

30TH ANNUAL WHITAKER

ST. LOUIS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

NOVEMBER 4-21, 2021
IN-PERSON & ONLINE

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This page sponsored by the Jane M. & Bruce P. Robert Charitable Foundation.



Centre Francophone at Webster University

An organization dedicated to promoting Francophone culture and helping French educators.

Contact info: Salim Ayoub, Ph.D., Jane and Bruce Robert Chair in French and Francophone Studies, Webster University, 314-246-8619, francophone@webster.edu, facebook.com/centrefrancophoneinstlouis, webster.edu/arts-and-sciences/affiliates-events/centre-francophone



Alliance Française de St. Louis

A member-supported nonprofit center engaging the St. Louis community in French language and culture.

Contact info: 314-432-0734, bonjour@alliancestl.org, alliancestl.org



American Association of Teachers of French

The only professional association devoted exclusively to the needs of French teachers at all levels, with the mission of advancing the study of the French language and French-speaking literatures and cultures both in schools and in the general public.

Contact info: Audra Merfeld-Langston, president, Greater St. Louis Chapter, audram@mst.edu, www.frenchteachers.org



Les Amis ("The Friends")

French Creole heritage preservationist group for the Mid-Mississippi River Valley. Promotes the Creole Corridor on both sides of the Mississippi River from Cahokia-Chester, IL, and Ste. Genevieve-St. Louis, MO. Parts of the Corridor are in the process of nomination for the designation of UNESCO World Heritage Site through Les Amis.

Contact info: 660-882-5946, info@les-amis.org, les-amis.org



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Cinema St. Louis offers French programming at the annual Robert Classic French Film Festival and the Robert French and French-Language Focus at the Whitaker St. Louis International Film Festival (Nov. 4-14, 2021).

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PROGRAM AD PRODUCTION ARTIST Kathy Ann Duffin

SLIFF

WELCOME

WELCOME BACK TO SLIFF

We've missed you, and Cinema St. Louis is delighted to offer in-person screenings — at last! — during the 30th Annual Whitaker St. Louis International Film Festival (SLIFF), held Nov. 4-21, 2021.

Because the effects of the pandemic continue, this year's fest will be a hybrid — with a significant number of virtual screenings also available — but in-person screenings will be held on all three screens of the Tivoli Theatre from Nov. 4-14 and Nov. 18-21.

Other in-person screenings will take place at Washington University's Brown Hall Auditorium (on the weekends of Nov. 5-6, 12-14, and 19-21) and Webster University's Winifred Moore Auditorium (on the evenings of Nov. 5-14).

In addition, the St. Louis Public Library's Central Library Auditorium will serve as the in-person venue for six Golden Anniversaries screenings of films from 1971. Those screenings will be held on the afternoons of Nov. 6-7, 13-14, and 20-21.

Finally, the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis will partner with SLIFF on two in-person screenings on the evenings of Nov. 4 and 11.

For those who prefer to view from home, many (though not all) of the films that receive in-person screenings will be available virtually through our partner Eventive from Nov. 4-21. SLIFF will also feature a substantial number of films, shorts programs, and livestreams that can only be accessed virtually.

To protect the safety and health of patrons, SLIFF will require masks and proof of vaccination at in-person screenings. No concessions will be available at any of the venues, including the Tivoli, to ensure audience members remain masked throughout films. Full information on the festival's Covid-19 policies appear on the next page.

We understand that not everyone will be happy with the policies that we've adopted, but our staff and board believe that the protection of our audience members and volunteers is paramount. Despite the requirements, we hope that you'll appreciate again having the opportunity to enjoy the festival in person and to view films as they should be seen: on a big screen and with a rapt, engaged, and appreciative audience.

Welcome back. Enjoy the show.





COVID-19 POLICIES FOR SLIFF IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE

The safety of our patrons, filmmakers, and volunteers is Cinema St. Louis' top priority. To ensure everyone is protected, SLIFF has instituted a number of policies for the duration of the festival.

These policies will be strictly enforced for the protection of everyone.

Guests must follow the instructions of SLIFF staff members and volunteers. SLIFF reserves the right to deny admission or dismiss any customer for noncompliance.

The following policies will apply during SLIFF:

- Proof of full vaccination (at least two weeks after the final dose) of any FDA-approved vaccine is required for all staff members, volunteers, audience members, and filmmakers at each in-person screening and event.
- Methods of confirming proof of full vaccination are:
 - * CDC Vaccine Card and valid photo ID.
 - * A photo of a CDC Vaccine Card and valid photo ID.
- Guests should arrive no earlier than 30 minutes before the scheduled screening time. Any guests arriving earlier will be asked to wait outside in line until the theaters are prepared for seating.
- Only guests age 12 or older will be permitted to attend.
- Masks are required for everyone at all times in indoor spaces, and the face coverings must be consistent with the current CDC guidelines.
 - * Paper masks, scarves, neck gaiters, shirts pulled up, masks with holes/filters/breathing valves, and makeshift masks are not acceptable.
 - * New disposable surgical masks are available to all audience members.
 - * Masks must completely cover the mouth and nose and must be replaced if wet or soiled.
 - * PPE may be inspected for compliance or issued as needed.
- No concessions will be available at any venue, and no eating or drinking will be permitted in the theaters. Outside food or drink will also not be permitted.
- Guests should stay home if not feeling well or exhibiting symptoms of Covid-19 in the past 10 days.
- Guests who have tested positive for Covid-19 within the past 10 days must stay home.
- Guests are asked to wash hands as often as possible, use hand-sanitizing stations, and cover nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing.

SLIFF **TICKET, PASS & VENUE INFORMATION**

TICKET PRICES

Individual tickets, for either in-person or virtual screenings, are \$15 for general admission, \$11 for Cinema St. Louis members and students with valid and current photo IDs. Prices are all-inclusive; no additional fees will be added.

"American Underdog" (held on Nov. 8), which includes a Q&A with Kurt and Brenda Warner, is \$50.

The **Tribute to Mary Strauss** (held on Nov. 21) is \$25 and includes a screening of "Sunset Boulevard," which follows the event.

SLIFF also offers 31 free in-person screenings, 6 free livestreams, and 31 virtual programs for a special \$5 price. Complete information can be found in the Free and Discounted Events section.

Free in-person screenings at the Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis Public Library, and Washington University do not require a ticket.

PASS PRICES

Passes can be used for either in-person or virtual screenings and can be used to purchase multiple tickets for an in-person event.

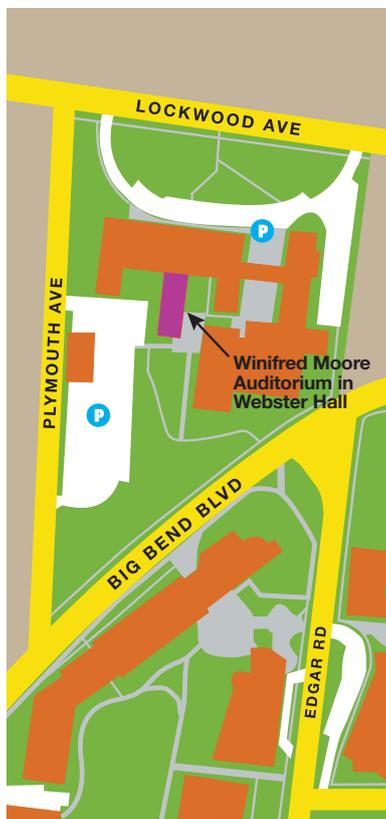
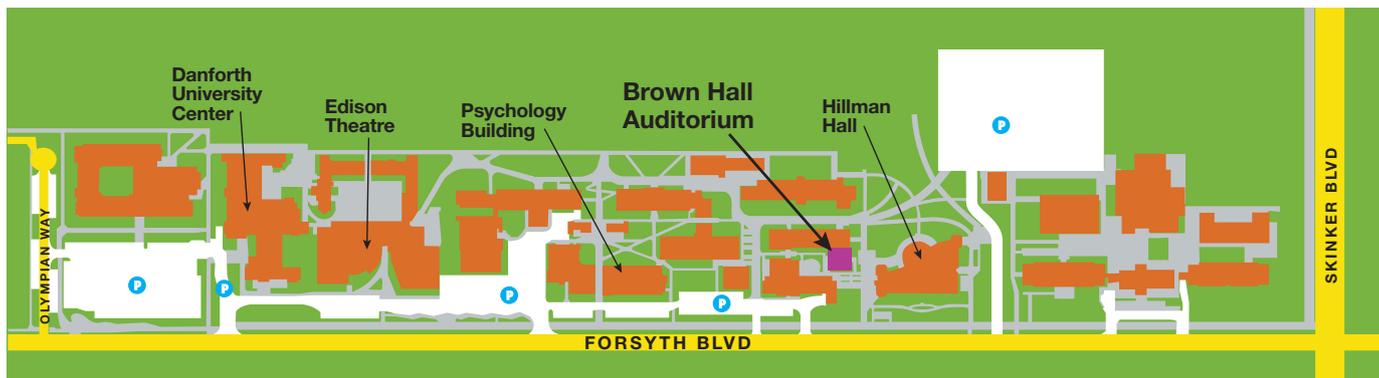
Three forms of passes are available:

- **6-Film Passes** are \$80, \$60 for CSL members.
- **10-Film Passes** are \$130, \$100 for CSL members.
- **20-Film Passes** are \$250, \$200 for CSL members.

Passes cannot be used for two special events: "American Underdog" and Tribute to Mary Strauss.

CONTRIBUTIONS

CSL will gratefully accept contributions of any size to help with the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Click [here](#) for ways to support the organization.



VENUES

Capes Sokol

8182 Maryland Ave., 15th Floor
There is paid parking in the building's garage and metered parking on the street. To reach the Capes Sokol offices, enter the lobby, follow the sign pointing to the Regions Centre, and go up the stone steps or ramp; enter the building marked Regions Centre and go up the elevator to the 15th floor.

Contemporary Art

Museum St. Louis

3750 Washington Blvd.
Metered parking (free after 7 p.m.) is available on the streets surrounding CAM, and paid parking lots are available nearby.

St. Louis Public Library's Central Library

250 seats
 1301 Olive St.
Metered parking (free on Sunday) is available on the surrounding streets.

Tivoli Theatre

6350 Delmar Blvd.
 375 seats (Tivoli 1),
 140 seats (Tivoli 2 and 3)
Paid parking is available in the garage across the street in the evening. Metered parking in the Loop is currently free. Non-metered free parking is available three blocks west and one block north of the theater in a lot bounded by Kingsland and Leland avenues.

Washington University's Brown Hall Auditorium (Washington U./Brown)

Auditorium at Washington University's Brown Hall, Forsyth Boulevard and Chaplin Drive (two blocks west of Skinker Boulevard)
 325 seats

Free parking is available on the street and in the yellow-zone sections of lots along Forsyth Boulevard and in the nearby East End parking facility; no permits are required on weekends. See Washington U. map.

Webster University's Webster Hall's Winifred Moore Auditorium (Webster U./Moore)

Winifred Moore Auditorium in Webster University's Webster Hall, 470 East Lockwood Ave.

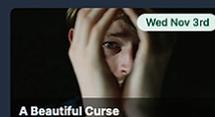
250 seats
Free parking is available in the lots both in front of and behind Webster Hall; no permits are required on weekends. See Webster U. map.

SLIFF VIRTUAL FESTIVAL BASICS

eventive

2021 St. Louis International Film Festival

Narrative Features



Documentary Features



Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the 30th Annual Whitaker St. Louis International Film Festival (SLIFF) is taking a hybrid approach. Although many films will be available at in-person screenings, a significant number of programs will also be presented virtually.

SLIFF is again partnering with **Eventive**, which also handles our ticketing, to present the virtual component of the festival.

Here are the key elements of the virtual offerings at the fest:

- **Program Availability:** SLIFF's lineup of features and shorts programs will be available to view on demand anytime from Nov. 4-21.
- **Geographic Availability:** All programs will be available to residents of Missouri and Illinois, but some will also be accessible to a wider audience. Information on where a virtual program can be streamed is found on the film listing.
- **Watch Window:** Once a ticket-holder begins watching a program, access to it remains available for 48 hours.
- **Livestreams:** Six free livestreams will be offered at specific times/dates.
- **Q&As:** Recorded Q&As with filmmakers and/or documentary subjects will accompany some virtual programs.

Full information on access, including system requirements, is found in the **Virtual Fest FAQ**.

Help with playing films on your TV (through HDMI, casting/airplay, or apps) is found **here**.

LIVESTREAMS & VIRTUAL PROGRAMS



I'm an Electric Lampshade

Six special events (three master classes, a seminar, the New Filmmakers Forum roundtable, and the closing-night awards presentation) will be offered as livestreams at specific times/dates. For full information on the livestreams, see the Special Events section. Below is a list of the livestreams:

Saturday, Nov. 6, 1 PM
Master Class: A Conversation with Writer/Director Ryan Eslinger

Saturday, Nov. 13, 1 PM
Master Class: A Conversation with Author/Artist/Animator William Joyce

Saturday, Nov. 20, 10 AM
New Filmmakers Forum Roundtable

Saturday, Nov. 20, 1 PM
Master Class: A Conversation with "Pen15" Co-creator/Director Sam Zvibleman

Sunday, Nov. 21, 1 PM
Seminar: BIPOC Filmmakers in Documentary

Sunday, Nov. 21, 8 PM
Closing-Night Awards Presentation

SLIFF's lineup of virtual features and shorts programs will be available to view on demand through Eventive anytime from Nov. 4-21. Films that are only available virtually are noted. There are 31 programs available at a special \$5 price, and those are also noted. Below is a list of all virtual programs:

Acts of Love (virtual only)
Alien on Stage
American Exile (special \$5 price)
Americanish
And So I Stayed (special \$5 price)
Any Given Day (special \$5 price)
Archipelago (special \$5 price)
The Art of Rebellion
Atlas (virtual only)
A Beautiful Curse (virtual only)
Beijing Spring (special \$5 price)
Berrigans: Devout and Dangerous (virtual only)
The Boys Who Said No! (special \$5 price)
Citizen Ashe
Confetti (virtual only)
The Daphne Project (virtual only)
Delicate State
Doc Shorts: American Politics (virtual only; special \$5 price)
Doc Shorts: Animals (virtual only; special \$5 price)
Doc Shorts: Growing Old (virtual only; special \$5 price)
Doc Shorts: Honest Work (virtual only; special \$5 price)
Doc Shorts: Immigrants & Refugees (virtual only; special \$5 price)
Doc Shorts: International Politics (virtual only; special \$5 price)
Doc Shorts: Living with Disabilities (virtual only; special \$5 price)
Doc Shorts: Method M (virtual only; special \$5 price)
Doc Shorts: The Prison System (virtual only; special \$5 price)

Doc Shorts: Secret Histories (virtual only; special \$5 price)
Doc Shorts: This Is Our Youth (virtual only; special \$5 price)
El Father Plays Himself
The Falconer
Film, the Living Record of Our Memory (special \$5 price)
The Final 19 (special \$5 price)
A Fire Within (special \$5 price)
A First Farewell (virtual only)
The First Step
From the Hood to the Holler (special \$5 price)
Gossamer Folds (virtual only)
The Grand Bolero (virtual only)
I'm an Electric Lampshade
The Insurer (virtual only)
Into the Light
Invisible (special \$5 price)
Jack London's Martin Eden (virtual only)
Keep the Cameras Rolling
The Kinloch Doc
The Lonely Man (virtual only)
A Matter of Perspective (virtual only)
Medicine Man (special \$5 price)
My So-Called Selfish Life (virtual only)
Narrative Shorts: Animation 1 (virtual only)
Narrative Shorts: Animation 2 (virtual only)
Narrative Shorts: Animation 3 (virtual only)
Narrative Shorts: Assorted Gems (virtual only)
Narrative Shorts: Comedy 1 (virtual only)
Narrative Shorts: Comedy 2 (virtual only)
Narrative Shorts: Dance, Music & Poetry (virtual only)
Narrative Shorts: Drama 1 (virtual only)

Narrative Shorts: Drama 2 (virtual only)
Narrative Shorts: Drama 3 (virtual only)
Narrative Shorts: Experimental (virtual only)
Narrative Shorts: Horror (virtual only)
Narrative Shorts: Sci-Fi (virtual only)
On the Divide (special \$5 price)
Once a Hero
A Once and Future Peace (special \$5 price)
One Pint at a Time (virtual only)
Papaw Land
Promise Through Lifetime (virtual only)
A Sexplanation
Shellfish (virtual only)
Shifting (virtual only)
Since I Been Down (special \$5 price)
Skid Row, Los Angeles (special \$5 price)
SLIFF/Kids Family Films 1 (virtual only; special \$5 price)
SLIFF/Kids Family Films 2 (virtual only; special \$5 price)
Solutions (virtual only)
Soy Cubana
St. Louis Filmmakers Showcase Sampler: Documentary Shorts
St. Louis Filmmakers Showcase Sampler: Narrative & Experimental Shorts
Target: St. Louis Vol. 1 (special \$5 price)
The Teacher (virtual only)
To Which We Belong (virtual only)
Twenty Pearls
Unsilenced (virtual only)
Voodoo Macbeth (virtual only)
Walk with Me (virtual only)
We Burn Like This (virtual only)
The White Fortress
Wind (virtual only)
When Claude Got Shot (special \$5 price)
A World for Julius (virtual only)
Youth v Gov (virtual only)
Zero Gravity (virtual only)

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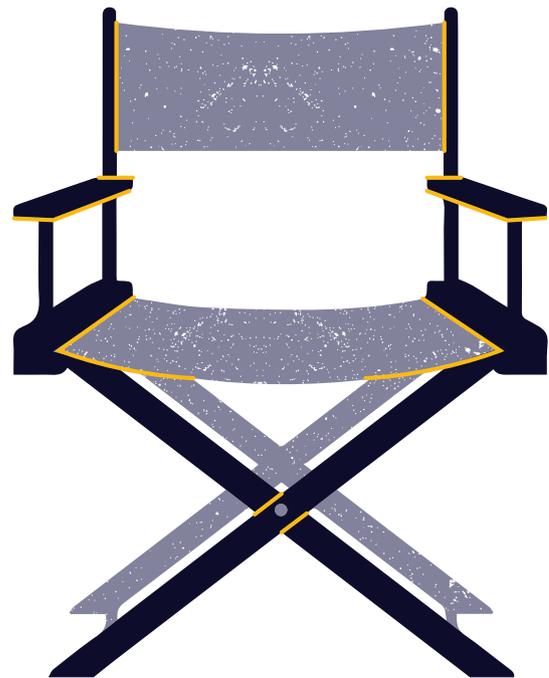
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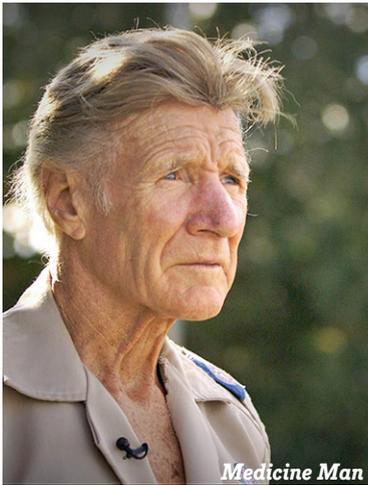
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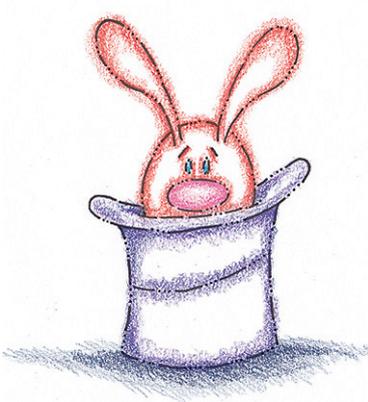
FREE & DISCOUNTED EVENTS



Medicine Man



Beijing Spring



SLIFF/Kids Family Films 1:
Rabbit Out of a Hat

SLIFF continues its tradition of offering a large selection of free and discounted events to maximize its outreach into the community and to make the festival affordable to all.

This year, we offer **31 free in-person events**. Among our virtual offerings, we're featuring **6 free livestreams** and **31 discounted programs** at a special \$5 price.

In addition, for the 18th year, we present the **Georgia Frontiere Cinema for Students Program**, which provides free access to film programs to St. Louis-area elementary, middle, and high schools. For more information, visit the **Cinema for Students** section of the CSL website.

FREE IN-PERSON EVENTS

CAPEX SOKOL

Nov. 11, 4:30 PM: **Master Class: Film and the Law**

CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM

Nov. 4, 6:30 PM: **Archipelago**
Nov. 11, 6:30 PM: **Where Is the Friend's House?**

ST. LOUIS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Nov. 6, 1:30 PM: **Duel**
Nov. 7, 1:30 PM: **Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song**
Nov. 13, 1:30 PM: **The French Connection**
Nov. 14, 1:30 PM: **A Clockwork Orange**
Nov. 20, 1:30 PM: **Two-Lane Blacktop**
Nov. 21, 1:30 PM: **Sunday Bloody Sunday**

TIVOLI 1

Nov. 11, 5 PM: **The Final 19**
Nov. 21, 5 PM: **Sunset Boulevard**

WASHINGTON U./BROWN

Nov. 5, 7:30 PM: **Target: St. Louis**
Nov. 6, 1 PM: **Invisible**
Nov. 6, 4 PM: **American Exile**
Nov. 6, 7:30 PM: **A Choice of Weapons**
Nov. 7, 1 PM: **Medicine Man**
Nov. 7, 4 PM: **Missing in Brooks County**
Nov. 7, 7:30 PM: **From the Hood to the Holler**
Nov. 12, 7:30 PM: **The Neutral Ground**
Nov. 13, 1 PM: **The Boys Who Said No!**
Nov. 13, 4 PM: **My Fugitive**
Nov. 13, 7:30 PM: **A Fire Within**
Nov. 14, 1 PM: **And So I Stayed**
Nov. 14, 4 PM: **Skid Row, Los Angeles**
Nov. 14, 7:30 PM: **Beijing Spring**
Nov. 19, 7:30 PM: **When Claude Got Shot**
Nov. 20, 1 PM: **Film, the Living Record of Our Memory**
Nov. 20, 4 PM: **On the Divide**
Nov. 20, 7:30 PM: **Since I Been Down**
Nov. 21, 1 PM: **A Once and Future Peace**
Nov. 21, 4 PM: **Any Given Day**

FREE LIVESTREAMS

Nov. 6, 1 PM: **Master Class: A Conversation with Writer/Director Ryan Eslinger**
Nov. 13, 1 PM: **Master Class: A Conversation with Author/Artist/Animator William Joyce**
Nov. 20, 10 AM: **New Filmmakers Forum Roundtable**
Nov. 20, 1 PM: **Master Class: A Conversation with "Pen15" Co-creator/Director Sam Zvibleman**
Nov. 21, 1 PM: **Seminar: BIPOC Filmmakers in Documentary**
Nov. 21, 8 PM: **Closing-Night Awards Presentation**

DISCOUNTED VIRTUAL PROGRAMS (SPECIAL \$5 PRICE)

FEATURES

American Exile
And So I Stayed
Any Given Day
Archipelago
Beijing Spring
The Boys Who Said No!
Film, the Living Record of Our Memory
The Final 19
A Fire Within
From the Hood to the Holler
Invisible
Medicine Man
On the Divide
A Once and Future Peace
Since I Been Down
Skid Row, Los Angeles
Target: St. Louis
When Claude Got Shot

SHORTS PROGRAMS

Doc Shorts: American Politics
Doc Shorts: Animals
Doc Shorts: Growing Old
Doc Shorts: Honest Work
Doc Shorts: Immigrants & Refugees
Doc Shorts: International Politics
Doc Shorts: Living with Disabilities
Doc Shorts: Method M
Doc Shorts: The Prison System
Doc Shorts: Secret Histories
Doc Shorts: This Is Our Youth
SLIFF/Kids Family Films 1
SLIFF/Kids Family Films 2

SLIFF FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS



Procession

The 30th Annual Whitaker St. Louis International Film Festival (SLIFF), an annual presentation of the nonprofit Cinema St. Louis (CSL), continues to provide the opportunity for St. Louis filmgoers to view the finest in world cinema — international films, documentaries, American indies, and shorts that can only be seen at the festival.

This year, after an all-virtual festival in 2020, SLIFF is pleased to offer a large selection of in-person events, including at all three screens of the Tivoli Theatre, which has been shuttered since the onset of the pandemic. For those who prefer to watch at home, we'll still provide plenty of options, with nearly 100 virtual programs and livestreams.

SLIFF begins on Nov. 4 with a powerful new Missouri-based documentary, **"Procession,"** which is directed by Robert Greene, the filmmaker-in-chief at the Murray Center for Documentary Journalism at the University of Missouri. In the film, six men from Kansas City, Mo. — all survivors of childhood sexual assault at the hands of Catholic priests and clergy — come together to direct

a drama-therapy-inspired experiment designed to collectively work through their trauma. Greene, who will receive SLIFF's Contemporary Cinema Award, and many of the film's subjects will attend the screening to participate in a compelling post-film Q&A.

On the festival's final day, SLIFF offers a **Tribute to Mary Strauss**, which includes a screening of Mary's favorite film, "Sunset Boulevard." Mary has played an absolutely essential role in Cinema St. Louis' evolution, and we're delighted to honor her during our 30th edition.

Between those two bookends, SLIFF will screen more than 400 films. Particularly exciting for St. Louisans is the Centerpiece Event screening of **"American Underdog."** The screening includes a post-film conversation with St. Louis Rams legend and Pro Football Hall of Famer Kurt Warner and his wife, Brenda.

The 2021 SLIFF features an especially impressive array of the year's most heralded films, including selections from such destination fests as Sundance, Berlin, SXSW, Hot Docs, Tribeca, Cannes, Venice, Telluride, Toronto, and New York.



Bad Luck Banging or Loony Porn

Among the most enticing English-language studio films are Kenneth Branagh’s “Belfast” (winner of the People’s Choice Award at Toronto), Mike Mills’ “C’mon C’mon” (with Joaquin Phoenix), Michael Pearce’s “Encounter” (with Riz Ahmed and Octavia Spencer), Stephen Karam’s “The Humans” (with Richard Jenkins, Beanie Feldstein, Stephen Yeun, and Amy Schumer), Clint Bentley’s “Jockey” (with Clifton Collins and Molly Parker), Reinaldo Marcus Green’s “King Richard” (with Will Smith), and Eva Husson’s “Mothering Sunday” (with Colin Firth and Olivia Colman).

Major international titles include “A Chiara” from Jonas Carpignano, “Ahed’s Knee” from Nadav Lapid (“The Kindergarten Teacher”), “France” from Bruno Dumont (“Slack Bay”), “Hero” from Asghar Farhadi



France

(“A Separation”), “Hit the Road” from Panah Panahi, “Memoria” from Apichatpong Weerasethakul (“Tropical Malady”), “One Second” from Zhang Yimou (“House of Flying Daggers”), “Paris, 13th District” from Jacques Audiard (“A Prophet”), “Petite Maman” from Celine Sciamma (“Portrait of a Lady on Fire”), “Wheel of Fortune and Fantasy” from Ryūsuke Hamaguchi (“Happy Hour”), and “The Worst Person in the World” from Joachim Trier (“Oslo, August 31st”). SLIFF also offers a pair of films from Radu Jude (“Bad Luck Banging or Loony Porn” and “Uppercase Print”) and a trio of works by Hong Sangsoo (“In Front of Your Face,” “Introduction,” and “The Woman Who Ran”).

Significant documentaries include Joshua Altman & Bing Liu’s “All These Sons,” John Maggio’s “A Choice of Weapons: Inspired by Gordon Parks,” Rex Miller & Sam Pollard’s “Citizen Ashe,” Andrea Arnold’s “Cow,” Mobolaji Olambiwonnu’s “Ferguson Rises,” Brandon Kramer’s “The First Step,” Matthew Heineman’s “The First Wave,” Jonas Poher Rasmussen’s “Flee,” Julie Cohen and Betty West’s “Julia,” Peggy Callahan & Louie Psihoyos’ “Mission: Joy,” Max Lowe’s “Torn,” Debbie Lum’s “Try Harder!,” and Emily and Sarah Kunstler’s “Who We Are: A Chronicle of Racism in America.”

And that’s just scratching the surface of the 2021 lineup, which includes nearly 20



Shellfish

American indies, 29 shorts programs, and eight free archival selections.

Below are some of the other highlights of this year's SLIFF.

THE DIVIDED CITY

SLIFF's The Divided City program focuses on the racial divide in St. Louis and other U.S. cities. The films are supported by The Divided City: An Urban Humanities Initiative, a program of Washington U.'s Center for the Humanities that addresses one of the most persistent and vexing issues in urban studies: segregation.

Sponsored by the Center for the Humanities at Washington University

FREE AND DISCOUNTED PROGRAMS

SLIFF continues our tradition of offering a large selection of free and discounted events to maximize the fest's outreach into the community and to make the event affordable to all. In addition, for the 18th year, we present the Georgia Frontiere Cinema for Students Program, which provides free screenings to St. Louis-area schools.

This year features 31 free in-person programs, including all screenings at the Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis Public Library, and Washington University. We're also offering a pair of free screenings at the Tivoli, a free in-person master class, and six free livestreams. And the fest features 31

virtual programs at the special price of \$5. See the Free and Discounted Events section for full details.

GEORGIA FRONTIERE CINEMA FOR STUDENTS PROGRAM

SLIFF offers free daytime screenings for children and teens from participating St. Louis-area schools. This year's selections include shorts, documentary features, narrative features, and shorts programs. See the Cinema for Students section of the SLIFF website for full information.

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

HUMAN RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT

This selection of documentaries focuses on human-rights issues in the U.S. and the world.

Sponsored by Sigma Iota Rho Honor Society for International and Area Studies at Washington University and the Whitney R. Harris World Law Institute

MASTER CLASSES AND SEMINARS

SLIFF provides four free master classes — one in-person event and three livestreams — and a seminar. See the Special Events section for full information.

Sponsored by the Chellappa-Vedavalli Foundation

NEW FILMMAKERS FORUM

The New Filmmakers Forum (NFF), a juried competition of works by first-time feature filmmakers, is an annual highlight of SLIFF. The featured films this year are "Delicate State," "Papaw Land," "Shellfish," "Walk with Me," and "We Burn Like This," and the filmmakers will participate in a free roundtable discussion. The screenings and roundtable are hosted by the Missouri Film Office's Andrea Sporcic Klund. The NFF Emerging Filmmaker Award — nicknamed the Bobbie in honor of the late Bobbie Lautenschlager, NFF's longtime curator — is presented at SLIFF's Closing-Night Awards Presentation.

Sponsored by Barry & Jackie Albrecht and Pat Scallet

RACE IN AMERICA: THE BLACK EXPERIENCE

Because the events in Ferguson continue to resonate in St. Louis and the country, SLIFF again offers a large number of programs organized under the title Race in America: The Black Experience. To maximize accessibility, eight of the 27 programs are offered for free, and four doc-shorts programs are available for a special \$5 price.

Sponsored by the William A. Kerr Foundation

SHOW-ME CINEMA

Films made in St. Louis and Missouri or by current and former St. Louisans and Missourians are an annual focus of SLIFF. This year's lineup of Show-Me Cinema is typically strong, featuring 18 feature films, three shorts programs, and four special events.

Sponsored by the Missouri Division of Tourism and Missouri Film Office

SLIFF/KIDS FAMILY FILMS

Cinema St. Louis presents a selection of eight family programs, including two documentaries and two free collections of shorts. Because patrons younger than 12 are not able to attend in-person screenings this year, all SLIFF/Kids programs are offered virtually.

SLIFF AWARDS

MAJOR FILMMAKER AWARDS

CHARLES GUGGENHEIM CINEMA ST. LOUIS AWARD

Previous winners of the Charles Guggenheim Cinema St. Louis Award — which honors St. Louisans making significant contributions to the art of film — include Josh Aronson, Michael Beugg, Cedric the Entertainer, Jim Finn, Jenna Fischer, Bob Gale, Jane Gillooly, the Charles Guggenheim family, James Gunn, George Hickenlooper, Brian Hohlfeld, Ken Kwapis, Jeremy Lasky, Dan Mirvish, AJ Schnack, Timothy J. Sexton, Brad Schiff, Marlon West, Beau Willimon, and Alex Winter.

Nina Gilden Seavey

Nina Gilden Seavey is an Emmy Award-winning documentarian with a 30-year career in the nonfiction world. Her media projects can be seen in theaters, on television, in ancillary media, and in museum exhibitions, and heard in podcasts across the globe. She is the president of Seavey Media (seaveymedia.com). Her program “My Fugitive” — based on her podcast — is a special event at this year’s SLIFF.

Nina is a St. Louis native and graduate of University City High School. She attended Washington University, earning a B.A. in history and French literature. Before moving to the East Coast to become a documentarian, Nina worked in Missouri politics. As office manager for the Missouri State Headquarters, she was the youngest paid staff member of the McGovern for President Campaign in 1972. She later worked in St. Louis for the United Farm Workers Union, Tom Eagleton for Senate, and Morris Udall for President.



Nina Gilden Seavey

Nina is the founding director of the Documentary Center in the School of Media and Public Affairs at the George Washington University. She holds the academic rank of full research professor of history and media and public affairs, with appointments both in the Department of History and in the School of Media and Public Affairs.

Nina’s documentaries — which include “Parables of War” (2015), “4th and Goal” (2010), “The Ballad of Bering Strait” (2003), and “A Paralyzing Fear: The Story of Polio in America” (1998) — have won numerous awards, including five National

Emmy nominations (one statue awarded), the Erik Barnouw Prize for Best Historical Film of the Year, the Golden Hugo, the Cine Special Jury Prize, the Telly Award, the Italian National Olympic Cup for Best Sports Film, and the Peter C. Rollins Prize for Best Film in American Culture.

Nina has received a number of professional accolades, including being named one of the top 50 professors of journalism in the U.S. Among other industry awards, she received a commendation for “Outstanding Service to the Industry” by Discovery Communications and was named a

“Woman of Vision” by Women in Film and Video.

In addition to her numerous film and media productions and work as an educator, in 2002, Nina became the founding director of Silverdocs: AFI/Discovery Channel Documentary Festival (now AFI Docs). She built the festival into the largest documentary festival in the U.S.

CONTEMPORARY CINEMA AWARD

Previous winners of the Contemporary Cinema Award — which honors filmmakers in mid-career doing challenging, innovative work — include Jay and Mark Duplass, Alex Gibney, Trent Harris, Stanley Nelson, Arsen Anton Ostojic, Doug Pray, Jason Reitman, Marco Williams, and Terry Zwigoff.

Robert Greene

Robert Greene’s latest film, “Procession” — which opens this year’s SLIFF — premiered at the 2021 Telluride Film Festival and will be distributed by Netflix. His previous critically acclaimed film, “Bisbee ’17” (2018), premiered at Sundance, aired on PBS’s “P.O.V.,” and was nominated for Best Documentary at the Gotham Awards.

His films include the Sundance award-winning “Kate Plays Christine” (2016), the Gotham Awards-nominated “Actress” (2014) and the Gotham Awards-nominated “Kati with an I” (2010).

Robert was an inaugural Sundance Art of Nonfiction fellow in 2015 and has been thrice nominated for Best Director at the Cinema Eye Honors. The Independent named Robert one of their 10 Filmmakers to Watch in 2014, and he received the 2014 Vanguard Artist Award from the San Francisco DocFest. His first documentary, “Owning the Weather” (2009), was screened at the COP15 Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen.

Robert has edited more than a dozen features, including “Her Smell” (2018), “Golden Exits” (2017), “Queen of Earth” (2015), and “Listen up Philip” (2014) by Alex Ross Perry; Nick Berardini’s “Killing



Robert Greene

Them Safely” (2015); Amanda Rose Wilder’s award-winning “Approaching the Elephant” (2014); Charles Poekel’s Independent Spirit Awards-nominated “Christmas, Again” (2015); and Douglas Tirola’s “Hey Bartender” (2013).

He has served as a Sundance Edit Lab Advisor and was on the U.S. Documentary Jury for the 2017 Sundance Film Festival.

Robert co-created the Murray Center for Documentary Journalism at the University of Missouri and serves as its filmmaker-in-chief.

Robert writes about documentary for outlets such as Sight & Sound and Hyperallergic, and he co-programs the Based on a True Story Conference, which runs annually in conjunction with the True/False Film Fest.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Previous SLIFF Lifetime Achievement Award winners include directors Michael Apted, Charles Burnett, Joe Dante, Paul Schrader, and Oliver Stone; acting legends Tony Curtis, Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis, John Goodman, Stacy Keach, Kevin Kline, Marsha Mason, and Kathleen Turner; independent filmmakers Jon Jost, Rob

Nilsson, and John Sayles and Maggie Renzi; documentarians Joe Berlinger, Les Blank, Ken Burns, Steve James, Albert Maysles, Ross McElwee, Sam Pollard, and Gordon Quinn; comedians Jerry Lewis and Harry Shearer; animators Bill Plympton and Michael Sporn; Tivoli Theatre savior Joe Edwards; and longtime Cinema St. Louis chair Kim Tucci.

Mary Strauss

Mary Strauss is best known to St. Louis audiences as the woman who — with her late husband, Leon — saved the historic St. Louis Fox Theatre, a 4,500-seat restored movie palace, and helped establish Grand Center, St. Louis’ Arts and Entertainment District. Mary served as the director of restoration for the year-long undertaking. Today, Mary is one of the co-owners of the Fox Theatre and Fox Theatricals in New York, which has produced Broadway plays, musicals, West End productions, and national tours. Fox Theatricals’ productions have received 250 Tony Award nominations, winning 68 Tony Awards.

Mary has spent her life promoting and supporting the arts in St. Louis. She underwrites an annual Women in the Arts



Mary Strauss

lecture at the Saint Louis Art Museum. In 2015, Mary created a 24-inch St. Louis skyline die-cut card whose proceeds benefit Landmarks Association of St. Louis. Mary was the underwriter/major contributor for several major exhibits at the Sheldon Art Galleries, including the 2013 exhibit “Glamour: Costumes and Images,” which gave visitors a glimpse into the magical world of showbiz glamour through the decades, and the 2012 exhibit “Al Hirschfeld’s Jazz and Broadway Scrapbook,” which featured more than 100 original drawings, paintings, prints, collages, posters, and ephemera from Hirschfeld’s storied career as an illustrator of film, theater, and jazz figures. Mary was the major underwriter

and an active participant in the Sheldon Art Galleries’ Centennial Celebration of Josephine Baker in St. Louis. “Josephine Baker: Image & Icon” was also exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C.

Mary created, produced, and chaired the Titanic Centennial Weekend in St. Louis from April 13-15, 2012, with five sold-out events. She is the creator and producer of the Fox Performing Arts Charitable Foundation’s annual St. Louis Teen Talent Showcase Competition, a bistate metropolitan-area-wide competition that showcases the talents of high-school seniors in the performing arts.

In the 1980s, she created and produced

the long-running Monday Night at the Movies at the Fox Theatre. Mary served as president of the St. Louis International Film Festival for seven years. She served as producer of the documentary film “Eroica!,” which aired for three years on the national PBS program “Independent Lens” and screened at film festivals across the country and at American embassies around the world. Mary served as an executive producer of Civil Pictures’ multiple-award-winning documentary film “The Gateway Arch: A Reflection of America” and provided production support for Civil Pictures’ multiple-award-winning documentary “The World’s Greatest Fair.”

Currently, Mary serves as the president of the board of Fox Performing Arts Charitable Foundation; as president of the board of Cabaret St. Louis; as a member of the National Society of Arts and Letters; and as the president of the board of Art Access, Inc./Stan Kann Scholarship Fund.

Her past board affiliations include the national advisory board of the American Film Institute; the executive committee of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra; the executive committee of Dance St. Louis; the executive committee of Grand Center; the board of the St. Louis Fashion Fund; and, as president, the board of the Tennessee Williams Festival.

WOMEN IN FILM AWARD

Previous winners of the Women in Film Award — which honors women who have made a significant contribution to the film industry — include Karen Allen, Lisa Cortés, Nina Davenport, Pam Grier, Barbara Hammer, Marsha Hunt, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Melanie Mayron, Katie Mustard, Rosemary Rodriguez, Ry Russo-Young, Ricki Stern and Annie Sundberg, Kimberly Steward, Yvonne Welbon, and Pamela Yates.

Deborah Riley Draper

Deborah Riley Draper is a filmmaker, storyteller, and two-time NAACP Image Award nominee in Outstanding Literary Work — Biography and Outstanding

Documentary. Deborah brings a unique perspective to filmmaking forged from her breakthrough ad campaigns with BBDO and Ogilvy and her cultural curiosity as a documentarian.

