

# **Georgia Frontiere Cinema for Students Program 2020 Whitaker St. Louis International Film Festival**

## **Free Film Programs for St. Louis-Area Students (Grades 1-12)**

**Sponsored by Lucia Rosenbloom and Chip Rosenbloom  
(in honor of Georgia Frontiere) and the Hawkins Foundation  
with support from Brown Smith Wallace and  
the Jane M. & Bruce P. Robert Charitable Foundation**

Cinema St. Louis and the 29th Annual Whitaker St. Louis International Film Festival (SLIFF) present their 17th year of **Free Educational Film Programming**, the **Georgia Frontiere Cinema for Students (CFS) Program**.

Films are available on **Nov. 6-20**.

Because of Covid-19, we are not holding screenings at venues this year. All films will be offered for **In-School and Remote-Learning Presentation** only.

For in-school presentations of individual films, schools will need to be able to screen from a computer using a website link and password, preferably with a digital projector. If students are learning remotely, teachers can either share the film during class through the platform used by the school (e.g., Zoom) or provide the students with the film link and password for viewing on their own.

**Unless otherwise noted on the film-program description, filmmakers and/or documentary subjects are potentially available for remote Q&As; inquire about availability (provide the date/time requested).**

CFS offers a diverse selection of films for grades 1-12, allowing students and educators to explore world cinema as a supplement to their current subjects of study. The films can enhance each student's education by providing exposure to various aspects of science, history, social studies, literature, language, music, and culture. The program also offers two films in French (the feature "Stars by the Pound" and the short "Making Waves"), two films partially in Spanish (the shorts "Linda and the Mockingbirds" and "The Undocumented Lawyer"), and one film in German (the feature "The Lesson").

To request films, please visit the [Cinema St. Louis' Cinema for Students](http://CinemaStLouis.org/CinemaForStudents) website. For more information, contact one of the following:

**Mallory Duncan, CFS school-outreach coordinator:**

**[CinemaForStudents@cinemastlouis.org](mailto:CinemaForStudents@cinemastlouis.org), 314-497-9084,**

**Brian Spath, CSL operations supervisor: [brian@cinemastlouis.org](mailto:brian@cinemastlouis.org), 314-289-4153**

## FILMS

### **Activized**

Eric Stange, U.S., 2019, 36 min., in English, documentary short

#### **Appropriate for grades 9-12**

A profile of several ordinary Americans — including a high-school senior working to change gun laws after the Parkland, Fla., mass shooting — who for the first time in their lives have left their comfort zones and thrown themselves into a political cause.

### **America's Last Little Italy**

Joseph Puleo, U.S., 2020, 72 min., in English, documentary feature

#### **Appropriate for grades 9-12**

“America’s Last Little Italy” explores the deep historic roots of the Hill, St. Louis’ iconic Italian neighborhood. Italians who immigrated to St. Louis in search of the American Dream built a “Little Italy” in the city’s heart that still flourishes to this day. Similar neighborhoods in other urban areas have long ago lost their specifically Italian character, making the Hill the last of a dying breed.

### **The Ballad of John Henry**

Matthew Rice, U.S., 2020, 50 min., in English, documentary feature

#### **Appropriate for grades 6-12**

This ambitious documentary analyzes how an ex-slave became one of America’s greatest tall-tale heroes: John Henry. Based on Scott Reynolds Nelson’s book “Steel Drivin’ Man,” the film provides a fresh perspective on the song and folk tale by exploring a myriad of related subjects, including the convict-lease program, an unjust legal system developed after the Civil War as a replacement for slavery. Director Matthew Rice worked as an intern on Ken Burns’ “The Vietnam War” series, and his film shares some of that master documentarian’s sensibility.

### **From Kurils with Love**

Taylor Rees, U.S./Russia, 2020, 25 min., in English, documentary short

#### **Appropriate for grades 9-12**

Vladimir, a scrappy but aging Russian marine-mammal biologist, is on a mission to understand and protect the Kuril Islands, with their seal and sea-lion populations, from the threat of climate change. **Suggested double bill with “Making Waves.”**

### **The Girl with the Rivet Gun**

Anne de Mare & Kirsten Kelly, U.S., 2019, 15 min., in English, documentary short

#### **Appropriate for grades 6-12**

A mix of live action and animation relates the adventures of three real-life World War II-era Rosie the Riveters.

