

Whānau Mārama

New Zealand
International Film
Festival
2023



Te Whanga-nui-a-Tara
Wellington
27 Jul
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Premium

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International Film Festival 2023

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Key to Screenings Information

EMB: Embassy Theatre

DEL: Deluxe Cinema, Embassy Theatre

LHC: Light House Cinema Cuba

LHP: Light House Cinema Petone

PEN: Penthouse Cinema

RXY: Roxy Cinemas

Nau mai, Haere Mai

Strap in and get ready for 17 jam-packed days! We're excited to be bringing NZIFF 2023 to five Wellington cinemas and venues with 130 films, and welcoming international guests coming from the USA, Denmark, Taiwan and Australia.

We're immensely proud of this year's programme. What better way to open than with Palme d'Or winner *Anatomy of a Fall*, followed by an incredible collection of films from around the globe. Get ready to be inspired, provoked, entertained, delighted and transformed by the stories which will unfold on the big screen during NZIFF 2023.

We love cinema, and we're passionate about the collective experience of watching films together—being in a room with others where individual stories contribute to a collective tapestry of life.

We're immersed in stories that transport us beyond our immediate reality; sharing laughter that ripples around the room, tears and sobs (and the rustle as your neighbour reaches for the tissues), and the gasps of astonishment that remind us of our capacity for wonder.

Coming together for the film festival connects us, transcending language, culture and backgrounds and bridges the gaps between us, erasing boundaries that often separate us in our daily lives—we share smiles, a nod or a gasp, and for a short time we are bound together.

Our striking imagery for 2023 (created by the talented team at Inhouse) highlights connection and a binding family of light as we cherish our place in the Pacific under the southern constellations and come together via the light of cinema in the depths of winter. Read more about the story behind the imagery and Whānau Mārama on page 5.

We thank our supporters—funders, sponsors and partners, along with the group of dedicated founding patrons who have signed up to our new NZIFF Patrons programme.

This year's festival line-up features a slew of filmmakers... revisit old favourites, see the latest from the masters, and discover the special gems which are part of the film festival experience.

A HUGE thanks to the dedicated band—our team and the New Zealand Film Festival Trust Board—who have pulled out every stop and worked tirelessly to bring you this year's festival.

And to YOU, our audience, this festival is for you. Come and embrace the magic of connection at NZIFF 2023.

*Sally, Michael and the
entire NZIFF team*



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New Zealand International
Film Festival



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Whānau Mārama
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Te Rerenga: The Journey

This year we are delighted to present special festival artwork created for Whānau Mārama: New Zealand International Film Festival 2023. Light artist Angus Muir and photographer Alistair Guthrie, together with Arch MacDonnell and the team at Inhouse have so strikingly visualised our name, **Whānau Mārama**.

Whānau Mārama describes the celestial bodies which light up the heavens—the moon, stars and sun, coupled with the double meaning of “family of light”; connecting us all via the light of cinema in the depths of Aotearoa winter.

Whānau Mārama also alludes to traditional star navigation, where we open each year beneath the starlit ceiling of The Civic in Auckland, where films from around the world light up our pathways and help us navigate these ever-changing times.

As **Whānau Mārama**, we cherish our place in the Pacific under the southern constellations and acknowledge the wonder of sharing the same sky with cultures from around the globe—a universally binding notion.

To us, **Whānau Mārama** represents the anticipation, of rushing in from the cold to the offering of a warm cinema, of sitting in the dark—alone yet together—and the feeling that comes from that first flicker of light of the screen, transporting us all to that new world. We look forward to sharing it with you this winter.

Tiramarama mai ngā whetū
Tūramamara mai ngā aorangi ki tua
Kei ngā pō atarau, kei ngā pō ahoroa
Ka here tonu ngā tangata ki te rangi
Te rangi ki te pito tāngata
E aro ki runga!
Te Whānau Mārama e!



Our Festival Patrons

In 2023 we launched the Whānau Mārama: New Zealand International Film Festival Patron Programme—an opportunity for those who love the festival to come on board and support us. In 2023 the NZIFF Patrons will be providing the Best Film Award for *New Zealand's Best 2023*. A HUGE thanks to our founding year patrons:

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Patrons are a special part of the film festival whānau and enjoy a range of benefits including an early preview of the festival programme and booking priority. Find out more about how you can be a festival patron at nziff.co.nz/patrons

The Sunday Session with Francesca Rudkin.

9AM – 12PM SUNDAY

A portrait of Francesca Rudkin, a woman with long, wavy, reddish-brown hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a black, short-sleeved, V-neck top and a necklace. Her hands are clasped in front of her.

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Anatomy of a Fall

Anatomie d'une chute

Opening
Night



Director: Justine Triet

France 2023 | 151 mins

Producers: Marie-Ange Luciani, David Thion

Screenplay: Justine Triet, Arthur Harari

Cinematography: Simon Beaufils

Editor: Laurent Sénéchal

Production Designer: Emmanuelle Duplay

Costume Designer: Isabelle Pannetier

Cast: Sandra Hüller, Swann Arlaud, Milo Machado Graner, Antoine Reinartz, Samuel Theis, Jehnny Beth, Saadia Bantaieb, Camille Rutherford, Anne Rotger, Sophie Fillières

Languages: French and English, with English subtitles

Festivals: Cannes (In Competition) 2023

Awards: Palme d'Or, Cannes Film Festival 2023

This year's Palme d'Or winner launches our festival with a profound and galvanising reflection on truth, facts and fiction, pivoting around another extraordinary central performance from Sandra Hüller—familiar to audiences for her work in *Toni Erdmann* (NZIFF 2016) and *In the Aisles* (NZIFF 2018), among other terrific films.

Director Justine Triet's sober courtroom procedural is a departure from the films honoured by Cannes' prestigious top award in the past two years—with which we closed NZIFF 2022 (*Triangle of Sadness*) and 2021 (*Titane*) and whose directors were respectively the Head and a Member of the Cannes' Competition Jury 2023. *Anatomy of a Fall* may not appear to share those two titles' raucous take-no-prisoners stance. But as it pries apart the intricacies of a relationship between successful writer wife and thwarted would-be writer husband, between parents and child, between stories told and reality lived, it proves to be as equally bold and engrossing. — Sandra Reid

"On the crisp snow outside his family's isolated chalet in the Alps, 11-year-old Daniel returns to find his father Samuel dead, blood trickling from his head, far below an open window; hearing Daniel's screams, his mother Sandra comes outside to the bad news, and the questions begin. First among them, the oldest one in the mystery playbook: did he jump or was he pushed? If the latter, Sandra is the only suspect; if the former, she's still under the microscope, as the underpinnings of

their seemingly comfortable marriage come in for scrutiny.

What we get... over an expansive but consistently riveting two-and-a-half-hour runtime, is a kind of emotional procedural, less concerned with cold facts than with multiple parties' fluid, permeable ideas of the truth and the ellipses between them.

Nobody holds all the cards here. Daniel, who is partially sighted, keeps adjusting his recollections of events—perhaps to protect his mother, perhaps to guard his own trauma. Sandra, at least, knows what she did and didn't do, but can't say the same about her husband; the more she argues her case in court, projecting convenient motivations onto a dead man, the more it sounds like she didn't really know him at all...

The filmmakers' fixation on untidy ambiguities is matched by Hüller's astonishing performance as a woman who would likely stand her ideological ground as intensely if she were guilty as if she were innocent. At a certain point in the trial, it feels she has to defend her right to an imperfect marriage more urgently than anything else...

Deliberate and elegant in form, but with a fast heartbeat under its serenity, *Anatomy of a Fall*

gives its audience plenty of space to breathe and gaze and ponder matters less immediate than simply whodunnit—though you may be arguing with yourself over that, too, for days to come." — Guy Lodge, *Film of the Week*

"The film slowly peels apart its layers, exploring how truths and facts become fictions in the retellings, whether they're told in a courtroom or in a novel." — Alissa Wilkinson, *Vox*

"Part true crime legal thriller and part family drama, Triet's Palme d'Or winner is a thrilling story about perception, truth and ambition."

— Therese Lacson, *Collider*

Screenings

A EMB Thu 27 Jul, 6.30 pm
A EMB Sun 30 Jul, 5.30 pm
B PEN Thu 3 Aug, 11.00 am

 NZ classification TBC

Past Lives

Centrepiece

**Director:** Celine Song

USA 2023 | 106 mins

Producers: David Hinojosa, Christine Vachon, Pamela Koffler**Cinematography:** Shabier Kirchner**Editor:** Keith Fraase**Music:** Christopher Bear, Daniel Rossen**Cast:** Greta Lee, Teo Yoo, John Magaro**Languages:** English and Korean with English subtitles**Festivals:** Sundance, Berlin, Sydney 2023

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Celine Song's gorgeous, intensely bittersweet romance ruminates on the lives and loves of two childhood friends fleetingly reunited after decades apart. Don't miss this remarkable debut feature that was the talk of Sundance.

Shimmering with melancholic longing, *Past Lives* is a love story of self as much as one of human connection. It's a deeply moving tale of past and future desires, romantic or otherwise, with great affection for its synopacted characters.

Inseparable classmates in late 90s Seoul, Na Young and Hae Sung are already quite sure of their feelings for one another. But when Na Young's family abruptly emigrates to America, twelve years pass before Hae Sung, fresh off mandatory military service, is able to track down Na Young via Facebook, who now goes by Nora and is studying playwriting in New York. Skype dates trigger old memories and new sensations—filled with such tender curiosity, their long-distance interactions make us instantly forget the modern tedium of video calls—only for Nora to cut ties in order to focus on her artistic dreams.

It's another twelve years until Hae Sung books a flight to see Nora. The days spent walking and talking around Manhattan recall the excitement of *Before Sunrise*'s iconic meet cute, except with a depth of feeling that's more pensive and sensitive to the transience of the moment. A playwright herself, writer-director Song's screenplay

is a marvel of intuition in the way it holds emotional breathing space between its simple yet expressive passages of dialogue.

Although both its title and characters refer to "In Yun"—a Korean concept of fated connection between two people in a past life—Song's film gently eschews the true love clichés of destiny and circumstance, and with it any comparisons to K-melodrama. Instead, there's a softness to its slice-of-life exploration of migration and culture, everyday resentment and sorrow (or "Han", another Korean concept), aspiration and expectation, and most telling of all, individuality and choice. Its final scenes, pitch-perfect in their aching certainty, will have you grasping for air—and tissues, too. — Tim Wong

"It's rare to see a film so accurately capture the type of unplaceable, digitally inflected relationships most people know on some level: heavily mediated by screens, warped by distance, shored up by some level of a digital footprint. The depth of connection not commensurate with the frequency of direct contact. A level of offline feeling that's more soaring, bruising and flickering, than the words or drama on the page.

The film's climax, one that should be witnessed and not spoiled, is a measured and searing acceptance of that murkiness.

There was a different path, a different life, a singular connection whose formativeness rendered it irreplaceable and irradiating. It's the type of relationship that's hard to explain but beautiful to watch three adults handle as adults, and more than deserving of a film smart enough to earn its unsaid yearning." — Adrian Horton, *The Guardian*

"Drawing from her own experience and a keen sense of psychology, Song writes clever, contained, jewel box conversations... [but] Song doesn't just choose her words carefully. Cinematographer Shabier Kirchner can open up the city, letting a quiet ferry ride breathe deeply of the wide sky, but excels at cramped compositions. One, as Hae Sung walks into Nora and Arthur's apartment, enhances one of the movie's best jokes. Up-and-coming composers Daniel Rossen and Christopher Bear (of Grizzly Bear) nudge and prod our tear ducts, as if they needed it. All the sweetness and pain is there in the words and in the distance, close and far, between Hae Sung and Nora." — Jacob Oller, *Paste Magazine*

"Past Lives is an exquisitely wistful drama that speaks with an honesty so affectingly crisp it will turn your conceptions of love, identity and fate on their head."

— Carlos Aguilar, *The Wrap*

Screenings

A EMB Sat 5 Aug, 6.30 pm
B EMB Wed 9 Aug, 11.00 am

M Offensive language

Fallen Leaves

Kuolleet lehdet

Closing

Night



Director, Screenplay:

Aki Kaurismäki

Finland 2023 | 81 mins

Producers: Aki Kaurismäki, Misha Jaari, Mark Lwoff, Reinhard Brundig

Cinematography: Timo Salminen

Editor: Samu Heikkilä

Production Designer: Ville Grönroos

Costume Designer: Tiina Kaukanen

Music: Pietu Korhonen

Cast: Alma Pöysti, Jussi Vatanen, Janne Hyytiäinen, Nuppu Koivu, Matti Onnismaa, Simon Al-Bazoon, Martti Suosalu, Alma-Koira, Sakari Kuosmanen, Maria Heiskanen, Alina Tomnikov, Maustetytöt

Language: Finnish with English subtitles

Festivals: Cannes (In Competition), Sydney 2023

Awards: Jury Prize, Cannes Film Festival 2023

We close this year's festival with the most delightful film from Cannes. Finnish director Aki Kaurismäki returns with a deadpan romantic crowdpleaser about two lost souls on a bumpy road to finding each other.

Returning to the festival after a six-year absence the wry Finnish master Aki Kaurismäki, harkens back further with *Fallen Leaves*, jokingly pitched as a lost work from his early 90s heyday. A critical favourite at Cannes, where it picked up the Jury Prize and topped *Screendaily's* influential Cannes critics' poll, Kaurismäki's latest delivers an endearing romantic tale in his trademark deadpan style, cleverly incorporating some biting political commentary as well as plenty of cinematic in-jokes.

We're introduced to Ansa (Alma Pöysti), working in a supermarket on an exploitative zero-hours contract. Bristling against having to throw away perfectly good food at the end of the day, she is fired when caught handbagging an expired sandwich. Later in a karaoke bar, Ansa meets construction worker and fellow lonely soul Holappa (Jussi Vatanen) sparking an immediate connection. Their relationship blossoms during

a successful movie date, albeit one with questionable cinematic taste. Our hangdog lovers choose none-other than the renowned disasterpiece *The Dead Don't Die* from fellow droll merchant Jim Jarmusch for their date night and perhaps the post-viewing exclamation by one "I've never laughed so much," is a clue to the true loneliness of their lives. A subsequent series of mishaps seems to imply that this budding romance could be doomed...

Kaurismäki punctuates events with radio news of the Russian invasion of Ukraine (no-one in the film seems to have a smartphone, much less a television), adding to the underlying tension and providing a canny reminder that the Finns share a border with Russia and have much more to lose from Russian expansionism than most.

"The director's characteristic heightened colour schemes and composed play with shadows and light give *Fallen Leaves*—shot as ever by Timo Salminen—that distinctive look of a fictional world sealed in on itself, yet carrying recognisable elements of the real Helsinki. The soundtrack is perhaps Kaurismäki's most diverse to date, with a bizarrely eclectic karaoke session featuring hard rock, stately Finnish tango and a Schubert serenade.

Fallen Leaves do indeed appear, in a lovely autumnal montage, but no less liberally scattered are the vintage movie posters seen throughout, with Kaurismäki as ever paying tribute to the great names—Ozu, Bresson and Chaplin only being the most obvious. Kaurismäki fans will note a fleeting cameo by long-term regular Sakari Kuosmanen and can be assured that sooner or later, the latest of a long line of lugubriously lovable screen dogs will get a look in."
— Jonathan Romney, *Screendaily*

"A film with a big heart, and absurd and cartoony as it may be, it fills you with a feelgood glow."

— Peter Bradshaw, *The Guardian*

Screenings

B EMB Fri 11 Aug, 11.15 am
A LHP Sat 12 Aug, 6.30 pm
A EMB Sun 13 Aug, 8.00 pm



Violence

Extraordinary films by the filmmakers influencing the state of contemporary cinema. Whether tackling important subjects or pushing boundaries of the craft, these films all display the hallmarks of pioneering artistry.

Spotlight

EO

One of 2022's least likely film trends was a focus on donkeys, from *Triangle of Sadness* to *The Banshees of Inisherin*. But just one film dared to place a donkey centre stage, boldly going where only Robert Bresson had gone before.

Anyone expecting the austerity of *Au Hasard, Balthazar*—an inspiration acknowledged by director Jerzy Skolimowski—will be roundly disabused by *EO*'s opening seconds, as red strobing lights bathe a circus performance. (Photosensitive viewers are cautioned). While much of *Balthazar* recurs in a remixed fashion—a drunken celebration, an aging château, beatings, gunshots, tender connection—this titular donkey's journey eschews the allegorical for the experiential, taking us both deep into *EO*'s world and outwards to the cosmic.

Skolimowski (*Deep End, The Shout*) cut his teeth during the French New Wave, and that indelible sense of freedom pulses through *EO*'s journey, with hypnotic passages evoking Terrence Malick, Gaspar Noé, Michael Snow, and even the mesmeric trip beyond the infinite in *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

Lest this all seem too ethereal, *EO* returns to Earth in encounters with humans and their inevitable cruelties and kindnesses. But even Isabelle Huppert can't steal the limelight from the six donkeys playing



EO. While no shortage of recent films (*Gunda, Cow*) have placed an animal centre stage, none approach *EO*'s jaw dropping ambition. Underpinned by Pawel Mykietyn's stellar score, Cannes 2022's Jury Prize-winner is an essential big-screen experience. — Doug Dillaman

"Polish arthouse veteran Jerzy Skolimowski hasn't lost his edge down the years. He directs with endless compassion but zero sentimentality." — Philip De Semlyen, *Time Out*

"There is no more beautiful-looking film this year... *EO* may be one of the greatest movies ever made about the spirit of animals, as much as we can know it."

— Stephanie Zacharek, *Time*

Director:

Jerzy Skolimowski

Poland 2022 | 86 mins

Producers, Screenplay: Ewa Piaskowska, Jerzy Skolimowski

Cinematography: Michal Dymek

Editor: Agnieszka Glinska

Production Designers: Roberta Amodio, Miroslaw Koncewicz

Costume Designer: Katarzyna Lewinska

Music: Pawel Mykietyn
Cast: Sandra Drzymalska, Lorenzo Zurzolo, Mateusz Kosciukiewicz, Isabelle Huppert with Hola, Tako, Marietta, Ettore, Rocco, Mela as *EO*

Languages: English, French, Italian and Polish with English subtitles

Festivals: Cannes (In Competition), Melbourne, Toronto, Busan, London 2022; Rotterdam 2023

Awards: Jury Prize, Cannes Film Festival 2022

Screenings

B	RXY	Fri 28 Jul, 4.45 pm
A	LHP	Sat 29 Jul, 2.00 pm
A	PEN	Sun 30 Jul, 5.30 pm
B	RXY	Thu 3 Aug, 11.45 am
A	EMB	Fri 11 Aug, 6.15 pm

R13 Violence, animal cruelty, offensive language & content that may disturb

Kidnapped

Rapito

Veteran director Marco Bellocchio returns to the festival with this rousing historical epic fresh from Cannes, based on the true story of Edgardo Mortara, a six-year-old Jewish boy who was abducted by the Catholic church in 19th-century Italy. Unbeknown to his parents, young Edgardo had been secretly baptised by his family's doting Catholic maid and, when the story is revealed, the fanatical church authorities take it as their cue to snatch the boy and whisk him away to the Vatican where he can be raised as a Catholic.

"Religious and political fanaticism, the abuse of power, emotional manipulation and blackmail: these subjects have always fascinated Italian director Marco Bellocchio. His most passionate films centre on lives taken, warped or ruined in the service of a cause, and *Kidnapped* is no exception..."

With its enjoyably over-the-top orchestral soundtrack, pin-sharp casting and old-school period-film production values, *Kidnapped* initially feels like a fairly conventional take on a remarkable historic cause célèbre... But once we enter the Vatican and meet the needy, imperious pope played with malevolent glee by Paolo Pierobon (a gifted theatrical actor still underused in the cinema) the film shifts gear. Melodrama curdles and



turns acid, as a serpentine script (co-written with fellow director Susanna Nicchiarelli) takes our naive wish to see justice done, to see a shocking anti-Semitic wrong righted, and hangs it out to dry...

Bellocchio forces his audience to reflect on just how violent and cruel the image of the crucifixion must seem to a child brought up in a different faith—or how clichés and lies surrounding Judaism and Jewish 'conspiracies' did not end with the death of a 19th century pope." — Lee Marshall, *Screendaily*

"A gripping, heartbreaking true-political crime story from the pages of history. It is a full-tilt melodrama with the passionate vehemence of Victor Hugo or Charles Dickens."

