

2025 SFFILM Festival Web Guide

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ATTENDING THE FESTIVAL

Tickets

General Admission.....	\$20
Student/Senior/ADA.....	\$19
SFFILM Member.....	\$16
*Children (14 and under).....	\$11

*Children’s ticket prices are for select programs only

Ticket Packs

Ticket Packs are the most flexible way to see SFFILM events at a discount, and may be redeemed for any regular, non-rush screening or event priced up to \$25.

6-PACK

SFFILM Members.....	\$100
General Public.....	\$120

10-PACK

SFFILM Members.....	\$150
General Public.....	\$180

Cinevisa

The best way to support SFFILM, this all-access pass includes entry to the priority line at all film screenings and access to the Festival Lounge.

Cinevisa.....	\$2300
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THE FINE PRINT

Ticket prices may vary for Special Events. Tickets are subject to a \$1.50 service fee. Ticket Packs are subject to a \$5 service fee. Valid ID required to receive discounts.

Accessibility

SFFILM is committed to providing accessible experiences at all events whether in-person or online. Event pages will be updated with accessibility information as it becomes available, which may be after tickets go on sale. For more information about accessibility at specific venues or programs, please visit [\[sffilm.org/accessibility\]](http://sffilm.org/accessibility) or contact ada@sffilm.org.

FILM DESCRIPTIONS

3670

Sat Apr 19 at 5:30 PM at Presidio Theatre

Sun Apr 20 at 8:15 PM at BAMPFA

Joonho Park (South Korea 2025, 124)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

A young North Korean defector's path towards self-discovery brings him into Seoul's vibrant gay community where new friendships and hardships lie ahead.

Film Description

For Cheol-jun, experiences life in two halves. As a North Korean defector living in Seoul, he is part of a small group who have followed a similar path to freedom. He has become close friends with many, but he conceals the fact that he is gay from them. Contending with feelings of isolation and longing for deeper connection, Cheol-jun summons the courage to explore Seoul's vibrant gay community. Finally, able to let his guard down, his life begins to blossom. But keeping his two worlds apart becomes increasingly unsustainable, and Cheol-jun finds himself in a precarious position that threatens the delicate relationships that he holds dear. In this auspicious and aching tender debut, director Joonho Park perceptively navigates two of South Korea's most marginalized communities with a deep level of nuance, specificity, and compassion towards those yearning for acceptance and understanding. —Jordan Klein

A Tribute to Chris Columbus + "Rent"

Sat Apr 26 at 6:00 PM at Premier Theater at One Letterman

Chris Columbus (USA 2005, 135)

Awards + Special Events

Tribute Description

Join us as we pay tribute to director, writer, and producer Chris Columbus with a conversation celebrating his achievements and a special 35 mm screening of his 2005 musical drama Rent.

Film Logline

Director Chris Columbus reunites most of the original Broadway cast for this vibrant adaptation of Jonathan Larson's Tony-winning musical about young bohemians sharing dreams and heartaches in 1990s New York.

Film Description

Anthony Rapp, Idina Menzel, and Tony winner Wilson Jermaine Heredia are among the original Broadway cast that reunite for director Chris Columbus' vibrant

adaptation of Jonathan Larson's Pulitzer Prize-winning musical. Inspired by Giacomo Puccini's opera *La Bohème*, HIV/AIDS replaces tuberculosis as the disease raging in New York's Alphabet City as 1989 draws to a close. Filmmaker Mark (Rapp) documents his and his friends' lives, poor bohemians all, as they share their dreams and heartaches. While performance artist Maureen (Menzel) makes shows illuminating the group's eviction fight with their former friend and landlord Benny (Taye Diggs), HIV-positive couples Angel (Heredia) and Collins (Jesse L. Martin) and Roger (Adam Pascal) and Mimi (Rosaria Dawson) struggle to maintain their health. Columbus reaps big dividends with striking cinematography and production design that vividly evoke the grit and glamour of the era, while the staging and choreography gloriously open the story from its stage-bound roots. There is also a local angle: While set in Manhattan, the film was largely shot in soundstages on Treasure Island and at other Bay Area locations. —Pam Grady

40 Acres

Wed Apr 23 at 8:45 PM at Premier Theater at One Letterman
R.T. Thorne (Canada 2025, 113)
Narratives: International

Film Logline

Danielle Deadwyler (Till) stars as a woman willing to go to any lengths to protect her family and her farm from roving bandits in this bloody, unrelentingly tense post-apocalyptic thriller.

Film Description

Danielle Deadwyler (Till) stars as a woman determined to protect her family and her farm in this pulse-pounding, post-apocalyptic thriller. After a mass die-off kills most animals, humans succumb to worldwide famine. For the few people left, viable acreage is a precious commodity. Hailey Freeman (Deadwyler) has that with the farm that's been in her family for generations. An electric fence, video surveillance, and an arsenal act as safety measures but then Hailey's teenage son Emanuel (Kataem O'Connor) brings in an outsider. At a time when brutal, cannibalistic bandits are on the prowl, that rash act invites trouble. Deadwyler is pitch perfect as a lethal helicopter mom, well supported by a cast that includes Michael Greyeyes (*Fear the Walking Dead*) as Hailey's tranquil partner Galen. Music video director R.T. Thorne makes a dazzling, unrelentingly tense feature debut with an indelible drama that blends scenes of everyday domesticity with bloody scenes of carnage.

All That's Left of You

Tue Apr 22 at 8:30 PM at Premier Theater at One Letterman
Sat Apr 26 at 12:00 PM at BAMPFA
Cherien Dabis (Germany, Cyprus, Palestine, Jordan, Greece, Qatar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2025, 145)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

An epic drama spanning three generations in the life of a Palestinian family, this dynamic film centers the story in the personal while also depicting the dehumanizing political situation surrounding its characters.

Film Description

An epic drama spanning three generations and over 70 years in the life of a Palestinian family, this dynamic and heart-wrenching film centers the story in the personal while also depicting the dehumanizing political situation surrounding its characters. The narrative begins in 1988 in the Occupied West Bank where Salim (Saleh Bakri, *The Teacher*, Festival 2024) lives with his wife Hanan (co-writer/director Cherien Dabis) and son Noor. The boy, increasingly rebellious against what he sees as his dad's inaction, takes to the streets to protest the occupation, where something happens that will change the course of the family's life. As a lengthy flashback explains how events that occurred in 1948 shaped Salim's diffident personality, the narrative relays a textured story of a husband and father who becomes despondent in the face of constant oppression. With powerful performances and a propulsive narrative, *All That's Left of You* is a stirring representation of survival amid intergenerational trauma. —Rod Armstrong

The Babadook

Tue Apr 22 at 8:30 PM at Presidio Theatre
Jennifer Kent (Australia, Canada 2014, 94)
Awards + Special Events

Film Logline

In Jennifer Kent's wicked cult classic, things go bump in the night when a widowed single mother's grief gradually grows into something monstrous.

Film Description

Amelia (Essie Davis, *True History of the Kelly Gang*) is not alright. Still consumed by grief six years after losing her husband in a car crash, she is also overburdened by her son Samuel's (Noah Wiseman) eccentricities and his conviction that a dark and mysterious character from one of his picture books has come to life. When chaos erupts in their lives, the six-year-old blames the book's trench coat-shrouded, top hat-wearing figure. Initially dismissive of her son's delirium, Amelia eventually comes to realize that the monstrous force known as *The Babadook* represents a terrifyingly real threat. More than a decade after its release, Jennifer Kent's (*The Nightingale*, Festival 2019) stunning directorial debut continues to haunt audiences the world over, earning a rabid fanbase that crosses boundaries into the pop culture sphere. With a spellbinding performance from Davis and adorned with a wickedly stylish expressionist aesthetic, *The Babadook*

remains an enduringly demonic delicacy for fans of horror cinema to feast upon.
—Jordan Klein

Beloved Tropic

Sat Apr 19 at 6:00 PM at Marina 2

Sun Apr 20 at 5:30 PM at BAMPFA

Ana Endara (Panama, Colombia 2024, 108)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

A Colombian immigrant woman in Panama cares for a matriarch suffering from dementia in a powerful story about love, motherhood, and aging.

Film Description

In director Ana Endara's powerful narrative feature debut a pregnant Colombian woman arrives in Panama City desperate for work as she copes with her precarious immigration status. Ana Maria (Jenny Navarrete) finds a job as a caregiver for aging matriarch Mercedes (Paulina Garcia), who is in the early stages of dementia. Patient and kind with the older woman, they form a sweet bond which fuels this tender tale. Navarrete and Garcia share remarkable chemistry, their masterful performances revealing a deepening connection between Ana Marie and Mercedes that allows both to evolve into stronger women. Nicolás Wong Díaz's gorgeous cinematography captures Panama City's lush environment along with the warmth between these very different women amidst great change in their respective lives. —Kristal Sotomayor

The Best Mother in the World

Sat Apr 19 at 12:15 PM at Marina 2

Anna Muylaert (Brazil, Argentina 2025, 106)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

A trash collector fleeing abuse tells her kids that they are on a grand adventure instead of admitting they are homeless in this compassionate portrait of a mom making the best of a dire situation.

Film Description

Filmmaker Anna Muylaert (The Second Mother, Festival 2015) is known for her empathetic portraits of Brazilian women working hard to provide for their families and improve their own personal circumstances. In her latest film, trash collector Gal (Shirley Cruz) flees an abusive relationship and takes to the streets with her two kids and the pushcart that is her livelihood. Pretending they are on a grand adventure in the streets of São Paulo rather than confront her children with the reality of being homeless, Gal attempts to bring a spirit of playfulness to a dire

situation. Muylaert brings her characteristic compassion to the fore, heightened by Cruz's textured performance that blends the levity of the family splashing around in a public fountain with the pathos of a middle-aged woman facing a difficult path ahead. Actor-musician Seu Jorge is similarly memorable as the brutish Leandro.

BLKNWS: Terms and Conditions

Fri Apr 18 at 8:30 PM at Premier Theater at One Letterman
Kahlil Joseph (USA, Ghana 2025,)
Documentaries: USA

Film Logline

Distinguished filmmaker and multimedia artist Kahlil Joseph returns to SFFILM with this sonic and visually immersive celebration of black culture deftly crafted by an artist at his zenith.

Film Description

Distinguished filmmaker, music video director, and multimedia artist Kahlil Joseph returns to SFFILM with his first feature. Building on *An Evening with Kahlil Joseph* (Festival 2019) and his stated intent to present Black stories outside the constraints of traditional media narratives, *BLKNWS: Terms & Conditions* takes us on an Afrofuturist oceanliner back to Africa. The *Nautica* is a beautiful vessel full of music, art installations, and welcoming spaces that encourages passengers to reconcile their personal history within a broader cultural context. Sarah (Shaunette Renée Wilson), an undercover journalist, leads the audience with reportings of activities aboard the ship. Her observations are punctuated by work from artists like Senga Nengudi, Garrett Bradley, Raven Jackson, Ja'Tovia Gary, and Alex Bell. Joseph employs his remarkable versatility to seamlessly weave together archival footage, YouTube and social media content, personal memoir, historical references, and more to offer a kaleidoscopic exploration of the Black experience. This sonic and visually immersive essayistic blend of documentary and fiction is difficult to categorize and not to be missed. A celebration of Black culture deftly crafted by an artist at his zenith. —Jessie Fairbanks

Blue Road: The Edna O'Brian Story

Sat Apr 19 at 2:45 PM at Presidio Theatre
Sun Apr 20 at 11:30 AM at BAMPFA
Sinead O'Shea (Ireland, UK 2024, 99)
Documentaries: International

Film Logline

Edna O'Brien became notorious for writing sexually explicit novels in the '60s and '70s that inspired generations of writers. Jessie Buckley narrates this tender documentary that captures the late writer's essence.

Film Description

No wallflower, literary sensation Edna O'Brien's sexually explicit novels enthralled readers for decades; simultaneously inspiring generations of writers while infuriating power brokers who banned her books. Ignoring prevailing norms of puritan propriety, O'Brien was renowned for her wild parties, lavish lifestyle, passionate affairs, and most notably, her radiant voice. A trailblazer who bucked convention until her passing in 2024, O'Brien was the ultimate maverick. Her life, both the bitter and the sweet, is captured in this beautifully compiled film. Director Sinéad O'Shea blends diary entries (read by Jessie Buckley), footage of O'Brien with luminaries such as Paul McCartney, Sean Connery, and Jane Fonda, as well as exclusive late life interviews with the scribe herself. Frank and funny, this documentary will lift your spirits and return you to O'Brien's wondrous writing. —Jessie Fairbanks

The Botanist

Fri Apr 18 at 6:00 PM at Presidio Theatre
Sat Apr 19 at 5:15 PM at BAMPFA
Jing Yi (China 2025, 96)
Narratives: International

Film Logline

In the sun-drenched valleys of Xinjiang, China, a young Kazakh boy, beguiled by the natural world, experiences that same sense of enchantment when he meets a spirited Han Chinese girl.

Film Description

The wind bellows and glides across golden blades of grass in the sun-drenched valleys of Xinjiang, on the northern border between Kazakhstan and China. Arsin is a young Kazakh boy with a deep passion for the flora and fauna around him, giving keen attention to plants and all of their beguiling details. When he meets Meiyu, a spirited Han Chinese girl, she evokes the same feelings of enchantment that he experiences with the botanical beauty that surrounds him. What unfolds between Arsin and Meiyu is a magical-realist fantasy that speaks volumes about our ephemeral and ethereal ties to our wondrous world. In his directorial debut, Jing Yi engages a cast of non-actors and a real-world setting to produce a spellbinding representation of a forgotten land and its people, whose deep connection with nature offers meaningful lessons to live by. —Jordan Klein

The Brink of Dreams

Sun Apr 20 at 2:45 PM at Marina 2
Nada Riyadh, Ayman El Amir (Egypt, France, Denmark, Qatar, Saudi Arabia 2024, 101)
Documentaries: International

Film Logline

In a conservative Egyptian village, a group of girls form a street theater troupe, using performance to challenge patriarchal norms, pursue their artistic dreams, and navigate the complexities of womanhood and societal expectations.

Film Description

Young women in a remote Egyptian village form a street theater troupe that uses performance as both a creative outlet and a bold act of defiance in this striking documentary. Through their plays, they challenge patriarchal norms, confront sexual violence and oppression, and question the long-held beliefs of their community. But dreams of becoming actors, dancers, and singers collide with reality in the face of resistance from family and friends. Majda's brother ridicules her ambitions, while Haidi's marriage forces her to reconsider her aspirations. Filmed over four years, directors Nada Riyadh and Ayman El Amir capture the women's journey from adolescence to adulthood, revealing the complexities of growing up in a conservative society. As fact and fiction blur onstage, *Brink of Dreams* becomes a moving portrait of female solidarity, artistic rebellion, and the unyielding pursuit of self-expression against all odds. —Amir George

Cactus Pears

Sat Apr 19 at 12:00 PM at Presidio Theatre

Wed Apr 23 at 7:00 PM at BAMPFA

Rohan Parashuram Kanawade (India, UK, Canada 2025, 112)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

A tender tale of queer love and friendship blossoms amidst one man's grief over the death of his father and the strict social mores of a rugged western Indian town.

Film Description

When his father dies, Anand returns from Mumbai to his rugged western Indian hometown to mourn. Surrounded by demanding relatives and frustrated by stifling rituals, Ananda finds respite from the claustrophobia when he reconnects with childhood friend Balya. In a conservative society that struggles to accept these men's authentic selves, their feelings deepen, with the pair forming a tender relationship that blossoms like vivid cactus pears in the dusty desert.

Writer/director Rohan Kanawade makes an auspicious feature debut with this erotic drama, deftly situating this tale of queer love—stories so often told within the boundaries of higher caste and class—in everyday rural India and lower middle-class Mumbai. —Bedatri Choudhury

Carnival of Souls

Sat Apr 26 at 9:30 PM at Marina 2

Herk Harvey (USA 1962, 78)
Awards + Special Events

Film Logline

In this timeless progenitor of low-budget horror cinema, a woman survives a devastating car accident and begins seeing paranormal visions of ghoulish men who pursue her to the ends of the earth and her sanity.

Film Description

After miraculously surviving a devastating car accident, Mary (Candace Hilligoss), an organist, relocates to Salt Lake City to continue her career. But soon terrifying visions of ghoulish men torment her, relentlessly pursuing her to the ends of the earth—and the ends of her sanity. Herk Harvey's timeless low-budget horror classic received little attention during its initial 1962 release but over the intervening decades it gained new life as it went on to influence and inform artists across generations and artistic mediums. *Carnival of Souls'* spellbinding atmosphere, nightmarish imagery, and menacing manifestation of the macabre have bewitched artists from Lana Del Rey to Phoebe Bridgers. —Jordan Klein

Chain Reactions

Mon Apr 21 at 6:30 PM at Presidio Theatre
Alexandre O. Philippe (USA 2024, 103)
Awards + Special Events

Film Logline

Tobe Hooper's slashtastic classic *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* shocked moviegoers upon its 1974 release. 50 years on, Stephen King, Takashi Miike, and others describe its influence and ongoing significance.

Film Description

Japanese horror maestro Takashi Miike remembers that he went to see Chaplin's *City Lights* when he was 15, but ending up watching *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* instead. Today he wonders if he would even be a filmmaker if not for that twist of fate. Novelist Stephen King puts Tobe Hooper's 1974 slashtastic classic in context with his own work and recalls his own association with the director. Australian film critic Alexandra Heller-Nicholas describes her long fascination with the movie and how she relates its terrors to a fire in the Outback. In Alexandre O. Philippe's (78/52) engrossing documentary, these three and others speak to the cultural significance of Hooper's sophomore feature and observe how this low-budget, 16mm gorefest went on to not only captivate a legion of fans but also influence and inspire succeeding generations of filmmakers. —Pam Grady

The Chaplain and the Doctor

Mon Apr 21 at 6:00 PM at Marina 1

Wed Apr 23 at 4:30 PM at BAMPFA

Jessica Zitter (USA 2025, 86)

Documentaries: USA

Film Logline

An unlikely partnership forms between a chaplain and a physician in an Oakland trauma center, challenging medical biases and redefining compassionate care as they confront personal and professional struggles together.

