylab Radio
Cocktails by Campari

MIFF x ACMI x HERO

Schedule your festival

Save a shortlist, compare session times and schedule your festival with the online schedule grid at miff.com.au.

Get the MIFF App

Browse the program, watch film trailers, make a shortlist of your favourites and access all your tickets in one place with the MIFF 2023 App.

Available on iOS and Android

Discount Parking

Pre-book your car parking and save.

Discount parking is available at Secure Parking locations throughout the CBD. Discounted prices only available by pre-booking online.

Apply promo code on booking page: MIFFDAY for $25 Day Rate (Monday to Friday)
MIFF for $12 Night and Weekend
Visit secureparking.com.au/miff for full terms and conditions.
Opening Night Gala
Thursday 3 August

MIFF 2023’s festivities commence with the Australian premiere of Noora Niasari’s Shayda.

Rub shoulders with the best-dressed and brightest stars on the red carpet with a drink on arrival, to be followed by the film screening with special guest introductions.

After the screening, enjoy drinks and canapés, entertainment and dancing at the Shayda-inspired afterparty, to be held at the iconic State Library of Victoria.

Music on Film Gala
Thursday 10 August

Be the first to see the biopic of the year at the world premiere of Ego: The Michael Gudinski Story.

Join us on the rock ‘n’ roll red carpet with a drink on arrival, followed by the film screening with special guest introductions.

Ego: The Michael Gudinski Story
Dir. Paul Goldman  Australia

The wild ride of maverick entrepreneur Michael Gudinski, who defied convention and revolutionised the Australian music industry over five decades.

Michael Gudinski was a music man, impresario and natural born hustler. He repeatedly risked everything for his one obsession: Australian music. At age 19, he launched Mushroom Records and went on to sign and nurture iconic artists including Skyhooks, Split Enz, Jimmy Barnes, Paul Kelly, Hunters & Collectors, Kylie Minogue, Archie Roach and Youths Yindi. But he wasn’t content with just a label – his hunger extended to being on the road promoting legendary international acts such as Foo Fighters, Ed Sheeran, Bruce Springsteen and Sting. There’s barely a living Australian whose life hasn’t been touched by the music he was behind.

Helmed by acclaimed feature film, documentary and music video director Paul Goldman (Suburban Mayhem, MIFF 2006; Australian Rules, MIFF 2002) and produced by Bethany Jones (Ways To Kill Naj), Ego features personal accounts from Gudinski himself, exclusive interviews with some of the world’s most influential artists, rare archival footage and an electrifying soundtrack.

Shayda
Dir. Noora Niasari  Australia

Cannes Best Actress winner Zar Amir-Ebrahimi (Holy Spider, MIFF 2022) anchors this Sundance Audience Award–winning portrait of a mother seeking a new life for herself and her daughter.

Shayda, a brave Iranian mother, finds refuge in an Australian women’s shelter with her six-year-old daughter. Over Persian New Year, they take solace in Nowruz rituals and new beginnings, but when her estranged husband re-enters their lives, Shayda’s path to freedom is jeopardised.

Supported by the MIFF Premiere Fund, the accomplished feature debut from MIFF Accelerator Lab alumna Noora Niasari (Tâm, MIFF 2020; Waterfall, MIFF 2017) was produced by Vincent Sheehan and Niasari, and executive-produced by Cate Blanchett. While forthright about the challenges of healing for those who have survived domestic violence, the film also shines a light on the indomitable hope that propels its spirited, beautifully complex characters. With affecting lead performances from Amir-Ebrahimi and newcomer Selina Zadeh – alongside Leah Purcell AM (The Drover’s Wife: The Legend of Molly Johnson, MIFF 2021), Jilian Nguyen (Newy Nurse), Daamah Sami (Waterfall, MIFF 2017), Mojgan Aria (Ways To Kill Naj) and Rina Mousavi – Shayda is a moving story of resilience, the desire for independence, and the sacrifices and strength of a mother’s love.

Presented by

6 Galas & Special Events

Roll out the red carpet and celebrate MIFF’s 71st edition in style with these unmissable events.

Galas & Special Events

Viewers’ Advice: Contains stroboscopic imagery; strong impact domestic violence themes; discussion of sexual violence.
The world premiere of Abebe-Butterfly Song will include a short Q&A and a special live performance by David Bridie, George Telek and their long-time collaborator Phil Wales. This promises to be a magical afternoon where film, cultures, friendships and music harmoniously collide.

**Abebe-Butterfly Song**

*Dir. Roska James, Australia, Papua New Guinea*

Discover the legacy and enduring friendship between Papuan musician Sir George Telek MBE and Not Drowning, Waving’s David Bridie.

In 1986, Bridie travelled to Papua New Guinea, where he heard the heartfelt sounds of Telek and the Mbai Stringband's Abebe (‘Butterfly Song’) on board a bus. It marked the beginning of a deep fascination with the nation and its culture—and a bond with Telek that would last more than 30 years. Abebe-Butterfly Song is a portrait not only of two musicians, but of the cross-cultural exchange between Australia and one of its closest neighbours.

**Planetarium Fulldome Showcase**

**5 & 12 August**

MIFF’s popular annual program of fulldome screenings at the Melbourne Planetarium returns for the 2023 festival.

**Showcase 1**

- **-22.7°C**
  *Dir. Dirty Monitor, SAT, Molécule*  
  Canada, France, Belgium

  An immersive work inspired by the musician Molécule's adventures in the polar circle.

  French music producer Molécule is the pioneer of ‘nomadic electronic music’. Following on from his debut album *60°43' Nord*, for which he spent 34 days on an Atlantic fishing trawler, he went to Greenland to make -22°C. Starting out from a remote Inuit village, he went on various trips to glaciers and fjords, during which he used his ‘survival electrotik’ to record environmental sounds such as howling wind, loud cracking deep in the Arctic ice and the crunch of snow. He then processed the sounds and mixed them into beats, which are reinforced in this unique and immersive fulldome live experience created by Dirty Monitor.

**Showcase 2**

- **Trial**
  *Dir. CLAUDE x Shin Hyejin*  
  South Korea

  An enveloping, awe-inspiring contemplation of the vast universe and humans’ place within it.

  The sudden fear that arises when imagining the infinite nature of the universe comes from realising the finiteness and weakness of human existence. Trial is intricately designed for us to think about what we can have and what attitudes we can bolster as soon as the moral that we have built and the laws that history has established become totally powerless.

**Biliminal**

*Dir. Franciscasum, Alexandre Pariseau*  
Canada

An immersive audiovisual experience through undulating and vaporous atmospheres, in the liminal space between the palpable and the elusive.

Biliminal immerses the audience in a universe of constant tension – between meditative lullabies and chaotic explosions. The work explores the metamorphosis of sound and visual materials inspired by reality, using algorithmic transformation systems to create new audiovisual landscapes whose various elements, at the limit of the perceptible, evoke an ethereal form of their original state.

**Encore Screenings & Late Announcements**

Check the website for up-to-date information, including late additions to the MIFF 2023 program.
Bright Horizons Award
Presented by VicScreen
The MIFF film competition's flagship prize awards $140,000 to a filmmaker on the ascent, making it the richest feature film prize in the Southern Hemisphere.

Blackmagic Design
Australian Innovation Award
This $70,000 cash prize recognises an outstanding Australian creative within a film playing in the MIFF program. The prize can be awarded to a director or a technical or creative lead.

Introducing
First Nations Film Creative Award in collaboration with Kearney Group
Awarded a $20,000 cash prize and $25,000 worth of financial services with Kearney Group, the winner will be an outstanding Australian First Nations creative within a film playing in the MIFF program.

Audience Award
Love it? Hate it? Rate it! This award crowns viewers' favourite title from the festival.
Vote for the Audience Award online or through the MIFF App.
Bright Horizons

Competition

MIFF’s film competition, Bright Horizons, recognises the new, the next, the breakthrough and the best, with an extraordinary international line-up of first- and second-time filmmakers competing for one of the richest film prizes in the world.

Inside the Yellow Cocoon Shell
Dir. Pham Thien An
Vietnam, France, Singapore, Spain

This hypnotic, transcendental debut feature follows a young man’s mystical journey across a beguiling rural Vietnam.

Thiên, a detached and morose Saigon thirtysomething, has little idea that his life is about to be pushed towards a vast spiritual reckoning. After learning of his sister-in-law’s death in a motorcycle accident, he is given temporary custody of her five-year-old son; together, uncle and nephew begin the arduous mission of returning the body to her home village for burial while searching for the boy’s father – Thiên’s long-lost brother.

Expanding on his prize-winning 2019 short Stay Awake, Be Ready, Pham Thien An has delivered a breathtaking, formally accomplished tale of family, loss and grief – a spellbinding journey across the seductive, dreamlike landscape of the countryside and the soul, which won the 2023 Camera d’Or at Cannes. With its hypnotic rhythm, exquisite visuals and textured sound design, Pham’s three-hour film evokes the work of such heavyweight auteurs as Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Tsai Ming-liang, confirming it as an unmissable masterpiece from one of cinema’s most gifted new talents.

182 MINS
MIFF GUEST

Ama Gloria
Dir. Marie Amachoukeli
France

A heartbreaking and unforgettable tender portrait of a six-year-old French girl’s bond with her Cape Verdenan nanny.

In an astonishing performance of charisma and detail, Louise Mauroy-Panzani plays Cléo, a Parisian child who lives with her widower dad but is largely raised by her Cape Verdenan nanny Gloria, whom she adores. When Gloria is informed that her mother has died, she must return to her homeland to look after her own children, who have grown into adulthood in her absence. Distraught, Cléo decides to spend the summer with her nanny and discovers the life the woman had to leave behind.

Opening this year’s Cannes Critics’ Week, the debut solo feature from French filmmaker and 2014 Camera d’Or winner Marie Amachoukeli (It’s In My Blood), Ama Gloria is a compellingly delicate drama filled with warm, feel-good energy that’s impossible to resist. Produced by Céline Sciamma’s Lilies Films, it shares with that director’s Petite Maman a keenly observed sense of childhood, capturing a transformative, once-in-a-lifetime relationship with extraordinary sensitivity. And Mauroy-Panzani’s breakout rendition – displaying wonder and precocious maturity at all of six years old – is one for the ages.

82 MINS

Banel & Adama
Dir. Ramata-Toulaye Sy
France, Senegal

Fresh from Cannes competition, Franco-Senegalese director Ramata-Toulaye Sy’s first longform work is a haunting fable of star-cross’d lovers set in a rural village.

Banel and Adama are blissfully in love. Their marriage comes after the death of Banel’s first husband – Adama’s brother, Yero – a union community elders initially saw as an act of honour. But suspicions about the couple’s all-consuming passion grow when Adama refuses to assume Yero’s role as chief and Banel scorns her domestic duties. When drought besets the region, villagers fear the disobedient lovers have incited a curse.

Scripted in the Pulaar language and featuring a local cast of non-professional actors – Khady Mane is particularly gripping in her starring turn – Banel & Adama shows Senegalese village life through a young woman’s eyes. Sy’s follow-up to the coming-of-age short Astel (11:20) is atmospheric and languid, its ethereal tone drawing comparisons with Terence Malick, and was the only debut selected for the 2023 Cannes competition. With this lyrical tale of love and duty, the director refuses singular interpretations, conjuring a beguiling world of folklore, fate, madness and obsession.

87 MINS
VIEWER ADVICE: DEPICTIONS OF VIOLENCE TOWARDS ANIMALS

Pham Thien An
Pham Thien An was born in the Lam Dong Province before relocating to Houston, Texas, and has won several film awards in Vietnam. His short film The Mute was followed by Stay Awake, Be Ready. His first feature film Inside the Yellow Cocoon Shell had its world premiere at the 2023 Cannes Film Festival, where it won the Camera d’Or award.

Marie Amachoukeli
Marie Amachoukeli
A French director and writer of Georgian descent, born in Paris, Marie Amachoukeli made her writing debut in 2005 with the short film Tantalus, and her directorial debut Party Girl competed in the Un Certain Regard section of the 2014 Cannes Film Festival (where it won the Camera d’Or). Her second feature Ama Gloria had its world premiere as the opening film of Cannes Critics’ Week in 2023.

Ramata-Toulaye Sy
French-Senegalese Ramata-Toulaye Sy was born and raised in the Paris region. She worked as a screenwriter on the film Sibèl by C. Zencirci and G. Giovanetti as well as on Our Lady of the Nile by A. Rahimi. In 2020, Astel, her first short film as director, was selected in more than 80 festivals and pre-selected for the 2023 César Awards. Her feature debut Banel & Adama had its world premiere in competition at the 2023 Cannes Film Festival.
Earth Mama
Dr. Savannah Leaf  USA
This delicate, absorbing portrait of motherhood follows a young Black woman caught up in a spiral of institutional disadvantage. Heavily pregnant Gia, a cash-strapped twentysomething mother living in California’s Bay Area, is up against the punitive measures of a system set up to fail her. Recovering from a drug addiction, she’s only allowed to see her two children for a one-hour supervised visit each week. Steered towards considering an open adoption for her unborn child, much to the chagrin of her religious best friend, Gia is faced with a gut-wrenching decision. 

Powered by a star-making performance from Tia Nomore – a mother and aspiring doula plucked from the Oakland rap scene by former Olympic athlete, Grammy winner and first-time feature director Savannah Leaf – Earth Mama draws on its maker’s short documentary The Heart Still Hums. Laying bare the oft-racialised pathways for young Black women, Leaf approaches poverty and the fallible US foster-care system in the sensitive manner of the Dardennies, a feat of such resonance that she won San Francisco’s Audience Award. Capped off with Judy Lee Lopes’ mesmerising filmmaking, this arresting debut confidently tackles the complexities of American institutions through its empathetic character drama.

104 MINS  VIEWER ADVICE: STRONG IMPACT THEMES

Savannah Leaf
Savannah Leaf has transitioned from a 2012 Olympian to award-winning filmmaker. Her latest short film The Heart Still Hums (2020) won Best Documentary Short at the Palm Springs International ShortFest. Her music video This Land for Gary Clark Jr. was nominated for Best Music Video at the 2020 Grammys. Her feature film debut Earth Mama had its world premiere at the 2023 Sundance Film Festival.

Totem
Dir. Lila Avilés  Mexico, Denmark, France
A spellbinding family portrait that presents a child’s-eye view of love, loss and life in all their messy, glorious, heartbreakingly colour. Over the course of a single day, seven-year-old Sol and her extended family prepare for a surprise birthday party. The guest of honour is Sol’s father, who is nowhere to be found – at least, as far as Sol can determine. As her aunts, uncles, cousins, grandfather and others busy themselves with baking cakes, dying hair or generally trying to corral (or evade) the chaos leading up to the evening’s big celebration, Sol begins to understand that the adults are not telling her everything.

Mexican actor turned director Lila Avilés’s second film (following 2018’s The Chambermaid) was awarded the Berlinale Prize of the Ecumenical Jury for the complex and sensitive way it illustrates the love that holds Sol’s family together during a time of great upheaval. With splendid acting from its cast of mostly non-professionals, Totem captures the freewheeling, intimate joys and sorrows of close-knit relatives grappling with something bigger than all of them. As she meticulously directs the familial hubbub towards a breathtaking conclusion, Avilés infuses every scene with abundant life, creating a bittersweet and beautiful work of extraordinary emotional depth.

95 MINS  MMFF GUEST

Lila Avilés
Mexican director, screenwriter and producer Lila Avilés founded the Limerencia Films production company in 2010, and her award-winning debut feature film The Chambermaid screened at over 50 international festivals, and was selected as Mexico’s entry for the Best International Feature Film Oscar. Her second feature Totem had its world premiere in Competition at the 2023 Berlin International Film Festival.

The Rooster
Dr. Mark Leonard Winter  Australia
Hugo Weaving and Phoenix Raei play a hermit and a cop who form an unlikely connection amid crisis in this wonderfully weird sucker-punch of tenderness. Dan (Raei, It’ll snow) works in a regional Victorian police outpost, but when a childhood friend is discovered dead following an incident, his judgement and motivational skills are called into question. Consumed with guilt, Dan camps out in the forest, where he encounters a cranky jazz-listening, ping-pong-obsessed misanthrope (Weaving). At first transactional, this bond soon becomes transformative for the broken men. But, surrounded by trees, far away from any trace of civilisation, is everything really as it seems?

Supported by the MMFF Premiers Fund, the feature debut from actor turned writer/director Mark Leonard Winter (Little Tornadoes, MMFFFest’s start-up) is a delicate, at times droll dramatisation of masculinity, mental health and the solace found in companionship. Winter’s storytelling talents are on display in a film unafraid to make bold choices: painterly compositions of rural isolation and the natural sublime; an eerily intriguing soundscape. With Weaving and Raei welded by a tremendous chemistry, The Rooster unfurls as an unforgettable tale of two individuals discovering what hides behind the bravado.

101 MINS  MMFF GUEST  VIEWER ADVICE: STRONG IMPACT THEMES

Mark Leonard Winter
Mark Leonard Winter is an Australian actor and director. His screen roles include Little Tornadoes, The Dressmaker, and Fires; he is one of the founding members of independent theatre company Black Lung, and won the Best Male Actor Helpmann Award for his starring role in Birdland at the Melbourne Theatre Company. His feature directorial debut The Rooster will have its world premiere at MMFF 2023.

The Sweet East
Dr. Sean Price Williams  USA
Famed indie cinematographer Sean Price Williams makes his feature directorial debut with this freewheeling picaresque trip through the cliques and communes of today’s USA.

Listless Lillian is on a school trip to Washington, DC. Separated from her classmates, she finds herself on a feverish journey through the eastern seaboard, falling into the orbit (or trap) of various freaks and interlopers who call this great nation home: predatory professors, vampire filmmakers, white supremacists and rich kids cosplaying as anarchists. The teen is open to play-acting at each leg, and what results is a darkly satirical road movie that unfurls as an unforgettable tale of two individuals discovering what hides behind the bravado.

108 MINS  VIEWER ADVICE: STRONG IMPACT THEMES

Sean Price Williams
Sean Price Williams was born in Wilmington, Delaware, USA. He is a cinematographer who has worked on numerous major independent films by directors such as Josh and Benny Safdie (including Good Time and Heaven Knows What), Owen Klein (Sunny Pages), Alex Ross Perry (including Her Smell and Queen of Earth) and Albert Mayles (Hil). His feature debut as a director, The Sweet East, had its world premiere in Directors’ Fortnight at the 2023 Cannes Film Festival.
How to Have Sex
Dir. Molly Manning Walker  UK, Greece
A sun-drenched, hormone-laden trip of teenage kicks turns dark in this compellingly contemporary navigation of political sex.
High school is over and, before the reality of exam results hits, a trio of British teenagers are determined to have the “Best Holiday Ever!” Tara, Em and Sky arrive in Mala, a party town in Crete, primed for a blowout of clubbing, binge-drinking and attempts at seduction. But after a try at challenges the limits of consent, the harsh light of day breaks on the bacchanal’s seedy aftermath, testing friendships that the young women thought would last forever.

Receiving the 2023 Prix Un Certain Regard at Cannes, writer/director Molly Manning Walker — who was cinematographer on the Sundance prize-winning Scrapper (also screening at MIFF 2023) — staunchly refuses the coming-of-age cliches of her Hollywood counterparts. In this radiant, satirical drama, hedonistic revelry à la Spring Breakers is soon shattered by a painful truth – a portrayal with keen attention to adolescent social dynamics, and which has drawn comparisons to the breakthrough Afternoon (2011). Mia McKenna-Bruce delivers a career-making performance as Tara, our Dante in this dizzying inferno of hormones and the darkness of the teenage brink.

Molly Manning Walker
Molly Manning Walker graduated from the NFTS in 2019 with an MA in Cinematography, and recently shot Charlotte Regan’s debut feature Scrapper. Molly’s directing debut and the short film Good Thanks, You! which premiered at Cannes Critics’ Week, and her second short, The Forgotten C, was BAFTA-nominated. Her directorial debut feature How to Have Sex had its world premiere at the 2023 Cannes Film Festival, where it won the Un Certain Regard prize.

Shayda
Dir. Noora Niasari  Australia
Cannes Best Actress winner Zar Amir-Ebrahimi (Kiyomars, MIFF 2022) anchors this Sundance Audience Award–winning portrait of a mother seeking a new life for herself and her daughter.

Shayda, a brave Iranian mother, finds refuge in an Australian women’s shelter with her six-year-old daughter. Over Persian New Year, they take solace in Nowruz rituals and new beginnings, but when her estranged husband re-enters their lives, Shayda’s path to freedom is jeopardised.

Supported by the MIFF Première Fund, the accomplished feature debut from MIFF Accelerator Lab alumnus Noora Niasari (Travail, MIFF 2018; Waterfall, MIFF 2020) was produced by Vincent Sheehan and Niasari, and executive-produced by Cait Blanchett. While fortissimo about the challenges of healing for those who have survived domestic violence, the film also shines a light on the indomitable hope that propels its spirited, beautifully complex characters. With affecting lead performances from Amir-Ebrahimi and newcomer Selina Zahednia – alongside Leah Purcell (The Dry) with The Legend of Wally Sklarson, MIFF 2021), Jillian Nguyen (Kupu Kupu), Osaham Siani (A Dog Walking), MIFF 2017, Mojgan Aria (Win A Kiss) and Rina Moussavi (We – Shayda is a moving story of resilience, the desire for independence, and the sacrifices and strength of a mother’s love.