In September 2021, the Ad Council recognized Deborah as their Champion for Good. Deborah brought her creative lens to their vital Covid-19 Vaccine Education Initiative. Deborah wrote and directed a short-form documentary and commercial campaign highlighting stories from descendants of the U.S. Public Health Services Syphilis Study at Tuskegee to build confidence in public health within Black communities, primarily related to the Covid-19 vaccines.

Deborah produced and directed the two-part docu-series “The Legacy of Black Wall Street” on OWN to elevate awareness of the Greenwood community on the 100th anniversary of the Tulsa Massacre. Her “Twenty Pearls” — which screens at SLIFF — is a documentary homage to the 113 years of history and sisterhood of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., and is the first original documentary to premiere on Comcast Xfinity’s Black Experience platform. The film, which received the HBO Max Best Documentary Award at the 2021 Martha’s Vineyards African American Film Festival, features Vice President Kamala Harris.

Deborah co-wrote “Force of Beauty,” a memoir about three Black matriarchs in Newark, released in February 2021. Draper will direct her screen adaptation of the classic coming-of-age novel “Coffee Will Make You Black” in late 2022. In 2019, Deborah directed television icon Jasmine Guy in “Illegal Rose,” an award-winning short film about immigration.

Draper was a 2016 Film Independent Lab Fellow and was named one of Variety’s “2016 Top 10 Documakers to Watch.” Her NAACP Image Award-nominated documentary “Olympic Pride, American Prejudice,” the untold story of 18 African Americans who defied Hitler and Jim Crow at the 1936 Summer Olympic Games, was one of only three nominees for the

Deborah Riley Draper



2017 Peace and Sport Award in Monaco, presented by HRH Prince Albert.

While working full-time as a vice president at Madison Avenue’s stalwart BBDO, Deborah wrote, directed, and financed her debut film, “Versailles ’73: American Runway Revolution.” The film has become a fashion cult classic after opening New York Fashion Week and Toronto Fashion Week and enjoying a coveted broadcast premiere spot on Logo TV, following “Ru-Paul’s Drag Race.” MOMA, SCAD, Guggenheim Bilbao, and the de Young Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco integrated the film with significant fashion exhibitions. Fox Searchlight optioned the feature rights to the film.

A TEDx speaker, Facebook Seen

Initiative alum, and active member of the WGA Black Committee of Writers, Deborah is an Atlanta resident and FSU alumna who recently completed the 2020 inaugural cohort of the Georgetown University Law Center Executive Certificate Program in Arts and Cultural Heritage.

AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARDS

Audience voting determines the winner of three awards from among the films in competition:

Best Film Award

Leon Award for Best Documentary

(named in memory of the late civic leader Leon Strauss)

TV5MONDE Award for Best International Film

JURIED COMPETITION AWARDS

ESSY AWARD FOR BEST ST. LOUIS FILM

Sponsored by the Chellappa-Vedavalli Foundation

The Essy Award honors a work — short or feature — either made in St. Louis or by a filmmaker with ties to the area. The award is accompanied by a \$500 prize underwritten by the Chellappa-Vedavalli Foundation.

FILMS: *After We're Over, All Gone Wrong, Alumination, Babes in the Woods, By the Sea, Castle Hill, Cave, Delicate State, DesMotivaciones, Ephemeral, every.single.one (karuna), Face Mask, Ghostbusters: South-Side (A Fan Film), The Final 19, Hammond's Books, I Am Kinloch, The Kinloch Doc, Lake Loch Pond Monster, Magic in the Mountains, Martyrs, Badgers & Other Rodents, Maxi, Monument, New Year, Once a Hero, Postcards, Sleepwalker, Target: St. Louis Vol. 1, Try Harder!, Woolgathering, Zig Zag*

The jury is **Ryan Eslinger** (chair), former St. Louis-area resident and director of "Madness and Genius," "When a Man Falls in the Forest," "Daniel and Abraham," and "UFO"; **Kayla McCulloch**, contributor to Cinema St. Louis' The Lens film blog; **Jody Mitori**, former A&E editor of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and director of development and communication for the True/False Film Fest, and current managing editor in the Office of Strategic Communications and Marketing for the University of Missouri-Columbia; **Jack Snyder**, director of the narrative features "Ghost Image" and "Fatal Call" and the TV movie "Family of Lies"; and **Andrew Wyatt**, editor of and film critic for the Cinema St. Louis blog The Lens.

INTERFAITH AWARDS

Juries give Interfaith Awards to both a documentary and a narrative, choosing from among eight films in each category, which were selected for their artistic



merit; contribution to the understanding of the human condition; and recognition of ethical, social, and spiritual values. The selected films:

DOCUMENTARIES: *Berrigans: Devout and Dangerous, The Boys Who Said No!, Ferguson Rises, From the Hood to the Holler, Keep the Cameras Rolling, Mission: Joy, The Neutral Ground, Since I Been Down*

NARRATIVES: *200 Meters, Any Day Now, Confetti, Hive, Neighbours, A Son, The Teacher, Unsilenced*

The documentary jury is **Janet Herrmann, Paul Marsh, Pier Marton, Dr. Phil Moy, and Pat Scallett**.

The narrative jury is **Delcia Corlew, Greg Hoeltzel, Jane Hoeltzel, Alma Merabet, and Saruul Purev**.

NFF EMERGING DIRECTOR AWARD: THE BOBBIE

Sponsored by Barry & Jackie Albrecht and Pat Scallett

The New Filmmakers Forum (NFF) annually presents the Emerging Director Award. Five works by first-time feature filmmakers compete for the prize, which includes a \$500 cash award. The selected films:

NFF FILMS: *Delicate State, Papaw Land, Shellfish, Walk with Me, We Burn Like This*

Since its inception, NFF was co-curated by **Bobbie Lautenschlager**. Bobbie died in the summer of 2012, and SLIFF honors her memory by nicknaming the NFF Emerging Director Award as the Bobbie.

The NFF jury is **Catherine Dudley-Rose** (chair), director of "Parallel Chords" (NFF competitor at SLIFF 2018); **Daniel Gartner**, producer of "The Ghost Who Walks" (NFF competitor at SLIFF 2019); **Aisha Sultan**, St. Louis Post-Dispatch columnist and director of the documentary short "33 and Counting"; **Joni Tackette**, casting director at Joni Tackette Casting; and **Nate Townsend**, director of the narrative short "The Lipinski" and the documentary feature "Wake Up."

SHORTS AWARDS

Two juries choose the winners of the following seven awards from among the shorts in competition:

- Best of Fest
- Best Animated Short
- Best Documentary Short
- Best International Short
- Best Live Action Short
- Best Local Short
- Best Short Short (less than 5 minutes)

The SLIFF shorts competition is officially sanctioned by the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences, making the winners in the Best of Fest, Best Animated,



A Once and Future Peace

Best Live Action, and Best Documentary categories eligible to submit for Oscar® consideration.

The narrative-shorts jury is **Katie Carter**, freelance film critic and owner of katieatthemovies.com; **Melissa Howland**, film critic, pop culture/horror aficionado, and multiple sclerosis/invisible illness advocate in LA; **Michael Long**, 2D animator and assistant professor of animation at Webster University; **Brandon McKinney**, cult/horror film scholar, independent critic at AttackOfTheFeature.com, and associate professor of mass communications at Lindenwood University; **Alexandra "Alex" Mitchell**, film and TV festival programmer, including Austin Film Festival, SeriesFest, Atlanta Film Festival, and 1261 Film Festival; **Kristina Monllos**, short filmmaker and senior marketing editor at Digiday; **Kristin Pratt**, final layout and assembly lead at Animal Logic and member of the Visual Effects Society (VES); **Steph Shannon**, Kansas City Film Office director and certified film commissioner; and **Kenya Vaughn**, journalist, film critic, and St. Louis American contributing editor.

The documentary-shorts jury is **Alison Carrick**, reference and outreach supervisor for the Department of Special Collections at Washington U. Libraries and co-director of "The First Secret City"; **Frank Popper**, director of "Gentlemen of Vision" and "Can Mr. Smith Get to Washington Anymore?"; and **Ranell Shubert**, producer of the "What's Up with Docs" podcast and former awards competition manager at the International Documentary Association (IDA).

SPOTLIGHT ON INSPIRATION DOCUMENTARY AWARD

Sponsored by the Albrecht Family

This juried competition awards a \$5,000 prize to a feature documentary that focuses on people working to make the world a better place and that inspires audience members and leaves them with a sense of hope for the future.

FILMS: *Beijing Spring, A Fire Within, The First Step, For the Left Hand, Medicine Man, A Once and Future Peace, To Which We Belong, Youth v Gov*

The jury is **Barry Albrecht** (chair), partner with the Bodley Group and director of the Albrecht Family Foundation; **Diane Carson**, former professor of film at the St. Louis Community College at Meramec, longtime film critic for the Riverfront Times and KDHX, and co-director of "Other People's Footage"; **Joshua Ray**, contributor to Cinema St. Louis' The Lens film blog; **Orlando Thompson**, filmmaker and former SLIFF documentary-shorts

programmer; and **Wilmetta Toliver-Diallo**, assistant dean in the College of Arts & Sciences, senior lecturer in African and African-American Studies, and coordinator of the African Film Festival at Washington University.

ST. LOUIS FILM CRITICS' JOE POLLACK AND JOE WILLIAMS AWARDS

In conjunction with the St. Louis Film Critics organization, SLIFF holds juried competitions for documentary and narrative features. The awards are named in honor of the late St. Louis Post-Dispatch critics Joe Pollack (narrative) and Joe Williams (documentary). The winners are picked by two juries of St. Louis film critics. SLIFF chose eight films to compete in each category:

DOCUMENTARIES: *Alien on Stage, Any Given Day, El Father Plays Himself, Hockeyland, Into the Light, North by Current, On the Divide, We Are the Thousand*

NARRATIVES: *18½, All Gone Wrong, Clara Sola, The Falconer, France, Luzzu, The Pink Cloud, The Woman Who Ran*

The documentary jury is **Lynn Venhaus** (chair), Webster-Kirkwood Times and KTRS Radio; **Martha Baker**, KDHX Radio; and **Scott Betz**, Avatar Studios.

The narrative jury is **Jim Batts** (chair), We Are Movie Geeks; **Max Foizey**, KTRS Radio and ZekeFilm; **Cate Marquis**, We Are Movie Geeks and St. Louis Jewish Light; and **Alex McPherson**, PopLifeSTL.com.



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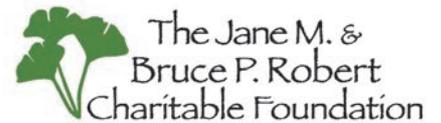
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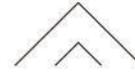
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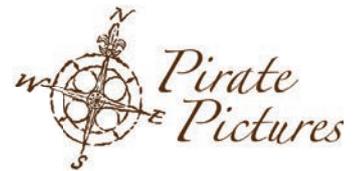
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VOLUNTEERS

**A SPECIAL THANK-YOU TO ALL OF
CINEMA ST. LOUIS' DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS.**



SPECIAL EVENTS

IN-PERSON EVENTS



OPENING NIGHT: PROCESSION

Thursday, Nov. 4, 7:30 PM, Tivoli 1

The 30th Annual Whitaker St. Louis International Film Festival opens with a powerful Missouri-based documentary by acclaimed documentarian Robert Greene, the filmmaker-in-chief at the Murray Center for Documentary Journalism at the University of Missouri. Greene, whose credits include “Bisbee ’17,” “Kate Plays Christine,” and “Actress,” will receive the fest’s Contemporary Cinema Award at the screening. In “Procession,” six men from Kansas City, Mo. — all survivors of childhood sexual assault at the hands of Catholic priests and clergy — come together to direct a drama-therapy-inspired experiment designed to collectively work through their trauma. As part of a radically collaborative filmmaking process with Greene, the men — Joe Eldred, Mike Foreman, Ed Gavagan, Dan Laurine, Michael Sandridge, and Tom Viviano — create fictional scenes based on memories, dreams, and experiences, exploring the church rituals, culture, and hierarchies that enabled silence around their abuse. In the face of a failed legal system, these men reclaim the spaces that allowed their assault, revealing the possibility for catharsis and redemption through a newfound fraternity. The film is followed by what’s sure to be a compelling Q&A. **With director Robert Greene, Contemporary Cinema Award honoree, and “Procession’s” subjects/co-creators.**



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& Rick Barnes

AMERICAN UNDERDOG

Monday, Nov. 8, 8:00 PM, Tivoli 1, \$50

SLIFF is excited to host the St. Louis premiere of “American Underdog,” which tells the inspirational true story of Kurt Warner (Zachary Levi), who went from a stock boy at a grocery store to a two-time NFL MVP, Super Bowl champion, and Hall of Fame quarterback. Kurt and Brenda Warner, who served as executive producers on the film, will attend the screening and hold a post-film Q&A. St. Louisans need no reminders about Warner’s storied career, which started here with the Rams when he went from essentially unknown backup to starter in 1999 after Trent Green suffered a torn ACL in the preseason. The Rams, of course, won the Super Bowl that season, and Warner and the “Greatest Show on Turf” went on an historic three-year offensive spree that produced a second Super Bowl appearance. Later, he took the perennially woebegone Arizona Cardinals — another franchise familiar to locals — to their first Super Bowl. The film centers on Warner’s unique story and the years of challenges and setbacks that could have derailed his aspirations to become an NFL player — it is only with the support of his wife, Brenda (Anna Paquin), and the encouragement of his family, coaches, and teammates that Warner perseveres and finds the strength to show the world the champion that he already is. “American Underdog” is an uplifting story that demonstrates that anything is possible when you have faith, family, and determination. **With Kurt and Brenda Warner.**



MASTER CLASS: FILM AND THE LAW

120 min.

Thursday, Nov. 11, 4:30 PM (check-in 4:00-4:30 PM; happy hour from 5:30-6:30 PM), Capes Sokol (8182 Maryland Ave.), Free (but a ticket is required for this event)

During this master class, the Entertainment & Media attorneys of Capes Sokol will share their insights into the legal needs of filmmakers, including business formation, deal structure, network and distribution contracts, talent agreements, production legal, rights acquisition and clearance, licensing, and copyright and trademark protection. The class — which will be followed by a happy hour — will be led by the following attorneys:

Pete Salsich III, known as The Screen Lawyer, is an experienced intellectual-property attorney whose practice is focused on advising large and small companies and entrepreneurs regarding the creation, protection, and use of intellectual property, in both litigation and transactional counseling, particularly in the media, technology, and entertainment industries. Pete has represented television production companies, independent film projects, and independent producers in connection with their business formation, deal structure, network contracts, publishing contracts, rights acquisition, IP licensing, and copyright and trademark protection.

Kara L. Lambert focuses her practice on corporate matters, including commercial transactions, business-entity formation, mergers and acquisitions, and real estate.

Directions: There is paid parking in the building garage and metered parking on the street. To reach the Capes Sokol offices, enter the lobby, follow the sign pointing to the Regions Centre, and go up the stone steps or ramp; enter the building marked Regions Centre and go up the elevator to the 15th floor.



Firefighters at the burning ROTC building

May 5, 1970/St. Louis Post-Dispatch.Polaris



John C. Danforth Center on
RELIGION AND POLITICS

Sponsored by John C.
Danforth Center on
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Washington University
St. Louis



Seavey with her father, Louis Gilden

MY FUGITIVE

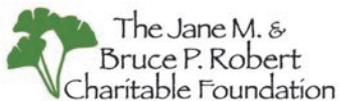
120 min.

Saturday, Nov. 13, 4:00 PM, Washington U./Brown, **FREE**

Nina Gilden Seavey was 12 years old on May 4, 1970, the day the Air Force ROTC building on the Washington University campus burned to the ground in an anti-war protest. Her father, civil-rights attorney Louis Gilden, represented several students arrested and sentenced on federal charges, the only such charges levied against protesters in the U.S. One of them,

Howard Mechanic, fled and became one of the longest-running fugitives in U.S. history. As an adult, documentarian Seavey (Emmy-winning “A Paralyzing Fear: The Story of Polio in America,” SLIFF selection “The Ballad of Bering Strait”) picked up the trail, intent on finding out what really happened that night on the campus of Washington University and why these students suffered such unique and intense punishment. Her decade-long investigation, originally conceived as a documentary, culminated in the eight-part podcast series “My Fugitive.” Now, more than 50 years later, Seavey returns to the proverbial scene of the crime. St. Louis Public Radio host Sarah Fenske and Seavey will engage in a wide-ranging discussion about “My Fugitive” and the tangled story it uncovered. Using film and audio clips, the program will revisit St. Louis in the late 1960s and ’70s — a hotbed of intrigue that included confidential informants, Russian moles, and a conspiracy to murder a civil-rights icon, all with links to the night of May 4, 1970, on the Washington University campus. Before the event, audience members are encouraged to listen to “My Fugitive” — available at multiple podcast sources — and then participate in the discussion with their own questions.

With Nina Gilden Seavey, Charles Guggenheim Cinema St. Louis Award honoree, and Sarah Fenske, host of St. Louis Public Radio’s “St. Louis on the Air.”



Sponsored by Jane M.
and Bruce P. Robert
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THE SURREAL THING

120 min.

Saturday, Nov. 13, 7:30 PM, Webster U./Moore

The surrealist movement — started by Guillaume Apollinaire and eventually led by André Breton — had its roots in France, and the earliest films that adhered to its principles also originated there. This program features a trio of foundational films, beginning with a pair of silent surrealist masterpieces: Germaine Dulac’s “The Seashell and the Clergyman (*La coquille et le clergyman*)” (1928, 41 min., B&W), which featured a screenplay by Antonin Artaud and introduced many of the movement’s characteristic traits, and Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí’s “An Andalusian Dog (*Un chien Andalou*)” (1929, 16 min., B&W), which launched the career of surrealist cinema’s most significant director. St. Louis’ Rats & People Motion Picture Orchestra provides newly written scores and live accompaniment for both films. The program concludes with “The Golden Age (*L’âge d’or*)” (1930, 63 min., B&W), the second and final collaboration between Buñuel and Dalí, and one of France’s earliest sound films. “The Golden Age” provoked riots, earned its backer a threat of excommunication, and was banned by the French police all within two weeks of its release. **With live music by the Rats & People Motion Picture Orchestra.**



TRIBUTE TO MARY STRAUSS WITH SUNSET BOULEVARD

Sunday, Nov. 21, 3:00 PM, Tivoli 1, \$25 (Tribute)

Sunday, Nov. 21, 5:00 PM, Tivoli 1, Free (Sunset Boulevard)

SLIFF honors philanthropist Mary Strauss with a Lifetime Achievement Award at this tribute program on the fest's final day. St. Louisans are certainly familiar with Mary's many accomplishments — such as the restoration of the Fox Theatre — and acts of civic generosity, but she's also been a major figure in the history of Cinema St. Louis. Mary has been an essential supporter of the festival almost since its inception, serving on the board — including as chair — for seven critical years during SLIFF's first decade. Mary not only provided key financial and governance help as the fest navigated its early days, she — and others she recruited — also programmed SLIFF for several years in the 1990s, before a full-time professional staff was hired. Among the highlights of Mary's time at the helm was a tribute to Tony Curtis — SLIFF's first major guest — and an ambitious stream of programming called "A Separate Cinema," which highlighted the underappreciated contributions of Black filmmakers to film history. After leaving the board, Mary continued her support of SLIFF by underwriting our documentary programming — for 20 years and counting — and making contributions to enable the hugely successful Vincentennial event in 2011 and special focuses on fashion and dance at the fest. The program will feature a video tribute to Mary from many who know her best, a video interview with Mary, some live musical entertainment, and appreciations from Cinema St. Louis staff members. After the presentation of the Lifetime Achievement Award to Mary, there will be an intermission, and at 5 pm her favorite film, "Sunset Boulevard," will screen. Attendees of the tribute can stay for the film, of course, but we'll also welcome other audience members to join us for the free screening.

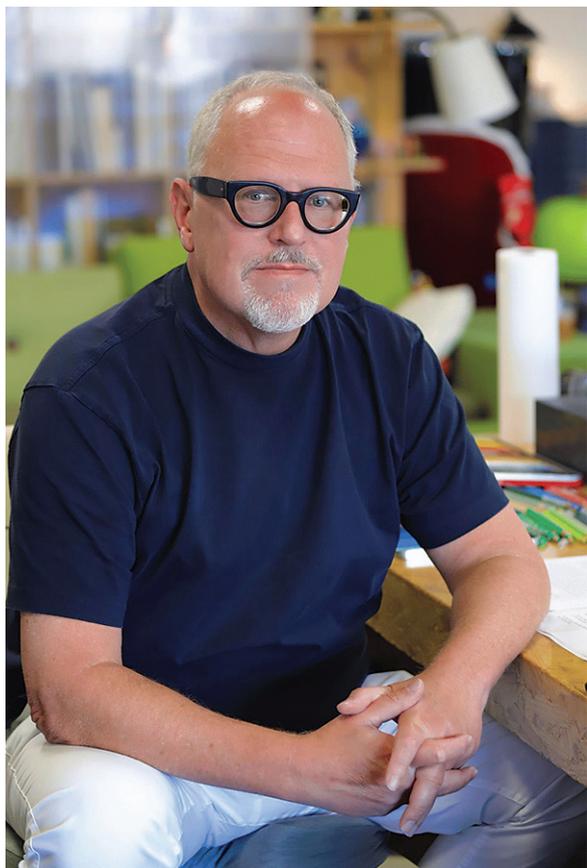


MASTER CLASS: A CONVERSATION WITH WRITER/DIRECTOR RYAN ESLINGER

90 min.

Saturday, Nov. 6, 1:00 PM, **FREE**

The festival interviews multiple SLIFF alum Ryan Eslinger, who was born and raised in the St. Louis area, about his diverse career in film as a multi-hyphenate. Ryan's debut film — made while he was still in school — was “Madness and Genius,” which starred Tom Noonan and was shot in 18 days on high-definition video for \$20,000. Eslinger not only wrote, produced, and directed the film but also edited, created the sound design, and composed and performed the music. He cut the movie in his dorm room during his third and final year at NYU, finishing the sound in St. Louis after graduation. The film subsequently premiered at the Toronto Film Festival to glowing reviews. Since then, Ryan has toggled back and forth between films with high-profile stars — such as “When a Man Falls in the Forest” (with Sharon Stone, Timothy Hutton, and Dylan Baker) and “UFO” (with Gillian Anderson and David Strathairn) and more independent work such as the microbudgeted “Daniel and Abraham” and “Colorless Green.” His work has been featured at Berlin, Toronto, SLIFF, and other festivals. Ryan received the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Feature Film Prize and has been nominated for an Independent Spirit Award. He lives with his novelist wife, Jamie, and son, Taschen. Ryan serves on the jury for this year's Essy Award, which honors the best St. Louis-related film in SLIFF.



MASTER CLASS: A CONVERSATION WITH AUTHOR/ARTIST/ANIMATOR WILLIAM JOYCE

90 min.

Saturday, Nov. 13, 1:00 PM, **FREE**

SLIFF holds a conversation with William Joyce, who has achieved worldwide recognition as an author, illustrator, and pioneer in the digital and animation industry. His most recent film, “Mr. Spam Gets a New Hat,” plays the fest in the SLIFF/Kids Family Shorts 1 virtual program. Bill began his film career on “Toy Story” and has since been a producer/director/screenwriter/production designer in both animation and live action. In 2009, he founded Moonbot Studios, a multimedia storytelling company producing books, apps, films, and video games. Among his many awards, Bill has won six Emmys, three Annies, and an Academy Award® for his short film “The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore.” He has written and illustrated 50 bestselling children’s books and novels, which have been translated into more than 40 languages. Bill was named by Newsweek magazine as “one of the 100 people to watch in the new millennium.” His feature films, all based on his books, include “Epic,” “Rise of the Guardians,” “Robots,” and “Meet the Robinsons.” His television series include the groundbreaking “Rolie Polie Olie,” for which he was creator and showrunner. His new company, Howdybot Studios, will focus on Bill’s stories in a variety of mediums and media. Bill hopes to someday serve as the first “Secretary of Cheerful Endeavors” for the United Nations.

Conducting the interview with Bill is former Cinema St. Louis Award honoree **Brian Hohlfeld**, who was Disney’s Pooh specialist for many years, contributing screenplays for “Winnie the Pooh: A Very Merry Pooh Year,” “Piglet’s Big Movie,” “Pooh’s Heffalump Movie,” and “Pooh’s Heffalump Halloween Movie,” and supervising the series “My Friends Tigger & Pooh.” For his work on the latter, Hohlfeld received the 2008 Humanitas Prize for children’s animation. He continues to work in animation, and his many credits include serving as writer and producer on Disney’s “A Poem Is ...” and “Transformers: Rescue Bots.”



NEW FILMMAKERS FORUM ROUNDTABLE

90 min.

Saturday, Nov. 20, 10:00 AM, **FREE**

As part of the New Filmmakers Forum (NFF), SLIFF holds a conversation with the participating directors: Justin Blake Crum (“Papaw Land”), Hunter Hopewell (“Shellfish”), Paula Rhodes (“Delicate State”), Isabel del Rosal (“Walk with Me”), and Alana Waksman (“We Burn Like This”). The event is moderated by Andrea Sporic Klund, the film commissioner at the Missouri Division of Tourism, who leads the discussion of both the directors’ five films and general issues related to American-independent filmmaking.



MASTER CLASS: A CONVERSATION WITH “PEN15” CO-CREATOR/DIRECTOR SAM ZVIBLEMAN

90 min.

Saturday, Nov. 20, 1:00 PM, **FREE**

The fest talks with Sam Zvibleman about his ever-ascending career as an award-winning film and television writer/director. Sam is the co-creator and director of Hulu’s “Pen15,” Emmy-nominated for Best Comedy Series. Before that, Sam received the Canadian Screen Award for Best Director for the CBC limited series “The Neddeaus of Duquesne Island.” And before that, Sam was born and raised in St. Louis, where he thought he was going to be a famous tennis player and/or investigative reporter. His short films have appeared in several editions of the St. Louis Filmmakers Showcase. He is reppped by UTA and Anonymous Content. The conversation will cover Sam’s career, with a specific focus on “Pen15,” from pitching the show, through the writing, directing, and producing process, all the way to broadcast and beyond.



SEMINAR: BIPOC FILMMAKERS IN DOCUMENTARY

90 min.

Sunday, Nov. 21, 1:00 PM, **FREE**

This seminar will address issues related to BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) documentary filmmakers, exploring such topics as the opportunities and specific challenges that exist in the doc world and examining the question of who should properly tell certain stories. The panel includes the following participants:

Srikant Chellappa (moderator), a board member of Cinema St. Louis, is an Indian-American director, producer, actor, and screenwriter based in St. Louis. His film credits include the action-comedy “Bad Grandmas,” the drama “Sleep with Me,” the thriller “Fatal Call,” the horror film “Ghost Image,” and the documentary “Running Against Dick” (2004).

Debbie Lum, a former St. Louisan, is an award-winning filmmaker whose projects give voice to the Asian-American experience and other unsung stories. She’s the director of “Try Harder!,” which premiered at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival and plays SLIFF, and “Seeking Asian Female,” which premiered at SXSW and won Best of Fest at AFI Docs.

Mbolaji Olambiwonnu’s goal is to use cinema as a tool to share diverse cultural and political experiences, critique the superficial conditions that divide us, and accentuate the merits of shedding our prejudices. His work includes “Ferguson Rises,” which plays SLIFF; the YouTube Originals docuseries “Resist”; and the short “The Visit,” which won the Directors Guild of America Student Award.

Natalie Pattillo is a journalist, filmmaker, and co-director of the SLIFF film “And So I Stayed,” an award-winning documentary about survivors of domestic violence who are unjustly incarcerated for killing their abusers in self-defense.

Damien D. Smith, a former St. Louisan, is an actor and filmmaker driven by a responsibility to shed light on injustice and oppression. He’s directed the narrative short “About That ...” and the SLIFF film “Target: St. Louis Vol. 1,” which was named the Best Documentary Feature at the 2021 Urban World Film Festival.

John J. Valadez is a Peabody Award-winning filmmaker whose documentaries explore Latino history and the larger struggle over race and power in America. His work includes the SLIFF film “American Exile,” the PBS series “Latino Americans,” “Beyond Brown,” “The Last Conquistador,” and “The Longoria Affair.”



CLOSING-NIGHT AWARDS PRESENTATION

60 min.

Sunday, Nov. 21, 8:00 PM, **FREE**

The festival comes to a conclusion with a free closing-night awards presentation. SLIFF first presents its juried-competition awards: the Interfaith Awards for Best Documentary and Best Narrative; the Shorts Awards; the St. Louis Film Critics' Joe Pollack Award (for Best Narrative) and Joe Williams Award (for Best Documentary); the New Filmmakers Forum Emerging Director Award ("The Bobbie"), which has a \$500 cash prize; and the Essy Award for the best film with St. Louis roots, which also includes a \$500 cash prize. The juried awards are capped by the presentation of the Spotlight on Inspiration Documentary Award, which features a \$5,000 cash prize. The awards presentations conclude with SLIFF's audience-choice awards: the Leon Award for Best Documentary, the TV5MONDE Award for Best International Film, and the Best Film Award.



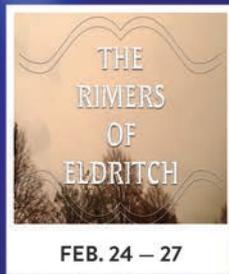
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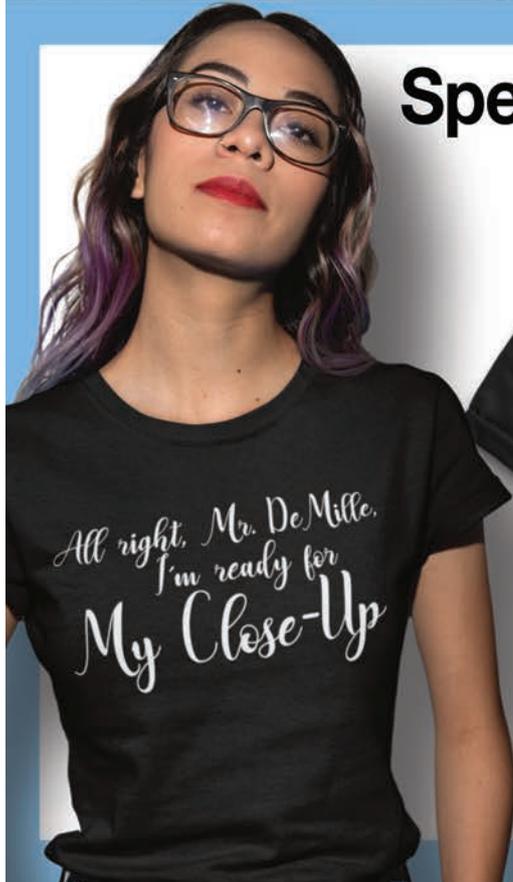
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SLIFF DOCUMENTARY & NARRATIVE FEATURES



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18½

Dan Mirvish, U.S., 2021, 87 min.

Wednesday, Nov. 10, 8:00 PM, Tivoli 1

This engaging 1970s-era dark-comedy thriller about the Watergate conspiracy poses an intriguing question: What if a copy of those infamous missing 18½ minutes of recording, allegedly erased by secretary Rosemary Woods, wound up in the hands of a well-meaning transcriptionist? The road to good intentions takes Connie (Willa Fitzgerald, “Little Women”) on a surreptitious journey to a rundown roadside inn with Paul (John Magaro, “First Cow”), a journalist who wants to help her. A small cast of zany characters — played by actors such as Richard Kind (“A Serious Man”), Vondie Curtis Hall (“Harriet”), and Troma’s Lloyd Kaufman — punctuate this clever cloak-and-dagger take on an odd footnote to the Nixon White House, and a number of surprise guest voices are heard on the “actual” tapes. “18½” is directed by Dan Mirvish, a frequent SLIFF guest whose films “Omaha,” “Between Us,” and “Bernard and Huey” all screened at the fest. Co-founder of the Slamdance Film Festival, Mirvish is a Washington U. grad and received SLIFF’s Charles Guggenheim Cinema St. Louis Award in 2017. **With director Dan Mirvish.**

NARRATIVE



200 METERS

Ameen Nayfeh, Palestine, 2020, 96 min., Arabic, English & Hebrew

Thursday, Nov. 11, 1:00 PM, Tivoli 3

Sunday, Nov. 14, 7:00 PM, Tivoli 3

A Palestinian man, Mustafa (Ali Suliman, “Paradise Now,” “Jack Ryan”), and his wife live 200 meters apart in villages separated by the Israeli border wall. One day he gets a call every parent dreads: His son has been injured in an accident. Rushing to cross the Israeli checkpoint, Mustafa is denied on a technicality. But a father’s love won’t give up, and he will do anything to reach his son. A 200-meter distance becomes a 200-kilometer odyssey, as Mustafa, left with no choice, attempts to smuggle himself to the other side of the wall. This heart-wrenching drama was the winner of 15 festival awards in 2021. Variety writes: “One of the pleasures of anticipating an Ali Suliman performance is knowing he’ll bring depth and complexity to every role. His character in ‘200 Meters,’ a father of three taking huge risks to get to his son in the hospital, doesn’t expand his repertoire, but it gives the movie its heart. Debuting writer-director Ameen Nayfeh’s depiction of the shameful hurdles Palestinians must overcome in their daily lives rings true. Part family drama, part road movie, the film — which landed the audience prize in Venice Days — works best when drawing out how one man’s story is a reflection of a collective experience.”

NARRATIVE



A CHIARA

Jonas Carpignano, Italy, 2021, 121 min., Italian

Thursday, Nov. 11, 8:00 PM, Tivoli 1

The Guerrasio family and friends gather to celebrate Claudio and Carmela's oldest daughter's 18th birthday. There is a healthy rivalry between the birthday girl and her 15-year-old sister Chiara as they compete on the dance floor. It is a happy occasion, and the close-knit family members are in top form. However, everything changes the next day when the father disappears. Chiara, unconvinced by the cover story, starts to investigate. As she gets closer to the truth, she is forced to decide what kind of future she wants for herself. The Film Stage writes: "Writer-director Jonas Carpignano completes his Calabrian trilogy with 'A Chiara,' an enthralling drama about a teenage girl coming to terms with her family's role in the mafia, which won the Europa Cinema Label at the Directors' Fortnight in Cannes. With a documentary-like authenticity, this is a touching, powerful film with a lyrical visual palette and a superb sense of time and place. As in 'Mediterranea' and 'A Ciambra,' which told stories about immigration and the Roma community, respectively, Carpignano takes us to Gioia Tauro at the southern tip of the Italian mainland. For 10 years the director has embedded himself here, a place infamous for the penetration in all walks of life of the 'Ndrangheta, the secretive mafia clan that by some accounts controls three percent of Italy's GDP."

NARRATIVE



ACTS OF LOVE

Isidore Bethel & Francis Leplay, France/Mexico/U.S., 2021, 71 min.

Eventive

When his older boyfriend loses interest in him, filmmaker Isidore Bethel looks for a way forward. Relocating to Chicago, he arranges meetings with strangers on dating apps and asks them to make a film with him. Bethel spirals into a series of unconventional relationships with them, and what results is a fragmented story about love, disappointment, and desire. Throughout, he receives phone calls from his mother, who reluctantly offers her son criticism and devotion — and other forms of love. Toronto's Now weekly calls the film "a bold, brave look at intimacy, honesty and the power dynamics that exist both in interpersonal relationships and between artist and subject. 'Real people do unexpected things,' says (Bethel's) mother — a statement that lingers over the film. Because casual dating has been a no-no during the pandemic, this doc offers a strange, voyeuristic thrill that comes as an unexpected bonus."

DOCUMENTARY



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AFTER WE'RE OVER

Nate Myers, U.S., 2021, 80 min.

Saturday, Nov. 13, 3:30 PM, Tivoli 2

One fateful Saturday, Zelzah (Adrienne Rose White) receives an unexpected call from her ex, Sazerac (Chris Mollica). It's the first Zelzah has heard from him in the year since he broke her heart and left St. Louis to move home to Long Island. Warily, she decides to grab breakfast with him, which turns into a daylong exploration of both the city of St. Louis and their failed relationship. Over the course of the day, the film slips in time: As the two come together in the present, they fall apart in the past, with their memories bleeding into their current conversations. While visiting some of the city's most famous landmarks, the former couple discusses love, death, sex, politics, memory, and what they owe to each other (and themselves). And before the reunion ends, Zelzah and Sazerac inevitably must address the ultimate question: Can they begin again after they're over? Although now working in LA, both writer/director Nate Myers and actor Adrienne Rose White are former St. Louisans. **With director Nate Myers.**

NARRATIVE



AHED'S KNEE *Ha'berech*

Nadav Lapid, Israel, 2021, 109 min., French, German & Hebrew

Friday, Nov. 19, 8:30 PM, Tivoli 2

Sunday, Nov. 21, 3:30 PM, Tivoli 2

In "Ahed's Knee," which debuted at Cannes, Nadav Lapid ("Synonyms," "The Kindergarten Teacher," "Policeman") tells the story of an Israeli filmmaker in his mid-40s — not unlike Lapid — who arrives in a remote village at the far end of the desert to present one of his films. He is dismayed when welcomed by a young woman working for the Ministry of Culture who asks him to sign a form limiting the discussion topics he will cover during the post-screening Q&A. The director suddenly finds himself fighting two losing battles: one against the death of freedom in his country, the other against the death of his mother. IndieWire writes: "While all of Lapid's films clench and spasm with the frustration of an artist whose homeland is too wild and extreme to fit inside the lens of a camera, none of them have confronted that frustration head-on. Not until now. This is what separates 'Ahed's Knee' from anything Israel's most vital auteur has made before: It's a film about a filmmaker grappling with the impotency of a lost cause. Lapid's ultra-personal cinema has never been presumptuous enough to think that it could help save Israel from being swallowed into the Dead Sea. But this, angrier than his earlier work yet strangely also more soft-hearted, is his first movie to resign itself to life aboard a sinking ship."

NARRATIVE



ALIEN ON STAGE

Lucy Harvey & Danielle Kummer, U.K., 2021, 83 min.

Saturday, Nov. 13, 6:00 PM, Tivoli 2

Eventive

“Alien on Stage” tells the unlikely story of a unique crew of Dorset bus drivers whose amateur dramatics group decides to ditch doing another pantomime and try something different. Having never done anything like it before, they spent a year creating a serious adaptation of the sci-fi horror film “Alien,” finding ingenious solutions to pay homemade homage to the original. The show is a crushing flop, but fate gives them a second chance to find their audience. While still adjusting to the idea that their serious show is actually a comedy, the group is suddenly whisked from their village hall to a London West End theater to perform this accidental masterpiece for one night only. With wobbly sets, awkward acting, and special effects requiring “more luck than judgment,” the performance proves a triumph of amateurism that reminds viewers of how much fun theater can be without the focus on pretension and stuffy professionalism. IndieWire writes: “If you knew nothing about the premise of ‘Alien on Stage,’ it would be easy to think you were watching the latest Christopher Guest comedy. Like a real-life ‘Waiting for Guffman’ with a fairytale ending, it’s one of the funniest documentaries in years.”



ALL GONE WRONG

Josh Guffey, U.S., 2021, 100 min.

Saturday, Nov. 20, 8:00 PM, Tivoli 1

NARRATIVE

After a rookie cop is killed in a drug bust gone wrong, his veteran partner (Chris Halverson) is put on leave. Embarking on an unauthorized investigation, he uncovers a pervasive narcotics network operating under the surface of a rural town. Filming in St. Louis with top-notch local actors and crew, writer/director Josh Guffey turns in a superb, high-octane thriller that features Tony Todd of “Candyman” in a central role. The origins of Guffey’s film can be traced to a true story related by a colleague of his police-officer sister. The case involved an especially talented undercover cop who went into an Illinois town alone to dismantle the narcotics trade — all without the help (or even knowledge) of the local police. Months later, after a host of arrests, he left the organized drug network in disarray. With Guffey drawing further inspiration from Sergio Leone’s “A Fistful of Dollars” and Akira Kurosawa’s “Yojimbo” — both tales of a stranger playing opposing gangs off each other and emerging as the last man standing — the seed for “All Gone Wrong” was planted, but it took years of research for Guffey to understand the true depth of undercover narcotics work. Touching on many of today’s critical issues, including race, corruption, criminal-justice reform, civil forfeiture, and cycles of incarceration, “All Gone Wrong” incorporates all that Guffey has learned in the 15 years since first hearing that catalyzing story. **With director Josh Guffey and actor Tony Todd.**



ALL THESE SONS

Joshua Altman & Bing Liu, U.S., 2021, 88 min.