— Peter Bradshaw, *The Guardian*

Director: Marco Bellocchio
Italy/France/Germany 2023
125 mins

Producers: Beppe Caschetto, Simone Gattoni

Screenplay: Marco Bellocchio, Susanna Nicchiarelli

Cinematography: Francesco Di Giacomo

Editors: Francesca Calvelli, Stefano Mariotti

Production Designer: Andrea Castorina

Costume Designers: Sergio Ballo, Daria Calvelli

Music: Fabio Massimo Capogrosso

Cast: Paolo Pierobon, Fausto Russo

Alesi, Barbara Ronchi, Enea Sala,

Leonard Maltese, Filippo Timi,

Fabrizio Gifuni

Language: Italian with English subtitles

Festivals: Cannes (In Competition) 2023

Screenings

B EMB Wed 2 Aug, 12.30 pm

B RXY Thu 10 Aug, 11.45 am

A EMB Sat 12 Aug, 3.30 pm

A PEN Sun 13 Aug, 3.00 pm

M Violence

Perfect Days

"Hirayama rises from his bachelor futon, goes to work, cleans the city's conveniences with a dignified gusto, then relaxes in his spare time with a visit to the baths or a beer in his favorite bar. At night he reads, or sometimes he sorts through the many abstract photographs he takes while working his shifts... Once Hirayama's routine is established, Wim Wenders' small but wonderfully gentle drama starts to add random encounters that, while they don't exactly shake his world from its axis, interfere with his ascetic way of life.

Working with screenwriter Takuma Takasaki, Wenders is concerned with the simple pleasures of life and the ripples caused by small gestures. Hirayama's musical taste becomes key in this respect, and Wenders has a lot of fun with a soundtrack to Hirayama's life that, one suspects, is actually the soundtrack to his own, with music from The Rolling Stones, The Animals, Nina Simone and—of course—Lou Reed, whose most famous song gives the film its title and appears in a lovely instrumental form.

The reason it works at all is down to the foxy, gracious Koji Yakusho, who commands the screen with a largely silent performance. His serenity is contagious, perfectly complementing Wenders' minor-key direction and adding unexpected profundity to the film's seemingly simple message:



"The world is made of many worlds. Some are connected, and some are not." — Damon Wise, *Deadline*

"The real reward of *Perfect Days*... is the accumulation of tiny details, tenderly observed fragments of a life that on their own seem inconsequential. When pieced together, they create a poetic, deeply moving account of the unexpected peace, harmony and contentment that one man has worked hard and made difficult decisions to attain." — David Rooney, *The Hollywood Reporter*

"Wenders' film... is sincere and unassuming, and owns its sentimentality with good humor."

— Guy Lodge, *Variety*

Director: Wim Wenders

Japan 2023 | 123 mins

Producers, Screenplay: Wim Wenders, Takuma Takasaki

Cinematography: Franz Lustig

Editor: Toni Froschhammer

Production Designer: Towako Kuwajima

Costume Designer: Daisuke Iga

Cast: Koji Yakusho, Tokio Emoto,

Arisa Nakano, Aoi Yamada, Yumi Aso,

Sayuri Ishikawa, Tomokazu Miura,

Min Tanaka

Language: Japanese with English subtitles

Festivals: Cannes (In Competition),

Sydney 2023

Awards: Best Actor, Cannes Film Festival 2023

Screenings

A LHP Sun 30 Jul, 3.15 pm

B EMB Tue 1 Aug, 3.00 pm

A PEN Wed 2 Aug, 6.00 pm

A EMB Sun 13 Aug, 2.30 pm

TBC NZ classification TBC

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Theater Camp

“‘Theater kid’ can be a pejorative in Hollywood. Being a ‘theater kid’ means you’re too enthusiastic, too showboaty—in other words, not cool... *Theater Camp* has a lot of ‘theater kid’ energy and wears it proudly... This gem of a mockumentary comes from a group of dedicated grown-up theater kids. Molly Gordon directs alongside Nick Lieberman, and they co-wrote the script with their pals Noah Galvin and Ben Platt...”

The plot kicks off at a middle school production of *Bye Bye Birdie* attended by Joan (Amy Sedaris), the beloved founder of the AdirondACTS summer camp. The unfortunate use of strobe lights gives Joan a stroke and puts her in a coma, forcing her bro-y, selfie-stick wielding son Troy (Jimmy Tatro) to take over camp operations.

Troy loves Post Malone and doesn’t get what it means when campers call him a ‘music man,’ meaning he is not the right person to lead these divas-in-training... The instructors are equally stressed out by Troy’s presence, particularly Amos (Platt) and Rebecca-Diane (Gordon), two former campers who are attached at the hip and write and direct an original musical each year...

Tatro... has the bro act down pat, while Gordon and Platt are endearingly obnoxious as these overly serious thespians who have decided to pour all of their creative



passion into teaching because the larger entertainment industry has failed them. Galvin, meanwhile, is both the movie and the camp’s secret weapon as the do-it-all techie with a song in his heart...

With the adult actors playing zany characters, the kids’ genuine passion and skills ground the movie. Their performances make you believe in the mission of the camp, and may even have you wiping away tears.”

— Esther Zuckerman, *Vanity Fair*

“Funny and smart and sweet stuff, a crowd pleaser for the misfit in all of us... packs so much fun and joy into its 94-minute running time.”

— Kate Erbland, *Indiewire*

Directors: Molly Gordon, Nick Lieberman

USA 2023 | 94 mins

Producers: Erik Feig, Samie Kim Falvey, Julia Hammer, Ryan Heller, Maria Zuckerman, Jessica Elbaum, Will Ferrell, Noah Galvin, Molly Gordon, Nick Lieberman, Ben Platt

Screenplay: Noah Galvin, Molly Gordon, Nick Lieberman, Ben Platt

Cinematography: Nate Hartsellers

Editor: Jon Philpot

Production Designers: Charlotte Royer, Jordan Janota

Costume Designer: Michelle Li

Music: James McAlister, Mark Sonnenblick

Cast: Noah Galvin, Molly Gordon, Ben Platt, Jimmy Tatro, Patti Harrison, Nathan Lee Graham, Ayo Edebiri, Owen Thiele, Caroline Aaron, Amy Sedaris

Festivals: Sundance, SXSW 2023

May December

“In Todd Haynes’s dark comedy... Julianne Moore plays Gracie Atherton-Yoo, a former pet-store worker whose affair with an adolescent boy, Joe, created a media frenzy in her middle-class community in Savannah, Georgia. The story begins more than two decades after the scandal, as an indie film is to be made about Gracie and Joe, who’s now 36. The key events are quickly established by Haynes, either by including images of tabloid front-pages, or Gracie’s own telling—we discover the two dutifully married and Gracie had Joe’s baby in prison.

Natalie Portman plays Elizabeth Berry, the actress who’s to portray the younger Gracie. Elizabeth arrives at Gracie’s family home to shadow her in her daily chores, to observe and later imitate her subject’s gestures, but also, increasingly, to probe the murkier depths of her affair and psyche—which turns out to be near impossible.

Fiction and fact, self-delusion and self-truth are given a dangerous edge in Haynes’s film, which, ultimately, isn’t so much about Gracie’s actions as it is about society’s appetite for demonstrations of compunction, even where none is felt. If society demands its martyrs, Gracie both dazzles and irritates by refusing to be one. With the choice of one fair, blonde actress, and another as a feistier brunette, Haynes invites comparisons to Bergman’s *Persona* (1966). But whereas there’s certainly



a parasitic power play between the two women, in its edgy and satirical tone, the film’s more akin to Gus Van Sant’s *To Die For* (1995). It convincingly shows how a woman can be both prey to vicious societal impositions and wholesale fairytales of marital life, and in profound denial about her own predatory behaviour. The lines of what is truly moral are constantly crossed in *May December*, a film that resolutely prods media—and cinema’s—complicity in feeding the machinery of lies.”

— Ela Bittencourt, *Sight and Sound*

“Todd Haynes unpacks America’s obsession with scandal and the impossibility of ever truly knowing what motivates others in this layered look at the actor’s process.”

— Peter Debruge, *Variety*

Director: Todd Haynes

USA 2023 | 113 mins

Producers: Natalie Portman, Sophie Mas, Christine Vachon, Pamela Koffler, Grant S. Johnson, Tyler W. Konney, Jessica Elbaum, Will Ferrell

Screenplay: Samy Burch. Based on a story by Samy Burch and Alex Mechanik

Cinematography: Christopher Blauvelt

Editor: Afonso Gonçalves

Production Designer: Sam Lisenco

Costume Designer: April Napier

Music: Marcelo Zavros

Cast: Natalie Portman, Julianne Moore, Charles Melton, Cory Michael Smith, Elizabeth Yu, Gabriel Chung, Piper Curda, D.W. Moffett, Lawrence Arancio

Festivals: Cannes (In Competition) 2023

Screenings

A LHP Sat 29 Jul, 6.00 pm
A PEN Fri 4 Aug, 8.30 pm
B EMB Tue 8 Aug, 10.45 am
A EMB Sat 12 Aug, 6.30 pm

TBC NZ classification TBC

The New Boy

Warwick Thornton's mesmerising story of spirituality and survival finds a young Aboriginal boy (Aswan Reid) left in the middle of the night at a remote outback monastery run by Cate Blanchett's rule-breaking nun, Sister Eileen.

Taking him in, the seemingly kindly nun calms the unnamed "new boy" and he soon forms connections with Sister Mum (Deborah Mailman) and the farm manager George (Wayne Blair). With an attempt at bullying quashed, he finds an uneasy place with the other orphans at the monastery.

Unlike other orphans who are given an Anglo-Saxon name, the New Boy remains "the New Boy" and his "otherness" becomes more and more apparent as his unusual powers are revealed—he cures wounds at a touch, handles snakes and magically conjures a shimmering light to comfort him in the darkest hours.

When a large carved crucifix arrives from Europe for safekeeping things begin to unravel: Sister Eileen's religious zeal intensifies as the, mostly wordless, New Boy develops a fascination and connection to the crucifix—he sees the eyes blink and the chest rise as if alive.

Thornton (*Samson and Delilah* [NZIFF 2009], *We Don't Need A Map* [NZIFF 2017]), sweeps the viewer into a battle of wills and faiths between the Aboriginal boy's spiritual connection



to the land, and Sister Eileen's Catholic faith, all blood and thorns, and tensions rise.

Intoxicating and mesmerising, Thornton matches concise storytelling with spectacular imagery and an incredible cast. Blanchett is compelling as the zealous nun who enjoys a regular swig of the communion wine, and the young actors playing the boys at the monastery are brilliant, but it is the extraordinary performance by Aswan Reid which makes this film magical. — Sally Woodfield

"An ethereal experience with transcendent performances from Cate Blanchett and Aswan Reid that will leave lasting impressions."

—Patrice Witherspoon, *Screen Rant*

Director, Screenplay, Cinematography: Warwick Thornton

Australia 2023 | 116 mins

Producers: Kath Shelper, Andrew Upton, Cate Blanchett, Lorenzo De Maio

Editor: Nick Meyers

Production Designer: Amy Baker

Music: Nick Cave, Warren Ellis

Cast: Aswan Reid, Cate Blanchett, Deborah Mailman, Wayne Blair, Shane McKenzie-Brady, Tyrique Brady, Laiken Beau Woolmington, Kailen Miller, Kyle Miller, Tyzailan Roderick, Tyler Rockman Spencer

Festivals: Cannes (In Competition), Sydney 2023

Screenings

B EMB Wed 2 Aug, 3.15 pm
A EMB Thu 3 Aug, 6.15 pm
A LHP Sun 6 Aug, 3.45 pm

M Adult themes

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Photography by Michelle Jacobson



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Directed by Jacqueline Coats

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Image by Hayley Collett



THE SUN AND THE WIND

28 Jul – 26 Aug

By Tainui Tukiwaho

Presented by Taurima Vibes

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Image by Le-Toya Fernandez



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS – ELECTION 2023

29 Jul–26 Aug

Thom Adams, Jamie McCaskill & Johanna Cosgrove

Directed by Gavin Rutherford

\$30 – \$55

Image by Jon Coddington



I WANT TO BE HAPPY

7–30 Sep

Nightsong

Written by Carl Bland

Directed by Ben Crowder & Carl Bland

Starring Jennifer Ludlam & Joel Tobeck

\$30 – \$55

Image by Ralph Brown

Also in July... **An Honest Conversation Series!** Talk, dance and be honest – Concept: Sacha Copland | Company: Java Dance Theatre | Sun 30 Jul 7pm | \$16 – \$25

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Asteroid City

The tiny desert town of Asteroid City (population 87) plays host to brilliant students and their parents as they gather for the 1955 Junior Stargazer/Space Cadet convention encouraging fellowship and scholarly competition. Amongst the parents are war and sports photographer Augustine (Schwartzman), who's avoiding dealing with a family crisis, and the glamorous film star Midge (Johansson). The students, while geniuses, have to overcome social awkwardness as they show off their incredible inventions. The inevitable flirtations and fledgling romances are rudely disrupted by a shocking world-changing event. As General Gibson (Jeffrey Wright) says to the kids: 'If you wanted a nice quiet life, you chose the wrong time to be born.' Featuring a stacked cast including Steve Carrell, Maya Hawke, Tilda Swinton, Bryan Cranston, Margot Robbie, and many more!" — Sydney Film Festival

"To say that he's done it again—yet again—is going to mean something different to fans and non-fans. But I have to say the first category is the only place to be for what is simply a terrifically entertaining and lightly sophisticated new comedy from Wes Anderson, in his signature rectilinear, deadpan style, with primary-pastel colours and his all-star repertory ensemble cast. Regulars including Jason Schwartzman and Tilda Swinton are now joined by Scarlett Johansson



and Tom Hanks, who have been welcomed into the droll Anderson fold.

Asteroid City's eccentricity, its elegance, its gaiety, and its sheer profusion of detail within the tableau frame make it such a pleasure. So, too, does its dapper styling of classic American pop culture. With every new shot, your eyes dart around the screen, grabbing at all the painterly little jokes and embellishments, each getting a micro-laugh." — Peter Bradshaw, *The Guardian*

"Wes Anderson at his most mature and magical—and at his most singular, in a way no one else can capture."

—Isaac Feldberg, *Polygon*

Director, Screenplay: Wes Anderson

USA 2023 | 104 mins

Producers: Wes Anderson, Jeremy Dawson, Steven Rales

Cinematography: Robert Yeoman

Editor: Barney Pilling

Production Designer: Adam Stockhausen

Costume Designer: Milena Canonero

Music: Alexandre Desplat

Cast: Jason Schwartzman, Scarlett Johansson, Tom Hanks, Jeffrey Wright, Tilda Swinton, Bryan Cranston, Edward Norton, Adrien Brody, Liev Schreiber, Hope Davis, Stephen Park, Rupert Friend, Maya Hawke, Steve Carell, Matt Dillon, Hong Chau, Willem Dafoe, Margot Robbie, Tony Revolori, Jake Ryan, Jeff Goldblum

Festivals: Cannes (In Competition), Sydney 2023

Screenings

A EMB Sat 29 Jul, 6.00 pm
B EMB Mon 31 Jul, 3.45 pm

M Nudity & suicide references

Monster

Kaibutsu

"The best of Kore-eda Hirokazu's films achieve a rare quality: a sublime everydayness, in which simple matters of life take on breathtaking, poetic shape... His new film, *Monster*, initially seems to be a simple, issue-driven movie designed to yank at heartstrings. Ando Sakura, so memorable in Kore-eda's Palme d'Or-winning *Shoplifters*, plays Saori, a dry cleaner in a small Japanese city whose son, tweenage Minato (Kurokawa Soya), is having some mental health difficulties. He's quiet and moody at home, he's acting out at school, and in one frightening instance he seems to have a propensity for self-harm.

Kore-eda sets this all up in such a way that we, the perhaps slightly jaded audience, assume we know what's coming. The film will chronicle Saori's struggle to reach her son, and his journey toward betterment. Saori's husband has died at some indefinite point in the past, so it seems that grief will come to bear on this process of understanding and healing. But then Sakamoto Yuji's script leads us in unexpected directions... The film is essentially concerned with how a secret, closely held by private fear and societal demand, can affect far more people than just the one keeping it...

Scoring all this are compositions by the late Ryuichi Sakamoto, billows of pensive, poignant music that suggest both ebb and flow, growth and retreat. Sakamoto's



melodies combine with Kore-eda's lush images—summery greens and pale blues, alternately crisp and bleary—to dazzling effect, creating a picture of life in all its hushed beauty, its gnawing ache. One comes to [Cannes] in search of at least one good cry, which *Monster* provides generously and without cynical manipulation. The film, at once warmly exuberant and carefully restrained, is... built with the compassion and inventiveness so signature to its creator."

— Richard Lawson, *Vanity Fair*

"This absorbing, ambiguously titled movie builds to a moving finish, one that reaffirms Kore-eda's peerless skill at directing young actors in particular."

— Justin Chang, *LA Times*

Director, Editor: Kore-eda Hirokazu

Japan 2023 | 124 mins

Producers: Banse Megumi, Ito Taichi, Taguchi Hijiri

Screenplay: Sakamoto Yuji

Cinematography: Kondo Ryuto

Production Designer: Mitsumatsu Keiko

Costume Designer: Kurosawa Kazuko

Music: Ryuichi Sakamoto

Cast: Ando Sakura, Nagayama Eita, Kurokawa Soya, Hiiragi Hinata, Tanaka Yuko

Language: Japanese with English subtitles

Festivals: Cannes (In Competition) 2023

Awards: Best Screenplay, Cannes Film Festival 2023

Screenings

A LHP Sat 5 Aug, 6.00 pm
A EMB Sun 6 Aug, 3.00 pm
B EMB Fri 11 Aug, 3.30 pm

TBC NZ classification TBC

We bring back six favourite films, two of which have previously screened at NZIFF and played seminal roles in shaping the film festival as it is today. Included in this collection is the premiere of a new 4K restoration of New Zealand film *Bread and Roses* celebrating its 30th anniversary.

Retrospective

Detour



Director: Edgar G. Ulmer
USA 1945 | 69 mins
Producer: Leon Fromkess
Screenplay: Martin Goldsmith,
Martin Mooney
Editor: George McGuire
Costume Designer: Mona Barry
Cast: Tom Neal, Ann Savage,
Claudia Drake

4K Restoration

When nightclub pianist Al Roberts decides to hitch-hike across America to reunite with his girlfriend, he's on the road to his own destruction. This isn't a spoiler: Al's at the end of said road at the beginning of *Detour*, a dirty, broken shell of a man. It's getting there that's the tale, and while Al (Tom Neal, haunted like few can be) may be the architect of his own destruction, it's the arrival of a wrecking ball named Vera that begins those proceedings in excruciating slow motion. As frightening of a femme fatale as there ever was, Vera (Ann Savage, perhaps the most aptly named actress in cinema) leads Al down the path of no return, to an unforgettable and diabolical climax.

While director Edgar Ulmer's claim that *Detour* was shot in six days has been debunked, this potent and pungent Poverty Row film nonetheless vastly transcends its modest roots. Even after its

much-belated canonisation, its public domain status meant that most have only seen copies as dirty and broken as its leads. A recent 4K restoration finally gives Ulmer's classic the long-overdue audiovisual respect it deserves, but nothing could ever cleanse the grime from *Detour's* dark heart. — Doug Dillaman

Screenings

A RXY Sun 6 Aug, 12.30 pm
A LHC Sun 13 Aug, 5.00 pm



The Munekata Sisters

Munekata kyodai



Director: Yasujiro Ozu
Japan 1950 | 114 mins
Producers: Hideo Koi,
Hiroshi Higo
Screenplay: Kogo Noda,
Yasujiro Ozu. Based on the novel
by Jiro Osaragi
Cast: Kinuyo Tanaka, Hideko
Takamine, Ken Uehara, Sanae
Takasugi, Chishu Ryu
Language: Japanese with
English subtitles

4K Restoration

Having been lured to make a film for Toho with a lucrative offer, *The Munekata Sisters* marks Yasujiro Ozu's first departure from his usual studio Shochiku, albeit with the caveat of agreeing to use the Toho's story and actors. It proved to be no impediment with the master filmmaker delivering an atmospheric drama in the best Ozu manner.

"Two of Japan's greatest actresses and several leading actors were assembled for this stunning 'prestige production,' which Ozu was commissioned to direct. The Munekata sisters—Setsuko (played by Mizoguchi veteran Kinuyo Tanaka) and Mariko (Naruse star Hideko Takamine)—reveal the two poles of postwar Japanese society. Feisty and modern, Mariko dresses in western attire and represents the liberated woman, while the placid and traditional Setsuko dresses in

kimonos. To emphasize the tensions between modernity and tradition, between the old Japan and the new, Ozu employs a series of picturesque settings such as the Moss Temple in Kyoto, a mountain villa in Hakone, and the Yakushiji Temple near Nara. Though more linear and elaborately mounted than any other Ozu film, *The Munekata Sisters* is typically rigorous and exquisitely composed. In the end Ozu manages to wrest profound emotion from convention." — Harvard Film Archive

Screenings

A RXY Sun 30 Jul, 12.45 pm
B RXY Tue 8 Aug, 3.45 pm



NZ classification TBC

Bread and Roses

We are delighted to present a new restoration of Gaylene Preston's brilliant long-form biographical drama, originally presented in the 1993 festivals. We could not improve on Bill Gosden's original programme note, so here it is:

In a breathtakingly sustained act of imaginative identification, Gaylene Preston has created a tribute to her mother's generation of New Zealand women. Her superb adaptation of Sonja Davies' autobiography will ring resoundingly true—and disconcertingly truthful—for many New Zealanders. Much of its sharp eye for social history belongs to the women at its centre. An illegitimate child, the Davies of Preston's film grew up with the middle class, but not of it, a watchful outsider looking for a safe haven. In Genevieve Picot's lucid and moving performance, the young Davies' pride in her own self-worth is never in doubt, but just how she is to live up to it is much less clear. Her outspoken recognition of the pressures wartime society places on women not only irritates her peers: it also fails to exempt her from the harsh experiences undergone by so many others. We see her fall in love with a GI, farewell him to war and disappear up country to bear an illegitimate child. We also witness the tuberculosis contracted while nursing, which almost killed her.