Noora Niasari
Tehran-born, Australia-raised Noora Niasari is a writer/director and co-founder of Paranel Pictures. She has a graduate of architecture and cinema, and her short films and documentaries have been screened at film festivals from Beirut to New York. Shayda is her debut feature film and had its premiere on the opening night of the World Cinema Dramatic competition of the 2023 Sundance Film Festival. It has been selected as MIFF 2023’s Opening Night Gala film.

Disco Boy
Dir. Giacomo Abbruzzese  France, Italy, Poland, Belgium
Franz Rogowski (Issaya, MIFF 2020) propels this mesmerising musing on wounded masculinity, which is ignited by French electro superstar MCM’s feverish soundtrack.

In Giacomo Abbruzzes’s sensorially and emotionally arresting debut dramatic feature, Rogowski delivers a tremendous starring turn as Alex. The rogue Belgian harbours dreams of slipping unnoticed across the French border, but the aspiration soon sours. Stumbling from terrible loss into the arms of the French Foreign Legion suggests a future, but all-encompassing grief and cruel fate throw Alex headlong into the path of another lost soldier (played by astounding newcomer Mor Ndiaye), binding him to the past.

Premiering in competition at the Berlinale, this luminous story of outsiders adapted in Paris secure cinematographer Hélène Louvart the Silver Bear for Outstanding Artistic Contribution. Having worked with titans of French cinema Agnès Varda and Claire Denis as well as on Alice Rohrwacher’s MIFF 2018 favourite Happy as Lazzaro, she brings an incandescent colour to Abbruzzes’s sensorially bold film. Sitting somewhere between Denis’s Beau Travail (1999) and the kinetic whirlwind of Gaspar Noé’s (Sátira, MIFF 2016) Climax for Red (2019), Disco Boy is simply ethereal.

Giacomo Abbruzzese
Born in Taranto in the south of Italy, Giacomo Abbruzzese studied at Le Fresnoy in France and has made several short films that have screened at festivals including Oberhausen, Clermont-Ferrand and the Viennale as well as on international television. In 2022, his documentary America was nominated for a César. His debut feature-length fiction film Disco Boy had its world premiere in competition at the 2023 Berlin International Film Festival.

Animalia
Dir. Sofia Alasou  France, Morocco, Qatar
A heady mix of sci-fi genre-bending and apocalyptic tension, this extraordinary debut uses an alien invasion to peer across the stakes of faith and family in contemporary Morocco.

From humble Berber origins, Itto has married into a wealthy, conservative family, enduring her mother-in-law’s endless disapproval. Now pregnant, she’s relieved to stay behind at their opulent country estate while the rest of the family leaves to seal a business deal. But when a mysterious supernatural catastrophe happens nearby, Itto must fight her way through the chaos to find her in-laws, past people and animals who now behave…strangely. On the way, she meets Fouad, a fellow Berber who challenges Itto’s faith and newfound privilege – and a farm boy who’s definitely not all he seems.

Sofia Alasou’s dreamlike, enigmatic imagery combines the family-focused humanism of Steven Spielberg with the inner voyages of Terrence Malick to startlingly original effect. Working from her own script, Alasou uses sci-fi to comment on-class, religion and gender roles in contemporary Morocco – a feat that won her Sundance’s World Cinema Dramatic Special Jury Award for Creative Vision. Like the hypnotic fog that spreads across the landscape, Animalia envelops you in a trance state of new storytelling possibilities.

Sofia Alasou
Sofia Alasou is a French-Moroccan filmmaker, raised between Morocco and France. Featured as one of Screen Daily’s Arab Stars of Tomorrow, she has credits including the short films So What If the Goats Die (Sundance Film Festival Grand Jury Prize 2020), César Awards Best Short Film (2020), followed by The Lake for 20th Century Fox, broadcast on Hulu. Animalia is her feature debut and had its world premiere at Sundance in 2023 in the World Cinema Dramatic competition.
acmi

MELBOURNE WINTER MASTERPIECES

Goddess

Exhibition Book now
About Dry Grasses
Dir. Nuri Bilge Ceylan Türkiye, France, Germany, Sweden
Nuri Bilge Ceylan (The Wild Pear Tree, MIFF 2018) presents an ambitious epic of maladjusted male ego. Art teacher Samet takes comfort in the rapport he builds with his students, but the lines between favouritism and impropriety grow blurry. When Samet and his colleague Kenan are falsely accused of misconduct, the allegations threaten Samet's self-image as beloved mentor – something inseparable from his problematic desire for adulation. Premiering in competition at Cannes, Ceylan's ninth feature proves him a master of intricate plotting and captures the harsh beauty of Anatolian summer and winter, which reflect the Janus face of his unforgettable antihero.

Kidnapped
Dir. Marco Bellocchio Italy, France, Germany
A pope's audacious act tears the Catholic Church and all of Italy apart in this gripping true story. When Pope Pius IX, racked with antisemitic beliefs, attempts to shore up his crumbling power base by ordering the kidnapping of a six-year-old Edgardo, the child's Jewish family is powerless to resist. The justification? Edgardo's Catholic nurse had him baptised in secret, making him a ward of the Catholic Church. But the pope's action eventually sparks a campaign for the boy's return that will reshape Italy and the world. More than half a century into his career, Marco Bellocchio (The Traitor; Blood of My Blood, MIFF 2016) still has an unwavering eye, a stellar command of operatic flourish and a willingness to critique his country's darkest hours.

Anatomy of a Fall
Dir. Justine Triet France
Bristling with emotional depth, this Palme d'Or–winning courtroom drama puts the complexities of a relationship on trial. Successful novelist Sandra stands accused of murdering her husband, Samuel, himself an author. But when her case goes before the courts, what comes under scrutiny are the machinations of a failing marriage – as obscure to outsiders as it is to the couple's 11-year-old son. Were her fiery spats signs of something more sinister? Anatomy of a Fall depicts marital acrimony with a veracity rivaling Ingmar Bergman's Scenes From a Marriage. Sandra Hüller (Toni Erdmann, MIFF 2016) is compelling as the beguiling and unknowable Sandra, proving herself one of the most dynamic actors of her generation.

Perfect Days
Dir. Wim Wenders Japan, Germany
In this triumphant return to narrative film, Wim Wenders tackles life's little details – mess and all – with his trademark meditative movement. Hirayama (Cannes Best Actor winner Koji Yakusho) wakes at dawn, tends to his plants, then spends his days transforming the Sisyphian labour of cleaning Tokyo's public toilets into a poetic practice of appreciating life's small pleasures. In his van, he listens to mid-century American classic songs; on his lunch break, he photographs patterns of light through trees; in the evenings, he inhales great novels. This sublime portrait of existence and joy is perhaps the most perfect distillation of the 77-year-old filmmaker's signature style and themes.

La Chimera
Dir. Alice Rohrwacher Italy, France, Switzerland
A preternaturally skilled archaeologist goes on an Orphean quest for his lost love in Alice Rohrwacher's most romantically bewitching film. Just out of jail, crumpled English archaeologist Arthur reconnects with his crew of happy-go-lucky grave-robbers, who survive by looting Etruscan tombs and fencing the treasures they dig up. Arthur isn't interested in the artefacts, though; he's seeking a legendary door to the underworld, and to his late beloved Beniamina. Rohrwacher plays with film gauges (35mm, super-16 and 16mm) and aspect ratios to depict differing states of reality. With Hélène Louvart's exquisite cinematography and starring Josh O'Connor (The Crown; God’s Own Country, MIFF 2017), La Chimera is a modern myth in the making.


**Last Summer**

**Dir. Catherine Breillat** 
**France, Norway**

Catherine Breillat’s (Jeux d’épices, MIFF 2010) returns with a daring portrait of a woman’s relationship with her teen stepson, starring Léa Drucker.

Well-to-do family lawyer Anne finds her morals tested with the arrival of her husband Pierrel’s adolescent ‘problem child’. Théo’s hedonistic behaviour epitomises pure teenage rebellion; Anne, meanwhile, discovers that his presence stirs a desire that oversteps legal and familial boundaries.

Renowned for her uncompromising explorations of female sexuality, Breillat has crafted a story about the confluence of temptation and the abuse of power, while the performances from Drucker (Vivre Avec Lui, MIFF 2021) and newcomer Samuel Kircher offer nuance and tension.

**108 MINS**

**May December**

**Dir. Todd Haynes** 
**USA**

Julianne Moore and Natalie Portman team up in Todd Haynes’s perfectly camp melodrama that dredges up a sexual scandal.

At 36, Gracie landed herself behind bars after her predatory sexual relationship with a 13-year-old boy was made public. Some 20 years later, with Gracie now married to him with children of their own, the complexities resurface when actor Elizabeth arrives in their hometown ahead of playing her in an upcoming biopic.

With unsurprising depth, Portman and Moore deliver captivating performances, while Charles Melton ( CSL) is commendable as baby-faced husband Joe. As an intertextual touch, Marcelo Zarvos’s score is adapted from that of 1971 Hitchcock flick The Go-Between.

**113 MINS**

**Showing Up**

**Dir. Kelly Reichardt** 
**USA**

As much an ode to the daily creative grind as it is to the creative partnership between Kelly Reichardt (First Cow, MIFF 2020) and Michelle Williams. Sculptor Lizzy has a show opening in a week, but life keeps getting in the way of her work. Her parents are dismissive, her brother is digging himself into a hole, her day job takes up too much time and her cat has just mauled a pigeon. Worst of all, Lizzy needs a shower, but her landlord (and fellow artist) Jo is too busy preparing for her two upcoming shows to fix the hot water!

That rare, honest work of art about the work of making art, Showing Up is the fourth collaboration between Reichardt and Williams, whose superb turn as Lizzy is matched by a cast that includes Hong Chau (In The Heat of the Night).

**104 MINS**

**Past Lives**

**Dir. Celine Song** 
**USA, South Korea**

What if the lover who never was is ‘the one’?

This swooning romance follows a Korean woman whose heart is torn by the road not taken.

The Korean concept of ‘ông ver’, suggests that two souls colliding is a twist of joyous fate but can also leave a heart bound in doubt when their paths diverge. That’s the case for Na-young. Even after a quarter of a century – during which she has gotten married and moved to New York – she can’t seem to quite move on from the memory of her childhood friend Hae-sung.

Starring Greta Lee (Kiss Me), John Magaro (Vertigo), and Theo Yoo (The Go-Between), playwright turned filmmaker Celine Song’s feature debut has rightfully drawn comparisons to Richard Linklater’s Before trilogy.

**96 MINS**

**Monster**

**Dir. Hirokazu Kore-eda** 
**Japan**

Hirokazu Kore-eda’s (Shoplifters, MIFF 2018) tender answer to the question ‘Who’s the monster?’, awarded Best Screenplay and the Queer Palm at Cannes, to the question ‘Who’s the monster?’, awarded "will melt your heart."

Minato has been acting strangely since his dad’s death: cutting his hair, leaping from a moving car, claiming his brain has been replaced with a pig’s. When he comes home from school injured, his mum is convinced something sinister is at play and sets out to expose Minato’s teacher, Hori, as the culprit. In turn, Hori claims Minato is a bully. But Minato has his own perspective, focused on his new friend, with troubles of his own.

Featuring a delicate piano score by Ryûichi Sakamoto in his final screen work before his death this March.

**126 MINS**

**The Eternal Daughter**

**Dir. Joanna Hogg** 
**UK, USA**

Tilda Swinton and Tilda Swinton star in Joanna Hogg’s Gothic coda to her two Souvenir films, executive-produced by Martin Scorsese.

Swinton reprises her role as The Souvenir’s (MIF 2018) matriarch Rosalind and steps in to play a now-middle-aged Julie. The two have travelled to Wales to stay in the family’s wartime country home; Julie plans to work on her latest film, of which Rosalind is the unwitting subject. But the house’s long-buried secrets have other plans.

In her dual roles, Swinton is characteristically brilliant, while Hogg – trading aching realism for something much more menacing – masterfully deploys intertextual nods to everything from The Turn of the Screw to The Shining to Vertigo.
**Ukraine Guernica – Artist War**  
**Dir. George Gittoes**  
**Afghanistan, Ukraine, Australia**

George Gittoes follows the frontline artists daring to stand up to the Russian invasions of Ukraine and Afghanistan. This anti-war film in the tradition of Pablo Picasso's Guernica takes us behind the battle lines and into the lives of the artists confronting Russia's march on Ukraine and Afghanistan following the withdrawal of foreign forces. From the ashes of unspeakable tragedy and destruction, new creative works are born, including projects completed at the former House of Culture in Irpin, the birthplace of unspeakable tragedy and destruction. Four First Nations trailblazers – a senator, a magistrate, a media icon and a poet – put everything on the line for a brighter future.

**Four First Nations Trailblazers**  
**Dir. George Gittoes**  
**Australia, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Australia**

Four First Nations trailblazers – a senator, a magistrate, a media icon and a poet – put everything on the line for a brighter future.

**Rebel With a Cause**  
**Dir. Douglas Watkins**  
**Australia**

Four First Nations trailblazers – a senator, a magistrate, a media icon and a poet – put everything on the line for a brighter future.

**Monolith**  
**Dir. Matt Vesely**  
**Australia**

A disgraced journalist is confronted with an artefact that may not be of this world, but is about to become the centre of hers.

Eager to salvage her reputation, a journalist retreats to her parents’ house to work on a podcast about the paranormal. While researching, she learns about a retired school teacher and a puzzling black brick, which appeared out of nowhere. A raft of similar anecdotes involving other black bricks leads her down shadowy paths and to a desperate fixation on the truth behind the mysterious objects – until, one day, a sinister brick of her own appears.

Blending sci-fi and thriller in its gripping feature debut, Matt Vesely's *Monolith* astutely crafts dramatic tension through constraint, aided by an intensely expressive Lily Sullivan in the lead role.

**Keeping Hope**  
**Dir. Tyson Mowarin**  
**Australia**

Coles Smith, an actor and Nyikina man, grew up surrounded by the beauty of the Kimberley. But there is deep heartache ingrained below the surface of this astounding landscape: the rate of suicide among the region’s young First Nations men is alarmingly high. For Coles Smith, these terrible statistics – some of the most troubling in the world – are more than just numbers; his best friend tragically took his own life when they were in their 20s. Commissioned by National Indigenous Television (NITV), *Keeping Hope* follows his intensely personal search for answers and, hopefully, solutions.

**Voices in Deep**  
**Dir. Jason Raftopoulos**  
**Greece, Australia**

Following a tragedy at sea, the lives of two orphaned refugees and an Australian aid worker are inextricably woven together in this bracing, humanistic drama.

In Athens, just after the devastating 2015 refugee crisis, Tarek and Zaeed fend for themselves on the street. Their parents died during their ocean journey; in a bid for shelter and food, Tarek accepts exploitative sex work and Zaeed takes desperate, risky measures to change their circumstances. Meanwhile, Bobby, a humanitarian worker dealing with her own painful past, is trying to offload bags of illegally harvested shellfish before she returns to Australia.

An astute examination of statelessness, trauma and time, *Voices in Deep* is the second feature from Jason Raftopoulos (*West of Sunshine*, MIFF 2015).

**Voices in Deep**  
**Dir. Jason Raftopoulos**  
**Greece, Australia**

Following a tragedy at sea, the lives of two orphaned refugees and an Australian aid worker are inextricably woven together in this bracing, humanistic drama.

In Athens, just after the devastating 2015 refugee crisis, Tarek and Zaeed fend for themselves on the street. Their parents died during their ocean journey; in a bid for shelter and food, Tarek accepts exploitative sex work and Zaeed takes desperate, risky measures to change their circumstances. Meanwhile, Bobby, a humanitarian worker dealing with her own painful past, is trying to offload bags of illegally harvested shellfish before she returns to Australia.

An astute examination of statelessness, trauma and time, *Voices in Deep* is the second feature from Jason Raftopoulos ( *West of Sunshine*, MIFF 2015).
A BIRDEATER PARTY TAKES A FERAL TURN IN THIS GENRE-DEFYING DEBUT FROM AN EXCITING NEW AUSTRALIAN DIRECTING DUO.

On an isolated country property, Louise and Irene have gathered their closest friends for a pre-wedding celebration. Things start festively enough, but as the night wears on, an uncomfortable revelation about the pair’s relationship upends the festivities. Soon, the party is plunged into full-blown chaos as the night descends into a vicious nightmare.

This debut feature tackles the evolving debate around gender roles head-on, with the uncomplimentary dynamics of relationships – and the merest of unchecked masculinities – through a riveting genre hybrid that fuses anxious domestic drama with the surreal terror of the remote landscape.

**MIFF Premiere Fund**

Now well into its second decade, MIFF’s film fund proudly continues its focus on ‘stories that need telling’ from diverse voices tackling today’s big themes.

This year’s slate of Premiere Fund films also includes Shayda (page 6, page 12), The Rooster (page 11) and This Is Going To Be Big (page 37).

**Kindred**  
Dr. Adrian Russell Wills, Gillian Moody  
Australia

An autobiographical story about the removal of Aboriginal children from their birth families, Kindred is also a celebration of friendship, unconditional love and resilience.

Wonona’s writer/director Adrian Russell Wills and Wod Wodi producer Gillian Moody have been best friends for more than two decades. Part of their unshakable bond has been similar life experiences – both were adopted into white families in Sydney’s northern suburbs – and, later in life, a desire to rejoin with their bloodlines. Following their collaborative efforts on the short films Angel and Daniel’s 21st and on the feature documentary Black Divaz, they now turn the camera on themselves in this tribute to Indigenous strength, courage and sovereignty.

---

**The Carnival**  
Dr. Isabel Darlington  
Australia

Amid bushfires, the pandemic and punters’ changing tastes, the family behind the Bells Family Carnival fight to preserve the attraction’s century-long legacy.

The Bells Family Carnival is a sixth-generation family business, and all year round, across Australia, the Bells drive a 3D-strong fleet of trailers containing the vast disassembled rides they’ll rebuild by hand come rain, hail or shine. Visitors’ shrieks and giggles are all that matter to 54-year-old patriarch Elin, for whom there is no better life. But whereas some of his children share his sentiments, others dream of a different path. Meanwhile, rising costs, unreliable insurance, unpredictable patronage, the bushfires and COVID-19 complicate the Bells’ struggle to keep the operation afloat.

---

**The Hidden Spring**  
Dr. Jason Di Rosso  
Australia

Divided by 4000 kilometres, a son and his dying father connect in this profoundly intimate documentary début.

In Perth, a father is on the precipice of death. In Sydney, his son picks up a camera to process his grief. Shot in the terrace home of writer/director Jason Di Rosso – best known as host of ABC Radio National’s The Screen Show – this essay film becomes a way of bridging not just physical distance but also the emotional and philosophical breach between two worldviews. Di Rosso’s father, an adherent of alternative spirituality and an architect well practised in constructing reality, believes he can heal his terminal illness himself. The Hidden Spring sees one of Australia’s foremost critics return to his roots in film and TV production, meditating on time, memory, history and family.

---

**Memory Film: A Filmmaker’s Diary**  
Dr. Jen Thorley  
Australia

Revered filmmaker Jeni Thorley (Tracks, Point Break; Hacksaw Ridge, MIFF 1979) composes an immersive cine-poem from her extensive super-8 archive spanning three decades.

Set against the backdrop of radical feminism, Aboriginal land rights and widespread social upheaval, this hyper-intimate opus traces its maker’s inner journey towards liberation. Adapting the lenses of psychotherapy and Eastern spirituality, and incorporating footage from Thorley’s earlier works, the film contemplates gender fluidity, sexual politics, the pleasure and pain of motherhood, and the desire for a world free of war and colonisation.

Supported by the MIFF Premiere Fund, Memory Film features a sweeping score by Egyptian-Australian multi-instrumentalist Joseph Tawadros.

---

**Australia’s Open**  
Presented by 7am  
Australia

Relive the most thrilling moments of Australia’s beloved tennis tournament in this chronicle of its ascent to top-seed status on the world stage.

The Australian Open is one of the world’s four tennis Grand Slams, but its early days in 1970s Kooyong were humble. Now the highest-profile sporting event in the country, the Open has hosted innumerable tennis legends and iconic matches, such as the Williams sisters’ finals clash in 2001. It has also become both a celebration of greatness and a site for the playing-out of social issues, from Aboriginal and queer representation to border control.

Supported by the MIFF Premiere Fund, Australia’s Open illuminates just how entwined the stories of the tournament and the nation truly are.

---

**The Carnival**  
Dr. Isabel Darlington  
Australia

Amid bushfires, the pandemic and punters’ changing tastes, the family behind the Bells Family Carnival fight to preserve the attraction’s century-long legacy.

The Bells Family Carnival is a sixth-generation family business, and all year round, across Australia, the Bells drive a 3D-strong fleet of trailers containing the vast disassembled rides they’ll rebuild by hand come rain, hail or shine. Visitors’ shrieks and giggles are all that matter to 54-year-old patriarch Elin, for whom there is no better life. But whereas some of his children share his sentiments, others dream of a different path. Meanwhile, rising costs, unreliable insurance, unpredictable patronage, the bushfires and COVID-19 complicate the Bells’ struggle to keep the operation afloat.

85 MINS  MIFF GUEST

---

**The Hidden Spring**  
Dr. Jason Di Rosso  
Australia

Divided by 4000 kilometres, a son and his dying father connect in this profoundly intimate documentary début.