Saturday, Nov. 6, 4:00 PM, Tivoli 3

Chicago gun violence has made national headlines for decades. While the city responds with aggressive policing, two community members lead programs that attempt to change the conditions that produce violence in the first place — by investing in the young men most at risk of being a victim or perpetrator. Designed to reduce the epidemic of gun violence on the South and West sides of the city, the programs offer educational opportunities, counseling, and alternatives to the dead-end life choices typically available. “All These Sons” — from Bing Liu and Joshua Altman, the director and editor of the award-winning “Minding the Gap” — focuses on a few key mentors and a trio of young men, all of whom struggle to stay in the programs and confront major challenges, including being shot and falling back into the criminal-justice system. Following the fitful progress and frequent regression of its central characters over more than a year, the film is clear-eyed in its view of the difficulties these young men will face in attempting to extricate themselves from their bleak circumstances, but “All These Sons” also offers glimmers of hope as the three subjects make tentative steps toward better futures. The film site Hammer to Nail writes: “This never feels like misery porn, because Altman and Liu succeed in showcasing their documentary subjects’ humanity. It all adds up to a profound showcase of resilience and perseverance, strength of character emerging from failure, the drama of a life as real as it gets.”

[DOCUMENTARY](#)



ALUMINATION

Eric Bricker, U.S., 2021, 86 min.

Sunday, Nov. 21, 4:00 PM, Tivoli 3

During these locked-down pandemic times, we all can appreciate an ode to the open road, and “Alumination” will undoubtedly stir in viewers the age-old desire to pack up and discover what lies beyond the next range of hills. In 1929, entrepreneur, traveler, and dreamer Wally Byam built the first Airstream travel trailer in the backyard of his California home. Nearly a century later, Airstream, the iconic American brand, continues as the oldest travel-trailer company in the United States. For many, the word “Airstream” signifies more than just the image of an aerodynamic silver bullet gliding down the highway; it also evokes the spirit of innovation, adventure, resilience, and dynamism. No longer just employed for a weekend camping trip or long summer vacation, these trailers are also now used as full-time residences, guest homes, food trucks, recording studios, and more. Ultimately, Wally Byam didn’t just create a tool for travel: He created a platform for living. “Alumination” makes a persuasive case for the trailers’ importance in American culture and design, and it benefits enormously from its access to the huge archive of company footage, especially of Byam-led excursions of large caravans of Airstreamers to various destinations, some of them quite far flung and exotic. Narrated by Kate Pierson of the B-52s, the film is directed by former St. Louisan Eric Bricker, whose “Visual Acoustics: The Modernism of Julius Shulman” played SLIFF in 2008. **With director Eric Bricker.**

[DOCUMENTARY](#)



AMERICAN EXILE

John J. Valadez, Mexico/U.S., 2021, 56 min.

Saturday, Nov. 6, 4:00 PM, Washington U./Brown, Free

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

Brothers Manuel and Valente Valenzuela both volunteered and fought in Vietnam. Now, 50 years later, they are among thousands of U.S. military veterans, many with distinguished records, who are being deported. The brothers reluctantly put their uniforms on for one last mission: to bring deported veterans and their families back home. Their quixotic quest leaves one brother exiled in a foreign country, while the other goes all the way to the White House to petition on behalf of the affected vets. “American Exile” serves as a compelling case study of undocumented immigrants who served in the U.S. military but now face deportation because of past criminal behavior (often minor infractions that occurred many years ago). The film also explores the effects of PTSD on both brothers, but keeps a strong focus on its central subject: the forced expulsion of veterans by the government they served. Filmmaker John J. Valadez’s impressive résumé includes a Peabody Award for his work as producer on the series “Latino Americans.”

With director John J. Valadez.



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AMERICAN UNDERDOG

Andrew & Jon Erwin, U.S., 2021, 109 min.

Monday, Nov. 8, 8:00 PM, Tivoli 1, \$50

“American Underdog” tells the inspirational true story of former St. Louis Ram Kurt Warner (Zachary Levi), who went from a stock boy at a grocery store to a two-time NFL MVP, Super Bowl champion, and Hall of Fame quarterback. The film centers on Warner’s unique story and years of challenges and setbacks that could have derailed his aspirations to become an NFL player — it is only with the support of his wife, Brenda (Anna Paquin), and the encouragement of his family, coaches, and teammates that Warner perseveres and finds the strength to show the world the champion that he already is. “American Underdog” is an uplifting story that demonstrates that anything is possible when you have faith, family, and determination. **With Kurt and Brenda Warner.**

NARRATIVE



AMERICANISH

Iman Zawahry, U.S., 2021, 91 min.

Friday, Nov. 12, 12:30 PM, Tivoli 2

Sunday, Nov. 14, 2:00 PM, Tivoli 2

Eventive

Welcome to America: Where dreams come true ... ish. A provocative spin on the traditional romantic comedy, “Americanish” highlights different layers of womanhood as they intersect with cultural and societal expectations. Following the joys and tribulations of two career-driven sisters and their fish-out-of-water cousin, the film provides a revealing look into the home and lives of three marriage-age Pakistani women as they navigate the often turbulent waters of romance, culture, career, and family. “Americanish” features a relatable and charming storyline but offers a fresh perspective on classic rom-com tropes by delving into the complexity of trying to both honor and break from cultural traditions while balancing personal values and career goals in a society that does not always accommodate both. Moving Image Middle East writes: “Chemistry, charm and comedy mesh delightfully in Iman K. Zawahry’s engagingly old-fashioned intercultural rom-com about two sisters and their cousin as they deal with tradition, relationships and family life while living in Jackson Heights, New York. ‘Americanish’ is the first Muslim romantic comedy directed by an American Muslim woman which offers a clever take on the genre (and) an astute perspective on the experiences of American-Muslim women.”

NARRATIVE



AND SO I STAYED

Natalie Pattillo & Daniel A. Nelson, U.S., 2021, 91 min.

Sunday, Nov. 14, 1:00 PM, Washington U./Brown, Free

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

“And So I Stayed” offers a moving profile of three domestic-violence survivors who served steep prison sentences for killing their abusers. One of the women, Kim Dadou Brown, becomes a victim’s rights activist after serving 17 years for killing her abusive boyfriend. Kim helps pass New York’s Domestic Violence Survivors Justice Act, which protects the rights of abused women, and one potential beneficiary of the new law is Tanisha Davis, who suffered for seven years before killing her abuser in self-defense. The judge in Tanisha’s case agrees that she was a victim of domestic violence but concludes that she didn’t deserve a break for her crime because of the classic misconception: “She should have just left.” The film’s third subject, Nikki Addimando, is a devoted mother who shot her abuser while trying to leave with her kids. Nikki’s treatment by the system over the years she struggled to free herself was its own form of abuse: Although she followed all of the “right” protocols, such as reporting to authorities and photographically documenting the abuse, she never received the help needed to escape. The anguish in Nikki’s voice, who is primarily heard and not seen, is palpable — not out of fear for herself but because of what incarceration might mean for her children. **With co-directors Daniel A. Nelson & Natalie Pattillo.**

DOCUMENTARY



ANY DAY NOW

Hamy Ramezan, Finland, 2020, 82 min., English, Finnish & Persian

Friday, Nov. 19, 6:00 PM, Tivoli 2

Saturday, Nov. 20, 12:30 PM, Tivoli 2

At the outset of “Any Day Now,” 13-year-old Ramin Mehdipour and his Iranian family are living in a refugee center in Finland. But just as Ramin starts to enjoy the school holidays, the family receives the terrible news that their asylum application has been denied. The Mehdipours file a final appeal and continue with their everyday lives, all the while trying to keep a positive public attitude despite the looming danger of deportation. As Ramin starts the new school year, every moment, every friendship becomes all the more precious. Screen Daily writes: “Hamy Ramezan draws upon his own family’s experience of fleeing the war in Iran for Finland in his debut fiction feature, ‘Any Day Now.’ As a result, the story about a family’s long wait for their asylum application to be processed carries a strong emotional resonance. Where many films about the refugee experience linger on the minutiae of applications and the grind of bureaucracy, Ramezan leaves those elements to brew in the background while focusing on 13-year-old Ramin Mehdipour (Aran-Sina Keshvari), his dad Bahman (Shahab Hosseini), mum Mahtab (Shabnam Ghorbani) and little sister Donya (Kimiya Eskandari), as they wait to hear their fate. This is the sort of family we’d all like to be a part of, with Asghar Farhadi regular Hosseini making the most of his eternal optimist dad.”

NARRATIVE



ANY GIVEN DAY

Margaret Byrne, U.S., 2021, 93 min., Bulgarian & English

Sunday, Nov. 21, 4:00 PM, Washington U./Brown, Free

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

A stellar documentary from SLIFF alum Margaret Byrne (“Raising Bertie”), “Any Given Day” follows a trio of participants in Cook County’s Mental Health Court’s probation program as they navigate both their mental illnesses and the addictions and lapses into criminality (generally to feed their drug habits) that complicate their already-difficult lives. The vérité portraits of the three — Angela, Daniel, and Dimitar — are compelling on their own, but the film is further elevated by its confessional nature: Byrne, like her subjects, is bipolar, and her empathetic connection deepens the viewers’ understanding of their struggles. During the course of the film, which unfolds over five years, Byrne has her own debilitating mental breakdown that temporarily halts filming, and the reaction of her subjects makes it clear that they’ve developed close bonds and become, at least to some degree, dependent on her attention, which lends some welcome regularity and stability to their often chaotic lives. Because of this intimacy between filmmaker and subjects, the film also becomes a subtle exploration of the fraught, tangled relationships that can affect the evolution of a documentary project, changing the dynamic in both positive and negative (and unpredictable) ways. The longitudinal nature of the film allows us especially privileged access to the subjects, and we see the cycles of their illnesses — the moments of blessed respite, the bleak relapses, the slow, difficult climb out of the depths. “Any Given Day” offers extraordinary insight into the daily struggles of the mentally ill and their unfair entanglement in the criminal-justice system.

DOCUMENTARY



Co-presented with
Contemporary Art Museum
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ARCHIPELAGO

Felix Dufour-Laperrière, Canada, 2020, 71 min., French

Thursday, Nov. 4, 6:30 PM, Contemporary Art Museum, Free
Eventive, Special \$5 Price

The animated essay film “Archipelago” is partly documentary but mostly fiction, with poetry perhaps the more apt reference. Essentially, the work is an abstract meditation on Québec, the St. Lawrence River, and the waterway’s islands. Formally ambitious and undeniably accomplished, “Archipelago” has a distinct avant-garde sensibility and employs a diverse array of graphic approaches as it unfolds. The film’s dual narrators — one male, one female — engage in an oblique sort of dialogue, speaking in Godardian aphorisms and occasionally even offering a factual nugget. Sight & Sound describes “Archipelago” as “a freewheeling showcase of 12 animators deploying wildly different styles to evoke myriad moods, images and sensations connected, directly or tangentially, with Québec. Animation techniques overlap with live-action footage amid hallucinatory swirls of on-screen hand-written text; old maps, photographs and films — most prominently a 1941 newsreel-style reportage — are presented, augmented, rotoscoped and distorted; the concrete morphs into the impressionistic.” Washington University’s Colin Burnett, who hails from Montreal, will introduce and discuss “Archipelago.” **With Colin Burnett, associate professor of Film & Media Studies at Washington U.**



THE ART OF REBELLION

Libby Spears, U.S., 2021, 79 min.

Tuesday, Nov. 9, 7:30 PM, Webster U./Moore
Eventive

“The Art of Rebellion” follows blunt, sarcastic, but ultimately lovable Lydia Emily — an LA-based street artist, activist, and single mother of three — as she defies a crippling diagnosis that threatens to take away her livelihood. Fighting against an unforgiving healthcare system while she battles the symptoms of progressive multiple sclerosis, Lydia ties paintbrushes to her failing hands to create large-scale works of creative resistance. “I can’t sing. I can’t write,” she says. “But I can paint.” Over time, the portrait of Lydia that emerges is one of a tough, tender, indomitable force of nature, plagued by hospital bills, buoyed by medication, never silenced. The film follows Lydia through several years of her life, providing viewers with a real sense of the flow of life for the artist and her clan. The kids — one of them autistic — grow older and struggle with their own identities, and Lydia rides the roller coaster of MS symptoms from good days to stays in the hospital. There’s even a love relationship that takes a surprising turn, landing Lydia in a small town outside of Austin. Throughout, the film features Lydia’s art, which is compelling and direct — just like her personality. As access to healthcare in America comes under significant threat, “The Art of Rebellion” presents the story of a woman whose life underscores just how urgently we need universal health coverage, better treatment options, prevention, and support.

Shown with Living Music (Libby Spears, U.S., 2017, 20 min.) A profile of violinist Tyler Carson, who lost his ability to sing and his chance at success in country music, setting him on a unique path to recover his voice and career.



ATLAS

Niccolò Castelli, Switzerland, 2021, 88 min., Italian

Eventive

Telling a straightforward story in an intriguingly nonlinear fashion, “Atlas” follows Allegra, a lively young woman with a passion for high-mountain climbing, as she attempts to recover from a devastating event. Allegra — played by Italian actress Matilda De Angelis, who recently co-starred with Nicole Kidman in the HBO miniseries “The Undoing” — travels to Morocco to climb in the Atlas Mountains, but her trip ends abruptly when a man explodes a bomb in a coffee shop and her three friends die in the attack. Months later, unable to overcome the trauma, she returns to her city, where an encounter with Arad, a young Muslim refugee, forces Allegra to confront her fears and altered perception of reality and to heal her profound interior wounds. Cineuropa writes: “Swiss director (Niccolò Castelli) sets himself the goal of expressing, through images (sophisticated and elegant, thanks to the photography of Pietro Zuercher), the horror of an experience from which no one comes out unscathed. From this perspective, the trauma experienced by Allegra becomes a metaphor for a collective and social fear that has infiltrated our (privileged) society, robbing us of a tranquility that we thought was eternal.”

NARRATIVE



BAD LUCK BANGING OR LOONY PORN

Babardeală cu bucluc sau porno balamuc

Radu Jude, Romania, 2021, 106 min., Romanian

Tuesday, Nov. 9, 8:00 PM, Tivoli 1

Schoolteacher Emi (Katia Pascariu) finds her career and reputation under threat by her peers and the school board after a personal sex tape made with her husband is accidentally leaked on the Internet. Forced to meet with parents and other teachers demanding her dismissal, Emi refuses to surrender to their pressure. Radu Jude (“Aferim!”) delivers an incendiary mix of unconventional form, irreverent humor, and scathing commentary on hypocrisy and prejudice in our societies and the dangers of knee-jerk reactions to social media. SLIFF also features another of Jude’s recent films, “Uppercase Print.” IndieWire writes: “The brilliance of ‘Bad Luck Banging or Loony Porn,’ Romanian director Radu Jude’s astonishing Berlinale Golden Bear-winning satire, comes from a most unusual combination by jamming together two very different kind of movies that shouldn’t work in harmony, but end up making perfect sense. The filmmaker’s bold approach suggests what might happen if someone spliced a late-period Jean-Luc Godard essay film into the middle of ‘The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie,’ with such mesmerizing results that you just have to roll with it. One of European cinema’s most unclassifiable auteurs has delivered the bitter pill we deserve.”

NARRATIVE



A BEAUTIFUL CURSE

Martin Garde Abildgaard, Denmark, 2020, 92 min.

NARRATIVE

Eventive

“A Beautiful Curse” — the grand-prize winner at this year’s Cinequest film festival — explores an intriguing question: Can a person get to know another by mere observation, paying attention to their thoughts and how they react in the world, following their preferences and learning their point of view? When a whole island is affected by an unexplainable sleep phenomenon and closed off from the mainland, photographer Samuel heads there undetected to document the events. Finding Stella deep in slumber, he becomes infatuated, and his attraction grows. But Samuel soon discovers that the sleep affliction is more dangerous than expected, and he succumbs to it while still trying to connect with Stella. The San Jose Mercury News writes: “Martin Garde Abildgaard’s moody romantic drama takes an original premise and fills it with compassion, even hope. The Copenhagen-based filmmaker’s feature debut is a minimalistic mood piece that takes place entirely on a sedate island where the entire population has fallen into a deep sleep for unexplained reasons. Lonely photographer Samuel (Mark Strepan in a tender performance) wanders around the desolation and is captivated by the slumbering Stella (Olivia Vinall), a fiery spirit he engages with in imagined (or are they?) conversations. ‘Curse’ casts a dream-like spell as these two likeable characters bond in waking and non-waking hours.”



BEIJING SPRING

Andy Cohen & Gaylen Ross, Austria/China/France/Switzerland/U.S., 2021, 100 min., English & Mandarin

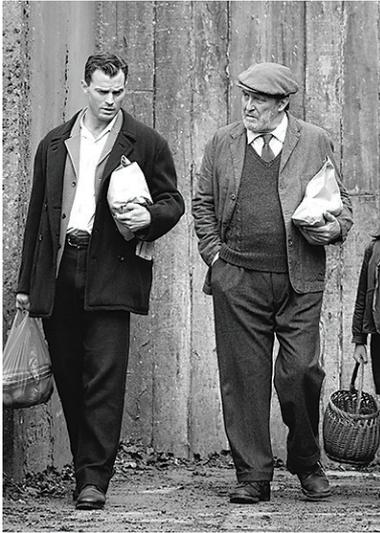
DOCUMENTARY

Sunday, Nov. 14, 7:30 PM, Washington U./Brown, Free

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

“Beijing Spring” tells a story about underground filmmaking, radical art, and censorship that’s dismayingly reminiscent of what’s taking place in Hong Kong today. At Democracy Wall in Beijing 1978, the cheekily named Stars, a group of self-taught artists (including a young Ai Weiwei), challenged propaganda art by displaying new work that championed individuality and free expression, often exposing the inhumanity of the Cultural Revolution. During this brief period of relative freedom, editor and essayist Wei Jingsheng posted his call for democracy on the same wall. The authorities, provoked by the Stars exhibits and protest demonstrations, cracked down and closed Democracy Wall, imprisoning many and slamming the door on this fleeting period of reform. Directed by SLIFF alums Andy Cohen and Gaylen Ross (“Ximei”), “Beijing Spring” features frank, revealing contemporary interviews with the artists — many now scattered around the globe — and remarkable material shot by a daring young filmmaker named Chi Xiaoning, whose long-hidden 16mm film footage is seen here for the first time after 40 years.

*Shown with **The Chemical Factory** (Drew Leung, U.S., 2021, 14 min., Cantonese & English)*
In this animated doc, a Chinese immigrant mother recounts her life growing up during the tumultuous 1950s in Communist China to her American son during the Covid-19 pandemic.



Sponsored by Drs. Diane Carson & Willis Loy

BELFAST

Kenneth Branagh, Ireland/U.K., 2021, 98 min.

Friday, Nov. 5, 8:00 PM, Tivoli 1

Written and directed by multiple Academy Award® nominee Kenneth Branagh, “Belfast” — winner of the People’s Choice Award at the Toronto Film Festival — is a poignant story of love, laughter, and loss in one boy’s childhood, amid the music and social tumult of the late 1960s. A semi-autobiographical look at Branagh’s youth in Northern Ireland during the Troubles, “Belfast” is shot in luminous black-and-white and prominently features music by the legendary Van Morrison, another native of Belfast, including eight classics and a new song written for the film. The stellar cast includes newcomer Jude Hill as Buddy, the film’s young protagonist, Jamie Dornan and Caitriona Balfe as his parents, and Judi Dench and Ciarán Hinds as his grandparents. Branagh’s filmography ranges widely, including such disparate work as Marvel’s “Thor” and Disney’s “Cinderella,” and he’s best known for his exceptional Shakespeare adaptations — “Henry V” (1989), “Much Ado About Nothing” (1993), “Hamlet” (1996), “Love’s Labour’s Lost” (2000), and “As You Like It” (2006). “Belfast,” however, is surely the film closest to Branagh’s heart, and he calls it “a very personal movie about a place and people I love.” Variety writes: “Though the (Northern Ireland) conflict has been depicted to the point of exhaustion on-screen, ‘Belfast’ avoids many of the clichés in favor of a more personal look back, through a child’s eyes. The affectionate cine-memoir is rendered all the more effective on account of young discovery Jude Hill and its portrayal of a close-knit family (Ciarán Hinds and Judi Dench as stay-put grandparents) crowded under one roof.”

NARRATIVE



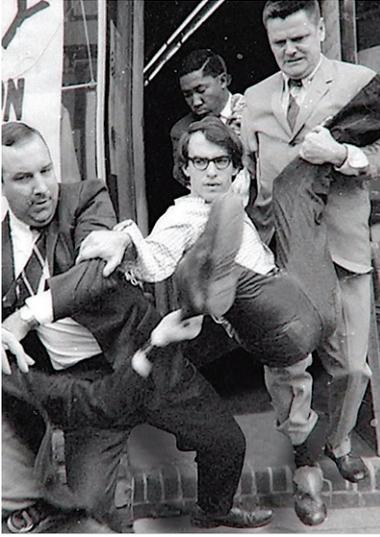
BERRIGANS: DEVOUT AND DANGEROUS

Susan Hagedorn, U.S., 2020, 80 min.

Eventive

Some 50 years before BLM and March for Our Lives — before computers, cell phones, and Facebook — priests and brothers Philip and Daniel Berrigan shook up the Washington establishment by engaging in nonviolent resistance against the Vietnam War, earning Daniel a spot on the FBI’s list of Ten Most Wanted Fugitives. Nun Elizabeth McAlister — who married Philip in defiance of the Roman Catholic Church — joined with the brothers in protest against war, racism, capital punishment, and nuclear weapons. The Berrigans are amply represented in archival footage and interviews, but their presence is also keenly felt through Dan’s poetry, performed by Liam Neeson, and Philip’s revealing letters, read by Bill Pullman. The New Haven Independent writes: “This absorbing film contains news footage from the trio’s multiple arrests and trials — including the brothers’ roles as part of the Catonsville Nine, a group of Catholic activists whose actions sparked a movement that helped end the draft — as well as archival interviews with each of the three, Philip and Elizabeth’s children, and numerous peace activists who knew them. All this helps illuminate the trio’s engrossing journey and educate the viewer about their vital work, and its effect on them, their family, and the anti-war movement as a whole. If you did not know the story of the Berrigans before this film, it will soon become one you will be eager to share with others.”

DOCUMENTARY



THE BOYS WHO SAID NO!

Judith Ehrlich, U.S., 2020, 90 min.

Saturday, Nov. 13, 1:00 PM, Washington U./Brown, Free
Eventive, Special \$5 Price

As the war in Vietnam raged, one of the largest and most successful youth-led resistance movements in American history was growing at home. Hundreds of thousands of young men opposed to an unjust war said “No!” to being drafted into the military, risking up to five years in federal prison. Their individual courage and collective nonviolent actions helped end a tragic war and the draft. The film pays particular attention to draft resister and anti-war activist David Harris and his eventual wife, Joan Baez, but it features a large, diverse array of draft resisters, who appear in both well-chosen archival footage and sharp contemporary interviews. Directed by Oscar®-nominated filmmaker Judith Ehrlich (“The Most Dangerous Man in America: Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers”), “The Boys Who Said No!” tells for the first time the inspiring story and impact of the draft-resistance movement. Eat Drink Films writes: “‘The Boys Who Said No!’ celebrates the power of the word. From the flyers that were handed out at draft boards to the cadences of King during the March on Washington, to how word-of-mouth can turn out thousands to protest injustice in an age before social media, its power to effect meaningful change is undeniable. Then and now. If the resisters did not force the government to acknowledge the injustice of the war, they did succeed in irrevocably turning the tide of public opinion and forcing a cease-fire. It is too important a lesson to be forgotten. And ‘The Boys Who Said No!’ is too important a film to be missed.”



BRIGHTON 4TH

Levan Koguashvili, Georgia/Russia/U.S., 2021, 90 min., English, Georgian & Russian

Thursday, Nov. 11, 3:00 PM, Tivoli 2

Friday, Nov. 12, 8:30 PM, Tivoli 2

“Brighton 4th” — which won a trio of awards at the Tribeca Film Festival, including best international film — tells the story of Khaki, a humble former wrestling champion, whose supreme devotion to his family leads him on a journey far from his home in Tbilisi, Georgia, to visit son Soso in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn. To his dismay, Khaki discovers that Soso is not studying medicine, as he believed, but working for a moving company to repay a large gambling debt to a vicious local mob boss. Khaki vows to help his son get the chance at a better life no matter what the cost. Director Levan Koguashvili is himself a former Olympic wrestler, and his 2010 “Street Days” was selected as the Georgian entry for Best Foreign Language Film at the Academy Awards®. The Village Voice’s Michael Atkinson writes: “I wouldn’t miss Levan Koguashvili’s ‘Brighton 4th,’ a tiny but near-perfect, semi-comic portrait of the low-rent Georgian enclave in Brighton Beach. It’s quite like a wintery, shabby day trip to Coney Island, because the film fans out, embracing a dozen or more vivid, craggy-faced characters and their struggles and grifts, less to drive a story than to thumbnail a weathered, hard-smoking community.”



C'MON C'MON

Mike Mills, U.S., 2021, 108 min.

Sunday, Nov. 7, 8:00 PM, Tivoli 1

Radio journalist Johnny (Oscar® winner Joaquin Phoenix) and his young nephew forge a tenuous but transformational relationship when they are unexpectedly thrown together on a cross-country road trip in this delicate and deeply moving story about the connections between adults and children, the past and the future, from writer/director Mike Mills. Calling the film “a small, soft-spoken yet casually profound family drama,” Variety writes: “‘C’mon C’mon’ comes on the heels of a pair of intensely personal yet easily relatable films Mills wrote and directed about his relationship to his mother (embodied by Annette Bening in ‘20th Century Women’) and father (Christopher Plummer in ‘Beginners’). This one also deals with parenthood, albeit from the other side of the equation: The protagonist here is Phoenix’s character Johnny, who agrees to help his sister Viv (Gaby Hoffmann) by taking care of her 9-year-old son, Jesse (Woody Norman, so natural, it never feels like acting). It’s a transformative experience for both of them, but not in that pat, inspirational way you might get in a Judd Apatow or James L. Brooks movie.”

NARRATIVE



CATCH THE FAIR ONE

Josef Kubota Wladyka, U.S., 2021, 85 min.

Saturday, Nov. 20, 6:00 PM, Tivoli 2

In this gripping revenge thriller — executive-produced by Darren Aronofsky (“The Wrestler,” “Black Swan”) — Native American Kaylee (Kali Reis), a former champion boxer, engages in the fight of her life when she goes in search of her missing sister. Endeavoring to retrace her sister’s steps and find the man ultimately responsible for her disappearance, Kaylee becomes entangled in a horrifying human-trafficking operation. Reis, a real-life world boxing champion, not only stars in the film, delivering a powerful debut performance, but co-wrote “Catch the Fair One” with Josef Kubota Wladyka, who won a directorial award at the 2014 Tribeca Film Festival for “Manos Sucias.” Describing the film as “a lean, efficient variation on ‘Taken’ in which women are both predator and prey, and happily-ever-afters are best left to the imagination,” the Daily Beast writes: “Barreling forward without any interest in filling in all the sharp, jagged corners of its plot, ‘Catch the Fair One’ immerses us both in Kaylee’s headspace and in the seedy underworld milieu of sex trafficking. The fact that this is a portrait of white men exploiting Native American women for profit and sexual gratification isn’t lost on the film, but Wladyka shrewdly leaves those larger sociopolitical concerns unremarked-upon; like the rest of his thriller, he allows his spartan scripting and visual storytelling to convey the material’s wealth of pain, suffering, and righteous fury.”

NARRATIVE



Co-presented with Washington University Libraries' Film & Media Archive as part of the Henry Hampton Film Series

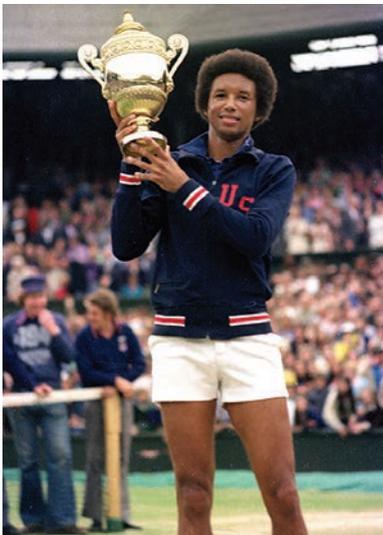
A CHOICE OF WEAPONS: INSPIRED BY GORDON PARKS

John Maggio, U.S., 2021, 89 min.

Saturday, Nov. 6, 7:30 PM, Washington U./Brown, Free

"A Choice of Weapons: Inspired by Gordon Parks" explores the power of images in advancing racial, economic, and social equality as seen through the lens of Gordon Parks, one of America's most trailblazing artists, and the generation of young photographers, filmmakers, and activists he inspired. Especially celebrated for his work in Life magazine, Parks' career as a photographer would have been more than enough to establish his cultural importance, but he was equally accomplished as a filmmaker, writer, composer, and painter. The first Black director to helm a major studio film, Parks adapted his own semi-autobiographical novel "The Learning Tree" in 1969, and also contributed the film's score. He then helped launch the blaxploitation genre with "Shaft" in 1970. Slant magazine writes: "A Choice of Weapons: Inspired by Gordon Parks' is a portrait of an artist whose work was so varied, impactful, and boundary-leaping that it's hard to imagine anyone like him coming around again." **With Novotny Lawrence, associate professor at Iowa State University, author of "Blaxploitation Films of the 1970s: Blackness and Genre," editor of "Documenting the Black Experience," and co-editor of "Beyond Blaxploitation."**

Shown with Listen to a Stranger: An Interview with Gordon Parks (Romas Slezas, U.S., 1973, 20 min.) Produced by Henry Hampton's Blackside Inc., "Listen to Stranger" intercuts scenes of famed photographer/director Gordon Parks talking about his life and creative work with behind-the-scenes footage of him directing "Shaft's Big Score." Preserved with funds from the National Film Preservation Foundation.



Sponsored by
The Powell Law Firm

CITIZEN ASHE

Rex Miller & Sam Pollard, U.S., 2021, 95 min.

Wednesday, Nov. 10, 7:00 PM, Tivoli 3

Eventive

"Citizen Ashe" is the story of sports legend and social activist Arthur Ashe. Known to most by his stellar sports career — Wimbledon, U.S. Open, and Australian Open winner and the first Black player to be selected for the U.S. Davis Cup Team — the film uncovers Ashe's personal evolution, showing how his activism grew and embraced not only the civil-rights movement and African Americans but all oppressed peoples throughout the world. Ashe died of AIDS-related complications in 1993 and was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom the same year. Directors Rex Miller and Sam Pollard (a SLIFF Lifetime Achievement Award honoree whose work includes "MLK/FBI" and "Two Trains Runnin'") explore the enduring legacy of Ashe in a documentary as elegant, meaningful, and poignant as the life he lived. Ashe's widow, brother, friends from his childhood in Richmond, Va., to his Grand Slam tournament playing and coaching days, as well as confidantes who nurtured his personal evolution from sports legend to global activist, describe the key events that shaped Ashe's quiet determination to "use what he had to do what he could." Ashe spent important time in St. Louis, moving to the city for his senior year in high school to hone his already-impressive tennis game with Richard Hudlin, a teacher and coach at Sumner. Hailing the film as a "fascinating, candid portrait," IndieWire writes: "Arthur Ashe was a trailblazer in tennis, a sport with a long history of white elitism. 'Citizen Ashe' captures key moments in Ashe's life but race looms large throughout. For the African-American tennis champion, it was an albatross that eventually motivated a thrust into the civil rights struggle."



CLARA SOLA

Nathalie Álvarez Mesén, Costa Rica, 2021, 108 min., Spanish

Tuesday, Nov. 9, 1:00 PM, Tivoli 3

Saturday, Nov. 13, 1:00 PM, Tivoli 3

In a remote village in Costa Rica, Clara, a withdrawn 40-year-old woman, experiences a sexual and mystical awakening as she begins a journey to free herself from the repressive religious and social conventions that have dominated her highly sheltered life. “Clara Sola” is a truly wondrous gem of a film — a deeply empathetic, nuanced portrait that is altogether exotic but never indulges in exoticism. The movie transports viewers into a magical yet fully lived-in world of discovery and wonder. The Hollywood Reporter writes: “The title character of the remarkable ‘Clara Sola’ is a 40-year-old virgin. You might also call her a middle-aged version of Sissy Spacek’s Carrie. But Nathalie Álvarez Mesén’s first feature is neither a comedy nor a horror freak-out. Set in a rural village and cast with nonactors, led by a feral performance from dancer Wendy Chinchilla Araya, the drama occupies its own territory, tinged with magical realism and deeply immersed in the sensory world. It’s also a vivid reminder that even a matriarchy can be paternalistic.”

NARRATIVE



A CLOCKWORK ORANGE

Stanley Kubrick, U.K./U.S., 1971, 136 min.

Sunday, Nov. 14, 1:30 PM, St. Louis Public Library, Free

Cinema St. Louis continues its year-long Golden Anniversaries series during SLIFF by featuring a half-dozen 1971 films on their 50 anniversary. Set in a dystopian England of the near-future, Stanley Kubrick’s once-controversial but now-classic adaptation of Anthony Burgess’ black-comic novel “A Clockwork Orange” follows the destructive trail of psychopathic delinquent Alex (Malcolm McDowell) and his faithful “droogs” as they gleefully engage in more than “a bit of the old ultraviolence.” Eventually brought to heel by the law, Alex receives the option of reducing his time in prison by participating in a government program designed to solve society’s crime problems. Subjected to the Ludovico Technique — a behavior-modification experiment intended to curb his destructive impulses — Alex ends up becoming utterly powerless to deal with the violence that surrounds him. Richard Schickel in Time writes: “‘A Clockwork Orange’ is a merciless, demoniac satire in the future imperfect. It posits a world somehow gone berserk, in which there are no real alternatives, only degrees of madness. Kubrick makes the whole thing (as he did in ‘Dr. Strangelove’) chillingly and often hilariously believable. Alex, so contemptuously in control, soon becomes a victim of his own lunatic society.” **With Andrew Wyatt, editor of and film critic for Cinema St. Louis’ The Lens and the Gateway Cinephile film blog.**

NARRATIVE

Co-presented with the St. Louis Public Library



CONFETTI

Ann Hu, U.S., 2020, 86 min.

Eventive

How far would a mother go to change her child's fate? When Lan (Zhu Zhu, "Cloud Atlas") learns that her 9-year-old daughter, Meimei (Harmonie Zhu), suffers from dyslexia, she will stop at nothing to help her, including leaving her life in China behind and venturing with Meimei to New York City, braving a place she knows nothing about and speaking not a word of English. Their pursuit of the impossible is a roller coaster, affected by the numerous people who join them on their journey, including Helen (Amy Irving), an outspoken, wheelchair-bound writer who reluctantly takes them in, and Dr. Wurmer (Helen Slater), the head of a private school that Lan views as Meimei's last hope. Finding a school for a recent immigrant requiring learning accommodations presents unique challenges, and ultimately Lan's low-wage factory job and visiting-immigrant status endanger Meimei's acceptance at a special school. What Lan and Meimei discover is that in a world where people are often not fully seen, their courageous belief in themselves will eventually lead them to people who see them for who they truly are. RogerEbert.com writes: "Writer/director Ann Hu, who based the film on her own experience, has a gift for subtle details that illuminate character and culture. The contrasting Chinese and American classrooms, the piles of books in Helen's New York apartment, the eyeglasses Lan does not need but wears to make her look more intellectual, help keep the film's world vibrant and engaging."

NARRATIVE



COW

Andrea Arnold, U.S., 2021, 94 min.

Saturday, Nov. 13, 4:00 PM, Tivoli 3

A documentary by acclaimed filmmaker Andrea Arnold ("American Honey," "Fish Tank," "Red Road"), "Cow" is an immersive work akin to films from the Harvard Sensory Ethnography Lab such as "Sweetgrass" and "Leviathan." Closely focused on a single dairy cow — the camera seems almost Velcroed to her throughout, only occasionally detaching and pulling back to provide a wider view — the film follows her through several cycles of calving (with the calves quickly hauled away to her consternation) and impassively records her repetitive daily routines (the automated milking, the regimented feeding with other cows, the immense time spent in crowded conditions in a bleak industrial-scaled structure) and her occasional respites in a pasture (though even then she's plagued by swarming flies). Without offering any explicit commentary, "Cow" speaks eloquently about humans' exploitation of animals for our benefit. Describing the film as "a nearly wordless, yet extremely loud and incredibly in-your-face argument for veganism," the Hollywood Reporter writes: "The film represents Arnold's first feature-length documentary, applying her characteristic kitchen-sink realism and quotidian poetry to a world where animals exist solely under human control, serving as mere supply chains for our unlimited appetites. Yet as 'Cow' reveals in one scene after another, livestock can have feelings, too. In fact, these animals are much closer to us than we'd like to imagine."

DOCUMENTARY



THE DAPHNE PROJECT

Zora Iman Crews & Alec Tibaldi, U.S., 2021, 97 min.

Eventive

Daphne Wilco, actor and self-empowered social-justice warrior, wreaks havoc on a production of Euripides' "The Bacchae" in the name of progress. Her progress. This oddball comedy deftly juggles any number of hot-button topics with aplomb. In shaping the film, co-writer and -director Zora Iman Crews, who also stars as Daphne, drew from her own experience as the only woman of color in a stage production. In a similar position, Daphne refuses to be grateful just to be let in the door. In fact, she pushes the door down because she values herself beyond what others see. Daphne simply demands what she deserves: a fair shot and respect. To paraphrase noted stage actor Margo Channing in "All About Eve": Fasten your seatbelts, it's going to be a bumpy night ... in the theater.

NARRATIVE



DELICATE STATE

Paula Rhodes, U.S., 2021, 89 min.

Saturday, Nov. 20, 2:00 PM, Tivoli 1

Eventive

We all hold some responsibility for our nation's ever-increasing lack of polite, respectful discourse. For first-time director (and former St. Louisan) Paula Rhodes, that sense of responsibility led her to envision a film in which a near-future U.S. is torn apart by civil war while the central couple is expecting a child. Making "Delicate State" particularly compelling is the fact that Rhodes, who co-stars in the film with her husband, Charlie Bodin, was actually pregnant during the shoot. Shot over the course of their actual pregnancy, with Rhodes ("The League," "Bunk'd") and Bodin ("Good Trouble," "Halt and Catch Fire") doubling as two-person crew, the film sets their impending parenthood in a time of extreme political division, but the couple remains blithely unconcerned about the greater world around them until it upends their privileged life. Now, they face a situation for which social media offers no preparation: bringing a new life into a country torn apart by war. When Rhodes conceived the film and her baby, she likely couldn't imagine just how close her dystopian docu-fiction would approach becoming an actual documentary with the events of Jan. 6, and "Delicate State" may yet prove all too prescient. "Delicate State" is part of SLIFF's annual New Filmmakers Forum (NFF) competition, which features five works by first-time feature directors. **With director Paula Rhodes.**

NARRATIVE



Co-presented with the St. Louis Public Library

DUEL

Steven Spielberg, U.S., 1971, 90 min.