Davies' consequent journey towards political activism gives the film its direction, but it's the epic of common experience she embodies that gives it such substance. Audiences may be startled into delighted acquaintance with a thousand nuances of an earlier New Zealand, but there's nothing conservative or nostalgic about this view of our past. A long time in the gestation, this is a richly developed, highly detailed and beautifully realised piece of work. — Bill Gosden

“There is a fierce glow to Picot's performance that never lets us seriously question the truth of the life she is recreating or the integrity of the woman who lived it.”

— Neil Jillett, *Melbourne Age*

Director, Associate Producer: Gaylene Preston
New Zealand 1993 | 202 mins

Producer: Robin Laing

Screenplay:

Graeme Tetley with Gaylene Preston

Cinematography: Allen Guilford

Editor: Paul Sutorius

Music: John Charles

Cast: Genevieve Picot, Mick Rose

4K Restoration

Q&A: Gaylene Preston*

Declaration of Interest

The staff and trustees of NZIFF congratulate NZFFT Board Member Robin Laing as Producer of *Bread and Roses*.

This 30th anniversary restoration has been made possible by the Aotearoa/New Zealand Film Heritage Trust, in partnership with Ngā Taonga Sound and Vision and Park Road Post Production.



New Zealand Film
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Screenings

A EMB Sat 29 Jul, 1.00 pm*

PG Violence

The Innocents

Prim and proper Miss Giddens (a knockout performance from Deborah Kerr), a parson's daughter, is enlisted to take charge of two orphaned children, Miles and Flora, by their uncle. It's most unfortunate he's been saddled with the children's care, which gravely impacts on his bachelor lifestyle in London and abroad. Unfazed by such blunt honesty, Miss Giddens soon sets off to the remote country estate, where little Flora is being raised, while Miles is at boarding school. It's thoroughly enchanting, from the gardens and pond, alive with chirping birds, to the vast, turreted mansion and the homely housekeeper Mrs Grose. And Flora is a delightful, dizzying child.

It's therefore disconcerting when Miles is expelled from school due to his bad influence on the other boys. Surely the school authorities are mistaken, for young Miles is charming, if eerily mature. However, the siblings' complicity and peculiar behaviour begins to disturb their governess, increasingly unsettled by strange whisperings and sightings of a man and a woman, whose description fits the former governess Miss Jessel and gardener Peter Quint—both dead. Obsessed with what the children may have witnessed of this couple, and the power the latter may have exerted, Miss Giddens is determined to dig out the truth. But perhaps it is she who is the one possessed...



Shot in deep focus black and white, enhancing the intense contrasts of minimal lighting, actual candlelight and dark shadows, never has CinemaScope been so claustrophobic. The mansion, with its creaking staircases and nooks and crannies, becomes another character in its own right, and ups the ante in creepiness. Technical prowess is employed to marvellous effect, but the film's disturbing force lies as much in the mysteries it leaves unresolved. — Sandra Reid

“If you've never seen Jack Clayton's 1961 adaptation of Henry James's *Turn of the Screw*, hurl yourself into a cinema ASAP.”

— Charlotte O'Sullivan, *London Evening Standard*

Director, Producer: Jack Clayton

UK 1961 | 115 mins

Screenplay: William Archibald, Truman Capote. Based on the novella *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James

Cinematography: Freddie Francis

Editor: James Clark

Production Designer: Wilfred Shingleton

Costume Designer: Motley

Music: Georges Auric

Cast: Deborah Kerr, Michael Redgrave, Megs Jenkins, Peter Wyngarde, Martin Stephens, Pamela Franklin, Isla Cameron, Clytie Jessop

4K Restoration

Presented in association with

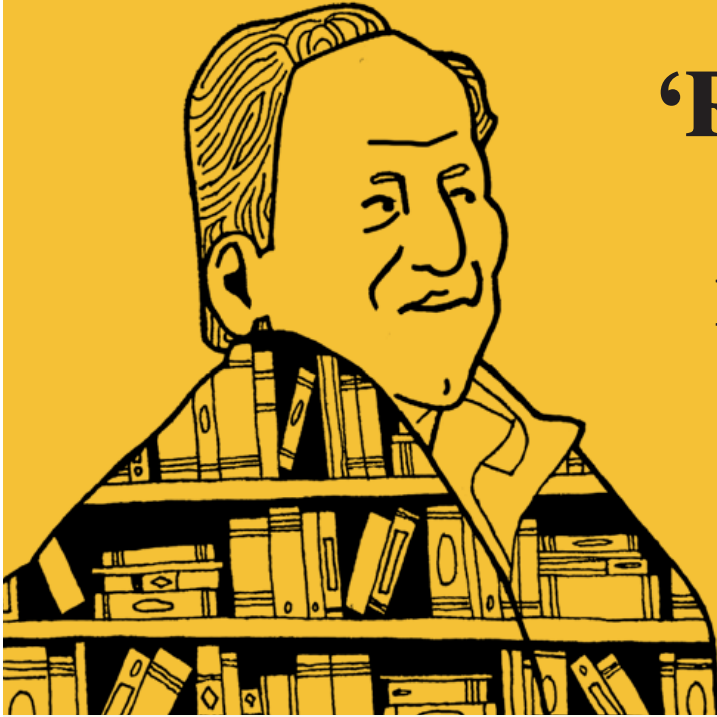


Screenings

B EMB Thu 10 Aug, 1.15 pm

A EMB Sun 13 Aug, 11.45 am

PG Supernatural themes



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read, read,
read, read,
read, read,
read’**

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Chocolat

Beloved French filmmaker Claire Denis began her career working for Wim Wenders and Jim Jarmusch before going on to direct an incredibly diverse oeuvre (*Both Sides of the Blade* [NZIFF 2022]; *Stars At Noon* [NZIFF 2022]; *Beau Travail* [NZIFF 2021]; *High Life* [NZIFF 2019]; *Let the Sunshine In* [NZIFF 2017]; *White Material* [NZIFF 2010]; *35 Shots of Rum* [NZIFF 2009]; *The Intruder* [NZIFF 2005]; *Friday Night* [NZIFF 2003]; *Trouble Every Day* [NZIFF 2002]), receiving widespread acclaim for her elliptical narrative and visual style, inspiring cinephiles the world over from filmmakers Barry Jenkins (*Moonlight*) and Mati Diop (*Atlantics*) to long-time NZIFF Festival Director Bill Gosden, who programmed nearly every one of the auteur's films during his tenure. His love of Claire Denis' films can be traced all the way back to her debut, *Chocolat*.

"In her multi-layered, languorously absorbing feature debut, Claire Denis draws on her own childhood experiences growing up in colonial French Africa, exploring many of the themes that would recur throughout her work. Returning to the town where she grew up in Cameroon after many years living in France, a white woman (Mireille Perrier) reflects on her relationship with Protée (Isaach De Bankolé), a Black servant with whom she formed a friendship while not fully grasping the racial divides that governed their



worlds." — David Hudson, *Criterion*
 "It's astonishing how early on in her career Denis had a handle on her distinct brand of visual composition. Hers is a genius for showing not telling, for laying out surfaces that are rich with implication and for conducting details until there is a heady picture that is minutely observant with a sweep that reaches from heaven to hell." — Sophie Monks Kaufman, *Little White Lies*

"[*Chocolat*] is about how racism can prevent two people from looking each other straight in the eyes, and how they punish each other for the pain that causes them."

— Roger Ebert

Director: Claire Denis

France 1988 | 104 mins

Producers: Alain Belmondo, Jean-Paul Belmondo, Gérard Crosnier
Screenplay: Claire Denis, Jean-Pol Fargeau
Cinematography: Robert Alazraki
Editors: Monica Coleman, Claudine Merlin, Sylvie Quester

Production Designer: Thierry Flamand

Costume Designer: Christian Gasc

Cast: Isaach De Bankolé, Giulia Boschi, François Cluzet

Language: French with English subtitles

4K Restoration

Screenings

B EMB Fri 28 Jul, 1.30 pm

A EMB Sat 5 Aug, 11.00 am

PG

Suzhou River

One of the trademark films of the sixth generation, *Suzhou River* catapulted Chinese cinema into the next millennium as a rustic, radically sublime take on neo-noir and Hitchcockian obsession. This gorgeously grainy restoration harnesses the film's improvised energy, rekindling the excitement of renegade filmmaking at the turn of the new century.

Vibing off American crime capers, Wong Kar-wai love stories, and the evergreen influence of the French new wave, Lou Ye's restless direction spins like a carousel around a Shanghai videographer, whose impromptu images of urban decay depict the spread of post-Cultural Revolution alienation; a motorcycle courier entangled in a gangland plot; and their mysterious girlfriends, who may or may not be the same person. Originally banned for its rebellious spirit—Lou screened it internationally without State permission—*Suzhou River* still crackles with the same defiant, expressive cinematic fire decades later. — Tim Wong

"Regardless of what you think may be the answer(s) to the various riddles presented by *Suzhou River*, one thing is for certain: the entire film is lovely to look at. Originally shot on Super 16 film, the new restoration doesn't scrub away any of the grain from the original images, ensuring that the



film's gritty, underworld atmosphere remains intact and preserving a rich color palette that feels decidedly vintage despite having been shot only twenty-three years ago." — Lee Jutton, *Film Inquiry*

"Its radical indeterminacy, its abyss of unstable identities and unresolved mysteries, is at the heart of Lou's bold political diagnostics."

— Richard Brody, *New Yorker*

Director: Lou Ye

China 2000 | 79 mins

Producers: Nai An, Philippe Bober

Screenplay: Lou Ye

Cinematography: Wang Yu

Editor: Karl Riedl

Production Designer: Zhuoyi Li

Cast: Zhou Xun, Jia Hongsheng,

Hua Zhongkai, Yao Anlian, Nai An

Language: Mandarin with English subtitles

4K Restoration

Screenings

A LHC Thu 3 Aug, 6.15 pm

A RXY Sat 12 Aug, 4.15 pm

M

We proudly present a slate of powerful local films that illuminate and challenge our national character. Featuring two World Premieres, the 2023 selection includes new documentaries which shine a light on artists, musicians (including a post-screening gig) and personalities, while feature dramas bring distinctly New Zealand stories to the screen.

We continue to celebrate the short film format with two curated programmes collecting the best new shorts from Aotearoa and the Pacific community in *New Zealand's Best 2023* and *Ngā Whanaunga Māori Pasifika Shorts*.

See also *Bread and Roses* (p17) and *Billion Dollar Heist* (p61)

Aotearoa

The Paragon



Director, Screenplay, Cinematography, Editor:
Michael Duignan
Aotearoa NZ 2023 | 85 mins
Producers: Lissy Turner, Michael Duignan
Cast: Benedict Wall, Florence Noble, Shadon Meredith, Jess Grace-Smith, Michelle Ang, Jonny Brugh, Cameron Rhodes, Chloe White, Lucky Lee Morton
Contains strobe effects
Q&A: Michael Duignan*

This microbudget fantasy-comedy centres on an everyday schmo, Dutch (Benedict Wall), who is special in approximately one way—he recently died (for about six minutes). The victim of a hit and run, and now seriously injured, he's out for revenge, and seeks the help of mysterious psychic Lyra (Florence Noble) to teach him how to use telepathy to find the person who hit him. Turns out, it's the fact that Dutch has died that gives him access to an immense power which draws him into a reality-bending battle with Lyra's brother Haxan (Jonny Brugh), who seeks to use a mysterious crystal known as "The Paragon" to take over the world.

The Paragon is a testament to Kiwi ingenuity and can-do attitude, a phantasmagorical comedy that swings well above its weight class. Wall and Noble enjoy an easy chemistry, while supporting players like Brugh and Michelle Ang bring

laughs and pathos to this story of psychic revenge. As written and directed by Duignan, *The Paragon's* clever, fleet story moves like a rocket, employing knowingly handmade special effects to give the film's telekinetic sequences a trippy, off-kilter feel. Duignan and his team make a lot out of a little, giving the film a wide scope while maintaining the spirit of low-budget New Zealand cinema in the footsteps of *Bad Taste*. — Tom Augustine

Screenings

A RXY Sat 29 Jul, 8.30 pm*
A LHC Sun 30 Jul, 6.00 pm*

 NZ classification TBC

Ms. Information



Director: Gwen Isaac
Aotearoa NZ 2023 | 100 mins
Producers: Alex Reed, Phillida Perry, Gwen Isaac
Cinematography: Gareth Moon
Editor: John Silvester
Animation: Ruben O'Hara
Music: David Long
With: Dr Siouxsie Wiles
Q&A: Gwen Isaac*

For much of the confined population, regular media appearances by scientist Siouxsie Wiles were a calming and enlightening presence amid the fear and confusion of Covid-19. While she was coolly urging the populace not to panic, Siouxsie herself was the target of hate and hysteria from certain groups who took issue with her work protecting the population's health.

"What is the world's problem with women like me?" the microbiologist wonders in this candid fly-on-the-wall documentary covering the pressure-filled two-year period from the first appearance of the virus. An influx of interviews establishes the unmistakable Siouxsie as a go-to expert, earning her the grateful admiration of a worried public along with the misogynistic online abuse from an unfortunate few.


The camera tracks the scientist through both professional and personal life, following along on

innumerable media meetings and watching her household brace for impact. Things take a darker turn when the toxic messaging grows to include harassing phone calls, vitriolic video messages and publication of the family's home address.

There's anger, there's frustration and there's anguish as Siouxsie is victimised for nothing less than trying to save lives. But through it all she laces up her great, glittery boots and presses forward with ferocity and heart. — Adrian Hatwell

Screenings

A EMB Sun 6 Aug, 6.00 pm*
B EMB Mon 7 Aug, 1.00 pm*

 Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

Bad Behaviour

Jennifer Connelly stars as Lucy, a former child actress seeking enlightenment at a retreat led by spiritual leader Elon (Ben Whishaw, *Lilting* [NZIFF 2014]). Before turning her phone off for the duration of the retreat, Lucy calls her stunt performer daughter, Dylan (played by the film's writer and director, Alice Englert) who is in New Zealand working on set. The two have a fraught, codependent relationship, just as Lucy did with her own mother, only strained further when Lucy meets model, DJ and fellow retreat attendee Beverly (Dasha Nekrasova, *The Scary of Sixty-First* [NZIFF 2021]) who epitomises all the vanity and myopia Lucy couldn't tolerate in her own mother, daughter and self.

Having premiered at Sundance Film Festival 2023, *Bad Behaviour* is the feature debut of Alice Englert. The film is stacked with New Zealanders in supporting roles; Ana Scotney (*Millie Lies Low* [NZIFF 2021]), Marlon Williams (*The Rehearsal* [NZIFF 2016]), Beulah Koale (*Dual* [NZIFF 2021]), Xana Tang (*Munkie* [NZIFF 2021]), Robbie Magasiva, and Tom Sainsbury (*Loop Track* [NZIFF 2023]). A darkly comic look at matrilineal dysfunction, *Bad Behaviour* paints a fascinating, whimsical picture of two complex women. — Amanda Jane Robinson



"Connelly and Whishaw sharply define their complicated characters, *Bad Behaviour* is... engaging, droll and shrewdly observed". — Caryn James, *The Hollywood Reporter*

"Funny, flinty, and intriguing... Connelly and Englert, already so good apart, do even better work when they're finally sharing the screen. Englert's cracking wit and ability to find humor and heart in all sorts of situations translate to her own performance, which is sneakily vulnerable." — Kate Erbland, *Indiewire*

"*Bad Behavior* is strange, savage, and oddly beautiful, and it announces Alice Englert as one to watch."

— Jason Bailey, *The Playlist*

Director, Screenplay:
Alice Englert

Aotearoa NZ 2023 | 107 mins

Producers: Desray Armstrong, Molly Hallam

Cinematography: Matt Henley

Editor: Simon Price

Production Designer: Heather Hayward

Costume Designer: Kirsty Cameron

Hair and Makeup Designer: Stefan Knight

Cast: Jennifer Connelly, Ben Whishaw, Alice Englert, Ana Scotney, Dasha Nekrasova, Marlon Williams, Beulah Koale

Festivals: Sundance, Sydney 2023

Q&A: Alice Englert*

Presented in association with

FLICKS

Screenings

B EMB Thu 3 Aug, 3.00 pm*

A EMB Fri 4 Aug, 6.15 pm*

M Violence, offensive language & suicide references

Loop Track

A fitting follow-up to Tom Sainsbury's adventures in short filmmaking and *48Hours* success, *Loop Track* synthesises everything we know and love about the cult entertainer into a full-scale suspense feature. As writer and director, Sainsbury is both faithful to the cinema of unease and committed to the genre thrills of watching people in peril—a riveting combination.

Also starring in the film, Sainsbury is perfectly self-cast as Ian, a pasty sweat-ball of a man who has rarely set foot on a treadmill, much less a four-day hiking trail. Convinced a solo tramp will calm his nerves, his solitude is short-lived when he crosses paths with the obnoxiously friendly Nicky and other annoying specimens straight out of the Sainsbury canon. The immediate horror for Ian is having to socialise with these strangers, while his insomnia only serves to heighten his paranoia in their presence.

Taut and tense, with contrasting bursts of silliness and humour, Sainsbury's film holds its own as a colloquial potboiler of interpersonal fear and anxiety, until its explosive third act, a left-field swing that's hugely memorable—and best left to surprise.



"This film originated with a single image—someone on an isolated bush walk seeing a figure in the far distance. They can't make out exactly what they're looking at, but the figure's presence feels malevolent."

—Tom Sainsbury

Director, Screenplay:
Tom Sainsbury

Aotearoa NZ 2023 | 94 mins

Producers: Gabriel Lunte, Jonathan Potton, Tom Sainsbury, Milon Tesiram

Cinematography: Milon Tesiram

Editor: Gabriel Lunte

Production Designer: Madilyn Davidson

Costume Designer: Sacha Young

Cast: Tom Sainsbury, Hayden J. Weal, Kate Simmonds, Tawanda Manyimo

Q&A: Tom Sainsbury*

An audio-described screening will screen on **Sunday 12 August**. See p79 for details about Accessibility Screenings.

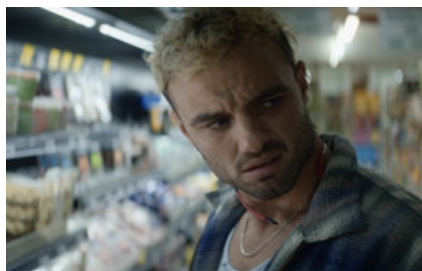
Screenings

A EMB Fri 11 Aug, 8.30 pm*

A RXY Sat 12 Aug, 1.30 pm

R16 Violence, offensive language and horror

Home Kills



Director, Screenplay, Editor: Haydn Butler
Aotearoa NZ 2023 | 110 mins
Producers: Matt Hicks, Pete Cameron, Josh McKenzie, Vanessa Arden-Wood, Haydn Butler
Cinematography: Alex Jenkins
Cast: Cameron Jones, Josh McKenzie, Mavournee Hazel, Dahnu Graham, Stefan Dennis

Times are tough in the rural town of Mata and nobody knows that better than brothers Tom (Cameron Jones) and Mark (Josh McKenzie) who, following the suspicious death of their father, have begrudgingly inherited the family “home kills” business. With his first child on the way and a loose-cannon of a sibling to deal with, Tom soon finds himself wrestling with some ghoulish ideas for business development.

Written with a stony realism and shot through with deadpan Kiwi humour, *Home Kills* presents a grim view of smalltown New Zealand that makes the ensuing macabre antics plausible enough to follow with a smirk. When the brothers haphazardly find themselves in the role of country hitmen, making the bodies of unpopular townsfolk disappear for a price, they remain sympathetic as bumbling victims of circumstance—until they’re not.