### **Growing for Good**

Vân Nguyen & Morgan Paar, U.S., 2020, 15 min., in English, documentary short

#### **Appropriate for grades 6-12**

A look at urban farmers Arthur and Nancy Culbert, who planted the initial seed that became the Central West End Farm in St. Louis. **Suggested double bill with “The Honest Work of Farming.”**

### **The Honest Work of Farming**

Rickie Ross, U.S., 2020, 15 min., in English, documentary short

#### **Appropriate for grades 6-12**

A chronicle of the life of a Missouri farmer and his family as they learn the art of regenerative agriculture. **Suggested double bill with “Growing for Good.”**

### **I’m Not Bad Luck: The True Story of Kesz Valdez**

Marcos Negrão & Johanna Schnell, Philippines/U.S., 2020 20 min., in English, documentary short

#### **Appropriate for grades 9-12**

Denounced by his parents as bad luck, Kesz Valdez was cast out to live alone on the streets of the Philippines at the age of 4, but a fateful encounter inspired him to help thousands of similar children, eventually leading to his winning the International Children’s Peace Prize.

### **Larry from Gary**

Dan Rybicky, U.S., 2020, 26 min., in English, documentary short

#### **Appropriate for grades 9-12**

A dedicated Black dance teacher continues working with and inspiring his current and former students even after his nationally recognized arts high school in Gary, Ind., is closed by the state.

### **The Lesson**

Elena Horn, Germany, 2020, 60 min., in English & German with English subtitles, documentary feature

*No Q&As available.*

#### **Appropriate for grades 9-12**

“The Lesson” follows four children through their experience of learning about the Holocaust in a German state school. Filmed over five years during 2014-19, the film touches on important social and political issues, including the resurgence of the far right, xenophobia, the fractured collective memory of National Socialism, and the surprising lack of knowledge of the younger generations on the subject. The film examines how despite Germany’s perceived exemplary educational system, new generations are growing indifferent to their nation’s dark past and unwilling to apply the lessons learned to the realities of today. **Suggested double bill with “Zaida.”**

### **Linda and the Mockingbirds**

James Keach, U.S., 2020, 40 min., in English & Spanish with English subtitles, documentary short

#### **Appropriate for grades 6-12**

“Linda and the Mockingbirds” is a song-soaked, foot-stomping trip straight to the heart of what it means to be Mexican, and to be American, and the complex joy of being both at the same time. Linda is Linda Ronstadt, and the Mockingbirds are Los Cenzontles (“mockingbirds” in the Nahuatl language), a band and a music academy for young people in the San Francisco Bay Area. Ronstadt, musician Jackson Browne, and a busload of Cenzontles travel from Arizona to the little town of Banámichi in Sonora, Mexico, where Ronstadt’s grandfather was born. Eugene Rodriguez, a third-generation Mexican-American and musician, founded the Cenzontles 30 years ago to reconnect working-class kids with the dignity and beauty of their ancestral music and culture. **Suggested double bill with “The Undocumented Lawyer.”**

### **The Lost Astronaut**

Ben Proudfoot, U.S., 2019, 13 min., in English, documentary short

#### **Appropriate for grades 6-12**

Although Ed Dwight Jr., who was poised to be NASA’s first Black astronaut, never made it into space, he later became a successful sculptor with a focus on chronicling the Black experience.

### **Making Waves**

Laura Zéphirin, Faroe Islands/France/Mayotte/Morocco/U.S., 32 min., in English & French with English subtitles, documentary short

#### **Appropriate for grades 9-12**

Ocean activist Lamya Essemlali works to prevent overfishing and to protect marine turtles from being poached in the Indian Ocean and pilot whales from being hunted in the North Atlantic. **Suggested double bill with “From Kurils with Love.”**

### **River City Drumbeat**

Anne Flatté & Marlon Johnson, U.S., 2020, 94 min., in English, documentary feature

#### **Appropriate for grades 9-12**

For nearly three decades, Edward “Nardie” White has led an after-school community drum corps (River City Drum Corp) in Louisville, Ky., drawing on Pan-African culture and music to reach and mentor youth in his West End neighborhood. Now in his 60s, Mr. White feels he must step down to allow the drum corps to evolve with a new generation. “River City Drumbeat” is the story of Mr. White’s final year and the training of his successor Albert Shumake, a young man whose troubled life was transformed by the drumline. Over the years, the drumline has been a lifeline for many children navigating personal struggles and adversity, including high-school seniors Imani and Jailen, and pre-teen Emily. During this transitional year, Mr. White and Albert reflect on the tragedies and triumphs in their lives, and the legacy Mr. White and the drumline group created, against the backdrop of the American South.