Saturday, Nov. 6, 1:30 PM, St. Louis Public Library, Free

Cinema St. Louis continues its year-long Golden Anniversaries series during SLIFF by featuring a half-dozen 1971 films on their 50 anniversary. In Steven Spielberg's debut feature — intended as a TV movie but so accomplished that it was also released theatrically — David Mann (Dennis Weaver), a mild-mannered electronics salesman, is driving cross-country on a two-lane highway when he encounters an oil tanker piloted by an unseen driver who seems to enjoy annoying him with dangerous antics on the road. Unable to escape the demonic big rig, David finds himself in a dangerous game of cat-and-mouse with the monstrous truck. When the pursuit escalates to deadly levels, David must summon his inner warrior and turn the tables on his tormentor. Written by horror and science-fiction author Richard Matheson (“I Am Legend”), who adapted his own short story, “Duel” is widely considered the greatest television movie of all time. In “TV (The Book),” Matt Zoller Seitz writes: “(‘Duel’) feels a bit like a dry run for such future Spielberg classics as ‘Jaws’ and ‘War of the Worlds,’ wherein plucky individuals scramble to endure or defeat a faceless, implacable force; the vehicular mayhem also prefigures the chase sequences in the Indiana Jones films and in Spielberg’s first theatrical feature, 1974’s ‘The Sugarland Express.’ Almost 50 years after its initial broadcast, this stripped-down, subtly mythic action thriller retains a good deal of its power. Spielberg has said that he re-watches it twice a year ‘to remember what I did.’” **With Joshua Ray, film critic for Cinema St. Louis’ The Lens.**



EL FATHER PLAYS HIMSELF

Mo Scarpelli, Italy/U.K./U.S./Venezuela, 2020, 105 min., Spanish

Saturday, Nov. 6, 7:30 PM, Webster U./Moore

Eventive

“El Father Plays Himself” chronicles expat filmmaker Jorge Thielen Armand’s return to Venezuela to make a film based on his father’s life in the Amazon jungle. Despite clear warning signs of inevitable trouble, he opts to cast his father, Jorge Roque Thielen, to play himself. But what starts as an act of love spirals into a barely controlled chaos. A serious alcoholic who frequently can only perform when drinking, Thielen — whom everyone refers to as “El Father” — lashes out both verbally and physically, creating constant worry about whether the shoot can be completed. Happily, the film that resulted, “Fortitude,” eventually premiered at the Rotterdam film festival and received laudatory reviews. But “El Father Plays Himself,” the documentary about its making, proves far more than a simple companion piece — it’s a film worthy of comparison to “Burden of Dreams,” Les Blank’s jaw-dropping chronicle of Werner Herzog’s epic struggles to make “Fitzcarraldo.” SLIFF alum Mo Scarpelli (“Frame by Frame”) achieves an extreme intimacy in the film, capturing the utterly unguarded reactions of both father and son. Scarpelli is Armand’s wife — which the film never tells us, though the fact that they have a romantic relationship is obliquely hinted at in one sequence — and she has essentially unprecedented access. The Guardian writes: “El Father is clearly a rampaging narcissist who loves being the star of a movie about himself. But what about Armand, the quietly intense film-maker: what are his reasons for making the film? Scarpelli gently and sensitively suggests he has grown up in the shadow of El Father. He left Venezuela aged 15, and the film is his way of getting closer to his dad, perhaps, and possibly of punishing him — or at least forcing him to come face to face with his failures in life and as a father. It’s thought-provoking stuff.”



ENCOUNTER

Michael Pearce, U.K./U.S., 2021, 108 min.

Sunday, Nov. 14, 8:15 PM, Tivoli 1

In “Encounter” — which debuted at the Telluride and Toronto film festivals — former Marine Malik Khan (Oscar® nominee Riz Ahmed, “The Sound of Metal”) kidnaps his two young sons (Lucien-River Chauhan and Aditya Gedda) from his estranged wife in a desperate bid to protect them from alien microorganisms that he believes are surreptitiously infecting the populace. As they embark on a cross-country trip in pursuit of the safety of a military base, the trio’s path is strewn with obstacles — including troubling questions about Malik’s service history and mental stability. “Encounter” co-stars Oscar® winner Octavia Spencer (“The Help,” “Hidden Figures”), Janina Gavankar, and Rory Cochrane. Time Out writes: “British writer-director Michael Pearce kept audiences guessing with his intriguing 2017 debut ‘Beast’ and his follow-up is laced with just as much ambiguity. Co-written with ‘Giri/Haji’ screenwriter Joe Barton and starring Riz Ahmed, ‘Encounter’ incorporates elements of sci-fi creature feature lifted from the likes of ‘Invasion of the Body Snatchers’ or ‘The Faculty.’ Mostly, though, it functions as a character-driven, psychological journey. A seriously watchable one, too. Ahmed is in his element as this anxious father who can switch between doting dad and petrifying patriarch with impressive ease. His trademark wide eyes often draw you into his humanity even when his edgy demeanour is designed to discomfort. ‘Encounter’ has a whole lot of heart and takes a sensitive approach to PTSD that is underscored by a cultural tension that comes to a head in its high-octane, action-packed final act. Ending with an iconic image, Pearce shows both a visual and thematic appreciation for genre films in all sorts of endearing and enigmatic ways. Like his fired-up man on a mission here, he’s going places.”

NARRATIVE



EYIMOFE: THIS IS MY DESIRE

Arie Esiri & Chuko Esiri, Nigeria, 2020, 116 min.

Wednesday, Nov. 10, 3:00 PM, Tivoli 2

Saturday, Nov. 13, 12:30 PM, Tivoli 2

A triumph at the 2020 Berlin International Film Festival, the revelatory debut feature from co-directors (and twin brothers) Arie and Chuko Esiri is a heartrending and hopeful portrait of everyday human endurance in Lagos, Nigeria. Shot on richly textured 16 mm film and infused with the spirit of neorealism, “Eyimofe” traces the journeys of two distantly connected strangers — Mofe (Jude Akuwudike), an electrician dealing with the fallout of a family tragedy, and Rosa (Temi Ami-Williams), a hairdresser supporting her pregnant teenage sister — as they each pursue their dream of starting a new life in Europe while bumping up against the harsh economic realities of a world in which every interaction is a transaction. From these intimate stories emerges a vivid snapshot of life in contemporary Lagos, whose social fabric is captured in all its vibrancy and complexity. The New York Times writes: “With aerial shots of Lagos’s bustling marketplaces and a sound design attuned to the city’s chatter, the directors, Arie and Chuko Esiri, evocatively capture a milieu where everyone — rich or poor — is always hustling and bargaining. The cinematographer Arseni Khachaturan shoots on warm, grainy 16-millimeter film, which emphasizes not just the vibrant colors of Lagos but also its textures. The heat, dust and crumbling facades of Mofe and Rosa’s world contrast with the rarefied air and glossy surfaces of the venues where Rosa’s boyfriend takes her on dates. The portrait of life that emerges organically from this understated, observant approach makes ‘Eyimofe’ the rare social realist drama that conveys critique without didacticism and empathy without pity.”

NARRATIVE



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THE FALCONER

Adam Sjöberg & Seanne Winslow, Oman, 2020, 100 min., Arabic & English

Friday, Nov. 19, 9:15 PM, Tivoli 3

Saturday, Nov. 20, 7:00 PM, Tivoli 3

Eventive

“The Falconer” thrillingly recounts a larger-than-life adventure, but at its core the film tells an intimate story about the friendship between two boys from very different backgrounds. Inspired by true events, “The Falconer” features an unlikely pair of best friends: Tariq, the Lebanese-born son of a poor beekeeper, and Cai, a privileged Westerner. The inseparable pair work together at a ramshackle zoo in Oman. Their carefree friendship is challenged when Tariq promises to help his sister, Alia, escape from an abusive marriage. Cai’s worldview and love for animals is pitted against Tariq’s daring plan to steal animals from the zoo and sell them to save Alia. The boys are forced to wrestle with morally complex choices that reveal the vast distance between their worlds. To ensure that the film was “from” rather than “about” the region, American directors Seanne Winslow and Adam Sjöberg brought the real-life Cai and Tariq to set, worked with village women to plan the traditional wedding, and surrounded themselves with collaborators in the region, and that respectful approach beautifully informs both the story and the visual language of “The Falconer.”

NARRATIVE



Sponsored by Paul A. Randolph

FERGUSON RISES

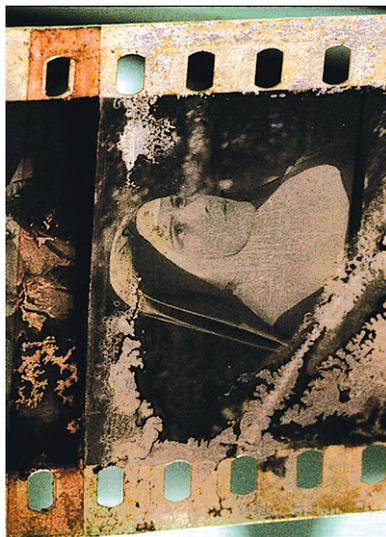
Mobolaji Olambiwonnu, U.S., 2021, 83 min.

Saturday, Nov. 6, 4:30 PM, Tivoli 1

How does a father find purpose in pain? In 2014, Michael Brown Sr.’s son was killed by White police officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, an event that fueled the global Black Lives Matter movement. But his personal story seeking justice and healing has not been told until now. “Ferguson Rises” provides an excellent summation of the circumstances surrounding Michael Brown Jr.’s death and the subsequent uprising, including the events after the decision not to press charges against Wilson. But the film also explores where Ferguson stands today — what’s changed, what remains ever the same — keeping a strong focus on Brown Sr. and the activism in which he’s been tirelessly engaged since his son’s death. Screen Daily writes: “This is an act of remembrance and quiet defiance, a principled refusal to let Brown’s death be forgotten, and as such the film is a worthwhile testament to keeping the victims of police brutality alive in our minds. The film’s subjects suggest that the furor provoked by Brown’s murder not only inspired Black Lives Matter but began to force white Americans to consider inequality in their communities. That reckoning has only grown in subsequent years, and ‘Ferguson Rises’ wants those difficult conversations to continue — while also remembering Michael Brown Jr. so that others won’t have to suffer his fate.” **With director Mobolaji Olambiwonnu, producer Tanayi Seabrook, and subject Michael Brown Sr.**

Shown with **October 27th, 2020** (Hannah Price, U.S., 2021, 16 min.) Oct. 27, 2020, was the second night of protests in Philadelphia over the killing of Walter Wallace Jr., a Black man who had a bipolar episode and was shot by police.

DOCUMENTARY



Co-presented with Washington University Libraries' Film & Media Archive

FILM, THE LIVING RECORD OF OUR MEMORY

Inés Toharia, Canada/Spain, 2021, 119 min.

Saturday, Nov. 20, 1:00 PM, Washington U./Brown, Free

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

Why are we still able to watch moving images captured more than 125 years ago? As we move ever further into the digital age, our audiovisual heritage seems to be taken increasingly for granted, and much of our filmed history and cinema has already been lost forever. In “Film, the Living Record of Our Memory,” archivists, curators, technicians, and filmmakers from around the world explain what film preservation is and why it is needed. The documentary celebrates the custodians of film whose work behind the scenes safeguards the survival of motion pictures. Featuring a who’s who of film preservation — including Jonas Mekas, Rick Prelinger, Kevin Brownlow, Wim Wenders, and countless preservationists and technicians from around the world — the film illustrates their vital work with hand-painted films, cinema classics such as F.W. Murnau’s “Faust” and Abel Gance’s “Napoleon,” proto-moving image technology, early special-effects trick films, and amazing footage from Africa, India, South America, and other far-flung places. **With Andy Urich, curator of the Film & Media Archive at Washington University Libraries.**

Shown with A Brief History of Hollywood (Nate Barlow, U.S., 2020, 10 min.) The histories of the Hollywood sign and the Hollywood industry are visually interwoven.

DOCUMENTARY



THE FINAL 19

Timothy Breitbach, U.S./Vietnam, 2021, 106 min.

Thursday, Nov. 11, 5:00 PM, Tivoli 1, Free

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

“The Final 19” tells the harrowing true story of Sgt. Dan Hefel, one of the final 19 prisoners of war to come home from Vietnam. Hefel’s riveting, sometimes raucous first-person account is by turns intense, horrific, and blackly humorous. His Vietnam experiences included both a delirious bout with malaria and a broken back from the helicopter crash that led to his capture. The severely wounded Hefel managed to survive being carried through the jungle on a difficult journey, but during his subsequent imprisonment, he faced torture and exploitation as a propaganda pawn by the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). The film is directed by Hefel’s cousin, St. Louisan Tim Breitbach. **With director Timothy Breitbach.**

DOCUMENTARY



Sponsored by Andy & Karen Leonard

A FIRE WITHIN

Christopher Chambers, Canada/Ethiopia/U.S., 2021, 88 min.

Saturday, Nov. 13, 7:30 PM, Washington U./Brown, Free Eventive, Special \$5 Price

“A Fire Within” documents a U.S. court case brought by a trio of Ethiopian women against the man who tortured them during the country’s Marxist-Leninist military rule after the overthrow of Haile Sellasie. The film addresses the period from 1977-78, known as the Red Terror, when young people, particularly those with education, were rounded up, tortured, and killed in significant numbers to suppress dissent. One of the survivors, Edge, came to the States as a refugee in 1989, and began working in a hotel in Atlanta. At the hotel, she encountered a fellow employee whom she was horrified to recognize as the man who was in charge of her neighborhood association — which devolved into an instrument of the military’s authoritarian rule — and who oversaw her torture when she was just a teen. Shocked to find him in Atlanta, she contacted two of her friends, also teen victims of the man and now refugees in the States, to confirm that her identification was correct. Certain that he was their tormenter, the three women decide to bring him to justice, but at the time there was no international tribunal that would have served as a venue, so they instead have to use the U.S. courts. Adroitly structured, telling a complicated history with efficiency, the film makes especially fine use of reconstructions to show the women’s stories during both their torture/imprisonment as teens and their efforts to bring the perpetrator to justice as adults. Director Christopher Chambers is a SLIFF alum who was the winner of our New Filmmakers Forum in 2015 with “Aram, Aram.” **With director Christopher Chambers.**

DOCUMENTARY



A FIRST FAREWELL

Wang Lina, China, 2018, 86 min., Mandarin & Uighur

Eventive

With lush imagery and touching naturalistic performances, “A First Farewell” finds poetry in the minutiae of Uighurs’ life in Xinjiang, China, through the story of Isa, a Muslim boy from the countryside. Left deaf and mute from meningitis, his mother frequently wanders away from home, and Isa is torn between taking care of her, going to school, and doing farm work. The boy is also good friends with a lively little girl named Kalbinur, and together they take care of an adorable lamb. Unfortunately, Isa’s two key relationships will soon be ruptured. Because Kalbinur’s grades in Mandarin are terrible, her family makes plans to leave the village so she can attend a Chinese school in the city. At the same time, Isa’s father decides to send his mother to a nursing home. Reading a story called “A First Farewell” in school, Isa doesn’t initially grasp its implications, but he soon experiences the feelings it evokes firsthand. Variety writes: “An outstanding debut feature by Chinese writer-director Wang Lina, ‘A First Farewell’ centers on three Uighur children and their farming families whose lives are upended by regulations demanding increased levels of Mandarin language-based teaching in schools. Beautifully photographed and performed by amazingly talented non-professional child actors, Wang’s film is an emotionally rewarding glimpse into challenges faced by this Muslim minority. Avoiding commentary on headline-grabbing issues relating to the Uighur that surely would have seen her work fall foul of Chinese censors, Wang opts for storytelling reminiscent of many fine Iranian films such as Majid Majidi’s ‘The Color of Paradise.’”

NARRATIVE



THE FIRST STEP

Brandon Kramer, U.S., 2021, 86 min.

Sunday, Nov. 7, 5:00 PM, Tivoli 1

Eventive

“The First Step” — directed by SLIFF alum Brandon Kramer (“City of Trees”) — explores the divisions within the activist community when it comes to crossing political lines to achieve bipartisan compromise. CNN contributor Van Jones, a Black progressive activist known for calling Donald Trump’s election “a whitelash” live on primetime TV, controversially crosses party lines to win support from both sides of the aisle for criminal-justice reform and a response to the addiction crisis. Jones’ journey building bridges in a time of extreme polarization takes him deep into the messy drama of the Trump administration, internal divisions within both parties, and the lives of activists fighting on the frontlines for their communities. Variety writes: “‘The First Step’ gains its best footing when Jones brings together two groups of community activists, one from Los Angeles, the other from West Virginia. South L.A. citizen Tylo James was born addicted to heroin, while WV.-based Bikers Against Heroin founder Dee Pierce has a daughter with addiction issues. These two women remind viewers that documentaries are often at their best when they let compelling, unexpected characters shine. When Jones encourages each of the groups’ members to travel to the other’s turf and then on to D.C. and the White House, there is genuine drama as a number of the activists of color struggle with their sense of who they are, the trust they’ve worked to instill in their community and whether or not going to the Trump White House can align with their personal — and honed — sense of ethics.” **With producer Lance Kramer.**

DOCUMENTARY



THE FIRST WAVE

Matthew Heineman, U.S., 2021, 93 min.

Wednesday, Nov. 10, 6:00 PM, Tivoli 2

Directed by Oscar®-nominated and Emmy-winning filmmaker Matthew Heineman (“Cartel Land,” “City of Ghosts,” “A Private War”), “The First Wave” spotlights the everyday heroes at the epicenter of Covid-19 as they come together to fight one of the greatest threats the world has ever encountered. Leaving a devastating trail of death and despair, this once-in-a-century pandemic changed the very fabric of daily life and exposed long-standing inequities in our society. The “first wave” of Covid-19 ravaged New York from March through June 2020. With Heineman’s signature approach of character-driven cinéma vérité, “The First Wave” uses exclusive access to one of New York’s hardest-hit hospital systems to document those harrowing first four months, embedding with a group of doctors, nurses, and patients on the frontlines as they navigate the crisis. Their distinct storylines serve as a microcosm through which audience members can view the emotional and societal impacts of the pandemic, providing a testament to the strength of the human spirit.

DOCUMENTARY

Shown with E14 (Peiman Zekavat, U.K., 2020, 16 min.) A study in human behavior in the densest and most overdeveloped residential area in the U.K. during the coronavirus pandemic.



FLEE

Jonas Poher Rasmussen, Denmark/France/Norway/Sweden/U.S., 2021, 83 min., Danish & English

Sunday, Nov. 14, 2:00 PM, Tivoli 1

“Flee” — winner of Sundance’s Grand Jury Prize in the World Cinema Documentary section — tells the story of Amin Nawabi as he grapples with a painful secret he has kept hidden for 20 years, one that threatens to derail the life he has built for himself and his soon-to-be husband. Telling his story to director Jonas Poher Rasmussen, Amin recounts for the first time his extraordinary journey as a child refugee from Afghanistan, and the film uses animation to bring that gripping tale to vivid life. IndieWire writes: “There have been countless movies about the immigration crisis, but none of them have the sheer ingenuity of ‘Flee.’ In Danish filmmaker Jonas Poher Rasmussen’s poignant animated documentary, an Afghan refugee recounts his 20-year survival story, and the dazzling storytelling goes there with him. Yet the remarkable graphic style works in tandem with a narrative that would stun in any format: As the man — identified only by a pseudonym, Amin Nawabi — gradually opens up about his experiences, ‘Flee’ builds to a powerful secret buried in his past that reframes the global migrant crisis in intimate terms.”

[DOCUMENTARY](#)



FOR THE LEFT HAND

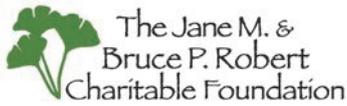
Gordon Quinn & Leslie Simmer, U.S., 2021, 74 min.

Friday, Nov. 5, 7:30 PM, Webster U./Moore

Co-directed by SLIFF Lifetime Achievement Award winner Gordon Quinn, “For the Left Hand” profiles Norman Malone, a Black pianist who lost most use of his right hand at age 10 after his father — dying from advanced syphilis — attacked him and his two siblings with a hammer before committing suicide by throwing himself in front of a train. The film tracks the life story of Malone, now in his mid-80s, who overcame the hurdles his disability created, becoming a beloved but demanding Chicago high-school music teacher/chorus master over a long career. Although essentially one-handed, Malone also continued to pursue his childhood interest in the piano, writing his thesis on pre-eminent left-handed pianist Paul Wittgenstein, whose own right hand was amputated during World War I, and obsessively searching for and playing compositions for the left hand. Malone’s story was first told in a series of articles by Chicago Tribune music writer Howard Reich — whose documentary “Prisoner of the Past” played at SLIFF — when he was 78, and it led to an offer from the West Hartford Symphony Orchestra for him to make his professional orchestral debut with a performance of Ravel’s Concerto for the Left Hand, which is regarded as the quintessential piece for the left hand. A charmer, Malone exhibits the sort of steely resolve you’d expect from someone who faced such difficulties, but he’s also realistically fretful about his limited abilities, and the film dramatically builds to his performance of the Ravel. **With Chicago Tribune music critic and film producer/writer Howard Reich.**

*Shown with **A Concerto Is a Conversation** (Kris Bowers & Ben Proudfoot, U.S., 2020, 13 min.)* A virtuoso jazz pianist and film composer tracks his family’s lineage through his

[DOCUMENTARY](#)



Sponsored by Jane M. and
Bruce P. Robert Charitable
Foundation

FRANCE *Par ce demi-clair matin*

Bruno Dumont, France, 2021, 133 min., English, French & German

Saturday, Nov. 13, 9:00 PM, Tivoli 2

Sunday, Nov. 14, 8:30 PM, Tivoli 2

Set in contemporary Paris, “France” — the latest from SLIFF alum Bruno Dumont (“Slack Bay,” “The Life of Jesus”) — stars Léa Seydoux, who brilliantly holds the center of this unexpected, unsettling new film, which starts out as a satire of the contemporary news media before steadily spiraling out into something richer and darker. Never one to shy away from provoking his viewers, Dumont casts Seydoux as France de Meurs, a seemingly unflappable superstar TV journalist whose career, home life, and psychological stability are shaken after she carelessly drives into a young delivery man on a busy Paris street. This accident triggers a series of self-reckonings, as well as a strange romance that proves impossible to shake. A film that teases at redemption while refusing to grant absolution, “France” is tragicomic and deliciously ambivalent — a very 21st-century treatment of the difficulty of maintaining identity in a corrosive culture. “France” has screened at a bevy of major international film fests, including Cannes, Toronto, and New York.

NARRATIVE



Co-presented with the St. Louis
Public Library

THE FRENCH CONNECTION

William Friedkin, U.S., 1971, 104 min.

Saturday, Nov. 13, 1:30 PM, St. Louis Public Library, Free

Cinema St. Louis continues its year-long Golden Anniversaries series during SLIFF by featuring a half-dozen 1971 films on their 50 anniversary. William Friedkin’s gritty police drama “The French Connection” — which won five Oscars®, including Best Film, Best Actor, and Best Director — follows two tough New York City cops, Jimmy “Popeye” Doyle (Gene Hackman) and Buddy “Cloudy” Russo (Roy Scheider), as they attempt to intercept a huge heroin shipment coming from France. The film offers a fascinating study in contrasts between Doyle, a short-tempered, alcoholic bigot who paradoxically proves a hard-working and dedicated police officer, and nemesis Alain Charnier (Buñuel regular Fernando Rey), a suave, urbane gentleman who heads one of the largest drug suppliers of pure heroin to North America. As the film’s centerpiece, Friedkin — who went on to direct the hugely successful “The Exorcist” and the vastly underappreciated “Sorcerer” later in the ’70s — stages one of cinema’s most jaw-dropping and intensely harrowing car-chase sequences. The Guardian’s Peter Bradshaw writes: “The final moments of ‘The French Connection’ are a powerful, even magnificent repudiation of the modern piety of redemption and sympathy. It is a stunningly nihilist ending, one to set alongside Polanski’s ‘Chinatown.’ Perhaps most striking of all is the leisureed, unhurried pace of ‘The French Connection.’ There are many scenes in which Doyle simply cruises around New York, searching, brooding; these, to me, evoke the city as powerfully as ‘Mean Streets’ or ‘Taxi Driver.’ The details are lovingly recorded: sometimes it seems as if we are watching a documentary by the Maysles brothers. And the ghostly, ambient honk of car horns, sometimes fluttering a little on the soundtrack, say 1971 like nothing else. Having said that, a lot of ‘The French Connection’ feels contemporary. The long surveillance scenes anticipate the modern world of police work. And in their rickety, prehistoric way, Doyle and Russo look like the forebears of McNulty and Bunk in ‘The Wire.’” **With Calvin Wilson, theater critic for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.**

NARRATIVE



FROM THE HOOD TO THE HOLLER

Pat McGee, U.S., 2021, 102 min.

Sunday, Nov. 7, 7:30 PM, Washington U./Brown, Free

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

Running in the 2020 Democratic primary for the U.S. Senate seat held by Mitch McConnell, Charles Booker attempts one of the biggest upsets in political history by challenging establishment-backed candidate Amy McGrath. “From the Hood to the Holler” follows his campaign across Kentucky, from the most urban to the most rural settings, with Booker and his team rewriting the campaign playbook. Instead of exploiting divisions, they instead lean into the idea that average Kentuckians have common bonds, united by their shared day-to-day fight to survive. Forcefully asserting that poverty and struggle are color blind, the African American Booker works to represent Kentuckians, both Black and White, who feel entirely left out of the political process. His message is simple: Whether you are from the city “hood” — like Booker — or the Appalachian “holler,” you are not invisible. **With director Pat McGee and subject Charles Booker.**

DOCUMENTARY



THE GIRL AND THE SPIDER *Das Mädchen und die Spinne*

Ramon Zürcher & Silvan Zürcher, Switzerland, 2021, 99 min., German

Friday, Nov. 5, 3:00 PM, Tivoli 2

Sunday, Nov. 7, 8:30 PM, Tivoli 2

As her roommate Lisa prepares to move out of their apartment, Mara contemplates the end of an era. Furniture is moved, walls painted, cupboards built. Amid all the hustle and bustle, secret longings and desires come to the surface and coalesce around the roommates, Lisa’s mother, the movers, the girls’ old neighbors, the neighbors’ cat, Lisa’s new neighbor, and an ever-expanding cast of characters. Day turns into night and one final party in the apartment. When the last box is moved, the fragments of their lives remain. The Zürcher brothers compose a poetic panopticon of forms of human relationships that is at once a study of everyday life, a fairytale, and a psychological portrait of a brittle world. Following “The Strange Little Cat,” “The Girl and the Spider” is the second installment in a trilogy about human togetherness, a ballad about the need for closeness and the pain of separation. IndieWire writes: “The tantalizing mysteries in the latest film from the ‘Strange Little Cat’ team of Ramon and Silvan Zürcher never quite reveal themselves in this story about two roommates torn asunder and to separate middle-class flats in Berlin. While the mad entropy of this chamber piece — filled with doppelgängers, women coming and going from rooms, as T.S. Eliot might say — will drive some viewers barking insane, those patient and curious enough to soak in the fuzzy vibes of the film’s painterly reds and yellows and key into this film’s odd rhythms will find much to love.”

NARRATIVE



GOSSAMER FOLDS

Lisa Donato, U.S., 2020, 95 min.

NARRATIVE

Eventive

“Gossamer Folds,” which beautifully demonstrates that hatred is a learned experience and that we can instead opt for open-hearted kindness, explores the unlikely bonds that can be found next door. In 1986, 10-year-old Tate (Jackson Robert Scott, “Stephen King’s It”) finds himself uprooted and unwillingly moved to the suburbs of Kansas City. As his parent’s marriage unravels, the boy finds solace in an unlikely friendship with his new neighbors: a retired Black college professor and his 25-year-old transgender daughter, Gossamer (Alexandra Grey). Although Tate’s transphobic father forbids him from engaging with Gossamer, the boy sees beyond the discrimination he’s been taught and ultimately finds a new family of his own choosing. The Advocate writes: “The charming, touching movie, taking place in the summer of 1986 and directed by Lisa Donato, stars trans actress Alexandra Grey, a stunningly talented veteran of projects including ‘Transparent,’ ‘Empire,’ and, recently, ‘The Alienist: Angel of Darkness.’ (Tate) is initially wary of Gossamer — his father calls her ‘the deviant next door’ and worse — but she eventually wins him over, and the story of their friendship is sweet without ever being treacly, and it evokes both laughter and tears. It does not shy away from showing the difficulties of being transgender in a time and place where acceptance is rare, but it’s not a film about victimization, and it portrays both Gossamer’s strengths and her vulnerabilities.”



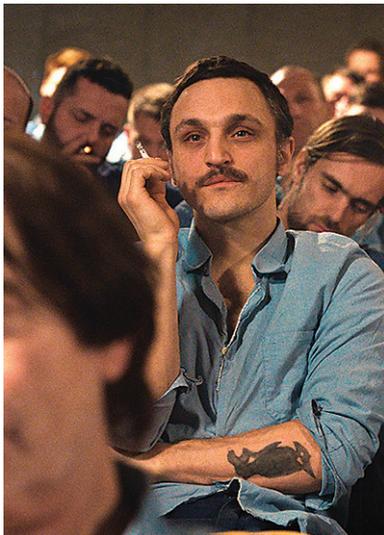
THE GRAND BOLERO

Gabriele Fabbro, Italy, 2021, 90 min., English & Italian

NARRATIVE

Eventive

When Roxanne (Lidia Vitale), a gruff, middle-age pipe-organ restorer, begins working with her new 20-year-old mute female assistant (Ludovica Mancini), she struggles to control her surprising and obsessive attraction. Although Covid-19 remains mostly in the background, director Gabriele Fabbro wrote “The Grand Bolero” to explore our aching need for human connection and touch during the pandemic. As befits a work in which organs play such a central role, “The Grand Bolero” also wonderfully showcases Fabbro’s love of classical music in films: The soundtrack was recorded on three different types of organs, including the Grand Organ of Villasanta (one of the biggest symphonic organs in Italy) and a Mighty Wurlitzer (currently the only theater organ in Italy). Another thread in the film’s weave is its tribute to the movie’s past, with Fabbro using a modern cinematic approach (including stereotype-free female protagonists and method performances) while referencing the classic silents, which were often accompanied by pipe organs.



GREAT FREEDOM *Grosse Freiheit*

Sebastian Meise, Austria/Germany, 2021, 117 min., German

Sunday, Nov. 7, 9:15 PM, Tivoli 3

Monday, Nov. 8, 1:00 PM, Tivoli 3

In postwar Germany, Hans is imprisoned again and again for being homosexual. Due to the infamous anti-gay legal ruling called Paragraph 175, his desire for literal and sexual freedom is systematically being destroyed along with his mind. The one steady relationship in his life becomes his longtime cellmate, Viktor, who is a convicted murderer. What starts in revulsion grows to something called love. Director Sebastian Meisel was the winner of the Un Certain Regard Jury Prize at the 2021 Cannes Film Festival. The Hollywood Reporter writes: “Chronicling an ignominious chapter in queer history, ‘Great Freedom’ is also a contemplative psychological study of the effects of incarceration, and beyond that, an unconventional love story, tender but unsentimental. Built around a moving characterization of defiant resilience conveyed with great restraint by Franz Rogowski, who continues to impress after ‘Victoria’ and his work with Christian Petzold in ‘Transit’ and ‘Undine,’ Meise’s film should elevate the stock of both the actor and the Austrian director.”

NARRATIVE



A HERO

Ashgar Farhadi, Iran, 2021, 127 min., Persian

Friday, Nov. 19, 8:00 PM, Tivoli 1

In “A Hero” — the latest from Ashgar Farhadi, acclaimed writer/director of “The Past,” “The Salesman,” “Everybody Knows,” and the Oscar®-winning “A Separation” — calligrapher Rahim (Amir Jadidi) has been imprisoned because of an escalating debt he’s unable to repay. During a two-day leave, with the help of girlfriend Farkhondeh (Sahar Goldoust), Rahim appears to find a means of freeing himself, but as is usual in the work of Farhadi — whose plots endlessly twist in new and unexpected directions — things don’t quite go as planned. “A Hero” was named the co-winner of this year’s Cannes Grand Prix. IndieWire writes: “Epitomized by the heart-wrenching uncertainty of 2011’s ‘A Separation,’ Farhadi’s social melodramas begin with straightforward predicaments that are peeled back — layer by layer, and with deceptive casualness — while the hard bulb of a moral crisis is revealed deep underneath. Even his worst movies offer a kind of Ikea-worthy functionality, and ship with exactly as many pieces as you need to put them together, but ‘A Hero’ is one of his best for how each of its parts help complicate the design to completion. And it takes all of them to reach another of Farhadi’s signature endings — poignant and understated as ever, yet this time ruefully well-aware of how the search for moral purity can be futile once it falls under the public eye.”

NARRATIVE



HIT THE ROAD

Panah Panahi, Iran, 2021, 93 min., Persian

Wednesday, Nov. 10, 1:00 PM, Tivoli 3

Friday, Nov. 12, 7:00 PM, Tivoli 3

A chaotic, tender family is on a road trip across a rugged landscape, but to where? In the backseat, Dad appears to nurse an injured leg, but is it really broken? Mom tries to laugh when she's not holding back tears. The kid keeps exploding into choreographed car karaoke. All of them are fussing over the sick dog and getting on each others' nerves. Only the mysterious older brother remains quiet. This warm, funny, touching, exuberant, poetic first feature by Panah Panahi, son of celebrated Iranian filmmaker Jafar Panahi ("The White Balloon," "Taxi"), had a triumphant premiere at this year's Cannes Directors' Fortnight. Variety writes: "With a touch on the pedal so light you don't even feel the woosh, Panah Panahi goes instantaneously from zero to 60 with his debut feature, 'Hit the Road.' Doubly surprising, he does it repeatedly within the film too, from scene to scene — and within scenes, from moment to moment — accelerating and decelerating so abruptly, switching moods like gears, like radio stations, that by the end we should be rattling around inside, carsick, dying to get out. Instead, its 93 minutes whip by so airily, it's possible not to realize how much you've learned to love the family whose road trip you've shared in, until the credits roll and you immediately start to miss them."

NARRATIVE



HIVE *Zgjoj*

Blerta Basholli, Albania/Kosovo, 2021, 84 min., Albanian

Friday, Nov. 5, 1:00 PM, Tivoli 3

Saturday, Nov. 6, 7:00 PM, Tivoli 3

In the searing drama "Hive," Fahrije lives with fading hope and burgeoning grief since her husband went missing during the war in Kosovo. To provide for her struggling family, Fahrije pulls the other widows in her community together to launch a business selling a local food product. They find healing and solace in considering a future without their husbands, but their desire to begin living independently is met with hostility. The men in the patriarchy-dominated village condemn Fahrije's efforts to empower herself and the women around her, starting a feud that threatens both their newfound sovereignty and the financial future of Fahrije's family. Against the backdrop of Eastern Europe's civil unrest and lingering misogyny, Fahrije and the women of her village join in a struggle to find hope in the face of an uncertain future. Winner of the Audience Award, Directing Award, and World Cinema Grand Jury Prize at Sundance, "Hive" is a pithy, devastating portrait of loss and the uphill journey to freedom. The Hollywood Reporter writes: "In 'Hive,' her first feature, writer-director Blerta Basholli is inspired by the true story of Fahrije Hoti, a single mother who, many years after her husband goes missing, is forced by economic necessity to face his loss. Instead of focusing on her emotional journey, Basholli crafts an engrossing, utterly classic tale of overcoming adversity around how she bucks the hide-bound town, gets out of the house and finds a job that will support her family."

NARRATIVE



HOCKEYLAND

Tommy Haines, U.S., 2021, 107 min.

Saturday, Nov. 20, 4:00 PM, Tivoli 3

In Minnesota's unforgiving North Country, a tradition of grit has been forged in the mines and on the ice. But, to quote a famous Minnesotan, the times they are a-changin'. Pressed between yesterday's definition and new notions of masculinity, senior boys in rival communities — one an emerging dynasty, one with a fabled past — skate for a last chance to etch their names into local lore. In America's far reaches, "Hockeyland" offers a portrait of young men in transition. Eschewing voyeurism, filmmaker Tommy Haines — who grew up in the Iron Range — brings a patient observational approach to his subjects and a subtle cinematic eye to his images. Beauty and violence collide: Not just in the carefully choreographed filming of ice hockey, but in the relationships between young men, and in the relationship between "Iron Rangers" and the land. Following one long winter, the film captures the natural drama of the collective obsession with the high-school hockey season, but the heart comes from unwrapping closely guarded personal stories about shame, pain, life, loss, and the audacity to dream big. "Hockeyland" captures place and people with empathy, honesty, and a critical eye, re-examining cursory notions of "blue-collar America." Haines' debut feature, "Pond Hockey" (2008), has been cited as "the best hockey movie ever" by ESPN. His "Saving Brinton" screened at SLIFF in 2017.



HUDA'S SALON

Hany Abu-Assad, Egypt/Palestine, 2021, 91 min., Arabic

Friday, Nov. 19, 7:00 PM, Tivoli 3

Based on real events, 'Huda's Salon' — directed by two-time SLIFF alum Hany Abu-Assad ("Omar," "Rana's Wedding") — is a heart-racing, entertaining feminist thriller in which two women fight for their freedom. Nadia, a young mother married to a jealous man, goes to Huda's salon in Bethlehem for a haircut and an attentive ear. But this ordinary visit turns sour when Huda, after having put Nadia in a shameful situation, blackmails her into working for the Secret Service of the Israeli occupiers and thus betraying her people. The Playlist writes: "There's no escape for the women in Hany Abu-Assad's blistering new film 'Huda's Salon,' a fearless statement on gender oppression shaped as an edge-of-your-seat thriller. Back in top form, the acclaimed director behind stunners such as 'Paradise Now' and 'Omar' returns to dissecting the perilous Palestinian experience under Israeli control. Strikingly bold in its dramatic construction, and adept at folding the macro issues into the lives of everyday residents of a tumultuous area of the world, 'Huda's Salon' is contained inside an expertly paced plot that seems ready to combust at any second."

NARRATIVE



THE HUMANS

Stephen Karam, U.S., 2021, 108 min.

Saturday, Nov. 20, 5:00 PM, Tivoli 1

A piercingly funny and haunting debut film from writer/director Stephen Karam, “The Humans” explores the hidden dread of a family and the love that binds them together. Set inside a pre-war duplex in downtown Manhattan, “The Humans” — whose deep cast includes Richard Jenkins, Beanie Feldstein, Steven Yeun, Amy Schumer, and June Squibb — follows the course of an evening in which three generations of the Blake family gather to celebrate Thanksgiving in the younger daughter’s new apartment. Mundane family conversations and observations pile up and simmer throughout the day, and as darkness falls outside the crumbling building, mysterious things start to go bump in the night. Family tensions reach a boiling point, and the group’s deepest fears are laid bare. RogerEbert.com writes: “Like Emma Seligman’s masterful ‘Shiva Baby,’ Stephen Karam’s screen adaptation of his Tony Award-winning play, ‘The Humans,’ wrings a staggering amount of visceral tension and suspense out of what appears to be, on the surface, a simple family gathering. Brigid (Beanie Feldstein) welcomes her family on Thanksgiving to the new Chinatown apartment she shares with her boyfriend, Richard (Steven Yeun), which is lensed in widescreen cinematography by Lol Crawley that heightens one’s paranoia of encroaching decay. The fear of floodwaters voiced by her father, Erik (Richard Jenkins), hits home especially hard in light of the historic flood New York City endured earlier this month. Crawley finds inventive ways of making characters appear isolated even when surrounded by family, such as Brigid’s ailing sister, Aimee, played in a marvelous dramatic performance by Amy Schumer. Karam’s film deserves to be a major contender during this year’s awards season.”

NARRATIVE



I AM HERE

**Jordy Sank, South Africa, 2021, 72 min.,
English, Hebrew & Yiddish**

Monday, Nov. 8, 7:00 PM, Tivoli 3

Ella is not your average 98-year-old. Her magnetic personality makes her past even more surprising. “I Am Here” follows this spirited South African Holocaust survivor as she reveals her astonishing journey and unwavering appreciation of life. The documentary contrast’s Ella’s vibrant day-to-day present with stories of her past surviving the Holocaust. These memories are depicted through dynamic animation, innovatively bringing her storytelling to life. Ella recalls bearing witness to losing her family, becoming a prisoner of three concentration camps, and narrowly escaping death in a gas chamber. However, she never lost the connection to the beautiful moments and people who changed her life forever. As tragic as her experiences have been, Ella triumphantly cherishes each moment and lives life with joy. “I Am Here” won the Audience Choice Award and the Jury Award for Best Documentary at the 2021 Durban International Film Festival.

DOCUMENTARY

*Shown with **Two Sides of Survival** (Violet Du Feng & Amanda Pope, China/U.S., 2021, 30 min., English & Mandarin) The film brings together two World War II-era stories of resilience and survival: one from Nanjing, where Japanese soldiers massacred Chinese civilians, and the other from Germany, where the Nazi regime sought the systematic murder of Jewish populations in Europe and beyond.*



I'M AN ELECTRIC LAMP SHADE

John Clayton Doyle, Mexico/Philippines/U.S., 2021, 96 min.

Sunday, Nov. 21, 7:00 PM, Tivoli 3

Eventive

An offbeat, heartwarming portrait of the world's least likely rock star, this documentary-narrative hybrid tells the story of Doug McCorkle, a buttoned-up, mild-mannered corporate accountant. Although starting in a traditional documentary mode, the film begins moving into fictional territory at Doug's retirement, when he bridges his two worlds of humdrum accounting and performative bliss. After he "premieres" his first music video, a man whispers into Doug's ear about a special place to train for his dream, and the film leaves reality altogether, sending viewers on a surrealist journey with only the loosest plotline and heavy doses of choreography and visual expressionism. Soon Doug is knocking on the door of a dreamlike studio filled with drag queens training for the spotlight, becoming one with his newly adopted family, and eventually taking a small wafer that catapults him into a performative dreamscape. Like Sean Baker's "Tangerine," "I'm an Electric Lampshade's" cast is a collection of real people portraying versions of themselves, bringing an authenticity to the film that would be impossible to fake. The result is a mind-bending musical odyssey in the tradition of "Stop Making Sense" and "Searching for Sugar Man."