Director Haydn Butler slowly tightens the noose with the mischievous glee of a Coen brother as smalltown social claustrophobia starts to get the better of the butcher boys. Pursued (in very laid-back fashion) by the town cop, squeezed by a local gangster and his drunken goons, increasingly frustrated with his brother, and forced to keep dark secrets from his loved ones, Tom stoically trudges the gravel road towards an inevitably grizzly climax. — Adrian Hatwell

Screenings

A RXY Thu 10 Aug, 8.00 pm
B RXY Fri 11 Aug, 1.30 pm

TBC NZ classification TBC

Building Bridges: Bill Youren’s Vision of Peace



Director, Cinematography, Editor: John Chrisstoffels
Aotearoa NZ 2023 | 83 mins
Producer: Alexandra Porter
Screenplay: James Beattie, Richard Bullen, Paul Millar
With: Geoff Robinson, Kim Garrett, Paul Millar, Roy Montgomery
Q&A: John Chrisstoffels*

Farmer, family man, and—unlikely leftist organiser. Bill Youren gave up a career as a lawyer to live a traditional farmer life in the back-blocks of the Hawke’s Bay. He was also a zealous supporter of freedom of speech in a political environment, with the backdrop of the Cold War and the 1951 Waterfront Strike, where anyone labelled a Communist was seen as an existential threat. Youren documented much of his work via his trusty 8mm camera, including his travels around the world and his DIY approach to farming.

Building Bridges: Bill Youren’s Vision of Peace is a fascinating account of a man who firmly supported many of the largest social movements in the twentieth century. The centrepiece of the documentary is Youren’s footage from his trips to China in the 1950s. With each visit, he documents the subtle changes in how China transformed itself from

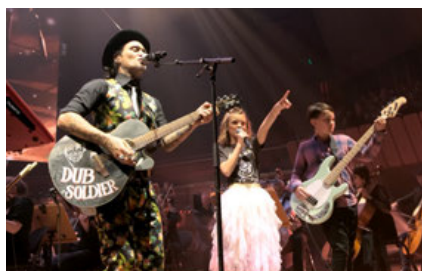
the ruins of World War II and a brutal Civil War, into one of the dominant twenty-first century superpowers. The documentary also captures his growing disillusionment with the way leftist movements shifted over the course of the century. Director John Chrisstoffels has compiled a gentle portrait of an ordinary man capturing extraordinary things. — Brannavan Gnanalingam

Screenings

A LHC Sat 5 Aug, 3.45 pm*
B LHC Mon 7 Aug, 4.00 pm*
A LHP Thu 10 Aug, 6.15 pm

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

Tiki Taane in Session with CSO



Director, Producer, Music: Tiki Taane
Aotearoa NZ 2023 | 68 mins
Cinematography, Editor: Mark Russell
Orchestral Arrangements: Tom Rainey, Hamish Oliver, Ewan Clark, Reuben DeLautour
Featuring: Christchurch Symphony Orchestra conducted by Tom Rainey
With: Tiki Taane, MC Tali, Big Sima and Tiki’s tamariki—Karcia and Charlie

Fans of dub musician Tiki Taane are in for a treat with the film of his one-off 2021 concert extravaganza, ‘Otautahi Proud’.

Filed in front of a sold-out audience at the fully refurbished Christchurch Town Hall, Tiki Taane captures an emotional and explosive performance with Christchurch Symphony Orchestra. Stunningly shot and superbly mixed, Tiki has raised the bar with what can be achieved when collaborating with a fifty-piece orchestra.

More than just a filmed concert, the film is intercut with scenes from the rehearsal providing an insight into Taane’s process and working with the orchestra. “I don’t read sheet music, I just memorise it all and see it all in my head as colours and sounds. The orchestration of ‘Always On My Mind’... I’m used to a beat, but this is freeform, with strings,” Taane said (*Stuff*).

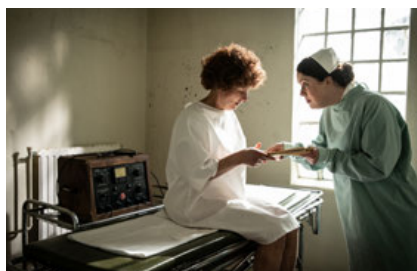
With familial links to the CSO, and his very talented tamariki Charlie (12) and Karcia (9) joining him to perform on stage, there’s no doubt this concert was very special for the multi-talented musician and now film festival audiences can experience Tiki at his very best. — Sally Woodfield

Screenings

A RXY Sun 13 Aug, 4.30 pm

TBC NZ classification TBC

The Strangest of Angels



Director, Producer: Rebecca Tansley
Aotearoa NZ 2023 | 57 mins
Screenplay, Libretto: Georgia Jamieson Emms
Music: Kenneth Young with Anna Leese
Cast: Anna Leese, Jayne Tankersley
Performed by the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra with conductor Kenneth Young
Q&A: Rebecca Tansley*

Curled in bed, Janet Frame scribbles in a notebook before concealing it under her pillow. So opens the film *The Strangest of Angels*—an interpretation of the 2022 NZ Opera production performed in Christchurch and Dunedin.

Filed opera is nothing new, but rather than filming a performance, Rebecca Tansley (*Crossing Rachmaninoff* [NZIFF 2015], *The Heart Dances—the journey of The Piano: the ballet*, [NZIFF 2018]) takes us inside the crumbling walls of the mental institution where Janet Frame is a patient awaiting a lobotomy.

The close quarters and moulding walls with an immediacy and intimacy as we are caught up in the imagined relationship between patient Janet Frame (Jayne Tankersley) and her (fictional) nurse Katherine Baillie (Anna Leese).

Nurse Baillie recognises Janet as a former classmate and is torn between

duty (all starched superiority) and empathy, eventually revealing her own inner torment.

Ending as Janet’s lobotomy is cancelled after she wins a literary prize, she is presented with a typewriter and we’re given a glimpse of the future to come. Dramatically played and superbly sung, this contemporary opera was presented by NZ Opera under the innovative directorship of Thomas de Mallet Burgess and with Tansley’s film, can be enjoyed by even more. Bravo. — Sally Woodfield

Screenings

A PEN Sun 6 Aug, 12.30 pm*
B PEN Mon 7 Aug, 11.30 am*

M Suicide references

Red Mole: A Romance

“Someday all theatre will be like this.” The slogan on Red Mole posters was characteristically brash. For nearly 30 years the flamboyant radical theatre troupe, which emerged out of New Zealand’s counterculture in the early 1970s, doggedly set out to make their vision come true. They performed wherever they could find an audience, from schools to strip clubs to opera houses, and their political cabaret was revolutionary in its Muldoon-era heyday and hugely popular among a leftist *cognoscenti*. Red Mole then set sail to take Manhattan, playing venues off-off-Broadway and on, while living more from the smell of the greasepaint than the roar of the crowds.

Annie Goldson subtitles her exhilarating, deeply moving documentary “A Romance”. Red Mole’s goals were romantic, and at the troupe’s centre was a troika whose talents, energy and interpersonal dynamic fuelled the momentum: stentorian-voiced Alan Brunton, the tenacious performer Sally Rodwell, and the multi-media phenomenon Deborah Hunt.

Brunton and Rodwell died in the early 2000s, so Goldson turns to those left behind for the narrative. From inside the troupe, Hunt and cohorts Martin Edmond and John Davies relate the long-term impact—creatively and psychologically—the experience had on their lives. Ruby Brunton, daughter of Rodwell and Brunton, travels



Photo credit: Joe Bleakley

between the US and New Zealand to explore the threads in her peripatetic, artistic upbringing.

Goldson’s assembly of support material; archival footage, photographs, scrapbooks, stage designs, posters, is extraordinarily rich. The documentary is like witnessing Red Mole during its triumphal season at Carmen’s Balcony, while experiencing the excitement and exhaustion of joining a dramatic, intellectual circus. As in the best theatre, there is laughter, and tears. — Chris Bourke

“You keep going on and on. Why?” screams a stranger as my mother carries a suitcase full of theatre props onto a bus. She turns to the camera and says, ‘To keep the romance alive.’”

— Ruby Brunton, *The Spinoff*

Director, Producer, Editor: Annie Goldson

Aotearoa NZ 2023 | 88 mins

Producer: Annie Goldson

Cinematography: Renke An,

Daniel Guzmán, Peter Simpson

Additional Editing: Cushla Dillon, Harry Ashley

Composer: Ewan Collins

Music Consultants: Jean McAllister, Tony McMaster

Motion Graphics: Jon Baxter

Archival Research: Harry Ashley, Ben Goldson, Heather Wallace

World Premiere

Q&A: Annie Goldson*

Screenings

A EMB Sun 30 Jul, 12.15 pm*
B EMB Mon 31 Jul, 11.15 am*
A PEN Tue 8 Aug, 6.15 pm

E Documentary feature exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

Grant Sheehan: Light, Ghosts & Dreams



Director: Robin Greenberg

Aotearoa NZ 2023 | 119 mins

Producers: Robin Greenberg,

Vincent Burke, Marie Silberstein

Music: Rhian Sheehan,

Tyaan Singh, Jim Kimo West

With: Grant Sheehan,

Ian Anderson, Julie Bénard,

Shelley-Maree Cassidy, Rosalind

Clark, Mark Gee, Jeff Kennedy,

David McGill, Geoff Marsland,

Rhian Sheehan, Matt Wood

World Premiere

Q&A: Robin Greenberg*

For more than four decades, Wellington-based photographer Grant Sheehan has made his way in the world through images. Where many photographers find longevity in laser-focused speciality, he is one of the few that has managed to thrive by expanding his style ever wider. In this film Sheehan recounts his own exceptional career.

A prolific creative, the photographer has published more than twenty-four books, as well as having work in magazines, museums, and exhibitions around the globe. His style is characterised by a roving inquisitiveness. Whatever subject catches his eye—lighthouses, heritage architecture, penguins—becomes his world until the creative impulse is thoroughly satisfied.

Not just a busy author of his own books, Sheehan has established his own publishing house in Phantom House Books. But don’t mistake print

appreciation for intransigence, he’s often ahead of the curve when it comes to change. Early adoption of drone photography and engaging with AI well before current day’s panic reveal an artist both innovative and classic.

With the intimacy of a cosy camera club meetup, accompanied by a dynamic score, Greenberg’s creative documentary delves into Sheehan’s extraordinary career the only way that makes sense—through his own unique lens and artistry. — Adrian Hatwell

Screenings

A RXY Sun 30 Jul, 3.00 pm*
B RXY Mon 31 Jul, 3.15 pm*

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

King Loser



Directors: Cushla Dillon,

Andrew Moore

Aotearoa 2023 | 90 mins

Producer: Derek Gehring

Cinematography: Andrew Moore,

Amber de Boer, Stuart Page,

Sarah Palmer

Music: King Loser

With: Chris Heazlewood,

Celia Mancini, Lance Strickland,

Sean O’Reilly, Duane Zarakov

Q&A: Cushla Dillon

& Andrew Moore*

“We had a bit of an us against the world vibe... but also us against us, too.” King Loser’s first of fifteen drummers summarizes their stunningly explosive (and implosive) qualities midway through this unflinching yet affectionate portrait of the legendary 90s band. Driven by the “C&C Music Factory”—Chris Heazlewood and Celia Mancini—King Loser blended surf, lounge, psych and noise into a singular, swampy sound. A cyclone of chutzpah, cigarettes and impeccable fashion sense, the larger-than-life Mancini epitomised a notorious band that collapsed too soon but left a mark on all who encountered them—either at their transcendent best or catastrophic worst.

Perhaps the biggest surprise of *King Loser* is its universality. A rich archive poignantly contrasts the youthful rock and roll dream with the middle-age reality of the

struggling musician, while present-day interviews acknowledge the cumulative challenges of addiction, physical and mental health issues, poverty and homelessness.

There may be plenty of details to satisfy scenesters (Triangle TV! Snapper!), but newcomers won’t need to know a note for King Loser—and *King Loser*—to leave its mark. — Doug Dillaman

Special Event: Gig with Cash Guitar featuring Chris Heazlewood and special guests will follow the screening on **Saturday 5 August** at Roxy Cinemas. Limited Film + Gig tickets available.

Screenings

A RXY Sat 5 Aug, 8.30 pm*
A LHC Sun 6 Aug, 2.15 pm*

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

Ngā Whanaunga Māori Pasifika Shorts 2023

89 mins approx.

This collection of eight Māori and Pasifika short films has been selected by co-curators Leo Koziol (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Rakaipaaka), Director of the Wairoa Film Festival, and Craig Fasi (Niue), Director of Pollywood Film Festival.

Support these homegrown films and vote for your favourites at the screenings in Te Whanga-nui-a-Tara.

Please note that if any films are classified with an R rating, children under the rating age will need to leave the screening for that film(s).

Notes on each film are provided by the curators.

Wellington UNESCO
City of Film Award



Letterboxd
Audience Award



Presented in
association with



Tulouna Le Lagi

Director, Screenplay: Pati Tyrell (Samoan) | **Aotearoa NZ 2023** | **Animation:** Tanu Gago | **With:** Jermaine Dean, Manu Vetenibua, Fili Tapa, Moe Laga, Falencie Filipo
Commissioned by CIRCUIT Artist Moving Image | **5 mins**

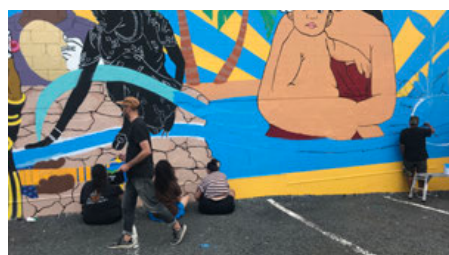
“Visually confrontational with ritualistic connotations of an environment we may have never considered.” — CF



Kōkako

Director, Screenplay: Douglas Brooks (Te Ati Haunui-a-Pāpārangi, Ngāti Tuwharetoa, Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Pākehā) | **Aotearoa NZ 2023** | **Producer:** Patsy Burke English and te reo Māori with English subtitles | **13 mins**

“The underlying theme is dark and mournful, but this bounty of birds is a fantastical delight from start to finish, never will I think the same again when I visit my Ngāhere.” — LK



Whakaako kia Whakaora / Educate to Liberate

Director: Robert George (Kuki Airani, Ngāti Kea Ngāti Tuara) **Aotearoa NZ 2022** | **Producers:** Chris McBride, Petrina Togi-Sa'ena | **Artists, Collaborators:** Huriiana Kopeke-Te Aho, Numa McKenzie, Toa Sieke Taihia, Emory Douglas, Tigilau Ness, Chris McBride | **7 mins**

“50 years later the stand for the marginalised continues. Vigilance with purpose will sustain and cultivate the seed of equality.” — CF



The Last Sunday

Director, Screenplay: Saito Lilo (Samoan) | **Aotearoa NZ 2022** | **Producer:** Georgina Grey | **Cinematography:** Marino Evans-Vakatini | **Editors:** Marino Evans-Vakatini, Saito Lilo
Cast: Iavana Seuala, Haanz Fa'avae Jackson, Italia Hunt, Talayna Tuihaangana, Popo Lilo, Sekini Siiloto-Lilo | **13 mins**

“The burden of any form of responsibility will distort the true nature of simple intent. Would you make the ultimate sacrifice for family, religion and status?” — CF



Mako

Director: Mark Papalii (Samoan) | **Aotearoa NZ 2022**
Screenplay: Mark Papalii, April Philips, Amy Laura Jansen
Producer: Amy Laura Jansen | **Cast:** Koby Bryce, MikeyEse Daniel, Taofi Mose-Nehemi | **16 mins**

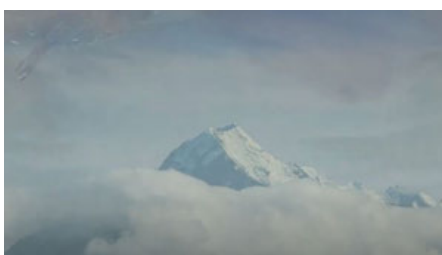
“Mental, physical, emotional and spiritual challenges are essential to give perspective of who you are. Mako reflects on self-empowerment and the reward of uplifting others.” — CF



Bringing Mere Home

Director: Keelan Walker (Rangitāne o Wairau, Ngāti Kuia, Ngāti Apa ki to Rā Tō) | **Aotearoa NZ 2022**
Screenplay: Keelan Walker, Frederick Pokai
Producers: Suzie Morrell, Phill Morell, Tyler Redmond, Keelan Walker | **Cast:** Frederick Pokai, Isis Bradley-Kiwi, Carleen Heemi | **15 mins**

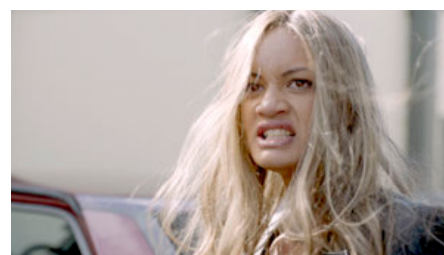
“A timely reminder of the cultural changes and social attitude changes that Māori have made towards alcohol, and the price we once paid.” — LK



He Pounamu Ko Āu

Director, Producer, Screenplay: Tia Barrett (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Mamoe, Te Rapuwai, Waitaha, Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Tamainupō) | **Aotearoa NZ 2022** | Te reo Māori with English subtitles | **5 mins**

“A contemplation of heritage and spirituality in an endless journey of healing.” — CF



I Am Paradise

Director, Screenplay, Producer: Hiona Henare (Ngāi Tara, Muaupoko, Ngāti Huia) | **Cast:** Rickylee Russell-Waipuka, Mahutonga Hotere, Shavaughn Ruakere, Teone Kahu, Erina Daniels, Neila Kahu | **Aotearoa NZ 2023** | **17 mins**

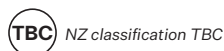
“The dreamy, escapist fantasy feel of this film contrasts deeply with the reality of lived daily life for many Māori; yet aroha and hope remain and our tamariki keep us strong.” — LK

Screenings

B LHC Fri 11 Aug, 4.15 pm**
A RXY Sat 12 Aug, 6.00 pm*

Q&A + Awards*

Introduction**



New Zealand's Best 2023

82 mins approx.

A total of 81 films were submitted for this year's *New Zealand's Best* short film competition. NZIFF Head of Programming, Michael McDonnell, and Senior Programmer Sandra Reid viewed them all to draw up a shortlist of 12, from which Guest Selector Niki Caro selected the six finalists.

Show your support for the year's best Aotearoa New Zealand short films by voting for your favourite at the screenings.

"This selection of short films features fresh perspectives, acts of resistance, and small, but powerful stories perfectly told. From a range of different voices, these films are tough and tender. It was wonderful to be reminded of the diversity of our people and our stories, our lack of sentiment, depth of feeling, sense of humour, sense of justice, and our curiously New Zealand perspective on universal themes."
— **Niki Caro**

A jury of three will select the winner of the \$7500 **Best Short Film Award**, the \$4000 **Creative New Zealand Emerging Talent Award**, and the \$4000 **Auckland Live Spirit of The Civic Award**. The winner of the audience vote takes away the Audience Award, consisting of 25 percent of the box office from NZIFF screenings in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin.

Notes on each film are provided by Niki Caro. Films are listed in the order that they will screen.

NZIFF Patrons
Best Film Award



Creative New Zealand
Emerging Talent Award



Auckland Live
Spirit of The Civic Award



Daughter of God

Director, Screenplay: Maza White | **Aotearoa NZ 2022** | **Producers:** Jen Huang, Maza White
Cinematography: Tammy Williams | **Editor:** Tim Ellis
Cast: Benjamin Amini, Farhad Art, Taraneh Khorshid
English and Farsi, with English subtitles | **11 mins**

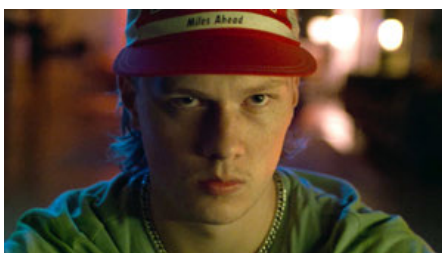
A simple and profound act of resistance against the cultural forces of family, tradition, and expectation.



My Eyes Are Up Here

Director: Nathan Morris | **Aotearoa NZ/UK 2022**
Screenplay: Aminder Virdee, Arthur Meek
Producers: Naomi Wallwork, Katie Dolan, Vanessa Muir
Cast: Jillian Mercado, Ben Cura | **14 mins**

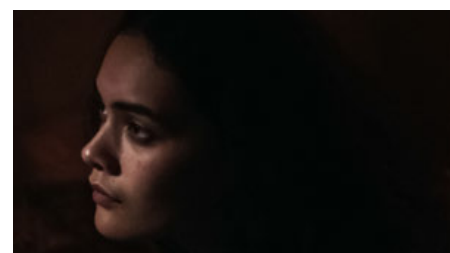
A fashion model navigates courtship amidst the day-to-day irritations and misconceptions of who she is.