Film Description

At Highland Hospital, Oakland's level-one trauma center, chaplains and doctors rarely work closely together but in this involving documentary, 80-year-old African American chaplain Betty Clark and white Jewish physician Jessica Zitter are exceptions to that generality. Longtime colleagues in the hospital's Palliative Care unit, the two women forge a deep bond through their shared commitment to compassionate end-of-life care. Trained in medical science and interventions, Dr. Zitter learns from Chaplain Clark's wisdom and perspective, and begins to see the emotional and spiritual aspects of healing. The film explores the systemic barriers that prevent holistic patient care, particularly for communities of color, as well as the personal transformations both women undergo. When Chaplain Clark faces her own health struggles, Dr. Zitter steps in, seeing firsthand the challenges Black patients endure. *The Chaplain and The Doctor* is a moving testament to care beyond medicine, where healing honors both body and spirit. —Amir George

Closing Night: Outerlands

Sun Apr 27 at 5:00 PM at Premier Theater at One Letterman

Sun Apr 27 at 6:00 PM at Marina 1

Elena Oxman (USA 2025, 100)

Awards + Special Events

Film Logline

Cass, a newcomer to San Francisco, finds themselves an unintentional caretaker for an acquaintance's child in this sweet local film about discovery and acceptance.

Film Description

Cass is a newcomer to San Francisco, attempting to find their way in a big city. With rigorous discipline Cass starts to build a new life: renting a studio, saving for the future, and maintaining two gigs as a server and nanny. Reserved and cautious, Cass yearns for connection, so when vivacious Kalli comes barreling into their life, bursting with sex appeal and bravado, Cass quickly lets down their guard. When Kalli suddenly asks Cass to watch her daughter Ari, Cass reluctantly

agrees to the unusual request. Days pass leaving Cass to absorb new responsibilities and unexpected financial obligations while providing a safe space for Ari. Angry and confused by her mother's absence, Ari's reaction triggers unwelcome memories for Cass. Despite their mutual frustrations, Cass and Ari form a unique bond even as their situation spirals out of control. Elena Oxman's tender debut, developed through SFFILM's Artist Development program, speaks to the Bay Area's vibrant and rich communities that can magically lead to new beginnings. With a cast of exciting emerging talents, including Asia Kate Dillon and Ridley Asha Bateman, as well as iconic queer comic Lea DeLaria, Oxman weaves together a passionate story of loss, discovery, and acceptance. —Jessie Fairbanks

Cloud

Sun Apr 20 at 8:30 PM at Marina 1
Kiyoshi Kurosawa (Japan 2024, 123)
Narratives: International

Film Logline

An unscrupulous online reseller's misdeeds catch up with him in mysterious and frightening ways in horror maestro Kiyoshi Kurosawa's dark tale.

Film Description

Shrouded in the chilling atmosphere that has become a hallmark of his career, horror maestro Kiyoshi Kurosawa crafts yet another eerie tale that reveals the darkest parts of the human condition. Ryosuke Yoshii runs an online reselling operation out of his drab Tokyo apartment, determined to strike it big. Through sheer gumption, his unscrupulous practices pay off, allowing him to move to an ornate home in the countryside where his business continues to expand. But Yoshii's misdeeds eventually catch up with him. A series of unsettling and inexplicable occurrences disrupt his tranquil existence, before the malevolence's true form emerges from the shadows. Kurosawa builds off the themes of his 2001 classic cyber horror *Pulse*, imbuing his protagonist's plight with a keen awareness of how the digital frontier has infiltrated our lives and become a domain for our most troubling and malicious tendencies. —Jordan Klein

Come See Me in the Good Light

Sat Apr 19 at 1:45 PM at Premier Theater at One Letterman
Ryan White (USA 2025, 104)
Documentaries: USA

Film Logline

Spoken word icon and poet laureate Andrea Gibson navigates her final tour amid a devastating cancer diagnosis. She and her partner Megan Falley bring a vibrant accessibility to the cycles of treatment with grace, poignancy, and bawdy humor.

Film Description

Spoken word icon and poet laureate Andrea Gibson navigates her final tour amid a devastating and incurable cancer diagnosis. She and her partner, poet and writer Megan Falley, share their journey through treatment and mortality in this powerful portrait of love and resilience. Their intellect and compassion bring a vibrant accessibility to the cycles of treatment and the toll of caregiving. The couple's love and compassion for one another is a refreshing reminder that it is always an option to meet life's toughest moments with grace. And humor! Gibson's wit is on full display throughout the film, daring you not to laugh along with her. Director Ryan White's unique bond and deep respect for his subjects allows the film to unfold with stunning intimacy, as he documents the highs and lows in Gibson's fight for more time. Produced by Sara Bareilles, Brandi Carlile, and Tig Notaro, the story of *Come See Me in the Good Light* is a gift from two radically brave women. —Jessie Fairbanks

Cutting Through Rocks

Sat Apr 19 at 2:30 PM at BAMPTFA

Sun Apr 20 at 2:45 PM at Premier Theater at One Letterman

Sara Khaki, Mohammadreza Eyni (Iran, Germany, USA, Netherlands, Qatar, Chile, Canada 2025, 94)

Documentaries: International

Film Logline

The first female elected to her rural Iranian village's council refuses to follow patriarchal norms despite facing aggressive resistance in this transcendent vérité portrait of an extraordinary woman effecting change.

Film Description

Sara Shahverdi, a brave and independent soul, loves to ride motorcycles, refuses to follow patriarchal norms, and is the first female elected to her rural Iranian village's council. A natural maverick, Shahverdi takes her leadership role seriously, building new parks and increasing access to fuel and electricity for all. These initiatives are cleverly tied to her insistence that the village's women be given greater rights and deeds to their homes, leading to heavy backlash. Spearheaded by her own brother, a fellow council member, Shahverdi faces shocking legal challenges and deepening mistrust from her community. Despite these setbacks, she continues to ride in the desert, improve the lives of others, and finds joy in daily discovery. With a patient eye and unobtrusive presence, co-directors Sara Khaki and Mohammadreza Eyni spent five years documenting the lives of women in Iran. The result is a transcendent vérité portrait of an extraordinary woman effecting change. —Jessie Fairbanks

The Dating Game

Fri Apr 18 at 8:30 PM at Marina 1
Violet Du Feng (USA, UK, Norway 2025, 90)
Documentaries: USA

Film Logline

When males outnumber females by 30 million, getting a date with a woman is almost impossible. Enter coach Kao whose business is helping Chinese males up their game—and maybe find a wife.

Film Description

In this fascinating documentary, Violet Du Feng (Hidden Letters) looks at the unhappy result of China's one-child policy in a society that prefers sons. Years after the country abolished the dictate, there are 30 million more men than women. Males, especially those of lower social classes, find it almost impossible to secure a wife. In an era of endemic male loneliness amid a hypercompetitive dating market, enter dating coach Hao. He remakes men in his own brash image, an approach that is a mismatch with some of his clients. At the same time, while women may be armed with greater bargaining power in this bizarre social scenario, they also feel burned by it, some choosing to swear off messy human interaction and find fulfillment instead with the perfection of virtual boyfriends. What Du Feng so intriguingly uncovers is a dystopic picture of a society grappling with a rash policy's unintended consequences. —Bedatri Choudhury

Deaf President Now!

Sun Apr 27 at 11:15 AM at Premier Theater at One Letterman
Sun Apr 27 at 5:00 PM at BAMPFA
Nyle DiMarco, Davis Guggenheim (USA 2024, 100)
Documentaries: USA

Film Logline

In this involving documentary, students at Washington, D.C.'s Gallaudet University stage protests in March 1988, demanding that the world's first university for the deaf and hard of hearing appoint a deaf president.

Film Description

For eight days in March 1988, students of Washington D.C.'s Gallaudet University protested the appointment of a hearing president. Demanding truly representative leadership, the students broke the cycle of pity and condescension that defined their experience at the world's first university for deaf and hard of hearing students. Actor Nyle DiMarco, a Gallaudet graduate, makes his directorial debut with this documentary that memorializes a watershed moment not only in American disability rights activism but also in the history of US student movements. Key players in the protest lead the audience through the events of

those heady days and relate how they overcame sexism, ableism, and paternalism to ensure an equitable future for the generations of Gallaudet students that followed. Narrated through American Sign Language and voiceovers, Deaf President Now relates the involving story of an under-reported triumph. —Bedatri Choudhury

The Devil Smokes

Fri Apr 18 at 8:45 PM at Marina 2
Ernesto Martínez Bucio (Mexico 2025, 97)
Narratives: International

Film Logline

Telling the story of five siblings fending for themselves in the wake of parental abandonment, this tender, well-crafted film won Berlinale's inaugural Perspectives Award for fiction debut.

Film Description

Telling the story of five siblings fending for themselves in the wake of parental abandonment, this tender, well-crafted film won Berlinale's inaugural Perspectives Award for fiction debut. It's 1990 and Mexico eagerly awaits the second visit of Pope John Paul II while the Palacios López family wrangles with a different visitation, real or imagined. When the quintet's mom disappears and five pairs of shoes appear out of nowhere, imaginative youngster Victor claims, "The Devil brought them." Their unstable grandmother Romana, left behind as caretaker when the kids' father goes to find his wife, encourages the thought that something malevolent is at work. In a tale replete with generational mental health issues, superstition, and religious belief, director Martínez Bucio employs an impressively diverse style with home movie footage that fills in important backstory information and tight close-ups that reflect the increasingly claustrophobic tension in the household. Stellar performances from a very young cast of non-professionals further buoys the narrative. —Rod Armstrong

The Dutchman

Sun Apr 20 at 5:45 PM at Marina 1
Andre Gaines (USA 2025, 94)
Narratives: USA

Film Logline

In this powerful reimagining of Amiri Baraka's 1964 play, successful-but-troubled man about town Clay (Festival tributee André Holland) faces off fearlessly and unforgettably with tempestuous racial provocateur Lula (Kate Mara).

Film Description

In this powerful reimagining of Amiri Baraka's Obie-winning 1964 play, successful-but-troubled man about town Clay (Festival tributee André Holland) has an important evening ahead—a party launching the political campaign of his friend Warren (Aldis Hodge)—when he meets a tempestuous woman named Lula (Kate Mara) on the subway. Both Clay and Lula have demons—he's in marriage therapy and she's a racial provocateur who threatens to upend his life. Baraka's seminal and disturbing work addresses racial and sexual polarities between Black men and white women and Gaines's update suggests that society—and Black men in particular—needs to push past and through the play's dynamics in order to heal. Stephen McKinley Henderson as therapist Dr. Amiri (note the name!) and Atlanta's Zazie Beets as Clay's wife Kaya are memorable in supporting roles, but it's Mara and Holland who faceoff fearlessly and unforgettably in Gaines's coruscating film. —Rod Armstrong

Endless Cookie

Sat Apr 19 at 9:00 PM at Marina 1
Seth Scriver, Peter Scriver (Canada 2025, 97)
Documentaries: International

Film Logline

From distinct backgrounds, Seth and Pete Scriver come together to record Pete's stories in this colorful, digressive, and endlessly entertaining animated documentary, a brilliantly inventive mix of brotherly love and Canadian history.

Film Description

"The goal is to make something funny, beautiful, spiritual, political, complex, simple, and true. That should be easy, right?" So, declares Seth Scriver at the beginning of this colorful, digressive, and endlessly entertaining animated documentary. But define "easy." Canadian arts grant secured, co-director Seth travels from Toronto to remote Shamattawa, Manitoba, to document his Indigenous half-brother Pete's beguiling stories. But since Pete has nine kids, a dozen dogs, and friendly neighbors who constantly disrupt the flow of one tale and prompt the start of another, it's an ever-changing process. The Scrivers wrap an anti-colonialism message in a story that extends from the 1980s to dystopian 2028 and from Pete's lively, cluttered home to the supermarket frozen food aisle. Characters might have an onion for a head or a balloon for a nose. And car seats listen to and comment on the news in this brilliantly inventive mix of brotherly love, family ties, and Canadian history. —Pam Grady

Ferrari: Fury & The Monster

Sun Apr 20 at 3:30 PM at Presidio Theatre
Steve Hoover (USA 2024, 80)
Documentaries: USA

Film Logline

Motorsports engineer Mauro Forghieri, creator of the legendary Ferrari 250 GTO, takes center stage in this rip-roaring tale of Ferrari's ascendance in the racing world.

Film Description

Ferrari ruled the racetrack for over two decades, beginning in the 1960s, a legacy explored in this rip-roaring documentary. Building upon the company's heritage as one of the most iconic race and sportscar manufacturers in the world, the Ferrari team's parade of victories defined the brand as it is known today. In this exhilarating film, director Steve Hoover shines a spotlight on not only the era but also on brilliant engineer Mauro Forghieri and his most legendary creation, the 250 GTO. Its pedigree and spellbinding beauty enchant legions of collectors, from Ralph Lauren to Pink Floyd drummer Nick Mason, leading to the car becoming one of the most expensive and sought-after vehicles in the world. With archival footage of company founder Enzo Ferrari, interviews with Forghieri and collectors, and a mesmerizing abundance of adrenalin-pumped racing scenes, *Ferrari: Fury & The Monster* deftly balances a keen exploration of man and machine. —Jordan Klein

Festival Talk: Filming in San Francisco: A Case Study with Outerlands and Film SF

Fri Apr 25 at 4:00 PM at Lounge
Talks + Workshops

Event Description

San Francisco has served as the backdrop for numerous iconic films—*Vertigo* (1958), *The Rock* (1996), *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1978), *The Conversation* (1974), among numerous others. Now, the Festival's Closing Night film *Outerlands* joins this illustrious pantheon. The essential city agency Film SF is leading the charge to support a diversity of storytellers to bring their casts and crews to the City by the Bay. For this conversation, *Outerlands* director Elena Oxman, and producer Marc Smolowitz will discuss the opportunities and challenges of filming in San Francisco with Film SF Executive Director Manijeh Fata and Deputy Director Sofia Alicastro. This talk is free and open to the public, RSVP required.

Festival Talk: Sloan Science in Cinema Prize: Talking about Twisters

Sun Apr 20 at 3:30 PM at Walt Disney Family Museum
Talks + Workshops

Event Description

In partnership with the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, SFFILM is thrilled to award the Sloan Science in Cinema Prize to last summer's blockbuster *Twisters*. Join director Lee Isaac Chung, along with scientific experts and effects wizards from the film, as they discuss whether a tornado can actually be "tamed," the world of tornado chasers, and how they embraced science to depict the awesome power of nature through cinematic craft and create the vastly entertaining world of *Twisters*. This talk is free and open to the public, RSVP required.

The Sloan Science in Cinema Prize celebrates the compelling depiction of scientific themes or characters in a narrative feature film. The program celebrates and highlights cinema that brings together science and the art of storytelling, showing how these two seemingly disparate areas can combine to enhance the power of one another. The selections are meant to immerse a broad public audience in the challenges and rewards of scientific discovery, as well as to engage members of the scientific community.

Sundown Cinema Outdoor Screening: *The Fog*

Fri Apr 25 at 8:00 PM at The Presidio Civil War Parade Ground

John Carpenter (USA 1980, 89)

Awards + Special Events

Film Logline

When a low-lying fog creeps through a seaside town in Northern California, ghastly occurrences ensue in this mystifyingly atmospheric horror classic from John Carpenter.

Film Description

As a seaside Northern California town prepares to celebrate its centennial, a mysterious marine layer slowly envelops it as night falls in John Carpenter's eerie horror classic. According to local legend, a shipwreck 100 years ago in the waters just off the shore of Antonio Bay claimed the lives of the Elizabeth Dane's entire crew. Now, as paranormal occurrences and ghastly slayings ensue, the townspeople must unravel their home's troubled past before the true manifestation of malevolence emerges from the fog. At its 45th anniversary, Carpenter's mist-shrouded chiller—shot in Point Reyes and Bodega Bay—continues to induce goosebumps. This second collaboration with his Halloween "scream queen" Jamie Lee Curtis also stars Curtis' mother Janet Leigh and Carpenter's then wife Adrienne Barbeau. Containing an entrancing synth score by Carpenter himself, *The Fog's* still potent ability to set pulses racing demonstrates why it remains a cult favorite among his outstanding oeuvre of spine-tingling thrillers. This is a free outdoor screening, presented in conjunction with the San Francisco Parks Alliance. RSVP required. —Jordan Klein

Folktales

Sun Apr 20 at 12:30 PM at Marina 1

Rachel Grady, Heidi Ewing (USA, Norway 2025, 106)

Documentaries: USA

Film Logline

Teenagers attend a rural high school in the Norwegian wilderness where the curriculum includes lessons from sleigh dogs, dances in the forest, and unexpected friends.

Film Description

Teenagers attend a rural high school in the Norwegian wilderness where the curriculum includes lessons from dogs, dances in the forest, and unexpected friendships. The hope is these students will emerge from a year spent north of the Arctic Circle as self-assured and more self-reliant adults. Lessons include ancient folktales, engaging in leatherwork, and outdoor adventures. Under the watchful eyes of their patient teachers—and far from any form of technology—the students are encouraged to think deeply about their relationship with themselves and the physical world. Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady's stunning documentary gorgeously shot amidst vast expanses of snow and tall barren trees, takes an empathetic measure of these students as they undertake a journey toward a spring of sorts. As they embrace their vulnerability and shed their confusion, these young people blossom into the confident humans they were destined to become. —Bedatri Choudhury

Ghost Trail

Fri Apr 18 at 5:30 PM at BAMPFA

Sun Apr 20 at 1:00 PM at Presidio Theatre

Jonathan Millet (France, Belgium, Germany 2024, 108)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

A Syrian exile and former literature professor, now living in France, hunts the prison guard who once tortured him, balancing vengeance, secrecy, and the emotional weight of his past.