In Perth, a father is on the precipice of death. In Sydney, his son picks up a camera to process his grief. Shot in the terrace home of writer/director Jason Di Rosso – best known as host of ABC Radio National’s The Screen Show – this essay film becomes a way of bridging not just physical distance but also the emotional and philosophical breach between two worldviews. Di Rosso’s father, an adherent of alternative spirituality and an architect well practised in constructing reality, believes he can heal his terminal illness himself. The Hidden Spring sees one of Australia’s foremost critics return to his roots in film and TV production, meditating on time, memory, history and family.

85 MINS  MIFF GUEST

---

**Memory Film: A Filmmaker’s Diary**  
Dr. Jen Thorley  
Australia

Revered filmmaker Jeni Thorley (Tracks, Point Break; Hacksaw Ridge, MIFF 1979) composes an immersive cine-poem from her extensive super-8 archive spanning three decades.

Set against the backdrop of radical feminism, Aboriginal land rights and widespread social upheaval, this hyper-intimate opus traces its maker’s inner journey towards liberation. Adapting the lenses of psychotherapy and Eastern spirituality, and incorporating footage from Thorley’s earlier works, the film contemplates gender fluidity, sexual politics, the pleasure and pain of motherhood, and the desire for a world free of war and colonisation.

Supported by the MIFF Premiere Fund, Memory Film features a sweeping score by Egyptian-Australian multi-instrumentalist Joseph Tawadros.

85 MINS
Dive into sweeping, splendid and spirit-lifting tales from across the Asia Pacific region, including the latest from festival faves Hong Sang-soo and Anthony Chen; stories from India, New Zealand and Japan; and two noteworthy Malaysian prize winners.

Tiger Stripes
Dir. Amanda Nel Eu
Malaysia, Taiwan, France, Germany, Netherlands, Indonesia

The beast is unleashed in this original, darkly funny debut feature – and she’s a 12-year-old Malaysian schoolgirl whose body is changing in more ways than one.

Zaffan isn’t afraid to do as her conservative faith and strict education say she shouldn’t. She’s also the first at school to embark on the treacherous journey of puberty, which causes her status as ringleader to be replaced with being a target for mockery. Then mysterious scars appear and Zaffan’s changing body becomes animalistic… if you rile this beast, she’ll show her claws.

Tiger Stripes is the first film from a Malaysian female director to be selected for Cannes and the first Malay-language film to scoop the Grand Prize at Cannes for 14 years. Drift thrilled Cannes audiences with this intimate and self-written, semi-silent environment as a welcome change from the noise of a guru Elon Bello. Lucy, who had acting success when she was younger, submits herself to the semi-silent environment as a welcome change from her professional troubles – and from her difficulties with her daughter Dylan.

The Shadowless Tower
Dir. Zhang Lu
China

This beguiling tale of a middle-aged man who’s lost his bearings doubles as a charming meditation on the frayed bonds of family. Forty-something food critic Gu Wentong ponders what life might have been like if he’d kept in touch with his estranged father. For his part, Wentong is divorced, so his own daughter is under the care of his withering sister. But when word comes that Dad may be living in the seaside town of Beidaihe, a healing opportunity appears – especially if Wentong can channel the spontaneity of his younger photographer colleague.

Kayo Kayo Colour?
Dir. Shahrukhkhan Chavada
India

Naturalistic and brimming with empathy, this debut drama unfolds over 24 hours in a marginalised Muslim community in India. In the slums of Ahmedabad, a working-class Muslim family go about their quotidian routines. For Razia, the days revolve around chores and childcare. Her son Faiz chases chickens in the street, while her daughter Ruba plays quietly indoors. Meanwhile, her unemployed husband Razzak wants to buy an autorickshaw to secure financial autonomy and alter the family’s fate. Kayo Kayo Colour is a striking portrait of a religious minority rarely depicted in Indian cinema. With a humane gaze reminiscent of Hirokazu Kore-eda, Shahrukhkhan Chavada depicts the family’s toil with marked restraint, allowing activities to illuminate how politics governs day-to-day existence.

The Breaking Ice
Dir. Anthony Chen
China

The French New Wave lives on in this luminous Gen Z love triangle from Wet Season (MIFF 2020) and Ilo Ilo (MIFF 2013) director Anthony Chen.

Nerdy, depressed Shanghai financier Haofeng is visiting wintry Yanji, on China’s North Korean border, for a friend’s wedding. When he loses his phone and misses his flight home, effervescent local tour guide Nana invites him to spend the long weekend with her… and her friend Xiao, who nurtures a hopeless crush on Nana. Over several playful days and soju-fuelled nights, the trio let their guards down. Can a shared adventure melt their chilled heart?

Bad Behaviour
Dir. Alice Englert
New Zealand

Jennifer Connelly and Ben Whishaw star in this blackly comic debut about a former child star who attends a spiritual retreat in search of enlightenment and fillai reconciliation.

Oregon’s Loveland Ranch promises spiritual healing under the guidance of guru Elon Bello. Lucy, who had acting success when she was younger, submits herself to the semi-silent environment as a welcome change from her professional troubles – and from her difficulties with her daughter Dylan. Off-grid, Lucy hopes she’ll find the peace and validation she’s paid good money for. Unfortunately for her, so do all the other ego-centric attendees.

Connelly (A Bittersweet Life, MIFF 2006) and Whishaw (Requiem for a Dream, MIFF 2002) drive this whip-smart film from actor-turned-director Alice Englert (You Will Meet a Tall Dark Stranger, MIFF 2011).

Cobweb
Dir. Kim Jee-woon
South Korea

Parasite’s Song Kang-ho stars as a 1970s filmmaker-in-crisis in this chaotic comedy from the director of I Saw the Devil.

Song plays an ambitious but beleaguered director trying to finish the movie – a black-and-white melodrama entitled ‘Cobweb’ – that he’s convinced is going to be his masterpiece. But the project is rife with chaotic censors are interfering, bewildered actors and producers struggle to make sense of the rewritten ending, and everything else that seemingly can go wrong does.

Delighting in orchestrating the mayhem of a film shoot run amok, Kim Jee-woon (I Saw the Devil, MIFF 2011) reveals a considerably more playful flip side to his dark, twisted thrillers. Cobweb is a sharp, stylish and sometimes silly showbiz satire that will be catnip for cinephiles and movie fans alike.

Kaya Kayo Colour?
Dir. Shahrukhkhan Chavada
India

Naturalistic and brimming with empathy, this debut drama unfolds over 24 hours in a marginalised Muslim community in India. In the slums of Ahmedabad, a working-class Muslim family go about their quotidian routines. For Razia, the days revolve around chores and childcare. Her son Faiz chases chickens in the street, while her daughter Ruba plays quietly indoors. Meanwhile, her unemployed husband Razzak wants to buy an autorickshaw to secure financial autonomy and alter the family’s fate. Kaya Kayo Colour is a striking portrait of a religious minority rarely depicted in Indian cinema. With a humane gaze reminiscent of Hirokazu Kore-eda, Shahrukhkhan Chavada depicts the family’s toil with marked restraint, allowing activities to illuminate how politics governs day-to-day existence.
Stonewalling
Dir. Huang J, Ryui Otsuka Japan
A Gen Z woman contends with shifting cultural values and the one-child policy’s lasting impacts to understand her place in the world. Lynn prefers to stand at the peripheries rather than charge through with abandon. She reluctantly learns English after being goaded by her TikTok boyfriend, falls in pursuit of a career as a flight attendant and considers a side hustle via a sketchy egg-donor program for moneyed-up couples. But when she becomes pregnant herself, she is forced to re-evaluate her life. Stonewalling is set in what directors Huang J and Ryui Otsuka describe as a “post-TikTok China”. Yao Honggui’s translucent portrayal of a woman pushed to take control of her own fate garnered the Best Actress award at the Hong Kong International Film Festival.

Walk Up
Dir. Hong Sang-soo South Korea
Telling four stories (or maybe just one) over four stores, Hong Sang-soo’s latest MIFF entry is a shrewdly structured chamber play set within a single building. Film director Byung-soo takes his estranged daughter to meet his old friend Ms Kim, who is well regarded in the field she wants to pursue. Ms Kim owns and works in a building with four floors and, after much booze-soaked chat, offers to rent out a soon-to-be- vacant flat to Byung-soo. He accepts, time jumps forward (or sideways – it’s deliberately unclear) and the film’s action moves up a floor. The higher up we go, the lower our protagonist falls ... Operating on multiple levels – literally and figuratively – Hong’s 28th feature in 26 years is a spirited, slippery, funny and ever so curious joy.

Absence
Dir. Wu Lang China
Lee Kang-sheng brings undeniable star power to this pensive story of a man finding himself in a world that has left him behind. Released from jail after 10 years, Han Jiangyu returns home to Hainan. Much has changed, but in a coastal barber shop he finds his former flame, Su Hong, and her young daughter – who might be his. Like many on the island, Hong scrambles to find a foothold among the skyscrapers that have pushed to take control of her own fate garnered the Best Actress award at the Hong Kong International Film Festival.

Stone Turtle
Dir. Woo Ming Jin Malaysia, Indonesia
The supernatural encroaches on a woman’s simple existence in this FIPRESCI Prize-winning tale of folklore, deception and retribution. Zahara is a refugee who now calls an isolated Malaysian island home. She sells turtle eggs and looks after her 10-year-old niece, whose mother was slain as part of an honour-killing ceremony. When their unexceptional life is interrupted by a mysterious stranger who claims he’s doing research on the area’s ecosystem, a mystical loop of violence and deceit ensues. Regarded as Woo Ming Jin’s film about the Myanmal language feature to screen in competition at Locarno and includes hand-drawn animation by Studio Ghibli alum Paul Williams illustrating the island’s myth of a stone turtle.

Remembering Every Night
Dir. Yui Kiyohara Japan
Get lost with three women wandering a town on Tokoyo’s outskirts, whose discombonating architecture mirrors the vastness of life. Why are we here and where do we need to be? That’s the question hanging unsolved over Yui Kiyohara’s haunting follow-up to Our House (MIFF 2018). A uni student greiving the death of a friend explores the uniquely uniform streets of Tama New Town. Separately, a gas company’s meter inspector helps an old man find his way home, and another woman follows a lost memory caught for eternity in a postcard. As we discover, there are ties that bind these roaming souls even as their paths do not cross. Remembering Every Night is a deeply personal work that distils the profound, inherently magical ephemerality of the everyday.

Autobiography
Dir. Markus Madure Indonesia, France, Singapore, Poland, Germany, Qatar
In this chilling political coming-of-age film, a young housekeeper is drawn into the sinister orbit of his influential boss. In this film that won Best Screenplay at the Asia Pacific Screen Awards, Adelaide’s Feature Film Award and a Venice FIPRESCI Prize, Rakib is a fourth-generation servant for the family of Purna, a retired army general who has come back to his rural Indonesian hometown to run for office. With his father in prison and his brother abroad, lonesome Rakib grows enchanted by his employer, who transforms into a mentor and father figure. When a campaign poster of Purna is found vandalised, Rakib jumps at the chance to find the offender, triggering a wave of violent, corrupt acts through which innocence is extinguished and the country’s brutal history is laid bare.
Discover the rarely screened but groundbreaking works of the late Safi Faye and her keen ethnographic lens, on her journey from actress, to first Sub-Saharan African woman to direct a commercially distributed film, to being lauded at Cannes.

**Letter From My Village**

*Dir. Safi Faye* Senegal

This trailblazing 1975 work - the first feature made by a woman from Sub-Saharan Africa - sets a story of love and land against a postcolonial backdrop. Forced by French decrees to harvest peanuts rather than their usual rice, farmers in a remote Senegalese community lament the effects of this shift on their soil and livelihoods. Left with few opportunities amid an ongoing drought, Ngor journeys to the capital to find the money he needs to marry his fiancée. But with every step he takes through Dakar's crowded streets and every fellow jobseeker he meets, his longing for his village increases. An emotive ode to the very country that banned it upon release, this transgressive film received multiple accolades at the 1976 Berlinale.

**No Bears**

*Dir. Jafar Panahi* Iran

In this gripping blend of fact and fiction, revered Iranian auteur Jafar Panahi decides whether to cross a line for his beliefs. Panahi has ostensibly been making a docudrama about a Turkish couple procuring fake passports to cross the border into Europe. He directs them remotely beyond the Iranian border he himself cannot cross - he still faces house arrest for his filmmaking - but ponders whether to transgress his home country's limits. Meanwhile, the previously fawning villagers who have hosted him are growing suspicious. And are there really bears out there in the dark? Moments of profound and painful symbolism abound in this soul-achingly metatextual drama, which was awarded a Venice Special Jury Prize.

**Inshallah a Boy**

*Dir. Amjad Al Rasheed* Jordan, France, Saudi Arabia, Qatar

The first Jordanian film to screen at Cannes takes ferocious aim at the country's ingrained misogyny. After the death of her husband, Nawal faces an even more wrenching loss. Her brother-in-law Rifqi argues he now owns the modest Amman apartment where she and her young daughter Nora live - and which Nawal's own money helped buy - because in Jordan's Sharia-derived legal tradition, only a son can inherit property. If Nawal loses her home, she'll also lose custody of Nora to Rifqi. As the dismayed widow learns the extent of her spouse's debts and infidelities, she decides to stall Rifqi's legal proceedings by faking a pregnancy. God willing, she'll birth the courage to determine her own fate.

**Omen**

*Dir. Baloji* Belgium, Netherlands, Congo

Four Congolese people accused of practising sorcery forge very different spiritual paths in this electrifying cinematic mixtape that won the Un Certain Regard New Voice Prize at Cannes. Belgium-based Koffi brings his pregnant fiancée to visit his home country, Congo, hoping to reconnect with his family. Sadly, his mother still believes his port-wine birthmark is a sign of evil. Meanwhile, Koffi's younger sister Tshala is torn between her liberated sexuality and her ambivalent pull towards traditional spirituality. And tutu-wearing gangster Paco has embraced and even monetised the sorcery stigma – as he grieves his sister's death, he makes psychedelic voyages into the spirit realm.

**Little by Little**

*Dir. Jean Rouch* France, Niger

In her first foray into cinema, Safi Faye acts in Jean Rouch's 1970 comedy about two Nigerien entrepreneurs whose research trip to Paris becomes a sharp lesson in 'reverse ethnography'. Damoure Zika and Lam Ibrahima Dia, who have an import-export business in Niger, learn of a competitor's plans to construct a multistorey building in the capital. Viewing it as a symbol of capitalistic success, they travel to Paris to gather ideas for their own building but quickly become bemused by the eccentricities of the French and their way of life. The satirical Little by Little displays Rouch's distinct ethno-fiction approach to filmmaking, including his close collaboration with his friends and subjects. Among them was Faye, who went on to study both ethnology and cinema.
Terrestrial Verses
Dir: Ali Afsari, Alinez Khahami
Iran
This series of formally daring vignettes about the absurdity and menace of state control in Iran is laced with both scathing irony and glimmers of hope.

Deserts
Dir: Fasouli Bensadli
France, Germany, Morocco, Belgium
Two debt collectors face the absurdity of their jobs while dwarfed by the majestic Moroccan desert.

All the Colours of the World Are Between Black and White
Dir: Babakunta Aondoze
Nigeria
Love seeps through the cracks in this touching tale of same-sex desire in Nigeria, which won the Berlinale’s Teddy Award.

Subtraction
Dir: Marj Haghighi
Iran, France
A husband and wife get mixed up with their doppelgangers in Mani Haghighi’s (My MF 2018) Hitchcockian thriller starring Taraneh Alidoosti (The Salesman, MIFF 2018) and Navid Mohammadzadeh (Leila’s Brothers, MIFF 2018).

Hounds
Dir: Kamal Lazraq
Morocco, France, Belgium, Qatar, Saudi Arabia
Bringing echoes of the Coen brothers and Quentin Tarantino to the mean streets of Morocco, this Cannes Un Certain Regard Jury Prize winner is not the Casablanca you think you know.

Come and Work
Dir: Safi Faye
Senegal
The first ever African film to screen at Cannes, this account of village life is a profound meditation on time, memory and community.

I, Your Mother
Dir: Safi Faye
West Germany, Senegal
“When will you return?” This haunting question – familiar to many – is asked of a Senegalese student in West Berlin.

Mossane
Dir: Safi Faye
Senegal
In a rare work of pure fiction for Safi Faye, drawing from a Wolof legend, a teenager brings disaster to her village after defying an arranged marriage.

In Safi Faye’s 1980 treasure created for broadcast on German television, young student Moussa finds himself drifting – often alone – in Berlin, working odd jobs to send money, clothes and more, as demanded in letters from back home. But where does his heart lie? “Sooner or later, I’ll return to where my other self is.”

Drawing on her brief time in Germany during a period of considerable cultural and political upheaval, this fascinatingly fluid work reveals Fayès rich sense of self, blurring the lines of fact, fiction and form in ways that only deepen our connection to the truth.

In Sai Faye’s 1980 treasure created for broadcast on German television, young student Moussa finds himself drifting – often alone – in Berlin, working odd jobs to send money, clothes and more, as demanded in letters from back home. But where does his heart lie? “Sooner or later, I’ll return to where my other self is.”

Drawing on her brief time in Germany during a period of considerable cultural and political upheaval, this fascinatingly fluid work reveals Fayès rich sense of self, blurring the lines of fact, fiction and form in ways that only deepen our connection to the truth.

In Sai Faye’s 1980 treasure created for broadcast on German television, young student Moussa finds himself drifting – often alone – in Berlin, working odd jobs to send money, clothes and more, as demanded in letters from back home. But where does his heart lie? “Sooner or later, I’ll return to where my other self is.”

Drawing on her brief time in Germany during a period of considerable cultural and political upheaval, this fascinatingly fluid work reveals Fayès rich sense of self, blurring the lines of fact, fiction and form in ways that only deepen our connection to the truth.

In Sai Faye’s 1980 treasure created for broadcast on German television, young student Moussa finds himself drifting – often alone – in Berlin, working odd jobs to send money, clothes and more, as demanded in letters from back home. But where does his heart lie? “Sooner or later, I’ll return to where my other self is.”

Drawing on her brief time in Germany during a period of considerable cultural and political upheaval, this fascinatingly fluid work reveals Fayès rich sense of self, blurring the lines of fact, fiction and form in ways that only deepen our connection to the truth.

In Sai Faye’s 1980 treasure created for broadcast on German television, young student Moussa finds himself drifting – often alone – in Berlin, working odd jobs to send money, clothes and more, as demanded in letters from back home. But where does his heart lie? “Sooner or later, I’ll return to where my other self is.”

Drawing on her brief time in Germany during a period of considerable cultural and political upheaval, this fascinatingly fluid work reveals Fayès rich sense of self, blurring the lines of fact, fiction and form in ways that only deepen our connection to the truth.
**It's Raining in the House**
*Dir. Paloma Sermon-Daï - Belgium, France*

Winner of the French Touch Prize of the Jury at Cannes Critics’ Week, this coming-of-age drama is a stirring social-realist fiction debut. Seventeen-year-old Purdey and her brother Makenzy live in Belgium's Wallonia province. They spend their days swimming at the lake, a local haven for tourists and economic climbers, and avoiding their struggles at home: an erratic and absent mother, poverty, and the escalating spectre of adulthood. Confronted with the realities of pursuing her dreams or supporting her family through hard times, Purdey fantasises about a better life away from this society where her plight is becoming more and more common. An eye-opening narrative breakthrough from an exciting directorial talent with echoes of the Dardennes and Ursula Meier.

**Afire**
*Dir. Christian Petzold - Germany*

In Christian Petzold’s Silver Bear Grand Jury Prize–winning drama, a summer getaway on Germany’s Baltic coast unravels against the backdrop of looming wildfires. Leon escapes to the coast to work on his second novel, joined by his friend Felix, who has grand plans for his art-school portfolio. Expecting solitude, they’re instead met with company in the form of bubbly Nadja – played by Petzold favourite Paula Beer (Shine, MFF 2015) – who invites her local lover over in the evenings. As wildfires threaten to encroach on their languid retreat, so too do the suffocating pressures of creative unrest and social insecurity bear down on Leon’s malaise. Group dynamics shift, attraction builds and, all the while, a sense of foreboding hangs around like a cloud of smoke.

**Blue Jean**
*Dir. Georgia Oakley - UK*

This multi-award-winning debut is an intimate, deeply felt portrait of a lesbian teacher living a double life in Thatcher’s England. Jean teaches physical education at a secondary school in the north-east of England. She lives with her girlfriend Viv and hangs out with her friends at the local gay bar, but isn’t ‘out’ at work. It’s 1988 and the government has just passed Section 28 – legislation prohibiting the “promotion of sexuality” – which threatens to push Jean even further into the closet. When the arrival of a new student, Lois, escalates tensions at home and at work, Jean must confront the kind of person she wants to be. Winner of four British Independent Film Awards, Blue Jean is a searing reminder of the need for continuing vigilance in the face of fear and hostility.

**One Last Evening**
*Dir. Lukas Nathrath - Germany*

Moving cities is the perfect excuse to throw a party – and unpack some awkward home truths.

Clemens and Lisa are moving from Hanover to Berlin as Lisa’s medical career takes off. For Clemens, who’s lost in a depressive slump, it’s a desperately needed fresh start. On their last evening in town, the pair host a housecooling dinner at their apartment. Of course, some guests don’t show, while others bring their own problems – and a few unexpected strangers – who invite her local lover over in the evenings. As wildfires threaten to encroach on their languid retreat, so too do the suffocating pressures of creative unrest and social insecurity bear down on Leon’s malaise. Group dynamics shift, attraction builds and, all the while, a sense of foreboding hangs around like a cloud of smoke.

**Creature**
*Dir. Asif Kapadia - UK*

Oscar-winning Amy and Senna (MFF 2011) director Asif Kapadia fuses horror and expressionistic dance in this spellbinding ballet inspired by Woyzeck and Frankenstein.