*Shown with **Gangnam Beauty** (Yan Tomaszewski, France/South Korea/U.K., 2020, 23 min., English & Korean) Oli London, a thirtysomething Englishman fascinated by South Korea and especially K-pop star Jimin, has spent a fortune on plastic surgery to look like the musician. (Short will only play with in-person screening of "I'm an Electric Lampshade.")*

DOCUMENTARY



IN FRONT OF YOUR FACE Dangsin-eolgul-apeseo

Hong Sangsoo, South Korea, 2021, 85 min., Korean

Friday, Nov. 5, 12:30 PM, Tivoli 2

Tuesday, Nov. 9, 8:45 PM, Tivoli 2

With "In Front of Your Face," prolific South Korean auteur Hong Sangsoo suggests that perhaps the most important things in this life are also the most immediate. After years living abroad, former actress Sangok (Lee Hyeyoung) is back in Seoul, staying with her sister, Jeongok (Cho Yunhee), in her high-rise apartment. The siblings sleep late, have breakfast in a cafe, and visit a restaurant owned by Jeongok's son. But as the details of Sangok's day accrue (a spill on her blouse, an encounter at her childhood home), it becomes clear that there is much she is not revealing. And these mysterious circumstances have something to do with her decision to meet with film director Jaewon (Kwon Haehyo) to discuss her return to acting. In her first role for Hong, Lee, a prominent theater and screen actress in South Korea, makes a captivating return to the big screen. With "Introduction" and "The Woman Who Ran," "In Front of Your Face" is one of a trio of new works by Hong at this year's SLIFF. Variety writes: "It can be difficult, when discussing Hong's films, to sort the stand-alone virtues of the work in question from the manifold pleasures gained from a compare-and-contrast critique of the movie as a fragment of a greater whole, a riff on prevailing themes. But while 'In Front of Your Face' presents that dilemma as well, it is less beholden to the looped rhythms and circular conversations that give a prismatic sheen to so many of Hong's 26-title-strong feature filmography. Instead there is an unusual emotional directness to this film, which is perhaps more intimately involved with one remarkably sympathetic woman's internal journey than any of his since the 2017 Berlin Silver Bear winner 'On the Beach at Night Alone.'"

NARRATIVE



THE INSURER *L'assureur*

Antoine vans, Belgium, 2020, 85 min., French

Eventive

In “The Insurer,” an energetic comic thriller, a young female insurance-fraud investigator pairs up with an ex-agent to probe the claim of a possible scammer. But instead of uncovering their quarry’s scheme, they are compelled to help the suspect to save an innocent person. Quirky characters and a perky score propel this lively Belgian whodunit. A stylish and fluid caper, “The Insurer” is the debut feature of intriguingly named director Antoine vans, who has been driven to tell stories via film since he was 15 years old.

NARRATIVE



INTO THE LIGHT

Benjamin Schwartz, U.S., 2020, 74 min.

Wednesday, Nov. 10, 7:30 PM, Webster U./Moore

Eventive

“Into the Light” profiles painter Chuck Connelly, who received serious critical and commercial attention in the 1980s and 1990s as a key figure among the New York-based Neo-expressionists, before his alcoholism and general obstreperousness damaged both his life and career. The film serves as a complement of sorts to an earlier documentary, “The Art of Failure: Chuck Connelly Not for Sale,” which aired on HBO in 2008, when the artist was arguably at his nadir. Now sober and in his mid-60s, Connelly is no less difficult in his personality, and he’s essentially sealed himself off in his Philadelphia home, a generous space that is packed to the rafters with his ever-accumulating work — numbering more than 5,000 — which he continues to churn out compulsively. But the film eventually becomes a record of his reluctant reentry into society, with the filmmaker coaxing Connelly first into his backyard and eventually into the wider world. The doc provides the general biographical details of Connelly’s life, including the perspectives of sympathetic but frustrated gallerists and curators who lament his persistent unwillingness to compromise his principles and practices, but it keeps a tight focus on the artist, whose dyspeptic commentary is often self-justifying but also provocative and perceptive. The film does a wonderfully effective job of presenting a significant number of Connelly’s stylistically diverse paintings, and it revealingly shows him engaged in the act of creation. Connelly was the model for Nick Nolte’s character in Scorsese’s “Life Lessons” — he also served as the short’s consultant — and the creative vitality that film so wonderfully captures is still abundantly evident as the artist works on his current paintings.

DOCUMENTARY



INTRODUCTION

Hong Sangsoo, South Korea, 2021, 66 min., Korean

Tuesday, Nov. 9, 3:00 PM, Tivoli 2

Thursday, Nov. 11, 6:00 PM, Tivoli 2

For his 25th feature as director and his first as cinematographer, Hong Sangsoo offers a simple tale — in three parts — of young people on the edge of adulthood. Youngho (Shin Seokho) goes to see his father who is tending to a famous patient. He surprises girlfriend Juwon (Park Miso) in Berlin, where she is studying fashion design. And he goes to a seaside hotel to meet his mother and brings his friend Jeongsoo (Ha Seongguk) with him. In each instance, he anticipates an important conversation. But sometimes a shared look or smoke can mean as much as anything we could say to those close to us. “Introduction” cuts to the essence of who we are as people, like an unexpected hug on a winter’s day. For still more of Hong’s work at SLIFF, see “In Front of Your Face” and “The Woman Who Ran.” Sight & Sound’s Nick James writes: “Hong Sangsoo’s films are too charming to be loathed, so their notorious divisiveness forms two camps: fans and the indifferent. I’ve been on either side of that equation, but ‘Introduction’ has me raising the soju glass and drinking deep. One flaw of his rarer, weaker films is the overloading of conversation with character’s backstories, but in this richly compact 66-minute tale of parents trying to guide their young adult children into an uncertain future, it’s what’s left out of its few scenes — including a two-year jump — that makes how much we come to know and feel about its characters seem miraculous.”

NARRATIVE



INVISIBLE

T.J. Parsell, U.S., 2020, 107 min.

Saturday, Nov. 6, 1:00 PM, Washington U./Brown, Free

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

Growing up gay in the South is hard enough, but to be an openly gay woman in country music is nearly impossible. This revealing and consistently entertaining examination of lesbians in country music places a strong focus on songwriting, which was the one area in which the women could contribute consistently, given that performing was largely off limits because of the hidebound, conservative nature of the country-radio and recording-industry decision-makers and audience members. The film rotates its spotlight among about a dozen singer/songwriters of varying renown — Mary Gauthier, Ruthie Foster, Cheryl Wheeler, Pam Rose, Mary Ann Kennedy, Dianne Davidson, Bonnie Baker, Kye Fleming, Jess Leary — offering compelling portraits of their often fraught lives and industry trials, culminating in the story of Chely Wright, the first major country star to come out. The film supplements their personal stories with the perspectives of sympathetic industry insiders and several major stars who have worked with some of the featured women (Linda Ronstadt, Emmylou Harris, Pam Tillis, Rodney Crowell). The film features a plenitude of excellent performances throughout, including a particularly enchanting trio performance of “Driving Home” by Wheeler, Rose, and Kennedy around a dinner table. RogerEbert.com writes: “Among the lovely songs we get to hear in full during the second half of Parsell’s film, none are quite as indelible as the one Davidson performs with Ronstadt at the retired Grammy-winner’s home. When Davidson delivers her splendid rendition of ‘Sixty-Minute Man,’ Ronstadt spontaneously joins her for a duet, proving she can still harmonize, albeit at a lower volume. Rather than resign herself to a life in the shadows, Davidson is the proud mother of an adopted son from Kazakhstan and has decided to record a new album so that she can sing for those who, like Ronstadt, no longer can. ‘Invisible’ is full of bittersweet stories like these, and it ranks alongside Morgan Neville’s ‘20 Feet from Stardom’ as well as Barbara Kopple and Cecilia Peck’s ‘Shut Up & Sing’ in its insightful tribute to unsung artistry and rousing courage.”

With director T.J. Parsell.

DOCUMENTARY



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JACK LONDON'S MARTIN EDEN

Jay Craven, U.S., 2021, 104 min.

NARRATIVE

Eventive

“Jack London’s Martin Eden” is based on the writer’s autobiographical novel about a poor and unschooled sailor, Martin Eden (Andrew Richardson), who unexpectedly meets Ruth Morse (Hayley Griffith), a magnetic young woman of means and education, with their unconventional attraction upending both lives. (If the “Martin Eden” title seems familiar, an Italian take on London’s story played in last year’s SLIFF.) Though set in 1909, the film addresses timeless themes of impossible love, class divisions, dogged individualism in pursuit of the American Dream, and the quest for a comfortable place in an inconstant world. London based the story on his own life, excavating his own conflicted quests and outcomes through Eden, whose idealistic pursuit of his single-minded goals, and his hard work to transform himself, ultimately leaves him emotionally stranded, unable to return to his roots or find sustenance in his “success.” Director Jay Craven is a multiple SLIFF alum and frequent fest guest; his work includes “Where the Rivers Flow North,” “A Year That Trembled,” “Northern Borders,” and “Disappearances.” Like several of his recent films, “Jack London’s Martin Eden” was the result of an intensive course that Craven offers through Sarah Lawrence College, with students collaborating with professionals to produce a feature film.



JOCKEY

Clint Bentley, U.S., 2021, 94 min.

NARRATIVE

Friday, Nov. 5, 7:00 PM, Tivoli 3

Sunday, Nov. 7, 7:00 PM, Tivoli 3

In Clint Bentley’s “Jockey” — which premiered at this year’s Sundance Film Festival — an aging rider (Clifton Collins Jr.) hopes to win one last title for his longtime trainer (Molly Parker), who has acquired what appears to be a championship horse. But the years — and injuries — have taken a toll on his body, throwing into question his ability to continue his lifelong passion. And the arrival of a young rookie jockey (Moises Arias), who claims to be his son, further complicates the path to fulfilling his dream. Variety writes: “‘Jockey’ gives Collins the role of his career, and he leans into it with all he’s got, delivering the performance of the 2021 Sundance Film Festival. Like Collins, Arias is a striking actor with uncommon features and a kind of wild intensity behind the eyes. Both have been standout members of many an ensemble, so it’s great to see them elevated to leads and cast opposite one another here. ‘Jockey’ provides the kind of parent-child bonding moments that real life doesn’t always allow, but its tone is hardly sentimental. Bentley’s own father was a jockey, and the film serves as both an homage to that career and a clear-eyed and thoroughly unglamorous look at life behind the barns. As in ‘The Rider,’ Bentley weaves documentary detail into an original narrative, creating scenes where fictive characters can interact with genuine equestrians.”



Sponsored by Sight & Sound Productions/David Houle

JULIA

Julie Cohen & Betsy West, U.S., 2021, 95 min.

Saturday, Nov. 6, 6:00 PM, Tivoli 2

Sunday, Nov. 7, 3:00 PM, Tivoli 2

“Julia” — directed by Julie Cohen and Betty West, who also helmed the Oscar®-nominated “RBG” — brings to life the legendary cookbook author and television superstar Julia Child, who changed the way Americans think about food, television, and even about women. Using never-before-seen archival footage, personal photos, first-person narratives, and cutting-edge, mouth-watering food cinematography, the film traces Child’s 12-year struggle to create and publish the revolutionary “Mastering the Art of French Cooking” (1961), which has sold more than 2.5 million copies to date, and her rapid ascent to become the country’s most unlikely television star. It’s the empowering story of a woman who found her purpose — and her fame — at 50, and took America along on the whole delicious journey. Variety writes: “Child was a broadly entertaining public personality, and the film is broadly entertaining in turn, zipping through her eventful, rather inspiring life story — from sheltered youth to late-blooming sensualism to unlikely middle-aged celebrity — at a lively pace, full of attractive asides about evolving food culture from the past to the present. That approach, peppered with talking-head contributions from culinary personalities like Ina Garten and André Cointreau, will go down particularly well with mature, nostalgic audiences.”



KEEP THE CAMERAS ROLLING: THE PEDRO ZAMORA WAY

William T. Horner & Stacey Woelfel, U.S., 2021, 98 min., English & Spanish

Sunday, Nov. 7, 5:30 PM, Tivoli 2

Eventive

A moving biopic of Pedro Zamora, “Keep the Cameras Rolling” — co-directed by Mizzou professors William T. Horner and Stacey Woelfel — traces the life and work of the HIV/AIDS activist and star of MTV’s “The Real World” through contemporary interviews with family members, friends, and castmates, and an abundance of archival footage, which includes excerpts from the reality show in which he appeared. The long-running “The Real World,” often cited as the progenitor of contemporary reality TV, debuted in 1992, and its San Francisco-based third season proved especially memorable, primarily because of Zamora’s presence. The documentary provides background on the making of “The Real World” and its place in the media ecosphere, but its focus stays firmly on Zamora, its charismatic and movie-star handsome subject. Although by 1994, the ways in which HIV/AIDS was transmitted were relatively well understood, many in the general public still regarded those infected with fear and suspicion. In choosing to cast the HIV-positive Zamora, who was both a sympathetic charmer and a highly effective AIDS educator, “The Real World” helped destigmatize those living with HIV/AIDS. As his fellow castmates overcame their own apprehensiveness and misconceptions, learning to embrace Zamora (both literally and figuratively) as a friend, many in the show’s audience undoubtedly experienced a similar evolution in their thinking. Another boundary-pushing element of the season: Zamora and the partner he met while on the show were married on “The Real World” in a ceremony of commitment. **With co-directors William T. Horner and Stacey Woelfel.**



Sponsored by Jon Mendelson
REALTORS

KING RICHARD

Reinaldo Marcus Green, U.S., 2021, 138 min.

Thursday, Nov. 18, 7:00 PM, Tivoli 1

“King Richard,” which stars two-time Oscar® nominee Will Smith (“Ali,” “The Pursuit of Happyness,” “Bad Boys for Life”) under the direction of Reinaldo Marcus Green (“Monsters and Men”), tells the story of tennis-legend sisters Venus and Serena Williams and their determined father, Richard. Armed with a clear vision and a brazen 78-page plan, Richard Williams is determined to write his daughters, Venus and Serena, into history. Training on Compton, Calif.’s abandoned tennis courts — rain or shine — the girls are shaped by their father’s unyielding commitment and their mother’s balanced perspective and keen intuition, defying the seemingly insurmountable odds and prevailing expectations laid before them. Based on the true story that will inspire the world, “King Richard” follows the uplifting journey of a family whose unwavering resolve and unconditional belief ultimately deliver two of the world’s greatest sports legends. Aunjanue Ellis (“If Beale Street Could Talk”) plays the girls’ mom, Oracene “Brandy” Williams, Saniyya Sidney (“Hidden Figures,” “Fences”) stars as Venus Williams, and Demi Singleton (TV’s “Godfather of Harlem”) stars as Serena Williams. The cast also includes Tony Goldwyn, Jon Bernthal, Andy Bean, Kevin Dunn, and Craig Tate. Green directed “King Richard” from a screenplay written by Zach Baylin, and the behind-the-scenes creative team includes Oscar®-winning director of photography Robert Elswit (“There Will Be Blood”).

NARRATIVE



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Redefining Together)

THE KINLOCH DOC

Alana Marie, U.S., 2021, 50 min.

Saturday, Nov. 6, 2:00 PM, Tivoli 1

Eventive

Kinloch is a town on life support, with fewer than 200 citizens still residing in the area, a budget flirting with bankruptcy, and corruption sometimes appearing to be the main job description for local officials. This once-thriving municipality — the oldest all-Black city west of the Mississippi and known as Missouri’s First Black City — often seems only a few sunsets away from extinction. To drive through Kinloch today is to see despair and dilapidation, but it was once a town where Black entrepreneurship was the rule, not the exception; a place that such important figures as Dick Gregory, Jenifer Lewis, and Maxine Waters called home. Located next to the now-infamous Ferguson and on the outskirts of the city of St. Louis — nationally known for its segregation — Kinloch contains a wealth of history that explains how racial division has manifested for decades. An expansion of a short documentary that screened at the 2018 Showcase and SLIFF, “The Kinloch Doc” explores how two major political decisions — a city merger and the Lambert Airport buyout — essentially destroyed the community. Directed by a former resident of the city, the film tells the story of Kinloch through interviews with scholars and, most tellingly, former and current residents and city officials. **With director Alana Marie.**

Shown with I Am Kinloch (Daniel E. Williams, U.S., 2021, 19 min.) Jacqueline Williams, a former resident of Kinloch — the first and largest all-Black incorporated city in Missouri — shares her personal memories of being raised in this suburb of St. Louis.

DOCUMENTARY



LISTEN

Ana Rocha, U.K., 2020, 73 min., English & Portuguese

Saturday, Nov. 20, 3:00 PM, Tivoli 2

Sunday, Nov. 21, 6:30 PM, Tivoli 2

In the outskirts of London, Portuguese couple Bela and Jota, the parents of three, struggle to make ends meet. When a misunderstanding arises at school regarding their 7-year-old deaf daughter, the British social services grow concerned for the safety of their children. “Listen” portrays these immigrant parents’ tireless battle against an impersonal system to keep their family together. Screen Daily writes: “This heartfelt drama follows the couple’s anguished attempts to regain custody of their own kids, one of whom is deaf and can only communicate through sign language. The first feature from actress-turned-filmmaker Ana Rocha de Sousa, ‘Listen’ follows in the footsteps of films like Ken Loach’s ‘Ladybird, Ladybird’ in its depiction of a family deemed unfit through a combination of hardship, bad luck and bad decisions.”

NARRATIVE



THE LONELY MAN

Han Wanfeng, China, 2020, 110 min., Chinese

Eventive

“The Lonely Man” tells the story of frontline gas-station employee Wang Chongqing, who has been working hard for more than 20 years at the foot of Tianshan Mountain in China’s remote Kazakh area. Demonstrating an admirable spirit of honesty, dedication, loyalty, and integrity, Wang overcomes the many difficulties that frequently confront him in a remote location with wintry weather. Not only does Wang do his job well, he also helps ensure the economic vitality and social harmony of the ethnic minority areas in Xinjiang. This gorgeously filmed tale touches on many themes, including human connectivity, family, community, acceptance, generational understanding, and the tenuous relationship between remote areas and basic necessities.

NARRATIVE



LUZZU

Alex Camilleri, Malta, 2020, 95 min., Maltese

Friday, Nov. 5, 9:15 PM, Tivoli 3

Monday, Nov. 8, 4:00 PM, Tivoli 3

A hardworking Maltese fisherman, Jesmark is faced with an agonizing choice. He can repair his leaky “luzzu” — a traditional, multicolored wooden fishing boat — in the hopes of eking out a meager living at sea for his wife and newborn son, just as his father and grandfather did before him. Or he can decommission it in exchange for an EU payout and cast his lot with a sinister black-market operation that is decimating the Mediterranean fish population and the livelihoods of the local families who depend on it. At Sundance, where the film premiered, “Luzzu” won a special Jury Prize for its lead actor, Jesmark Scicluna, a real-life Maltese fisherman. Writer/director/editor Alex Camilleri’s gripping film follows in the neorealist tradition of Luchino Visconti, Roberto Rossellini, and the Dardenne brothers, and calls to mind the work of producer Ramin Bahrani (“Man Push Cart,” “The White Tiger”). Calling the film “an honest, affecting slab of working-class portraiture, altogether bracing with its thorny labor politics and salty sea air,” Variety writes: “At its most heated points, the storytelling here practically hovers between docudrama and melodrama, but it’s pulled down to earth by Camilleri’s keen eye for community relations and conflicts, and a vivid, perspiring sense of place. Scicluna’s slouchily charismatic authenticity in the role, meanwhile, keeps things consistently real — like an unforced Brando in unglamorous waders.”

NARRATIVE



MAGIC IN THE MOUNTAINS

Cody Stokes, U.S., 2021, 79 min.

Sunday, Nov. 14, 6:00 PM, Tivoli 2

“Magic in the Mountains” tells the remarkable underdog story of how Squaw Valley, a little-known ski area in California, won the bid for the 1960 Winter Olympics and, with the help of Walt Disney, changed forever the ways in which the Games were presented. Directed by St. Louis-based filmmaker and SLIFF alum Cody Stokes (“The Ghost Who Walks”), the documentary features never-before-seen archival footage from the 1960 Olympic Games and revealing interviews with participating athletes and attendees. The 1960 edition of the Olympics introduced a substantial array of “firsts,” including such innovations as live broadcast, instant replay, sponsorships, and an official Olympic Village for the athletes. Perhaps most importantly, thanks to Disney’s involvement in producing the Games, Squaw Valley featured an unprecedented — but soon to be standard — level of pageantry for the opening and closing ceremonies. **With director Cody Stokes and members of the filmmaking team.**

DOCUMENTARY

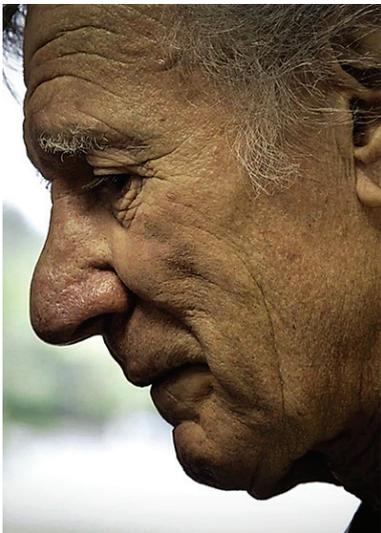


A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE *Eine Sache der Perspektive* **Gerda Leopold, Austria, 2020, 85 min., German**

NARRATIVE

Eventive

Inspired by Arthur Schnitzler’s “La Ronde,” the episodic “A Matter of Perspective” explores 10 people, 10 relationships, and 10 realities. Over the course of 24 hours, intimate secrets are revealed and formerly hidden connections come to light. Confronted with the unforeseeable consequences of their actions, the characters’ lives change forever. Filmed from the subjective point of view of the actors, “A Matter of Perspective” highlights the complexity of human relationships and deals with the polarity between freedom and responsibility.



MEDICINE MAN: THE STAN BROCK STORY **Paul Michael Angell, Guyana/U.K./U.S., 2020, 96 min.**

DOCUMENTARY

Sunday, Nov. 7, 1:00 PM, Washington U./Brown, Free
Eventive, Special \$5 Price

“Medicine Man” recounts the incredible life story of Stan Brock, a British-born Amazonian cowboy turned U.S. TV star, who sacrificed everything to bring free health-care to people in need. Brock’s remarkable journey began in his native England. Hailing from a poor family, he was talented enough to receive a scholarship to a prestigious school, but after relentless bullying by the well-to-do students, Brock punched one of his tormentors and was booted from the institution at age 14. Following his family to British Guiana, he soon became a young cowboy — and eventually supervisor — on the largest cattle ranch in the world. While living in that remote corner of the Amazon, a seed was planted that would bloom much later: Because a 26-day trek on foot was required to reach any sort of medical care, Brock first recognized the value of accessible healthcare. Before acting on that realization, however, he entered a new phase of his life, appearing for a decade with St. Louisan Marlon Perkins on “Mutual of Omaha’s Wild Kingdom” and later starring in several B-movies. Finally, after relocating to Knoxville, Tenn., Brock discovered his life’s true work, founding Remote Area Medical (RAM) in 1985 and devoting himself fully to the organization, forgoing a salary and living a spartan life in its dilapidated headquarters. Providing free vision, dental, and other basic medical care, RAM continues to bring vital help to millions of people who lack the means of accessing a doctor (among the RAM missions that the film chronicles is a trip to East St. Louis). “Medicine Man” is at once a heartwarming tribute to the unifying power of volunteerism and an exploration of a perennial outsider’s search for meaning through giving of himself.

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MEMORIA

NARRATIVE

Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Colombia/Thailand, 2021, 136 min., English & Spanish

Sunday, Nov. 14, 5:00 PM, Tivoli 1

The latest meditative wonder from Palme d'Or-winning Thai director Apichatpong Weerasethakul (“Tropical Malady,” “Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives”), “Memoria” stars Academy Award® winner Tilda Swinton as Scottish expat Jessica, who sells flowers in Colombia. Traveling to Bogota to visit her sister, who’s in the hospital with a mysterious ailment, Jessica herself isn’t quite right: Ever since being startled by a loud “bang” at daybreak, she’s unable to sleep and begins experiencing a mysterious sensory syndrome. Screen International writes: “Halfway through ‘Memoria,’ the film’s troubled protagonist is advised against taking Xanax because it will deprive her of the ability to savour the beauty in the world — the kind of beauty, in fact, that Apichatpong Weerasethakul’s latest film offers in steady doses. Graced by Tilda Swinton’s emptied-out performance as a woman haunted by a strange sound whose origins she is obsessed with uncovering, ‘Memoria’ eludes easy categorisation while becoming a powerful meditation on connection, spiritual isolation and renewal. The celebrated Thai auteur’s first English-language feature — and his first to be made outside of his home country — is as entrancing and wonderfully perplexing as any of his previous pictures.”



MISSING IN BROOKS COUNTY

DOCUMENTARY

Jeff Bemiss & Lisa Molomot, Mexico/U.S., 2020, 81 min., English & Spanish

Sunday, Nov. 7, 4:00 PM, Washington U./Brown, Free

“Missing in Brooks County” provides a clear-eyed, heartbreaking look at the deadly cost of the U.S.’s border policies. As enforcement ratchets up, shutting down entry points, undocumented migrants are essentially funnelled into areas — such as the arid ranchlands of Brooks County, Texas — where crossings remain doable but the risk of death is high. Focusing on two families desperately searching for relatives who went missing on their trek through the parched landscape, the film gives a human face to the ever-growing numbers of the lost, who are inevitably dead but cannot be found in the vastness. An array of people involved in the hunt for the missing are featured — border agents, local law-enforcement officials, forensic specialists — but two figures receive particular attention. Helping the families is an aging Latinx human-rights activist who doggedly keeps records of those who have disappeared, provides water stations for those attempting to navigate the harsh terrain, and drives the endless ranch roads in search of both the missing dead and the dehydrated, barely living wanderers who have lost their way. Providing a stark contrast is a rancher who’s part of a vigilante group that patrols the county in camo, totes automatic rifles, and deploys night-vision goggles and scopes. He suspects the human-rights advocate of profiteering by collaborating with coyotes and flatly refuses to allow water stations on his own property. The film smartly avoids any overt editorializing, simply presenting the vigilantes’ statements and activities, and allowing viewers to reach their own conclusions.



MISSION: JOY — FINDING HAPPINESS IN TROUBLED TIMES

Peggy Callahan & Louie Psihoyos, India/South Africa/Tibet/U.S., 2021, 90 min., English & Tibetan

Saturday, Nov. 6, 12:30 PM, Tivoli 2

“Mission: Joy” — co-directed by Oscar® winner Louie Psihoyos (“The Cove”) and Peggy Callahan — provides unprecedented access to two international icons who transcend religion: His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu. The film chronicles how a strong but intermittent friendship developed between the two Nobel Peace Prize winners, and deftly traces the biographies of both Tutu and the Dalai Lama, weaving their stories throughout the film and making excellent use of well-chosen archival footage to accompany their recollections. But the bulk of the film focuses on a 2015 meeting between the two religious leaders, who together respond to questions from interlocutor Doug Abrams (author of New York Times bestseller “The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World”). Consisting largely of never-before-seen footage shot over five days at the Dalai Lama’s residence in Dharamsala, India, the film takes viewers behind the scenes as the religious leaders recount stories from their lives, which have been filled with periods of difficulty and strife. With genuine affection, mutual respect, and a healthy dose of teasing, these unlikely friends impart lessons gleaned from lived experience, ancient traditions, and the latest cutting-edge science regarding how to live with joy in the face of all of life’s challenges. The result is a delight: Surprisingly mischievous and playful, the Dalai Lama and Tutu give a master class in how to create joy in a troubled world.

DOCUMENTARY



THE MONOPOLY OF VIOLENCE *Un pays qui se tient sage*

David Dufresne, France, 2020, 86 min., French

Monday, Nov. 8, 7:30 PM, Webster U./Moore

Journalist David Dufresne’s first documentary is a devastatingly timely investigation of the place of police in democracy and the legitimacy of violence. Primarily composed of smartphone images filmed at the yellow-vest demonstrations in France, the film presents a viscerally shocking picture of police brutality and protests transformed into scenes of urban warfare. Especially compelling are the sections in which interviewees view footage of police violence in which they were the victims. A shattering and intelligent documentary, “The Monopoly of Violence” — which screened at the 2020 New York Film Festival — is essential viewing. J. Hoberman in Artforum writes: “This meta-documentary, an annotated assemblage of mainly first-person smartphone videos made during the gilets jaunes (yellow vests) demonstrations of 2018 and 2019 by the mixed-media journalist-artist-provocateur David Dufresne sans help from French ministry of culture, is as significant in its way as the founding film of cinema vérité, Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin’s 1961 ‘Chronicle of Summer,’ in which Parisians of all types were asked about their personal lives and then in some cases, having seen themselves on-screen, were interviewed again provide the film’s coda. ‘Monopoly’ creates a similar feedback loop. Simply described, the film features images of urban mayhem — Robocopoid police battling scraggly yellow vests. Produced largely by the demonstrators, these videos are presented on the screen as subjects for analysis by actual participants, among other commentators (truck drivers, plumbers, lawyers, police-union officials, academics, social workers, journalists, stay-at-home moms): talking heads whose identities are withheld until the end of the movie, the better to sharpen the viewer’s appreciation of body language and vocal tone.”

DOCUMENTARY



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Tackette Casting

MOTHERING SUNDAY

Eva Husson, U.K., 2021, 110 min.

Saturday, Nov. 13, 7:00 PM, Tivoli 3

Sunday, Nov. 14, 4:00 PM, Tivoli 3

“Mothering Sunday,” which premiered at Cannes, begins on a warm spring day in 1924, when house maid and founding Jane Fairchild (Odessa Young) finds herself alone on Mother’s Day. Her employers, Mr. and Mrs. Niven (Colin Firth and Olivia Colman), are out, and she has the rare chance to spend quality time with her secret lover. Paul (Josh O’Connor), the boy from the manor house nearby, is Jane’s long-term love despite the fact that he’s engaged to be married to another woman, a childhood friend and daughter of his parents’ friends. But events that neither can foresee will change the course of Jane’s life forever. Screen Daily writes: “This deft, shimmeringly sensual adaptation of the novel by Graham Swift elegantly weaves together multiple timelines — we rejoin Jane in the 1950s and as an elderly woman, played by Glenda Jackson. It’s a richly detailed mosaic of a movie which pays as much attention to emotional authenticity — a dull ache of grief which is the aftermath of the First World War and a smouldering yearning between the two lovers — as it does to the story itself. The presence of Olivia Colman and Colin Firth in supporting roles cements the film’s status as a prestige period picture, but the flighty non-linear structure brings a spark of unconventional spirit which chimes beautifully with that of the central character. Audiences will likely be seduced by the combination of Brit star power and the unapologetic steaminess of the central relationship.”

NARRATIVE



MY SO-CALLED SELFISH LIFE

Therese Shechter, U.S., 2021, 78 min.

Eventive

In “My So-Called Selfish Life,” filmmaker Therese Shechter examines an oft-undiscussed social taboo: women who choose not to become mothers. In doing so, she presents a funny, thought-provoking, and at times sobering work that reveals the U.S. as a strongly pro-natal country that socializes everyone to believe that all women want children — that giving birth is not only a biological imperative but the defining measure of womanhood. “My So-Called Selfish Life” draws on a heady mix of culture, science, and history to reveal the rich lives of a diverse group of people saying no to having children and to explore the forces that have marginalized them in society. The subjects include an up-and-coming Brooklyn rapper who wants to grow old like the women in “The Golden Girls”; a former teacher whose early-’70s appearance on “60 Minutes” came at the expense of her job; a Southern college professor teaching the first-ever course on childfree reproductive justice; and a woman whose unsuccessful IVF treatments led to a total life change. “My So-Called Selfish Life” questions the cultural narratives that shape our identities and sparks a debate about who’s really in control of women’s identities and bodies.

DOCUMENTARY



NEIGHBOURS

Mano Khalil, Switzerland, 2021, 124 min., Kurdish

Tuesday, Nov. 9, 7:00 PM, Tivoli 3

Wednesday, Nov. 10, 4:00 PM, Tivoli 3

In a Syrian border village in the early '80s, as little Sero attends school for the first time, a new teacher arrives with the goal of making strapping pan-Arabic comrades out of the Kurdish children. To enable paradise to come to earth, he uses the rod to forbid the Kurdish language, orders the veneration of Assad, and preaches hate of the Zionist enemy — the Jews. These lessons upset and confuse Sero because his longtime neighbors are a lovable Jewish family. With a fine sense of humor and a satiric bite, “Neighbours” — which is inspired by the director’s personal experiences — depicts a childhood that balances light moments with dark drama. Although Sero engages in dangerous pranks with his friends and dreams of having a television so he can finally watch cartoons, he also experiences the pain felt by the adults in his life, who are increasingly crushed by the despotism, violence, and nationalism that surround them. The Jewish Film Review writes: “Mano Khalil’s film elicits superb performances from its professional and non-professional multilingual cast, some drawn from refugee camps in Iraqi Kurdistan. The quiet dignity of the villagers in the face of oppressive tyranny and corruption of Syrian government officials and Turkish border guards is deeply moving. Amidst the suffering endured by Sero, his family and neighbours, this film has many gently funny moments and is emotionally uplifting. ‘Neighbours’ is an important humanistic work and a stunning achievement.”

NARRATIVE



THE NEUTRAL GROUND

CJ Hunt, U.S., 2020, 90 min.

Friday, Nov. 12, 7:30 PM, Washington U./Brown, Free

Smart, funny, and thoughtful about issues of race in America, “The Neutral Ground” follows comedian and “The Daily Show” field producer CJ Hunt as he expertly chronicles the process of Confederate-statue removal in New Orleans — a multi-year struggle prolonged by the lawsuits and protests of those trying to protect the monuments. Hunt is particularly astute at explaining how the statues grew out of the Daughters of the Confederacy and Jim Crow power structures, broadening the film’s topical scope to explore the foundation of post-Civil War America’s racist systems. Hunt’s sense of humor keeps the film from feeling overly polemical, but what’s most remarkable about the documentary is his willingness to show up and talk to the other side, with Hunt even participating in a Civil War reenactment with White supremacists. Although Hunt’s discomfort and horror are evident, he always appears to be honestly trying to understand the opposing point of view. Variety writes: “Hunt’s alternately amusing and enraging essay film ‘The Neutral Ground’ goes beyond the surface debates to examine why some Southerners are so attached to their Civil War heroes. The answer, complicated though it may be, is tied up in the pernicious propaganda campaign known as the Lost Cause, which has enabled subsequent generations to rationalize (rather than reconcile/repair) the racism of their not-so-distant past. ‘The Neutral Ground’ neatly balances wry bemusement with a more sobering history of Louisiana and the South than many locals get in school.”

DOCUMENTARY

Co-presented with Washington University Libraries’ Film & Media Archive as part of the Henry Hampton Film Series



NEW YEAR

Nathan Sutton, U.S., 2020, 88 min.

Saturday, Nov. 20, 9:15 PM, Tivoli 3

In “New Year” — directed by former St. Louisan Nathan Sutton — unhappily married couple Benjamin and Katherine are having one last hurrah with their closest friends before moving back to New York. Benjamin, who considers himself the most successful person in most rooms, is a playwright, famed for his play “Gifts of Truth,” and a renowned NYU acting professor. Benjamin, in fact, taught both Katherine — now a photographer — and the partygoers who have gathered for New Year’s Eve at their home. Like most friends from college, the group’s members have kept in touch over the years, but their lives have taken different courses. As the night unfolds, a clearer picture emerges about just how much their ideas about each other have changed. Those realizations are further precipitated by a manipulative and destructive game that Benjamin brings to the table called “I Love You, I Hate You,” which causes fights to break out and old friends to face hard truths. As the countdown to the New Year begins, the group is forced to deal with some increasingly harsh realities. **With director Nathan Sutton.**

NARRATIVE



NORTH BY CURRENT

Angelo Madsen Minax, U.S., 2021, 86 min.

Sunday, Nov. 7, 7:30 PM, Webster U./Moore

After the death of his infant niece, filmmaker Angelo Madsen Minax returns to his rural Michigan hometown to create a multifaceted reflection on generational addiction, Christian fervor, and trans embodiment. “North by Current” explores a daunting array of subjects: the director’s trans experience, the mysterious death of his sister’s child (which led to criminal charges against both the sister and her husband), the fraught relationship between the filmmaker and his family (at one point, his parents compare his transition to the death of their granddaughter), the effects of religion (specifically Mormonism) on the family dynamic, and the related addictions and depression of his sister. The story unfolds over four years — which are demarcated by titles and a song appropriate to the mood at that juncture — and is told obliquely, using vérité footage shot by the filmmaker but also family archival material and more abstract imagery, with haunting song choices and periodic direct address and first-person voice-over, including (most provocatively) occasional dialogues between the filmmaker and an amalgamation of his dead niece and his former female self. Crucial facts are quite deliberately delayed or entirely withheld, and the viewer is compelled to become an active participant in making meaning from the fragmentary information provided. “North by Current’s” cumulative impact is astonishing, proving as emotionally potent as it is intellectually stimulating. The Queer Review writes: “‘North by Current’ is an extraordinary, deeply personal, transcendent work of great power that’s harrowing at times but ultimately a journey of healing, as Minax addresses faith, mental health, addiction, grief, and domestic violence, all of which have directly impacted his family, while at the heart of the film there’s a rarely seen, rich, layered portrait of trans identity.”

DOCUMENTARY



Sponsored by Kyle Hanes

THE NOVICE

Lauren Hadaway, U.S., 2021, 94 min.

Saturday, Nov. 20, 8:30 PM, Tivoli 2

When Alex Dall (Isabelle Fuhrman, “Orphan”), a queer college freshman, joins her university’s rowing team, she undertakes an obsessive physical and psychological journey to make it to the top varsity boat — no matter the cost. Inspired by the experiences of writer/director Lauren Hadaway as a competitive college rower, “The Novice” debuted at the Tribeca Film Festival, where it took a trio of top prizes: Best U.S. Narrative Feature, Best Actress (Fuhrman), and Best Cinematography (Todd Martin). The Hollywood Reporter writes: “‘The Novice’ is equal parts sports film, coming-of-age drama and psychological thriller. It’s a horrific tale of a young woman hurtling directly toward failure and welcoming the pain that comes with it. Hadaway brings out the best in Fuhrman, who gives a searing, star-making performance as Dall. Cinematographer Todd Martin adds a sickly green tint to Dall’s later rowing scenes, creating the illusion of drowning in murky water. Dark, unnerving and thrilling, ‘The Novice’ is poised to become a genre-breaking success. A film this raw made with such a steady, assured hand only comes along once in a while. We should take notice.”

NARRATIVE



ON THE DIVIDE

Leah Galant & Maya Cueva, U.S., 2021, 80 min., English & Spanish

Saturday, Nov. 20, 4:00 PM, Washington U./Brown, Free

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

Although set in McAllen, at Texas’ southern tip in the Rio Grande Valley, the film doesn’t deal with immigration but with abortion: Whole Women’s Health in McAllen is the only clinic on the border offering abortions in the state, where the even-shrinking number of clinics are now clustered in its four major cities. Focusing on three Latinx subjects — anti-abortion protester Mercedes, abortion-clinic escort Denisse, and abortion-clinic security guard Rey — the film offers intimate vérité access over several years to its principals, who resist conforming to stereotypes or audience expectations. Mercedes, a heavily tattooed former gang member, was “saved” from an abortion by the woman who heads the competing anti-abortion “crisis pregnancy center” set up next to the clinic, and she becomes heavily invested in her church, which she believes helped rescue her from addiction and gang life. But as her life begins to unravel, Mercedes finds herself questioning the motives and beliefs of the anti-abortion and church communities. Denisse is similarly complex: Although she works to ensure abortion remains accessible, she’s the mother of four children and was unable to make the decision to abort her last pregnancy, even though she recognized that it would be the best choice for her own and her family’s future. Finally, Rey’s story is especially compelling: Assigned by his employer to guard the clinic, he was initially hesitant about the posting but comes to believe strongly in the clinic’s necessity. He ultimately pays a high price for his stalwart commitment.