Film Description

Director Jonathan Millet masterfully balances the tension of a political thriller with a deeply personal story of loss and survival in this tale of a Syrian exile haunted by his past. A former literature professor once incarcerated in Damascus' notorious Sednaya prison, Hamid works with a covert group hunting war criminals, while engaging in a relentless quest to find the guard who tortured him. As he follows a lead at a Strasbourg university, Hamid must maintain his cover while confronting the weight of his trauma. Meanwhile, weekly phone calls with his mother, now a

refugee in Beirut, offer a fragile link to a life that no longer exists. César-award nominee Adam Bessa delivers a magnetic performance as the tormented Hamid; his scenes with Tawfeek Barhom as his suspected tormentor, crackling with suspense. Ghost Trail shifts subtly from a gripping tale of pursuit to a sobering meditation on exile, justice, and the cost of vengeance. —Amir George

Happyend

Wed Apr 23 at 8:45 PM at Marina 1

Fri Apr 25 at 4:30 PM at BAMPFA

Neo Sora (Japan, USA 2024, 113)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

In a moody near-future Tokyo, a school's new draconian mass surveillance system unsettles the friendships and free spirits of a group of endearingly rambunctious teens.

Film Description

In a moody near-future Tokyo, the looming threat of earthquakes, political unrest, and rampant xenophobia pervades every corner of daily life. A group of endearingly rambunctious teens answers these perils by playing pranks but two of them go too far in engineering an elaborate stunt that enrages their principal and sends shockwaves through their school. The implementation of a draconian surveillance systems meant to put an end to their shenanigans unsettles the friends, exposing a growing rift between them. In his bold narrative directorial debut, Neo Sora (Ryuichi Sakamoto: Opus) demonstrates a keen eye for alluring visual detail and creative odd specificities. Full of boisterous performances from an eclectic cast, and enveloped by a sublime score from virtuosic composer Lia Ouyang Rusli. Happyend yields a cinematic experience that speaks magnitudes on our precarious times. —Jordan Klein

Harvest

Fri Apr 18 at 8:00 PM at BAMPFA

Tue Apr 22 at 8:30 PM at Marina 1

Athina Rachel Tsangari (UK, Germany, Greece, France, USA 2024, 133)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

In this painterly adaptation of Jim Crace's novel, director Tsangari once again observes behavioral systems within a pressure cooker as residents of a medieval village face upheaval when capitalist dynamics come to town.

Film Description

From the mischievous antics of the two young women in *Attenberg* (Festival 2011) to the machismo gamesmanship of *Chevalier* (Festival 2016), director Athina Rachel Tsangari is interested in looking at behavioral systems within a pressure cooker. An adaptation of Jim Crace's acclaimed novel, her latest, *Middle Ages*-set film observes the upheaval residents of a village face when capitalist dynamics come to town. The disruption begins when local landowner Master Kent invites a map maker to survey the locality. Unbeknownst to the serfs in his employ, the ultimate goal is to convert most of the property to pasture. The narrative, however, is just a jumping-off point for Tsangari to assemble various painterly tableaux (think Bruegel and Bosch) of a medieval village at work and the power dynamics that get upended when lives and labor are threatened. Caleb Landry Jones is the *Candide*-like protagonist, attempting to make sense of the brave new world erupting around him. —Rod Armstrong

Her/Mine

Sun Apr 20 at 12:15 PM at Marina 2
Alexandra Shiva (USA 2025, 82)
Documentaries: USA

Film Logline

Filmmaker Alexandra Shiva pieces together memories of her Hollywood scion mother, rooting through personal artifacts and 16mm footage to reflect on her own life and craft a poetic meditation on memory, loss, and motherhood.

Film Description

A heartfelt and reflective documentary that delicately balances nostalgia with a deeply personal journey of self-discovery, *Her/Mine* traces the life of director Alexandra Shiva's late mother, Susan, an actress and travel agent, and the daughter of Hollywood mogul Jules C. Stein. As the filmmaker sifts through her mom's belongings, including a trove of 16mm footage, she pieces together the traces of a childhood shaped by privilege, loss, and longing. The film becomes a poetic meditation on memory, grief, motherhood, and the weight of familial legacy as Shiva contemplates her own mortality, drawing parallels between past and present. Jane Fonda, Barry Diller, and Griffin Dunne appear along with Shiva's family in this documentary that offers a unique and deeply intimate perspective in its poignant and unconventional reflection on love, identity, and the stories we inherit. —Amir George

Hola Frida!

Sat Apr 19 at 10:00 AM at Marina 1
André Kadi, Karine Vézina (Canada, France 2024, 82)
Narratives: International

Film Logline

In Coyoacán, Mexico, young Frida Kahlo experiences the world as vibrant, colorful, and full of animals and dreams. When challenges come her way, she faces them with her enchanting imagination!

Film Description

In dazzling, vibrant animation we follow Frida, a curious young child, in her hometown of Coyoacán, Mexico, where her interest in art and creativity begins. Eagerly, she fills her first notebook with pages of colorful drawings and ideas. She spends her days playing with her sister, befriending a neighborhood dog, climbing trees, and running around the town. When polio leaves her bedridden, her dreams beckon as messages from the underworld and her inner spirit emerge to protect her. During these tough times, she finds solace in her imagination that brims with flowers, animals, and Zapotec and Mexican iconography. Little Frida does not back down from a challenge, once she recovers, she is back on the streets, an empowered young woman. This incredible film brings to vivid life the early childhood of world-renowned painter, artist, and feminist icon Frida Kahlo. —Soph Schultz Rocha

Recommended for ages 7 and up.

Honeymoon

Fri Apr 18 at 6:30 PM at Marina 2
Zhanna Ozirna (Ukraine 2024, 84)
Narratives: International

Film Logline

Trapped in their high-rise apartment, a newlywed couple in Ukraine play a cat-and-mouse with Russian soldiers as war rages in the outside world.

Film Description

A couple celebrates their marriage with friends and family only to have their lives turned upside down in a matter of days in Zhanna Ozirna's electrifying feature debut. The film's title is literal as Taras and Olya spend their first days of wedded bliss cocooned in their high-rise apartment. But their joy takes a radical turn when the war in Ukraine escalates. What was supposed to be a special moment in their lives becomes horrific when Russian soldiers invade their building. As Honeymoon transforms into a thriller, the drama oscillates between tender moments of a young couple in the first blush of married life and the terror of the war that threatens to engulf them. Shot on location in Kyiv, Ozirna employs intimate cinematography to immerse us into the world of Taras and Olya as they fight to preserve their love and survive. —Kristal Sotomayor

Horizon

Sun Apr 20 at 8:00 PM at Premier Theater at One Letterman

César Augusto Acevedo (Colombia, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Chile 2024, 125)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

Decades-long civil conflict has claimed the lives of many in Colombia. This visually transcendent cinematic reverie explores a mother and son's remorse as they reckon with their own transgressions during this period.

Film Description

Decades-long conflict has claimed the lives of many in Colombia. This visually transcendent cinematic reverie explores a mother and son's remorse as they reckon with their own transgressions during this period. A man visits his home village looking for his mom, Inés (Beloved Tropic's Paulina García), but she doesn't answer the door when he arrives and he finds the family farm in disrepair. Over time, it's revealed he was conscripted as a teenager into the government's war against the guerrillas and, like Colombia itself, he needs a Truth and Reconciliation moment with his parent and community. Though *Horizon* is certainly a film about war and its attendant horrors, its sensibility is poetic and symbolic, more Tarkovsky than Tarantino. What César Augusto Acevedo achieves here is a profoundly moving film questioning whether one can forgive the unforgivable and, if so, what might be the mechanisms of that forgiveness. —Rod Armstrong

Hot Milk

Fri Apr 18 at 6:00 PM at Marina 1

Sun Apr 27 at 7:45 PM at BAMPFA

Rebecca Lenkiewicz (UK 2025, 92)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

An unsettling mother/daughter story set over a sultry Spanish summer, this sexy and mysterious drama starring Emma Mackey, Fiona Shaw, and Vicky Krieps, beautifully adapts Deborah Levy's acclaimed novel.

Film Description

An unsettling mother/daughter story set over a sultry Spanish summer, this sexy and mysterious star-studded drama beautifully adapts Deborah Levy's acclaimed novel. Sofia (Sex Education's breakout star, Emma Mackey) has long been the caretaker of her demanding wheelchair-bound mother, Rose (Fiona Shaw), but a trip to Spain to seek out the latest potential cure might just give the budding young adult the chance to break out of her confines amid the sun and sand. Drawn to a free-spirited German seamstress (Phantom Thread's Vicky Krieps) staying nearby, Sofia has her first taste of erotic pleasure, but has to contend with a neighbor's chained-up dog, the beach's stinging jellyfish, and her meddlesome mom on the

way to her own self-realization. Screenwriter Rebecca Lenkiewicz (Ida) in her directing debut explores these interpersonal relationships with a taut tension as Sofia's summer of awakening takes on darker shades. —Rod Armstrong

How Deep Is Your Love

Sun Apr 20 at 12:00 PM at Premier Theater at One Letterman
Eleanor Mortimer (UK 2024, 100)
Documentaries: International

Film Logline

As scientists uncover new lifeforms in the deep sea, their discoveries inspire wonder in a documentary that asks us to consider the relationship between exploration and exploitation.

Film Description

Fueled by the innate human desire to explore and uncover new terrains, 54 people and a robot embark on a 51-day scientific journey into the deep sea. As the expedition wades through the Pacific Ocean's untamed Clarion Clipperton Fracture Zone, it discovers new lifeforms captured with sumptuous underwater cinematography. As much as there is a sense of wonder in encountering these never-before-seen creatures, there is also danger lurking in these waters: human greed. As scientists unlock the secrets of the ocean floor, mining companies gear up to extract minerals from these pristine depths. How Deep is Your Love is a mesmerizing trip to a secret wonderland and a cautionary tale that invites us to rethink the relationship between exploration and exploitation. What is the ultimate cost of human wonder and our quest to demystify the unknown? —Bedatri Choudhury

How to Build a Library

Sat Apr 19 at 12:30 PM at Marina 1
Chris King, Maia Lekow (Kenya, Germany 2025, 101)
Documentaries: International

Film Logline

Two determined women in Nairobi take on the daunting task of decolonizing a former whites-only library, navigating bureaucracy, fundraising, and colonial legacies to transform it into a vibrant cultural hub for modern Kenya.

Film Description

Motivated by their strong admiration for literature, two women embark on a bold mission to decolonize downtown Nairobi's formerly whites-only McMillan Memorial Library. Faced with decades of neglect, outdated books, and the lingering ghosts of Kenya's colonial past, Shiro and Wachuka take on the seemingly impossible tasks of renovating the space, redefining the library's

purpose, and reshaping access to knowledge. Over the course of eight years, they navigate bureaucratic resistance, fundraising hurdles, and difficult questions about which histories should be preserved. Directors Maia Lekow and Christopher King capture the women's journey with a precise observational lens, revealing the deeper struggle of reclaiming identity in post-colonial Kenya. Beyond its depiction of the library's physical restoration, the documentary is a powerful exploration of legacy, culture, and the urgent need to redefine public spaces in a way that truly reflects the communities they serve. —Amir George

The Hyperboreans

Mon Apr 21 at 8:45 PM at Marina 2

Cristóbal León, Joaquín Cociña (Chile 2024, 71)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

On a mission to recover a lost film, an actress and psychologist stumbles into Chilean history and uncovers secrets hidden in Antarctic ice in this fantastically surreal blend of live action and animation.

Film Description

When the negative of a film she starred in disappears, an actor embarks on a quest to recover it, in the process butting up against Chilean history and the legacy of fascist thinker Miguel Serrano. Antonia Giesen plays a version of herself as an actor and psychologist who initially stole the missing film's idea from her patient Metalhead's dreams. That dream state infects her search as she transforms into a cop contending with ailing parents, Metalhead's declining state, Chile's fascist history, and amazing things that live beneath Antarctica's ice. Filmmakers Joaquín Cociña and Cristóbal León appear as twisted version of themselves in this fantastically surreal and virtuoso blend of live action, animation, puppetry, and practical effects.

I Dreamed His Name

Sat Apr 26 at 1:00 PM at Marina 2

Sun Apr 27 at 2:30 PM at BAMPFA

Angela Carabali (Colombia 2025, 86)

Documentaries: International

Film Logline

Thirty years after their father disappeared during a period of civil unrest, director Ángela Carabalí and her sister Juliana travel throughout Colombia seeking answers.

Film Description

Through powerful and poetic storytelling, *I Dreamed His Name* follows director Ángela Carabalí and her sister Juliana as they traverse Colombia's Indigenous farmlands to investigate the disappearance of their father. Thirty years ago, the Afro-Latino farmer became a victim of the violence enveloping the country during a period of civil unrest. Now, as Ángela and Juliana probe their missing parent's story, they encounter others who lost family members in similar circumstances. Gorgeous and intimate cinematography further illuminates the tenderness in each frame of Ángela Carabalí's moving documentary debut, a chronicle not only of loss but also of the love the sisters have for their family and for one another.
—Kristal Sotomayor

Idiotka

Tue Apr 22 at 6:00 PM at Premier Theater at One Letterman
Nastasya Popov (USA 2025, 82)
Narratives: USA

Film Logline

Nastasya Popov's delightful debut is a playful sendup of reality fashion shows and a heartwarming portrait of a designer who definitely (and defiantly) thinks outside the box.

Film Description

Nastasya Popov's delightful debut is a playful sendup of reality fashion shows and a heartwarming portrait of a designer who definitely (and defiantly) thinks outside the box. Margarita (Anna Baryshnikov, *Love Lies Bleeding*) lives with her extended family of Russian Jewish émigrés in West Hollywood—ne'er-do-well brother, ex-con father, and hilariously kvetching grandmother. Behind on rent, she survives by selling fashion knockoffs with designer labels sewn in until she gets busted. In a "Hail Mary" moment, she auditions for a brand-new reality show and makes the cut! Guided by a producer, played with irrepressible glee by Camila Mendes (*Riverdale*), to accentuate her quirky charm, Margarita gives her all to "Slay. Serve. Survive." as the show's tagline has it. With sharply delineated characters paying humorous tribute to Popov's own background, *Idiotka* never misses the chance to both satirize and pay homage to the types of shows where stylish dreamers hope to stake a future in fashion. —Rod Armstrong

In Waves and War

Sun Apr 27 at 12:30 PM at Marina 1
Bonni Cohen, Jon Shenk (USA 2024, 108)
Documentaries: USA

Film Logline

Struggling with PTSD and traumatic brain injury (TBI), a group of former Navy SEALs turn to cutting-edge psychedelic therapies, embarking on a deeply personal battle to heal and reclaim their lives beyond war.

Film Description

A gripping and deeply personal documentary, *In Waves and War* explores the mental and physical toll of war on former US Navy SEALs. Trained to navigate extreme danger during adrenaline-fueled missions, these veterans return home to face even greater battles: PTSD, survivor's guilt, traumatic brain injury (TBI), and chronic depression. Traditional treatments fail to address their suffering, pushing them toward experimental therapies that offer a glimmer of hope. At the heart of the film is Marcus Capone, a decorated soldier who seeks alternative healing methods in the face of treatment-resistant PTSD. His journey leads to a groundbreaking therapy combining two powerful psychedelics, unapproved in the US but showing remarkable success. Blending intimate interviews, powerful animation depicting hallucinogenic experiences, and cutting-edge neuroscience, Bonni Cohen and Jon Shenk's (*Audrie and Daisy*, Festival 2016; *The White House Effect*, Doc Stories 2024) latest film is an emotional and inspiring odyssey of resilience and healing, and an urgent call for better veteran care. —Amir George

Ink Wash

Sun Apr 20 at 5:30 PM at Marina 2

Sarra Tsorakidis (Romania, Greece, Denmark 2024, 90)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

A heartbroken mural painter nearing 40 retreats to a remote Romanian hotel, where the surrounding wilderness and solitude force her to confront her past, reassess her future, and rediscover her artistry.

Film Description

A mural artist navigates personal and creative uncertainty after a painful breakup in Sarra Tsorakidis' enchanting feature debut. Seeking solace, Lena (Ilinca Hărnuț) takes a commission to adorn the walls of a remote luxury brutalist hotel deep in a Romanian forest. Initially unsettled by isolation and self-doubt, Lena gradually embraces her solitude, confronting her emotions and rediscovering her artistic voice. Surrounded by the quiet vastness of the trees and the harsh architecture of the hotel, Lena's art becomes a beautiful reflection of the Romanian countryside. Through beautifully restrained cinematography, *Ink Wash* becomes a contemplative journey of self-discovery, transformation, and renewal. Tsorakidis crafts a subtle yet profound exploration of personal growth, reminding us that even in darkness, new possibilities and connections await. Anchored by Hărnuț's understated performance, the film is a striking reflection on the unexpected gifts reinvention. —Amir George

Isle Child

Fri Apr 25 at 8:30 PM at Marina 1

Thomas Percy Kim (USA, South Korea 2024, 88)

Narratives: USA

Film Logline

A teenager's idyllic life comes crashing down when he receives news of his birth mother's illness, thrusting him into a complex space between his Korean heritage and his American identity.

Film Description

Si Miller (Ethan Hwang, *Riceboy Sleeps*) leads an idyllic life as a teenager in Concord, Massachusetts, reveling in the camaraderie of his baseball teammates and blessed with the unyielding support of his loving parents (Samantha Mathis, Sam Robards). His self-assured personality comes crashing down when he receives a phone call from an adoption agency, informing him of his South Korean birth mother's illness. The news complicates Si's perfectly constructed self-image, thrusting him into a complex space between his Korean heritage and his American identity. In his absorbing feature debut, Thomas Percy Kim perceptively and compassionately examines the challenging feelings of otherness that manifest from Si's precarious circumstances, along with the universal desire to belong. Gorgeous cinematography captures Hwang's stunning performance and paints a breathtakingly beautiful portrait of Si's search for his place in the world. —Jordan Klein

Julie Keeps Quiet

Tue Apr 22 at 6:00 PM at Marina 1

Sat Apr 26 at 5:30 PM at BAMPFA

Leonardo Van Diji (Belgium, Sweden 2024, 97)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

With astute attention to framing and shot design, this riveting debut puts its rising tennis star protagonist front and center as she navigates the suspension of her coach amid rumors of abuse.