On a remote Arctic research station, a creature (played by the English National Ballet’s principal dancer, Jeffrey Cirio) is enlisted into a military program that subjects him to sinister experiments. Amid this turmoil, he finds himself enamoured with a cleaner, the only person who shows him kindness; together, they dream of escape from their dystopian surrounds. Originally conceived for the stage by award-winning choreographer Akram Khan, Creature is a deft, dialogue-free performance of pure movement.

**20,000 Species of Bees**
*Dir. Estibaliz Urrutia Solaguren - Spain*

Featuring a Berlinale award-winning lead performance from nine-year-old Sofia Otero, 20,000 Species of Bees is an empathetic exploration of gender and generations. “How come you know who you are and I don’t?” asks Lucia, who was given the traditionally male name of ‘Aitor’ at birth. Her mother, who is going through a divorce, flounders as she comes to terms with her child’s identity, while Lucia’s grandmother is severe not just with her but with her mother’s struggles. With great-aunt Lourdes, the local beekeeper, however, Lucia eventually finds friendship and acceptance. Basque director Estibaliz Urrutia Solaguren’s debut feature is a tender film about the trans experience that unfolds with a warm, serene grace.
Scrapper
Dr. Charlotte Regan  UK
A grieving girl connects with her estranged father in this Sundance World Cinema Grand Jury Prize–winning debut.

Twelve-year-old Georgie lives alone in an East London council flat. Following the death of her mother, she has avoided eviction by convincing the authorities she’s being cared for by an uncle called “Winston Churchill”. But things get complicated when her dad, Jason – played by Harris Dickinson (Staged by Ladies, MFF 2022; Arch Kids, MFF 2021) – reappears after over a decade away. Behaving with the immaturity of someone closer to her age, Jason is out of his depth and unwelcome until he and Georgie realise how alike they are.

Charlotte Regan’s energetic debut feature depicts coming of age with stinging frankness but tempers it with whimsy, wit and even magic realism.

94 MINS

Medusa Deluxe
Dr. Thomas Hardiman  UK
Scissors out! Someone literally slays at a hairdressing competition in this exuberant one-take murder mystery.

News spreads rapidly through a studio where stylists and their models are prepping to compete. Mosca, the stylist to beat, has been found dead – and scalped! But who done it? Mosca’s husband Angel – also in MFF 2023’s Bad Behaviour! – is shattered. But later, when he unexpectedly catches Preston’s roving eye in a gay sauna, Jules senses a twisted opportunity to challenge his abuser.

Premiering at Cannes Directors’ Fortnight, Georgian filmmaker Elene Naveriani’s third feature is a complex portrait of late-life desire that depicts its ageing protagonist’s sensuality without sentimentality or cliché.

93 MINS

Femme
Dr. Sam H. Freeman, Ng Choon Ping  UK
After being attacked outside a London nightclub, a drag queen decides to turn the tables in this Hitchcockian queer noir.

Nathan Stewart-Jarrett (Iseue) dazzles in this electrifying film as Jules, a talented drag performer who transforms into the mighty Aphrodite Banks on stage. After being assaulted on the street by aggressive drug dealer Preston – played by George MacKay (The Nylon of the Nail) – Jules’s confidence is shattered. But later, when he unexpectedly catches Preston’s roving eye in a gay sauna, Jules senses a twisted opportunity to challenge his abuser.

Premiering at Cannes Directors’ Fortnight, Georgian filmmaker Elene Naveriani’s third feature is a complex portrait of late-life desire that depicts its ageing protagonist’s sensuality without sentimentality or cliché.

89 MINS

Passages
Dr. Ira Sachs  France
Love Is Strange (WFF 2014) director Ira Sachs embraces the art of French cinema in this queer musing on a complicated relationship.

Fast-rising star Franz Rogowski (who also appears in this year’s Bright Horizons contender Disco Boys) plays Tomas, an impetuous Fassbinder-like director who has fallen into a funk with his husband (charmingly played by Ben Whishaw, also in MFF 2023’s Bad Behaviour!). When magnetic schoolteacher Agathe (Blue Is the Warmest Colour’s Adèle Exarchopoulos) catches Tomas’s roving eye on the dance floor, things get emotionally messy.

Sachs and regular co-writer Mauricio Zacharias lean into the French New Wave’s steamiest tropes in this tempestuous love triangle that brews within the Paris indie film scene, handsomely lensed by Josée Deshaies (Léa-Lawrence).

91 MINS

Blackbird
Dr. Ira Sachs  France
A charming character study about love, liberty and the pursuit of forbidden fruit, set in the Georgian countryside.

Shopkeeper Etero is approaching middle age with her autonomy and her virginity intact. After a near-death experience while picking blackberries, she begins a passionate love affair with a local man and is faced with a familiar conundrum: whether to maintain her hard-won freedom or succumb to the possibility of imperfect coupledom. “If marriage and dicks brought happiness,” Etero snaps at a would-be suitor, “many women would be happy.”

Premiering at Cannes Directors’ Fortnight, Georgian filmmaker Elene Naveriani’s third feature is a complex portrait of late-life desire that depicts its ageing protagonist’s sensuality without sentimentality or cliché.

110 MINS

Drift
Dr. Anthony Chen  France, UK, Greece, Singapore
Cynthia Erivo and Aliia Shawkat shine in the emotionally stirring new work from Anthony Chen (WIFF Guest, MFF 2023; 40 Kids, MFF 2013), which explores how friendship and connection can save the traumas of the past.

Jacqueline spends her days trying to disappear from the sight of vacationing Europeans on a picturesque Greek beach – all the better with which to steal leftover food from restaurants. When questioned, she claims to be a tourist, a story lent weight by her crisp British accent. But when she meets effervescent American tour guide Callie, Jacqueline’s walls start to come down, and in each other these two scarred women find a restorative solace.

Making his English-language debut, Chen (WIFF Guest, MFF 2023) delivers a remarkable and unconventional refugee story.

93 MINS

98 MINS VIEWER ADVICE: STRONG IMPACT THEMES

90 MINS VIEWER ADVICE: HIGH IMPACT THEMES, SEXUAL VIOLENCE

93 MINS

92 MINS
In this Cannes Un Certain Regard comedy, the ineffability of romance is put to the test by an unfaithful married philosopher. Forty-year-old Sophia is a university lecturer with expertise in the philosophy of love, but her marriage to a fellow academic, while comfortable, has grown bloodless and dull. Then she meets Sylvain, the hulking, hirsute builder in charge of renovating their lake cabin. Passion overrides all of Sophia’s intellectualism but brings up a host of questions about compatibility, desire and what we ultimately look for in a partner.

In her deft third feature, Canadian actor turned director Monia Chokri (I Am Not Okay) subverts some of the more schmaltzy tropes of the rom-com to craft something far more probing and perceptive.

Three years ago, Sam was breaking out as a Toronto stand-up comedian while working part-time as an au pair. Now, something deeply traumatic has left her numb and isolated. Rebuffing the kindness of her fellow-comic housemates, she struggles to even shower, let alone write jokes and brave the stage. But when Brooke, the girl Sam once nannied, goes missing at age 14, Sam feels compelled to get involved in the search.

Gracefully playing a survivor, Sennott reveals the dramatic flipside of her lauded comedic talent in the imaginative and compassionate big-screen debut from TV comedy director Ally Pankiw.

Siblings can drive us to the edge. This visceral car crash of love and fury revs this American indie vehicle led by Michael Cera.

Reuniting with director Dustin Guy Defa for his poignant family dramedy, Cera (Person to Person; I Used to Be Funny) plays awkward thirtysomething Eric. Returning to his hometown after a long absence, Eric initially plans a brief trip, but his schedule unspools between awkward reconnections with his sisters – the cranky Rachel and the enthusiastic but rudderless Maggie – and increasingly competitive poker games with old acquaintances.

Cera is joined by Hannah Gross (Bodies Bodies Bodies; Operation Avalanche; How to Blow Up a Pipeline) as the cranky Rachel and the enthusiastic but rudderless Maggie – and increasingly competitive poker games with old acquaintances.

The stakes are high but the cost of sitting idle is higher for a group of environmental activists banding together to disrupt the oil industry.

Eight young Americans hatch a plan to detonate explosives in the Texan desert to destroy an oil pipeline, with hopes of sending shockwaves through the fossil-fuel industry. Brought together by their compulsion to act, each member has their own catalyst: from sustained health issues sparked by toxic chemicals, to compulsory acquisition of farmland for an oil pipeline, to the loss of a parent from a heatwave. Will the escalating pressure and their competing motivations ultimately mar their mission?

Playing out like the most thrilling of heist movies, this film is, at its core, a rousing journey into the fiery beating heart of the climate-justice movement.
**Fairyland**
**Dr. Andrew Durham**  
USA

This Sofia Coppola–produced drama explores the intricacies of a father–daughter bond blossoming amid the AIDS crisis. After the sudden death of his wife, Steve, and his two-year-old daughter Alysia decamps to the gay bohemian of the Haights-Asbury district in the 70s. What follows is a twin coming of age. Alysia grows up into a rebellious teen, while Steve enmeshes himself in the city’s queer counterculture. When AIDS begins to surface, their ever-shifting relationship is turned on its head.
First-time Australian writer/director Andrew Durham’s searing portrait features powerfully understated performances from Scoot McNairy (Reins), W F D'Ale and Emilia Jones (MFIFF 2021), who act alongside Geena Davis, Adam Lambert, Maria Bakalova (Later Nights Later), W F D’Alo and Cody Fern (American Vice Boys).

113 MINS

**Radical**
**Dr. Christopher Zalla**  
Mexico

CODA (MFIFF 2021) scene-stealer Eugenio Derbez leads this luminous Sundance Festival Favorite Award winner about an inspiring teacher. After charming audiences as the big-hearted choir leader in Oscar Best Picture winner CODA, Derbez returns to play another life-changing educator. This time, the beloved Mexican superhero plays Sergio, a man determined to usher the adorable kids in his classroom into better lives beyond the poverty and car-driven violence racking their city, Matamoros, on the US border. This feel-good film based on Sergio Juarez Correa’s real-world story follows in the footsteps of classics of the genre – including To Sir With Love, Dead Poets Society and Dangerous Minds. But Zalla’s sincere direction and Derbez’s impeccable performance create an unforgettable tale all its own.

92 MINS

**Mutt**
**Dr. Vul Lungulov-Klotz**  
USA

In this award-winning feature debut, one chaotic day sees a young trans man’s past chase him as he chooses his future.

Today, Feña is picking up his Chilean dad from the airport – that is, if he can borrow a car. Feña’s also reeling from an unexpected hookup with an ex. Then his sister suddenly shows up; they haven’t spoken since Feña cut ties with their transphobic mum. This would be a stressful day for anyone. But for Feña, the stakes are higher: by staying true to himself, he keenly feels the risk of losing loved ones who knew him as someone else.

Drawing on his own trans identity and Chilean–Serbian background, Vul Lungulov-Klotz has created a film that is both touchingly real and satisfyingly complex, as enabled by Lis Meh'el’s charismatic lead performance.

97 MINS

**Biosphere**
**Dr. Mel Eslyn**  
USA

Spoiler alert: humanity destroyed itself. How will the last two men on Earth … get on? With a laconic Jarmuschian vibe, Fremont is a heartfelt comedic ode to the immigrant experience.

Afghan refugee Donya once worked as a translator for the US Army in Kabul, but was evacuated to California when the Taliban took over. Now, she works in a fortune-cookie assembly line and jokes with her therapist about her social calendar – which consists of watching soap operas while diving alone in an empty restaurant. Plagued by survivor’s guilt, Donya is given a chance to write herself a new life following an unexpected promotion. With Fremont, Babak Jalali (Juss Icnu, MFIFF 2021) has created a wistful character comedy that, with real-life Afghan refugee Anila Wali Zad’s extraordinary performance, is both wryly funny and poignantly melancholic.

88 MINS MIFF GUEST

**Fremont**
**Dr. Babak Jalali**  
USA

With a laconic Jarmuschian vibe, Fremont is a heartfelt comedic ode to the immigrant experience.

Afghan refugee Donya once worked as a translator for the US Army in Kabul, but was evacuated to California when the Taliban took over. Now, she works in a fortune-cookie assembly line and jokes with her therapist about her social calendar – which consists of watching soap operas while diving alone in an empty restaurant. Plagued by survivor’s guilt, Donya is given a chance to write herself a new life following an unexpected promotion. With Fremont, Babak Jalali (Juss Icnu, MFIFF 2021) has created a wistful character comedy that, with real-life Afghan refugee Anila Wali Zad’s extraordinary performance, is both wryly funny and poignantly melancholic.

88 MINS MIFF GUEST

**Master Gardener**
**Dr. Paul Schrader**  
USA

Joel Edgerton and Sigourney Weaver deliver outstanding, nuanced performances in revered filmmaker Paul Schrader’s latest explosive study of male guilt and redemption.

Narlven tends the gardens of a sprawling estate; on occasion, his work branches out to servicing the grounds’ owner, Norma, in more intimate ways. When the imperious Southern dowager tasks him with taking on her grand-niece as an apprentice, it sets the stage for an emotional showdown as jealousy, bigotry and history catch up with all three of them.

Following First Reformed (MFIFF 2018) and The Card Counter, Master Gardener rounds out Schrader’s informal trilogy of films about troubled masculinity and redemption – yet it’s also the most optimistic film he’s ever made.

91 MINS

**Riddle of Fire**
**Dr. Weston Russell**  
USA

Direct from Cannes comes a charming, lo-fi fantasy caper for adults and children alike that’s destined for cult status.

Hazel, his brother Jodie and their friend Alice want to spend the day gaming, but Hazel and Jodie’s mother insists they must first fetch her a blueberry pie. What seems like a simple errand becomes a monumental quest across the North American West, setting off a wild tale with as many obstacles as the videogame the trio actually wanted to play. Soon, they must face off against the Enchanted Blade Gang before they can find their way home.

Ostensibly a paean to childhood imagination, this comic odyssey is a costly nostalgic, irreverent riff on coming-of-age and magic tropes – harking back to the golden age of kids’ adventure films like The Goonies and Stand by Me.

92 MINS MIFF GUEST

**The Maiden**
**Dr. Graham Fay**  
Canada

In this exceptional debut, a supernatural discovery transfigures two teenagers’ world of graffiti, grief and suburban exploration.

Cotton and Kyle live in the suburbs of Calgary. When they’re not swimming in the local river, they’re skateboarding through empty construction sites, prattling away or daring each other with risky acts – until one act of adolescent defiance changes their lives forever. After one of them discovers a deceased classmate’s diary, it becomes clear their fates are intertwined, and we learn more about these kids who struggle with isolation and loss.

Shot on 16mm with a cast of non-professionals, The Maiden is a melancholic, dreamy vision of adolescent liminality evoking Gus Van Sant, while its elliptical, atmospheric quality calls to mind Apichatpong Weerasethakul.

117 MINS

**Shortcomings**
**Dr. Randall Park**  
USA

First-time director Randall Park (First of the Last: Asian in LA/Bry) takes on social mores with this fresh and fun misanthropic comedy.

Ben is frustrated that a movie like Crazy Rich Asians has ‘solved’ Hollywood’s representation problems. He’s also a crank whose superiority of personal taste doesn’t endear him to his friends. After a break-up, Ben flounders: the only companion. Surrounded by uncertainty and in such close quarters, something is bound to happen.

Co-written by Duplass, Mel Eslyn’s feature directorial debut is a kooky, dreamy vision of adolescent liminality evoking Gus Van Sant, while its elliptical, atmospheric quality calls to mind Apichatpong Weerasethakul.

106 MINS

**The Goonies**
**Dr. Babak Jalali**  
USA

Ostensibly a paean to childhood imagination, this comic odyssey is a coolly nostalgic, irreverent riff on coming-of-age and magic tropes – harking back to the golden age of kids’ adventure films like The Goonies and Stand by Me.

In this award-winning feature debut, one chaotic day sees a young trans man’s past chase him as he chooses his future.

Today, Feña is picking up his Chilean dad from the airport – that is, if he can borrow a car. Feña’s also reeling from an unexpected hookup with an ex. Then his sister suddenly shows up; they haven’t spoken since Feña cut ties with their transphobic mum. This would be a stressful day for anyone. But for Feña, the stakes are higher: by staying true to himself, he keenly feels the risk of losing loved ones who knew him as someone else.

Drawing on his own trans identity and Chilean–Serbian background, Vul Lungulov-Klotz has created a film that is both touchingly real and satisfyingly complex, as enabled by Lis Meh'el’s charismatic lead performance.

97 MINS

**North America**

25
Travel to Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Mexico and beyond with MIFF’s selection of Latin American films, including two accounts of Indigenous resistance and the latest from Lisandro Alonso and Amat Escalante.

**The Delinquents**
*Dir: Rodrigo Moreno  Argentina, Brazil, Luxembourg, Chile*

In this gently surreal, formally bold Argentinian take on the heist film, two bumbling bandits try to buy their liberty. After running the numbers, middle-aged teller Morán decides he’d rather raid his workplace’s vault for his remaining wages – and do the requisite time – than waste his life behind a desk, subsequently recruiting his colleague Román to bury the loot in the Córdoba countryside. Money equals emancipation, but when these unlikely outlaws are loosed from the capitalist grind, they must learn how to spend their freedom.

Argentina’s financial turmoil thrums in the background of this existential crime caper – the fifth fiction feature from New Argentine Cinema director Rodrigo Moreno, and his first to screen at Cannes.

189 MINS

**Charcoal**
*Dir: Carolina Markowicz  Brazil, Argentina*

A Brazilian family caring for their ailing patriarch make a diabolical deal to shelter a drug don in this tense, darkly comic thriller.

Somewhere in the remote countryside outside São Paulo, Irene and Jairo are struggling to tend to their nine-year-old son and Irene’s bedridden father. One day, a mysterious foreigner offers them an unusual but lucrative proposal: to put Grandpa to rest and, in his place, harbour an Argentinian drug kingpin in exile. The family reluctantly agree – throwing their lives into surreal upheaval in ways they could never have expected.

Starring Maeve Jinkings (*Neon Bull*, MIFF 2016), the feature debut from lauded short filmmaker Carolina Markowicz (*Long Distance Relationship*, MIFF 2018) is a thriller that mixes white-knuckle tension, bracing social commentary and wry gallows humour.

107 MINS

**The Buriti Flower**
*Dir: João Salaviza, Renée Nader Messora  Portugal, Brazil*

This blend of documentary and fiction is an intoxicating portrait of the Indigenous Krahô people and their unwavering resistance. Young Jotat is experiencing terrifying visions in her dreams. Her mother Patpro is intent on joining a demonstration in Brasilia against the Bolsonaro government’s policies that promote encroaching on their territory. Meanwhile, Patpro’s uncle Hỳjnõ acts as a protector of the Krahôlandia reservation, battling poachers and intruders. From a 1940 massacre to a 1960s military dictatorship to the peak of former president Jair Bolsonaro’s reign, history repeats itself, threatening their land and their very way of life.

Winning the Cannes Un Certain Regard Ensemble Prize, *The Buriti Flower* explores the identity and customs of the Krahô people across decades.

123 MINS  VIEWER ADVICE: STRONG IMPACT THEMES

---

**ONLY IN THE CITY**

**WORLD-CLASS SHOW**

**FOLLOW THE GLOW**

MELBOURNE NOW NGV Australia & JULIET

Regent Theatre

MELBOURNE NOW

NGV Australia

WHAT'S ON
Congratulations to all the Australian titles selected for MIFF

The Face of the Jellyfish
Dir. Melisa Liebenthal - Argentina

In this Kafkaesque comedy for the selfie age, a woman confronts just what makes her identity her own after her face changes overnight. Thirty-something Marina wakes up one morning with a different face than the one she went to bed with. She doesn’t recognise herself, and neither does anyone else who knows her – including her mother and grandmother. Is she legally the same person if her features don’t match those on her ID? Does she still have the same DNA? When doctors can’t explain why this has happened nor offer her a solution, she sets out to rediscover who she is. Blending live action with animation, biometric graphics and animal imagery, all held together by Inés Copertino’s mesmerically eerie electronic score, this audacious film reflects on the nature of genetics, beauty and the self.

Lost in the Night
Dir. Amat Escalante - Mexico, Netherlands, Germany, Denmark

Amat Escalante’s long-awaited follow-up to The Untamed (MIFF 2016) is a searing, stunningly visualised crime thriller that lays bare the class conflict and vice within modern Mexico.

Residents of a rural town are protesting a new mine likely to have harmful effects on their health. When Mónica, the activist leading the charge, goes missing after police shut down the protest, her son Emiliano sets out to find answers. As clues lead him to the estate of a celebrated artist and his musician wife, Emiliano must ask: where does justice end and revenge start? Enveloped in DOP Adrian Durazo’s shadowy nightscape, actor Juan Daniel García Treviño (Robe of Gems, MIFF 2022) plays Emiliano with intimidating resolve – the tyrannised soul through which Escalante shows us his country’s wounds.

Trenque Lauquen
Dir. Laura Citarella - Argentina, Germany

This dazzling rabbit hole of a film, which shares considerable DNA with cinephile Everest La Flor (MIFF 2019), sketches the ‘before’ and ‘after’ of a woman’s mysterious disappearance.