DOCUMENTARY



ONCE A HERO

Tim Reischauer, U.S., 2020, 91 min.

Eventive

A decorated Navy SEAL and a loving husband and father, Bradley battles the demons of PTSD and addiction, leading to isolation, self-destruction, and ultimately homelessness. He encounters pain and heartache while searching for redemption and control through an improbable journey. Will the nightmares of his past be too difficult to overcome or will Bradley succeed in regaining control of his life? Writer/producer/lead actor Brett Jones is a former Navy SEAL, global-response agent with the CIA, and author of the book “Pride: The Story of the First Openly Gay Navy SEAL.” Directed by former St. Louisan Timothy C. Reischauer, “Once a Hero” won Best Director, Best Actress, Best Actor, and Best Narrative Feature at the 2021 St. Louis Filmmakers Showcase.

NARRATIVE



A ONCE AND FUTURE PEACE

Eric Daniel Metzgar, U.S., 2020, 96 min.

Sunday, Nov. 21, 1:00 PM, Washington U./Brown, Free

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

A hybrid of animation and live action, “A Once and Future Peace” provides an engrossing exploration of Peacemaking Circles — a humane and effective alternative to traditional criminal-justice punishment (i.e., prison) in which juvenile offenders are required to engage in directed dialogue with family members and friends over an extended period. With roots in ancient practices in many cultures, this so-called restorative-justice approach is being used in a handful of U.S. cities (including the pilot program in Seattle featured here). Far less expensive than incarcerating offenders, the circles obviously aren’t 100 percent successful, but they’ve proven far more likely to bring young people back to a lawful, productive path than imprisonment. The film follows the case of Andy, a Latinx teen whose distraught family works to lure him away from gang life with the help of circle facilitator Saroem Phoung, a Cambodian refugee who himself was a hardened gang member in his youth. These sequences are expressively animated — to protect Andy’s identity — and alternate with live-action vérité footage and interviews that trace Saroem’s own life and the evolution of the circles in the U.S., where formerly skeptical judges and prosecutors come to recognize the value of the method.

DOCUMENTARY



ONE PINT AT A TIME

Aaron Hosé, U.S., 2021, 89 min.

Eventive

“One Pint at a Time” — a feature expansion of the short “A Fresh Perspective,” which screened at last year’s SLIFF — examines the work of a handful of Black microbrewers from around the country who operate in a very White, male-dominated industry. Despite beer’s Egyptian and African heritage, these ancient traditions have been mostly forgotten and are rarely found in American brewing culture. Given beer’s ancestral roots, the microbrew industry should be a welcoming home to aspiring Black entrepreneurs, but all of the brewers featured in the film have felt the sting of exclusion, whether because of restrictive laws that make starting a shop difficult or simply being the only face of color in a sea of bearded white men. Although craft beer generates tens of billions of dollars annually for the U.S. economy, Black-owned breweries make up less than 1 percent of the nearly 9,000 breweries in operation. Eager to shift the historical perception of who makes and drinks beer, Black brewers, brand owners, and influencers across the country are reshaping the craft-beer industry and the future of America’s favorite adult beverage, and “One Pint at a Time” profiles a trio of brewmasters at the movement’s forefront.



Sponsored by Susan Waugh,
in honor of a great student and
teacher of film, Roy D. Zurick

ONE SECOND

Zhang Yimou, China/Hong Kong, 2020, 104 min., Mandarin

Saturday, Nov. 6, 8:00 PM, Tivoli 1

Set near the end of the society-convulsing Cultural Revolution, “One Second” follows a nameless protagonist (Zhang Yi) who, after escaping a remote labor camp, goes in desperate search of an opportunity to view a newsreel that features a fleeting glimpse of his beloved daughter. Joining him on his quest is Liu (Liu Haocun), a homeless orphan girl, and Fan (Fan Wei), an expert projectionist known as Mr. Movie. Famed director Zhang Yimou — whose stellar filmography includes “Hero,” “House of Flying Daggers,” “Raise the Red Lantern,” and “Shanghai Triad” — calls the film his “love letter to cinema.” Originally slated to premiere at the 2019 Berlinale before it was mysteriously pulled at the last minute, “One Second” finally made its belated debut as the closing-night gala presentation at this year’s Toronto festival, where it received rapturous reviews. Variety writes: “Somewhere in the land of worn-out metaphors, there’s a drawer overflowing with love letters from all the filmmakers who ever thought to make cinema of the making of cinema. But it feels inadequate to file Zhang Yimou’s ‘One Second’ alongside those when it is the most direct and heartfelt valentine to the medium the revered Fifth Generation filmmaker has ever composed. This time, in language as simple and lovely as a close-up on Liu Haocun’s grimy, radiant face and in sentences made from strips of sticky celluloid glinting in a projector’s glare as they dry, cinema has written back. ‘One Second’ is not just about the magic of the movies, it’s about their resilience, and so it’s fitting — even moving — that despite the omissions and additions that have been mandated by the Chinese censors since it was yanked from the 2019 Berlinale competition, the film survives so soulfully.”

NARRATIVE



PAPAW LAND

Justin Blake Crum, U.S., 2021, 77 min.

Sunday, Nov. 7, 2:00 PM, Tivoli 1

Eventive

In “Papaw Land,” a coming-of-age drama set in rural Arkansas, 17-year-old Matthew is slipping into a cycle of alcohol and drugs that looks all too familiar to his single mother, Christy. In a desperate bid to break that cycle, she sends him away for a summer of sobriety and honest work at his grandfather’s place in the Ozarks. Against the hum of cicadas, Matthew comes to know the generational abuse that has happened there, and those secrets change how he looks at those closest to him — and at himself. Justin Blake Crum’s debut feature, which was inspired by his grandfather, is a patient and affecting case study in how toxic masculinity and inherited trauma shape this underrepresented part of America. “Papaw Land” is part of SLIFF’s annual New Filmmakers Forum (NFF) competition, which features five works by first-time feature directors. **With director Justin Blake Crum.**

NARRATIVE



PARIS, 13TH DISTRICT

Jacques Audiard, France, 2021, 94 min., French & Mandarin

Friday, Nov. 12, 8:00 PM, Tivoli 1

In “Paris, 13th District” — which debuted at Cannes — three girls and a boy become friends, sometimes lovers, and often both, when Émilie meets Camille, who is attracted to Nora, who crosses paths with Amber. Based on a trio of short stories by award-winning cartoonist Adrian Tomine — “Amber Sweet,” “Killing and Dying,” and “Hawaiian Getaway” — the film is directed by Jacques Audiard (“A Prophet,” “Rust and Bone,” “The Sisters Brothers”) and co-written by Céline Sciamma (“Portrait of a Lady on Fire”), whose own “Petite Maman” is also featured at this year’s SLIFF. The vibrant cast features Lucie Zhang, Makita Samba, singer Jehnny Beth (of the duo John and Jehn and the rock band Savages), and Noémie Merlant (the co-star of “Portrait of a Lady on Fire”). Little White Lies writes: “It’s the quartet of actors at the heart of the story who really deserve all the praise: in a pleasurable two-hour runtime, they feel fully-realised and sympathetic. Newcomer Lucie Zhang is particularly impressive, cutting an acerbic but vulnerable figure as Emilie, caught between familial expectation and her own interests. With keenly-observed riffs on topics including dating apps, stand-up comedy and the nature of casual dating in the modern world, there’s no moralising or scorn for the young folks and their messy approach to work and play. Even with its artsy cinematography, this feels like Audiard’s least self-conscious work to date, a playful reminder that the kids aren’t alright, but they’re feeling their way through.”

NARRATIVE



Sponsored by Centre
Francophone



Sponsored by Delcia Corlew & Mike Shaner

PERFUMES *Les parfums*

Grégory Magne, France, 2019, 100 min., French

Friday, Nov. 5, 4:00 PM, Tivoli 3

Sunday, Nov. 7, 4:00 PM, Tivoli 3

In the lively French comedy “Perfumes,” Anne Walberg (Emmanuelle Devos) is a celebrity in the world of expensive scents. Her exquisitely sensitive “nose” is highly desired by multiple companies, and her life of privilege allows Anne to behave like a selfish and ill-tempered diva. But new driver Guillaume (Grégory Montel of “Call My Agent”) isn’t easily cowed, and he proves unafraid to stand up to his employer. The Guardian writes: “In this extremely French but quite enjoyable comedy-drama, comic actor Grégory Montel, basically a smiley Labrador in human form, plays Guillaume, a divorced, middle-aged Parisian chauffeur. He is striving to make enough money to upgrade to a better apartment so he can have his tween-aged daughter (Zelie Rixhon) stay overnight. That makes enduring the hauteur of his latest client, professional ‘nose’ or fragrance designer Mademoiselle Anne Walberg (Emmanuelle Devos), all the more challenging. From this cutesy meeting — a predictably antagonistic first encounter — a friendship develops that, admirably for a change, doesn’t end up in quite the place you might expect by the end. In fact, that’s just one of several refreshing surprises. Others include the finely observed writing that limns the relationships between the main duo and between them and supporting characters, such as Guillaume and his smart, observant kid, or Anne and her avaricious agent (Pauline Moulène).”

NARRATIVE



Sponsored by French Connexions Cultural Center

PETITE MAMAN

Céline Sciamma, France, 2021, 72 min., French

Saturday, Nov. 13, 8:30 PM, Tivoli 1

In “Petite Maman,” Céline Sciamma’s follow-up to her critically lauded “Portrait of a Lady on Fire,” 8-year-old Nelly (Joséphine Sanz) has just lost her beloved grandmother and is helping her parents clean out her mother’s childhood home. She explores the house and the surrounding woods where her mom, Marion, used to play and built the treehouse she’s heard so much about. While walking in those woods, Nelly meets another 8-year-old girl who looks startlingly like her. She’s building a treehouse, and her name is Marion (Gabrielle Sanz, Joséphine’s twin sister) — Nelly’s “petite maman.” Deadline’s Todd McCarthy writes: “The two most mature and emotionally insightful 8-year-old girls you’ve ever encountered in your life are the subjects of ‘Petite Maman.’ Magnetically attentive to the serious ‘things of life,’ as the French put it, Céline Sciamma’s 72-minute study of an intense brief friendship between two girls of extraordinary similar looks prioritizes insight and emotional awareness over any artificial plot constructs. The result is a piercingly satisfying chamber drama with a lovely intimate feel. In all events, this is an arrestingly original and alive creation that offers acute observations and unexpected grace notes.”

NARRATIVE



THE PINK CLOUD A Nuvem Rosa

Iuli Gerbase, Brazil, 2021, 105 min., English & Portuguese

Saturday, Nov. 6, 8:30 PM, Tivoli 2

Monday, Nov. 8, 6:00 PM, Tivoli 2

In this prescient Sundance thriller — written in 2017 and shot in 2019 — “Pink Cloud” eerily evokes the lockdowns of the Covid-19 pandemic. When a mysterious and deadly pink cloud appears in the skies, spreading dramatically across the world, everyone is forced to quarantine in place. Giovana is frustratingly confined in an apartment with Yago, a man she met at a party only the night before, and while waiting for the cloud to pass, the two are compelled to somehow invent themselves as a couple. RogerEbert.com writes: “From Brazil, Iuli Gerbase’s not-so-dystopian drama ‘The Pink Cloud’ might feel too close to our current reality for some to enjoy. However, the way it builds a microcosm that exacerbates the worst in human dynamics and fears is outstanding. Ambitious in her scope, Gerbase tracks this relationship to its lowest points, like the pair scheduling activities so they don’t have to cross paths, and then to the elation of renewed hope. In those dramatic ebbs and flows, she investigates what is unchangeably important to our spirits in order to endure even the most unimaginable events. Even if the entire story takes place in such a limited space, the filmmaker’s layered writing and meticulous execution to mark the passage of time keeps it consistently intriguing.”

NARRATIVE



PROCESSION

Robert Greene, U.S., 2021, 118 min.

Thursday, Nov. 4, 7:30 PM, Tivoli 1

In “Procession,” six men from Kansas City, Mo. — all survivors of childhood sexual assault at the hands of Catholic priests and clergy — come together to direct a drama therapy-inspired experiment designed to collectively work through their trauma. As part of a radically collaborative filmmaking process with SLIFF alum Robert Greene (the award-winning “Bisbee ’17”), the men — Joe Eldred, Mike Foreman, Ed Gavagan, Dan Laurine, Michael Sandridge and Tom Viviano — create fictional scenes based on memories, dreams, and experiences, exploring the church rituals, culture, and hierarchies that enabled silence around their abuse. In the face of a failed legal system, these men reclaim the spaces that allowed their assault, revealing the possibility for catharsis and redemption through a newfound fraternity. The filmmaker-in-chief at the Murray Center for Documentary Journalism at the University of Missouri, Greene will receive the fest’s Contemporary Cinema Award. The LA Times writes: “‘Procession’ has a particularly bracing directness, a refusal to distance or over-intellectualize pain. What begins as an anxious, sometimes awkward exercise in performance therapy gradually evolves into a cumulatively shattering vision of male friendship and strength in the face of evil.”

With director Robert Greene, SLIFF Contemporary Cinema Award honoree, and subjects.

DOCUMENTARY



PROMISE THROUGH LIFETIME

Jianhua Yang, China, 2021, 96 min., Chinese

NARRATIVE

Eventive

A film of quiet beauty and honor, “Promise Through Lifetime” celebrates the heroic efforts of the teachers at a primary school in a Chinese mountain village. In the film, which is based on a true story, three generations of educators work in tandem to support the poor students of the area. Sacrificing their own opportunities, the teachers make a promise to live on the mountain for their entire lifetimes, ensuring that the village’s children receive the education necessary to make a better life elsewhere.



RED SOIL *Rouge*

Farid Bentoumi, France, 2020, 86 min., French

NARRATIVE

Tuesday, Nov. 9, 5:00 PM, Tivoli 1

Friday, Nov. 12, 5:00 PM, Tivoli 1

In this ecological thriller based on true events, Nour Hamadi (Zita Henrot) returns to her small hometown after losing her job as an emergency-room nurse and takes a position as a nurse at the chemical plant where her father has worked for 30 years. As she settles into her new job, Nour becomes aware of multiple irregularities in the treatment of hazardous waste and the protection of workers. Nour meets an investigative journalist (Céline Sallette) and finds herself compelled to become a whistleblower, at the risk of alienating her entire family. With his second feature, Algerian-French director Farid Bentoumi takes a nuanced look at the conflict between idealism and pragmatism in a complex political, economic, and environmental context sadly familiar to those who read the news. Co-produced by legendary Belgian filmmakers Luc and Jean-Pierre Dardenne and featuring their stalwart actor Olivier Gourmet, “Red Soil” establishes Bentoumi as a worthy heir to the Dardenne’s brand of socially relevant films in which regular people face the thorniest moral questions of our era.



A SEXPLANATION

Alexander Liu, Canada/U.S., 2020, 76 min.

Friday, Nov. 12, 7:30 PM, Webster U./Moore

Eventive

Filmmaker Alex Liu, a 36-year-old gay man who grew up with years of sexual shame, hits the road to learn about sex education, embrace sex positivity, and accept himself. From neuroscience labs to church pews, “A Sexplanation” features provocative conversations with psychologists, sex researchers, and even a Jesuit priest. With humor and grit, Liu takes audiences on a playful, heartfelt journey from a shame-filled past to a happier, healthier future. Like many American youth, Liu was taught in school that sex before marriage was wrong, and his classes showed shocking childbirth videos and all-too-graphic images of people with untreated HIV/AIDS. Because Liu knew he was gay, these “lessons” worked to suppress his sexuality, but his overwhelming curiosity compelled him to secretly surf the world of online pornography, leading him down a path of shame and isolation that eventually turned to suicidal thoughts. Convinced that sex would destroy him, Liu didn’t talk to anyone about his feelings. Now in his 30s and out of the closet, Liu has transformed fear and loathing into something positive and humorous, and “A Sexplanation” turns his personal pursuit of shame-free pleasure into a call for comprehensive sex education for everyone. POV Magazine writes: “‘A Sexplanation’ humorously plays with the elements of fun and self-discovery that are part of sex as Liu shifts sex ed from stigma and shame to pleasure and pride. As Liu proudly declares his love for penises before chomping down on a phallic frozen novelty, ‘A Sexplanation’ unabashedly puts the ‘d’ in doc.”



SHELLFISH

Hunter Hopewell, U.S., 2020, 82 min.

Eventive

Instead of finding a “real” job, as his parents lovingly put it, stop-motion animator Keller attempts to produce a film in a week with his dumbstruck brother and longtime crush. When their shoot goes wrong, Keller must face his own selfishness and decide which is more important: his filmmaking or his close relationships. A coming-of-age comedy with a twist of stop-motion animation, the sweet and playful “Shellfish” is the first feature from director Hunter Hopewell, who in his day job serves as a video producer at the Walt Disney Company. “Shellfish” is part of SLIFF’s annual New Filmmakers Forum (NFF) competition, which features five works by first-time feature directors.

NARRATIVE



SHIFTING: JOURNEYS THROUGH ANTARCTICA

DOCUMENTARY

Abraham Lim, Antarctica/South Korea/U.S., 2021, 73 min., English & Korean

Eventive

SLIFF viewers with long memories will recall Abraham Lim's first work as a director, "Roads and Bridges," which appeared in the 2001 New Filmmakers Forum. Twenty years later, the fest is pleased to feature his new film, "Shifting: Journeys Through Antarctica." A multilayered, ambitiously experimental personal documentary, the film follows Lim as he journeys back to the U.S. when his elderly mother has a stroke. As he cleans her house and prepares for her possible death, Lim awakens to his mother's life story and, through her, finds the key to unlocking his unfinished film on Antarctica. Working in an abstract, essayistic mode — alternately recalling Chris Marker's "San Soleil" and Dziga Vertov's "Man with a Movie Camera" — Lim weaves together a hypnotic montage, blending footage from his trips to both Antarctica and his former U.S. home with a dizzying array of sounds and images culled from many sources, including material from his previous films and vertical shots captured on his cell phone. Lim, whose first major professional work was as editor on mentor Robert Altman's "Cookie's Fortune," deftly uses rapid-fire cutting to create startling juxtapositions and associations, and further complicates viewers' perceptions by employing subtitles that sometimes deviate subtly from what's actually heard.



SINCE I BEEN DOWN

DOCUMENTARY

Gilda Sheppard, U.S., 2020, 105 min.

Saturday, Nov. 20, 7:30 PM, Washington U./Brown, Free

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

"Since I Been Down" follows a group of prisoners as they break free from their fate and create a model of education that is transforming their lives and communities. The film tells the story of how Washington State, in exchange for a false sense of safety, security, and prosperity, sacrificed an entire generation, consigning its poorest and most vulnerable youth of color to a life behind bars. In 1993, influenced by the national drug-war frenzy, escalating crime, and gang activity, Washington voters passed a three-strikes law and sent children considered irredeemable superpredators to prison for life without parole. Although imprisoned solely to remove and punish, not to educate or rehabilitate, these children, now adults, could not be silenced. Spotlighting one of those long-incarcerated youths, Kimonti Carter, "Since I Been Down" documents the entirely self-motivated efforts of prisoners to build a community of healing that now extends well beyond prison walls.

Shown with **Don't Go Tellin' Your Momma** (Topaz Jones & rubberband, U.S., 2020, 35 min.) In 1970, a group of Black educators in Chicago developed a flashcard set of the alphabet to provide Black-centered teaching materials; 50 years later, artist Topaz Jones offers an update through 26 individual scenes exploring Black identity.



SKID ROW, LOS ANGELES

Van Maximilian Carlson, U.S., 2021, 41 min.

Sunday, Nov. 14, 4:00 PM, Washington U./Brown, Free

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

Former New Filmmakers Forum winner Van Maximilian Carlson (2019's "Princess of the Row") returns to SLIFF with an informative and wide-ranging documentary that covers — and challenges conventional notions of — LA's infamous Skid Row. Narrated by charismatic Iraq War veteran Gerald Hall, who acts as the viewer's guide through the enormous homeless encampment, "Skid Row, Los Angeles" goes well beyond the typical view of the area to reveal the people and the stories that make up its large homeless community. Carlson first allows Hall to tell the story of how he arrived on Skid Row and then follows him as he introduces viewers to other remarkable people living there, including members of a music choir and activists fighting to form a neighborhood council — all of them searching for purpose and connection while overcoming the economic disadvantages of life on Skid Row. Effectively discussing the past, present, and future of the area, the film is compassionate and nonjudgmental, allowing for people living on Skid Row to make a case for themselves and offer up solutions to improve their lives.

Shown with Shelter (Smriti Mundhra, U.S., 2021, 34 min.) The co-director of "St. Louis Superman" examines the homeless crisis in LA through the eyes of some hopeful young children and their parents.

DOCUMENTARY



SKIES OF LEBANON *Sous le ciel d'Alice*

Chloé Mazlo, France, 2020, 92 min., Arabic, French & Italian

Friday, Nov. 5, 5:00 PM, Tivoli 1

Thursday, Nov. 18, 8:00 PM, Tivoli 3

Celebrated animator Chloé Mazlo makes her feature debut with this strikingly original film inspired by her family's life in the years leading into the Lebanese Civil War. In the 1950s, Alice (Alba Rohrwacher, "Happy as Lazarro") is eager to escape her strait-laced home in the Swiss Alps by becoming a nanny in Beirut. She soon falls in love with Joseph (Wajdi Mouawad, "Incendies"), a local astrophysicist dreaming of putting the first Lebanese national on the moon. As the lovers marry and start a family, Mazlo combines meticulously designed live-action sequences with the occasional offbeat stop-motion scene to create an irresistible picture of the glory days when Beirut was known as "the Paris of the Middle East." Unfortunately, the civil war soon sucks the joy out of Alice and Joseph's relationship. But Mazlo seeks neither to elicit pity nor to edify: Her considerable achievement here is to convey the quotidian strain of life during wartime while maintaining a nearly bubbly tone through her attention to detail, distinctive compositions, inventive approach to character, and obvious fondness for eccentrics. Far from denying the horror of kidnappings, army raids, and forced exile, Mazlo underlines the tragedy by contrasting these hardships with the exuberance of a place and society that exude love of life.

NARRATIVE

Sponsored by Janet Vigen Levy
& Rob Levy



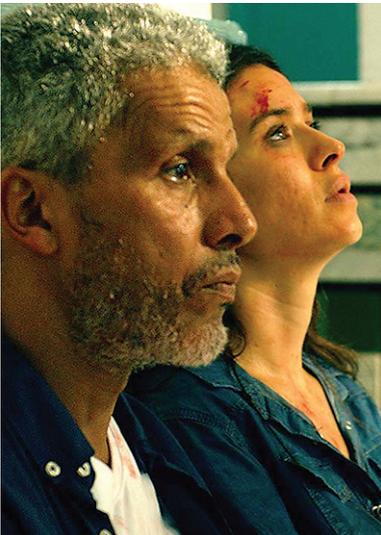
SOLUTIONS

Pernille Rose Groenkjaer, Denmark/U.S., 2021, 111 min.

Eventive

“Solutions” offers important insight into the visions and concrete ideas that will pave the way for solving some of the world’s most challenging problems. A group of the world’s leading thinkers — including historians, neuroscientists, economists, artificial-intelligence experts, and entrepreneurs — isolate themselves for 10 days at the renowned Santa Fe Institute in the desert of New Mexico. Coming from all corners of science, business, and academia, the participants want to secure the future of humanity by creating a new and optimistic pathway into the future. The topics they address range widely — from climate change, to wealth disparities, to social media, to the decline of democracy. The more these thinkers discuss the world’s daunting problems, the clearer it becomes that the seemingly disparate issues are intrinsically related, and unless we greatly alter our collective behavior, a doomsday future awaits us. Bleak as that prospect sounds, “Solutions” — as its name implies — offers hope: At the conclusion of each of its chapters, the film summarizes the major ideas that grow out of each discussion and provides a potential plan of action.

Shown with I Gotta Look Good for the Apocalypse (Ayce Kartal, Turkey, 2021, 4 min.) An animated exploration of confronting apocalyptic change, such as a pandemic, using clips from real gaming videos and animated re-creations of Internet videos.



A SON *Un fils*

Mehdi Barsaoui, Tunisia, 2019, 95 min., Arabic & French

Friday, Nov. 5, 6:00 PM, Tivoli 2

Monday, Nov. 8, 3:00 PM, Tivoli 2

When driving home from southern Tunisia, Fares and Meriem’s car is hit by a stray bullet during an ambush by an armed group, and their young son Aziz’s liver is punctured. Further upping the emotional ante, at a local hospital, the need for a transplant uncovers a long-kept secret. And this is only the beginning of the unexpected twists in “A Son’s” deftly crafted story, which also offers a probing look at Tunisian society’s social and legal realities. As their world falls apart, the subtleties of the couple’s shifting emotions are handled masterfully, heralding director Mehdi Barsaoui as a bold new talent to watch. Variety writes: “Not many debuting directors are able to bring subtlety and depth to a heart-rending subject, which is just one reason why Mehdi M. Barsaoui’s superb ‘A Son’ deserves significant attention. On the surface, the plot sounds like it could be taken from a hospital TV drama: When a young boy needs a liver transplant, his father discovers he’s not the biological parent. Such a bare-bones description does the film no justice, as Barsaoui’s sensitive script delves into issues of masculinity and paternity without losing sight of the strong female character and her double trauma as she faces the potential loss of both child and husband.”

NARRATIVE



SOY CUBANA

DOCUMENTARY

Ivaylo Getov & Jeremy Ungar, Cuba/U.S., 2020, 80 min., English & Spanish

Sunday, Nov. 14, 7:30 PM, Webster U./Moore

Eventive

In 2017, the Vocal Vidas, an all-female Cuban quartet, were invited to perform their first show in America. Complicating the trip was the fact that relations between the U.S. and Cuba, which had somewhat opened up under President Obama, were rapidly closing down again under the new administration. What began as a concert became a journey across physical and ideological borders: an affirmation of the connective power of music, even in the most uncertain times. “Soy Cubana” efficiently provides a grounding in the lives of the four charming members of Vocal Vidas, who struggle to keep the group going because there’s so little money to be made from performing in Cuba. The opportunity in LA — made possible by an invitation to perform at the city’s Grand Performances summer concert series — is thus a significant validation for the quartet. These insights into the women’s backgrounds are welcome, but the group’s performances undeniably provide the film’s high points: Although not a concert film, “Soy Cubana” very effectively presents full performances of many songs in the group’s repertoire, and the women’s complexly interwoven voices are truly transcendent. The film was the deserved audience-choice winner in the 24 Beats Per Second sidebar of this year’s SXSW.



STANLEYVILLE

NARRATIVE

Maxwell McCabe-Lokos, Canada, 2021, 89 min.

Thursday, Nov. 11, 4:00 PM, Tivoli 3

Friday, Nov. 12, 9:15 PM, Tivoli 3

Everyone likes to be a winner, but how far would you go to prove yourself worthy? A dissatisfied, bored woman suddenly abandons her career and her family when she gets the chance to compete in a bizarre contest whose prize is a brand-new, habanero-orange compact SUV. A singularly odd cast of misfit but motivated contestants gather to compete and are tasked with a series of six random and ridiculous challenges. Chaos quickly ensues. RogerEbert.com writes: “A twisted comedy that feels inspired by everything from Samuel Beckett to Wes Anderson to ‘Cube,’ (‘Stanleyville’) opens with the introduction of a dissatisfied soul named Maria (Susanne Wuest of ‘Goodnight Mommy’). After leaving her life behind, she’s approached by a mysterious character (Julian Richings), who informs her that she has been carefully selected for a very special competition. Not even knowing what she could win (a car!), she agrees to participate, quickly finding herself locked in a room with four quirky strangers as they compete in an increasingly surreal series of challenges. It starts simply enough — who can make the most balloons explode using only their lungs in just 60 seconds? It gets much, much weirder.”



Co-presented with the St. Louis Public Library

SUNDAY BLOODY SUNDAY

John Schlesinger, U.K., 1971, 110 min.

Sunday, Nov. 21, 1:30 PM, St. Louis Public Library, Free

Cinema St. Louis continues its year-long Golden Anniversaries series during SLIFF by featuring a half-dozen 1971 films on their 50 anniversary. John Schlesinger followed his iconic “Midnight Cowboy” with this deeply personal take on love and sex. “Sunday Bloody Sunday,” written by novelist and New Yorker film critic Penelope Gilliatt, depicts the romantic lives of two Londoners, middle-age doctor Daniel and prickly thirty-something divorcée Alex — played with great sensitivity by Peter Finch and Glenda Jackson — who are sleeping with the same handsome young artist, Bob (Murray Head). A revelation in its day, “Sunday Bloody Sunday” may be the 1970s’ most intelligent, multi-textured film about the complexities of romantic relationships. Cinema Scope writes: “The world of ‘Sunday Bloody Sunday’ feels as complete and real as it does because Schlesinger doesn’t force equations between the micro and the macro. The story of Daniel, Alex and Bob and their overlapping love lives resonates as intensely as it does because, while its details are grounded in the cultural specifics of its time and place, its essence — the sense that love is too often fleeting, and we must decide whether something is better than nothing — is timeless. Captivating while remaining unvarying in tone and pace, acted with seamless naturalism and attention to detail, elegantly photographed (by Billy Williams), edited (by Richard Marden) and designed (by Luciana Arrighi, who seems to have been unable to place a single object in a room that doesn’t feel true to the film’s characters), ‘Sunday Bloody Sunday’ seems to me flawless.” **With Susan Waugh, retired professor of English at St. Louis Community College at Meramec and former film critic for The Riverfront Times.**

NARRATIVE



SUNSET BOULEVARD

Billy Wilder, U.S., 1950, 110 min.

Sunday, Nov. 21, 5:00 PM, Tivoli 1, Free

As a complement to SLIFF’s Tribute to Mary Strauss, the fest offers a free screening of one of Mary’s favorite films, “Sunset Boulevard.” Winner of three Academy Awards®, director Billy Wilder’s classic stars Gloria Swanson as Norma Desmond, an aging silent-film queen, and William Holden as the struggling young screenwriter who is held in thrall by her madness. “Sunset Boulevard” earned Oscar® nominations not just for stars Swanson and Holden but also for real-life silent director Erich von Stroheim (“Greed”), devilishly cast as Desmond’s discoverer, ex-husband, and butler, and Nancy Olson as the lone bright spot amid the film’s unrelenting darkness. London’s Time Out writes: “One of Wilder’s finest, and certainly the blackest of all Hollywood’s scab-scratching accounts of itself, this establishes its relentless acidity in the opening scene by having the story related by a corpse floating face-down in a Hollywood swimming-pool. What follows in flashback is a tale of humiliation, exploitation, and dashed dreams, as a feckless, bankrupt screenwriter (Holden) pulls into a crumbling mansion in search of refuge from his creditors, and becomes inextricably entangled in the possessive web woven by a faded star of the silents (Swanson), who is high on hopes of a comeback and heading for outright insanity. The performances are suitably sordid, the direction precise, the camerawork appropriately noir, and the memorably sour script sounds bitter-sweet echoes of the Golden Age of Tinseltown. It’s all deliriously dark and nightmarish.”

NARRATIVE



TARGET: ST. LOUIS VOL. 1

Damien D. Smith, U.S., 2021, 59 min.

Friday, Nov. 5, 7:30 PM, Washington U./Brown, Free
Eventive, Special \$5 Price

“Target: St. Louis Vol. 1” serves as a valuable history lesson with sadly continuing relevance. The film tells the story of the U.S. government’s secret Cold War-era dispersal of aerosolized radioactive material in Pruitt-Igoe and other North City locations with majority Black populations to gauge their effects (though no proper follow-up ever seems to have occurred). Although the focus stays firmly on the so-called study, the documentary also links the exploitation of poor, Black St. Louisans for medical testing to other historical examples (e.g., the Tuskegee syphilis experiment), and it makes connections to the city’s unfortunate larger legacy of radiation contamination. Through interviews with Dr. Martino-Taylor, whose research on the program serves as the foundation on which the film is built, “Target: St. Louis” lays out the damning evidence against the government. Also implicated are participating corporations and educational institutions, who all frustratingly escape any legal culpability and stonewall efforts to uncover the full story. Former residents of Pruitt-Igoe complex, many still suffering from the effects of the experiment, offer moving testimony. **With director Damien D. Smith and subjects.**

DOCUMENTARY



THE TEACHER *Muallim*

Muslim Sahin, Turkey, 2021, 90 min., Turkish

Eventive

In the early-20th-century Ottoman Empire, Ali returns from France, where he was sent by the state to obtain an engineering education. Alienated from his autocratic homeland, he attends a meeting of the Young Turks, a political-reform movement, and is arrested. Ali finds himself exiled to a town in Anatolia, where he is required to teach at the local school. Trying to survive life before the formation of the Turkish Republic, Ali searches for a way out of his predicament, but the political and military oppression of the local populace continues to remind him of the aspects of the empire that he finds so problematic. When a state-controlled company confiscates the village’s tobacco, which is the townspeople’s only means of subsistence, he’s compelled to help.

NARRATIVE



TO WHICH WE BELONG

DOCUMENTARY

Pamela Tanner Boll & Lindsay Richardson, Kenya/Mexico/U.S., 2021, 89 min.

Eventive

Climate change is huge, scary, and highly politicized, and the relentless bad news can prove overwhelming: flooding in the Midwest, fires consuming California, seas rising, temperatures escalating, glaciers melting. But what if there is a solution that is proven, available, and scalable, and has no ill effects or unforeseen consequences? All that's required is taking carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere, where it traps heat and disturbs the water cycle, and putting it back into the soil through regenerative agricultural practices. With just these simple shifts, the soil becomes more flood-proof and drought-proof, and improves yields. "To Which We Belong" highlights an array of farmers and ranchers who are already practicing regenerative agriculture and profiles the scientists, businesses, and nonprofits who are working on financial incentives that will lead us to reduce — and eventually reverse — climate change on a global scale. By leaving behind conventional practices that are no longer profitable or sustainable, these unsung heroes are not only improving the health of the soil and the sea but also saving their own livelihoods — and our planet.



TORN

DOCUMENTARY

Max Lowe, Tibet/U.S., 2020, 92 min.

Saturday, Nov. 6, 1:00 PM, Tivoli 3

On Oct. 5, 1999, legendary climber Alex Lowe was tragically lost in a deadly avalanche on the Himalayan peak Mount Shishapangma. Miraculously surviving the avalanche was Alex's best friend and climbing partner, the renowned mountaineer Conrad Anker, who went on to marry Alex's widow and help raise his three sons. With "Torn," filmmaker, photographer, and National Geographic Explorer Max Lowe turns his camera's lens on his own family when the body of his father is uncovered 17 years after his death. Offering a profoundly intimate look at the Lowe-Anker family, Max captures their intense personal journey toward understanding Alex as a man, not a myth, and records the emotionally and physically harrowing trek to Shishapangma, where they will finally put him to rest. The Hollywood Reporter writes: "One can easily imagine all the ways 'Torn' could have become something sensationalistic and tawdry. Instead, it's a family drama that, rather than exploiting its jaw-dropping twists, aims for something more contemplative and much more emotional. 'Torn' isn't a terrifying, see-on-the-big-screen-at-all-costs thriller like 'Free Solo,' but it's almost guaranteed to make you cry by the end, and it mostly earns that response."



TRY HARDER!

Debbie Lum, U.S., 2021, 85 min.

Saturday, Nov. 20, 1:00 PM, Tivoli 3

“Try Harder!” offers an engaging portrait of five young adults as they navigate a quintessential rite of passage. At Lowell High School, the top-ranked public high school in San Francisco, the seniors are stressed out. As they prepare for the emotionally draining college-application process, students are keenly aware of the intense competition for the few open spots in their dream colleges. They scrutinize how every element of their application, from their classes to their extracurricular activities to their racial identities, might be read by admission officers. At Lowell — where cool kids are nerds, nearly everyone has an amazing talent, and the majority of the student body is Asian American — the things that usually make a person stand out can feel not good enough, even commonplace. With humor and heart, former St. Louisan and SLIFF alum Debbie Lum (“Seeking Asian Female”) examines the increasingly fraught American college-application process and explores the complicated intersection of class, race, and educational opportunity. Variety writes: “‘Try Harder!,’ Debbie Lum’s simultaneously charming and chastening documentary on the senior class in Lowell High, takes its cue from its lovable, dorky, high-achieving subjects and mostly remains in a cheerful register, heroizing a group rarely celebrated in high school movies: the good kids. But underneath the goofiness and gallows humor, there is a darker point being made about the impossible cycle of heightened expectations, cultural stereotyping and ever-shrinking admissions quotas for top-flight colleges.” **With director Debbie Lum.**



TWENTY PEARLS: THE STORY OF ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA SORORITY

Deborah Draper, U.S., 2021, 90 min.

Saturday, Nov. 13, 5:00 PM, Tivoli 1

Eventive

In “Twenty Pearls” — deftly narrated by Phylicia Rashad — two-time SLIFF alum Deborah Riley Draper (“Versailles ’73: American Runway Revolution,” “Olympic Pride, American Prejudice”) closely examines the founding and legacy of the first Black sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA), which is now regarded as one of the most significant and influential Black organizations in history. Through interviews and rarely seen archival materials, “Twenty Pearls” tells a powerful story of sisterhood. The documentary recounts the sorority’s origins in 1908, when nine Black women at Howard University created Alpha Kappa Alpha, and shows how it has remained an important force for social change and empowerment for Black women for more than 100 years. The accomplishments of the organization are legion. AKA created the Mississippi Health Project, which served impoverished children during Jim Crow amid threats from White supremacists. As an outgrowth of this initiative, they created the first mobile health clinic in the country. AKA did important work on anti-lynching bills with Eleanor Roosevelt, supported the World War II effort, and lobbied to desegregate the armed forces. The famous “Hidden Figures” of NASA’s space program? They were Alpha Kappa Alphas. Maya Angelou? Alpha Kappa Alpha. Civil-rights strategist Constance Baker Motley? Alpha Kappa Alpha. The good works of AKA continue to this day, from Japan to Ghana to the United Arab Emirates, and “Twenty Pearls” documents the sorority’s vast impact, culminating in the historic election of sorority member Kamala Harris as America’s first Black and South Asian woman vice president. **With director Deborah Riley Draper, SLIFF Women in Film Award honoree.**



Sponsored by Alpha Kappa Alpha, Inc. Gamma Omega Chapter



Co-presented with the St. Louis Public Library

TWO-LANE BLACKTOP

Monte Hellman, U.S., 1971, 102 min.

Saturday, Nov. 20, 1:30 PM, St. Louis Public Library, Free

Cinema St. Louis continues its year-long Golden Anniversaries series during SLIFF by featuring a half-dozen 1971 films on their 50 anniversary. Drag racing east from Los Angeles in a souped-up '55 Chevy are the wayward Driver and Mechanic (singer/songwriter James Taylor and the Beach Boys' Dennis Wilson, in their only acting roles), accompanied by a tag-along Girl (Laurie Bird). Along the way, they meet Warren Oates's Pontiac GTO-driving wanderer and challenge him to a cross-country race. The prize: their cars' pink slips. But no summary can do justice to the existential punch of "Two-Lane Blacktop." With its gorgeous widescreen compositions and sophisticated look at American male obsession, this stripped-down narrative from maverick director Monte Hellman is one of the artistic high points of 1970s cinema, and possibly the greatest road movie ever made. The Chicago Reader's Jonathan Rosenbaum writes: "This exciting existentialist road movie by Monte Hellman, with a swell script by Rudolph Wurlitzer and Will Corry and my favorite Warren Oates performance, looks even better now than it did in 1971, although it was pretty interesting back then as well. The movie starts off as a narrative but gradually grows into something much more abstract — it's unsettling but also beautiful." **With Robert Garrick, attorney, former contributor to the davekehr.com film blog, and contributor to Cinema St. Louis' The Lens film blog.**

NARRATIVE



UNSILENCED

Leon Lee, Canada/China/Taiwan, 2021, 108 min., English & Mandarin

Eventive

Based on true events, "Unsensored" follows Wang, a Chinese student and Falun Gong practitioner, and his friends as they attempt to navigate the 1999 order that banned the spiritual practice in China and remains in effect to this day. New lies and coverups appear around every turn as the Chinese Communist Party attempts to quell the rising voices of dissent, deploying every form of propaganda and suppression that it can muster. With the risk of prison, torture, and even death looming over Wang and his compatriots, they must all make sacrifices to protect the truth and expose the government's human-rights abuses. Director Leon Lee's 2018 "Letters to Masanjia" won multiple festival prizes, including the St. Louis Film Critics' Best Documentary Award when the film screened at SLIFF.