Film Description

With astute attention to framing and shot design, this riveting debut puts its rising tennis star front and center as she navigates the suspension of her coach Jeremy amid rumors of abuse. A power hitter on the court, Julie is introverted in other realms. She requests that her new coach, Backie, not make a shining example of her to her teammates and deflects whispered conversations about Jeremy's actions while also continuing to communicate with him by phone and text. Avoiding melodrama while rising to a virtuosic ending, director Leonardo Van Diji

expertly conveys the pressures and anxieties Julie faces as school officials and her parents carefully probe her for details of untoward behavior. Van Dijn's cinematic bravura is matched by the performance of his spectacular lead Tessa Van den Broeck, who embodies the character's protective cocoon of reticence underneath her unmistakable athletic prowess. —Rod Armstrong

The Last First Time

Thu Apr 24 at 8:30 PM at Marina 2
Rafael Ruiz Espejo (Mexico 2025, 76)
Narratives: International

Film Logline

Away from home to take a test, a teenager experiences his firsts in love and sex when he meets another boy, embarking on a wild night of hard partying and carnal passion.

Film Description

A teenager from a small Mexican town experiences firsts in love and sex during a trip away from home in writer/director Rafael Ruiz Espejo's erotically charged first feature. At a college entrance exam in Guadalajara, Eduardo (Alejandro Quintana) meets city kid Mario (Carlos E. López Cervantes) and falls fast for the more sophisticated youth. Through the afternoon and a wild partying evening, Eduardo's initial shyness gives way to wild abandon as he explores his sexuality. Quintana is excellent as a youngster taking his initial steps in the adult world in this cinematic coming-of-age story. The Last First Time is filled with angst and wonder as Eduardo finds himself through his drunken day in a new city. —Kristal Sotomayor

Centerpiece: "Love, Brooklyn" + A Tribute to André Holland

Sat Apr 19 at 7:30 PM at Premier Theater at One Letterman
Rachael Abigail Holder (USA 2024, 87)
Awards + Special Events

Tribute Description

In a career spanning two decades, André Holland has established himself as a dazzling talent on stage, television, and screen. On Broadway, he appeared in two August Wilson plays, Joe Turner's Come and Gone and Jitney. His television work includes starring roles in The Knick, American Horror Story, and Castle Rock. Holland made his big-screen debut in Sugar (2008). Among his notable films are Miracle at St. Anna (2008), 42 (2013), Selma (2014), Moonlight (2016), Passing (2021), Exhibiting Forgiveness (2024), and the two films screening in the Festival, The Dutchman and Love, Brooklyn.

Film Logline

Bursting with sexual chemistry, textured relationships, and the allure of a love triangle, *Love, Brooklyn* is a charged film that explores Black life in the modern age.

Film Description

On the surface this debut feature from Rachel Abigail Holder has the nonchalant charm of a classic romantic comedy. The three terrific leads generate plenty of sparks and humor, reminiscent of contemporary stalwarts like *Love Jones*, *Hav Plenty*, and *Brown Sugar*. The story, executive produced by Steven Soderbergh, centers around Roger (André Holland, Festival Tribute; *Moonlight*), a charming writer who flouts deadlines and avoids serious commitments. His attention is pulled between two alluring women: his complicated ex Casey (Nicole Beharie), a gallery owner fighting against gentrification and her fear of failure, and new love interest Nicole (DeWanda Wise), an aloof masseuse wrestling with loss and the challenge of being a single parent. Roger attracts and repels Casey and Nicole repeatedly, sometimes callously, as he struggles to come to terms with his evolving identity as he enters middle age. The heat and power crafted by the leads is the hook, but the real strength of *Love, Brooklyn* sits within Holder's deft explorations of contemporary hookup culture, the proliferation of apathy in society, and the isolation hangover plaguing urban centers. The specificity of the borough of Brooklyn is vital to the complex world built around Roger, but Holder's film is ultimately a tribute to Black life and an ode to the never-ending evolution of growing up. —Jessie Fairbanks

Mad Bills to Pay (or Destiny, dile que no soy malo)

Sat Apr 19 at 8:45 PM at Presidio Theatre

Joel Alfonso Vargas (USA 2025, 99)

Narratives: USA

Film Logline

A 19-year-old Dominican American endeavors to grow up after his girlfriend becomes pregnant. As characters shift rapidly between English and Spanish, director Joel Alfonso Vargas crafts a debut of great verisimilitude, humor, and empathy.

Film Description

Ricardo is an underemployed 19-year-old Dominican American who spends his days squabbling with his sister, being hollered at by his single mom, and (illegally) selling homemade alcoholic beverages called "nutties" on the beaches of the Bronx. A perpetual adolescent, he's argumentative, defensive, and emotionally immature. When it's revealed that he has gotten his underage girlfriend Destiny pregnant, he swears he'll get his act together and be a good father if she moves in with them. However, as the film conveys through wry comedy and poignant insights, Ricardo's path to manhood is a challenging one, fraught with moments of

self-sabotage, emotional abuse of his family and Destiny, and belligerent behavior with bosses. With the characters shifting rapidly between English and Spanish, director Joel Alfonso Vargas has crafted a debut of great verisimilitude and empathy. The arguments between the characters feel unmistakably real, but so do the love and affection between them. —Rod Armstrong

Sloan Science on Screen Award: Magma

Mon Apr 21 at 8:30 PM at Marina 1

Cyprien Val (France 2024, 85)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

The struggles between scientists, community members, and local politicians spill over like the titular substance that threatens the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe in Cyprien Vial's dramatic thriller starring Marina Foïs.

Film Description

The struggles between scientists, community members, and local politicians spills over like the titular substance that threatens the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe in Cyprien Vial's dramatic thriller. When a team of scientists led by Katia (Marina Foïs) records the biggest magmatic surge in 50 years on the small island, a struggle ensues among politicians who want to evacuate, locals who can't afford to stop working or shut down their businesses, and the researchers themselves who are forced to admit the inexactitude of volcanology. Particularly torn is Katia's assistant Aimé (Théo Christine) who grew up on the island and is well aware of the frustrations stemming from the fact that the mostly Black populace is dictated to by white European officials. Vial keeps a keen eye on all three personal elements of the story while never losing sight of the island's grand volcano, known as La Soufrière, whose majestic power will always have the last word. —Rod Armstrong

Manas

Fri Apr 18 at 8:45 PM at Presidio Theatre

Fri Apr 25 at 7:00 PM at BAMPFA

Marianna Brennand (Brazil, Portugal 2024, 101)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

Trapped in an abusive home on an isolated island in the Brazilian rainforest, a 13-year-old girl yearns to escape and reunite with her older sister in the city.

Film Description

Documentary director Marianna Brennand makes a stunning narrative debut with this sobering drama inspired by 10 years research into the struggles of women living on Marajó Island in the Amazon rainforest. Thirteen-year-old Tielle's life

seems carefree, although she misses an older sister who abandoned rural life for Rio. But appearances can be deceiving, as the area's dense vegetation hides a dark family secret. Tielle yearns for escape from her tormentor. As she grapples with how to move forward, Tielle also struggles with the question of how to protect her younger siblings. Brennand elicits extraordinary performances from her ensemble, many of them non-professional. Jamilli Correa as Tielle is astonishing in her first feature in this gripping story of the loss of innocence. —Kristal Sotomayor

Marlee Matlin: Not Alone Anymore

Fri Apr 25 at 6:00 PM at Premier Theater at One Letterman
Shoshannah Stern (USA 2024, 97)
Documentaries: USA

Film Logline

Oscar®-winner Marlee Matlin struggled to balance professional success with the pressures of being an icon for the deaf community. Shoshannah Stern's tender debut documentary joyfully celebrates the trailblazing triumph of Matlin's career.

Film Description

Marlee Matlin shot to fame at 21 when she won an Academy Award® for her triumphant performance in *Children of a Lesser God*. During the ensuing decades Matlin struggled for recognition and support as a deaf actor, despite working steadily in both television (*The West Wing*, *Law & Order*, *The L Word*) and film (*Sweet Nothing in My Ear*, *CODA*). Her tenacity and dedication to her craft belied the overwhelming challenges Matlin faced personally and professionally. In Shoshannah Stern's riveting debut documentary Matlin lays bare her experiences as an icon, an actress, a mother, and an advocate. This inspirational documentary is a celebration of the remarkable power of community and a tender tribute to Matlin's trailblazing career. —Jessie Fairbanks

Mel Novikoff Award: Roxie Theater + "Rashomon"

Wed Apr 23 at 7:00 PM at Roxie Theatre
Akira Kurosawa (Japan 1950, 88)
Awards + Special Events

Award Short Description

Join us in celebration of the Roxie Theater! Filmmaker Rodrigo Reyes will moderate a conversation about the Roxie's past, present, and future, with Executive Director Lex Sloan and Director of Partnerships and Community Programming Isabel Fondevila. A screening of Akira Kurosawa's multivalent *Rashomon*, celebrating its 75th anniversary, will follow.

Film Logline

In Akira Kurosawa's hugely influential drama, a woodcutter, a bandit, a bride, and a ghost offer opposing perspectives on a samurai's murder.

Film Description

Waiting out pouring rain in the shelter of Kyoto's Rashomon Gate, a woodcutter and a priest relate the story of a samurai's murder in Akira Kurosawa's classic drama. But as they swap anecdotes, it's apparent that this is no straightforward chronicle. The woodcutter claims to have witnessed the crime and tells one version of events. But there are three other perspectives: that of the bandit charged with the killing, that of the samurai's bride, and then there is the samurai's ghost speaking through a medium. No two recollections lineup, leaving a mystery intact at the heart of the tale. Rashomon's influence looms large over succeeding generations of filmmakers, the title itself entering the lexicon as shorthand that describes a certain type of film. Seventy-five years after winning Venice's Golden Lion and jolting cinema, the film's ravishing black-and-white images and arresting storytelling remain as powerful as ever.

Members Screening: Magic Farm

Sun Apr 27 at 10:00 AM at Marina 1
Amalia Ulman (Argentina, USA 2024, 93)
Awards + Special Events

Film Logline

A hapless reporting team descends on a small Argentinean town in this pointed satire featuring Chloë Sevigny, Alex Wolff, Joe Apollonio, and Simon Rex. Free to members with RSVP.

Film Description

A hapless American reporting team descends on a small Argentinean town hoping to film a bunny ears-wearing musician who's gone viral in this pointed satire about our woeful current media landscape. Working for a VICE-like outfit, the quintet arrives in remote San Cristobal with their "ugly American" attitudes at full volume—only to realize they've arrived at the wrong San Cristobal. With sly humor and a cast of quirky characters, writer/director Amalia Ulman (who also plays the crew's cameraperson and interpreter) vitally points out that the relentless quest for "eyeballs" means that reporters frequently miss the real story. The terrific cast includes Chloë Sevigny, Alex Wolff, Joe Apollonio, and Simon Rex (also seen in Operation Taco Gary's). Free admission for SFFILM members, but please RSVP. This screening is a benefit of membership and will not count against annual RSVP allotments. Members are encouraged to arrive 30 minutes before showtime. Seating is first come, first served, and not guaranteed. —Rod Armstrong

Nine Months

Thu Apr 24 at 5:30 PM at Premier Theater at One Letterman

Chris Columbus (USA 1995, 103)
Narratives: USA

Film Logline

A San Francisco yuppie reacts with dismay when his girlfriend announces her pregnancy in Chris Columbus' fizzy romcom blending screwball antics with sentimental moments. Hugh Grant and Julianne Moore star.

Film Description

A year after his star-making performance in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, Hugh Grant sparkles in his first American leading role as a reluctant dad-to-be in Chris Columbus' San Francisco-set romcom. Samuel (Grant) and girlfriend Rebecca (Julianne Moore) have been together for five years but her announcement that her birth control failed shocks him. Initially dismayed at the prospect of fatherhood, Samuel has those titular nine months to learn to embrace the idea. In a fizzy comedy blending screwball antics with sentimental moments, Moore is wonderful playing the straight woman to her exasperating partner. But this movie is Grant's as he delivers a brilliant performance that emphasizes the actor's charm (even when Samuel is being a pill) and his spectacular comic gifts. Adding to the laughs in support are Tom Arnold, Joan Cusack, Jeff Goldblum, and the Bay Area's own Robin Williams, hilarious as a Russian obstetrician. —Pam Grady

Olivia & The Clouds

Tue Apr 22 at 6:30 PM at Presidio Theatre
Tomás Pichardo Espailat (Dominican Republic 2024, 80)
Narratives: International

Film Logline

This visually stunning exploration of love, memory, and perception follows two couples whose recollections of their relationships diverge, revealing how intimacy is shaped by time, storytelling, and personal truth.

Film Description

A poetic and visually mesmerizing exploration of love, memory, and the fluidity of perception, Tomás Pichardo Espailat's experimental debut weaves together stop-motion animation, graphic sketching, and Claymation to deconstruct intimacy and the way we remember it. The film follows two couples who recount their relationships, their stories revealing how their experiences and memories differ in unexpected ways. As perspectives shift, this first animated feature from the Dominican Republic questions how we construct narratives and how love, longing, desire, and personal truth shape our recollections. Beyond its compelling themes, the film is a sensory experience, blending live-action landscapes with striking 2D animation, surreal imagery, and an evocative soundscape. With collapsed

timelines and abstract representations of yearning and loss, *Olivia & the Clouds* offers a dreamlike, immersive journey into the fragile nature of human connection.

Only on Earth

Sun Apr 20 at 6:00 PM at Presidio Theatre

Robin Petré (Denmark, Spain 2025, 92)

Documentaries: International

Film Logline

In the hottest summer on record in Galicia, Spain, flames engulf the picturesque hills as fires rage on for days in this empathetic, immersive documentary that takes the measure of climate change.

Film Description

The rolling hills of Galicia dotted with herds of wild horses and bleating sheep paint an idyllic picture—at least until wildfires rage over the region during an exceptionally hot summer. Firefighters, veterinarians, and shepherds tend to the blaze and its aftermath, struggling to keep pace with the brisk descent into destruction. With a patient and immersive gaze, the camera weaves through the lives of these dedicated people as they grapple with their rapidly changing world. Cinematographer Maria Grazia Goya's images are ravishing in Robin Petré's unhurried, observational documentary that captures a single season in this autonomous corner of Spain. Filled with empathy, *Only on Earth* measures the cost of Earth's changing climate through the experiences of those facing its enormous impact as they fight to preserve their home. —Bedatri Choudhury

"On Healing Land, Birds Perch" + "Roots That Reach Toward the Sky" + "We Were the Scenery"

Fri Apr 25 at 6:15 PM at Marina 1

Mid-Length Films

On Healing Land, Birds Perch

Naja Pham Lockwood (USA, Vietnam 2025, 33 min)

Mid-Length Logline

AP photographer Eddie Adams' iconic "Saigon Execution" photo depicting a South Vietnamese general killing a Viet Cong captain serves as the springboard for a documentary examining the impact of the Vietnam War on both men's families.

Mid-Length Film Description

AP photographer Eddie Adams won the Pulitzer Prize for his photo "Saigon Execution" that caught the killing of Viet Cong captain Nguyễn Văn Lém by South Vietnamese general Nguyễn Ngọc Loan during the opening days of the Tet

Offensive. Five decades later, Naja Pham Lockwood relates the extraordinary story of the opposing combatant's complex legacies. The film gathers together for the first time the children General Loan and Captain Lém, as well as the son of a family Lém executed. Now living in the United States, these descendants exchange polarizing views on the iconic photograph and their conflicted feelings toward their fathers and their actions. While perspectives may push these individuals apart, the lasting shadow cast by the Vietnam War ultimately entangles them. Lockwood explores in candid detail the ramifications of this generational trauma for Vietnamese diaspora, but also compassionately distills the resilience of each individual and demonstrates the power of healing they find through the Vietnamese American community. —Jordan Klein

Roots That Reach Toward the Sky
Jess X. Snow (USA 2024, 15 min)
Mid-Length Films

After vandals attack her mother's traditional Chinese medicine shop, Kai contends with her deepest anxieties, until she discovers the power of communal healing.

We Were the Scenery
Christopher Radcliff (USA, Vietnam, Philippines 2025, 15 min)
Mid-Length Films

In this Sundance award winner, producer Cathy Linh Che's parents Hoa Thi Le and Hue Nguyen Che recall fleeing to the Philippines after the Vietnam War, where they inadvertently became extras on *Apocalypse Now*.

Operation Taco Gary's

Sun Apr 20 at 8:30 PM at Presidio Theatre
Michael Kvamme (USA 2024, 88)
Narratives: USA

Film Logline

Simon Rex stars as a conspiracy oddball who resorts to extreme measures to rescue his brother from a coming global cataclysm in this wacky blend of screwball comedy, action, sci-fi, and tacos.

Film Description

Something strange is afoot at Taco Gary's. At least that's what conspiracy oddball Danny (San Francisco native Simon Rex, *Red Rocket*) believes, claiming the fast food chain has far more going on behind the counter than the creation of delicious tacos. Determined to rescue his brother Luke (Dustin Milligan, *Schitt's Creek*) from a coming global cataclysm, Danny joins him on what is ostensibly a road trip to

Luke's new job in Ottawa. But as Danny's stories get wilder and each stop between Taco Gary's outposts gets more absurd, Luke is forced to consider if Danny is just off his meds or is there something to his older sibling's outlandish claims? American Pie's Jason Biggs adds a hilarious comic turn as himself in this wacky blend of screwball comedy, action, and sci-fi that also stars Brenda Song (The Last Showgirl) and Doug Jones (The Shape of Water). —Pam Grady

Opening Night: Rebuilding

Thu Apr 17 at 7:00 PM at Premier Theater at One Letterman

Thu Apr 17 at 8:00 PM at Marina 1

Max Walker-Silverman (USA 2025, 95)

Awards + Special Events

Film Logline

In Max Walker-Silverman's achingly personal tale about communal love and resilience, Josh O'Conner stars as a man determined to rebuild his family ranch and recapture his purpose as a cowboy.