In the small town of Trenque Lauquen, a woman named Laura goes missing. As two men in love with her helplessly search for clues, the mystery only deepens and Laura’s story expands: Is it an erotic affair hidden between pages in the local library? A recollection of history’s formidable feminist icons? An affectionate study of rural Argentinian life? A botanical survey of talismanic flowers? Or a supernatural puzzle that has the whole town abuzz? Like its predecessor, this epic is bewitching, expansive (unfolding over 12 chapters across two parts) and enthralled by the possibilities of narrative.

Sorcery
Dir. Christopher Murray - Chile, Mexico, Germany

Witchcraft, revenge and Indigenous rancour swell in this atmospheric, anti-colonial bildungsroman set in 19th-century Chile.

On the remote island of Chiloé, Huilliche teenager Rosa works with her dad as domestic help for German settlers. When her father is killed by their employer over a misunderstanding and neither Church nor State come to her aid, Rosa is set on a path of mystical vengeance. Rescinding her Western faith, she becomes enmeshed with La Recta Provincia, who promise to teach her ancient magic to avenge her family and empower native heritage. Produced by Pablo Larraín (Ema, MIFF 2020) and drawing comparisons to The Witch and The Nightingale (MIFF 2019), this strikingly beautiful film is a spellbinding study of ritual, redress and defiant self-determination.

Eureka
Dir. Lisandro Alonso - Argentina, France, Portugal, Germany, Mexico

Slow cinema auteur Lisandro Alonso and actor Viggo Mortensen reunite for a triptych of meditations on colonialism past and present.

Beginning almost as a parody of Jauja (MIFF 2014), Eureka reintroduces us to Mortensen and Viilbjørk Malling Agger as a father and daughter, this time in a classic black-and-white western – complete with the earlier film’s Academy ratio and rounded-edge framing. Part two, shot in 1.85 and with Lynchian visual echoes, introduces us to a contemporary Lakota Sioux officer of the law on her rounds. Part three transports us to 1970s Brazil, the shift signalled by another change in aspect ratio (now 1.66) and a virtuoso, almost mythical, metamorphosis. This is Alonso’s most ambitious and experimental work yet, transgressing genres and navigating temporal and geographical space.

Lost in the Night
Dir. Amat Escalante - Mexico, Netherlands, Germany, Denmark

Amat Escalante’s long-awaited follow-up to The Untamed (MIFF 2016) is a searing, stunningly visualised crime thriller that lays bare the class conflict and vice within modern Mexico.

Residents of a rural town are protesting a new mine likely to have harmful effects on their health. When Mónica, the activist leading the charge, goes missing after police shut down the protest, her son Emiliano sets out to find answers. As clues lead him to the estate of a celebrated artist and his musician wife, Emiliano must ask: where does justice end and revenge start? Enveloped in DOP Adrian Durazo’s shadowy nightscape, actor Juan Daniel García Treviño (Robe of Gems, MIFF 2022) plays Emiliano with intimidating resolve – the tyrannised soul through which Escalante shows us his country’s wounds.

Trenque Lauquen
Dir. Laura Citarella - Argentina, Germany

This dazzling rabbit hole of a film, which shares considerable DNA with cinephile Everest La Flor (MIFF 2019), sketches the ‘before’ and ‘after’ of a woman’s mysterious disappearance.

In the small town of Trenque Lauquen, a woman named Laura goes missing. As two men in love with her helplessly search for clues, the mystery only deepens and Laura’s story expands: Is it an erotic affair hidden between pages in the local library? A recollection of history’s formidable feminist icons? An affectionate study of rural Argentinian life? A botanical survey of talismanic flowers? Or a supernatural puzzle that has the whole town abuzz? Like its predecessor, this epic is bewitching, expansive (unfolding over 12 chapters across two parts) and enthralled by the possibilities of narrative.

Sorcery
Dir. Christopher Murray - Chile, Mexico, Germany

Witchcraft, revenge and Indigenous rancour swell in this atmospheric, anti-colonial bildungsroman set in 19th-century Chile.

On the remote island of Chiloé, Huilliche teenager Rosa works with her dad as domestic help for German settlers. When her father is killed by their employer over a misunderstanding and neither Church nor State come to her aid, Rosa is set on a path of mystical vengeance. Rescinding her Western faith, she becomes enmeshed with La Recta Provincia, who promise to teach her ancient magic to avenge her family and empower native heritage. Produced by Pablo Larraín (Ema, MIFF 2020) and drawing comparisons to The Witch and The Nightingale (MIFF 2019), this strikingly beautiful film is a spellbinding study of ritual, redress and defiant self-determination.

Eureka
Dir. Lisandro Alonso - Argentina, France, Portugal, Germany, Mexico

Slow cinema auteur Lisandro Alonso and actor Viggo Mortensen reunite for a triptych of meditations on colonialism past and present.

Beginning almost as a parody of Jauja (MIFF 2014), Eureka reintroduces us to Mortensen and Viilbjørk Malling Agger as a father and daughter, this time in a classic black-and-white western – complete with the earlier film’s Academy ratio and rounded-edge framing. Part two, shot in 1.85 and with Lynchian visual echoes, introduces us to a contemporary Lakota Sioux officer of the law on her rounds. Part three transports us to 1970s Brazil, the shift signalled by another change in aspect ratio (now 1.66) and a virtuoso, almost mythical, metamorphosis. This is Alonso’s most ambitious and experimental work yet, transgressing genres and navigating temporal and geographical space.
**Critical Condition**

To celebrate the 10th edition of Critics Campus, this retrospective of forgotten gems, cult oddities and misunderstood masterpieces turns its lens on overlooked, underrated and divisive films whose reputations were resuscitated by critics.

**PROGRAMMED BY LUKE GOODSELL**

Each screening will be introduced by a critic, and will be followed by a panel discussion.

---

**Fresh Kill**

Dir. Shu-Lee Cheung  USA

Radical lesbians, radioactive fish lips and toxic cat food collide in this avant-garde sci-fi – a transgressive landmark of anachronistic satire and queer hacktivism.

In a post-apocalyptic New York City that has become a toxic waste dump, Claire and Shaneen find themselves caught in a sinister conspiracy when their young daughter eats some contaminated fish, begins to glow with a radioactive sheen and suddenly vanishes. Could it be the doing of an ominous multinational corporation waging war on the working class? Who are the chaotic cable TV hosts hawking sex toys with baby heads? And can a sushi chef turned hacker disrupt the system and help the marginalised fight back?

93 MINS  HOSTED BY PHOEBE CHEN

---

**Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One**

Dir. William Greaves  USA

William Greaves’s countercultural masterpiece about a beleaguered New York movie crew turns the conventions of filmmaking inside out.

Somewhere in Central Park, a pair of exasperated performers are acting out a romantic break-up scene over and over at the behest of their director (played by the actual director, Greaves). This happens while a documentary crew films a crew filming the crew, bystanders wander in and out of the shoot, and the entire project appears to be on the verge of complete chaos. At the same time, Greaves’s own camera roves around this manic scene as the boundaries between performance and reality blur. Feted by the likes of Steven Soderbergh, this once little-seen cult film is now rightly regarded as one of the most innovative and influential works of self-reflexive vèrité cinema.

75 MINS  HOSTED BY MICHAEL KORESKY

---

**Querelle**

Dir. Rainer Werner Fassbinder  France, Germany

Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s final film is a ravishing adaptation of Jean Genet’s homoerotic classic about a deadly sailor on shore leave.

The swan song for New German Cinema’s enfant terrible, this dreamlike adaptation of Genet’s seminal novel Querelle of Brest unfurls in a highly stylised, wondrously phallic French port. There, the titular beatcake sailor (Brad Davis) decamps to a bar run by Madame Lysiane (Jeanne Moreau) and becomes embroiled in opium dealing, sex and murder. All the while, his superior, the lieutenant Seblon (Franco Nero), lurs and kuts after him.

Released in 1982 in the wake of Fassbinder’s untimely death, Querelle has since emerged as one of his key works, admired for its bold, expressionistic design and lurid, ravishing homoeroticism.

96 MINS  HOSTED BY KELLI WESTON

---

**Trouble Every Day**

Dir. Claire Denis  France

Claire Denis’s notoriously divisive, seductively erotic horror film rises again, with Béatrice Dalle (My Name is Anna, WIF 1993) and Vincent Gallo (Twin Peaks, WIF 1996) in all their grisly, sensuous glory.

American director Shane (Gallo) arrives in Paris with his new wife, hoping to track down Leo (Denis fave Alex Descas), the physician he once worked with on a bio-prospecting mission in the tropics. Shane is afflicted with the same bloodlust as Léo’s wife Coré (Dalle) – who, when not snacking on strangers in the woods, must be locked up in order to restrain her libidinous appetite.

Denis’s follow-up to Beau Travail (WIF 1999) received a largely hostile reception upon its release in 2002, but has since been reconsidered as a key work of the New French Extremity and a forerunner to the likes of Julia Ducournau’s Raw.

91 MINS  HOSTED BY MICHAEL SUN

---

**Golden Eighties**

Dir. Chantal Akerman  Belgium, France

Chantal Akerman puts love and capitalism in the crosshairs in this funny, vibrantly coloured musical set entirely within a shopping mall.

Two shopfronts, a juice bar and a multiplex play host to romantic yearnings and intrigues: hairdresser Mado loves wayward clothes store scion Robert; Robert loves Lili, the owner of the neighbouring hair salon; and Lili is seeing gangster and sugar daddy Mr. Jean. Meanwhile, Robert’s mother Joannes (Delpheine Seyrig) has a visitor from the past who will plunge her contented life into disarray, and Robert’s father has his eye on Lili’s retail space.

Impressively catchy and with a delightfully cynical sting, Akerman’s pastel-coloured, MGM-inspired 1980s musical may be more playful than her masterpiece Jeannette Dieiman, yet it’s no less formally rigorous or daring.

94 MINS  HOSTED BY ISABELLA TRIMBOLI

---

**Lord Shango**

Dir. Ray Marah  USA

Christianity clashes with African spiritualism when a mother summons a tribal priest to avenge her daughter in this singular, supernatural oddity of 70s Black cinema.

Billie is about to be baptised when her boyfriend Femi, an avid follower of an African religious cult, tries to intervene, and members of the Christian parish brutally draw him in a river. Racked with grief, Billie disappears. Her mother Jenny (Marlene Clark) then summons a tribal priest in a desperate bid to find her, and is drawn into a mysterious world of sorcery and esoteric belief.

Shapeshifting between horror, social drama and the occult, Ray Marah’s haunting 1975 film was released at the height of Blaxploitation cinema but defied clear-cut genre labels.

93 MINS  HOSTED BY KELLI WESTON

---

**Phoebe Chen**

is a writer and PhD candidate living in New York. Her essays and criticism have been published in Artforum, The Nation, The New York Times Magazine and elsewhere.

**Michael Koretsky**

is editorial director at New York’s Museum of the Moving Image, where he also serves as editor of the film journal Reverse Shot; a freelance programmer and host for T The Criterion Channel; and author of Films of Endearment and Terence Davies.

**Guy Lodge**

is the UK film critic for industry bible Variety, a columnist for The Guardian and The Observer, and editor of the review site Film of the Week. Born and raised in South Africa, he now lives in London.

**Michael Sun**

is a critic and essayist, and works in culture and lifestyle at The Guardian. His writing has been published in The Saturday Paper, The Monthly, Sydney Review of Books, ABC Arts, Australian Book Review and many more. He presents a weekly show on FBI Radio.

**Isabella Trimboi**


**Dr Kelli Weston**

is a film critic and programmer based in Brooklyn. Her writing has been published in Sight and Sound, Film Comment, The Current (Criterion) and The Guardian, among other publications.
Restorations

A program of cinematic treasures, classics and curios, newly restored to their former glory – ready to be discovered or ripe for rediscovery.

Millennium Mambo
Dr. Hou Hsiao-Hsien
Taiwan, France

Taiwanese auteur Hou Hsiao-Hsien’s sensual 2001 tale of an adrift bar hostess at the turn of the millennium, now in dazzling 4K.

The Coolbaroo Club
Dr. Roger Scholtes
Australia

This powerhouse documentary chronicles how a haven of Indigenous dance and activism arose from segregated postwar Perth.

I Heard It Through the Grapevine
Dr. Dick Fontaine
USA

Civil rights pioneer James Baldwin, subject of I Am Not Your Negro (WF 1997), revisits key sites in the fight for racial equality.

Japanese Story
Dr. Sue Brooks
Australia

In this multi-award-winning outback journey of discovery, Toni Collette stars as a geologist at odds with a Japanese businessman.

The Munekata Sisters
Dr. Yasuyuki Ozu
Japan

In their quest to restore long-lost romance, two sisters learn that love’s course never runs smoothly.

With Love to the Person Next to Me
Dr. Brian McKenzie
Australia

A brooding taxi driver becomes obsessed with the lives of his passengers in Brian McKenzie’s forgotten Melbourne gem.

Return to Reason
Dr. Max Ray
USA

Man Ray’s classic shorts are reimagined for their 100th anniversary alongside an ecstatic soundtrack from SQURL members Jim Jarmusch and Carter Logan.

Werckmeister Harmonies
Dr. Béla Tarr
Hungary

Hungarian slow-cinema master Béla Tarr finds metaphysical horror in a nascient revolution.

Blood
Dr. Pedro Costa
Portugal

Pedro Costa’s onerous debut film declared the arrival of an essential new voice in world cinema.

In their quest to restore long-lost romance, two sisters learn that love’s course never runs smoothly. Markie is in Kyoto caring for her ailing father. When she meets the much older but affectionate gangster Jack, who might hold the key to Vicky escaping her seemingly aimless life.

With indelible cinematography by Mark Lee Ping-bing (Chih-hui), the film is soaked in gorgeous neon light and set to a propulsive techno score. Mysterious and hypnotic in equal measure, Millennium Mambo pulls audiences into the languid days of Taipei’s youth.

In their quest to restore long-lost romance, two sisters learn that love’s course never runs smoothly. Markie is in Kyoto caring for her ailing father. When she meets the much older but affectionate gangster Jack, who might hold the key to Vicky escaping her seemingly aimless life.

Festivals buzz, including winning the Locarno Prize of the

When their father mysteriously disappears, sickly Nino and his older brother Vicente must contend with a legacy of violence and financial debt. Vicente’s friend Clara soon joins their new family unit, and the trio take care of one another until they are threatened by the men their father owed money to and by an uncle who decides Nino would be better off with him.

Costa spent several years assisting other filmmakers before making his debut in 1989. Comprised of stirring, stark black-and-white images in studiously composed tableaux, the film reveals the extent of Costa’s cinematic knowledge as well as the undeniable influence of Jacques Tourneur, Nicholas Ray and Robert Bresson.

In their quest to restore long-lost romance, two sisters learn that love’s course never runs smoothly. Markie is in Kyoto caring for her ailing father. When she meets the much older but affectionate gangster Jack, who might hold the key to Vicky escaping her seemingly aimless life.

With indelible cinematography by Mark Lee Ping-bing (Chih-hui), the film is soaked in gorgeous neon light and set to a propulsive techno score. Mysterious and hypnotic in equal measure, Millennium Mambo pulls audiences into the languid days of Taipei’s youth.
Documentaries

Truth is definitely stranger than fiction in the Documentaries strand, which presents — and probes — the many facets of real life. From famous and not-so-famous faces to spectacular and far-flung places, these films are inspiring, blood-boiling, entertaining, educational, emotional and true.

Four Daughters
[Image 33x656 to 767x959]
In this Cannes L’Œil d’Or winner, a mother and two of her daughters are joined by actors to work through their family history and understand the other two daughters’ heartbreaking choices.

The Mother of All Lies
Winner of Un Certain Regard’s Best Director and L’Œil d’Or at Cannes, this Moroccan documentary sets out to untangle personal and national secrets.

A Storm Foretold
Cartoon villain, master manipulator, traitor or true patriot? You decide in this engrossing portrait of Donald Trump’s wily adviser Roger Stone.

You Can Call Me Bill
From Star Trek to actual space travel, 92-year-old William Shatner has done it all. Alexandre O. Philippe (78/52, MIFF 2022; 78/52, MIFF 2017) beams us up with this touching tribute.

The Disappearance of Shere Hite
Pioneering sexologist Shere Hite is rescued from the margins of history in this fascinating portrait from Oscar-nominated documentarian Nicole Newnham.

Paradise
[Image 33x189 to 271x336]
Abandoned by an indifferent government, a remote Siberian village stands united in the face of a forest fire that threatens its future.

You can read more about these films and many more in the Documentaries section of the MIFF 2023 program.
MINI Selects

Inspired by its 'Big Love' attitude to life, MINI has partnered with MIFF to present a selection of films within our Documentaries strand that highlight the universality of the human condition.

Regardless of age, creed, culture, ability, gender or sexuality, we all have the power to enrich our own and others’ lives.

PRESENTED BY

MINI

Casa Susanna
Dir. Sébastien Lifshitz France, USA
Deep in the US’s Catskill Mountains of the 50s and 60s sat a clandestine refuge for transgender women and cross-dressing men to experience life without fear.

Away from New York City’s gay rights movement and the front-page headlines about Christine Jorgensen, Casa Susanna was an oasis. For the transgender women and self-identifying cross-dressers and female impersonators of the time – plus their wives and families, who often joined them – it was a place to come together and simply be themselves. For viewers today, watching this winner of DOC NYC’s US Competition Grand Jury Prize, it was an institution that epitomised resilience.

A Still Small Voice
Dir. Luke Lorenzani USA
This Sundance US Documentary Directing Award winner is a revelatory portrait of a hospital chaplain and the people under her care during COVID.

Margaret “Mat” Engel is a chaplain-in-training at New York’s prestigious Mt Sinai Hospital. It’s 2020, and her work on the frontlines challenges her spiritually, emotionally and physically. During her residency, she counsels patients and their loved ones as they confront worry, grief and hope. Meanwhile, her supervisor, Reverend David Fleenor, is suffering his own crisis: he is burnt out by the conflict of undertaking care work even just having a coffee – they work with a team of specialists to “build his own crisis: he is burnt out by the conflict of undertaking care work and work with a team of specialists to “build Adamant is an architect-designed vessel that Afloat on the Seine, the hospital chaplain and the people under her care during COVID.

Invisible Beauty
Dir. Bethann Hardison, Frederic Tcheng USA
An intimate self-portrait of iconic Black model, booking agent and fashion industry changemaker Bethann Hardison's challenge to the colourist status quo.

Hardison did more than just grace New York runways in the 1970s, spearheading representation in the homogeneous landscape of fashion. Her tireless work also involved co-founding the Black Girls Coalition in the 1980s and advocating against the sector’s entrenched racism towards non-white models in the 2000s. Alongside interviewees Zendaya, Naomi Campbell, Iman and Tyson Beckford, Hardison’s voice as director and subject is at the forefront of this biopic-cum-memoir.

The Echo
Dir. Tatiana Huezo Mexico, Germany
This double Berlinale award winner evocatively captures the joys, heartaches and rhythms of daily life in rural Mexico, as seen through the eyes of children and young women.

Tatiana Huezo (Rey) (In Crime, 88/102) turns the lens on Montse, Luz María and Sarah, who live in El Eco, a tiny village in the central-highland state of Puebla. Adolescent Montse is entrusted with the care of her beloved grandmother while dreaming of escaping with her horse to Mexico City. Tense: Luz María is not shielded from the hardships of farming life, nor the casual misogyny of her male kin. Meanwhile, primary school student Sarai loves to learn – she even teaches children younger than herself.

The Tuba Thieves
Dir. Alison O’Daniel USA
Described by its maker as a “meditation on access and loss”, this trailblazing film reframes cinema from a d/Deaf and hard-of-hearing perspective.

Who was stealing tubas across Californian high schools from 2011 to 2013? The answer is not to be found in The Tuba Thieves, which is interested less in petty delinquents than in the absence of sound. From this jumping-off point, director Alison O’Daniel creates a film about a type of listening untethered from the ear: the stories of Deaf woman Nyke Price and drummer Geovanny Marroquin, LÀs ambient noises, John Cage’s 4’33” a 1979 punk show at San Francisco’s famed Deaf Club.

Fledglings
Dir. Lidia Duda Poland
Three children tentatively spread their wings as they farewell their parents and enter a boarding school for students who are blind or have low vision.

Director Lidia Duda hands over the storytelling reins to expressive Zosia, sensitive Oskar and outgoing Kinga, whom we follow as they take their initial, halting steps towards conquering the sighted world playing in the boarding school’s grounds, interacting with teachers, confessing their troubles and learning to be each other’s source of strength. Winner of Locarno's Marco Zucchi Award, this affecting, formally inventive documentary asks us to envisage alternative forms of understanding.
This visually striking meditation on growing up apart in South Africa is unlike any documentary memoir you’ve seen before.

“I have to be very careful about remembering my memories,” says Milisuthando Bongela. She grew up in Transkei, a so-called homeland created in the 1970s to segregate Xhosa-speaking Black people from South African citizenship. Bongela remembers a middle-class childhood protected from the violence and indignities of the divisional legislation, but as an adult, she can glimpse as “a surreal experiment” what her grandmother still mourns as a lost oasis of self-determination. How can Bongela, like so many younger South Africans, reconcile the post-apartheid freedom rhetoric with a more complex and ambiguous attitude to race and belonging?

R21 aka Restoring Solidarity
Dr. Moharad Yaqubi
Galan, Pakistan, Belgium

This time capsule of an extraordinary unseen history is a remarkable work of documentation and preservation – both of a moment in time and of the moving image. Throughout the 20th century, filmmakers from around the world documented the campaign for Palestinian self-determination. Most of their films have rarely, if ever, been seen until a stranger in Tokyo offered director Moharad Yaqubi an archive of films stashed in her closet. Did he end up in Japan thanks to a staunch Japanese film enthusiast? In this surreal and haunting documentary, a group of Pakistani refugees talk about the shrapnel of the MH17 plane crash.