Gate Crash

Director, Screenplay, Music: Paloma Schneideman
Aotearoa NZ 2022 | **Producers:** Vicky Pope, Thomas Coppell
Cinematography: Maria Ines Manchego
Editor: Cushla Dillon | **Cast:** Tabatha Killick, Rosalind Lay-Yazdani, Luka Piripi, Ethan Morse, Dylan Prasad Menon, Gideon Smith, Te Ani Solomon | **18 mins**

Tenderness, awkwardness, disquiet, and dread at a post-ball after-party. Deft shifts in tone and insight in the 'teen' genre.



Freedom Fighter

Director, Screenplay: Tusi Tamasese | **Aotearoa NZ 2022**
Producer: Catherine Fitzgerald
Cinematography: Matt Henley
Editor: Chloe Laing | **Music:** David Long | **Cast:** Luz-Eliana Folau-Brown, Maurea Perez-Varea, Kasi Valu, Seiyon Thompson-Tonga, Brett Taefu, Uatesoni Filikitonga, Matt Sunderland | English and Samoan, with English subtitles
16 mins

A young Samoan overstayer challenges the secrets behind her benign incarceration in 1970's Wellington.



Guest Selector: Niki Caro

Film director Niki Caro was born in Wellington, New Zealand. She is the director of the highly acclaimed *Whale Rider*, winner of 27 international awards, *North Country*, nominated for two Academy Awards, and Disney's live action *Mulan*, making Caro only the fourth woman in history to direct a movie with a budget of more than \$100M.

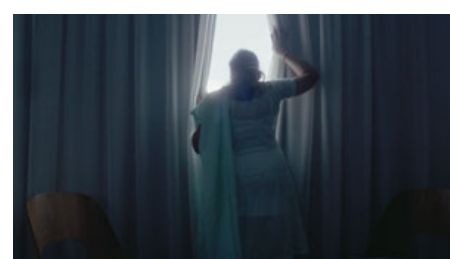
Caro's latest project is the epic global action movie, *The Mother*, starring Jennifer Lopez. Released on Mother's Day 2023, *The Mother* held the #1 spot globally in its first three weeks of release and is Netflix's most successful movie to date in 2023.



Hey Brainy Man

Directors: Jo Randerson, Loren Taylor | **Aotearoa NZ 2022**
Producers: Jaimee Poipoi, Olivia Shanks
Screenplay: Jo Randerson | **Cinematography:** Adam Luxton
Editor: Paul Wedel | **Cast:** Jo Randerson, Ana Scotney, Cohen Holloway, Madeline McNamara, Geronimo Lahood | **10 mins**

An absurdist comedy. A warning to modern day homosapiens from a good-natured bunch of evolutionary losers.



Anu

Director: Pulkit Arora | **Aotearoa NZ 2022**
Producers: Rachel Fawcett, Shuchi Kothari
Cinematography: Adam Luxton | **Editors:** Lisa Greenfield, Jolin Lee | **Cast:** Prabha Ravi, Mansi Multani, Pulkit Arora, Auradha Duda Reddy, Jessie Lawrence, Bharat Bhushan, Rajneesh Mishra | English, Te Reo Māori and Hindi, with English subtitles | **13 mins**

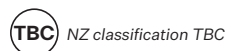
Grief and loss and the practicalities of mourning, set against the cheerful hospitality of NZ managed isolation.

Screenings

A EMB Tue 1 Aug, 6.15 pm*
B LHC Wed 2 Aug, 2.15 pm**

Q&A: Filmmakers*

Introduction**



A panorama of the best and brightest films that drew our attention on the world stage during our intense engagement with international cinema on the festival circuit this year.

We've had an incredibly wide palette to choose from this year, not the least is the selection from Cannes Film Festival, yielding some of our most exciting choices in the frantic week before we closed our schedule.

Widescreen

Àma Gloria



Director, Screenplay: Marie Amachoukeli
France 2023 | 83 mins
Producer: Bénédicte Couvreur
Editor: Suzana Pedro
Cast: Louise Mauroy-Panzani, Ilça Moreno Zego, Abnara Gomes Varela, Fredy Gomes Tavares,
Languages: French and Cape Verdean Creole, with English subtitles
Festivals: Cannes (Critics' Week) 2023

Àma Gloria is a heartwarming film that revolves around the relationship of Cléo, a spirited six-year-old girl residing in Paris, and her Cape Verdean nanny, Gloria.

Gloria provides Cléo with reciprocated love and care. However, when Gloria is compelled to return to Cape Verde following her mother's passing, Cléo grapples with the anguish of separation. To ease this heartache, Gloria proposes that Cléo spend the summer in Cape Verde. Despite initial reluctance, Cléo's father eventually permits the trip.

As Cléo embarks on her journey, she encounters strained relationships, particularly with Gloria's son, César. Adjusting to her new surroundings, Cléo realises the demands on Gloria's attention, including familial obligations and a rekindled romance. Through these challenges, Cléo undergoes a profound internal shift, evolving from

self-centeredness to a realisation that others have lives beyond her own.

"The considerable power of *Àma Gloria* lies not in its take on colonial conscience, nor even in its insights into the complex economical and emotional dynamics of the child-nanny bond. It is in its unmatched portrait of one brave little heart, bruised but learning to beat on its own, after the painful revelation that to love someone completely is to want to set them free—even if that means freeing them from your love."
— Jessica Kiang, *Variety*

Screenings

A	PEN	Sat 29 Jul, 12.45 pm
B	PEN	Mon 31 Jul, 2.00 pm
A	LHC	Sun 6 Aug, 10.45 am
A	LHP	Sat 12 Aug, 1.45 pm



Charcoal

Carvão



Director, Screenplay: Carolina Markowicz
Brazil/Argentina 2022
109 mins
Cinematography: Pepe Mendes
Cast: Maeve Jinkings, César Bordón, Jean Costa, Camila Márdila, Romulo Braga, Pedro Wagner, Aline Marta
Languages: Portuguese and Spanish, with English subtitles
Festivals: Toronto, San Sebastián 2022

"It will be good for your family... and someone else who is in need." So reasons nurse Juracy to a family of impoverished Brazilian charcoal burners, proposing they secretly euthanise and replace their bedridden patriarch with an on-the-lam Argentinian drug lord who needs to lay low before assuming a new life. But such fraught decisions exert a psychological weight. Irene, Jairo, and their young son Jean cannot help but manifest their internal struggles in social interactions, as guilt fomented and paranoia grows. The situation is exacerbated by their "guest" Miguel who chafes at the strict rules of his confinement and the inferior state of living he is made to endure.

Writer-director Carolina Markowicz shares narrative responsibility across her excellent ensemble: each character evincing discernible dimension and describing a provocative arc. Buoyed by a vein

of dark humour, *Charcoal's* central "Sophie's Choice" dilemma, effectively critiques the wealth and class divide, and the impact of these factors on autonomy. Markowicz's screenplay also takes aim at the socio-political power of religious institutions, underscored by some artfully inspired cinematography. Yet the film is equally concerned with exploring the personal, with macro issues applying pressure to the family's existing relational cracks.
— Jacob Powell

Screenings

A	PEN	Fri 28 Jul, 8.45 pm
A	LHC	Sat 5 Aug, 6.15 pm
B	LHC	Wed 9 Aug, 1.45 pm
A	LHP	Sun 13 Aug, 7.45 pm



NZ classification TBC

Blue Jean

Jean (Rosy McEwan), a newly divorced PE secondary school teacher in Newcastle, is well-liked by her students and colleagues. At night, she hangs out with her girlfriend Viv (Kerrie Hayes) at the local lesbian bar with their friends, though Jean is still uncomfortable being seen with a “comfortably out” Viv.

Living in Margaret Thatcher’s Britain in 1988, where Section 28 had been passed prohibiting teachers from “promoting homosexuality”, the apolitical Jean is adamant about keeping her work and private lives separate. However, when Jean’s new student Lois (Lucy Halliday) spots her at the lesbian bar, her carefully constructed double life is suddenly under threat. Jean must decide whether to continue to live in fear or make peace with her own queer identity in the face of rampant homophobia.

Georgia Oakley’s stunning debut, beautifully shot on 16mm, feels like an artefact from the 1980s with its colour palette and synth-rock soundtrack. McEwan gives a deeply moving and nuanced performance of a queer woman struggling to be herself when prejudice is encouraged by those in power, a past that feels all too familiar today. — Vicci Ho



“A supremely accomplished debut feature from writer-director Georgia Oakley, *Blue Jean* captures a specific moment in British history with almost uncanny accuracy. The graininess of the photography, the well-chosen soundtrack of punchy 1980s electro-socialist pop anthems, the way that Jean’s costumes subtly shift as she crosses between the straight world and the gay one: it’s as persuasive as it is powerful.”

— Wendy Ide, *The Observer*

Director, Screenplay:
Georgia Oakley

UK 2022 | 97 mins

Producer: H  l  ne Sifre

Cinematography: Victor Seguin

Editor: Izabella Curry

Production Designer: Soraya Gilanni Viljoen

Costume Designer: Kirsty Halliday

Cast: Rosy McEwan, Kerrie Hayes, Lucy Halliday

Festivals: Venice, London 2022

Screenings

A	LHP	Sat 29 Jul, 8.15 pm
A	EMB	Mon 7 Aug, 9.00 pm
B	EMB	Wed 9 Aug, 3.45 pm
A	PEN	Sun 13 Aug, 8.00 pm

M *Offensive language, sex scenes, sexual references & nudity*

Carmen

Major up-and-coming stars Paul Mescal (Oscar-nominee for *Aftersun* [NZIFF 2022]) and Melissa Barrera (a highlight of Lin Manuel Miranda’s *In the Heights*) play star-crossed lovers from different sides of the US-Mexico border in the debut feature of choreographer Benjamin Millepied. Carmen (Barrera) is a steely young woman fleeing gang violence in the Mexican desert. Aidan (Mescal) is the moody and wayward ex-Marine who rescues her from the clutches of a violent American militia hunting illegal immigrants. On the run, the two fall into a steamy love affair as they try to make their way to Los Angeles. Millepied conjures fierce performances from his two stars, who showcase their musical and dancing talents amidst a sweltering, tense drama that daringly reimagines Bizet’s tragic opera of the same name. Nicholas Britnell, composer of *Succession* and *Moonlight* fame, punctures the film with his emphatic and, yes, operatic score.

Shot in the Australian outback, the film features stunning photography from cinematographer Joerg Widmer, recalling modern desert classics like *No Country for Old Men* and *Birds of Passage* (NZIFF 2018). Millepied’s talent with rhythm and movement is well suited for frequent sequences of song and dance, but he proves to be a talent in the art of capturing a story in striking, well-defined imagery as well, frequently luring the viewer into



well-mounted, dreamlike moments of abstraction. The film has the feel of a passionate first-timer blazing their own path away from genre conventions. It is a musical with only a few, memorable, songs; it is a dance movie which wields its choreography as stylistic interludes from the action of the drama. Though this *Carmen* ultimately bears little resemblance to the specifics of Bizet’s masterwork, it remains a smouldering, tragic tale of passion that is guaranteed to leave its mark on audiences. — Tom Augustine

“A beautiful, dreamlike and defiantly experimental film... Barrera and Mescal consistently burn the screen, and our foolish hearts.”

— Tomris Laffly, *The Wrap*

Director, Choreography:
Benjamin Millepied

Australia/France 2022

116 mins

Producers: Dimitri Rassam, Rosemary Blight

Screenplay: Benjamin Millepied, Alex Dinelaire, Loic Barr  re

Cinematography: Joerg Widmer

Editor: Dany Cooper

Production Designer: Steven Jones-Evans

Costume Designer: Emily Seresin

Music: Nicholas Britnell

Cast: Melissa Barrera, Paul Mescal, Rossy De Palma, Tracy “The D.O.C.” Curry, Benedict Hardie

Languages: English and Spanish with English subtitles

Festivals: Toronto 2022; Sydney 2023

Presented in association with

VIVA

Screenings

A	PEN	Sat 29 Jul, 5.00 pm
B	PEN	Wed 2 Aug, 11.15 am
A	LHP	Sun 6 Aug, 1.30 pm
A	PEN	Sat 12 Aug, 10.30 am

R13 *Violence, offensive language & sex scenes*

GAGA

Grandpa Ha-yong (Wilang Noming), the patriarch of an Indigenous Taiwanese Atayal family living in the highlands, has followed the tradition of gaga—a traditional values system—all his life, but the younger generations have little interest in keeping it alive. The family's last piece of land is being targeted by the mayor, and when Grandpa suddenly dies, his eldest son Pasang (Wilang Lalin) decides to run for mayor as a way to keep the land in the family. Between financial stress, an unwanted pregnancy and simmering family tensions, the three generations must learn the importance of their relationships and keeping their traditions alive as modern society continues to threaten their culture, heritage and way of life.

This charming, heart-warming family drama is an accomplished third feature from Laha Mebow, Taiwan's first female Indigenous director, the film is anchored by naturalistic and moving performances from its largely nonprofessional cast to tell a nuanced tale of Indigenous life in Taiwan. It was awarded Best Director and Best Supporting Actress at the prestigious Golden Horse Award in Taiwan, as well as Best Director at Singapore International Film Festival 2022 (Asian Feature Competition).
— Vicci Ho



"GAGA continues to raise awareness for the plight of these defining aspects of Taiwan's identity, and offers a fascinating window into a way of life that is in serious danger of disappearing completely." — James Marsh, *South China Morning Post*

"An honest, compelling look at the ups and downs of life in a tight-knit community."

— Han Cheung, *Taipei Times*

Director: Laha Mebow

Taiwan 2022 | 112 mins

Producers: Eric Liang, Arthur Chu

Screenplay: Laha Mebow, Hsieh Hui Ching

Cinematography: Garvin Chan,

Aymerick Benjamin Pilarski

Editor: Chien Chih Chen

Production Designer: Yao Kuo-Chen

Music: Baobu Badulu

Cast: Wilang Noming, Kagaw Piling, Wilang Lalin, Ali Batu, Gaki Baunay, Esther Huang, Yasuy Silan, Yukan Losing, Buya Watan

Languages: Tayal, Mandarin and Hokkien, with English and Chinese subtitles

Festivals: Golden Horse, Singapore 2022; Sydney 2023

Q&A: Laha Mebow*

Screenings

A RXY Sun 6 Aug, 2.00 pm*
B RXY Mon 7 Aug, 3.15 pm*

TBC NZ classification TBC

Disco Boy



Director, Screenplay:

Giacomo Abbruzzese

France 2023 | 91 mins

Cast: Franz Rogowski, Morr Ndiaye, Laetitia Ky
Languages: English, French and Igbo with English subtitles

Festivals: Berlin, New Directors/ New Films 2023

Awards: Outstanding Artistic Contribution (Hélène Louvart), Berlin International Film Festival 2023

Proudly wearing its *Beau Travail* (NZIFF 2000, 2021) influence on its sleeve, *Disco Boy* explores the identity and trauma of soldiers whose bodies clash in combat—and converge again, at least in spirit and soul, through the catharsis of dance. The always magnetic Franz Rogowski is Aleksei, a Belarusian migrant with *vive la France* dreams, who quickly makes rank in the Foreign Legion as a path towards citizenship. Dispatched to oil-rich Niger Delta, where militia are fighting colonial exploitation, Aleksei kills out of instinct and is haunted by his actions back in France, where nightclubs are the escape of choice. Moody and unpredictable, with trance-like images and startling use of infrared light, this is a film bursting with poetic intensity.

"Abbruzzese is wrestling with the profound, frightening topics of identity, colonialism, violence,

tribalism and power; and the choice to underline all this with dance and music elevates *Disco Boy* to something unusual... [Rogowski] has a compelling physical presence, with an incredible gift for being in the moment and paying attention, which means you literally can't tear your eyes away from Aleksei no matter what he's doing... The movie leaves an exceptional impression."
— Sarah Manvel, *Critic's Notebook*

Preceded by short film:
Cetology, 13 mins. See p45

Screenings

A RXY Fri 28 Jul, 6.30 pm
A LHP Tue 1 Aug, 8.00 pm
B RXY Thu 3 Aug, 4.15 pm
B RXY Fri 4 Aug, 12.00 pm

M Offensive language & nudity

Fremont



Director, Editor:

Babak Jalali

USA 2023 | 91 mins

Screenplay: Babak Jalali, Carolina Cavalli

Cinematography: Laura Valladao

Music: Mahmoud Schricker

Cast: Anaita Wali Zada, Gregg Turkington, Jeremy Allen White

Languages: English, Dari and Cantonese with English subtitles

Festivals: Sundance, SXSW, San Francisco 2023

"The fortune you're looking for is in another cookie," reads one of the many custom fortune cookie messages featured in *Fremont*, a lovely, low-budget mood piece with a hypnotically deadpan temperament... While Iranian filmmaker Babak Jalali's easygoing fable-like movie serves up such oracular tidbits in abundance, this one defines his central character best. She is Donya (real-life Afghan refugee Anaita Wali Zada), a lonesome and restless Afghan immigrant working at a family-owned fortune cookie factory in San Francisco by day, and enduring severe insomnia by night, in a Fremont apartment complex that also houses other immigrants from her motherland...

Shot in misty black-and-white and co-scripted by Jalali and Carolina Cavalli with a straight-faced sense of humor, *Fremont* is a quasi-comedy

that strikes a vibe akin to the films of Jim Jarmusch... In its final chapter, *Fremont* rewards the viewer with a splendid cameo: Jeremy Allen White (yes, everyone's favorite chef, thanks to *The Bear*) appears as a handsome and inquisitive mechanic who's helpful to Donya—and who might turn out to be something more. In its final moments, the potency of *Fremont* sneaks up on you. You go in reluctant and even skeptical, and come out wondering how and why you're moved to tears."
— Tomris Laffly, *Variety*

Screenings

A LHC Wed 2 Aug, 6.15 pm
B PEN Fri 4 Aug, 1.00 pm
A PEN Fri 11 Aug, 8.30 pm

TBC NZ classification TBC

Holy Spider

Zar Amir-Ebrahimi deservedly won Best Actress honours at the Cannes Film Festival 2022 for her committed portrayal of an intrepid Iranian reporter who risks her own life to capture a serial killer targeting sex workers in Mashhad, Iran in this graphic, true-crime thriller that divided critics and gave rise to heated discussions among the NZIFF programming team.

Audiences familiar with director Ali Abbasi's ingenious, supernatural mind-bender *Border* (NZIFF 2018) are in for a whole different experience with his latest film. Although the notion of monsters is common to both, *Holy Spider's* ogre is both an individual and a society rife with misogyny. Based on a real-life serial killer, Saeed Hanaei, an "upstanding" Muslim and family man, who strangled sixteen sex workers to death over two years during a self-appointed "cleansing" mission, the film is unflinching and visceral. It also introduces a fictional character, Rahimi, a Tehrani journalist hellbent on catching the killer, even if this involves her posing as a sex worker, and thereby putting her own life in danger.

While exposing the sordid underbelly and hypocrisy of a society that hallows religious purity, a stance which nevertheless apparently harbours, if not fosters, prostitution and a drug trade, the film's effective genre stylings and brutal shocks



sometimes seem to indulge in what it purports to decry. Hanaei's gruesome killings—here depicted in prolonged and disturbing scenes—fascinated the media, and his pronouncements about his maniacal quest found support among hardliners. Abbasi certainly seems more captivated by the killer and his contradictions than his victims, so its left to Zar Amir-Ebrahimi and her terrific performance in dogged pursuit of a killer in the face of general contempt, to bring some hope. — Sandra Reid

"An intensely stylish and appropriately troubling film, with stomach-churning murders and a pacy first half that's reminiscent of David Fincher's *Zodiac*."

— Kevin Maher, *The Times*

Director: Ali Abbasi
Denmark/Germany/France/
Sweden/Jordan/Italy 2022
127 mins

Producers: Sol Bondy, Jacob Jarek,
Ali Abbasi

Screenplay: Ali Abbasi,
Afshin Kamran Bahrami

Cinematography: Nadim Carlsen

Editor: Olivia Neergaard-Holm

Production Designer: Linda Nordqvist

Costume Designer: Hanadi Khurma

Music: Martin Dirkov

Cast: Mehdi Bajestani, Zar Amir-Ebrahimi,
Arash Ashtiani, Forouzan Jamshidnejad,
Alice Rahimi, Sara Fazilat, Sina Parvaneh,
Sara Fazilat, Nima Akbarpour,
Mesbah Taleb

Language: Farsi with English subtitles

Festivals: Cannes (In Competition),
Melbourne, Toronto, Vancouver, London,
Busan 2022

Awards: Best Actress, Cannes Film Festival
2022

Screenings

A EMB Sun 30 Jul, 9.00 pm
A RXY Tue 1 Aug, 8.15 pm
B RXY Fri 4 Aug, 4.15 pm
A LHP Sat 5 Aug, 8.30 pm

R18 Violence, sexual violence, sex
scenes & content that may disturb

If Only I Could Hibernate

Baavgai bolohson



Director, Screenplay:
Zoljargal Purevdash
Mongolia/France/
Switzerland/Qatar 2023
99 mins

Music: Johanni Curtet
Cast: Battsooj Uurtsaikh,
Nominjiguur Tsend,
Tuguldur Batsaikhan

Language: Mongolian with
English subtitles

Festivals: Cannes (Un Certain
Regard) 2023

As the first Mongolian film to play in the Official Selection at Cannes, Zoljargal Purevdash's accomplished debut is a gentle and poignant look at the socioeconomic changes transforming modern-day Mongolia.