NARRATIVE



UPPERCASE PRINT

Radu Jude, Romania, 2020, 128 min., Romanian

Friday, Nov. 5, 8:30 PM, Tivoli 2

Monday, Nov. 8, 8:45 PM, Tivoli 2

In 1981, chalk slogans written in uppercase letters started appearing in public spaces in the Romanian city of Botoșani. They demanded freedom, alluded to the democratic developments taking place in Romania’s socialist sister countries, or simply called for improvements in the food supply. The culprit was Mugur Călinescu, a teenager who was still at school at the time and whose case is documented in the files of the Romanian secret police. Drawing on that material, theater director Gianina Cărbunariu crafted a documentary play, which was then filmed by Radu Jude (“Aferim!”). Jude — whose “Bad Luck Banging or Loony Porn” also screens at SLIFF — intriguingly supplements the play with archival footage from Romanian TV of the era: Cooking shows alternate with interrogations, transcripts of wiretapped phone calls with recommendations to exercise instead of taking sedatives. This dialectical montage creates a vivid picture of the era’s dictatorial surveillance state, drawing on the authorized popular entertainment of the Ceaușescu regime to unmask it.

NARRATIVE



VOODOO MACBETH

Dagmawi Abebe, Victor Alonso-Berbel, Roy Arwas, Hannah Bang, Christopher Beaton, Agazi Desta, Tiffany Kontoyiannis, Zoe Salnave, Ernesto Sandoval & Sabina Vajraca, U.S., 2021, 108 min.

Eventive

Based on true events surrounding the Negro Theatre Unit’s revolutionary 1936 production of “Macbeth,” “Voodoo Macbeth” tells the story of a group of committed artists as they set out to create what is now considered a landmark event in African-American theatrical history. Harlem in 1936 is a neighborhood battered by economic strife and hardship. With FDR’s New Deal providing funding for the Federal Theatre Project’s Negro Unit, director Rose McClendon convinces co-director John Houseman to help her bring Shakespeare’s “Macbeth” to the Harlem community at the Lafayette Theater — with an all-Black cast. They choose for their groundbreaking production a gifted but untested 20-year-old director by the name of Orson Welles, whose reimagined Haitian vision for the Scottish play is as daring and fresh as the cast and crew themselves. However, it quickly becomes clear that the road to opening night will not be a smooth one. Orson and Rose — who’s playing Lady Macbeth — clash over everything from scene blocking to crew hires, while Houseman contends with a congressman hellbent on shutting down what he deems “communist propaganda.” “Voodoo Macbeth” is a uniquely collaborative project. Made under the auspices of the University of Southern California, the film was written in the fall semester by eight selected USC students and then shot in the spring semester by 10 of the top graduate directing students. The strong ensemble cast includes Jeremy Tardy (“68 Whiskey,” “Dear White People”).

NARRATIVE



WALK WITH ME

Isabel del Rosal, U.S., 2020, 112 min.

Eventive

As Amber (Devin Dunne Cannon) braves life after divorce, the young mother must challenge herself to take some personal risks after finding love in an unexpected place. “Walk with Me” addresses the many aspects of what it means to be a woman — motherhood, marriage, family, career, sexuality — and deftly explores how to balance them. Music plays a vital role in the film, which prominently features the work of Amanda Walther, a Juno-nominated singer/songwriter from Toronto. Walther wrote 16 original songs for “Walk with Me,” four of which are performed in the film by co-star Bridget Barkan. First-time feature filmmaker Isabel del Rosal, a Cuban-American writer, director, and editor, has real-life experience with balancing the demands of contemporary womanhood: After making two short films, she took some time off to raise and school her children, and “Walk with Me” represents her return to moviemaking. “Walk with Me” is part of SLIFF’s annual New Filmmakers Forum (NFF) competition, which features five works by first-time feature directors.

NARRATIVE



WE ARE THE THOUSAND

Anita Rivaroli, Italy, 2020, 85 min., English & Italian

Thursday, Nov. 11, 7:30 PM, Webster U./Moore

In the smart, joyous “We Are the Thousand,” a handful of Foo Fighters fans in Cesena, Italy, led by band superfan Fabio Zaffagnini, hatch an elaborate plan to attract the American rockers to do a show in their town. As part of their Rockin’1000 project, they attract 1,000 musicians to the same open field to perform the Foo Fighters’ song “Learn to Fly.” The performance — an impressive technical achievement in which hundreds of singers, bassists, drummers, and guitarists all play in unison — catches on virally, leading to participants achieving dreams beyond just the Foo Fighters appearance. Although randomly thrown together by a quirky, orchestrated event, the members of the Rockin’1000 discover that they have forged meaningful relationships and found glorious uplift from their drab daily lives. Realizing that they have created a new community of musicians, the team decides to do it all again — not for the sake of getting big stars to a small town, but for the sense of belonging and shared passion that the event evokes. And when the makeshift band of 1,000 performs its own concert in front of an adoring audience, the superfans become the superstars. The Consequence website calls the film “an undeniable crowd pleaser guaranteed to soften the most hardened and cynical of hearts. Brimming with genuine enthusiasm and chill-inducing moments of earnest joy, ‘We Are the Thousand’ highlights the absolute best that music and humanity has to offer.”

*Shown with **The Dancing Man of L.A.** (Jen Fodor & Scott Sheppard, U.S., 2021, 26 min.)*

One-man dance party Howard Mordoh, a longtime fixture of the LA concert scene, copes with the canceled concerts and isolation of life during the Covid-19 pandemic.

DOCUMENTARY



WE BURN LIKE THIS

Alana Waksman, U.S., 2021, 81 min.

Eventive

When 22-year-old Rae, a descendant of Holocaust survivors, is targeted by neo-Nazis in Billings, Mont., her ancestors' trauma suddenly becomes very real. Returning home to her mother, she also uncovers the truth about a childhood accident. As anti-Semitism continues to rise in the community, Rae embarks on a journey to forgive herself, her mother, and the broken world. Inspired by true events, this coming-of-age story shows the inherited effects of historical trauma and the strength of survival and healing. "We Burn Like This" is the first feature by Alana Waksman, who in a director's statement explains that she made the film to sort through her feelings about her Jewish identity and to explore what self-acceptance and self-love look like. "We Burn Like This" is part of SLIFF's annual New Filmmakers Forum (NFF) competition, which features five works by first-time feature directors.

NARRATIVE



**Sponsored by Webster
University Film Series**

WHEEL OF FORTUNE AND FANTASY

Gūzen to sōzō

Ryūsuke Hamaguchi, Japan, 2021, 121 min., Japanese

Friday, Nov. 12, 1:00 PM, Tivoli 3

Saturday, Nov. 13, 9:30 PM, Tivoli 3

Spin the "Wheel of Fortune and Fantasy" and discover an unexpected love triangle, a failed seduction, and a chance encounter with the past. Propelled by coincidence and imagination, and guided by love's gentle current, acclaimed director Ryūsuke Hamaguchi ("Happy Hour," "Asako I & II") returns with an enchanting triptych that spins mundane encounters into a world of infinite possibilities. In "Episode 1: Magic (or Something Less Assuring)," a young woman is startled when she realizes that her best friend's new flame might just be her ex; in "Episode 2: Door Wide Open," a disgruntled student plots to trick his college professor, using his friend-with-benefits as bait; and in "Episode 3: Once Again," a girl's college reunion leads to an unanticipated run-in with an old friend and awakens feelings long since forgotten. Playfully inspired by life's tiny miracles, and bound together by memory, regret, deception, and fate, Hamaguchi leaves no stone unturned in his quest to chart the ever-deepening mysteries of the all-too-human heart. IndieWire writes: "A playful triptych of self-contained vignettes (complete with their own credit blocks) that are bound together by a shared fascination with memory, coincidence, and the deep truths that shallow lies tend to uncover, Hamaguchi Ryūsuke's wonderfully beguiling 'Wheel of Fortune and Fantasy' is neither fish nor fowl. It feels more like a single film than it does a trio of smaller ones that have been stitched together into a makeshift anthology, but the finished product is only greater than the sum of its parts because Hamaguchi understands that the best short fiction isn't just a travel-sized version of something bigger. On the contrary, the short stories he tells here are so delightful because they operate in a way that 'long' ones don't."

NARRATIVE



WHEN CLAUDE GOT SHOT

Brad Lichtenstein, U.S., 2020, 97 min.

Friday, Nov. 19, 7:30 PM, Washington U./Brown, Free

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

“When Claude Got Shot” follows the multi-year struggles of Claude Motley, a non-traditional-age Black law student (whose wife was already an attorney), after he’s shot while visiting his hometown of Milwaukee for a high-school reunion. The victim of a carjacking, Claude was shot in the face by 15-year-old Nathan King after he dropped off a friend at his house; he miraculously survived but then faced a seemingly endless series of operations to repair the damage the bullet caused. Nathan continued the crime spree with his accomplices and was himself shot when a subsequent Black robbery victim, Victoria Davison, who had a concealed-carry license, was able to pull a gun from her purse after being pushed to the ground. Like Claude, the teen survived, but he was paralyzed from the waist down. Claude wants justice and presses for Nathan’s conviction, but he also is painfully aware of the effects of American society’s mass incarceration of young Black men, which seriously complicates his feelings toward the teen who shot him. The film largely focuses on Claude, whose life is derailed in the shooting’s aftermath: Outsized medical bills endlessly accumulate, threatening his family’s middle-class life, and although he manages to complete law school despite his many surgeries, he twice fails the bar exam, upending his plans for a legal career. But if Claude remains the center of the doc, filmmaker Brad Lichtenstein deftly interweaves the stories of the other two principals in this drama — Nathan and Victoria — providing a complexly nuanced perspective on gun violence, Black-on-Black crime, and the criminal-justice system.

DOCUMENTARY



WHEN I’M DONE DYING *Bir Nefes Daha*

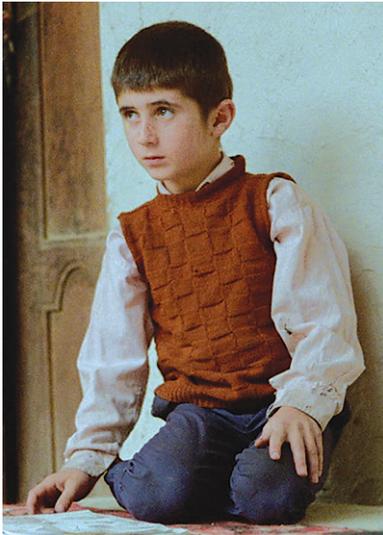
Nisan Dag, Turkey, 2020, 97 min., Turkish

Tuesday, Nov. 9, 4:00 PM, Tivoli 3

Thursday, Nov. 11, 7:00 PM, Tivoli 3

Fehmi, a 19-year-old aspiring rapper from a rough neighborhood of Istanbul, is addicted to bonzai, a cheap and deadly drug, jeopardizing his dreams of becoming a successful hip-hop artist. When Fehmi crosses paths with Devin, a 25-year-old affluent DJ, they fall hard for each other and find the inspiration both were lacking. But the incendiary and troubled love of this unlikely duo soon becomes toxic. An emotional roller coaster through Istanbul’s youth culture, “When I’m Done Dying” features edgy rap composed by one of the most acclaimed beatmakers and rappers in Turkey, Da Poet. Screen Daily writes: “The romance between a pair of lovers from opposite sides of the tracks drives this lively Istanbul-set drama. But director Nisan Dag manages to cover considerable territory using the relationship as a jumping off point: the country’s socio-economic divisions; its growing problem with the deadly synthetic drug ‘bonzai’; and its burgeoning rap scene are all explored. It could all feel a bit like an issue checklist, but the picture’s loose-limbed swagger and readiness to take risks keeps the energy level high. Plus the chemistry between the two charismatic central characters, 19-year-old aspiring rapper Fehmi (Oktay Cubuk) and Devin (Hayal Koseoglu), a DJ from a privileged background, is potent and persuasive.”

NARRATIVE



Co-presented with Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis

WHERE IS THE FRIEND'S HOUSE?

Abbas Kiarostami, Iran, 1987, 83 min., Persian

NARRATIVE

Thursday, Nov. 11, 6:30 PM, Contemporary Art Museum, Free

The first in Abbas Kiarostami's sublime, interlacing trilogy of films set in the northern Iranian village of Koker, "Where Is the Friend's House?" takes a premise of fable-like simplicity — a boy searches for the home of his classmate whose school notebook he has accidentally taken — and transforms it into a miraculous, child's-eye adventure of the everyday. As the young hero zigzags determinedly across two towns aided (and sometimes misdirected) by those he encounters, his quest becomes both a revealing portrait of Iranian society in all its richness and complexity and a touching parable about the meaning of personal responsibility. Shot through with all the wonder, beauty, tension, and mystery one day can contain, "Where Is the Friend's House?" established Kiarostami's reputation as one cinema's most sensitive and profound humanists. The film was selected by artist Farah Al Qasimi as an accompaniment to "Everywhere there is splendor," her newly commissioned, photo-based installation across the Contemporary Art Museum's Project Wall. Al Qasimi has long documented and created alternative narratives of Arab culture, style, taste, and interior spaces, and for her CAM exhibition (which continues through Feb. 13), she focuses on her personal family history through a lens of intimacy and interiority.



THE WHITE FORTRESS *Tabija*

Igor Drljaca, Bosnia and Herzegovina/Canada, 2021, 92 min., Bosnian & English

NARRATIVE

Saturday, Nov. 6, 9:15 PM, Tivoli 3

Friday, Nov. 12, 4:00 PM, Tivoli 3

Eventive

In a rundown Sarajevo suburb, Alipasino Polje, Faruk is an orphan who lives with his ill grandmother. He spends his days foraging for scrap metal with his uncle Mirsad and dabbling in petty crimes with his friend Almir. One day he meets Mona, a timid teen, from an affluent family. Her father Slaven's political campaign consumes Mona's household, while her mother Aida tries to salvage what remains of her failing marriage. When Mona's parents decide to send her to Canada to live with relatives, Mona seeks refuge and opens herself up to Faruk, a boy from a world entirely different from her own. The Film Stage writes: "The line between fairy tale and horror proves a thin one in Igor Drljaca's 'The White Fortress' thanks to the differing perspectives of young love in Sarajevo. Whether Faruk (Pavle Cemerikic) and Mona (Sumeja Dardagan) believe a life together may yet be possible for them despite coming from opposite social and economic worlds doesn't factor in because they're just teenagers buckling under the pressure of outside forces that refuse to let them be free."



Sponsored by Linda Brown
Reed, Esq.

WHO WE ARE: A CHRONICLE OF RACISM IN AMERICA

Emily Kunstler & Sarah Kunstler, U.S., 2020, 117 min.

Saturday, Nov. 6, 3:00 PM, Tivoli 2

Tuesday, Nov. 9, 6:00 PM, Tivoli 2

Directed by Sarah and Emily Kunstler — who previously helmed the well-received “William Kunstler: Disturbing the Universe,” about their famous father — “Who We Are: A Chronicle of Racism in America” features a multimedia performance on the history of American racism by ACLU deputy legal director Jeffrey Robinson as its centerpiece. In that sense, it’s a formal variant on “An Inconvenient Truth,” but the film doesn’t stay confined to Broadway’s Town Hall — though this material is highly effective — instead venturing out into the wider world, from a hanging tree in Charleston, S.C., to a walking tour of the origins of slavery in Colonial New York, to the site of a 1947 lynching in rural Alabama. Using archival material, vérité footage, and interviews with Black change-makers and eyewitnesses to history, the film brings history to life, exploring the enduring legacy of White supremacy and our collective responsibility to overcome it. Robinson shows how legalized discrimination and state-sanctioned brutality, murder, dispossession, and disenfranchisement continued long after slavery ended, profoundly impeding Black Americans’ ability to create and accumulate wealth and to gain access to jobs, housing, education, and healthcare. The film also poignantly traces the Robinson family’s illustrative personal journey, particularly their experiences while attempting to purchase a home in a White neighborhood. With heartbreak, humor, passion, and rage, “Who We Are” offers a potent distillation of the key ingredients in America’s racist brew, and Robinson serves as an appealing, charismatic guide to Black life past and present.



WIND

Dandren Wanggyal, China/Tibet, 2020, 96 min., Tibetan

Eventive

Based on famed writer A Lai’s novel “Dog Boy Gera” and produced by well-regarded screenwriter Lu Wei (“Farewell My Concubine,” “To Live”), “Wind” is the debut feature of Tibetan director Dandren Wanggyal. Thirteen years ago, the mysterious and beautiful Sang Dan arrived in a Tibetan village alone and was discovered sleeping in the sheepfold. Having neither a house nor livestock of her own, she becomes dependent on the alms of the villagers to survive. When Sang Dan later gives birth to a daughter, named Gera, no one knows the identity of the girls’ father, and she’s further ostracized because of her child’s illegitimacy. Living together in a broken house by the village square, mother and daughter are treated icily by the townsfolk, but as Gera grows, she becomes increasingly independent and assertive. In the end, she helps not only to improve her mother’s life but also to soften the harsh judgments of the villagers.

NARRATIVE



THE WOMAN WHO RAN Domangchin yeoja Hong Sangsoo, South Korea, 2020, 77 min., Korean

Wednesday, Nov. 10, 8:45 PM, Tivoli 2

Friday, Nov. 12, 6:00 PM, Tivoli 2

The 24th feature from Hong Sangsoo, “The Woman Who Ran” follows Gamhee (Kim Minhee), who has three separate encounters with friends while her husband is on a business trip. Youngsoon (Seo Youngwha) is divorced, has given up meat, and likes to garden in her backyard. Suyoung (Song Seonmi) has a crush on her architect neighbor and is being hounded by a young poet she met at the bar. Woojin (Kim Saebyuk) works for a movie theater. Their meeting is polite, but strained. Before long, their shared history bubbles to the surface. With characteristic humor and grace, Hong takes a simple premise and spins a web of interconnecting philosophies and coincidences. “The Woman Who Ran” is a subtle, powerful look at dramas small and large faced by women everywhere. The film is part of a focus on Hong’s recent work — including “In Front of Your Face” and “Introduction” — at this year’s SLIFF. The New York Times’ A.O. Scott writes: “Hong, a prolific miniaturist with an unmatched eye and ear for heterosexual romantic disappointment, is often compared to Eric Rohmer, the French writer-director who specialized in fables of wayward desire among the bourgeois-bohemian class. To me, he more closely resembles a short-story writer like Ann Beattie or Alice Munro, assembling an anthology of recognizably similar but always distinct approaches to a carefully selected set of characters and themes. For those of us who delight in his elegant explorations of drunkenness, regret, lust and ennui, he is an indispensable comedian of modern manners, good and bad, and his steady (or perhaps compulsive) productivity is a gift. ‘The Woman Who Ran’ is a cinematic sketch, and also the work of a master.”

NARRATIVE



A WORLD FOR JULIUS Un Mundo Para Julius Rossana Díaz Costa, Peru, 2021, 104 min., Spanish

Eventive

Julius — an upper-class child in 1950s Lima, Peru — lives in a mansion with his aristocratic family and a bevy of servants. Little by little, Julius loses his innocence as he discovers, but never understands, a home and a world full of inequalities and injustices. The film is based on Alfredo Bryce Echenique’s “Un Mundo para Julius,” a 1970 book considered one of the most important literary works in Peru. Although the film is set in the past, the racism, discrimination, abuse of power, and sexism shown in “A World for Julius” remain sad realities not just in Peru and Latin America but throughout the world.

NARRATIVE



THE WORST PERSON IN THE WORLD *Verdens verste menneske*

NARRATIVE

Joachim Trier, Norway, 2021, 127 min., Norwegian

Saturday, Nov. 13, 2:00 PM, Tivoli 1

The third film (with “Reprise” and “Oslo, August 31st”) in Joachim Trier’s unofficial Oslo trilogy, the comic drama “The Worst Person in the World” explores love in our complicated time — when someone can receive all of life’s opportunities but still feel like the worst person in the world. Julie is turning 30, and her life is an existential mess. Several of her talents have gone to waste and her older boyfriend, Aksel — a successful graphic novelist — is pushing for them to settle down. One night, she gatecrashes a party and meets the young and charming Eivind. Before long, she has broken up with Aksel and thrown herself into yet another new relationship, hoping for a new perspective on her life. But she will come to realize that some life choices are already behind her. Time Out writes: “Norwegian actress Renate Reinsve is the heart and soul of this touching and inventive account of one millennial life that unfolds over several years in Oslo and feels like it’s capturing the heartbeat of a city as well as honouring the rhythms and rituals of a generation. It’s full of playful filmmaking, from a young woman running through a city where everyone else is frozen in time, to a visual freakout when the same woman and her pals knock back a truckload of magic mushrooms. ‘The Worst Person’ is busy and bursting with recognisable experience. Any film that can combine questions of mortality with funny, fully alive scenes of sex, social awkwardness, professional screw-ups and throwaway fun is a rich one. Its brilliant, full-on performance from Reinsve deserves to be celebrated far and wide.”



YOUTH V GOV

DOCUMENTARY

Christi Cooper, U.S., 2020, 107 min.

Eventive

An intelligent combination of civics lessons and environmentalism, Christi Cooper’s “Youth v. Gov” tells the story of America’s youngest citizens taking on the world’s most powerful government. The film focuses on a suit brought by 21 diverse kids and teens, ranging in ages from 8 to 19, in which they sued — with the help of the nonprofit Our Children’s Trust — the U.S. government for failing to take action on climate change, thus endangering their constitutional right to life, liberty, and property. The documentary does a fine job of balancing its many elements: profiling the young litigants; outlining the key environmental issues; citing the scientific evidence of climate change and its dire effects; tracing the history of successive U.S. administrations’ failures to seriously engage with the existential threat; explaining the legal reasoning behind the suit; and following the case as it wends its slow, hiccuping way through the court system from 2015 through 2020 before it’s finally heard in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. And thanks to its youthful protagonists’ admirable engagement, intelligence, and resolve, the film even provides a welcome glimmer of hope for our increasingly gloomy world. POV Magazine writes: “Youth v Gov is both a documentary and a kind of superhero movie. Cooper does not shy away from casting an awe-struck gaze on the group of young people she clearly admires. The kids are the heroes of the film — not world-weary — and with strong, newly minted moral compasses.”

“The Day I Had to Grow Up”
sponsored by Janet Park

Shown with **The Day I Had to Grow Up** (Stefano Da Frè & Laura Pellegrini, U.S., 2020, 25 min.) Five prominent young activists meet in New York City to discuss their efforts to improve the world by addressing such issues as racial justice, gun reform, and climate change.



Sponsored by Engagedly

ZERO GRAVITY

Thomas Verrette, U.S., 2021, 74 min.

Eventive

“Zero Gravity” follows a diverse group of middle-school students from San Jose, Calif., who compete in a nationwide tournament to code satellites aboard the International Space Station (ISS). Seen through the wondrous eyes of three young students and their first-time coach, they each take an intimate and personal journey to space as their team grows from amateur coders to representing California in the ISS Finals Tournament — the culmination of a summer-long adventure that sees their incredible accomplishment performed by astronauts in orbit.

Shown with **Generation Impact: The Coder** (Samantha Knowles, U.S., 2021, 7 min.) Jay Jay Patton was only 13 when she designed and built Photo Patch, a mobile app to help kids send photos and letters to parents who are incarcerated. **Generation Impact: The Inventor** (Sarah Klein & Tom Mason, U.S., 2021, 7 min.) Easton LaChappelle developed the world’s lightest weight and most affordable prosthetic limb, which was inspired by a science-fair-winning robotic arm he built as a teenager. **A View from Above** (Dylan Werkman, Netherlands/U.S., 2020, 18 min., Dutch & English) Featuring breathtaking footage of Earth from space, the film traces the intimate journey of an astronaut, raising questions about our shared home and our broader collective consciousness.

SLIFF DOCUMENTARY & NARRATIVE SHORTS



The Beauty President

DOC SHORTS: AMERICAN POLITICS

114 min.

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

An anthology of shorts exploring the biggest issues in the United States today.

The Beauty President (Whitney Skauge, U.S., 2021, 10 min.) Terence Smith, who as drag queen Joan Jett Blakk made a historic bid for the White House in 1992 as one of the first openly queer write-in candidates, reflects back on his place in gay-rights history at the height of the AIDS crisis. **Meltdown in Dixie** (Emily Harrold, U.S., 2021, 40 min.) In the wake of the 2015 Charleston Massacre, a battle erupts in Orangeburg, S.C., between the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) and the owner of an ice-cream shop who is forced to fly the Confederate flag in his parking lot. **Party Line** (Lydia Cornett, U.S., 2021, 7 min.) At the early-voting line in Ohio's most populous county, civic duty is made public. **Sawyer County, 2020** (Nick Libbey & Zach Tomasovic, U.S., 2021, 25 min.) The pulse of America is taken in Sawyer County, Wis., in the weeks leading up to the 2020 presidential election. **Still Home** (Keenan Wetzel, U.S., 2020, 32 min.) The story of East Liverpool, Ohio, and how it went from a shining example of an American town to the center of the opioid epidemic.



Mama

DOC SHORTS: ANIMALS

103 min.

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

An examination of the life and conservation of animals across the globe.

Continuing a Legacy (Elizabeth Bayne, U.S., 2020, 32 min.) London Gladney, an 11-year-old girl and competitor in the California Junior Rodeo Association, is the latest in a line of Black cowboys in her family. **Mama** (Pablo de la Chica, Congo/Spain, 2020, 29 min., French) Deep in the Kahuzi-Biega National Park is the Lwiro Primate Rehabilitation Sanctuary, where Mama Zawadi and her baby chimpanzees find the only place in the world where unconditional love can heal the wounds of war and save them from extinction. **Snowy** (Alexander Lewis & Kaitlyn Schwalje, U.K./U.S., 2020, 12 min.) An exploration of the happiness of Snowy, a 4-inch-long pet turtle who has lived in the family basement for 10-plus years with minimal sunlight and no companionship other than his caretaker. **The Vet Van** (Sarah Jenks & Lizzie Mulvey, U.S., 2020, 30 min.) Lucy and Tabitha have to make tough choices to save the pets who help them cope with isolation and poverty, and although the vet van offers a low-cost solution, it requires difficult trade-offs.



Senior Prom

DOC SHORTS: GROWING OLD

123 min.

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

A program that captures the wisdom, the humor, and the pain that comes with age.

Come on Time (Chris Vernon, U.K./U.S., 2020, 40 min.) A joint effort between subject and filmmaker to help Clive Kennedy, a performer whose incredible talent has gone unrealized, improve his mental health by finding catharsis through song. **The Hairdresser** (Lorraine Price, Canada, 2020, 13 min., French) At 83, Kathleen continues to work as a hairdresser, still doing extraordinary things in what is typically considered a pedestrian profession. **Heurtebise** (Octavio Guerra & Elisa Torres, France/Spain, 2020, 20 min., French & Spanish) At Heurtebise, her home in France, Alice lives her last summer as her grandson experiences his first. **Senior Prom** (Luisa Conlon, U.S., 2021, 14 min.) At an LGBTQ retirement home, the annual “senior” prom celebrates the lives and legacies of resistance of the eldest queer generation. **Strikers** (Amber Love & Andrea Raby, U.S., 2021, 12 min.) At Illinois’ Affordable Assisted Living Coalition’s annual Wii bowling competition, the reigning champs of Eden Supportive Living take on their old rivals from Bolingbrook. **Testimony of Ana** (Sachin Dheeraj Mudigonda, India/U.S., 2021, 24 min., Dangi) Anaben Pawar, an elderly tribal woman, is accused of witchcraft in rural India, which has a deep-rooted culture of patriarchy.



The Neon Craftsman

DOC SHORTS: HONEST WORK

110 min.

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

Glimpses of labor in its many forms and the sense of catharsis it can bring.

A Broken House (Jimmy Goldblum, Lebanon/U.S., 2020, 19 min., Arabic & English) When Mohamad Hafez received a single-entry visa to study architecture in the United States, he realized if he couldn’t return home to Syria, he could make a simulation by sculpting life-like renditions of his Damascus neighborhood. **Eric and the Bees** (Erin Brethauer & Tim Hussin, U.S., 2020, 8 min.) When Eric Grandon, a former soldier with PTSD, returned to his family farm and discovered beekeeping, he had no idea that the bees would give him the power to transform both his own life and the lives of many others. **Joakim** (Tobias Ohlsson, Sweden, 2021, 13 min., Swedish) A small-town gay florist who grew up in the conservative Swedish countryside, Joakim struggled for acceptance from his peers, his society, his family, and ultimately himself. **Lines of Exile** (Eric Patrick, U.S., 2021, 7 min.) In this animated portrait, Hamid Naficy intimately recounts the evolution of cultural theory over the last decades through his drawings. **Mutha & the Death of Ham-Ma-Fuku** (Daniel Suberviola, Spain/Western Sahara, 2021, 25 min.) Mutha faces death every day as she searches for antipersonnel mines in the Western Sahara Desert. **The Neon Craftsman** (Jason Knade, U.S., 2021, 3 min.) The history and art of neon seen through the prism of Tom Wartman, one of the country’s last remaining neon professionals. **The Seeker** (Lance Edmands, U.S., 2020, 19 min.) A lyrical portrait of an excommunicated Amish woodworker struggling with spirituality, poverty, and life as an outcast from his strict, insular community. **Takeaway** (Victor Giner, China/Spain, 2021, 16 min., Mandarin) Xiao works 15 hours a day seven days a week delivering food in Beijing.



A Year in Exile

DOC SHORTS: IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

122 min.

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

Harrowing stories of coming and going — by choice, by force, or by necessity.

Above the Troubled Water (Joseph Cohen, Canada/U.K./U.S., 2020, 38 min.) Three gay friends from Nigeria are forced to flee their country and adjust to life in exile. **Ale Libre** (Maya Micaela Cueva, U.S., 2021, 16 min., English & Spanish) As she prepares for one of the biggest moments of her life — her deportation case — Alejandra is forced to reckon with a past mistake and a system that could tear her apart from her family and the only home she has ever known. **Eagles** (Kristy Guevara-Flanagan & Maite Zubiaurre, U.S., 2021, 14 min., English & Spanish) The Aguilas del Desierto (Desert Eagles), themselves largely immigrant Latinos, search along the scorching southern border in Arizona, where it is estimated that only one out of every five missing migrants is ever found. **Since You Arrived, My Heart Stopped Belonging to Me** (Erin Semine Kökdil, Mexico/U.S., 2021, 21 min., Spanish) Central American mothers journey by bus through Mexico, searching for their children who migrated north toward the United States but disappeared en route. **A Year in Exile** (Malaz Usta, Syrian Arab Republic/Turkey, 2020, 19 min., Arabic) An innovative look at the first year in the life of an immigrant after moving to Turkey from Syria. **Yulisa** (Joshua Echevarria & Jonathan Schienberg, Mexico/U.S., 2020, 14 min., English & Spanish) A young pregnant woman, fleeing for safety, finds herself trapped in dire conditions in a dangerous Mexican-U.S. border town just weeks before she's supposed to give birth.



Three Songs for Benazir

DOC SHORTS: INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

115 min.

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

Shorts that examine the impact of the most significant current events facing our modern world.

Digging for Life (Joao Queiroga, Angola/Cameroon, 2020, 14 min.) When a young Cameroonian man attempts to pursue the dream of a better life in post-apartheid South Africa, he instead finds himself trapped as a slave in Angola. **Faraway** (Aziz Zoromba, Canada, 2020, 18 min., Arabic, English & French) After being estranged from his family for his homosexuality, a young Arab man navigates his solitude while attempting to reconnect with his mother. **Generation 94** (Gemma Capdevila, Rwanda/Spain, 2021, 21 min., English & Kinyarwanda) A quarter-century after the Rwandan genocide took nearly a million lives, the orphans left behind have become the symbol of the country's reconstruction. **Hunger Ward** (Skye Fitzgerald, U.S./Yemen, 2020, 40 min., Arabic & English) Two women healthcare workers fight to thwart the spread of starvation against the backdrop of a forgotten war in Yemen. **Three Songs for Benazir** (Elizabeth Mirzaei & Gulistan Mirzaei, Afghanistan/U.S., 2021, 22 min., Persian) Shaista, newly married to Benazir and living in a camp for displaced persons in Kabul, struggles to balance his dreams of being the first from his tribe to join the Afghan National Army with the responsibilities of starting a family.



6,000 Waiting

DOC SHORTS: LIVING WITH DISABILITIES

102 min.

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

An exploration of the challenges and experiences of real people living with a disability.

6,000 Waiting (Michael Joseph McDonald, U.S., 2021, 29 min.) Three Georgians with cerebral palsy fight to live life on their own terms, but as their families bind together, state policy tries to tear them apart. **A Burning Voice** (Pirjo Ojala, Finland/Uganda, 2021, 30 min.) Ugandan Deus Twesigye was leaving for work one morning in 2010 when his ex-girlfriend threw acid on him, changing his life completely. **I Forgot to Live** (Hernandez de Haro Eduardo, Spain, 2021, 21 min., Spanish) Although born with a severe motor disability, Tani is a grateful and happy person because of his family. **Tictoc** (Mark Waters, U.K., 2020, 22 min.) Felix, 16 years old, contends with the unpredictable and consuming nature of Tourette's disorder while navigating the usual tribulations of adolescence.



Sin Miedo

DOC SHORTS: METHOD M

104 min.

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

A sampler of films from students in the Jonathan B. Murray Center for Documentary Journalism at the Missouri School of Journalism, which applies the "Missouri Method" approach to the hands-on teaching of journalism to the field of documentaries.

1414 (Victoria Heinsohn, U.S., 2021, 20 min.) In a college town, eight friends live together during their last months before graduation, holding tight to memories of collective good times in the past and facing individual anxieties about the future. **Ea La Mar's** (Jada Page, U.S., 2021, 21 min.) At Ea La Mar's Cosmetology and Barber College, a mother and daughter have a tight bond and are determined to maintain their family-owned business. **Gifts from Our Father** (Armaja LaRue-Hill, U.S., 2021, 19 min.) A decade after finding her father on Facebook, a woman travels through the American South to meet her three paternal siblings for the first time. **Little Soldier** (Victoria Zeyen, U.S., 2021, 28 min.) A 14-year-old breaks barriers as she navigates the always-difficult teenage years. **Sin Miedo** (Marian Bouchot, U.S., 2021, 16 min., English & Spanish) The construction industry in Texas has countless Latinx workers like Fredy, who has spent the last eight years trying to make the American dream his reality.



Life, Again

DOC SHORTS: THE PRISON SYSTEM

98 min.

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

True stories of the inequities that permeate throughout the justice system at large.

Beyond the Wire (Ted Griswold, U.S., 2021, 17 min.) Former Army Ranger Chris Pesqueira, who experiences freedom after 33 years at Soledad State Prison in California, leans into a community of formerly incarcerated veterans for support as he reintegrates into society. **Cycles** (Jonathan Barenboim, U.S., 2020, 21 min.) Two young Black men, who are motorcycle stunt riders from Compton and Watts in LA, are caught in a cycle of incarceration. **Destiny Made** (Joenique C. Rose, U.S., 2021, 14 min.) After several stints in jail, Ashenka's re-entry into her children's lives is made even more difficult because she's never confronted a significant loss. **Hustle** (Xavier Cousens, U.S., 2021, 10 min.) Anthony Johnson, a work-release recipient, spends his days as a courier in New York City and his nights incarcerated. **Last Meal** (Marcus McKenzie & Daniel Principe, U.S., 2020, 18 min.) A look at death-row inmates' final feasts shines a light on our understanding of the prisoners and the institutions meting out capital punishment. **Life, Again** (Orion Huang & Anna Maité Kaplan, U.S., 2021, 18 min.) An intimate portrait of Wes Burlison, recently released from prison after 23 years, as he navigates his journey to freedom, rehabilitation, and redemption.



Street Reporter

DOC SHORTS: SECRET HISTORIES

124 min.

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

A collection of fascinating exposés that unearth surprising stories about some of the most recognizable institutions.

The FBI's Secret War (David Reppond, U.S., 2020, 14 min.) The FBI's illegal Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) infiltrated and disrupted many organizations, including the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, forcing a soldier recently returned from the Vietnam War to fight another battle: against his own government. **Memory Lanes** (Brian Gersten, U.S., 2021, 13 min.) A slightly personal, slightly experimental archival documentary about the history of bowling in America. **The Queen of Basketball** (Ben Proudfoot, U.S., 2021, 22 min.) One of the greatest living women's basketball players, she won three national trophies, scored the first basket in women's Olympic basketball, and was drafted by the NBA. But have you ever heard of Lucy Harris? **Red Horizon** (T.C. Johnstone, U.S., 2020, 30 min.) A group of young Black pilots attempt to carry on the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen while struggling to overcome racism and prejudice in today's world. **Restrictions Apply** (Justice A. Whitaker, U.S., 2020, 18 min.) In a California suburb called "America's happiest city," a resident uncovers a sad secret when she discovers racist language in her home deed and uncovers a system that's designed to keep itself buried. **Street Reporter** (Laura Waters Hinson, U.S., 2021, 27 min.) An aspiring photojournalist discovers the power of her own voice while struggling to survive homelessness.



Cowboy Poet

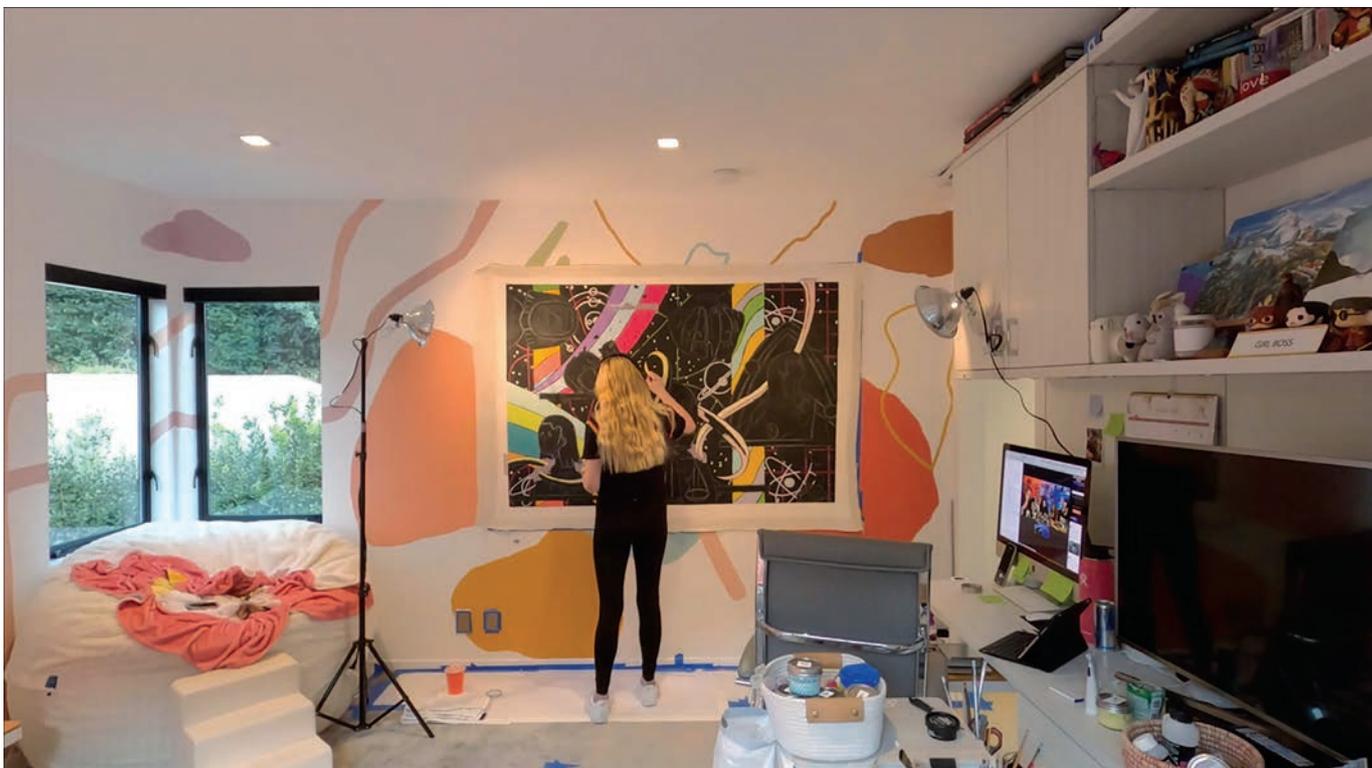
DOC SHORTS: THIS IS OUR YOUTH

114 min.

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

Children are the future, and their present experiences captured in these shorts demonstrate what that future might look like.