### **Shaking a Singapore Spear**

Hannes Rall, Singapore/U.K., 2020, 17 min., in English, documentary short  
*No Q&As available.*

#### **Appropriate for grades 9-12**

Made in collaboration with the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-upon-Avon, this delightful combination of live action and animation examines the relevance of Shakespeare's classical works to contemporary Singaporeans.

### **SLIFF/Kids Shorts**

Multiple directors, multiple countries, in English or with no dialogue, animated narrative shorts  
**Total program running time:** 65 min.

*No Q&As available.*

#### **Appropriate for grades 2-5 (equivalent to G)**

An enlightening and entertaining selection of age-appropriate shorts from the 2019 St. Louis International Film Festival.

- **The Adventures of Theo's Star** (Matthieu Silberstein, U.S., 2019, 9 min.): To fulfill his destiny, a young star travels the solar system to help a little boy cope with a childhood tragedy.
- **Asteroid Season** (Earthstar Smith, Canada, 2019, 4 min.): A feisty hermit's sheltered reality is shaken when an asteroid arrives.
- **The Hole** (Will Kim, U.S., 2019, 4 min.): A mother bird searches for her missing baby.
- **Lulu Dotaway** (Snobar Avani, Denmark, 2019, 7 min.): Lulu has beautiful dots, but how will she react when she starts to lose them?
- **The Most Magnificent Thing** (Arna Selznick, Canada, 2018, 22 min.): A little girl receives a new tool kit and sets out to make the most magnificent thing for her best friend.
- **Sea Dogs** (Spencer Loucks, U.S., 2018, 6 min.): A wacky cast of kooky canines sail the seas for fun and adventure.
- **The Wrong Rock** (Michael Cawood, U.S., 2018, 13 min.): Martin the mushroom, who was born on the wrong rock, goes on an epic journey to find his place in life.

### **Stars by the Pound (100 kilos d'étoiles)**

Marie-Sophie Chambon, France, 2019, 88 min., in French with English subtitles, narrative feature  
*No Q&As available.*

#### **Appropriate for grades 9-12 (equivalent to R; strong language)**

Sixteen-year-old physics whiz Lois wants only one thing: to travel into space. But heavy-set people like Lois don't get to be astronauts. Though she has a genetic predisposition to be overweight, Lois starves herself to trim down — and winds up in a clinic after a series of fainting spells. Here, she meets three girls facing their own stiff challenges: Amélie suffers from gender dysphoria, Stannah is in a wheelchair, and Justine is so terrified of electromagnetic waves that she destroys whatever appliances she can get her hands on. The girls form a motley crew, but they have one thing in common: they want to get out of the clinic. And when Lois reveals her plan to make it to Toulouse to compete at a national science competition for the grand prize of a zero-gravity flight, the girls band together to break free and make a dream come true.

### **Taboo Teaching**

Dan Steadman, U.S., 2020, 27 min., in English, documentary short

#### **Appropriate for grades 9-12**

St. Louis-area history teacher Rodney Wilson garnered national attention — and became an LGBTQ activist — when he came out to his students in the early 1990s and nearly lost his job at Mehlville High School.