2017 MINS MFIF GUEST

Happy Clothes: A Film About Patricia Field
Dr. Michael Goldin
USA

Venture behind the pink tutu with the legendary Sex and the City stylist to discover the creative process that made her a New York icon.

Twenty-five years ago, Patricia Field created instantly iconic icononsense looks for Sex and the City. Also behind the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger the costumes on The Devil Wears Prada, Younger

2017 MINS MFIF GUEST

Smoke Sauna Sisterhood
Dr. Anna Hints
Estonia

In the southern Estonian woods, a group of women talk and embrace the soul-cleansing power of steam in this Sundance Directing Award winner.

As the seasons change outside, in a woodland world away from men, a group of women regularly gather in a smoke sauna to sweat and chat. No topic is off-limits – body image, dating disasters, sex, motherhood, miscarriage, menstruation, abortion, abuse – and as they share their stories, some funny, some tragic, the women forge an unbreakable bond.

Anna Hints won Sundance’s World Cinema Documentary Directing Award for this hypnotic work of radical intimacy. Shot almost entirely within the smoke sauna itself, the film invites us to bear witness to the women cleansing not just their bodies but their souls.

89 MINS VIEWER ADVICE: STRONG IMPACT THEMES, DISCUSSION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Iron Butterflies
Dr. Roman Ludby
Ukraine, Germany

In this surreal and haunting documentary, a Ukrainian filmmaker obsessively sifts through the shrapnel of the MH17 plane crash.

When Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 was shot down over Ukrainian airspace in 2014, killing all 298 passengers and crew, international investigators found a Russian missile was responsible. The highly mediated fallout was a swathe of propaganda spread by Russian media, casting Ukraine as the aggressor and the national army’s war against Ukraine as justification.

Dr. Moharad Yaqubi an archive of films stashed in her closet. Did he end up in Japan thanks to a staunch Japanese film enthusiast? In this surreal and haunting documentary, a group of Pakistani refugees talk about the shrapnel of the MH17 plane crash.

2017 MINS MFIF GUEST

Time Bomb Y2K
Dr. Marley McDonald, Brian Becker
USA

This archival explosion relives the wild and unhinged madness of the turn of the millennium. The Matrix was evolving cinema, robot dogs were a thing, Napster was causing music-industry chaos and wi-fi had just landed on the scene. Meanwhile, a flail in the game of moves and policies saw a trend or a pattern briefly take hold.

This archival explosion relives the wild and unhinged madness of the turn of the millennium. The Matrix was evolving cinema, robot dogs were a thing, Napster was causing music-industry chaos and wi-fi had just landed on the scene. Meanwhile, a flail in the game of moves and policies saw a trend or a pattern briefly take hold.

31 MINS MFIF GUEST

Beyond Utopia
Dr. Madeleine Gaxt
USA

This pulse-racing nonfiction thriller, which won a Sundance Audience Award, follows the individuals risking their lives to defect from North Korea and the past that has cost them so much.

A clergyman who has helped thousands flee to safety. A mother longing to reunite with her son after a decade apart. A family of five, including an elderly grandma, on a perilous trek through rainforests and over mountains. A family of five, including an elderly grandma, on a perilous trek through rainforests and over mountains.

The film also provides a glimpse into the director’s camaraderie with his subject, both men haunted by the trauma of the past.

89 MINS VIEWER ADVICE: STRONG IMPACT THEMES, DISCUSSION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE
**Lost Angel: The Genius of Judee Sill**

*Dir. Andy Brown, Brian Lindstrom*  
*USA*

Why is the 1970s’ most original and ethereal folk singer almost forgotten today? Judee Sill was the first artist David Geffen signed to his label Asylum. While she was often compared to Joni Mitchell, both Sill and her music were darker and stranger – and she believed her startling blend of folk, classical and gospel was a gift from God. Critics admired her two albums, and she made fans of labelmates Graham Nash and Jackson Browne, but her music was too ambitious for FM radio. After a failed record deal, an abusive relationship and a return to her teenage heroin addiction, Sill overdosed in 1979. Featuring contemporary artists including Weyes Blood, Fleet Foxes and Big Thief’s Adrienne Lenker, this documentary celebrates this unsung musician’s complicated talent.

**Mutiny in Heaven: The Birthday Party**

*Dir. Ian White*  
*Australia*

The thrilling, debauched and frequently hilarious adventures of the legendary Melbourne post-punk band, in their own words.

In February 1980, they were Boys Next Door on the brink of stardom. But they changed their name to The Birthday Party and moved to London, then to West Berlin, writing ever scarier, sexier: angrier music and turning their gigs into antagonistic art orchestales. Offstage, things were even more chaotic. Nick Cave, Rowland S. Howard, Mick Harvey, Tracy Pew and Phil Calvert froze and starved in increasingly squallid squats, descending into addiction, psychosis, imprisonment and, worst of all, creative differences. Yet by their final gig in 1983, howling like fallen angels at St Kilda’s Crystal Ballroom, The Birthday Party had achieved rock immortality.

---

**Music on Film**

Always one of MIFF’s most popular programs, Music on Film presents a cine-sonic smorgasbord that thrusts the aural onto the big screen.

**Little Richard: I Am Everything**

*Dir. Lisa Cortes*  
*USA*

A rollicking deep dive into one of rock ‘n’ roll’s most exhilarating personalities, whose queerness was hidden in plain sight.

Born Richard Wayne Penniman, Little Richard was an iconic musician with a complicated legacy. A Black man from the US’s Deep South, he was deeply religious but not heterosexual – at different points announcing and decrying his orientation. With his penchant for theatrics, he was also a pioneering performer who anticipated the wilder creative liberties of today. Yet his signature style, which coupled big hair and lavish costumes with feverish musicality and a biting voice, tore through the racial divide of American music like few others had done before. After last year’s Elvis, now the real king of rock ‘n’ roll gets his big-screen moment.

**It’s Only Life After All**

*Dir. Alexandra Bombach*  
*USA*

On Her Shoulders (2020) director Alexandra Bombach recounts how two unassuming childhood friends became lesbian icons as folk-rock duo Indigo Girls.

To Gen X queer women, being into the Indigo Girls was basically like waving a pride flag. Listening to their uniquely poetic ballads felt like finding yourself and your community. Those same loyal fans helped make Amy Ray and Emily Saliers among the first out-and-proud musicians to go gold and platinum in the 80s and 90s – even putting a Grammy win to their name. Since the birth of their collaboration as teenagers in Decatur, Georgia, their music has expressed not just their camaraderie and mutual respect, but their commitment to LGBTQIA+ visibility and rights.

**Kiss the Future**

*Dir. Nenad Covic-Sain*  
*USA, Ireland, Bosnia and Herzegovina*

Produced by Ben Affleck and Matt Damon, this film recounts how determined local musicians banded together with U2 to offer hope to Bosnians trapped in war-torn Sarajevo.

From 1992 to 1996, Sarajevo was subjected to routine shelling bombardments and sniper attacks. But despite the ever-present danger, the city’s art and music scenes carried on. Within bomb shelters and garages, disco nights sprung up, DIY punk gigs thrived and teenagers formed new bands. Then an American journalist and aid worker ingeniously asked Bono to give an interview on Bosnian TV, which led to U2 arranging live satellite link-ups with Sarajevo residents. In the singer’s afterglow, the band put on a giant show in the bomb-bout city for 45,000 fans – the largest gathering since the war began.

**Joan Baez I Am a Noise**

*Dir. Karen O’Connor, Miri Navasky, Maeve O’Boyle*  
*USA*

Tracing her stratospheric rise, this candid portrait of an iconic folk singer and civil rights activist illuminates a rich life not without its struggles.

Joan Baez is renowned for her soulful folk tracks, but she was vocal in more ways than one: she was a champion of the civil rights movement, in part due to her friendship with Martin Luther King Jr, and participated in the 1963 March on Washington. Yet her illustrious career – which, among many other achievements, helped to launch that of Bob Dylan before their relationship gave way – overshadowed her public and private battles, including anxiety as a child and trauma therapy’s confronting revelations uncovered later in life. This film is a frank portrait of an iconic artist against a backdrop of one of the most radical periods of the 20th century.

---

**Louder Than You Think**

*Dir. Joel Rosenberg*  
*USA*

Winner of a SXSW Audience Award, this doc traces the unlikely ascendency of one of rock’s most influential yet under-sung musicians: Pavement’s Gary Young.

Young didn’t know just how big of a deal the indie-rock band Pavement was until he left. Given the boot in 1998 because of his erratic behaviour, which was aided by alcoholism, he nevertheless left an almighty impression on the alternative and lo-fi scenes. From the band’s earliest recording studio sessions to his much-publicised flame-out during production on their second album, Young was a one-of-a-kind talent who helped to pioneer an iconic sound but was undone by the pitfalls of fame. This is the definitive telling of both Young’s and Pavement’s stories, prepare to be slanted and enchanted.

**Abebe – Butterfly Song**

*Dir. Rosina James*  
*Australia, Papua New Guinea*

Discover the legacy and enduring friendship of celebrated Papuan musician Sir George Tlek MBE and Not Drowning, Waving’s David Bridie.

In 1986, Melbourne musician David Bridie of the groups Not Drowning, Waving and My Friend the Chocolate Cake travelled to Papua New Guinea, where he heard the heart-pounding sounds of George Tlek and the Moab Stringband’s Abebe (‘Butterfly Song’) on board a bus. It marked the beginning of a profound fascination with the nation and its rich culture – and of a bond with Tlek that would last more than 30 years. Together, their collaboration on critically acclaimed albums and tours has helped amplify Papuan stringband sounds and languages like Tik Pisin and Kuanua outside of the country.

**Squaring the Circle (The Story of Hipgnosis)**

*Dir. Anton Corbijn*  
*UK*

Music video auteur, revered photographer and Control (2007) director Anton Corbijn takes history for a spin as he demystifies the vinyl record artwork of the masters.

Travel back to the golden era of 1970s rock ‘n’ roll and ask, “What makes a great album cover?” Corbijn’s music roots are put to exceptional use here as he explores the world of Hipgnosis, whose work graced the LPs and the gatefolds of Pink Floyd, Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin, AC/DC, Peter Gabriel and many more. From the streets of Cambridge to the displays of museums and record collections all over the world, Squaring the Circle goes behind the music and investigates what gave the enduring excessiveness of 70s aesthetics such a lasting legacy.

**Ego: The Michael Gudinski Story**

*Dir. Paul Goldman*  
*Australia*

The wild ride of maverick entrepreneur and music legend Michael Gudinski, who defied convention and revolutionised the Australian music industry over five decades.

Michael Gudinski was a music man, impresario and natural-born hustler. He repeatedly risked everything for his one obsession: Australian music. At age 19, he launched Mushroom Records and went on to sign and nurture iconic artists including Skyhooks, Split Enz, Jimmy Barnes, Paul Kelly, Hunters & Collectors, Kylie Minogue, Archie Roach and You&Y. But he wasn’t content with just a label – his hunger extended to being on the road promoting legendary international acts such as Foo Fighters, Ed Sheeran, Bruce Springsteen and Sting.
Night Shift

MIFF rolls out the black carpet for those tempted by the provocative and the unusual, and for lovers of the outlandish, creepy and weird things that go bump in the night.

The Kingdom Exodus
Dir. Lars von Trier  Denmark
Lars von Trier (Alexithymia, MIFF 2011) revisits the wacky, disturbing world of Kingdom Hospital in his cult series’s long-awaited final chapter.

The Copenhagen healthcare institute Rigshospitalet holds dark secrets: its corridors house nightmarish oddities and malevolent supernatural forces; its operating theatres reveal criminally incompetent surgeons and rabid anti-Danish sentiment. When former patient Karen somnambulates into this bizarre setting that she first encountered on her television, she discovers that not all that much has changed since 2007 – but that a new struggle between good and evil is brewing within the hospital’s corridors. Over 25 years after The Kingdom (1997) amassed a cult following, Danish cinema’s infatuation with all things macabre returns to further the show’s signature mayhem.

Late Night With the Devil
Dir. Colin Cairnes, Cameron Cairnes  Australia
The Aussie brothers behind 100 Bloody Acres (MIFF premiere fund, 2012) mix frights and frivolity in recreating a ’70s talk show that goes straight to hell.

Jack Delroy is a syndicated late-night talk show host craving to be the next Johnny Carson. On the one-year anniversary of his wife’s death (on Halloween night, of course), he returns to the airwaves with guests including a clairvoyant, a parapsychologist and the lone survivor of a satanic cult. Unbeknown to Jack, the trio is joined by a supernatural force seeking to haunt him until a climax so diabolical it would no doubt top the prime time charts.

The King of Horror himself, Stephen King, applauded the film following its SXSW premiere: “It’s absolutely brilliant,” he tweeted to his 7.1 million followers. "I couldn’t take my eyes off it.”

Sleep
Dir. Jason Yu  South Korea
Bong Joon-ho protege Jason Yu’s clever horror debut stars South Korean favourites Lee Sun-kyun (Parasite) and Jung Yu-mi (Bairn Issue, MIFF 2018).

Newlyweds Hyun-su and Soo-jin are expecting a baby, but this may not be the only new addition to their home. One night, Hyun-su sits bolt upright in bed, declaring, “Someone’s inside,” before falling back asleep. Are his somnambulistic slumber just night terrors? Or has a more sinister presence invaded their home, as the increasingly anxious Soo-jin fears?

Yu conjures an all-consuming atmosphere of domestic claustrophobia, and Palme d’Or-winning director Bong has called Sleep, which premiered in competition at Cannes Critics’ Week, “the most unique horror film and the smartest debut film [he has] seen in 10 years.”

You’ll Never Find Me
Dir. Josiah Allen, Indianna Bell  Australia
An elderly caravan park resident tangles with a mysterious woman in this deliciously unpredictable horror debut from a South Australian filmmaking duo.

The only Australian selection at this year’s Tribeca Festival, You’ll Never Find Me has crafted an unconventional story of despair and motherhood, and a salve for those who seek solace in the macabre.

Perpetrator
Dir. Jennifer Reeder  USA, France
Oozing blood, shapeshifting and a serial killer on the loose – this high school body horror is a feminist-charged frenzy, starring Alicia Silverstone.

Something peculiar is going on with 17-year-old Jonny. Something peculiar is going on with 17-year-old Jonny. Jonny’s childhood best friend Tamira, who’s taken to wearing her hair like Sadako and carrying around a mason jar. When Tamira comes clean to Jack, the trio is joined by a supernatural force seeking to haunt him until a climax so diabolical it would no doubt top the prime time charts.

Something peculiar is going on with 17-year-old Jonny. Jonny’s childhood best friend Tamira, who’s taken to wearing her hair like Sadako and carrying around a mason jar. When Tamira comes clean to Jack, the trio is joined by a supernatural force seeking to haunt him until a climax so diabolical it would no doubt top the prime time charts.

Perpetrator
Dir. Jennifer Reeder  USA, France
Oozing blood, shapeshifting and a serial killer on the loose – this high school body horror is a feminist-charged frenzy, starring Alicia Silverstone.

Something peculiar is going on with 17-year-old Jonny. Something peculiar is going on with 17-year-old Jonny. Jonny’s childhood best friend Tamira, who’s taken to wearing her hair like Sadako and carrying around a mason jar. When Tamira comes clean to Jack, the trio is joined by a supernatural force seeking to haunt him until a climax so diabolical it would no doubt top the prime time charts.

Godless: The Eastfield Exorcism
Dir. Nick Kozakis  Australia
This rare Aussie take on the popular exorcism subgenre builds to a brutal finale you won’t be able to excise from your mind.

Ron’s wife Lara has been having delirious episodes; for help, he turns to Daniel, a so-called ‘religious fixer’. Daniel has commodified his own cruelty and bloodlust, but so too does Ron manipulate his wife’s situation for personal gain. Is Lara really possessed, or has she been hoodwinked by those with ulterior motives? As Ron now rallies his devout community behind him, the faith of all involved is brought into stark question.

Toxic masculinity, the dangers of zealotry and the hypocrisy of institutions that believe in the Devil much more readily than they would believe a woman come under fire in this bracing film.
Delight in a selection of titles by master of Italian horror Dario Argento, all lovingly restored to 4K by Cinecittà. The blood-red colour really pops, almost as much as the eyes.

**Phenomena**
*Dir. Dario Argento* *Italy*
This oeuve of outré, starring a then-14-year-old Jennifer Connelly, is widely regarded as one of Dario Argento's most eccentric and bizarre films. Jennifer Corvino, the daughter of a famed American movie star, is sent to study at the Richard Wagner Academy for Girls in Switzerland. Once there, she finds herself the path of a serial killer targeting teenage girls. Naturally, her tendency to somnambulate and her telepathic connection with maggots and flies will prove useful in solving the murders – especially after she teams up with a forensc entomologist and his chimpanzee nursemaid.

**Four Flies on Grey Velvet**
*Dir. Dario Argento* *Italy*
A quirky and lesser-known piece of the Italian-giallo maestro's tapestry, and a lesson in cinematic innovation. In Dario Argento's striking final feature in the ‘Animali’ trilogy, Roberto, a drummer in a rock band, is being watched by a mysterious man. He follows the shadowy figure into a theatre, where a struggle ensues; Roberto accidentally stab the knife-wielding stranger. The tussle is photographed by a masked witness, who begins to torment Roberto, and soon a cast of offbeat characters – from a flamboyant detective, Roberto’s wife Nina and her alluring cousin, to a friend named ‘God’ and a parrot called “Jerry O’” – progressively intensify Roberto’s guilt.

**The Five Days**
*Dir. Dario Argento* *Italy*
A rarely screened outlier in Dario Argento’s career, this deliciously dark historical comedy follows a thief and a baker caught up in the chaos of a political uprising. Set against the backdrop of the 1848 Italian Revolutions and inspired by real-life accounts, this politically charged action-comedy stars pop icon Adriano Celentano as a hapless thief liberated from his Milanese prison cell by a stray cannonball as the Austrian army lays siege to the city. Misadventure ensues as he crosses paths with a naïve baker on the hunt for a brigand turned revolutionary and the country plunges into bleak and bloody civil unrest.

**Deep Red**
*Dir. Dario Argento* *Italy*
Hailed as one of the greatest giallo works ever made, this enigmatic fever dream about an amateur sleuth attracted praise from the Alfred Hitchcock himself.

When a psychopath is brutally murdered in her apartment, English jazz pianist Marcus – a resident of the same building – teams up with Gianna, an Italian tabloid journalist, to solve the murder. As the pair pursue various leads, the meat cleaver keeps swinging and more bodies begin to drop. The musician becomes a suspect, then a target. Is Marcus in over his head? Stylish and horrific in equal measure, this is an intricate, lushly visualised story of suspicion and neurosis.

**Suspiria**
*Dir. Dario Argento* *Italy*
With a title derived from the Latin phrase ‘sighs from the depths’, Dario Argento's beloved classic – the first entry in his eventual ‘Three Mothers’ trilogy – fuses Argento’s beloved classic – the first entry in his eventual ‘Three Mothers’ trilogy – fuses argento's吃的 classic – the first entry in his eventual ‘Three Mothers’ trilogy – fuses "La Caduta degli Dei" with a prequel scenario in which an American dancer student arrives at a prestigious academy in Germany on the same night that another pupil is violently murdered. An intrigued Suzy investigates, and after maggots rain down in the dormitory, the mystery begins to unfold – leading to more grisly killings and frightening revelations.

**The Black Cat**
*Dir. Dario Argento* *Italy*, *USA*
Harvey Keitel stars in this adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe’s tale of obsession and violence. Rod Usher is no stranger to the dark and gruesome; he’s frequently called on by local police to document horrific crime scenes. But when his girlfriend Annel, a violinist, brings home a black cat, Rod starts to unravel. Increasingly convinced the cat is out to get him, he commits a brutal act that propels him into a horrifying guilt-induced nightmare from which there is no return.

**Opera**
*Dir. Dario Argento* *Italy*
After bringing bloodshed to a ballet school in Suspiria, the giallo maestro wreaks operatic havoc on a soprano tackling a Shakespeare adaptation. Theatre folks consider it a curse to utter the title of Macbeth while staging a production of Shakespeare’s historical tragedy, a superstition shared by their opera colleagues. Giuseppi Verdi’s remodelling of the play is similarly haunted by freak deaths and suspicious near-misses. Dario Argento embraced this spooky drama, wielding operatic flourishes for his extravagantly staged 1987 masterpiece that pits a naive young soprano under study, thrust into the limelight against a masked killer stalking the Parma Opera House.

**The Bird With the Crystal Plumage**
*Dir. Dario Argento* *Italy*
In Dario Argento’s assured and tense debut, an American expat in Rome is entangled in a serial killer’s web.

Sam Dalmas is a struggling writer living abroad; he makes ends meet by writing manuals about the preservation of rare birds. One night, he walks past an art gallery and witnesses a brutal attack committed by a knife-wielding figure in a shiny black coat. Haunted by what he has seen, he decides to help the police on their hunt for the perpetrator; who has already murdered three other victims. Soon, Sam is sucked into a freakish world involving a cat-eating artist and a neurotic pim, and becomes the killer’s number-one target.

**The Cat o’ Nine Tails**
*Dir. Dario Argento* *Italy*
Do murderous thoughts lurk in our very DNA? Dario Argento questions nature here in his suspenseful second film.