Arctic Summer (Daniel Fradin & Kyle Rosenbluth, Canada/U.S., 2020, 24 min.) A look at Tuktoyaktuk (Tuk), one of the northernmost towns in the world, capturing the Indigenous community during one of the last summers before climate change forced its coastal population to relocate to more habitable land. **At What Cost?** (Lauren Rothman, U.S., 2020, 22 min.) Following the deaths of several USC students, a film student befriends the editor of the school newspaper to investigate potential underlying causes of these tragedies and the impact they had on the rest of the university. **Cowboy Poet** (Jared Jakins, U.S., 2021, 6 min.) Thatch Elmer, a 14-year-old cowboy poet, has found the cultural practice to be a wellspring of strength, connection, and healing. **Eagles Rest in Liangshan** (Bohao Liu, China/U.S., 2021, 31 min., Chinese) Inspired by Kobe Bryant's Mamba Mentality, a young man returns to coach the kids in his city of Liangshan, where basketball is so popular with the Yi minority that the center of town is not a park but a basketball court. **The Lord's Day** (Simon Weizineau, Canada, 2020, 7 min., French) To get over his Sunday boredom, a young Atikamekw spends time with friends, reminiscing about his dogs. **The Promise** (Roni Azgad, Israel, 2020, 24 min., Hebrew) A form-bending archival odyssey into life in Israel in the 1990s, as told through Jewish rituals, cultural and political rites of passage, and a failed prom.



At What Cost?



Black Slide

NARRATIVE SHORTS: ANIMATION 1

115 min.

Eventive

These animated stories offer insight into rural life, religion, war, and mortality.

Beyond the Fog (Xue Feng, China/Germany, 2021, 7 min., No Dialogue) Two kung-fu fighters compete to occupy a tree for their beloved pet birds. **Black Slide** (Uri Lotan, Israel, 2021, 11 min., Hebrew) Two friends sneak into the most terrifying ride at the water park. **Chasse Galerite** (Brian Hawkins, U.S., 2020, 6 min., English & French) In an adaptation of a cherished Missouri French Creole folktale — told in the local dialect by one of its last native speakers — a passionate hunter's untamed desire often leads him into trouble. **Fetch** (Sam Gill, New Zealand, 2021, 18 min.) A dog and his human work together as the only maintenance crew aboard a colossal space station. **Homebird** (Ewa Smyk, U.K., 2021, 10 min., No Dialogue) Struggling to make it in a big city, a young artist finds herself retreating into the rose-tinted memories of the village she left behind. **Hypo-gravitation** (Jacob Arenber, Israel, 2021, 10 min., No Dialogue) A daughter gets sick, hovers in the air, and must learn to live with her mother. **Memory Makers** (Mark Pagliaroli, Canada, 2021, 7 min.) A ragtag group of cameras try to escape their owner's apartment before they are thrown away. **Mila** (Cinzia Angelini, Canada/Italy/U.S., 2021, 20 min., No Dialogue) With a little more than imagination and humanity, Mila manages to profoundly impact others, including a caring stranger. **Ryori** (Brian Yulo Ng, Japan, 2020, 5 min., No Dialogue) A guardian statue comes out of the forest to eat traditional Japanese cuisine. **Shadow** (Azzaya Munkhbat, Mongolia, 2021, 8 min., English & Mongolian) A little girl wants to show her drawings to her family members, who have a sedentary lifestyle. **Split Apart** (Zina Papadopoulou & Petros Papadopoulos, Greece, 2020, 13 min., No Dialogue) In a single-tone, vertical city, a lonely man who stands out tries to fit in.



Shadow



Two Little People

NARRATIVE SHORTS: ANIMATION 2

124 min.

Eventive

This animated sampler has an international focus.

Autumn Leaves (Wojciech Ostrycharz, Poland, 2021, 3 min., No Dialogue) A short story about intimacy and loss is synchronized with music of the same name by Joe Pass. **Baggage** (Einat Keshet, Israel, 2020, 6 min., English & Hebrew) On a flight with her father to a family gathering overseas, Reut realizes that she doesn't meet his expectations, yet the experience helps her uncover her identity. **The Boy and the Mountain** (Santiago Aguilera & Gabriel Monreal, Chile, 2020, 11 min., Spanish) Hernán likes to daydream, but the rest of his life is starting to suffer. **BusLine35A** (Elena Felici, Denmark, 2021, 6 min.) One city bus, three passengers, and a back-seat scenario they fail to address. **The Girl Who Stood Still** (Joana Toste, Portugal, 2021, 9 min., Portuguese) A policeman helps a lost child find her mother. **House of Memory** (Sofía Rosales Arreola, Mexico, 2020, 13 min., No Dialogue) An old man carefully preserves a film library made up of memories captured in celluloid. **Invisible Eyes** (Jung Seung-hee, South Korea, 2021, 8 min., No Dialogue) Three children suffer nightmares after chasing a squirrel through the forest. **The Living Wall** (Keita Kurosaka, Japan, 2020, 6 min., No Dialogue) The old wall has no choice but to stay in that same place, watch those who are leaving, and decay in loneliness. **Mechamorphosis** (Bowen Tan, China/U.S., 2020, 14 min., Chinese) A young schoolboy learns to cope with the rigors of family pressure and mechanical success. **Mistral** (Nico Bonomolo, Italy, 2021, 11 min., No Dialogue) When a man goes to work and sees a boat for sale, he dreams of buying the vessel and leaving his life behind. **Peek-a-Boom** (Toni Yammine & Maya Zankoul, Lebanon, 2021, 5 min., Arabic) Surrounded by her loving family on her birthday, Mira finds her life forever changed by an unexpected event. **Shergar** (Cora McKenna, Denmark, 2020, 7 min.) A boy living a fast-paced, free-roaming life with his friends on the streets of Dublin doesn't always make good choices. **Two Little People** (Xin Li, Australia/China, 2020, 3 min.) A wheat field harbors hurtful memories for a woman left by her lover. **Unnecessary Things** (Dmytro Lisenbart, Ukraine, 2020, 14 min., Ukrainian) Could a robot adopt a pet in the near future? Could this pet be a human? And could they become friends? **Unwanted Gift** (Bomin Lee, South Korea, 2020, 8 min., English & Korean) A girl travels through the night with an unwanted gift.



The Tulip King

NARRATIVE SHORTS: ANIMATION 3

122 min.

Eventive

A third helping of animated shorts.

Distance (Wei Zhang, China, 2021, 2 min., No Dialogue) A man discovers that what he perceives to be broken isn't always the case. **The Ducks** (Ángela Arregui, Spain, 2021, 7 min., No Dialogue) A duck disrupts Mari's first day at a new job. **The First Breath** (Yueling Zhou, Canada, 2021, 3 min.) Three different characters prove a small change can make a big difference. **First Light** (Amy Lee Ketchum, U.S., 2020, 8 min.) A young woman's ghost leads her grieving sister to acceptance. **HeadNoise** (Alejandro Álvarez & Rafael Jimenez, Colombia/U.S., 2020, 9 min.) Two NBA hopefuls follow different paths to achieve their dreams. **Know You Well** (Micheala Wadzinski, U.S., 2021, 10 min.) Four isolated college students find one another and form a bond that will help them through almost anything. **The Monkey** (Lorenzo Degl' Innocenti & Xosé Zapata, Portugal/Spain, 2021, 17 min., English & Spanish) A shipwrecked member of the Spanish Armada is captured on a beach in Ireland, tried, found guilty, and hanged — despite the fact that he's a monkey. **My Grandmother Is an Egg** (Wu-Ching Chang, Taiwan/U.K., 2021, 8 min., Mandarin) Like an egg, this grandmother is fragile and tough at the same time. **Poise** (Luís Soares, Portugal, 2020, 7 min., No Dialogue) A sad man contemplates his life and searches for a reason to continue living. **Skindeep** (Edi, Youth & Yuca, U.S., 2021, 8 min.) After winning a swimming competition, Dom experiences a racist situation that brings her deepest traumas to the surface. **Still With You** (Ryan Livesay, U.S., 2021, 8 min.) After his canine best friend goes missing, Ollie the cat must journey through the Lake Tahoe wilderness to find her. **Tango Through Life** (Zsofia Opra-Szabo, Canada, 2021, 7 min.) Life is like a dance for which we do not know the steps. **Thanks Again!** (Yifan Jiang, Japan, 2021, 5 min., Japanese) Melody and memory collide in this homage to the vending machines common in the Japanese Shōwa era. **Thunder Rises** (Evan Curtis, U.S., 2021, 4 min.) In a vanishing wilderness, man silences the freedom of the wolf. **The Tulip King** (Chloé Chapart Agnès Dejean, Dorian Douaud, Flavien Duramé, Audrey Rioux & Alexis Rousseau, France, 2020, 7 min., French) A humble king finds joy when he discovers a tulip in his garden. **Turtle Bird** (Daniel Houghton, U.S., 2021, 3 min.) Two people living at the seaside explore the kind of love that lasts a lifetime. **Up to the Sea, She Weaves a Dream** (Maryam Khalilzadeh, Iran, 2021, 9 min.) Women weave a dream while waiting for soldiers to return from war.



Shower Boys

NARRATIVE SHORTS: ASSORTED GEMS

102 min.

Eventive

A selection of many of the absolute best of this year's shorts submissions, ranging from an experimental dance piece to a compelling prison drama.

The Coupon (Laura Seay, U.S., 2021, 18 min.) When Wendy's birthday coupon ends up in the wrong hands, a demented and determined stranger will stop at nothing to cash it in. **The Danger in Front** (Alexis Chartrand, Canada, 2020, 17 min., French) While observing life outside his shop, a barber thinks he sees someone who is after his life and his family. **The Letter Room** (Elvira Lind, U.S., 2020, 30 min.) When a kind-hearted prison officer (Oscar Isaac) is transferred to the letter room, he soon gets involved in an inmate's personal affairs. **Out of Time** (Delphine Montaigne, France, 2021, 9 min., French) Felix tries to connect with his grandmother before she fully fades away. **Play It Again** (Daniel Abramovici, Canada, 2021, 9 min.) Kitty struggles to open up before Erin departs for a new city and a new life. **Shower Boys** (Christian Zetterberg, Sweden, 2021, 9 min., Swedish) After a heated training match with the team, Viggo and Noel go home to challenge each other's limits and masculinity. **Strasbourg 1518** (Jonathan Glazer, U.K., 2020, 10 min., No Dialogue) Inspired by a powerful involuntary mania that took hold of citizens in the city of Strasbourg a little more than 500 years ago, director Jonathan Glazer ("Under the Skin") collaborates with some of the greatest dancers working today.



Strasbourg 1518



Play It Again



School Night

NARRATIVE SHORTS: COMEDY 1

118 min.

Eventive

A hilarious collection whose subjects range from pregnancy to virtual learning, restaurant etiquette to taboo acts.

Big Baby (Sam Meier, U.S., 2021, 15 min.) When a young gay man ends his relationship with his religious mother after years of her emotional abuse, he copes by becoming an adult baby. **Bolt Cutters Make Great Friends** (Ariel Iman Rose, U.S., 2021, 10 min.) An introverted farmer uses unconventional methods to try and make a friend. **Bump** (Rory Keenan, U.K., 2021, 15 min.) Pearl, portrayed by Gemma Arterton, is a pregnant woman raging against the world over the course of a day. **Come On, Shake Your Body Baby, Do the Conga!** (Tom Hipp, U.S., 2020, 2 min.) All Tim wants to do is ask Jane to dance. **Harvest Bowl** (Cody Kostro, U.S., 2021, 7 min.) A salacious secret is uncovered in a 19th-century New England village. **It's All in the Sauce** (Marcus A Olsson, Sweden, 2021, 10 min., Swedish) A chef wants to impress a journalist with his sauce, but something keeps getting in the way. **Personals** (Sasha Argirov, Canada, 2021, 13 min.) When a casual encounter sparks an unexpected connection, two socially anxious loners must risk vulnerability to find the intimacy they yearn to find. **School Night** (Zachary Joel Johnson, U.S., 2020, 11 min.) An eighth-grade teacher accidentally texts nudes to the wrong contact. **Slow Vine** (Glenn Fellman, U.S., 2020, 14 min.) A series of comedic vignettes are connected by their quietly absurd tone and unhurried pace. **Virtual Learning** (Louisa Vilardi, U.S., 2021, 9 min.) A grandfather realizes he is not cut out for a new educational platform no matter how much he loves his granddaughter. **Winning in America** (Amrita Singh, U.S., 2020, 12 min.) Aishwarya clashes with her immigrant father, questions the meaning of success, and vies for a spot at the prestigious National Spelling Bee.



Slow Vine



Monsieur Sachet

NARRATIVE SHORTS: COMEDY 2

124 min.

Eventive

Demented clowns, matchmaking kids, and a poker night highlight our second comedy program.

The Acolyte (Sammy James Jr., U.S., 2020, 14 min.) A doomsday cult clashes with an idealistic new recruit. **Beach Body** (Kelly Diaz, U.S., 2021, 9 min.) Freshly divorced, Amanda must navigate an encounter with an ex she still desires. **Cupids** (Zoey Martinson, U.S., 2021, 10 min.) Two students try to play matchmaker for their bus driver. **The Dogfriend** (Fredgy Noel, U.S., 2021, 13 min.) Dismayed by the loneliness of her circumstances, a young woman wishes for her dog to become her boyfriend and then endures the myriad consequences when her wish comes true. **Man or Tree** (Tom Hancock & Varun Raman, U.K., 2021, 4 min.) In the wilderness, a tree begins to question whether it may actually be a man tripping on hallucinogens. **The Man Who Wouldn't Cry** (Emil T. Jonsson, Sweden, 2021, 16 min., Swedish) A man tarnishes the company's reputation when he refuses to mourn the death of a beloved actress and now his professional and social life is in jeopardy. **Monsieur Sachet** (Mathieu Girard, Canada, 2021, 10 min., French) When a retiring clown finds himself confined to his apartment, he's ravaged by hunger and boredom, and tries to satisfy his various appetites. **Parent Trip** (Leah Chen Baker, U.S., 2020, 8 min.) A millennial couple disagree on how to make their first baby-free getaway an intimate success. **Phlegm** (Jan-David Bolt, Switzerland, 2021, 6 min., No Dialogue) Oscar's late and it's the fault of these damn snails! **Up to My Neck** (Alauda Ruiz de Azúa, Spain, 2021, 16 min., Spanish) Xabi disrupts the regular poker game when he tells his friends what he's been doing the past month. **While We Stayed Home** (Gil Vesely, Israel, 2020, 5 min., No Dialogue) Boy meets girl during the coronavirus quarantine, with both hiding secrets under their masks. **Wolf in Dude's Clothing** (Solmund MacPherson, Canada, 2021, 13 min.) A starving wolf finds a suit of human skin, crawls inside, and becomes a man.



Wolf in Dude's Clothing



Martyrs, Badgers & Other Rodents

NARRATIVE SHORTS: DANCE, MUSIC & POETRY

124 min.

Eventive

A slate of films that explore the art of dance, the passion of music, and the power of poetry.

All Boys Aren't Blue (Nathan Hale Williams, U.S., 2021, 40 min.) A dramatic reading of George M. Johnson's "All Boys Aren't Blue," his "memoir-manifesto" about life as a young queer man of color. **Black.Matters** (Kyndra Kennedy, U.S., 2020, 5 min.) A visual protest about what's happening in America today. **I Mustache You** (Shara Ashley Zeiger, U.S., 2020, 14 min.) A neurotic woman finds an invitation to love and self-acceptance in this ode to silent-film comedies and slapstick cartoons. **Lines** (Claire Fleming, U.K., 2020, 10 min.) Poems written by six young prisoners are animated, revealing their stories, thoughts, fears, and hopes.

Martyrs, Badgers & Other Rodents (Peter Bolte, U.S., 2021, 4 min., No Dialogue) A music video for the Spermchurch song. **My Own** (Courtney Hope Therond, U.S., 2020, 12 min.) Bianca, a nonbinary person, struggles to find the place for gender fluidity within the rigid world of ballet. **On the Sidewalk, at Night** (Alexander Deland Jr., U.S., 2020, 9 min.) On a sidewalk, at night, two young artists discover that they share more than just a moment. **Only a Child** (Simone Giampaolo, Switzerland, 2020, 6 min.) A visual poem gives shape and color to the words spoken by 12-year-old Severn Suzuki at the United Nations' Rio Summit in 1992. **Rekonstruktio** (Pia Andell, Finland, 2021, 17 min.) When two old friends meet to reminisce about their youth, they discover very different recollections of a school party at a hotel in 1982. **We Will Become Better** (Andzej Gavriiss, Russia, 2021, 6 min., Russian) Two lovers are threatened by Russia's anti-gay laws and mainstream homophobia.



I Mustache You



Rekonstruktio



Mass Ave

NARRATIVE SHORTS: DRAMA 1

132 min.

Eventive

A sampler of films with diverse subjects, including the pandemic, divorce, and puppetry, but similar themes.

Alone Together (c. Craig, U.S., 2021, 14 min.) Isolated in an assisted-living facility with only her caretaker, a grandmother, portrayed by Marla Gibbs, battles her loneliness and fading memory as she searches for human connection through a series of family Zoom calls. **Attest** (Andi Behring, U.S., 2021, 7 min.) Two sisters try to get their story straight about a fateful encounter at a party the night before. **Frank & Emmet** (Carlos F. Puertolas, U.S., 2021, 12 min.) Two show-business partners have a heated conversation when they must confront the fact that one of them is a puppet. **It Happened One Thursday** (Irene Tassemedo, Burkina Faso, 2020, 22 min., French) Afissatou learns that the party on Thursday is a celebration of her marriage. **Liberté** (Christopher Hanvey, U.K., 2020, 17 min., English & French) Can Britain's first Muslim war heroine face her brutal Nazi captors and hold onto London's secret plans as the Allied forces finally start advancing through France? **Like the Ones I Used to Know** (Annie St-Pierre, Canada, 2020, 18 min., French) Denis is anxious to pick up his children at his ex-in-laws' house on Christmas Eve. **Mass Ave** (Omar S. Kamara, U.S., 2021, 21 min.) Over a day of landscaping work, a first-generation African American and his immigrant father have their tense relationship and different outlooks on life transformed irreversibly when they are racially profiled by police. **Pippi** (Mia Walker, U.S., 2021, 7 min., English & Swedish) Jessa wants to dress as Pippi Longstocking for Halloween, but as a Chinese-Swedish girl, her costume isn't immediately recognized. **Wild Seed** (Sunyin Zhang, China, 2020, 14 min., Chinese) During the period of the One-Child Policy, an illegally pregnant mother escapes from her home to avoid getting arrested by the family-planning committee and forced to have an abortion.



Pippi



The Love You Want Exists

NARRATIVE SHORTS: DRAMA 2

125 min.

Eventive

Stories from around the globe, including the Netherlands, Romania, and China, both demonstrate our common traits and feature universal themes.

3:35 to Boston (Kay Barnes, U.S., 2021, 9 min.) A military wife breaks down when she realizes the life she had originally planned for herself may not be possible.

Back to Zotteken Waes (Lobke de Boer, Belgium/Netherlands, 2020, 20 min., Dutch) Mathis returns to his native village to collect an early inheritance from his dying father, an infamous criminal, but there's one condition. **The Big Green**

(Massoni Lorenzo, France, 2021, 18 min., French) When Jeanne's last cutting tree site is destroyed by environmental activists, she has to rely on their kindness when she becomes stuck in a tree. **I Know My Potential**

(Ivasca Emy-Mirel, Romania, 2021, 14 min., Romanian) A high-school student wants to participate at National Math Olympiad. **The Love You Want Exists**

(Zanah Thirus, U.S., 2021, 24 min.) A feminist couple plans a commitment ceremony free from patriarchal traditions. **Origami**

(Marjan Hashemi, Iran, 2020, 14 min., Persian) Soodeh develops feelings for a classmate but is coerced into a relationship with a school coach who threatens to expose the forbidden feelings. **Shimmer Summer**

(Tong Mao, China, 2021, 26 min., Chinese) Ou Yuan hopes that his new friend can join him to watch the once-in-a-decade total solar eclipse.



Store Policy

NARRATIVE SHORTS: DRAMA 3

120 min.

Eventive

SLIFF's third dramatic program grapples with topics such as prison, capitalism, and the patriarchy.

April Kills the Vibe (Bonnie McKee, U.S., 2020, 14 min.) When party girl April wakes up after a rowdy New Year's Eve with a lot more than just a hangover, she calls her partner in crime to fill in the blanks, and the truth proves ugly. **August Sky**

(Jasmin Tenucci, Brazil/Iceland, 2021, 16 min., Portuguese) As the Amazon burns for the 17th day, a nurse in São Paulo finds herself drawn to a neo-Pentecostal church. **Faranak**

(Mehrnoush Alia, Iran, 2021, 16 min., Persian) A driver who has lost nearly everything worthwhile in his life finds redemption in a dog. **Goodbye to Yesterday**

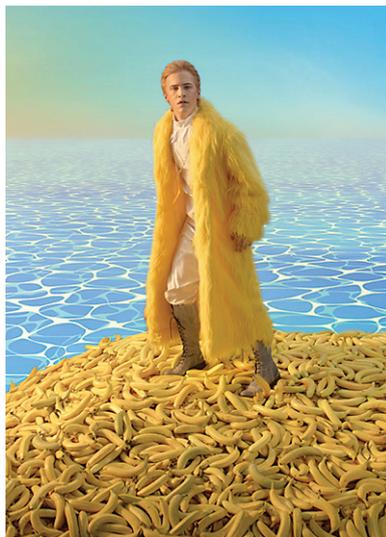
(Chae Talley, U.S., 2021, 17 min.) In 1995, Clayton Teague returns to Granville, Penn., where he must decide the fate of the man who murdered his mother: his father. **Her Name Is Carla**

(Catia Biscaia, Portugal/Spain, 2021, 11 min., Portuguese) While waiting for her incarcerated boyfriend, the impregnated Carla develops an unlikely relationship. **The Right Words**

(Adrian Moyse Dullin, France, 2021, 15 min., French) Madhi wants to profess his love to Jada, but their social-media-savvy teen cohorts disrupt the moment. **Store Policy**

(Sarah Arnold, France, 2020, 17 min., French) Lea begins a summer job as a cashier in a large supermarket chain and soon discovers the underlying violence of the workplace. **Yasha's Tapochki**

(Irina Gorovaia, U.S., 2021, 14 min., English & Russian) Tensions arise between two generations of Russian Jewish women when dealing with the tragic loss of the family patriarch.



Banana Island

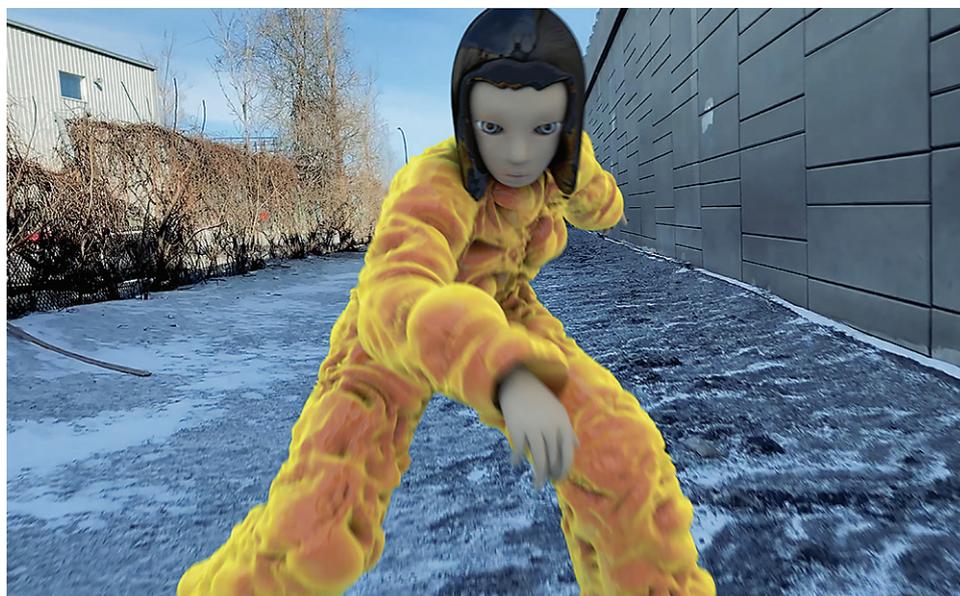
NARRATIVE SHORTS: EXPERIMENTAL

109 min.

Eventive

Explorations of both body and mind that are only possible through experimental film.

Anxious Body (Yoriko Mizushiri, France, 2021, 6 min., No Dialogue) When lines and geometric shapes intersect with living and artificial things, a new direction is born. **Apartment 3-1/2** (Manon Crespin, U.S., 2021, 20 min.) Tara and Pia are different in many ways, but as they get to know each other, they also learn about themselves. **An Apology** (Collin Del Cuore, U.S., 2021, 17 min., English & Hebrew) As a man goes through the motions of furniture shopping, his imagination is filled with movement and dance. **Are You OK?** (Faiyaz Jafri, U.S., 2021, 5 min.) Trying to maintain a fragile balance when vulnerable and lonely. **Babil** (Grégory Robin, France, 2020, 5 min., No Dialogue) Sounds of a man-made world dominate and mesmerize. **Banana Island** (Caroline Schwarz, Germany, 2021, 5 min., No Dialogue) When a Banana Islander realizes that people seem to be approaching by boat, he panics and frantically starts to eat his island of bananas. **Beast** (Benjamin Nicolas, Canada, 2020, 11 min.) Without warning, Martin's body begins to make uncontrolled movements. **Black Sateen** (Shiva Sadegh Asadi, Iran, 2021, 2 min., Persian) A little girl compares her dolls to her family members. **Homage** (Catalina Del Pilar Cerda Ceresuela, Chile, 2021, 12 min., Spanish) When a group of friends gather at the home of a recently deceased grandmother, they search for inspiration to shoot a short film. **In Her Image** (Yael Solomonovich, Israel, 2020, 9 min., Hebrew) Women who have dealt with eating disorders and negative body image appear as images from classical art. **A Machine for Boredom** (Marc Cartwright, U.S., 2020, 3 min.) Isolation drives a man to rethink his position within a capitalistic society. **When I Die** (Alan Griswold, U.S., 2021, 9 min.) In this pandemic project 26 years in the making, rediscovered film footage is set to the Magnetic Fields song "The Dreaming Moon." **Where Are You Really From?** (Steven Lee, U.S., 2021, 5 min.) Told through a Taiwanese-American lens, this surrealist work explores the absurdity and inconclusive nature of living in a double culture.



Are You OK?



Part Forever

NARRATIVE SHORTS: HORROR

129 min.

Eventive

A collection of shorts designed to frighten and disturb.

Dana (Lucía Forner Segarra, Spain, 2020, 18 min., Spanish) After being attacked, Dana decides to enact her own form of justice. **The Daughter** (Soon-a Nam, South Korea, 2021, 21 min., Korean) After inheriting her mother's home, Hyo-eun begins to hear whispers, and then strange things begin to happen. **The Everlasting Club** (Joy Wilkinson, U.K., 2021, 9 min.) At an elite college, Sarah invites a diverse group of female students to restart a powerful men's club from centuries ago, but they discover the original members are joining them for dinner. **Follow Me, Please** (Ian Matthews, U.S., 2021, 17 min.) A struggling photographer is consumed by comparison anxiety while living in the shadow of his influencer roommate. **Part Forever** (Chung-An Ou Alan, Taiwan, 2021, 13 min., Mandarin) Huei and her husband come to say goodbye to her sister, but the farewell ceremony hides a dark secret. **Plastic Dream** (Merve Bozcu, Turkey, 2021, 21 min., Turkish) Belma's self-confidence is damaged when her doctor suggests that she should get botox. **Shadow at the Door** (Roshni "Rush" Bhatia, U.S., 2019, 4 min.) A troubled young woman searches for an intruder in her home, but she may be looking for something that she refuses to see. **The Thing That Ate the Birds** (Dan Gitsham & Sophie Mair, U.K., 2021, 12 min.) On the North Yorkshire moors, Abel discovers the thing that is eating his grouse. **You Will Never Be Back** (Mónica Mateo, Spain, 2020, 14 min., Spanish) Ana and David say goodbye like any other day, but then something extraordinary happens.



Lost Beyond the Stars

NARRATIVE SHORTS: SCI-FI

106 min.

Eventive

Science-fiction shorts that explore the timely and the timeless.

Answers (Scott Tinkham, U.S., 2021, 14 min.) When AI makes the final decision on compatibility, a young couple faces harsh truths. **Atér** (Marie Fages, France, 2020, 21 min., French & Other) Sahar makes a surprising discovery while exploring volcanic landscapes in search of a rare mineral. **Fempire** (Honora Talbott, U.S., 2021, 16 min.) In a near future where women rule the world, a politician visits a grooming school to snag a trophy husband. **Heartland** (Jahmil Eady, U.S., 2021, 11 min.) A woman attempts to immortalize her dying grandfather using virtual-reality technology, but her obsession with documenting drives a wedge between them. **I Am** (Jerry Hoffmann, Germany, 2021, 27 min., German) Noé finds and reactivates an android that wants to copy her personality. **Lost Beyond the Stars** (Kayla Arend, U.S., 2021, 9 min.) While on an interplanetary exploration, Capt. Lorena is betrayed by the one person she thought she could trust. **New Normal** (Chul Heo, Singapore/South Korea, 2021, 8 min.) With the Earth's gravity disrupted, a man continues to run into danger while trying to hide in his own fantasy.



Milk

SLIFF/KIDS FAMILY SHORTS 1

96 min.

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

Stories of kindness and bravery highlight this collection aimed at 4- to 8-year olds.

Another Pack (George Nelson, U.S., 2021, 6 min.) Rocky the dog learns that unexpected changes can yield new opportunities. **Birth** (Roberto Valle, Spain, 2021, 9 min., Spanish) A little boy's world changes when he learns his mother is pregnant. **Butterfly Orchid** (Chia-Hui Lu, Taiwan, 2020, 6 min., No Dialogue) A piano composition helps bring an animated painting to life. **A Cat Called Jam** (Lorraine Lordan, Ireland, 2019, 8 min.) A cat from out of town tries to befriend three dogs while they wait for a butcher to throw out scraps of meat. **Hope** (Abdulla Al-Janahi, Qatar, 2020, 9 min., No Dialogue) A baby sea turtle faces many obstacles, from human pollution to different predators, but he overcomes them all with cleverness and courage. **HuManatee** (Sea Jin Park, South Korea, 2021, 3 min., No Dialogue) Jellyfish protect their manatee friends from reckless boat drivers. **In a Pickle** (Jennifer Gelfer, U.S., 2020, 7 min.) A precocious little boy finds a charming solution for his schoolyard predicament. **Ink** (Joost van den Bosch & Erik Verkerk, Netherlands, 2020, 2 min., No Dialogue) An octopus is a neat freak. **Let's Talk About Farts** (Greg Runnels, U.S., 2021, 2 min.) A team of experts discuss flatulence. **Milk** (Celia Jaspers, New Zealand, 2021, 5 min.) When she sees an old man unable to pay for his milk, a young girl has a change of heart. **Mr. Spam Gets a New Hat** (William Joyce, U.K., 2021, 13 min.) A man with a head full of dreams is beaten down by the factory where he works until he meets a woman who brings meaning and love back to his life. **The Ocean Duck** (Huda Razzak, U.S., 2021, 7 min.) When a woman visits her ailing grandmother, an ancient tale comes to life. **Rabbit Out of a Hat** (Daryl A. Boman, U.S., 2021, 2 min.) A magician's rabbit attempts to release herself from the hat in which she's trapped. **She Dreams at Sunrise** (Camrus Johnson, U.S., 2021, 11 min.) The great-nephew of an elderly woman who escapes her mundane reality through dreams helps her reconnect to what she's really missing. **Sprout** (Nayt Cochran, U.S., 2021, 6 min.) A kind-hearted gardener nurtures a botanical child's individuality when a prize-winning plant causes self-doubt.



Another Pack



Bigfoot Took My Photo!

SLIFF/KIDS FAMILY SHORTS 2

101 min.

Eventive, Special \$5 Price

Perfect for 9- to 12-year-olds, this collection features both discoveries from the past and explorations of the future.

Bigfoot Took My Photo! (Sasha Espinosa, U.S., 2021, 6 min.) Johanna has photographic proof that Bigfoot is real — until Bigfoot steals it! **Blush** (Joe Mateo, U.S., 2021, 11 min., No Dialogue) After an asteroid knocks his spaceship off course, a stranded astronaut's chances for survival dwindle with each breath. **Chocolate Milk** (Latisha Di Venuto, U.S., 2021, 10 min.) A young girl challenges her parents to drink chocolate milk every day for a year in hopes of bringing them closer together. **The Farmer and the Lightning Storm** (Danielle Browne, U.S., 2021, 5 min.) Can a farmer help the Goddess of Lightning regain confidence in her powers and in herself? **Goodbye Home** (Jonathan Chong, Australia, 2020, 6 min.) When wildfires threaten the area, a young boy learns he shares his bushland home with many different animals. **Mum Is Pouring Rain** (Hugo de Faucompret, France, 2021, 29 min., English & French) Jane wants to spend Christmas with her mom, but when she is sent to her grandma's instead, she learns to open herself to others and inspire her mother to get back on her feet. **Pickled** (Jingyu Zhang, U.S., 2020, 3 min.) A young chili pepper dreams of becoming a dish of delicious food, but the chef instead throws her into a glass jar to be pickled. **Sea Dragon** (James Morgan, U.K., 2020, 17 min.) A young fossil hunter makes a groundbreaking discovery, challenging the worldview of 19th-century England. **The Weather Is Lovely** (Chun-Chien Lien, China, 2020, 14 min., Chinese) When Claude drops his cloud-making gadget, Yin finds it and accidentally creates a cloud monster.



Maxi

ST. LOUIS FILMMAKERS SHOWCASE SAMPLER: DOCUMENTARY SHORTS

84 min.

Wednesday, Nov. 10, 5 PM, Tivoli 1

Eventive

A selection of standout documentaries, some experimental in form, from the 2021 St. Louis Filmmakers Showcase.

Babes in the Woods (Leanna Kaiser, U.S., 2019, 34 min.) Filmed over the course of four years in 16mm, the film offers a portrait of a young woman and her two sons living on an agricultural commune founded in the early 1970s in rural Missouri. **Ephemeral** (Sabrina Urban, U.S., 2021, 2 min.) Image-manipulated nature footage is set to a soundtrack of two kids having a conversation. **every.single.one (karuna)** (Cherie Sampson, U.S., 2019, 6 min.) The first 72 hours after a breast-cancer diagnosis is depicted through a montage of sound juxtaposed with close-ups of gestural expression and contrasting images of the natural world. **Hammond's Books** (Joshua Mullins, U.S., 2021, 10 min.) A look at the brother/sister duo who run an eclectic bookstore on Cherokee Street. **Maxi** (Zia Nizami, U.S., 2021, 4 min.) A profile of St. Louis activist Maxi Glamour, a nonbinary drag artist and self-described "Demon Queen of Polka and Baklava." **Postcards** (Ashley Seering, U.S., 2021, 18 min.) An exploration of the history and modern-day importance of postcards. **Zig Zag: Handclaps in Alternity** (Van McElwee, U.S., 2021, 10 min.) A series of claps, each creating a new space, echoes through anonymous worlds.



Monument

ST. LOUIS FILMMAKERS SHOWCASE SAMPLER: NARRATIVE & EXPERIMENTAL SHORTS

91 min.

Friday, Nov. 19, 5 PM, Tivoli 1

Eventive

A sampling of the best narrative and experimental shorts from the 2021 St. Louis Filmmakers Showcase.

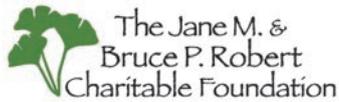
By the Sea (Zlatko Cosic, U.S., 2021, 4 min.) Minimal explorations of rain and sound. **Castle Hill** (Alexandria Ferguson, U.S., 2019, 19 min.) After secretly following her older brother and his friends to an abandoned neighborhood, Myra encounters a mysterious girl who lives with a group that is preparing for “the reckoning.” **Cave** (Dan Rule, U.S., 2019, 5 min.) A video collage — both pastoral and unsettling — fabricated from YouTube videos, online photos, nature desktop wallpapers, animation, and some “real life” shooting. **DesMotivaciones** (Kelly Jimenez, U.S., 2020, 4 min.) An animated film that deals with aspects of resilience by creating a parallel between the world of emotions in human beings, metamorphosis, and the seasons in nature. **Face Mask** (Daniel Allen & Adam Huber, U.S., 2020, 6 min.) In the middle of a pandemic, an encounter between a man and his strange neighbor quickly becomes tense. **Ghostbusters: South-Side (A Fan Film)** (Patrick Lawrence, U.S., 2021, 15 min., English & Spanish) “There’s something strange in the neighborhood” when an underfunded team of paranormal exterminators is faced with a demonic entity summoned by a local street gang. **Lake Loch Pond Monster** (Carolina Diz & Brittany Zeinstra, U.S., 2020, 2 min.) A girl is determined to go to any extreme to catch the legendary Lake Loch Pond Monster, only to realize he may have feelings, too. **Monument** (Joshua James Johnson & Tim Maupin, U.S., 2021, 6 min.) In a near-future world ravaged by climate change, a family takes a trip to an important historical monument. **Sleepwalker** (Ben Manhanke, U.S., 2021, 24 min.) Guided by a strange dream, a young man believes he’s found a way to bring the dead back to life. **Woolgathering** (Emma Bright & Bethany Clemens, U.S., 2020, 6 min.) An interpretation of a deep, dark, and intimate dream.



By the Sea



The Andalusian Dog



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THE SURREAL THING

120 min.

Saturday, Nov. 13, 7:30 PM, Webster U./Moore

The surrealist movement — started by Guillaume Apollinaire and eventually led by André Breton — had its roots in France, and the earliest films that adhered to its principles also originated there. This program features a trio of foundational films, two shorts and a feature. St. Louis' Rats & People Motion Picture Orchestra provides newly written scores and live accompaniment for “An Andalusian Dog” and “The Seashell and the Clergyman.”

The Andalusian Dog (Luis Buñuel & Salvador Dalí, France, 1929, 16 min., No Dialogue) The first collaboration between Luis Buñuel and artist Salvador Dalí, “The Andalusian Dog (Un chien Andalou)” features several iconic and still-arresting sequences (a razor slitting an eyeball, ants infesting a hand) during its surrealist dream narrative. **The Golden Age** (Luis Buñuel, France, 1930, 63 min., French) More than 90 years on, this masterpiece of cinematic surrealism remains as brilliantly witty and shocking as ever. Uniting the genius of Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali, “The Golden Age (L'âge d'or)” is a uniquely savage blend of visual poetry and social commentary. **The Seashell and the Clergyman** (Germaine Dulac, France, 1928, 41 min., No Dialogue) Featuring a screenplay by Antonin Artaud, Germaine Dulac’s “The Seashell and the Clergyman (La coquille et le clergyman),” a fantasia on the erotic hallucinations of a priest, introduced many of the surrealist movement’s characteristic traits. **With live music by the Rats & People Motion Picture Orchestra.**



The Golden Age

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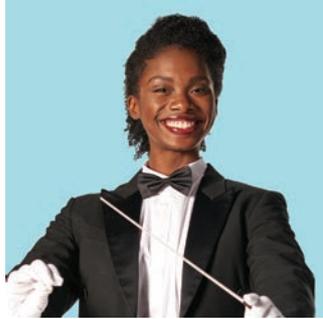


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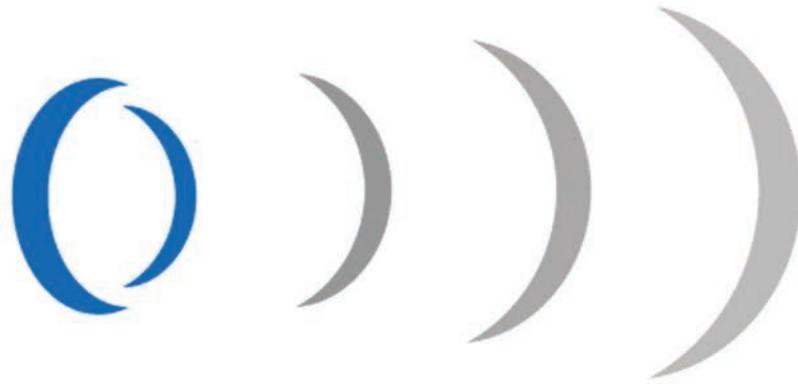


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