Film Description

Californians are overly familiar with the devastating effects of wildfires. Blazes and destruction captivate headlines, but the totality of loss and years of communal rebuilding quickly recedes into obscurity. In Max Walker-Silverman's achingly personal tale of one man's journey to reclaim his identity, the story focuses on what happens after the embers fade. Josh O'Connor (Challengers, La chimera, The Crown) stars as uncertain, mild-mannered Dusty, a man adrift after losing his family ranch and his purpose as a cowboy. As he clambers to find his footing, Dusty must also reconcile with his daughter Callie-Rose and redefine his place in a blended family. This quiet story of love and resilience unfolds gracefully under Walker-Silverman's assured direction. O'Connor delivers another nuanced performance, every gesture and expression carefully calibrated. A stellar supporting cast—including Meghann Fahy, Amy Madigan, Lilly LaTour, and Kali Reis—delivers powerful, textured performances. With stunning cinematography of rural landscapes, a visual reminder that openness leads to new beginnings, this moving film is one of inspiration and possibility. —Jessie Fairbanks

"O R I G I N S" + "A quiet storm" + "Voices from the Abyss"

Sat Apr 19 at 4:30 PM at Premier Theater at One Letterman

Mid-Length Films

O R I G I N S

Drea Cooper (USA 2025, 39 min)

Mid-Length Logline

Acclaimed choreographer Alonzo King and his renowned LINES Ballet Company step up to the barre in this gorgeously photographed film that interweaves powerful personal stories and performance.

Mid-Length Film Description

Acclaimed choreographer Alonzo King and his renowned LINES Ballet Company step up to the barre in this gorgeously photographed film that interweaves powerful personal stories and performance. The film follows King and his troupe as they employ their graceful and breathtaking artistry in service to a dance that poetically celebrates humanity. Weaving together King's words and LINES' striking movements, O R I G I N S creates a moving portrait of the language of dance and how the art forges connection, despite cultural barriers and personal differences. Director Drea Cooper delivers a stunning meditation on the meaning of life, the ties that bind us to each other, and hope for a brighter future. —Kristal Sotomayor

A quiet storm

Irving Serrano, Victor Rejón (Mexico 2024, 30 min)

Mid-Length Films

Maïto, a teenage Krump dancer in Japan, navigates a complicated and deeply emotional family life along with the pressures of being a young prodigy.

Voices from the Abyss

Benjamin Nicolas (Canada, Japan 2024, 23 min)

Mid-Length Films

Why do they jump despite the danger? A diverse group of cliff divers in Mexico poetically relate the thrill of taking that leap into the water.

Persistence of Vision Award: Sky Hopinka: małni – towards the ocean, towards the shore

Thu Apr 24 at 7:00 PM at BAMPFA

Sky Hopinka (USA 2020, 81)

Awards + Special Events

Film Logline

Bodies of water ebb and flow throughout Sky Hopinka's poetic experimental documentary that follows the wanderings of two Native Americans as they share their rituals and relationships to life, identity, language, and their homeland.

Film Description

Bodies of water ebb and flow throughout this poetic experimental documentary by filmmaker Sky Hopinka. Honoring connections to nature and the cycles of life, małni (pronounced moth-nee) separately follows the wanderings of Sweetwater

Sahme and Jordan Mercieras as they share their personal rituals and relationships to life, identity, language, and their homeland. Meditative and beautifully photographed, the film sonically weaves in the origin-of-death myth from the Chinookan people. Hopinka has crafted a lush exploration of afterlife, rebirth, and the place in-between.—Festival 2020

The Quiet Son

Sat Apr 26 at 8:30 PM at Marina 1

Delphine Coulin, Muriel Coulin (France 2024, 119)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

Pierre (Vincent Lindon) is a railroad repairman in northeastern France who discovers that his eldest son is hanging around a group of right-wing thugs in this carefully observed drama centered on family and politics.

Film Description

Pierre (Vincent Lindon) is a railroad repairman in northeastern France who discovers that his eldest son is hanging around a group of right-wing thugs in this carefully observed drama centered on family and politics. After the early death of their mother, Pierre raised the scholarly Louis and the more jockish Félix with blue-collar values but a progressive sensibility. So when the latter begins spouting nationalist rhetoric and develops a penchant for violence, Pierre tries to assert some parental authority. As familial bonds begin to fray, the film becomes a remarkable study of the poisonous vitriol that impacts certain present-day political forces. Vincent Lindon has an air of world weariness that makes him perfect to play the father who wonders where he went wrong and he's matched by the nuanced script by Delphine and Muriel Coulin, who return to SFFILM after their equally excellent features *17 Girls* (Festival 2012) and *The Stopover* (Festival 2017). —Rod Armstrong

Rains Over Babel

Sat Apr 26 at 6:30 PM at Marina 2

Gala Del Sol (Colombia, Spain, USA 2025, 118)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

Afrofuturism, surrealism, and punk blend to spin a queer, neon-lit adventure fable inspired by Dante's *Inferno*.

Film Description

A tropical, neon-lit bar filled with colorful figures, drag queens throwing shade, and the Grim Reaper herself sets the stage for an epic life-and-death adventure. The party never stops even as Babel's owner nervously awaits news of his

missing headliner—the show is the only thing standing between him and a loan shark’s retribution. Meanwhile a preacher’s son agonizes over his upcoming drag debut, an ex-soldier hopes the night will see the end of long servitude, and a young woman puts her own life on the line to save her ailing daughter. All find themselves journeying through a kind of hell on earth in this dark comic fantasy inspired by Dante’s *Inferno*. Blending Afrofuturism, surrealism, and steampunk, director Gala Del Sol’s first feature is an ambitious feat soaring on vibrant cinematography, brilliant production design, a unique story, and a terrific ensemble of trans and queer actors. —Kristal Sotomayor

Red Path

Sun Apr 20 at 8:00 PM at Marina 2

Lotfi Achour (Tunisia, France, Belgium, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Qatar 2024, 100)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

Haunted by his cousin’s brutal murder, a young shepherd in Tunisia navigates trauma through visions of the boy’s ghost, while his family fights for justice in an indifferent and dangerous world.

Film Description

A young shepherd takes a fateful journey that will forever alter his perception of the world in this haunting and deeply affecting drama. Achraf and his cousin Nizar venture far from home in search of water, a trek that becomes a nightmare when Mujahideen forces attack them. Only Achraf is spared, left to return home with a warning to their village. Director Lotfi Achour, along with co-writers Doria Achour and Sylvain Cattenoy, crafts a harrowing meditation on trauma, survival, and the generational impact of violence. Achraf is too young to process the horrors he’s endured, yet he’s forced to witness their ripple effects as his family mourns and struggles for justice. Anchored by Ali Hleli’s captivating performance in the central role, *Red Path* offers a stark, unflinching look at a boy caught in the crosshairs of terror, grief, and an uncertain future. —Amir George

Ricky

Thu Apr 24 at 9:00 PM at Premier Theater at One Letterman

Rashad Frett (USA 2024, 108)

Narratives: USA

Film Logline

After spending his teenage and early adult years in prison, Ricky navigates a tumultuous path toward reintegration and redemption in his post-incarcerated life.

Film Description

Back home in East Hartford, CT, after his recent release from prison, 30-year-old Ricardo "Ricky" Smith (Stephan James, *The Piano Lesson*) seeks to reclaim his freedom and make up for experiences lost during his teenage and early adult years. Ricky faces a tricky route to reintegrate back into a society that has left him behind, in a city that he no longer recognizes. He finds work through an old acquaintance, but his criminal record carries a stigma in the eyes of others, creating a tumultuous uphill battle on his path toward redemption. Embodying someone who has the odds perpetually stacked against him, James's transfixing multilayered performance is simply astonishing. Rashad Frett makes a mesmerizing directorial debut as he empathetically explores the circumstances of this fraught yet tender man's desperate search to find solace in a perilous world. —Jordan Klein

Sally

Sun Apr 20 at 5:15 PM at Premier Theater at One Letterman
Cristina Costantini (USA 2025, 99)
Documentaries: USA

Film Logline

Astronaut Sally Ride blazed a trail as the first American woman in space in 1983, while her personal life was more complicated. This exhilarating documentary offers a full-bodied portrait of an extraordinary hero.

Film Description

For astronaut Sally Ride, stepping into the space shuttle Challenger for her first flight in 1983 was, to paraphrase Neil Armstrong, one small step for woman, one giant leap for womankind. Becoming the first American woman in space fulfilled not just Ride's personal ambition but also symbolized limitless possibilities for girls and women. This intimate, exhilarating documentary offers an evocative portrait of this extraordinary trailblazer. Her professional life was a triumph, even if she was beset by silly questions from a condescending media and resentment from male peers who did not believe women "earned" their shot at space flight. Her personal life was more complicated as she remained closeted even in the midst of a 27-year-long relationship with partner Tam O'Shaughnessy. With the voice of Ride (who died in 2012), archival footage, reenactments, and reminiscences from O'Shaughnessy and Ride's family and NASA associates, this involving film honors the brilliance and humanity of an American hero. —Pam Grady

Seeds

Sat Apr 19 at 3:15 PM at Marina 1
Sun Apr 20 at 2:15 PM at BAMPFA
Brittany Shyne (USA 2024, 125)
Documentaries: USA

Film Logline

This visually stunning portrait reflects on identity, legacy, and the cyclical nature of life as it explores a Black family's century-old farm, capturing its beauty as well as the family's struggles.

Film Description

This deeply intimate portrait captures the struggles and resilience of Black farmers working land that has been in their family for a century. Director Brittany Shyne constructs a poetic vérité documentary that immerses viewers in the daily rhythms of agrarian life in the contemporary American South: children playing, conversations from car windows, and the quiet labor of toiling in the fields. Amid the lyrical and timeless beauty emerges something more ominous as the film exposes the systemic discrimination that threatens Black land ownership. With Black farmers historically denied the same government support and resources their white counterparts receive, the film underscores the fragility of these generational legacies. Rendered in breathtaking black-and-white cinematography, *Seeds* is both a celebration of endurance and a meditation on loss, offering an evocative exploration of identity, inheritance, and the ever-changing relationship between people and the land they cherish. —Amir George

Shadowbox

Sat Apr 19 at 8:00 PM at BAMPFA

Sun Apr 20 at 3:30 PM at Marina 1

Tanushree Das, Saumyananda Sahi (India, France, USA, Spain 2025, 93)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

Maya works multiple jobs to keep her household running until her husband's disappearance and trouble with the law upset the delicate and fragile balance she maintains in her world.

Film Description

Editor Tanushree Das and cinematographer Saumyananda Sahi make an impressive directing debut with this domestic drama set in the suburbs of Kolkata. Maya works several jobs to keep her family afloat—running a laundry service, housekeeping, even tending chickens—while caring for her teenage son Debu and PTSD-afflicted veteran husband Sundar. Ostracized by her family for her poor marriage and too proud to ask for help, she runs her household with conductor-like control. But the wheels come off the exact and delicate balance Maya maintains after Sundar goes missing and comes under suspicion of murder. Tilottama Shome is brilliant as Maya, her performance revealing the woman's resilience and determination. Striking sound design reflects Maya's changing circumstances in this indelible film of grace and economical storytelling. —Bedatri Choudhury

Sharp Corner

Wed Apr 23 at 6:00 PM at Premier Theater at One Letterman

Jason Buxton (Canada, Ireland 2024, 110)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

Ben Foster and Cobie Smulders shine in Jason Buxton's taut psychological thriller about a young family whose benign move to the suburbs leads to unthinkable consequences.

Film Description

Ben Foster and Cobie Smulders shine in Jason Buxton's (Blackbird) taut psychological thriller about a young family whose benign move to the suburbs leads to unthinkable consequences. Josh (Foster) and Rachel (Smulders) are enjoying the first evening in their new home when a car crashes through their yard and living room. The brutality of the shocking incident only deepens after Josh discovers it is not an isolated event but due to the flawed design of the road in front of his house. He becomes fixated on preventing another accident, alienating his wife and son, and spiraling into irrational rage. Buxton's knack for building unbearable tension and deploying ambiguity to keep the audience guessing is only heightened in his sophomore outing. Foster's ominous performance is carefully calibrated to evoke understanding and even empathy. But as Josh descends deeper into a state of permanent aggression—a clever critique of masculinity and power—questions arise about his true nature and intent. —Jessie Fairbanks

Shorts 1: Sublime Interludes

Tue Apr 22 at 6:15 PM at Marina 2

Short Films

Reality is fluid, memory is unreliable, and the boundaries between the known and unknown blur in this collection of shorts that is, indeed, sublime. These films immerse us in worlds where transformation is inevitable, whether through time's subtle erosion, encounters with the supernatural, or the weight of the past pressing against the present. Characters find themselves navigating shifting landscapes, from remote wildernesses to liminal spaces where belief and truth are indistinguishable. Some face forces beyond their control as rituals, myths, and unseen energies shape their fates, while others grapple with mortality, longing, and the echoes of those who came before them. Across these dreamlike interludes, isolation and connection intertwine, revealing the delicate impermanence of existence. In these films, perception bends, reality slips, and the most profound moments emerge in the spaces between the tangible and the elusive. —Amir George

Across the Waters
Viv Li (France 2024, 15 min)
Short Films

In a remote mining town cut off from radio signals and suffering water scarcity, a curious teenage girl's fascination with a passing truck driver stirs intrigue.

I Lay For You To Sleep
Ali Al Hajri (Qatar 2024, 15 min)
Short Films

As grieving women tenderly wash his body, Ali's soul drifts through visions of loved ones, unraveling revelations that reshape his understanding of life, loss, and the passage between worlds.

Maputo
Lucas Abrahão (Brazil 2024, 15 min)
Short Films

Older kids deceive a young boy, Tatu, into believing he can become a supernatural being, MAPUTO, if he completes dangerous challenges, pushing his determination to the limits.

Ordinary Life
Yoriko Mizushiri (France, Japan 2025, 10 min)
Short Films

A meditation on time and perception, Ordinary Life explores the tension between repetition and change, as human consciousness drifts through past and future while the body remains anchored in the present.

Rat Rod
Jared Jakins, Carly Jakins (USA 2025, 11 min)
Short Films

A haunted immigrant mechanic in rural America reflects on life, death, and his journey while resurrecting old cars, finding meaning in the machines he brings back to life.

Vox Humana
Don Josephus Raphael Eblahan (Philippines, Singapore, United States 2024, 22 min)
Short Films

A mysterious man living in the forest becomes the prime suspect when natural disasters devastate a small mountain town. A zoologist and a news team seek the truth behind his eerie connection.

Shorts 2: Under Precarious Circumstances

Wed Apr 23 at 5:45 PM at Marina 1
Short Films

Thrust into moments of upheaval, characters navigate shifting power dynamics, personal reckonings, and the weight of irreversible choices in this powerful collection. These stories highlight the tension between control and vulnerability, forcing individuals to confront societal structures, their own limitations, and the unpredictable nature of fate. In these narratives, some young people navigate the fragile threshold between innocence and responsibility, while others struggle with the tension between ambition and accountability. Other characters face the final chapters of life, reckoning with solitude and legacy, or wrestling with the lingering echoes of trauma and public scrutiny. Across time periods and landscapes, each story immerses us in a world where control is fleeting, stability is an illusion, and survival, be it emotional, physical, or social, demands resilience. Together, these films paint a compelling portrait of lives in flux, shaped by forces both personal and systemic. —Amir George

After What Happened at the Library
Syrma McCarthy (USA 2024, 15 min)
Short Films

After a terrifying, real-life encounter, a drag queen grapples with overwhelming public attention, struggling to reclaim their identity and peace in the aftermath of the unsettling event.

Bad For a Moment
Daniel Soares (Portugal 2024, 15 min)
Short Films

A disastrous team-building event leads an architect to confront the implications of his latest project, gentrifying a lower-class neighborhood, and unintended consequences.

Buick
Michael Godere (USA 2024, 12 min)
Short Films

In 1990s New Haven, three teenagers cruise the city, blasting Brand Nubian's latest album, but their carefree night takes a violent turn when they decide to catch a late movie.

Dawn Every Day
Amir Youssef (Egypt 2024, 20 min)
Short Films

In 1956 Egypt, at a crowded family party, young Nabil struggles to understand its social dynamics and his place in the adult world.

Memories of Zhi
Mingxin Li (China, UK 2024, 23 min)
Short Films

After accidentally killing a boy, 16-year-old orphan Zhi seeks refuge in a Buddhist monastery, unknowingly forming a bond with the victim's mother, leading to a tense journey of deception, fate, and redemption.

Retirement Plan
John Kelly (Ireland 2024, 7 min)
Short Films

Upon retirement, a man reflects on the joys, opportunities, monotony, and loneliness of his new life stage and contemplates on what comes next in this poetic Irish animated film.

Shorts 3: Dark Waves & Stranger Tides

Thu Apr 24 at 8:45 PM at Marina 1
Short Films

Dive into darkness and sink deeper into strangeness with these seven wickedly delightful horror and genre shorts. The filmmakers bring forth new and visionary ways of examining the terrifying realities of the external world, as well as the frightful and irrepressible things that grow inside our own bodies. Bitingly clever social critique and excavation of social taboos emerge through a dizzying array of visual styles that exemplify boundless craft and imagination. Matching the more terrifying moments of this block are monstrously humorous ways that the absurdities of the everyday creep into our waking lives. —Jordan Klein

/HAAW/
Joey Scoma (USA 2024, 12 min)
Short Films

A gondola ride at a ski resort takes an unexpected turn when a xenophobic man encounters an otherworldly family.

A Brighter Summer Day For The Lady Avengers

Birdy Wei-Ting Hung (Taiwan, USA 2024, 12 min)
Short Films

A girl's senses are aroused amidst the sweltering heat of a Taipei summer when she enters a cinema with a bag of crushed watermelon juice.

Chow
Kevin Armento, Jaki Bradley (USA 2024, 15 min)
Short Films

On a trip abroad, a man develops an unsettling obsession with a particularly delicious dish, becoming hellbent on replicating the flavor back home.

How Was Your Weekend?
Cam Banfield (USA 2025, 9 min)
Short Films

On a Monday morning, a man disrupts the established order of his corporate office when he responds honestly to an age-old perfunctory question.

MANGO
Joan Iyiola (UK, France 2025, 11 min)
Short Films

Zadie wants nothing more than to take her career to new heights, but persistent pain threatens to bring her to darker places.

She Raised Me
Ben Lewis (USA, Canada 2025, 13 min)
Short Films

A playwright plans to break up with his boyfriend, until he discovers that his mother is the colorful icon from his childhood.

Stomach Bug
Matty Crawford (UK 2024, 15 min)
Short Films

While struggling to maintain a connection with his absent daughter, a lonely empty-nester allows his inner turmoil and grief to grow into something gruesome.