When a mysterious break-in occurs at the Terzi Institute for genetic research, the only thing amiss is the glaring lack of stolen goods. But these apparently low stakes soon escalate wildly, as someone with everything to lose begins eliminating lessors ends. After Franco, a blind crossword-puzzle devotee, learns that intrepid reporter Carlo is on the case, he and his young niece Lina feel compelled to pay him a visit. Can this ragtag crew spy what everyone else is missing and unmasks the killer?

**The Phantom of the Opera**
*Dir. Dario Argento* *Italy*
There’s no-one better to deliver an outré rendition of the Music of the Night than an underground maestro who loves mayhem and organ music. You probably think you know this story, but Dario Argento’s version – which understands the absurdity and grotesqueries of Gaston Leroux’s novel – has way more rats and telepathy. In it, an orphaned outcast who finds refuge among the rodents beneath the Opéra de Paris grows up to become a genius composer. Having seduced beautiful young opera singer Christine, he promotes her career using a combination of threats and gory sabotage. But when the aristocratic Raoul also falls for Christine, the Phantom takes this rivalry to Gothic extremes.

**Do You Like Hitchcock?**
*Dir. Dario Argento* *Italy*
If you like Hitchcock, you’ll love Dario Argento’s exhilarating 2005 homage to the Master of Suspense.

Gioia is a Rome film student obsessed with the work of Alfred Hitchcock. He spends his time watching movies and spying on his attractive neighbour, Sasha, who he discovers frequents the same video store as him. There, she captures Gioia’s attention when she tries to borrow a Hitchcock film that is also sought by another customer. When a murder is committed in the building across from his, Gioia finds himself drawn deep into the investigation and at the centre of his own old-fashioned thrill ride.

**Tenebrae**
*Dir. Dario Argento* *Italy*
Inspired by the director’s own brush with an obsessive fan, this stylish slasher offers meta-commentary on sexism and screen violence.

American crime writer Peter Neal is greeted in Rome not only by a cavalcade of adoring journalists but by two detectives investigating a homicidal. A woman’s threat has been silt, mimicking a scene from his latest novel, whose pages were also stuffed in her mouth; the police have a hunch this first victim won’t be the last. As the bodies pile up around Neal, they begin to suspect the true murderer may live close to home. Tenebrae also asks whether transgressive fantasies can be contained by a book or, indeed, a movie.
Allensworth
Dir. James Benning USA
Landscape cinema titan James Benning invites us to contemplate Black history as he turns his structuralist lens on the first African American municipality in California.

Founded in 1908, the town of Allensworth was the first in California to be established and governed exclusively by African Americans. It's now largely abandoned, and its ghostly facades and surrounding rural landscape form the subjects of the latest formal meditation by Benning, who – almost as a coda to last year’s sprawling interrogation of his homeland, The United States of America (MIFF 2022) – surveys the locale through 12 static five-minute shots, covering a year from January to December. Awarded a Feature Film Jury Special Mention at this year’s Cinéma du Réel, Allensworth invites us to observe with both temporal distance and proximity.

65 MINS

Art College 1994
Dir. Liu Jian China
Auteurs Jia Zhang-ke (A Touch of Sin, MIFF 2013) and Bi Gan (Long Day’s Journey Into Night, MIFF 2018) join the voice cast for this acerbic animated wonder about Chinese art students facing a rapidly changing world.

It's the early 90s; China is transitioning into a market economy, and Western culture is slowly piercing the country’s veil of traditionalist thinking. Grungy chain-smoker Xiaojun and garrulous Rabbit, two students at the Chinese Southern Academy of Arts, are collaborating on a work – what they hope will be their ‘masterpiece’. But instead, crossing paths with a bunch of other creative dreamers, they end up ruminating on the sudden influx of new, progressive ideas; the true meaning of art; ageing; their crushes; and the tragedy of being a young, tortured artist.

118 MINS

Little Nicholas: Happy as Can Be
Dir. Amandine Fredon, Benjamin Massoubre France, Luxembourg
In this Annecy Best Feature–winning adaptation of France’s famed Le petit Nicolas comic book series, a mischievous character meets his creators.

Simple line sketches and soft-hued watercolours render a Paris from a bygone era. Little Nicholas: Happy as Can Be astutely envisions what happens when the art meets his artists, weaving young Nicholas’s escapades with the backstories of cartoonist Jean-Jacques Sempé and writer René Goscinny, who conjured his world. Blending biography and origin story, the film reveals how tales of the character’s carefree youth – pranks at summer camp and being grossed out by girls – emerged from his creators’ experiences of war and troubled childhoods.

82 MINS

Deep Sea
Dir. Tian Xiaopeng China
Heed the call of the waves and dive headfirst into this innovative and visually resplendent Chinese animation.

Abandoned by her mother, Shenxiu is struggling with a deep sadness when she's shipped off to sea with her emotionally absent father and his new wife and child. One day, during a wild storm, Shenxiu is washed overboard. She awakens in a wondrous underwater world, where, guided by a ‘hyjinx’ – a mystical, shape-shifting creature she knows from her mum’s songs – and accompanied by the motley crew of a subaquatic restaurant, Shenxiu embarks on an incredible odyssey to find the Eye of the Deep Sea … and, potentially, her missing mother too.

90 MINS

Experti—
mentations

Expand your understanding of narrative filmmaking with these works that foreground their formal qualities and challenge with bold approaches to sound, sight and storytelling.

Animation

Offering filmmakers a freedom unavailable in live action, Animation brings us some of the most inventive and extraordinary flights of imaginative fancy – from hand-drawn to rotoscope to CGI and the myriad styles in between.

MIFF Schools

A program to enhance students’ cinema and language learning, intercultural understanding, and media-analysis skills – but also open to all ‘learners’, regardless of age, beyond the classroom.
Hello Dankness
Dr. Soda Jerk
Australia

It’s the end of the world as we know it and no-one feels fine in Soda Jerk’s latest multi-layered cinematic remix, which sassyly swipes at deepfakes and Trumpism.

Youth (Spring)
Dr. Wang Bing
China

Wang Bing (Gang, WFF 2016; Alone, WFF 2013) documents the breakneck pace of China’s garment factories. For the workers on Happiness Road, life is anything but. This street is a microcosm of Zhi, a regional manufacturing capital: 150 kilometres from Shanghai that specializes in clothing where factories are mostly manned by young recruits from neighbouring provinces. Their days are soundtracked by C-pop, which they blast to drown out the whirl of industrial sewing machines, churning out wares at unformulable speeds to meet punishing quotas. At night, they retire to dismal dormitories, too exhausted to dream of a better life. This heartbreakingly portrait of youth sacrificed to the grind of global capitalism was a rare documentary selected for the Cannes competition.

Gush
Dr. Fox Marx
USA

A maximalist, kaleidoscopic visual essay and one of a-kind statement of bodily sovereignty. The debut feature of award-winning Ipal Kumayoa and Paykimawiun video artist Fox Marx builds on the energy, joy, passion and reverence of previous shorts such as Maat Moons Land WFF 2022. Compiled from over a decade’s worth of personal video archives, Gush overflows with imagery, emotion and humour, sumptuously layered and structured in almost musical fashion. The ‘tune’ it composes – unforgettable and at times unerving – is one of transformative power, survival and celebration. Though Marx identifies the film as “horror”, it is defiantly unlike anything you might have previously seen in that genre – or in any genre.

Conann
Dr. Bertrand Mandico
France, Luxembourg, Belgium

A deliriously defiant, all-female reimagining of Conan the Barbarian that’s fated to become a new cult classic.

Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman
Dir. Pierre Földes
France, Luxembourg, Canada, Netherlands

An enchanting take on Haruki Murakami’s short stories starring a gregarious talking frog, an existencial bank teller and an elusiv cat.

Rattled by the 2011 earthquake, dazed insomniac Kyoko leaves her husband, joyless bank employee Komura, to leave her. For methodical Josh, it will be a challenge to take seriously, while wide-eyed Elyse is just happy to be thrown a birthday party and her older (and thinner) pal Robot become inseparable, strolling around a companion via mail-order. In no time, Dog and his lonely but enterprising Dog decides to build himself a new pal from over a decade’s worth of personal video archives, which sassyly swipes at deepfakes and Trumpism.

White Plastic Sky
Dr. Tíbor Bercsény, Sandor Bádor
Hungary, Slovakia

Becoming one with nature takes a dystopian turn in this visionary roscopated romance.

Neneh Superstar
Dr. Ramiel Ben-Simon
France

Put on your ballet shoes for this triumphant, feel-good tale of a 12-year-old Parisian dancer who overcomes the odds of institutional prejudice.

France’s historic Paris Opera Ballet School is the place to depict the Big Apple and its many (animal) inhabitants. (MIFF 2021)

Paula
Dr. Florencia Wehbe
Argentina, Italy

In this sensitively told drama, a teenager’s battle with body image is a microcosm for the crushing weight of beauty standards on all young women.

Partly inspired by her own brushes with disordered eating, director Florencia Wehbe tells the story of Paula, who, amid the tempestuous period of adolescence, is struggling. Surrounded by the unrealistic pressures of society’s beauty ideals, plus her mother’s insistence on throwing her a birthday party and her older (and thinner) sister’s lack of empathy, she falls into a downward spiral of starvation and purging to lose weight. Paula finds solace in the online community, with whom she engages in harmless fat-reduction methods – even when doing so means sacrificing her real-world friendships.

This Is Going to Be Big
Dr. Thomas Charles Hyland
Australia

Peer behind the curtain as a cast of neurodiverent teens prepare to hit the stage in their school’s time-travelling, John Farnham–themed musical.

Every two years, the Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School’s Bulleenangaroo campus puts on a play. For overachiever Hal, it will be an opportunity to honour her late aunt. For methodical Josh, it will be a challenge to take seriously, while wide-eyed Elyse is just happy to be involved. And for charismatic Chelsea, it will be a chance to wow an audience with her undeniable comedic skill. Six months of auditions, rehearsals and nerves will be gruelling, but everything will pay off on opening night.

Supported by the MIFF Premiere Fund, this tender film reveals the human story behind the performed one.

The Tunnel to Summer, the Exit of Goodbyes
Dr. Taguchi Tomohisa
Japan

When the laws of time and space are turned topsy-turvy, what would you give up for one last moment with a lost love?

When Kiuru stumbles upon a strange glowing portal that appears to offer a glimpse of other worlds and alternate timelines, he jumps at the chance to reconnect with his dead sister. While he seeks to rectify his tragic past, new student Aroz’s intention is to reshape her hopes and dreams for the present. Perhaps, together, they can rewrite destiny. But the Uranus Tunnel exacts a toll: you can have whatever you desire while inside, but you’ll re-emerge with years shaved off your life. This coming-of-age adventure is a stunning ode to resilience.
Auteurs Abridged: New Shorts by Masters
Established feature directors return to the short form to play with time and experiment with structure.

Films in this package:
- As Filhas do Fogo (dir. Pedro Costa)
- Camarera de Piso (dir. Lucrecia Martel)
- Strange Way of Life (dir. Pedro Almodóvar)
- Trailer of the Film That Will Never Exist: 'Phony Wars' (dir. Jean-Luc Godard)
- Where do you stand, Tsai Ming-liang? (dir. Tsai Ming-liang).

95 MINS

Accelerator Shorts 1
Bold works from emerging Australian and New Zealand filmmakers.

Including a double Berlinale-winning docufiction hybrid about Yankunytjatjara artist Derik Lynch; a Tribeca prize winner about a Tongan-Australian girl learning the intricacies of identity; and a cine-poem starring Thom Green (dir. Jay Perry, Shaun Perry, Gate Crash)

Films in this package:
- Cold Water (dir. Anu)
- Development (dir. Rebecca Metcalfe)
- Earthlings (dir. Jamie Lawrence)
- Generations of Men (dir. Joanna Joy)
- Inda 4 Eva (dir. Sophie Somerville)

92 MINS

Australian Shorts
Impassioned narratives from this continent’s best.

Including a 35mm-shot work emulating 60s psychological thrillers; a coming-of-age tale starring Jamie-Lynn Sigler (The Sopranos) and set to an eclectic 80s soundtrack; and a Torres Strait Islander tale about the longing for home, led by Bangarra Dance Theatre’s Elma Kris and Waangenga Blanco.

Films in this package:
- Crushing Season (dir. James Ivor)
- Fuck Me, Richard (dir. Lucy McKendrick, Charles Polinger)
- Grain of Truth (dir. Marcus Gale)
- I’m on Fire (dir. Michael Spiccia)
- Walking (dir. Caleb Ribates)

94 MINS

O Canada! Shorts From the Maple-Leafed North
An intimate kaleidoscope of stories from the best emerging filmmakers working in Canada today.

From the basement bedrooms of teen brothers to claustrophobic club bathroom stalls to the heady cabin of a stolen car – treat yourself to Toronto's Best Canadian Short winner; a Clermont-Ferrand-crowned true story of breaking free; and a tender queer exploration of autonomy, intimacy and desire.

Films in this package:
- Baba (dir. Anya Chirkova, Meran Ismailsoy)
- Blond Night (dir. Gabrielle Demers)
- Invincible (dir. Vincent René-Lortie)
- Nantico (dir. Carol Nguyen)
- Simo (dir. Aziz Zoromba)

97 MINS

WTF Shorts
Unfiltered and unapologetic. Not for the faint of heart.

Including a Clermont-Ferrand prize winner that satirises capitalism and fame; a Cannes-screening story of a humanoid bird's erotic awakening; and an arresting mockumentary about alien sex, lauded at Sitges.

Films in this package:
- Chomp It! (dir. Mark Chua, Li Shuen Lam)
- Fairplay (dir. Zoel Aeschbacher)
- FROM.BEYOND (dir. Fredrik S. Hana)
- La Perra (dir. Carla Melo Gampert)
- Meantime (dir. Guillaume Scaillet)
- Pentola (dir. Leo Černic)
- Sweet Juices (dir. Will Suen, Sejon Im)

92 MINS

The much-loved MIFF Shorts program highlights the art of saying more with less. This year’s selection includes animation, documentary, experimental, and Australian and international fiction shorts, plus special suites of works from Canada and by famed auteurs.
Animation Shorts
Forms collide in this assorted collection of visual storytelling.
Including a MIFF alk’s masterpiece that won the Cannes Short Film Palme d’Or: a touching, very Melbourne queer short; and a work of Eastern European weirdness about an apartment… that is a dog.

99 MINS

International Shorts 1
Remarkable short-form favourites from Cannes, Venice, Locarno and more.
Including a deftly menacing Mongolian tale that won Best Short Film at Toronto and at Venice; a refugee story lauded at Cannes Critics’ Week; and a Locarno award-winning tale of sweet, sweet, taking-the-low-road revenge.

95 MINS

International Shorts 2
An awarded and acclaimed cornucopia from directors known and new.
Including a Rotterdam-crowned portrait of shared uncertainty; a dizzying Sundance award winner that collides virtual and real-world violence; and a heart-stoppingly sharp indictment of the US healthcare system.

96 MINS

Documentary Shorts
Far-reaching, resonating subjects pulled from various corners of the world.
Including the latest work from legendary Australian filmmaker Margot Nash; a filmic mixtape of shifting aspect ratios that keeps Tunisian film culture alive; and a Locarno prize-winning exploration of the male form from a Gen Z perspective.

96 MINS VIEWER ADVICE: MAY CONTAIN IMAGES AND VOICES OF DECEASED FIRST NATIONS PERSONS; STRONG IMPACT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE THEMES; CONTAINS STROBOSCOPIC IMAGERY

Experimental Shorts
Unconventional cinema that tests the boundaries of form and function.
Including a form-challenging 3D journey in search of a statue of Eros; the latest from MIFF 2022’s Best Experimental Short winner, nominated for the Cannes Queer Palm; and an autofictional retelling of a Buddhist folktale.

106 MINS VIEWER ADVICE: CONTAINS STROBOSCOPIC IMAGES

One of the most highly regarded short-film competitions in both the Asia Pacific region and the Southern Hemisphere, now in its 62nd year.

The MIFF Shorts Awards are Academy Awards accredited. The 2023 winners of the Best Short Film, Best Australian Short Film, Best Documentary Short Film and Best Animation Short Film awards are eligible to submit their films for the 96th Academy Awards in 2024.

The MIFF Shorts Awards are presented by Campari Australia, in partnership with ACMI, and supported by the MIFF Shorts Awards 2023 Jury.

Alena Lodkina is a Russian-born Australian filmmaker whose feature films include Strange Ceolbrans (2017) and Petrol (MIFF Premiere Fund 2022). She also writes about film, and her fiction and documentary short films have played internationally.

Kate ten Buuren is a Taungurung curator, artist and writer working on Kulin Country. Her interest in contemporary visual art, film and oral traditions is grounded in self-determination, self-representation and the power of knowing one another.

Virginia Whitwell is Head of Production and Partner at Good Thing Productions. Over a 25-year career, she has worked all over the world and has produced many award-winning scripted and factual projects including Nitram, Nude Tuesday, The Australian Omelet and 2040.

Best MIFF Shorts
A collection of the best short films from the festival, as chosen by the MIFF Shorts Awards jury and the MIFF Shorts programmers.
Films will be announced during the festival.

MIFF PLAY

A collection of the best short films from the festival, as chosen by the MIFF Shorts Awards jury and the MIFF Shorts programmers.
Films will be announced during the festival.

MIFF PLAY

Best MIFF Shorts
A collection of the best short films from the festival, as chosen by the MIFF Shorts Awards jury and the MIFF Shorts programmers.
Films will be announced during the festival.

MIFF PLAY

One of the most highly regarded short-film competitions in both the Asia Pacific region and the Southern Hemisphere, now in its 62nd year.

The MIFF Shorts Awards are Academy Awards accredited. The 2023 winners of the Best Short Film, Best Australian Short Film, Best Documentary Short Film and Best Animation Short Film awards are eligible to submit their films for the 96th Academy Awards in 2024.
MIFF XR

MIFF's program of extended reality (XR) experiences – spanning virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and mixed reality (MR) – rewrite the frontiers of storytelling through total audiovisual immersion.

Phase One
8–15 August

Turbulence: Jamais Vu
Dr. Ben Joseph Andrews  Australia

From the team behind epic environmental VR installation Gondwana (MIFF 2022) comes an intimate experience of (mis)perception.

Director Ben Joseph Andrews suffers from a chronic vestibular condition characterised by destabilising episodes of dizziness or imbalance, whose symptoms can last anywhere from a few minutes to a few days (or longer). Unlike his and producer Emma Roberts’s earlier work Gondwana – which speculates on the endangered future of the Daintree rainforest – Turbulence: Jamais Vu reimagines the medium on a personal scale, taking form as an essayistic exploration of an invisible illness.

10 MINS

From the Main Square
Dr. Pedro Horres  Germany

This multi-award-winning interactive VR experience shows the rise and fall of an entire civilisation.

The town square is traditionally a meeting place for its inhabitants – a crossroads of stories, commerce and civic life. But in this VR work, which has won awards at Venice, Annecy and NewImages, it’s also where the forces of history converge, as a small village is gradually overtaken by a military dictatorship. Participants bear witness to the steady march of so-called progress, rendered in immersive 360-degree animation, where economic advancement brings with it increasingly bloody battles.

10 MINS

I Took a Lethal Dose of Herbs
Dr. Yvette Granata  USA

A harrowing yet hypnotic true story from the frontline of North America’s abortion debates, told through hallucinatory episodes.

A former pro-life activist who once protested outside abortion clinics finds herself on the other side of the picket. Viewers are plunged into the warped worldview of a mother experiencing post-partum psychosis, who ingests the titular herbs and is swept up in a reality-bending trance. This unsettling yet utterly gripping work is based on an anonymous woman’s experience narrated on a subreddit.

10 MINS

Limbotopia in VR
Dr. Hsieh Wen-Yee  Taiwan

First-time director Hsieh Wen-Yee presents a surreal trip through a post-apocalyptic Taiwan.

Limbotopia refers to an imagined world where time seems to stand still: a static and endless landscape. Participants come passengers journeying through one such monochromatic eternity, submerged in phantasmagorical animations merging the microscopic and the monumental.

Premiering at Tribeca, this immersive 360-degree VR experience seems to defy the laws of gravity and perspective.

25 MINS

Stay Alive, My Son
(Chapters 1 & 2)
Dir. Victoria Boula  Greece, USA

A quest for personal and national healing, based on the experiences of a Khmer Rouge survivor.

When Pin Yathay and his wife fled a forced labour camp in Cambodia, they left behind their six-year-old son Neath, who was too ill to make the perilous journey to Thailand. Yathay’s courageous determination to reunite his family – and to find justice for his country, later testifying at a United Nations Special Tribunal – touched readers worldwide when he published his acclaimed memoir in 1987. This interactive VR work invites us to experience Yathay’s story, and Cambodia’s tragic history, firsthand.

50 MINS

Surfacing
Dr. Rossella Schiacci  Italy, Portugal

An immersive fairytale whose everyday heroes are mothers and children in Italian prisons.

When Italian women are incarcerated, they are permitted to keep their children with them in prison until they reach the age of 10. Often shot from a child’s vantage point, Surfacing uses 360-degree VR to envelop viewers in these families’ restricted worlds, where their imaginations are still free.

Director Rossella Schiacci made the work in collaboration with her subjects, who share their intimate impressions of life behind bars. Surreal animations depict their memories and dreams, which are blended with live-action footage of their confined realities.

21 MINS

Phase Two
17–20 August

In Pursuit of Repetitive Beats
Dr. Darren Emerson  UK

Hit the town and seek out the next illegal rave in this euphoric, multisensory jyride about the 1980s Acid House movement.