Ulzii (Battsooj Uurtsaikh), a poor 15-year-old who lives in a yurt with his mother and three siblings in the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar, is a talented physics student at school. Hoping to attend university one day, he is encouraged by his teacher to train for a national competition and win a scholarship to one of the best schools in the country. However, when his struggling alcoholic mother leaves to find work in the countryside, Ulzii must take care of his younger siblings while balancing his academic life. As the brutal Mongolian winter sets in and heating becomes more difficult, Ulzii, too proud to ask for help, begins to drift further away from his aspirations in a bid to survive.

With affecting and charming performances from its young cast, *If Only I Could Hibernate* is gentle in its pace but does not shy away from highlighting the devastation faced by a traditionally nomadic nation in the name of increasing "economic development", shining a spotlight on those left behind. — Vicci Ho

Screenings

A PEN Sat 29 Jul, 2.45 pm
A LHC Sun 30 Jul, 1.45 pm
B PEN Fri 11 Aug, 4.00 pm

M Offensive language

Inshallah a Boy

Inshallah walad



Director: Amjad Al Rasheed
Jordan/France/Saudi
Arabia/Qatar 2023 | 116 mins

Screenplay: Amjad Al Rasheed,
Rula Nasser, Delphine Agut

Cast: Mouna Hawa, Haitham
Omari, Yumna Marwan, Salwa
Nakkara, Mohammad Al Jizawi,
Islam Al-Awadi, Celina Rababa

Language: Arabic with English
subtitles

Festivals: Cannes (Critics' Week),
Sydney 2023

"According to Jordan's laws, which are guided by Islamic Sharia jurisprudence, if a woman does not have a son, the husband's family is entitled to a share of the inheritance. Thus recently-widowed Nawal (Mouna Hawa) has no time to mourn: instead, she is embroiled in a legal battle with her brother-in-law, Rifqi (Haitham Omari), desperate to keep the only home she and her daughter know. Nawal lies about being pregnant, delaying court proceedings for nine months on the potential promise of a male heir.

Inspired by the real-life experiences of a close relative of director Amjad Al Rasheed, *Inshallah a Boy* delivers a social realist critique of Jordan's structural oppression of women and girls... Ultimately, there are no villains here: everyone suffers in this system of inequality where even someone who wants to take control of their own life can't.

At times, Nawal behaves irrationally, but, motivated by her stirring fight for independence, Mouna Hawa's sincere and gutsy performance will win audience favour. Pregnant or not, Nawal fights for future generations to inherit equality."

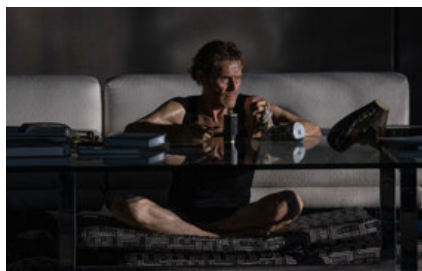
— Tara Judah, *ScreenDaily*

Screenings

B PEN Mon 31 Jul, 3.45 pm
A RXY Thu 3 Aug, 6.30 pm
A PEN Sat 5 Aug, 1.30 pm

M Offensive language
& adult themes

Inside



Director: Vasilis Katsoupis
Greece/Germany/Belgium
2023 | 105 mins
Producer: Giorgos Karnavas,
Konstantinos Kontovrakis,
Marcos Kantis, Dries Phlypo
Screenplay: Ben Hopkins
Art Curator: Leonardo Bigazzi
Music: Frederik Van De Moortel
Cast: Willem Dafoe, Gene
Bervoets, Eliza Stuyck
Festivals: Berlin 2023

“*Inside* follows Nemo (Willem Dafoe) as he’s sent to steal some expensive artwork from the well-secured New York flat of an art collector. Unfortunately for Nemo, the apartment’s security system goes haywire before he gets out with the loot, sealing every exit shut with unbreakable glass and thick metal locks... Nemo’s support team abandons the thief as soon as things go south. And since the flat is more of a personal gallery than a living space, there’s no way of telling when the apartment’s owner might return. So, alone, trapped, and with no means of communicating with the outside, Nemo must figure out how to survive long enough so he can manage to escape.

It’s easy to approach *Inside* as yet another pandemic-inspired film that shows the dangers of isolation. All the main elements of this growing subgenre are there, including Nemo’s slow descent into madness as he’s

deprived of any human contact. But it would be a mistake to condense the movie into a single note, as *Inside* is, above all, about the intrinsic connection between art and the human desire to exist beyond the confines of time...

Inside turns Nemo into the manifestation of human endurance, thrilling the audience as he beats the odds and keeps stretching his life, one day at a time.” — Marco Vito Oddo, *Collider*

Screenings

B EMB Wed 9 Aug, 1.30 pm
A EMB Thu 10 Aug, 9.00 pm

TBC NZ classification TBC

Lost Love

Lau soey lok faa



Director: Ka Sing-Fung
Hong Kong/China 2022
92 mins
Producer: Katherine Lee
Screenplay: Lo Kim-Fei,
Ka Sing-Fung
Cast: Sammi Cheng Sau-man,
Alan Luk, Hedwig Tam
Language: Cantonese with
English subtitles
Awards: Best Actress (Sammi
Cheng Sau-man), Hong Kong
Film Awards 2023

A modest married couple, Mei (Sammi Cheng Sau-man) and Bun (Alan Luk), foster children to help subsidise their income, but it also allows them to take on parental responsibilities after the death of their three-year-old son. Mei, still grieving and resisting Bun’s desires to have another child, devotes her energy to the children that come under their care throughout the years, causing Bun to feel increasingly disconnected from her. With their vastly different experiences and challenges, the foster children become a source of healing and love, their bonds forming a supportive family for one other.

Ka Sing-Fung delivers a touching and compassionate film, continuing the new wave of socially conscious films featuring Hong Kong society. Cheng, one of the biggest Hong Kong stars of her generation, gives a deeply moving and nuanced performance that won her Best

Actress at both Hong Kong Film Critics Society and the Hong Kong Film Awards. While never losing sight of the profoundly transformative weight of grief, *Lost Love* reveals the power of care and resilience in this impressive directorial debut.

— Vicci Ho

Screenings

A LHC Sun 30 Jul, 11.45 am
B RXY Tue 1 Aug, 4.00 pm
A RXY Tue 8 Aug, 6.15 pm

M Adult themes

I Like Movies

It’s 2003, Netflix is still just a postal service, video stores are thriving, and the multiplex is king—what a time to be alive for teenage film buff, Lawrence Kweller.

Whilst the love language of his cohorts consists of sharing a Wendy’s thick shake and fries, Lawrence’s charm offensive involves waxing lyrical about the acting chops of Adam Sandler (*before* the Sandler Brothers made him cool). When his best friend attempts to steadily distance himself from the desperately uncool and defiantly uncouth young cinephile, Lawrence finds solace in his new job at the local video store, “Sequels”.

Cue Lawrence becoming hopelessly attached to the store manager, Alana, several years his senior, and in terms of emotional maturity, way out of his league. But the wannabe-wunderkind is undaunted, his pretension masking an endearing sensitivity while also making him deeply unpopular. Director/Writer Chandler Leveck gives no free passes, and affectionately holds her protagonist to account throughout for his selfish tendencies and problematic views, not least those regarding women filmmakers.

Lawrence may be a delusional dork, but Leveck’s smart script and Isaiah Lehtinen’s stellar performance allow his tender vulnerability to shine through, resulting in a heartfelt, neatly crafted coming-of-age film.

— Matt Bloomfield



“Leveck understands the limits of what she has to work with for her debut feature—this was an ultra-low budget project, with Leveck citing a figure of \$125,000 in one recent interview out of TIFF—and wisely decides to work within them. Backed by strong writing and even stronger performances, the result is a film that is small but not slight, sweet but not cloying, and the kind of thing that can make even a cynical critic like movies again.” — Katie Rife, *Indiewire*

“Days after seeing it, I’m still in awe of the mental judo moves it pulled. It is just a perfectly executed piece of art from writer-director Chandler Leveck.”

— Andy Howell, *Film Threat*

Director, Screenplay: Chandler Leveck

Canada 2022 | 99 mins
Producers: Chandler Leveck, Lindsay Blair
Goeldner, Evan Dubinsky
Cinematography: Rico Moran
Editor: Simone Smith
Production Designer: Claudia Dall’Orso
Costume Designer: Courtney Mitchell
Cast: Isaiah Lehtinen, Alex Ateah,
Dan Beirne
Festivals: Toronto 2022, Sydney 2023

Screenings

A LHP Fri 28 Jul, 6.15 pm
A EMB Mon 31 Jul, 6.15 pm
B EMB Tue 8 Aug, 1.15 pm
A PEN Wed 9 Aug, 8.30 pm

M Offensive language
& sexual references

The Inspection

In his brutal and visceral debut feature, filmmaker Elegance Bratton tells the true-to-life story of escaping homeless destitution to become a Marine, all while being queer in the “don’t ask, don’t tell” military era. Multi-talented Jeremy Pope plays the lead role, delivering a hard-hitting and heavy performance, shouldering the weight of this intense story. His journey in the military is not an easy one, and as he rises to shine in the light of his mother’s eyes (a fierce Gabrielle Union), he warned—*The Inspection* has a sting in its tail, brutal in its honesty and truth. Look out for Raul Castillo in a strong supporting role as the commanding officer. — Leo Koziol

“This well-acted outsider’s-eye view of the inner workings of the US armed forces is fiercely candid, in its condemnation of the brutality that is enmeshed in the training programme, and in its celebration of the bonds and brotherhood that grow between fellow cadets. The confidence that director Elegance Bratton shows in navigating this closed world comes from his own experience. Before he was the director of films such as *Pier Kids*, an award-winning documentary about the homeless LGBTQ+ community in New York, he too escaped a life on the street by serving in the Marines. Impressive stuff.” — Wendy Ide, *The Guardian*



“Elegance Bratton’s superb autobiographical film explores the military’s complex, natural, problematic, potentially liberating, unique and curious place in the United States in a way that words often fail to.” — Violet Lucca, *Sight and Sound*

“An acutely personal drama shimmering with the raw pain, pride and hard-won elation of lived experience... One of the most stirring portraits of queer Black masculinity since *Moonlight*.”

— David Rooney, *Hollywood Reporter*

Director, Screenplay:
Elegance Bratton

USA 2022 | 95 mins

Producers: Chester Algenal Gordon, Effie T. Brown

Cinematography: Lachlan Milne

Editor: Oriana Soddu

Production Designers: Tommy Love, Erik Louis Robert

Cast: Jeremy Pope, Gabrielle Union, Bokeem Woodbine

Festivals: Toronto, New York, London 2023

Q&A: Elegance Bratton*

Screenings

A	EMB	Fri 28 Jul, 8.30 pm*
A	RXY	Sat 29 Jul, 1.45 pm*
B	RXY	Tue 1 Aug, 4.15 pm
A	LHP	Sun 6 Aug, 8.00 pm

R16 Violence, discrimination, sex scenes & offensive language

L’immensità

A riveting Penélope Cruz (*Broken Embraces*, [NZIFF 2009]) copes with a disintegrating, loveless marriage and the shifting gender identity of one her three children, in this evocative family drama set in a sun-drenched 1970s Rome summer, and to the rhythms of Italian pop tunes.

Clara, a Spanish expat, suffers in her upper-class marriage to Felice, who cheats on and abuses her, but refuses to divorce. Despite the burdens of this dead-end situation, her exuberant personality occasionally finds release in games and escapades with her three young children. Twelve-year-old Adriana (a stunning turn from newcomer Luana Giuliani), the oldest, pictures Clara as a goddess on par with Sophia Loren—projecting both mother and child into fantasy musical sequences. Her mother’s wellbeing isn’t Adriana’s only concern; identifying as a boy, Adri changes her name to Andrea and begins to increasingly assert his trans state, to his father’s disapproval, and the incomprehension of his siblings and society at large. Straying through the tall reeds nearby the family’s affluent home, to a shantytown of makeshift lodgings, Andrea encounters teenage Sara and experiences his first crush, and outsider mother and child bond with more intensity.

Drawing from autobiographical elements, director Emanuele Crialese (*Respiro*, [NZIFF 2003], *Golden Door*, [NZIFF 2007]) delivers another indelible



portrait of a mother at odds with the rules and expectations of a world that societal norms force her to inhabit. Cruz is gorgeous, but the film also fully belongs to Luana Giuliani depicting Andrea’s journey, inviting us to accept the fantastical and the ordinary in equal measure. — Sandra Reid

“Italian filmmaker Emanuele Crialese’s brilliantly colorful and touching *L’immensità* revels in the weight that all of the smallest things in the world can hold.” — Sarah Williams, *In Review Online*

“Full of feeling and nostalgia for 1970s Italian pop culture... *L’immensità* gives life to a beautifully affirming mother-son relationship that endures onscreen.”

—Sarah-Tai Black, *LA Times*

Director:
Emanuele Crialese

Italy/France 2022 | 97 mins

Producers: Mario Gianani, Lorenzo Gangarossa

Screenplay: Emanuele Crialese, Francesca Manieri, Vittorio Moroni

Cinematography: Gergely Pohárnok

Editor: Clelio Benevento

Production Designer: Dimitri Capuani

Costume Designer: Massimo Cantini Parrini

Music: Raelsson

Cast: Penélope Cruz, Vincenzo Amato, Luana Giuliani, Patrizio Francioni, Maria Chiara Goretti, Penelope Nieto Conti, Alvia Reale, India Santella, Mariangela Granelli, Carlo Gallo

Language: Italian with English subtitles

Festivals: Venice 2022; Sundance, San Francisco, Sydney 2023

Screenings

A	EMB	Sat 29 Jul, 10.30 am
A	PEN	Sun 30 Jul, 3.15 pm
B	PEN	Fri 4 Aug, 11.00 am

M Domestic violence & offensive language

Of an Age

Macedonian-Australian director Goran Stolevski's latest film, *Of an Age* is a decidedly more romantic and heartfelt departure from last year's dark witch-horror *You Won't Be Alone* (NZIFF 2022). While *Of an Age* doesn't shy away from exploring the murky depths of casual racism and xenophobia, the story centres on a queer romance—or perhaps an *almost* romance—between Serbian-born high-school student Kol (Elias Anton) and his best friend's older brother Adam (Thom Green). Stolevski takes the queer coming-of-age genre and applies a deft hand, recalling the poor timing and first love yearnings of *Call Me by Your Name* (NZIFF 2017) but with more balanced power dynamics and deeper observations on race, class and masculinity.

The chemistry between Kol and Adam unfolds in an hour-long road-trip to pick up Kol's hungover and stranded best friend—Adam's younger sister—Ebony (Hattie Hook). Full of smart jabs and flirty banter over favourite films and albums, the pair's interest in each other is a quiet spark, not yet acknowledged by the "straight" Kol. Kol recognises a freedom and worldliness in Adam, soon to head abroad to complete his studies, and Adam sees something of himself in the gentle, quick-witted Kol. However, the reality of Kol's situation—from his tense, homophobic home environment to the



final dance examination he failed—reveals Kol's struggle to attain and even understand the freedom that he seeks.

Set against the changing social fabric of Y2K Melbourne, *Of an Age* is a slowly building drama that shows the powerful effect of what it means to be truly seen, taking a first crush and burying it deep within the memories of its protagonists for years to come. — Emlou Lattimore

"A warm-hearted gem, pulsating with lustful tenderness (and tender lust) as it sketches what first love can feel like, and asking whether it can ever endure."

— Manuel Betancourt, *Variety*

Director, Screenplay, Editor: Goran Stolevski
Australia 2022 | 100 mins

Producers: Kristina Ceyton, Samantha Jennings
Cinematography: Matthew Chuang
Production Designer: Bethany Ryan
Cast: Elias Anton, Thom Green, Hattie Hook

Festivals: Melbourne 2022

Screenings

A EMB Tue 1 Aug, 9.00 pm
B EMB Fri 4 Aug, 3.45 pm
A LHC Fri 11 Aug, 8.15 pm
A LHP Sat 12 Aug, 8.15 pm

R16 Drug use, sex scenes & offensive language

Midwives

Sages-femmes



Director: Léa Fehner
France 2023 | 99 mins
Producer: Grégoire Debailly
Screenplay: Léa Fehner, Catherine Paillé
Cast: Khadija Kouyaté, Héloïse Janjaud, Myriem Akheddiou, Quentin Vernede, Tarik Kariouh, Lucie Mancipoz, Marine Gesbert, Fleur Fitoussi, Marushka Jury
Language: French with English subtitles

Festivals: Berlin, Sydney 2023

Plunging us into the maelstrom of a Toulouse maternity ward, understaffed, under-equipped and on the brink of collapse, this penetrating film pays vibrant homage to those who work the birthing frontlines. It is also a passionate outcry about the parlous state of the French health system, an impassioned cry that echoes far beyond that country's borders.

Best mates Louise and Sofia finally enter working life after training for five years to become midwives. Their first day on the job has little in common with their period of study, and they are quickly divested of their illusions and expectations as they are thrust into the frenetic pace of a maternity ward—and to assisting with their first deliveries (real childbirth scenes occur throughout the film, a testament to director Léa Fehner's finesse at establishing a safe setting and intimacy for these parents who become part of the narrative).

Chronic understaffing forces the midwives to juggle multiple labours simultaneously. Stress risks impacting their health and compromising their patients' wellbeing. Small wonder, in a place where life-or-death consequences are confronted on a daily basis, and when doing your utmost is barely good enough due to failing infrastructure and support, that some ponder their choice of vocation. — Sandra Reid

Screenings

A LHP Thu 3 Aug, 6.15 pm
B PEN Thu 10 Aug, 1.30 pm
A PEN Sun 13 Aug, 5.45 pm

M Offensive language & graphic medical procedures

Only the River Flows

He bian de cuo wu



Director: Wei Shujun
China 2023 | 101 mins
Producers: Tang Xiaohui, Dorothy Zeng, Li Chan
Screenplay: Kang Chunlei, Wei Shujun. Based on the novel by Yu Hua
Cast: Zhu Yilong, Chloe Maayan, Hou Tianlai, Tong Linkai
Language: Mandarin with English subtitles

Festivals: Cannes (Un Certain Regard) 2023

"A film noir that's so vintage it comes wrapped in crackling celluloid and old cassette tapes, *Only the River Flows* follows one obsessive detective's long and elusive hunt for a serial killer in 1990s provincial China, and the effect it has on a small town with plenty of secrets lurking beneath the surface.

Written and directed by Shujun Wei, the movie is less a nail-biting thriller than a puzzle-like homage to the noir genre itself, with echoes of Jean-Pierre Melville, *Chinatown* and *Memories of Murder*. But even more so, it's a portrait of Chinese society before the recent economic boom and in the wake of the Tiananmen Square protests, at a time when citizens lead repressed lives of quiet desperation." — Jordan Mintzer, *Hollywood Reporter*

"Imagine the gleaming surfaces of Park Chan-wook's terrific *Decision to Leave* stripped of romance, all

suzzed-up and grimy. Imagine drilling down through Diao Yinan's Berlin-winning *Black Coal, Thin Ice* and finding unexpected seams of absurdist dark comedy. You are now somewhere in the seamy offbeat world of *Only the River Flows* director Wei Shujun's inventive riff on Asian-noir that gives the expanding subgenre something its Chinese contributions often lack: a pitch-black sense of humour." — Jessica Kiang, *Variety*

Screenings

B LHC Fri 4 Aug, 2.15 pm
A DEL Mon 7 Aug, 6.30 pm
A LHP Thu 10 Aug, 8.00 pm

TBC NZ classification TBC

Passages

Franz Rogowski (*Transit* [NZIFF 2021], *Disco Boy* [NZIFF 2023]) plays Tomas, a narcissistic film director who sleeps with a young teacher Agathe (Adèle Exarchopoulos, *Sibyl* [NZIFF 2019]) after his film's wrap party. He confesses this marital blunder to his husband, graphic designer Martin (Ben Whishaw, *Bad Behaviour* [NZIFF 2023]), but continues the affair. Tomas darts between the two lovers at his whim with little thought for their hearts, and Agathe and Martin find themselves unable to escape his orbit. What ensues is an incisive study of restlessness, desire, entitlement and self-obsession.