Shorts 4: Family Matters

Tue Apr 22 at 8:45 PM at Marina 2
Short Films

This shorts block explores the love and dynamics between families from across the globe as they confront societal challenges and strengthen their bonds. Across generations these films reflect on the sturdiness of families and forgiveness. Young children, middle-aged immigrant mothers, and even the ghost of a doting grandmother, all lend their perspectives. The shorts feed off one other, leading viewers through a web of complex emotions and ultimately toward acceptance as each character forges their own path through life, redefining what family means. —Kristal Sotomayor

Bloomed In The Water
Joanne Mony Park (USA 2024, 14 min)
Short Films

A Korean immigrant mother wrestles with her young son's school photo outfit choice as she navigates other mothers' snide comments.

Grandma Nai Who Played Favorites
Chheangkea (Cambodia, France, USA 2025, 19 min)
Short Films

When a family visits Cambodia during the Qingming Festival, Grandma Nai's ghost follows her favorite grandson, guiding him as he makes a difficult decision in his coming-out journey.

Hermanos
Miguel Pérez Castelazo (Mexico 2024, 13 min)
Short Films

Teenage siblings Pedro and Fernanda are always at each other's throats but when a boy breaks Fernanda's heart, Pedro sets their differences aside to support her.

My Brother, My Brother
Saad Dnewar, Abdelrahman Dnewar (Egypt, France, Germany 2025, 15 min)
Short Films

This mesmerizing synthesis of live action and animation tells the story of twin brothers Omar and Wesam, beginning with their time in the womb.

Saint Andrews
Erin Ramirez (USA, Jamaica 2025, 15 min)
Short Films

A Chinese Jamaican teenager falls in love with a young Jamaican boy but the relationship is tested when her Chinese immigrant parents disapprove of the relationship.

Sola

Lana Barić (Croatia 2023, 15 min)

Short Films

Karla returns home for her estranged father's funeral, experiencing awkward and uncomfortable interactions with her mom and ex-girlfriend as she confronts her past.

The Mud Under My Window

Violette Delvoye (France, Belgium 2025, 12 min)

Short Films

Emma has two moms. On a rainy Sunday morning, she longs to be with the absent one she idealizes but must come to terms with the frictions she experiences with her other mother at home.

Shorts 5: Docs

Wed Apr 23 at 6:00 PM at Marina 2

Short Films

An eclectic collection of stories from across the world, this documentary block brings forth experiences of individuals and larger communities bound together by the tumultuous and often uncertain times that we are living in. Encompassing wide-ranging topics from housing crises to environmental concerns, each of the filmmakers and participants demonstrate how to combat these issues while also offering tender windows into their resilience in the face of loss. The subjects don't shy away from harsh reality, but they also reach toward a brighter future for themselves and the communities they hold dear. —Jordan Klein

Camp Widow

Laura Green, Anna Moot-Levin (USA 2025, 15 min)

Short Films

This documentary offers a compassionate window into gatherings where widowed people have the space to speak candidly of their losses, finding solace in the bonds they forge with one another.

Clara's Fruit

Morgan Mathews (USA 2024, 15 min)

Short Films

A principal lovingly reflects on the 90-year legacy of Mohammed Schools of Atlanta, the first Muslim private school system in the country.

Firefighter Goats

Phoebe Dobey, George McCann (Norway 2024, 11 min)

Short Films

Consuming shrubs that could otherwise become fuel for a devastating wildfire, a herd of goats feast on Orinda, CA's dry vegetation.

Fragmented

Tanya Marar, Balolas Carvalho (Palestine, Portugal 2025, 7 min)

Short Films

From the shores of Malta, a pioneering journalist from Gaza, Qassem, contemplates his experiences as a political prisoner and his painful decision to leave his homeland.

Losing Your Home

Emmanuel Rioux (Canada 2024, 19 min)

Short Films

Victims of Montreal's housing crisis, Jeannette and Frances candidly share their stories of eviction.

The Hemingway

Patrick Sean O'Brien, Evan Mathis (USA 2024, 10 min)

Short Films

Filmmaker Patrick Sean O'Brien brings forth a dose of levity, magical realism, and the undeniable truths of his experience living with ALS.

Waska: The Forest Is My Family

Nina Gualinga (Ecuador, UK 2025, 15 min)

In this Sundance award winner, producer Cathy Linh Che's parents Hoa Thi Le and Hue Nguyen Che recall fleeing to the Philippines after the Vietnam War, where they inadvertently became extras on *Apocalypse Now*.

Shorts 6: Family Films

Sat Apr 26 at 10:00 AM at Premier Theater at One Letterman

Short Films

Through genre-defying celebrations of culture, heartfelt stories that amplify resilience, and inventive animations that dramatically push the boundaries of the medium, Family

Films celebrates the wonder, whimsy, and wisdom of short films that appeal to people of all ages and backgrounds. These films celebrate and explore connection, courage, and the boundless spirit of discovery through a variety of subject: Indigenous traditions, our seemingly limitless digital world, climate-impacted Arctic landscapes, circus-filled daydreams, and powerful individuals redefining resilience. This year's collection brims with unwavering and inspiring works from internationally renowned filmmakers, including famed former Disney animator and director Aaron Blaise (Brother Bear, Beauty and the Beast) and Sony VFX Supervisor and director Clara Chan (Spider-man: Across the Spider-verse). Perfect for kids, parents, and anyone who believes in the power of storytelling, these films promise to educate, inspire, uplift, and change the many ways in which we see our world. —Christopher Lawrence

Recommended for ages 6 and up.

Snow Bear
Aaron Blaise (USA 2024, 11 min)
Short Films

A lonely polar bear traverses the increasingly harsh environment of the Arctic by land and sea to save a new friend.

Hoofs on Skates
Ignas Meilūnas (Lithuania 2024, 13 min)
Short Films

While skating together in a colorful winter wonderland, two barnyard friends struggle with preconceived notions when they stumble upon a strange and unfamiliar world.

Have I Swallowed Your Dreams
Clara Chan (Canada 2024, 6 min)
Short Films

A Chinese immigrant mother and daughter share an enlightening conversation about lost dreams and sacrifice in this hand-drawn tale where poetic imagery leads to a liberatory discovery.

Swimming with Butterflies
Karl Stelter (USA 2024, 8 min)
Short Films

After missing the bronze by 1/100ths of a second at the 2016 Paralympics, swimmer Lizzi Smith shares the inspiring story of how changing her self-perception allowed her to reclaim the pool.

On a Sunday at Eleven
Alicia K. Harris (Canada 2024, 9 min)
Short Films

A young Black girl navigates exclusion in her white-dominant ballet class, reclaiming her beauty, identity, and power in an ethereal and unapologetic celebration of Blackness.

Tule
Jocelyn Garcia (USA 2024, 4 min)
Short Films

In Clear Lake, California, a young Pomo girl shares the cultural importance of the Tule plant and the urgency of indigenous stewards to return it to its natural glory.

The Girl with the Occupied Eyes
André Carrilho (Portugal 2024, 8 min)
Short Films

With her eyes constantly glued to her screen, a little girl misses vibrant landscapes, splashy group of circus animals, a mysterious UFO, and all else that passes before her.

Shorts 7: Youth Works

Sat Apr 19 at 11:30 AM at Premier Theater at One Letterman
Short Films

Youth Works celebrates and spotlights the next generation of filmmakers from within the Bay Area, and from as far away as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and China. Demonstrating the rising talent of these teenagers, these shorts encompass thought-provoking scripts, breathtaking and delightful cinematography, rich stop-motion animation, and genre-pushing meditations. Through the filmmakers' unique viewpoints, we peek into their communities, adolescence, and the growth and transformation that happens in early adulthood. From perspectives of balancing intersecting identities, artistic resistance and celebration, childhood creativity, and self-acceptance and compassion, these films introduce us to a budding group of fresh cinematic voices carrying us boldly into the next generation of filmmaking. —Soph Schultz Rocha

Recommended for ages 12 and up.

Echoes of Sunlit Koi
Ying Zhao (China 2025, 5 min)
Short Films

Caught between family secrets and a desire to get the last rare fish before his classmate, a young boy discovers a surprise at the pet store.

Reach For Me

Hazel Baileh Klein Wolff (USA 2025, 5 min)

Short Films

A daughter reconciles the kaleidoscopic layers of complex emotions passed down from her mom, healing the past and present.

Thunderbird and Killer Whale: S-hwuhwa'us & Qul-Ihanumutsun

Jason Cheng (Canada 2024, 8 min)

Short Films

Stz'uminus First Nation Master Carver John Marston embarks on a personal journey to continue the legacy of the traditional and intricate art of canoe carving.

Why Can't We Just Be Ghosts?

Patrick Jang (USA 2025, 9 min)

Short Films

After a teen ghost confesses his depression to his human best friend, the two search for a path toward acceptance and happiness in this thought-provoking satire.

Junebug

Amiko Muscat (USA 2024, 6 min)

Short Films

A youthful, sensory-driven collage of drifting sounds, shimmering textures, and meditative reflections weave together during a sweltering summer day at a Los Angeles public pool.

Painting Resistance

Dylan Clarke, Gluck Liam (USA 2024, 9 min)

Short Films

San Francisco muralist Chris Gazeleh shares his family's story and his vibrant art that promotes awareness of the history and struggle of Palestinian people.

As You Are

Daria Strachan (USA 2024, 7 min)

Short Films

After she is confronted at church and misunderstood by her dad, a queer Black teen searches for self-acceptance and belonging in community.

little dreamer

Astrid Nymo-Young (USA 2024, 5 min)

Short Films

As she struggles with a creative block, young artist Lizzy transports back to her playful childhood aspirations where her imagination then might be just what she needs now.

Coop

Mujtaba Alhejji (Saudi Arabia 2024, 12 min)

Short Films

After accidentally popping a soccer ball, young Adam sparks a creative solution at the market to get enough money to buy a new ball and win over his teammates.

Umbral Cloak

Cade Savage Schwartz (USA 2024, 5 min)

Short Films

In a striking otherworldly terrain, a rock climber undergoes a poetic transformation when a mythological winged creature descends.

The Brave Ones

Mahdiyeh Abbaszadeh (Iran 2025, 4 min)

Short Films

A caring forester puts his own life in danger when he saves a Persian leopard after a poacher wounds the endangered cat in this culturally rich stop-motion short.

Sky Hopinka Shorts: a proposition of memory

Fri Apr 25 at 6:00 PM at Marina 2

Section

Dislocation Blues

Sky Hopinka (2017, 17 min)

An incomplete and imperfect portrait of reflections from Standing Rock...recounts the difficulties and the reluctance in looking back with a clear and critical eye.

Fainting Spells

Sky Hopinka (2018, 11 min)

Told through recollections of youth, learning, lore, and departure, this is an imagined myth for the Xąwjska, or the Indian Pipe Plant - used by the Ho-Chunk to revive those who have fainted.

Just a Soul Responding
Sky Hopinka (2023, 16 min)

A travelogue of sorts, as two friends whose lives intersect and diverge, look at the road and the vessels we use as means to traverse landscapes both contemporary and historical, and of the spirit and of the body.

Kicking the Clouds
Sky Hopinka (2021, 16 min)

A reflection on descendants and ancestors, guided by a 50 year old audio recording of my grandmother learning the Pechanga language from her mother.

Kunjkaga Remember Red Banks, Kunjkaga Remembers the Welcoming Song
Sky Hopinka (2014, 10 min)

The video traverses the history and the memory of a place shared by both the Ho-Chunk and settler: Red Banks, a Ho-Chunk village site near present day Green Bay, WI. Each serve as representations of personal and shared history, as well as of practices and processes of remembrance.

Lore
Sky Hopinka (2019, 11 min)

Images of friends and landscapes are cut, fragmented, and reassembled on an overhead projector as hands guide their shape and construction... a pastiche of rumination, reproduction, and creation.

When you're lost in the rain
Sky Hopinka (2018, 5 min)

In this video, drawing from Bob Dylan's song "Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues," layers of experiences circling loss and longing are overlaid between images of landscapes and movement.

Snow Bear: Workshop with Aaron Blaise

Sat Apr 26 at 2:30 PM at Walt Disney Family Museum
Talks + Workshops

Workshop Description

Aaron Blaise is a living legend in animation, capturing the beauty and complexities of the natural world in his work for more than 30 years. From the start of his career at Walt Disney Feature Animation, he brought to life iconic characters in

films that include *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *The Lion King* (1994), and *Pocahontas* (1995). He made his feature directorial debut with *Brother Bear* (2003), a film that displayed his special bond with animals and received a Best Animated Feature Oscar® nomination. For the last 12 years, he has shared his wisdom with the next generation of artists and storytellers at his renowned online art school, Creature Art Teacher. *Snow Bear*, a gorgeous 2D hand-drawn passion project that he created over three years almost entirely on his own, is Aaron's latest project. Along with screening the short, he will also offer a behind-the-scenes look at his filmmaking process, answer questions, and lead us in a drawing activity inspired by the film. This program is a collaboration with The Walt Disney Family Museum.

Be sure to bring paper and pencils to draw along.

Recommended for ages 7 and up.

Sonaggios

Sun Apr 27 at 3:45 PM at Marina 2
Pietro Mereu (Italy, Canada 2024, 84)
Documentaries: International

Film Logline

In this entrancing documentary, two families in Sardinia handcraft the cowbells that decorate the necks of sheep, while considering how to ensure the survival of their age-old artisanal tradition.

Film Description

After watching this entrancing documentary, the next time you hear Christopher Walken shout "More cowbell!" in that old SNL sketch, your thoughts will inevitably lead to Sardinia. There, in Tonara, two families continue the tradition of handcrafting the item. The name "cowbell" is a bit of a misnomer. The bells most often decorate the necks of sheep, providing music for the shepherd as well as a way to locate strays. A discerning shepherd can even identify a sheep by the sound of its bell. Aware that theirs are the last shops standing in a town that used to be rife with them, the families seek to widen their customer base through online sales, social media, and identifying other uses for the bells. They also decide to work together to ensure the survival of their craft. Pietro Mereu's film is a delight, full of musical sheep and artisans' passion. —Pam Grady

Souleymane's Story

Sun Apr 27 at 4:00 PM at Marina 2
Boris Lojkine (France 2024, 92)
Narratives: International

Film Logline

Boris Lojkine's moody and propulsive film plays like a thriller, steadily laying out the obstacles confronting undocumented immigrant Souleymane as he desperately tries to make the right choices.

Film Description

Meet Souleymane, an undocumented Guinean immigrant in France striving to build a new life and apply for asylum. To earn money Souleymane rents a verified UberEats account from another employee, a frequent option for new arrivals. Weaving through the streets of Paris, Souleymane's history unfolds in waves, its details revealed between the crushing countdown of the delivery clock, unpredictable weather, and frustrated customers. Despite his circumstances, Souleymane's innate kindness shines through as he finds moments of levity and connection with his sheltermates, street vendors, and fellow delivery drivers. Boris Lojkine's moody and propulsive film plays like a thriller, steadily laying out the mountain of obstacles Souleymane confronts as he desperately strives to make the right choices. The film is a stunning digest of a life lived in the shadows with a revelatory central performance from first-time, non-professional actor Abou Sangare (winner of Un Certain Regard Best Actor at Cannes). —Jessie Fairbanks

Sound and Cinema Showcase

Thu Apr 24 at 7:30 PM at San Francisco Conservatory of Music
Awards + Special Events

Along Away

Betsy Tsai (USA 2025, 10 min)

Ellie's grief over the suicide of her estranged friend Johnny takes an uncomfortable turn when she runs into his parents. SFCM team includes Clark Evans (Principal Composer), Ian Kaneko (Lead Sound) and Zhuoran Zhang (Additional Music and Sound).

AMERICA, WE BEG YOUR PARDON

A.K. Sandhu (USA 2025, 30 min)

As Oakland students bring a powerful play to life, AMERICA, WE BEG YOUR PARDON documents their journey of embodying the children of Black Panther Party members—interweaving history, intergenerational conversations, and the prophetic poetry of Gil Scott-Heron to illuminate the often-overlooked role of women and children in liberation movements. SFCM team includes Jonathan Bingham (Principal Composer), Caroline Feitosa (Lead Sound) and Misc. Students (Orchestrators).

Camino

Florencia Manóvil (USA 2025, 12 min)

A mother and her teen daughter flow in and out of harmony on a road trip that charts an emotional turning point in their lives. SFCM team includes Ryan Camastral (Principal Composer, Rafe Axne (composer), Clark Evans (composer) and Theo Popov (Sound Crew).

Oscar's Return

Steven Raven Liang (USA 2025, 11 min)

Oscar Rodriguez, a former juvenile lifer, dreams of becoming a dog trainer when he earns his freedom after serving over two decades behind bars. When the fantasy of liberty clashes with the reality of free world responsibilities, he wonders whether he can succeed and honor those he left behind. SFCM team includes Dimitris Mathiopoulos (Principal Composer), Chong Li (Lead Sound) and Wilka Wang (Additional Sound).

Sudan, remember us

Thu Apr 24 at 6:15 PM at Marina 2

Sat Apr 26 at 3:00 PM at BAMPFA

Hind Meddeb (France, Qatar, Tunisia 2024, 76)

Documentaries: International

Film Logline

In the midst of a war and destruction in Sudan, four young activists insist on justice, freedom, and change, emerging as beacons of hope for the country and the world.

Film Description

At the outset of Sudan, Remember Us, documentarian Hind Meddeb, travels to Khartoum, Sudan's capital city, to record the jubilation following the overthrow of genocidal leader Omar Al-Bashir that ended his 30-year regime of terror. It is a transitory moment in which Meddeb captures joy and possibility before the country devolves into civil war. Amidst the ensuing violence, the filmmaker finds a spark of hope in the activism of four Sudanese youths who employ poetry, sit-ins, music, and art to demand democracy. The film serves as a portrait of their courage, joy, and unwavering belief in the promise of a better, more equitable future, as well as a depiction of not only the country's political reality, but also of its formidable and brave citizenry. —Bedatri Choudhury

Sukkwan Island

Sun Apr 27 at 2:00 PM at Premier Theater at One Letterman

Vladimir de Fontenay (France, Norway/Belgium/Netherlands/Lu 2024, 114)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

Father-son bonding amid the majesty of nature takes a dark turn in this visually exhilarating adaptation of a novella by David Vann that stars Swann Arlaud and Woody Norman.