### **A Threat to Justice**

Chris Files, U.S., 2020, 13 min., in English, documentary short

#### **Appropriate for grades 9-12**

The death of George Floyd in Minneapolis sparked a wave of protests and civil unrest worldwide, including in St. Louis, a city already marked by a strained relationship with its police force. **Suggested double bill with “The Torture Letters.”**

### **The Torture Letters**

Laurence Ralph, U.S., 2020, 13 min., in English, documentary short

#### **Appropriate for grades 9-12**

Through four letters to victims, author Laurence Ralph chronicles the history of torture in Chicago and the burgeoning activist movement against police violence. **Suggested double bill with “A Threat to Justice.”**

### **Tyale McNary: He May Be Wrong, But He Doubts It**

Frank Popper, U.S., 2019, 45 min., in English, documentary shorts

#### **Appropriate for grades 6-12 (equivalent to PG; mild language)**

Website for more info: [Tyale McNary](#)

“Tyale McNary: He May Be Wrong, But He Doubts It,” a digital series from St. Louis’ Nine Network, follows the young, hilariously opinionated Black host as McNary shares his life stories and opinions on everything from politics to seasoning and then discusses those topics with participants on the streets. Among the subjects that McNary addresses in the 12 lively episodes — which average 3 to 6 minutes in length — are voting, Colin Kaepernick, “white people land,” the Golden Rule, and Black attitudes toward Jordans, hair, and the cold. McNary notes: “Although the show focuses on the divides we face, it also shows just how much we all have in common.”

### **The Undocumented Lawyer**

Zach Ingrasci & Chris Temple, U.S., 2020, 20 min., in English & Spanish with English subtitles, documentary short

#### **Appropriate for grades 9-12**

Lizbeth Mateo, an attorney in Los Angeles, is undocumented, but she hasn’t let that status hold her back, drawing from her own experiences to fight for immigrant rights. **Suggested double bill with “Linda and the Mockingbirds.”**

### **Virtually Free**

André Robert Lee, U.S., 2020, 39 min., in English, documentary short

#### **Appropriate for grades 9-12**

Three teens in a Richmond, Va., detention center speak truth to power by participating in the program Performing Statistics, in which they are taught to deliver messages through art, including a virtual-reality jail cell they help create.

### **Weston Woods Shorts**

Multiple directors, U.S., in English, animated narrative shorts

**Total program running time:** 77 min.

*No Q&As available.*

#### **Appropriate for grades 1-4 (equivalent to G)**

Weston Woods, a division of Scholastic Books, offers award-winning animated adaptations of the world's best children's books.

Website for more info: [Weston Woods](#)

- **Blackout** (Paul Gagne, Melissa Reilly & David Trexler, 2013, 7 min.): A young boy and his family break away from their usual distractions during the New York City blackout. Based on the Caldecott Honor book by John Rocco.
- **The Curious Garden** (Paul Gagne, Melissa Reilly & David Trexler, 2011, 10 min.): On a quest for a greener world, a young boy discovers a struggling garden and decides to take care of it. Based on the book by Peter Brown.
- **Doctor De Soto** (Michael Sporn, 1984, 10 min.): A mouse dentist finds a way to help a fox with a toothache without getting eaten. Based on the book by William Steig.
- **The Man Who Walked Between the Towers** (Michael Sporn, 2005, 10 min.): The story of Philippe Petit's walk between the Twin Towers in 1974. Based on the Caldecott Honor book by Modicai Gerstein.
- **Me ... Jane** (Paul & Sandra Fierlinger, 2015, 9 min.): A biography of pioneering primatologist Jane Goodall. Based on the Caldecott Honor book by Patrick McDonnell.
- **One Cool Friend** (Gary McGivney, 2015, 14 min.): In this endearing adventure, a boy decides a penguin would make a fantastic pet. Based on the Caldecott Honor book written by Tony Buzzeo and illustrated by David Small.
- **Star Stuff: Carl Sagan and the Cosmos** (Paul Gagne & Melissa Reilly, 2016, 10 min.): For every child who has ever looked up at the stars and asked "What are they?" comes the story of a curious boy who never stopped wondering: astronomer Carl Sagan. Based on the book by Stephanie Roth Sisson.
- **Where the Wild Things Are** (Gene Deitch, 1975, 7 min.): A boy named Max imagines he is where the wild things are. Based on the classic picture book by Maurice Sendak.

### **Zaida**

Sophie Parens, U.S., 2020, 33 min., in English, documentary short

#### **Appropriate for grades 9-12**

His filmmaking granddaughter profiles Henri Parens, who escaped the Holocaust at the age of 12 and went on to become a globally recognized psychoanalyst who dedicates his life to the prevention of prejudice. **Suggested double bill with "The Lesson."**