Director Ira Sachs (*Love Is Strange* [NZIFF 2014], *Keep the Lights On* [NZIFF 2012]) returns to form here, charting the turbulent intricacies of romantic relationships to compelling effect. Sachs' keenly felt empathy for these characters, despite their destructive tendencies and dependencies, leads Rogowski, Exarchopoulos and Whishaw to deliver among the strongest performances of their respective careers. A must-see for selfish artists, chaotic bisexuals, restless narcissists, and those who have dared to enter a relationship with them. — Amanda Jane Robinson

"Having introduced us to emotionally rich New York landscapes... it's remarkable to [see Sachs] take a turn for the Truffaut here and land it



with recognisably French elegance... Working with his regular co-writer Mauricio Zacharias, Sachs traces the collapse of multiple relationships with a deft hand. So much is said in where he locates his characters in the frame: who is obscured by whom when arguments rage, and in the wounded looks between his characters... Right down to a final shot that's scored joyously by a brass band, Sachs delivers an achingly beautiful film that's sexy, sad and so very French." — Stephen A. Russell, *Time Out*

"A sharp, superbly played portrait of shifting power dynamics among people whose judgment, when it comes to relationships, ranges from defective to deranged."

— Jon Frosch, *The Hollywood Reporter*

Director: Ira Sachs

France 2023 | 91 mins

Producers: Said Ben Said, Michel Merkt

Screenplay: Ira Sachs, Mauricio Zacharias

Cinematography: Josée Deshaies

Editor: Sophie Reine

Production Designer: Pascale Consigny

Costume Designer: Khadija Zeggai

Cast: Franz Rogowski, Ben Whishaw, Adèle Exarchopoulos, Erwan Kepoa Fale

Languages: French and English

with English subtitles

Festivals: Sundance, Berlin, Sydney 2023

Screenings

A EMB Thu 3 Aug, 9.00 pm
B EMB Fri 4 Aug, 1.30 pm

R16 Sex scenes, offensive language & nudity

Paris Memories

Revoir Paris

In a performance that earned her the César Best Actress Award, Virginie Efira (*Benedetta*, *Sibyl*) plays Russian translator Mia as she attempts to piece together the night she survived a terror attack in a Paris bistro three months earlier. Retracing the events of that night, Mia speaks to other survivors and revisits the scene in an effort to disentangle her fractured memories. Her former life begins to unravel as she shuts out her husband Vincent (Grégoire Colin) and grows closer with injured Thomas (Benoît Magimel) and daughter of a killed couple, Félicia (Nastya Golubeva Carax), all the while struggling to track down the cook she hazily remembers hiding with during the attack.

Paris Memories was written and directed by Alice Winocour whose previous films have similarly concerned post-traumatic stress, including *Augustine*, *Disorder*, *Proxima* and co-writing the screenplay for Oscar-nominated drama *Mustang*. Drawing on her younger brother's experiences as a survivor of the November 2015 Paris Bataclan attacks that killed more than 130 people, Winocour sensitively portrays the disorienting fragmentation of memory that follows a traumatic event and the way shock can continue to reverberate throughout a lifetime. — Amanda Jane Robinson



"*Paris Memories* is a mystery movie, with Mia, like Guy Pearce's character in *Memento*, following various leads and fractured memories to get to the truth. It's also a story of emotional renewal, chronicling the phases of recovery that follow in the wake of a major catastrophe, with all the ups and downs that entails." — Jordan Mintzer, *Hollywood Reporter*

"A piercing examination of what it means to live through devastating violence... Alice Winocour brilliantly dramatizes the way trauma can render our fragments of memory into a puzzle."

— Toronto International Film Festival

Director, Screenplay:

Alice Winocour

France 2022 | 105 mins

Producers: Isabelle Madelaine, Ardavan Safaee and Emilie Tisné

Cinematography: Stéphane Fontaine

Editor: Julien Lacheray

Production Designers: Margaux Remaury and Florian Sanson

Costume Designer: Caroline Spieth

Cast: Virginie Efira, Benoît Magimel, Grégoire Colin, Maya Sansa, Amadou Mbow

Languages: French with English subtitles

Festivals: Cannes (Director's Fortnight), Toronto 2022

Awards: Best Actress (Virginie Efira), César Awards 2023

Screenings

A PEN Sun 30 Jul, 7.30 pm
B PEN Tue 1 Aug, 4.00 pm
A LHP Wed 2 Aug, 8.00 pm

M Violence & offensive language

Phantom

Yuryeong

A gripping spy action-thriller that will keep you guessing until the explosive finale, Lee Hae-young's *Phantom* is a stylish adaptation of Chinese novel *The Message*, anchored by memorable characters and strong performances from the ensemble cast.

It's 1933 in Seoul, two decades after Korea was colonised and under the ruthless control of the Japanese Empire. A new Japanese resident-general arrives and is immediately targeted in an assassination attempt. Believing a spy code-named "Phantom" is within the colonial government and feeding information to the resistance, security chief Kaito (Park Hae-soo) rounds up five suspects and places them in an isolated seaside hotel.

The suspects—codebreaker Mr. Cheon (Suh Hyun-woo); Japanese-Korean police officer Murayama (Sol Kyung-gu); secretary to the deputy governor-general Yuriko (Park So-dam); communications officer Park Cha-kyung (Lee Ha-nee) and office worker Baek-ho (Kim Dong-hee)—are given a deadline to confess or to find Phantom amongst them. Held captive with listening bugs everywhere and Kaito watching their every move, the suspects must play cat-and-mouse mind games with their captors—and each other—to survive, while Phantom must keep their identity secret at all costs and complete their mission.

— Vicci Ho



"A throwback to American film noir from the last century, Lee Hae-young's new project takes us into an almost bicolor universe. Women in raincoats smoke in slow motion under the rain, exchanged coded messages pass from hand to hand in an old illegal cinema, and a scheme is brewing as the sumptuous film *Shanghai Express* plays in the background. *Phantom* is part of the wave of new Korean cinema... that focuses on powerful women." — Eleo Billet, *Asian Movie Pulse*

"An exquisitely staged drama of intrigue and slowly accumulating tension, as the suspects manoeuvre to gain information about each other and dodge Kaito's watchful eye."

— Darcy Paquet, Far East Film Festival

Director: Lee Hae-young

South Korea 2023 | 133 mins

Producers: Jung Chang-hoon, Park Un-kyung

Screenplay: Lee Hae-young.

Based on the novel *The Message* by Mai Ji

Cinematography: Ju Sung-lim

Editor: Yang Jin-mo

Production Designer: Kim Bo-mook

Cast: Sol Kyung-gu, Lee Hanee, Park

So-dam, Park Hae-soo, Seo Hyun-woo

Languages: Korean and Japanese with

English subtitles

Screenings

A RXY Fri 4 Aug, 8.00 pm
A EMB Sat 12 Aug, 9.15 pm

R16 Violence & cruelty

Plan 75



Director, Screenplay: Chie Hayakawa

Japan 2022 | 112 mins

Producers: Eiko Mizuno-Gray,

Jason Gray, Frédéric Corvez

Cast: Chieko Baisho, Hayato

Isomura, Stefanie Arianne

Language: Japanese with

English subtitles

Festivals: Cannes (Un Certain Regard), Melbourne, Toronto 2022

In this imagined near-future, Japan's aging society is seen as such a huge financial strain that the government introduces Plan 75—where anyone over the age of 75 is encouraged to help ease their burden on society through voluntary euthanasia. Michi (Chieko Baisho), a 78-year-old hotel maid lives an independent, fulfilling life, but is left to consider her options after losing her job. Meanwhile Hiromu (Hayato Isomura), a young Plan 75 recruiter, begins to question what this policy really means when his uncle signs up. Maria (Stefanie Arianne) is a Filipino caregiver who takes on a job with Plan 75 to make more money to send home.

Overwhelmed by loneliness and lured by the constant promotion of Plan 75, Michi builds a rapport with the young onboarding agent Yoko (Yuumi Kawai), and both are left wondering what humanity means when a life is only measured in economic terms.

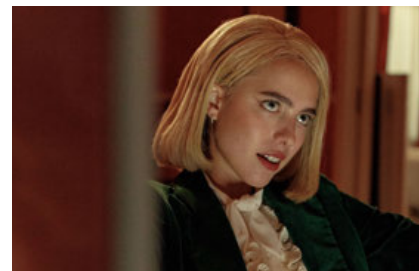
Supported by a quietly devastating performance from Baisho and shot in a low-key realism that makes it even more chilling, *Plan 75* is a highly impressive debut. The film received a Special Mention for Camera d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival and represented Japan for Best Foreign Film at the 2023 Academy Awards. — Vicci Ho

Screenings

A LHC Sat 5 Aug, 1.30 pm
A PEN Mon 7 Aug, 6.15 pm
B LHC Wed 9 Aug, 4.00 pm

M Euthanasia themes & suicide

Sanctuary



Director: Zachary Wigton

USA 2022 | 96 mins

Producers: David Lancaster, Stephanie Wilcox, Ilya Stewart, Pavel Burian

Screenplay: Micah Bloomberg

Music: Ariel Marx

Cast: Christopher Abbott, Margaret Qualley

Festivals: Toronto 2022

Preceded by short film:

That Workman's Arm, 13 mins.

See p45

Margaret Qualley (*Stars at Noon* [NZIFF 2022]) and Christopher Abbott (*Piercing* [NZIFF 2018]) star as Rebecca and Hal, a dominatrix and her long-time submissive. Theirs is a connection founded on humiliation and degradation, so when Hal learns he is to become the CEO of his late father's luxury hotel chain he concludes that the time for indulging in his fantasies of submission is over. He attempts to end his working relationship with Rebecca, but she is unconvinced. When they met, he was meek, insecure—it is only because of her efforts that he now has the self-confidence to perform as CEO, and doesn't that surely entitle her to half his salary? Set over one night in one hotel room, what follows is an evening of quippy screwball tête-à-tête, blackmail and cat-and-mouse power plays. — Amanda Jane Robinson

"Bloomberg's cruelly sharp dialogue is a pleasure to the ear, and Qualley and Abbott a sparring match worthy of the Broadway stage. We hang on their every word but more thrillingly, on their every thought." — Chuck Wilson, *Village Voice*

"[*Sanctuary*] upends the romantic comedy genre's usual approach to relationships with a delightfully demented but surprisingly sweet tale about sex, power, and, most shocking of all, love. It's loads of sick fun—if that's what you're into." — Kimber Myers, *Crooked Marquee*

Screenings

A LHP Fri 28 Jul, 8.15 pm
A LHC Sat 5 Aug, 8.30 pm
B RXY Fri 11 Aug, 4.15 pm
A RXY Sun 13 Aug, 6.00 pm

R16 Sex scenes, sexual references & offensive language

Radical

Superstar Mexican actor and comedian Eugenio Derbez gives a big-hearted crowd-pleasing performance as an inspirational teacher in this uplifting Sundance favourite.

“Based on the remarkable true story of Sergio Juárez Correa, a teacher in the northeastern Mexican border town of Matamoros, the film was hatched by Christopher Zalla out of a *Wired* magazine article by Joshua Davis... It’s set in 2011, an especially heated time in the drug wars, in a city plagued by violent crime, poverty and corruption, where the outlook is so grim that education beyond the basics is often viewed as a waste of time.

Derbez’s Sergio is up against all that and more when he signs up to teach elementary-grade students at Escuela José Urbina López, informally known as ‘The School of Punishment’ and one of the least desirable teaching placements in Mexico. The gates are locked every day during school hours to protect the children from the city’s criminal element, but their motivation to learn is dampened by jaded teachers and an institutional policy that emphasizes discipline and obedience over education.” — David Rooney, *The Hollywood Reporter*

“Eugenio Derbez has never been better... He brings an unbridled enthusiasm and compassion that immediately makes you root for him, utilizing both his natural comedic



skills and charm alongside his impressive dramatic chops. But he’s not painted as this perfect character. Juárez doesn’t have all the answers, but he’s doing his best to lift these kids up and set them on a more promising path

Radical doesn’t reinvent the wheel when it comes to what we’ve come to expect from teaching dramas... but that doesn’t keep this from being an uplifting story full of hope and heart.” — Ethan Anderton, *Slash Film*

“*Radical*... balances optimism with a side of heartbreak for those kids who lack access to the right resources. It’s a humane parting, hopeful and aching.”

— Tomris Laffly, *Variety*

Director: Christopher Zalla

Mexico 2023 | 127 mins

Producers: Ben Odell, Eugenio Derbez, Joshua Davis

Screenplay: Christopher Zalla.

Based on an article by Joshua Davis

Cinematography: Mateo Londoño

Editor: Eugenio Richer

Production Designer: Juan Santiso

Costume Designer: Lupita Peckinpah

Music: Pascual Reyes, Juan Pablo Villa

Cast: Eugenio Derbez, Daniel Haddad, Jennifer Trejo, Mia Fernanda Solía, Danilo Guardiola

Language: Spanish with English subtitles

Festivals: Sundance, Sydney 2023

Awards: Festival Favorite Award, Sundance Film Festival 2023

Screenings

B EMB Tue 1 Aug, 12.00 pm

A EMB Sat 5 Aug, 3.30 pm

A PEN Thu 10 Aug, 8.00 pm

A LHP Sun 13 Aug, 3.00 pm

TBC NZ classification TBC

Reality

Sydney Sweeney delivers a performance of astonishing naturalism as unassuming yoga-teacher turned whistleblower Reality Winner in this assured debut from playwright Tina Satter. Adapted from Satter’s own play *Is This a Room*, *Reality* offers a real-time reconstruction of the events of June 3, 2017, when 25-year-old Reality Winner, air force veteran and yoga instructor, is confronted by FBI agents at her home in Georgia. A part-time intelligence contractor, Winner leaked classified documents related to Russian interference in the American election of Donald Trump in 2016 to the press, an action that saw her prosecuted and which had a wide-ranging impact on American democracy.

Satter’s film unfolds with chilling, low-key menace, as Winner is slowly coerced into revealing the truth to two agents (played with unsettling sliminess by *Eighth Grade*’s Josh Hamilton and *Marchánt Davis*) while other agents search her home. Though it is Winner whose home is being invaded, the surrealism of the affair is heightened by the geniality of her interactions with the agents, as they joke about pets and the gym in-between heavy-duty questioning. What elevates this exercise in simmering, slowly escalating panic (confined to practically one room for much of its action), is the way the film tracks almost imperceptible power shifts—a wayward glance, an offhand statement dripping with



menace, a change in body language that reveals the agents’ true intentions. Satter makes great use of her clinical, invasive camera and sharp, unexpected moments of sound from outside the room punctuating the interrogation—a dog’s bark, a door slamming. At the center of it all is Sweeney, tremors of terror registering in subtle ripples of emotion across her face. It’s a performance of vanity-free dedication and control from the *Euphoria* and *The White Lotus* star, and one that is sure to generate awards conversation at year’s end. — Tom Augustine

“This tense, mesmerizingly paced drama unfolds with a steady drip of mundane moments that gather walloping force as the minutes tick by.”

— Ann Hornaday, *Washington Post*

Director: Tina Satter

USA 2023 | 85 mins

Producers: Noah Stahl, Brad Becker-Parton, Riva Marker, Greg Nobile

Screenplay: Tina Satter, James Paul Dallas. Based on the play by Tina Satter

Cinematography: Paul Yee

Editors: Jennifer Vecchiarelli, Ron Dulin

Production Designer: Tommy Love

Costume Designer: Enver Chakartash

Cast: Sydney Sweeney, Josh Hamilton, Marchánt Davis

Festivals: Berlin, Sydney 2023

Screenings

A EMB Fri 28 Jul, 6.15 pm

B EMB Mon 31 Jul, 1.45 pm

A LHP Tue 1 Aug, 6.15 pm

A PEN Sat 12 Aug, 8.30 pm

M Adult themes

Riceboy Sleeps

A stunning second feature from Canadian director Anthony Shim, this gorgeous coming-of-age tale of the immigrant experience has won numerous awards since its debut, winning the prestigious Platform Prize and Toronto Film Critics Association's Best Canadian Film Award.

After the death of her partner, So-young (Choi Seung-yoon) leaves Korea with her young son Dong-hyun (Dohyun Noel Hwang) and moves to suburban Canada in the 1990s. Immediately othered and bullied by his classmates, Dong-hyun gets little help from his school as casual racism runs rampant in the lily-white community. So-young makes a living in a menial job and is constantly on the receiving end of racist and sexist remarks, but despite her isolation in this new world, she strives to adapt to her new home and provide for her son.

As a teenage Dong-hyun (Ethan Hwang) finds a way to assimilate into Canadian life, he struggles with his Korean heritage and is increasingly frustrated with his mother's reluctance to talk about his father. When So-young receives unexpected news they make an unplanned trip back to Korea, providing mother and son an opportunity to reconcile the present by reconnecting with their roots. — Vicci Ho



"The beats of the immigrant drama—the new friendships and small triumphs of assimilation, as well as the humiliations and miscommunication of cultural otherness—are all here... in its soulful, expertly crafted simplicity it does ring with the sincerest and most moving of sentiments that a grown-up child could express to a beloved parent: I remember it all, and thank you." — Jessica Kiang, *Variety*

"An affectionate, sharply-observed portrait of family life... Shim finds the little details that give the story texture and specificity."

— Lee Hunter, *Screendaily*

Director, Screenplay, Editor: Anthony Shim

Canada 2022 | 117 mins

Producers: Bryan Demore, Anthony Shim, Andrea Agur

Cinematography: Christopher Lew

Production Designer: Louisa Birkin

Costume Designer: Lovisa Drever

Cast: Choi Seung-yoon, Ethan Hwang, Dohyun Noel Hwang

Languages: English and Korean with English subtitles

Festivals: Toronto 2022

Awards: Platform Prize, Toronto International Film Festival 2022

Screenings

A	PEN	Fri 28 Jul, 6.15 pm
A	LHC	Tue 1 Aug, 8.00 pm
B	RXY	Wed 2 Aug, 4.00 pm
B	LHC	Thu 3 Aug, 11.45 am

M *Offensive language & sexual references*

Saint Omer

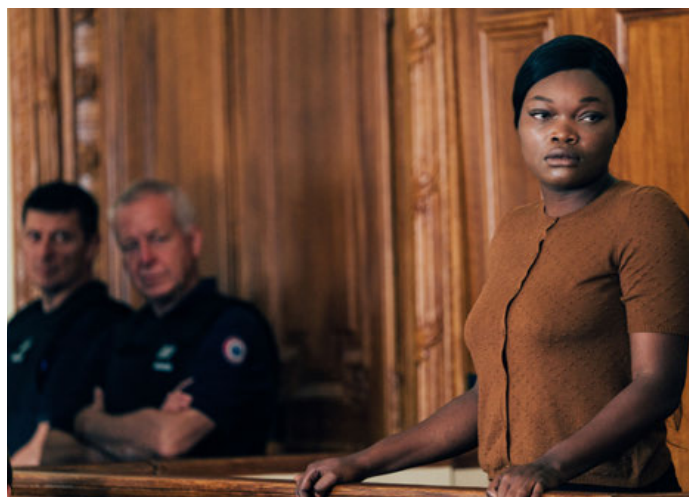
It's 2016 in the small town of Saint Omer in north-eastern France. Laurence, a cultivated young Senegalese woman is on trial for infanticide. She doesn't deny the prosecution's version of events: despite being a loving mother, she consciously abandoned her 15-month-old daughter to the waves on a beach at night.

But to the court's general consternation, Laurence impassively refutes any guilt: her act was the result of sorcery meted out by her aunts back in Senegal.

Among the people attending the trial, Rama, a best-selling Parisian author and academic, also of Senegalese background, has come to document it. Her publishers expect a juicy account, whereas Rama imagines integrating Laurence's story into the modern-day adaptation of *Medea* she is currently writing.

As the trial unfolds, revealing haunting details of Laurence's immigrant experience, the "truth" remains elusive. Laurence only becomes more opaque and her motivations confoundingly mysterious, while Rama is increasingly rattled by unsettling childhood memories and unease about her own impending motherhood. — Sandra Reid

"Quietly momentous. An hypnotically absorbing film that challenges accepted ideas of perspective, of subjectivity and objectivity—and even of what



cinema can be when it's framed by an intelligence that doesn't accept those accepted ideas. Extraordinary." — Jessica Kiang, *Variety*

"[An] intellectually charged, emotionally wrenching story about the inability of storytelling—literary, legal or cinematic—to do justice to the violence and strangeness of human experience." — A.O. Scott, *New York Times*

"Pitch-perfect. Human drama of the most intimately devastating kind, building to a stunningly thought-provoking climax."