Film Description

Father-son bonding amid the majesty of nature takes a dark turn in this visually exhilarating adaptation of a novella by David Vann. Unhappily separated from his wife, Tom (Swann Arlaud, *Anatomy of a Fall*) hopes for more time with their teenage son Roy (Woody Norman, *C'mon C'mon*). His ambitious idea is to spend an extended period of time in a cabin on a remote island in Alaska where they will brave the elements, hunt, fish, and hopefully build a stronger relationship. Things get complicated when Tom starts displaying manic tendencies and Roy, in addition to concerns over his dad's unpredictable behavior, starts missing his mom and his friends. In addition to rich performances from Arlaud and Norman, and the beauty of Amine Berrada's images (with Norway standing in for Alaska), writer/director Vladimir de Fontenay explores profound issues of imagination with a framing device involving an older Roy visiting this island that looms so large in his memory. —Rod Armstrong

Surviving Earth

Sat Apr 19 at 6:30 PM at Marina 1

Thea Gajić (UK 2025, 97)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

Vlad, a charismatic Yugoslav refugee and talented musician, is a larger-than-life character who cherishes his teenage daughter. He is also a recovering addict wrestling with his demons and the terror of failure.

Film Description

When we first meet Vlad, a charismatic Yugoslav refugee, he appears larger than life. A recovering addict who cherishes his teenage daughter and hard-won friendships, he bursts with energy and possibility. During the day he counsels fellow addicts at a center in Bristol. At night, he finds joy playing music with fellow Slavic refugees. Vlad's energy belies his stability, and his newly built world begins to fracture after a series of unfortunate events. Vlad soldiers on, convincing his bandmates to host a Balkan concert to celebrate their progress as immigrants and musicians, but behind the bravado he wrestles with his demons and the terror of failure. Slavko Sobin's portrayal of Vlad is formidable in this drama based on true events, the actor achieving a complicated mix of optimism and tragedy. With riveting performances and stunning musical segments, *Surviving Earth* is a powerful reminder of the fragility of life and the daily work of sobriety.

The Tallest Dwarf

Sat Apr 26 at 12:00 PM at Premier Theater at One Letterman

Sun Apr 27 at 12:00 PM at BAMPFA

Julie Forrest Wyman (USA 2025, 93)

Documentaries: USA

Film Logline

Diagnosed with hypochondroplasia dwarfism as an adult, filmmaker Julie Wyman seeks to understand her own condition as she confers with her family, medical experts, and a welcoming, creative group of little people for answers.

Film Description

Diagnosed with hypochondroplasia dwarfism as an adult, filmmaker Julie Wyman has questions: When did her parents and sister notice her proportions were different from others? Where has research led medicine when it comes to dwarfism and what are the ramifications should a "cure" present itself? And how do people in the little people community view themselves and the society surrounding them? Wyman's fascinating documentary digs deep into her queries. Her interactions with her parents—especially her sweet-natured dad from whom she inherited her condition—are humorous and moving, while the folks with whom she embeds herself respond to an uncomprehending world with exasperation and creativity. *The Tallest Dwarf* is a provocative film, one that asks us to examine our own biases and prejudices when it comes to the human impulse to reckon with others. —Pam Grady

The Texas Chain Saw Massacre

Mon Apr 21 at 9:15 PM at Presidio Theater

Tobe Hooper (USA 1974, 83)

Narratives: USA

Film Logline

It's been 50 years since Tobe Hooper's slasher masterpiece, now part of the Library of Congress National Film Registry, first chilled the world with its nihilistic portrait of a murderous family living in a Texas farmhouse.

Film Description

It's been 50 years since Tobe Hooper's slasher masterpiece first chilled the world with its nihilistic portrait of a murderous family living in a Texas farmhouse. Having spawned sequels and remakes and a legion of admirers and detractors, the film traveled the path from grindhouse nasty to cult classic to the Library of Congress National Film Registry. The story boils down to essentials—five teenagers on a road trip stop at a rural homestead looking for gas and find a family hellbent on murder instead. With a cast of relative unknowns, shot on 16mm with a miniscule budget, *Massacre* is chilling because there is no tidy backstory for the

bludgeoning brood, just a plethora of fearsome farm implements (including the titular chainsaw) used to ply their psychopathic pastime. As a special treat, the Festival also offers Alexandre Philippe's Chain Reactions, where five artists discuss the impact this film had on their lives and craft. —Rod Armstrong

That Summer in Paris

Sat Apr 26 at 4:00 PM at Marina 1
Valentine Cadic (France 2025, 75)
Narratives: International

Film Logline

In this constantly surprising and touching debut, 30-year-old Blandine visits Paris to reconnect with her half-sister Julie and see her idol compete in the Olympics, but nothing goes quite according to plan.

Film Description

Thirty-year-old Blandine travels from Normandy to Paris to reconnect with her half-sister Julie and see her idol, a female swimmer, compete in the Olympics. But nothing goes quite according to plan in this constantly surprising and touching debut. Blandine could be described by some as awkward, but director and co-screenwriter Valentine Cadic demonstrates in a variety of significant ways that the young woman is comfortable in her skin. Turned away from the anticipated swim event due to an overly large backpack, and offered a not very warm welcome from Julie, she instead finds understanding and human contact from a friendly electrician and has moments of bonding with her niece Alma. Cadic is up to something subversive with this warm and empathetic character portrait—instead of presenting Blandine as a sad-sack type, the filmmaker creates a three-dimensional woman who comes to realize the strength she has within and the deep pleasure of her own company.

They Live

Sat Apr 19 at 8:45 PM at Marina 2
John Carpenter (USA 1988, 93)
Awards + Special Events

Film Logline

Infamous for its extended, bone-crunching fistfight scene between "Rowdy" Roddy Piper and Keith David, this cult favorite is also an ingenious satire of neoliberal politics that holds particular resonance in our second go-round of Trumpism.

Film Description

Infamous for its extended, bone-crunching fistfight scene between "Rowdy" Roddy Piper and Keith David, John Carpenter's 1988 cult favorite is also an

ingenious satire of neoliberal politics that holds particular resonance in our second go-round of Trumpism. When drifter John Nada (Piper) dons a pair of sunglasses he's found, he discovers the true faces of many of the country's elites—they're skull-faced aliens manipulating people to consume and conform to the status quo—and sees it as his mission to convince the real people to believe him and resist! Like *The Matrix*, which blew millions of minds a little over a decade later and also features some iconic sunglasses, *They Live* questions the fundamentals of reality and is even more direct in its criticism of mass media and capitalist consumption. Carpenter fans also won't want to miss the Festival's special outdoors screening of his eerie 1980 film *The Fog*. —Rod Armstrong

Timestamp

Sat Apr 26 at 3:30 PM at Marina 2

Kateryna Gornostai (Ukraine, France, Luxembourg, Netherlands 2025, 125)

Documentaries: International

Film Logline

Children learn lessons in resilience alongside math and history in this cinema vérité documentary shot in classrooms across war-torn Ukraine.

Film Description

In the years since the Russian invasion, war rages on. In towns across Ukraine, schools try to provide a kind of normalcy for children—despite some classrooms damaged by bombs and others reduced to rubble. Regardless of their surroundings, kids recite rhymes, make friends, learn English, and awkwardly practice for their spring dance. As soon as it feels like just another day at school, an air raid alarm pierces the air and children immediately rely on their survival skills. Kateryna Gornostai (Berlinale Crystal Bear winner *Stop-Zemlia*) makes her documentary feature debut with this cinema vérité work featuring poignant observations of persistence. Shot between March 2023 and June 2024, the film bears witness to how the ordinary act of attending school becomes an extraordinary feat of reliance with parents and teachers fighting to ensure their children have access to the transformative power of knowledge. A portrait of childhoods caught in the maw of war, *Timestamp* presents a generation learning lessons of resistance alongside math and history.—Bedatri Choudhury

The Track

Wed Apr 23 at 8:30 PM at Marina 2

Ryan Sidhoo (Canada 2025, 90)

Documentaries: International

Film Logline

In a Sarajevo still shrouded by the shadow of war, an Olympic-size luge track slowly comes back to life, along with the hopes and dreams of three young athletes and their coach.

Film Description

Sarajevo's luge track, built for the 1984 Winter Games, is now a bullet-holed, graffitied tourist attraction. But where outsiders see war-scarred history, luge coach Senad Omanović and his team see possibilities for a brighter future. Three decades after the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, many young people are leaving to find jobs abroad, while those who stay behind warily eye an uncertain tomorrow. But for Omanović and the men he trains, a ray of hope lingers along with dreams of Olympic glory. *The Track* is the story of the team's steadfast will to continue doing what they believe in, even without any support or encouragement from the state. A winning underdog tale, this infectious documentary invites the audience to root for these athletes and their will to win—or at least compete.

Triumph

Thu Apr 24 at 6:00 PM at Marina 1

Kristina Grozeva, Petar Valchanov (Bulgaria, Greece 2024, 98)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

In this comedy of errors based on real life events, a hapless general in 1990s Bulgaria falls sway to his personal psychic's prophecy that glory await is they discover a way to communicate with aliens.

Film Description

Truth is stranger than fiction as this comedy of errors based on real life events demonstrates. In 1990s Bulgaria as the country grapples with the fall of communism, a hapless general desperate to prove his worth off the battlefield falls sway to his personal psychic. Prina prophesizes glory if they discover a way to communicate with aliens, using a powerful artifact hidden in Bulgarian soil. The general sends Prina and an army unit to undertake a decidedly unscientific excavation in search of this galactic connection. As soldiers rush to fulfill Prina's chaotic directives, their dubious commander, Colonel Plantnikov, attempts to keep order, manage the general's outsized expectations, and care for his impetuous daughter, Slava (a fantastic Maria Bakalova, *Borat; The Apprentice*). As luck would have it, Slava turns out to be a pure psychic with a knack for understanding the "alien's plans," threatening Prina's ambitions. Hilarity ensues but with a dark undercurrent to the caper that carries sharp reverberations of current affairs. Make sure you stay for the credits! —Jessie Fairbanks

"Two People Exchanging Saliva" + "Budget Paradise" + "1:10"

Sat Apr 26 at 6:15 PM at Marina 1

Mid-Length Films

Natalie Musteata, Alexandre Singh (France, United States 2024, 36 min)

Mid-Length Films

Mid-Length Logline

In a repressive society where kissing means death and currency is measured in slaps, an unhappy woman's growing bond with a salesgirl sparks desire, jealousy, and dangerous consequences.

Mid-Length Description

In a dystopian society where kissing means death and currency is measured in slaps, a woman's growing bond with a salesgirl sparks desire, jealousy, and dangerous consequences. Vicky Krieps narrates this bold and absurdist tragicomedy that stars Zar Amir Ebrahimi (Holy Spider) as unhappily married Angine. When she becomes infatuated with naïve young Malaise (Luana Bajrami, Portrait of a Lady on Fire), their secret connection grows into a dangerous romance that tests the limits of their repression-fueled world. Shot mostly in striking black-and-white, the film creates an atmosphere both surreal and chilling, reflecting a culture that polices intimacy while encouraging violent exchanges. As the duo's bond raises suspicions, Two People Exchanging Saliva becomes a sharp critique of control, desire, and resistance, balancing its bleak premise with moments of dark humor and unexpected tenderness. —Amir George

Budget Paradise

LaTajh Simmons-Weaver (USA 2025, 14 min)

Mid-Length Films

Black, non-binary painter Chester searches for space and belonging in their rapidly changing hometown, navigating identity, creativity, and the struggle for permission to exist on their own terms.

1:10

Sinan Taner (Switzerland 2024, 18 min)

Mid-Length Films

In a chilling microcosm of chaos, a harmless argument between two children at an elementary school sports day escalates into threats between their fathers.

Viet and Nam

Mon Apr 21 at 5:45 PM at Marina 2

Minh Quý Truong (Vietnam, Philippines, Singapore, France, Netherlands, Italy, Germany, USA 2024, 129)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

The ghosts of the Vietnam conflict fall heavily on war orphan Nam, who finds solace in the arms of his lover Viet even as he contemplates leaving the country.

Film Description

Decades after the fall of Saigon, much of Vietnam remains mired in poverty and grief. So it is with Nam, who finds solace in the arms of his lover Viet, while acknowledging that their days spent toiling in a coal mine are a dead end. To have a brighter future, he must leave the country, but there is Viet to consider, as well as his mother, still dreaming of her husband who died in the war. Minh Quy Truong's second feature carries traces of Alain Resnais and Apichatpong Weerasethakul in its DNA but ultimately reflects the director's own voice. Poetic, sometimes erotic, and often gritty, this lyrical drama is both a love story and a measure of the devastating consequences Vietnam paid for its civil war. Sublime cinematography captures the country's beauty but below that gorgeous surface rests a devastating darkness threatening to swallow Nam and all he holds dear. —Pam Grady

Visual Storytelling Workshop with Alicia K. Harris

Sun Apr 20 at 2:00 PM at Festival Lounge

Talks + Workshops

Event Description

Join Alicia K. Harris, award-winning filmmaker, director, and producer for a visual storytelling workshop for teens. Known for her poetic, expressive style and work celebrating the Black experience, Alicia will lead students through the various visual components that encompass a film, from cinematography to production and costume design. Students will learn how to convey emotion through imagery and storyboarding exercises as well as how a director goes from script to screen. The filmmaker will also screen her short film *On a Sunday at Eleven* and give a presentation on her career in the film and television industry. Students will have the chance to ask the director about her career or for advice about getting started in the film industry!

This workshop runs for two hours and is open to students ages 13–18; space is limited. This workshop is to students only; parents and guardians may drop off their students.

Vivien's Wild Ride

Fri Apr 18 at 6:00 PM at Premier Theater at One Letterman

Sat Apr 19 at 12:00 PM at BAMPFA

Vivien Hillgrove (USA 2024, 87)

Documentaries: USA

Film Logline

When legendary film editor Vivien Hillgrove begins losing her sight, she turns to filmmaking to craft a magical memoir, reflecting on her career, personal struggles, and the transformative power of creativity.

Film Description

When she begins losing her sight, legendary film editor Vivien Hillgrove (*The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, *Henry & June*), turns to the medium she knows best, film, to craft this intimate and unconventional memoir. Reflecting on her groundbreaking career, Hillgrove revisits the evolution of Bay Area filmmaking, from experimental art films to major theatrical features and documentaries. As she navigates this transition, the documentary explores her encounters with renowned directors, mentors, and activists, as well as the deeply personal losses that have shaped her life. Balancing creative reinvention with vulnerability, Hillgrove's journey becomes a detective story of self-discovery, aided by her longtime partner Karen Brocco, who helps uncover hidden parts of her past. Set against the dual landscapes of fast-paced filmmaking and the sanctuary of their farm, *Vivien's Wild Ride* is a poignant exploration of resilience, artistry, and what it means to truly see both in cinema and in life. —Amir George

Where the Wind Comes From

Sat Apr 19 at 3:30 PM at Marina 2

Amel Guellaty (Tunisia, France, Qatar 2025, 99)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

Two Tunisian youngsters hit the road in the hopes of winning an art competition in this rousing and fanciful portrait of two friends who find that working together makes them stronger than the sum of their individual parts.

Film Description

2010's Arab Spring began in Tunisia and brought great hope for change, but few lingering results. In the wake of this lies the unrealized dreams of youngsters like Alyssa and Mehdi. She is 19 and assertive, looking for any chance to live abroad, while he, shyer and more fatalistic, is a talented artist with few creative opportunities. When Alyssa comes across an art contest with a trip to Germany as its prize, she secretly signs up her talented friend and cajoles him into a road trip to enter. Amel Guellaty's delightful debut is infused with the enthusiasm of

youth—fanciful elements include animations springing from Mehdi's drawings and musical interludes arising from Alyssa's daydreams—while acknowledging the pathos underlying characters who face constant obstacles on the path to self-realization. It is also a rousing portrait of two friends who find that working together makes them stronger than the sum of their individual parts.

Winter in Sokcho

Mon Apr 21 at 6:00 PM at Premier Theater at One Letterman

Sat Apr 26 at 7:45 PM at BAMPFA

Koya Kamura (France, South Korea 2024, 104)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

In a snowy seaside town on South Korea's east coast, a mysterious French artist upends an introspective young woman's life.

Film Description

In a snowy seaside town on South Korea's east coast, a mysterious new guest at her boardinghouse upends an introspective young woman's life. Soo-ha (newcomer Bella Kim) is restless to experience more of the outside world that for now she can only glimpse through the tourists who visit. She's also hungry to solve the mystery of her paternal parentage, a secret her mother never divulged. When moody French artist Kerrand (played by the venerable Roschdy Zem) arrives for a long-term stay, his presence upends Soo-ha's life as she wrestles with her sense of self and finds herself drawn to the enigmatic guest. Writer/director Koya Kamura makes an impressive feature debut with this adaptation of Elisa Shua Dusapin's award-winning novel, skillfully rendering the story's perceptive intricacies to bring forth a visually alluring meditation on identity, longing, and the ephemeral nature of life. —Jordan Klein

The Wolves Always Come at Night

Sun Apr 27 at 1:15 PM at Marina 2

Gabrielle Brady (Mongolia, Australia, Germany 2024, 96)

Documentaries: International

Film Logline

A devastating sandstorm shatters a Mongolian herding family's life, forcing them to migrate to the city, where they struggle with urban hardship while longing for their disappearing way of life.

Film Description

A devastating sandstorm disrupts a Mongolian herding family's traditional way of life in this film that blurs the boundary between fiction and documentary. With their livelihood no longer sustainable, the family relocates to the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar, where they mourn the loss of their deep connection to the land and

struggle to adapt to pollution, overpopulation, and other harsh realities of urban life. Director Gabrielle Brady crafts a visually immersive portrait of displacement, climate change, and cultural erosion. The film captures both the physical and emotional toll of forced migration, highlighting the quiet sorrow of leaving behind a world that may never be reclaimed. Seamlessly blending realism with a dreamlike quality, *The Wolves Come at Night* is a moving reflection on resilience, longing, and the irreversible changes faced by communities living on the frontlines of environmental upheaval. —Amir Geoge

Xoftex

Mon Apr 21 at 8:30 PM at Premier Theater at One Letterman

Noaz Deshe (Germany, France 2024, 99)

Narratives: International

Film Logline

The surreal and haunting limbo of asylum seekers' daily lives reveals itself in Greece's Xoftex camp when a young Syrian refugee filmmaker blurs reality and fiction by making a zombie movie.