In the 1980s, Coventry became the epicentre of the UK rave scene, attracting countless young people on weekend pilgrimages to the Midlands area. But their energy is matched by the police’s staunch attempts to quell their rauscous parties. In the latest VR work, famed VR filmmaker Darren Emerson (Bannockburn, MF 360) reimagines the scene in an immersive 360-degree VR installation, MF 360, you’re thrust into the commotion, heart pumping with trepidation and excitement as you explore secret party locations – warehouses, woodlands, disused buildings, empty fields – and interact with memorable along the way.

With an extraordinary eye for historical detail, Emerson weaves 3D modelling, volumetric capture and animation with firsthand accounts from legendary ravers and iconic songs by Orbital, Joey Beltram and Neil Howard. But these parties combined reverence with rebellion: they birthed a community for youth from all classes and backgrounds who, during the Thatcher years, felt alienated and out of place. Winner of IDFA’s DocLab Award for Immersive Non-Fiction, In Pursuit of Repetitive Beats is a visceral, ecstatic ode to a time when what mattered most was chaining that next dance-floor high.

55 MINS

Repetitive Beats
Dir. Rosella Schiacci  Italy

A visceral, ecstatic ode to a time when what mattered most was chaining that next dance-floor high.

In the 80s, Coventry became the epicentre of the UK rave scene, attracting countless young people on weekend pilgrimages to the Midlands area. But their energy is matched by the police’s staunch attempts to quell their rauscous parties. In the latest VR work, famed VR filmmaker Darren Emerson (Bannockburn, MF 360) reimagines the scene in an immersive 360-degree VR installation, MF 360, you’re thrust into the commotion, heart pumping with trepidation and excitement as you explore secret party locations – warehouses, woodlands, disused buildings, empty fields – and interact with memorable along the way.

With an extraordinary eye for historical detail, Emerson weaves 3D modelling, volumetric capture and animation with firsthand accounts from legendary ravers and iconic songs by Orbital, Joey Beltram and Neil Howard. But these parties combined reverence with rebellion: they birthed a community for youth from all classes and backgrounds who, during the Thatcher years, felt alienated and out of place. Winner of IDFA’s DocLab Award for Immersive Non-Fiction, In Pursuit of Repetitive Beats is a visceral, ecstatic ode to a time when what mattered most was chaining that next dance-floor high.

55 MINS

Hit the town and seek out the next illegal rave in this euphoric, multisensory jyride about the 1980s Acid House movement.

In the 1980s, Coventry became the epicentre of the UK rave scene, attracting countless young people on weekend pilgrimages to the Midlands area. But their energy is matched by the police’s staunch attempts to quell their rauscous parties. In the latest VR work, famed VR filmmaker Darren Emerson (Bannockburn, MF 360) reimagines the scene in an immersive 360-degree VR installation, MF 360, you’re thrust into the commotion, heart pumping with trepidation and excitement as you explore secret party locations – warehouses, woodlands, disused buildings, empty fields – and interact with memorable along the way.

With an extraordinary eye for historical detail, Emerson weaves 3D modelling, volumetric capture and animation with firsthand accounts from legendary ravers and iconic songs by Orbital, Joey Beltram and Neil Howard. But these parties combined reverence with rebellion: they birthed a community for youth from all classes and backgrounds who, during the Thatcher years, felt alienated and out of place. Winner of IDFA’s DocLab Award for Immersive Non-Fiction, In Pursuit of Repetitive Beats is a visceral, ecstatic ode to a time when what mattered most was chaining that next dance-floor high.

55 MINS

Ref: 00247501
We extend our heartfelt thanks to all those who have taken their cue and shown their love for MIFF this year by making a donation, becoming a Member or joining the MIFF Circle. The festival belongs to you – the filmmakers and film lovers of Melbourne.

The generous support from our community is integral to our success as Australia’s premier film event, and it’s never too late to get involved!

Protect your favourite festival. Join and donate today.

All gifts above $2 are tax-deductible.

miff.com.au/donate
MIFF Talks
Go beyond the screen and get closer to the themes, ideas and talent of the 2023 festival through MIFF’s engaging panel and conversation events.

In Conversation: Celine Song’s Past Lives
The Wheeler Centre
Spend an hour with director Celine Song (USA), whose debut feature Past Lives is one of the most celebrated and talked-about of the year. Song will discuss her approach to work and the intimate intricacies of this film, which stars Greta Lee (Russian Doll), Teo Yoo (Decision to Leave, MIFF 2022) and John Mangano (First Cow, MIFF 2020).

Power Shift: The Future of Seeing
ACMI
A panel of academics, filmmakers and screen practitioners delve into some of the major recent changes in the industry. They will explore the emerging currents of evolution within the screen world; how the ethics of power are intertwined with inclusivity, virtual production and AI; and just what this may mean for both emerging and established creatives.

MIFF Industry
Operating with Victorian Government funding since commencing in 2007, MIFF Industry reinforces Melbourne’s standing as a creative city and supports the Antipodean screen sector with selective-entry programs to foster creative connections and collaborations.

MIFF 37°South Market facilitates sourcing, acquisition, development and production-financing of local screen content and talent via pitches/meetings, talks, screenings and networking events.

MIFF Accelerator Lab nurtures tomorrow’s top directors on the journey towards their first feature-film/longform works. Alumni include the directors of 52 Tuesdays, Animal Kingdom, Babyteeth, Busytown, H is for Happiness, Hounds of Love, Joos Rabbit, Of an Age, Snowtown, Shayda and Sweet As.

While both programs are invite-only, MIFF Industry also offers a select number of Behind the Scenes ticketed sessions to the film-loving public – be they media students, screen practitioners or the curious! Discover this year’s Behind the Scenes line-up at miffindustry.com.

The MIFF Premiere Fund provides co-financing support for co-commissioning Australian ‘stories that need telling’ into films that then premiere at MIFF.

Managed by MIFF Industry with Victorian Government funding, the Premiere Fund has, since 2007, supported more than 95 films that have won almost 200 awards from nearly 500 nominations and secured more than 700 festival selections globally.

MIFF 2023 debuts the Premiere Fund’s 15th slate, which comprises Accelerator Lab alumna Noora Niasari’s Shayda (the seventh Premiere Fund film to open MIFF), Australia’s Open, Memory Film: A Filmmaker’s Diary, The Rooster and This Is Going to Be Big (head to page 17 for more details).

Elsewhere in the 2023 MIFF Talks program, you can look forward to discussions themed around cinema in the regions and our Bright Horizons film competition, as well as to this year’s instalment of our audience-beloved Consuming Culture talk: a roundtable dedicated to what we’re up to and how we’re up to when it comes to watching, reading and otherwise consuming film and media, co-presented by The Wheeler Centre.

MIFF Talks events are also fantastic opportunities to spend time with our brilliant international and local festival guests. Head to miff.com.au to find out more!
Regional Screenings

In 2023, MIFF continues its commitment to meeting audiences where they are. The MIFF Regional program presents a selection of this year’s most anticipated titles across seven cinemas in regional Victoria. For session times and other details, head to miff.com.au/regional-venues.

Regional Opening Night
11 August

Screening across all seven of MIFF 2023’s regional venues, Paul Goldman’s exhilarating documentary kicks off MIFF Regional.

PRESENTED BY

Ego: The Michael Gudinski Story
Dir. Paul Goldman  Australia

The wild ride of maverick entrepreneur Michael Gudinski, who revolutionised the Australian music industry over five decades.

Helmed by director Paul Goldman (Suburban Mayhem, MIFF 2006) and produced by Bethany Jones (Molly: The Real Thing), Ego features personal accounts from Gudinski himself, interviews with some of the world’s most influential artists, rare archival footage and an electrifying soundtrack. Tracing its subject’s rise from shy son of immigrant Jewish parents to audacious international player and Australian household name, the film dives into Gudinski’s psyche and unorthodox tactics, his successes and failures, and reveals the unstoppable frontman of a music empire.

Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror
Ulumbarra Theatre (Bendigo)
Dir. F.W. Murnau  Germany

Experience F.W. Murnau’s iconic 1922 vampire film brought to life by a live orchestra for one night only on 11 August.

Following award-winning, sell-out shows at the Adelaide Fringe Festival and seasons at Edinburgh Fringe (UK) and Not Apart (Canberra), Rasa Daukus (piano) and Will Larsen (percussion) – the duo behind Tess Said So – have teamed up with Orchestra Victoria to expand their original score for Murnau’s magnificently eerie, Gothic silent film. In this unmissable event presented by MIFF, Orchestra Victoria, and Bendigo Venues and Events, a full orchestra, keyboard, electronics, and a massive labyrinth of drums, shakers, bells, cymbals, gongs and percussion come together to create an electrifying atmosphere to accompany this 1922 German expressionist adaptation of Bram Stoker’s Dracula. An influential work of early filmmaking and the horror genre that followed, Nosferatu is considered a masterpiece of cinema; 101 years after its release, you’re now invited to witness this thrilling silent film as it was meant to be heard.

Single ticket
FULL: $15
MEMBERS: $12.75

Bundle up and save with a MIFF Play Flexi-pass (4 films)
FULL: $50
MEMBERS: $45

play.miff.com.au
Food and Film Experiences

Melbourne’s best restaurants and bars are walking distance from MIFF, making for a whole night out. Fire up the group chat, book your tickets and reserve a table at one of our favourite restaurants.

La Madonna
Anatomy of a Fall
5 August
CHAMPAGNE TASTING + FILM SCREENING

Bristling with emotional depth, this Palme d’Or–winning courtroom drama puts the complexities of a relationship on trial.

La Madonna’s menu blends culinary artistry and the artisanal, serving food that is both challenging and comforting. In this French courtroom drama, which won the top prize at Cannes, a couple’s failed marriage is put on trial – a story that emphasises the solace and struggles of companionship.

Victoria by Farmer’s Daughters
The Rooster
12 August
DINNER + FILM SCREENING

Hugo Weaving and Phoenix Raei play a hermit and a cop who form an unlikely connection amid crisis in this wonderfully weird sucker-punch of tenderness.

Aligning with Victoria by Farmer’s Daughters’ focus on regional produce and food culture, this Australian film is set entirely within Castlemaine and nearby surrounds. It shows off the Victorian countryside and highlights the beauty of the landscape and living off the land.

Cumulus Inc.
Past Lives
13 August
FILM SCREENING + DINNER

What if the lover who never was is ‘the one’? This swooning romance follows a Korean woman whose heart is torn by the road not taken.

Matching Cumulus Inc.’s classy menu and ever-changing seasonal menu, this film by a breakthrough Korean-Canadian director is a contemporary but classic film about love, relationships and the passage of time – celebrating both the old and the new.

ARU
The Shadowless Tower
17 August
FILM SCREENING + DINNER

This beguiling tale of a middle-aged man who’s lost his bearings doubles as a charming meditation on the frayed bonds of family.

This Chinese film’s protagonist is a food critic who spends time with the proprietor of a humble restaurant, discussing changing flavours and tastes of the locals. While ARU’s menu blends native Australian ingredients and modern Asian flavours, these characters’ discussions gravitate around Chinese cuisine and culture.

HERO
Showing Up
20 August
FILM SCREENING + LUNCH

A film as much an ode to the daily creative grind as it is to the creative partnership between director Kelly Reichardt and actor Michelle Williams.

Located within ACMI at Fed Square, HERO is grounded on the intersection between film, food and art. In turn, this US film celebrates the working life of an artist, and First Cow (MIFF 2020) director Kelly Reichardt is nothing other than a contemporary filmmaking hero who forges her own creative path.

Limited tickets available to our film and dining experiences, with thanks to our favourite restaurants and hospitality partners.
## MIFF 2023 Index

### #
- ~22.7°C
- 20,000 Species of Bees

### A
- Aaah!
- Abebe-Butterfly Song
- About Dry Grasses
- Absence
- Accelerator Shorts 1
- Accelerator Shorts 2
- Adults, The
- Afire
- After Work
- AIMEND

### D
- Deep Red
- Deep Sea
- Delinquents, The
- Depersonalization
- Deserts
- Development
- Disappearance of Shere Hite, The

### E
- Earth Mama
- Earthings
- Echo, The
- Ego: The Michael Gudinski Story
- Eondoni Sea
- Eternal Daughter, The
- Eternal Memory, The
- Eureka
- Experimental Shorts

### F
- Flighting Looks Different 2 Me Now
- Face of the Jellyfish, The
- Fairplay
- Fairyland
- Fiamme
- Five Days, The
- Fledglings
- Four Daughters
- Four Flies on Grey Velvet
- Fremont
- Fresh Kill
- From the Main Square
- FROM:BEYOND
- Fuck Me, Richard
- Fulldome Showcase 1
- Fulldome Showcase 2

### G
- Gate Crash
- Generations of Men
- Geometry of Faith
- Goddess: The Eastball Exorcism
- Gods of the Supermarket

### H
- Hafizkii
- Happy Clothes: A Film
- Happy Outfits:
- Heart Spell
- Hello Darkness
- Hidden Spring, The

### I
- I Heard It Through the Grapevine
- I Promise You Paradise
- I Took a Lethal Dose of Herbs
- I Used to Be Funny
- I, Your Mother

### J
- Japanese Story
- Joaquin Baez I Am a Noise

### K
- Katele (Mudskippers)
- Kayo Kayo Colour?
- Keepers of Goodbyes, The
- Kiss the Future

### L
- La Chmera
- La Perra
- Labrador Terriers
- Last Summer

### L
- Late Night With the Devil
- Le Spectre de Boko Haram
- Letter From My Village
- Limbo in VR
- Linda 4 eva

### M
- Man Who Couldn’t Leave, The
- Manakara Tjaletjou (Dipped in Black)
- Master Gardener
- May December

### N
- Nancie
- Of Goodbyes, The

### O
- O Canada!
- Omen
- On the Adamant
- Opera
- One Last Evening

### P
- Paradise Passages
- Past Lives
- Paula
- Pentola
- Perfect Days

### Q
- Querelle

### R
- R21 aka Restoring Solidarity
- Rebel With A Cause
- Reconnection
- Remembering Every Night

### S
- Sand
- Scarygirl
- Scraper: Sebel: One Among Many
- Shackles
- Shadowless Tower, The

### T
- Take A Look at This Guy
- Tenebrae
- Terrestrial Verses
- Theater Camp
- Then Comes the Body

### U
- Ukraine Guernica – Artist War

### V
- Vision of Paradise

### W
- Walking

### Y
- You Can Call Me Bill
- You’ll Never Find Me

## Encore Screenings & Late Announcements

Check the website for up-to-date information, including late additions to the MIFF 2023 program.

## Schedule your festival

The complete MIFF 2023 program schedule grid is available online.

Save a shortlist, compare session times and schedule your festival at miff.com.au.

---

Slow Light
Smoke Sauna Sisterhood
Snow in September
Society
Squaring the Circle (The Story of Hipgnosis)
Stay Alive, My Son (Chapters 1 & 2)
Still Small Voice, A
Stone Turtle
Stone Walling
Storm Foretold, A
Strange Way of Life
Subtraction
Sunflow
Surface
Suspiria
Sweet East
Sweet Juices
Symbiosisaplastam: Take One
Tenneree
Terrestrial Verses
Theater Camp
Then Comes the Body
This Is Going to Be Big
This Is Not Here
Tiger Stripes
Time Bomb Y2K
Tomato Kitchen
Tommy Guns
Tollem
Toral
Trouble Every Day
Tuba Thieves
Tunnel to Summer, the Exit of Goodbyes
Turbulence: Jamais Vu
Ukraine Guernica – Artist War
Undercurrents: Meditations on Power
Vision of Paradise
Voices in Deep
Walk Up
Walking
We Used to Own Houses
Whorlmeister Harmonies
Where do you stand, Tsai Ming-liang?
White Plastic Sky
With Love to the Person Next to Me
WTF Shorts
You Can Call Me Bill
You’ll Never Find Me
Young (Spring)
Accessibility

Physical Access

Venue Information
Detailed venue information for each screening venue at MIFF this year is available on the MIFF website.

Step-Free and Wheelchair Accessibility
All metropolitan venues at MIFF 2023 have step-free access, are wheelchair-accessible and have accessible seating. Options such as aisle seats or seats close to a exit are also available.

Guide Dogs and Assistance Dogs
Guide dogs and assistance animals are welcome in all venues at MIFF.

To view all in-cinema and MIFF Play sessions with accessible services and to filter the program by specific services, visit the MIFF website or use the MIFF 2023 App.

For more detailed information about Access at MIFF 2023, visit miff.com.au/access.

Communication Access

Open Captions
Select sessions at MIFF will screen with Open Captions. Open Captioned screenings display captions that dictate any spoken dialogue, music or sound effect in the film and are shown on the screen for the duration of the film.

Audio Description
Select sessions at MIFF will screen with an Audio Description (AD) track. This service provides additional narration and commentary that aims to describe the visual content of the film, thereby offering additional information about the film through sound. AD units will be available for collection at the venue.

Hearing Loop
At select MIFF venues this year, a Hearing Loop is provided. Patrons can tune in using their own hearing-aid device for amplified film sound directly into the ear.

Assistive Listening
At select MIFF venues this year, Assistive Listening (AL) is available. This service provides an amplified version of the film’s sound through a device with headphones. AL units will be available for collection at the venue.

Auslan-Interpreted Events
To engage a wider audience for MIFF’s program of films and events, Auslan interpreters will be present at a selection of Talks, introductions, Q&As and special events throughout the festival.

100% Subtitled
Many films screening at MIFF are subtitled and without any spoken English language, including some films that are silent or that have no dialogue.

Sensory Access

Sensory Friendly Screenings
MIFF will run Sensory Friendly Screenings at select sessions this year. Sensory Friendly Screenings are designed to make the cinema experience accessible and are for anyone who would benefit from a more relaxed environment. This can include but is not limited to neurodivergent people who experience sensory processing differences (autistic people, ADHD people), people with learning disabilities, people with dementia as well as those living with anxiety or who have experienced trauma.

Inclusion

Crybaby Sessions
MIFF is offering select Crybaby Sessions this year, catering for parents and carers with babies and toddlers who wish to enjoy the festival in a baby-friendly environment.

MIFF Play
MIFF Play offers an alternative to in-cinema sessions for select films and allows viewers to enjoy quality film experiences at home. Select access services are available for films screening on MIFF Play.

MIFF 2023 Credits & Acknowledgements

Philanthropy
Brad Macdonald
Head of Philanthropy & Festival Development
Sophie Scott
Philanthropy & Membership Coordinator
Hannah Attwood
Philanthropy & Membership Intern

Finance & Administration
Cecily Wallace
Accounts

Systems & Ticketing
Jaymie Bandoowski
Head of Systems & Ticketing
Bonnie Perry
Box Office Manager
Nick Turner
Data & Ticketing Manager
Jordan Wilks
Data & Streaming Coordinator
Rosi Hezeli
Ticketing Coordinator

Operations
Erin Hutchinson
Head of Operations
Georgia Byrne
Operations Manager
Chris Ehrlich
Technical Manager
Chiara Gabrielli
Venue Manager
Grace Packer
Volunteers Manager
Melanie Orelle
Events Manager
Keir Atkiken
Assistant Venue Manager
Angela Liyllan
Assistant Venue Manager
Tom Middleditch
Assistant Venue Manager
Isla Talkback
Events Coordinator
Gina Cameron
Events Coordinator
Sarah Alesmado
Print Traffic Coordinator
Vidhi Vira
Events Intern

MIFF Industry
Eddie Coups
Industry Programs Manager
Scott Jolien
Industry Programs Officer
Andrew Goode
Industry Programs Coordinator
Anthoula Veversis
Industry Projects Coordinator
Claudia Nankervis
Industry Programs Administrator
George Samios
Industry Programs Assistant Administrator

Publicity – Common State
Luke McKinnon
Jelen Carroll
Alisa Leeholty
Caitlyn Miles
Leigh-Anne Ramirez

Panellists

Short Film
Sam Barnes
Erfan Behzadnia
Bedey Bleichendal
Jasper Cainerly
Lesley Chow
Theodoric Chung
Chloë Daniel
Lucy Davidson
David Heslin
Caroline Dropping
Tessa Flynn
Andy Huang
Ylin Jiang
Michelle Keating
Jessica Lou
Natalie May
Jack McColgun
Jemima McGrath
Tom Middleditch
Donovan Reen
Neil Salmon
Santilla Chingaipe
Trevor Bryan Cotton
Lisa Daniel
Yael Dossal
Alexandra Holier Nicholas
Dibgy Houghton
Matthew Jordan
Ronan Lobo
Kim Munro
Megan Ng
Sophia Petropoulos

XR
Paul Jeffery
Callum Stewart
Yale Too

Publications Team

Writers
Mel Campbell
Joanna Di Matteo
Glen Charlie Dansie
David Hodin
Luke Goodsell
Tilly Gravos
Rebecca Harms-Cross
Stephen A. Russell
Melanie Sheridan
Isabella Timbdoll

Proofreaders
Mel Campbell
David Hodin

Campaign artwork
Key imagery courtesy of the films Afire, Halekaai and How to Blow Up a Pipeline
A MOMENT OF ETERNITY

It’s more than just 24 frames flickering every second. More than an epic retelling of our collective past or an exploration of our possible futures. Each new masterpiece questions our deepest nature and fuels our highest aspirations. It’s a testament to what truly moves us, an invitation to always aim higher, and a legacy perpetually reinvented. It’s cinema.

#Perpetual