Film Description

In this genre-blending, surreal portrait of life inside a notorious Greek refugee camp, Syrian and Palestinian asylum seekers await news of their fate. Trapped in bureaucratic limbo, young Nasser and his friends pass the time by making satirical sketches and planning a zombie horror film—only to realize that the reality of the camp mirrors a nightmare of its own. As tensions rise, the fragile wall between reality and fiction crumbles, exposing raw fear and frustration but also humor. Blending elements of social horror, comedy, and surrealism, *Xoftex* offers a deeply immersive look at the struggles of displaced people, drawing from real-life experiences. Featuring a cast of asylum seekers and inspired by theater workshops in refugee camps, the film balances moments of levity with the weight of unimaginable uncertainty as it captures the unsettling, dreamlike existence of those forced to flee their homes, only to land in purgatory. —Amir George

Section Descriptions

Documentaries: International

Documentaries: USA

Narratives: International

Narratives: USA

Short Films

Talks + Workshops

Spotlight Descriptions

Bay Area Voices

Family Friendly

Global Documentaries

Global Visions

SFFILM-Supported

Shorts

Big Nights

VENUES

SAN FRANCISCO

- Premier Theater at One Letterman—1 Letterman Dr #B (At the Yoda Fountain)
- SFFILM Festival Lounge at One Letterman—1 Letterman Dr #B (Under the Skybridge)
- Civil War Parade Ground—Graham St
- Walt Disney Family Museum—104 Montgomery St
- Presidio Theatre—2340 Chestnut St
- Marina Theatre—2149 Chestnut St
- Gallery 308—Landmark Building A, 2 Marina Blvd
- San Francisco Conservatory of Music (SFCM)—50 Oak St
- SFFILM FilmHouse—455 9th St
- Roxie Theater—3117 16th St

EAST BAY

- Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA)—2155 Center St, Berkeley

TRANSIT

Muni & PresidiGO serve the **Marina & Presidio** festival venues:

- Muni Bus Lines: 28, 30, 43
- PresidiGO Shuttle (*free & open to the public*)
- Walking time from transit stops: 1–15 minutes

BAMPFA (Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive)

- Served by BART – Downtown Berkeley Station
- Just a 3-minute walk from BART

SFFILM FilmHouse

- About a 20-minute walk from Civic Center BART

PARKING

Presidio

- One Letterman Lot – \$6/hour
- Presidio-Owned Lots – \$3/hour

- Street Parking – Available in nearby neighborhoods
- Metered street parking available in surrounding neighborhoods and free after 6 PM and on Sundays

Marina District

- Lombard Street Garage (2055 Lombard St) – \$3/hour (*Entrance at Moulton Alley*)
- Pierce Street Garage (3252 Pierce St) – \$3/hour (*Entrance at Pierce Street*)
- Metered street parking available in surrounding neighborhoods and free after 6 PM and on Sundays

SFFILM FilmHouse

Metered street parking available in surrounding neighborhoods and free after 6 PM and on Sundays

FILM DESCRIPTION EXAMPLES DO NOT USE

A Tribute to Chiwetel Ejiofor + Sloan Science on Screen + "Rob Peace"

Sat Apr 27 at 7 PM at Premier Theater
Chiwetel Ejiofor (USA 2024, 146)
Narratives: USA

Chiwetel Ejiofor Tribute

Chiwetel Ejiofor began his acting career as a teenager, appearing in National Youth Theatre productions and going on to study at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMBDA). He was 19 when he made his screen debut in **Steven Spielberg's Amistad** (1997). Among his acting accolades are the 2006 Rising Star BAFTA award, an Academy Award® nomination and BAFTA award for best actor for *12 Years a Slave* (2013), a Film Independent Spirit Award for best supporting actor for **Talk to Me** (2007), and a British Independent Film Award for best actor for **Dirty Pretty Things** (2002), and the organization's 2015 Richard Harris Award. In 2007, he won a best actor Olivier Award for the Donmar Warehouse's production of *Othello*. His turn to screenwriting and directing began with a pair of shorts, **Slapper** (2008) and **Columbite Tantalite** (2013). His first feature, **The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind** (2019) was awarded the Sundance Film Festival's Alfred P. Sloan Feature Film Prize; an NAACP Image Award for outstanding direction; and the British Independent Film Awards' Douglas Hickox Award.

Rob Peace

In an acting tour de force, Jay Will plays the talented titular character, a young New Jersey science prodigy headed for the Ivy League, but heavily impacted by his past.

Rob Peace

In an acting tour de force, Jay Will plays the talented titular character, a young New Jersey science prodigy headed for the Ivy League, but heavily impacted by his past. While Rob is still an adolescent, his father (another impeccable turn from writer-director Chiwetel Ejiofor) is convicted of homicide and the boy devotes himself to proving his dad's innocence. As a budding scientist excelling in biophysics, Rob enters Yale, attempting to negotiate this elite new environment alongside his connection to family and community. Based on Peace's Yale roommate Jeff Hobbs' bestselling biography, Ejiofor's exquisite drama details the collision of a life lived under immense pressure. The film features terrific supporting performances by Mary J. Blige as Rob's caring mother and Mare Winningham as a Yale professor who grants him special lab access.

Mel Novikoff Award: Gary Meyer + “Macario” + “Sour Death Balls”

Sat Apr 27 at 12 pm PT at Premier Theater

Roberto Gavaldón (Mexico 1960, 146)

Section: Narratives: International

Mel Novikoff Award

When **Gary Meyer** was seven, he saw Disney’s **Lady and the Tramp**, the experience sealing his fate as someone who would spend his life in communion with movies. At 12, he started a screening series in his family’s Napa hayloft. After studying film production at San Francisco State University, he found his calling in exhibition. He started at United Artists, where he worked his way up from drive-in second feature booker to head buyer of the company’s Northwestern Division. In 1975, he co-founded Repertory Theatres, Inc., which would become Landmark Theatres after merging with another company. While at Landmark, he programmed the U.C. Theatre in Berkeley and the Nuart in Los Angeles. After leaving Landmark, he took over the Balboa Theatre in San Francisco in 2001–2012. In 1998, he joined the Telluride Film Festival as Programming/Marketing Consultant, became the Resident Curator from 1999–2006, and co-director from 2006–2015. A longtime journalist, he founded online magazine Eat Drink Film in 2014 along with an adjacent “EatDrinkFilms Festival.” He recently produced a documentary, **The Art of Eating: The Life of M.F.K. Fisher**.

Mel Novikoff Award

For over 30 years, the SFFILM Mel Novikoff Award has been given to an individual or institution whose work has enhanced the film-going public’s appreciation of world cinema. This year’s Mel Novikoff presentation will include **Gary Meyer** in conversation with IndieWire Editor-at-Large **Anne Thompson**, followed by a screening of the 1960 Mexican classic **Macario** and **Jessica Yu’s** memorable short **Sour Death Balls**.

Macario

A village’s Day of the Dead celebration foreshadows this bewitching fable of an impoverished woodcutter who gains the power to heal. Screens with **Sour Death Balls**, **Jessica Yu’s** hilarious account of a sour candy taste challenge.

Macario

A village’s Day of the Dead celebration foreshadows a bewitching magical realist fable in director **Roberto Gavaldón’s** dreamy adaptation of a B. Traven (**The Treasure of the Sierra Madre**) short story set in colonial Mexico. Impoverished woodcutter Macario (**Ignacio López Tarso**) has never gone a day without hunger, more acute now that he has five children to feed. His wife produces a rare turkey for him and him alone to eat but when he elects to share it with a mysterious

stranger, he gains the power to heal, a gift that enriches the family but also puts Macario in the murderous crosshairs of the Spanish Inquisition. Mexico's first foreign-language film Oscar® nominee, its star Tarso won the Golden Gate Award for Best Actor when Macario screened at the 1960 Festival. **Gabriel Figueroa's (Luis Buñuel's The Exterminating Angel)** luminous black-and-white cinematography sparkles anew and astonishes in a 4K restoration.

Screens with: **Sour Death Balls (Jessica Yu, Festival 1992, 5 min)** Kids and grownups accept the sour candy taste challenge. **Jessica Yu** records the hilarious results.

Members Screening: Mother Couch

Sun Apr 28 at 10 am PT at Marina 1
Niclas Larsson (USA 2023, 96)

Mother (**Ellen Burstyn**) refuses to leave a couch, which might not be a problem for her youngest child David (**Ewan McGregor**), except the sofa sits in a defunct furniture store and the owners want her to vacate. That is the set up for writer-director **Niclas Larsson's** absurd first feature that explores the ways our families can work our every last nerve. With Mother refusing to budge, David enlists his brother Gruffudd (**Rhys Ifans**) and sister Linda (**Lara Flynn Boyle**) to join him in coaxing her home. The three actors' wildly incongruous accents hint at children raised apart from one another and help explain the overall sense of estrangement—though not how Mother wandered into the store in the first place. 91-year-old Burstyn is marvelous in this film full of droll laughs as the recalcitrant matriarch, receiving excellent support from a cast that also includes **Lake Bell**, **Taylor Russell**, and **F. Murray Abraham**.

Persistence of Vision Award: Johan Grimonprez + "Soundtrack for a Coup d'Etat"

Thu Apr 25 at 6:30 pm PT at BAMPFA
Johan Grimonprez (Belgium 2024, 200)
Section: Documentaries: International

Persistence of Vision Award

Who owns our imagination in a world of existential vertigo where truth has become a shipwrecked refugee? Is it the storyteller who can contain contradictions, who can slip between the languages we have been given to become a time-traveler of the imagination? **Johan Grimonprez's** critically acclaimed work dances on the borders of theory and practice, between art and cinema, going beyond the dualisms of documentary and fiction, other and self, mind and brain to weave new pathways in how we perceive our realities. Our histories and memories are not only a means to reimagine our contested past, but

also tools to negotiate our shared present. In *Wonderland*, the Queen rephrases it to Alice: "It's a poor sort of memory that only works backwards."

Persistence of Vision Award

Established in 1997, the **Persistence of Vision Award** honors the achievement of a filmmaker whose main body of work falls outside the realm of narrative feature filmmaking each year. This year, the award goes to Belgian filmmaker and multimedia artist **Johan Grimonprez**.

Soundtrack for a Coup d'Etat

What is the first step a country might take when engineering its first post-colonial African coup? Weaponize music and appoint a jazz ambassador. The stylings of Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, Abbey Lincoln, Max Roach, and more form a backbeat in **Johan Grimonprez's (dial H-I-S-T-O-R-Y, 1997 New Visions GGA; Shadow World, Festival 2016)** rich essay that interweaves interviews, archival footage, and more to tell the story of Western nations conspiring against the nascent Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to protect capitalist interests. Featuring a Who's Who of midcentury international players, the documentary depicts how the US, Belgium, and other Western interests plotted first a coup and then the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, Congo's first prime minister. The film allows the viewer to connect the dots and make connections, holding a mirror to our own era as it harks back to a violent historical chapter written to serve colonizers and capitalists—all of it set to the soundtrack of cool jazz.

Soundtrack for a Coup d'Etat

Jazz becomes a successful smokescreen for the US and its allies' efforts as well-meaning musicians' diplomatic missions offer cover for a conspiracy to stage a coup against the Democratic Republic of the Congo Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba.

Shorts 6: Youth Works

Sun Apr 28 at 11 am PT at Marina 2

Section: Short Films

Youth Works celebrates and spotlights young filmmakers from within the Bay Area and as far across the globe as Ukraine and rural China. With works encompassing out-of-this-world visual effects, innovative hand-drawn animation, and intimate interviews, these young filmmakers do not shy away from pushing boundaries and displaying their talent. Through their unique viewpoints, we peek into their communities, adolescence, and the growth and transformation that happens in early adulthood. From tales of fantastic journeys, radical self-acceptance, and feminine power, to understanding one's culture and identity, these films introduce us to an up-and-coming group of cinematic voices carrying us one short at time into the next generation of filmmaking.

Recommended for ages 12 and up.

Make Art, Reese!

Mika Lim (USA 2023, 8)

Short Films, Shorts

Hoping to make a masterpiece, a young artist explores the meaning of art and rediscovers why he creates in the first place.

Weathered

Patrick Jang (USA 2023, 9)

Short Films, Shorts

Three teenagers openly share their personal stories of struggle and transformation that allowed them to embrace self-acceptance.

Comma

Sonia Leliukh (Ukraine 2023, 4)

Short Films, Shorts

Enter into a striking animated portal of Ukrainian people living their everyday lives despite the tragedies of war.

like a stone or flower

Kaiya Jordan (USA 2023, 10)

Short Films, Shorts

Three Bay Area Asian American artists across generations reflect on the ability of art to transcend rationality and logic.

FATALE

Kayen Manovil (USA 2024, 4)

Short Films, Shorts

Through music, enchanting nature, and movement, explore a vibrant meditation on the power and joy of teenage femininity.

Sil-tteu-gi

Yezy Suh (USA 2023, 5)

Short Films, Shorts

Growing up 6,000 miles away from her grandparents, a young Korean American reflects on lost family stories and the culture uprooted from her life.

Majid, the Muslim Rapper

Kea Morshed (USA 2023, 10)

Short Films, Shorts

In Oakland, an up-and-coming Muslim rapper struggles to balance his faith with the provocative nature of his song lyrics.

Substratum

Harvey Abrahams (Australia 2023, 7)

Short Films, Shorts

Isolated and surrounded by power, a young boy attempts to change the path of his dictator father. Will peace prevail or will he succumb to his family's history?

Puppet Back Up

Maxwell Downer (UK 2023, 9)

Short Films, Shorts

In the streets of Southampton, England, two artists create interactive giant puppet theater shows to create understanding and community dialogue surrounding climate issues.

Maps

Esmé Nix (USA 2023, 8)

Short Films, Shorts

Two best friends navigate high school as explorers, discovering new lands. When they find no island where they fit, they learn to change course.

Gentle Breeze

Wenwei Hu (China 2023, 4)

Short Films, Shorts

An old man, a young boy, and a bunch of balloons take a fantastic journey through rural China.

Sloan Science on Screen Award: Invention of Species

Sat Apr 27 at 7:30 pm PT at Vogue Theatre

Tania Hermida (Ecuador 2024, 91)

Section: Narratives: International

Sloan Science on Screen Award

Presented through a partnership between SFFILM and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the Sloan Science on Screen Award is a recognition that celebrates the compelling depiction of science in a narrative feature film.

Invention of Species

When Carla's dad drags her to the Galapagos Islands for a convention on conservation and species evolution, she is less than thrilled. On the cusp of womanhood and grappling with the loss of her brother, Carla finds herself adrift on the historic archipelago that led to Charles Darwin's breakthrough studies on adaptation. Befriending two young boys who become her emotional foils, Carla pretends to be a different version of herself in order to surmount this emotional and physical journey. In this stunningly lensed lyrical debut, Tania Hermida deftly

toys with parables while exploring the evolving relationship between man and nature. With Terrence Malick stylings, hints of Agnès Varda observational irony, and a dash of Alice Rohrwacher magical-realism, this tender film is a celebration of the shared sentient experience—biological and emotional.

Invention of Species

On the cusp of womanhood and grappling with the loss of her brother, Carla finds herself adrift on the historic archipelago that led to Charles Darwin's breakthrough studies on adaptation.

Sloan Science on Screen: Mabel

Sat Apr 27 at 5 pm PT at Vogue Theatre
Nicholas Ma (USA 2023, 84)
Narratives: USA

Biracial Callie (**Lexi Perkel**) loves trees and plants and little else in **Nicholas Ma's** warm debut feature. Surly with her parents and intolerant of people who don't share her interest, she's also unhappy about changing schools after her family relocates. But as luck would have it, substitute teacher Ms. G (**Judy Greer**) is starting a botany unit in science class, and Callie wangles her way in. Held rapt by Ms. G's lectures and online speeches, Callie develops an experiment raising chrysanthemums in darkness and manages to lure Agnes, her ebullient younger neighbor, into working on the project with her. Precocious, determined, and wryly funny, Callie is a unique protagonist who leverages her love of botany to propel herself into adolescence.

Recommended for ages 8 and up.

Closing Night: Thelma

Sun Apr 28 at 7:15 pm PT at Premier Theater
Sun Apr 28 at 8 pm PT at Marina 1
Josh Margolin (USA 2024 , 97)
Narratives: USA

A steely and hysterical **June Squibb** sinks her teeth into her first leading role as a 93-year-old widow proudly living alone who falls prey to a cash-grabbing hoax. Vowing to bring the perpetrators to justice, Thelma sets out on an odyssey across an evocatively lensed Los Angeles landscape, accompanied by her old friend Ben (a scene-stealing **Richard Roundtree** in his final performance). Together, the determined duo wield their charm, social invisibility, and elder-age devices to overcome numerous obstacles. Director **James Margolin** overtly and subtly draws on action-hero genre cliches, playing with traditional set-ups to illustrate Thelma's agency while also placing Tom Cruise and **Mission: Impossible** directly into the plot. Margolin is firmly at the helm of this hilarious romp but the film belongs to

Squibb, as the Oscar®-nominated performer imbues Thelma with a hunger to be seen and understood by those who love her most, something we never grow out of.

Zinzindurrunkarratz

Fri Apr 26 at 5:45 pm PT at Marina 2

Sat Apr 27 at 11:30 am PT at BAMPFA

Oskar Alegría (Spain 2023, 89)

Documentaries: International

"This is a film about a path," says director **Oskar Alegría (Zumiriki, Festival 2020 and 21)** near the opening of this playful and poetic documentary about disappearing practices, among other wide-ranging concerns. The journey begins with his father's ancient Super 8 camera that, surprisingly, still works though it no longer records sound. Needing to make every moment count—a reel is only a little over three minutes long—Alegría brings this camera on a scenic shepherding route traversed by his grandfather, accompanied by an elegant and unforgettable donkey named Paolo. Armed with this antique machine and alongside this equable equine, the filmmaker pays glorious attention to the natural beauty of rural Spain with a discerning and often wryly amusing eye. And, as each celluloid reel fades to black, his equally lyrical voiceover muses on light, history, old traditions, and capturing voices from the past.