— CJ Johnson, *ABC Radio*

Director: Alice Diop

France 2022 | 123 mins

Producers: Toufik Ayadi, Christophe Barral

Screenplay: Alice Diop, Amrita David, Marie Ndiaye

Cinematography: Claire Mathon

Editor: Amrita David

Production Designer: Anna Le Model

Costume Designer: Annie Melza Tiburce

Cast: Kayije Kagame, Guslagie Malanda, Valérie Dréville, Aurélie Petit, Xavier Maly, Robert Cantarella, Salimata Kamate, Thomas de Pourquery, Adam Diallo Tamba, Mariam Diop, Dado Diop

Language: French with English subtitles

Festivals: Venice, Toronto, New York, Busan 2022; Rotterdam 2023

Awards: Grand Jury Prize, Venice International Film Festival 2022

Screenings

B	EMB	Fri 28 Jul, 10.45 am
B	PEN	Wed 2 Aug, 3.30 pm
A	EMB	Thu 10 Aug, 6.15 pm
A	PEN	Sat 12 Aug, 3.15 pm

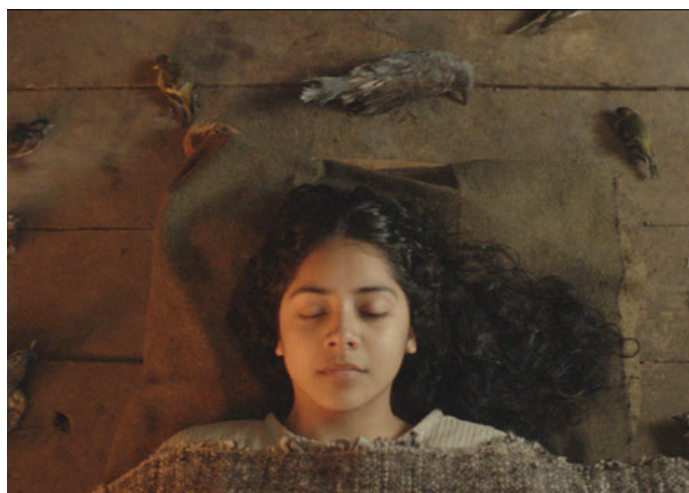
M *Sexual violence references & offensive language*

Sorcery

Brujería

This captivating tale of a young Huilliche girl's search for justice, after the violent and needless death of her father, morphs into a parallel journey of self-discovery. Cast out by her colonial employers, thirteen-year-old Rosa finds a place, and the possibility of redress, with her estranged indigenous community. Inspired by true tales of 19th century Chilean witchcraft trials, writer-director Christopher Murray and co-writer Pablo Paredes opt for narrative restraint, making use of the film's subtle supernatural elements to effectively convey a milieu of fear and misunderstanding. *Sorcery*'s critique of colonisation and colonial power dynamics is pointed in its delivery, adding a poignancy to young Rosa's journey.

Arresting cinematography immerses the viewer firmly in the rain soaked Chiloé Island setting, as well as in the inscrutable face of its young lead Valentina Véliz Cailleo (impressing in her debut feature role). A muted colour palette and detailed sound design combine to sustain a mood of tension and mystery throughout. Successfully fusing the genre mechanics of a revenge thriller with elements of magical realism and a contemplative visual tone, *Sorcery* sits somewhere between the work of Robert Eggers and Andrei Tarkovsky as very much its own remarkable cinematic experience. — Jacob Powell



"Rosa's coming of age is a hero's journey for which she did not ask, but Cailleo plays her with such subtlety and grace that the transformation is seamless. Likewise, the themes of female empowerment, grief, magic and mayhem all overlap smoothly, speaking to the complexity of acknowledging and rejecting one's colonial occupation." — Leila Latif, *Sight and Sound*

"A meditative tale of anticolonial vengeance that has its basis in fascinating true events in Chilote history, but that wears the skin of a dark fairytale."

— Jessica Kiang, *Variety*

Director:

Christopher Murray

Chile 2023 | 101 mins

Producers: Juan de Dios Larraín, Pablo Larraín, Rocío Jadue, Nicolás Celis
Screenplay: Christopher Murray, Pablo Paredes

Cinematography: María Secco

Editor: Paloma López

Production Designer: Bernardita Baeza

Costume Designer: Tatiana Pimentel

Music: Leo Heiblum

Cast: Valentina Véliz Cailleo, Daniel Antivilo, Sebastian Hülk, Daniel Muñoz, Neddíel Muñoz Millalongo

Languages: Spanish, Mapuche and German with English subtitles

Festivals: Sundance 2023

Screenings

A RXY Tue 1 Aug, 6.15 pm
B LHC Wed 2 Aug, 4.15 pm
A LHC Fri 11 Aug, 6.15 pm

R13 Violence & content that may disturb

The Settlers

Les colons

This brooding and brutal debut feature was a critical favourite at Cannes, where it won the critics' FIPRESCI Prize for Un Certain Regard.

"Gálvez, who co-wrote the film with Antonia Girardi, uses the template of a Western to tell his story, although it's a Western carried by a postcolonial critique that gradually takes on the viewpoint of its sole Indigenous character, Segundo (Camilo Arancibia).

When we first meet him, Segundo is laboring with other native-born on a fence the Spanish are erecting to separate the pampas of Chile from neighboring Argentina. The work is ruthless and overseen by cruel masters who have no qualms about killing the injured, so when Segundo's expert marksman skills get him recruited on a mission to clear grazing land all the way to the Pacific, it looks like he may be getting a better deal.

The mission has been commanded by José Menéndez (Alfredo Castro), a powerful player in Chile's emerging economy who's as merciless as Daniel Plainview. Indeed, there will be blood on a treacherous journey that takes Segundo, a war-torn Scottish lieutenant (Mark Stanley) and an American mercenary, Bill (Benjamin Westfall), who's been imported from Texas, over mountains and across ravines until they reach the sea...



Shot in the Academy format by Simone D'Arcangelo... the film looks like an artefact from an older time, slowly zooming and panning across the monumental landscapes where the journey takes place. Yet while its stylings are purposely retro, its aims are very much of the here and now. This is a film that digs deep into Chile's colonial past—especially during a closing section that transforms the story into one of historical reckoning." — Jordan Mintzer, *Hollywood Reporter*

"Felipe Gálvez's masterful debut offers an alternative artistic road map for dealing with historical horrors."

— Christian Blauvelt, *Indiewire*

Director: Felipe Gálvez

Chile/Argentina/France/

Taiwan/UK/Denmark/

Sweden/Germany 2023

97 mins

Producers: Giancarlo Nasi, Benjamín Doménech, Matías Roveda, Emily Morgan, Thierry Lenouvel, Stefano Centini

Screenplay: Felipe Gálvez, Antonia Girardi

Cinematography: Simone D'Arcangelo

Editor: Matthieu Taponier

Production Designer:

Sebastián Orgambide

Costume Designer: Muriel Parra

Music: Harry Allouche

Cast: Camilo Arancibia, Mark Stanley,

Benjamin Westfall, Alfredo Castro,

Marcelo Alonso, Sam Spruell,

Mishell Guña, Adriana Stiven, Mariano

Llinás, Agustín Rittano, Luis Machin

Languages: English and Spanish

with English subtitles

Festivals: Cannes (Un Certain Regard) 2023

Awards: FIPRESCI Prize Un Certain Regard, Cannes Film Festival 2023

Screenings

A EMB Fri 4 Aug, 9.15 pm
B EMB Mon 7 Aug, 3.45 pm
A RXY Tue 8 Aug, 8.15 pm

TBC NZ classification TBC

This collection of nine films celebrates new films from the masters of filmmaking—those filmmakers whose work has lit up the screens for decades and whose careers we have followed for many years.

Also see the Retrospective collection (p 16-19), *EO* (p10), *Perfect Days* (p11), *The New Boy* (p14), *May December* (p13), *Asteroid City* (p15), *Monster* (p15) and *Pictures of Ghosts* (p56)

Masters

Pacification

Tourment sur les îles

Pushing against the grain of grand, exotic storytelling in strangely hypnotic ways, Catalan director Albert Serra has enhanced his singular cinematic résumé with a contemporary thriller echoing Graham Greene and John le Carré—but in a sensual and structural form all of his own unconventional making.

Insidious in a tailored white suit and floral dress shirt, Benoît Magimel stars as De Roller, a shady high commissioner whose role is to rub shoulders with Tahitian citizens and maintain relations, all the while serving his own dubious agenda. As De Roller saunters around the island, flexing his bureaucratic muscle and leering at the locals like a modern-day Gauguin, there are even more sinister machinations afoot: comings and goings at a seamy nightclub, and in the nearby waters, a submarine and rumours of nuclear testing.

New Zealand's anti-nuclear protests need no elaboration regarding France and the Pacific, except to say Serra's fictional film is disturbingly close to home. The slow creep of *Pacification's* commentary on imperial corruption and colonisation is deeply unnerving, while its mixing of prosaic documentary realism with vibrant widescreen visuals and deliberately opaque narrative—alongside occasional flourishes of chilling humour—is nothing short of uncanny. — Tim Wong

“What do you want when you already have paradise? That question looms



over Albert Serra's singularly mysterious cinematic immersion into Tahiti, *Pacification*. The indigenous Polynesians living there would likely argue that this paradise hasn't been theirs in a long time. Serra... is yet another outsider coming to their shores, but he avoids the touristic travel-porn clichés of most movies set in some tropical locale... Set to its own tidal rhythm, it is one of the most beautiful and rigorously introspective movies of this or any year, a film that makes you deeply ponder the fate of humanity itself.” — Christian Blauvelt, *Indiewire*

“An intoxicating pleasure... Benoît Magimel is perfectly cast as a tarnished roué in Albert Serra's enigmatic and transfixing film.”

— Jonathan Romney, *Financial Times*

Director, Screenplay:
Albert Serra

France 2022 | 162 mins

Producers: Pierre-Olivier Bardet, Albert Serra, Montse Triola, Dirk Decker, Andrea Schütte, Joaquim Sapinho, Marta Alves, Laurent Jacquemin

Cinematography: Artur Tort

Editors: Albert Serra, Artur Tort, Ariadna Ribas

Cast: Benoît Magimel, Pahoia Mahagafanau, Marc Susini

Language: French with English subtitles

Festivals: Cannes, Toronto, San Sebastián 2022

Screenings

A PEN Sat 29 Jul, 7.30 pm
B PEN Fri 4 Aug, 3.00 pm
A LHC Sun 6 Aug, 4.45 pm

M Nudity & sexual content

La Chimera

“Alice Rohrwacher’s new film a beguiling fantasy-comedy of lost love: garrulous, uproarious and celebratory in her absolutely distinctive style. It’s a movie bustling and teeming with life, with characters fighting, singing, thieving and breaking the fourth wall to address us directly...”

The setting is Riparbella in Tuscany in the 1980s, and Josh O’Connor is tremendous as Arthur, a dishevelled Englishman in a grubby white suit sporting six-day stubble and a perennial cigarette. He is a former archaeological scholar who has assumed the morose, slouching gait and coiled style of a gangster... Using a dowsing rod, Arthur can tell where invaluable Etruscan antiquities are buried and has teamed up with a bizarre homeless gang of grave-robbers to dig them out under cover of darkness.” — Peter Bradshaw, *The Guardian*

“Shooting fluidly on multiple film formats—35mm, 16mm and Super 16—in the bleached sky blues and earth tones that have by now become a signature palette, Rohrwacher and her regular DP Hélène Louvart make a virtue of this skittering, literally shape-shifting visual quality, as the shifts in grain, light and frame dimensions from one sequence to the next denote the film’s own transient sense of reality, and the states of earthy pragmatism



and mournful reverie between which Arthur hovers. Is he sampling death every time he ventures underground, trying it on for size, at least until he finds something to live for above the surface? Is trading in the currency of the past a way to distance himself from a lonesome present? Raffish and boyish at the same time—or switching between either mode as a cover for the other—O’Connor’s deft, droll performance implies such possibilities without sentimentalizing them.” — Guy Lodge, *Variety*

“Josh O’Connor steals the show in Alice Rohrwacher’s giddy magical realist carnivalesque.”

— Sophie Monks Kaufman, *Time Out*

Director, Screenplay:
Alice Rohrwacher

Italy 2023 | 130 mins

Producer: Carlo Cresto-Dina

Cinematography: Hélène Louvart

Editor: Nelly Quettier

Production Designer: Emila Frigato

Costume Designer: Loredana Buscemi

Cast: Josh O’Connor, Carol Duarte, Isabella Rossellini, Alba Rohrwacher, Vincenzo Nemolato, Giuliano Mantovani, Melchiorre Pala, Gan Piero Capretto, Ramona Fiorini, Yile Vianello, Julia Pandolfo

Languages: English and Italian with English subtitles

Festivals: Cannes (In Competition) 2023

Screenings

B EMB Thu 3 Aug, 12.15 pm
A PEN Sat 5 Aug, 8.00 pm
A EMB Sun 6 Aug, 12.00 pm
B PEN Wed 9 Aug, 11.15 am

M *Offensive language*

No Bears

Khers nist

“Town people have problems with authorities. We have problems with superstition.”

Thus observes a village elder, who in one breath warns that it is unsafe to walk night paths alone due to danger from bears, then in another proclaims the bears “nonsense” made up to scare the villagers.

Dissident Iranian cine-maestro Jafar Panahi interleaves dual tales of tragic love. We follow the curious adventures of filmmaker “Jafar Panahi” (again playing a version of himself) ensconced in a parochial village, dangerously close to the border, involuntarily drawn into a scandal involving young lovers at odds with archaic local tradition. Concurrently, a beset urban couple seek to escape their political context in the film-within-the-film that Mr Panahi is attempting to direct remotely, in the face of government restrictions and increasingly unstable internet.

Each tale acts as an analogue for Panahi’s own struggle to come to terms with love for a country whose various power structures suppress freedoms to live and create and provide a critical reflection on the political efficacy of art. *No Bears* thoughtful evocation of melancholy and creative frustration is buoyed by a strong vein of wry humour, making the film as engaging as it is incisive. — Jacob Powell



“It’s a brilliant movie—an intricate and layered drama that somehow manages to be funny, angry, playful and despairing by turns. Panahi is as incisive a social critic as ever ... But Panahi has also made a powerful and deeply pessimistic statement about the nature of cinema itself. The movies may be capable of magic, but here, he reminds us, they also have their limitations.” — Justin Chang, *NPR*

“A masterwork... Panahi once again uses his situation to produce something that’s somehow life-affirming and deeply devastating.”

— David Fear, *Rolling Stone*

Director, Screenplay, Producer:
Jafar Panahi

Iran 2022 | 107 mins

Cinematography: Amin Jafari

Editor: Amir Etminan

Costume Designers: Hasibe Seçil Kapor, Leyla Siyahi, Ülker Çetinkaya

Cast: Jafar Panahi, Naser Hashemi, Vahid Mobasheri, Bakhtiyar Panjei, Mina Kavani

Languages: Farsi, Azerbaijani and Turkish with English subtitles

Festivals: Venice, Toronto, London 2022

Awards: Special Jury Prize, Venice International Film Festival 2022

Screenings

A PEN Fri 4 Aug, 6.15 pm
B PEN Tue 8 Aug, 1.45 pm
A EMB Sat 12 Aug, 10.30 am

M *Suicide references & content that may disturb*

Afire

Roter Himmel

Two friends, insecure novelist Leon (Thomas Schubert) and photographer Felix (Langston Uibel), head to a holiday home in the woods near the Baltic Sea to work on their projects. When they arrive, however, they find the home already occupied by seasonal worker Nadja (Paula Beer) and her lifeguard lover Devid (Enno Trebs), who are anxious about the nearby forest fires. The four share the cottage, much to the chagrin of petulant Leon, who, while immediately attracted to Nadja, bitterly dismisses her and goes about denying himself summer's pleasures—romance, swimming, even friendship—in a futile attempt to gain traction on his latest manuscript. As the fires grow closer, lust and resentment set in and heat rises between the housemates.

Awarded the Silver Bear Grand Jury Prize at the Berlin International Film Festival, *Afire* is the second film in a planned trilogy of features centering the elements of water, fire and earth. Directed by German filmmaker Christian Petzold (*Barbara* [NZIFF 2012], *Transit* [NZIFF 2018], *Undine* [NZIFF 2021]), the film wears its influences on its sleeve—Eric Rohmer, Agnès Varda and Chekhov among them—yet is at once signature Petzold in all its modernist melodramatic romance, making for a darkly comic and equally tragic ensemble piece in the age of climate anxiety. — Amanda Jane Robinson



"Schubert is terrific as Leon, a potentially abrasive character that he makes soft and weak and vulnerable, even pathetic at times, but never contemptible... This is a deceptively simple and straightforward but emotionally layered film, nicely acted by the tight ensemble." — David Rooney, *Hollywood Reporter*

"Petzold's writing has never been this casually crisp or rawly funny... It's the film's great, disorienting structural risks, its humoring of human untidiness and confusion, that make it so subtly thrilling and moving."

— Guy Lodge, *Variety*

Director, Screenplay:
Christian Petzold

Germany 2022 | 102 mins

Producers: Florian Koerner von Gustorf, Michael Weber, Anton Kaiser

Cinematography: Hans Fromm

Editor: Bettina Böhrer

Production Designer: Kade Gruber

Costume Designer: Katharina Ost

Cast: Thomas Schubert, Paula Beer, Enno Trebs, Langston Uibel, Matthias Brandt

Language: German with English subtitles

Festivals: Berlin, Sydney, Tribeca 2023

Awards: Grand Jury Prize, Berlin International Film Festival 2023

Screenings

B	PEN	Fri 28 Jul, 1.45 pm
A	PEN	Mon 31 Jul, 8.30 pm
A	EMB	Wed 2 Aug, 6.15 pm
B	EMB	Fri 4 Aug, 11.15 am
A	LHP	Sun 6 Aug, 6.00 pm

M *Offensive language, sexual references & content that may disturb*

On The Adamant

Sur l'Adamant

In Paris, you can find *l'Adamant*, a two-storey glass and wood structure festooned with plants, moored on the banks of the Seine. This facility, staffed by professionals, provides an unusual location for a voluntary yet vital service: offering those with mental health challenges a place to spend their days, lightly supervised and free to enjoy their preferred activities, from painting and cooking to music and reading, or simply enjoying a cup of coffee.

Films focusing on mental illness often struggle to avoid either wallowing in misery or indulging in treacly uplift. Yet veteran documentarian Nicholas Philibert—most famous for his schoolroom classic *To Be and To Have* and most recently seen at NZIFF in 2013's *The House of Radio*—expertly dodges both pitfalls. Using an observational style not dissimilar to the legendary Frederick Wiseman, but with a more personable touch, Philibert takes us aboard the Adamant with minimal introduction, allowing us to meet its daily visitors during their activities simply as fellow humans: never reduced to their diagnoses, never minimising their challenges.

A welcome antidote to turbo-charged issue documentaries, *On the Adamant* may superficially be an unlikely Golden Bear winner, but its uncommon sensitivity makes it a richly deserved one. — Doug Dillaman



"There was real justice in Kristen Stewart's Berlin jury awarding their top prize, the Golden Bear, to this excellent movie from the 72-year-old French director and lion of documentary film-making, Nicolas Philibert. His film is compassionate, intelligent and shrewdly observed... there is a gentle and very happy sense of freedom and possibility aboard the Adamant, and there is enormous warmth, sympathy and human curiosity in this film." — Peter Bradshaw, *The Guardian*

"The film unveils the creativity inherent in all individuals... A moving testament to what people are capable of, if they could just find the right place to do it."

— Jordan Mintze, *Hollywood Reporter*

Director, Screenplay, Cinematography, Editor:
Nicholas Philibert

France 2023 | 109 mins

Producers: Céline Loiseau, Miléna Poylo

Language: In French with English subtitles

Festivals: Berlin 2023

Awards: Best Film, Berlin International Film Festival, 2023

Screenings

A	PEN	Mon 31 Jul, 6.15 pm
B	RXY	Fri 4 Aug, 2.00 pm
A	LHP	Sat 5 Aug, 3.45 pm
B	PEN	Wed 9 Aug, 1.45 pm

E *Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements*

The Survival of Kindness

Sitting in The Civic in 2006, watching Rolf de Heer's *Ten Canoes* with my father, was like stepping off a cliff into a quiet stream on a piece of burnt bark calibrated perfectly to our collective weight. We looked at each other as the credits rolled, knowing we'd both been steered to a new place of possibility—sixty thousand years ago, uninterrupted. Seventeen years later, and almost a decade since his last film (*Charlie's Country*, [NZIFF 2014]), Rolf de Heer returns now with *The Survival of Kindness*, the recent past and future in his allegorical command.

Relationships, clarity of vision and an element of surrendering to dreamtime allow for these types of cinematic displays to come to life without artifice. *The Survival of Kindness* is largely dialogue free and features a stunning and translucent performance by Mwajemi Hussein. Like *Ten Canoes*, there is a collaboration where a director's idea creates a frame, but Hussein wears the sun, commands rhythm of hand and breath against a neck manacle through the night, with only a throat cough to fuel her. Her name is BlackWoman, and what starts with the slicing up of territory cake, moves to BlackWoman's reality: a metal cage on sun-baked sand. She isn't a stranger in a strange land, but a woman surviving on her post-apocalyptic motherland.



Rolf de Heer has journeyed further than most, and in *The Survival of Kindness* he creates his fullest reverie of horror, resulting in industrial incursions, stream-trickled whispers between strangers and bone dust. A haunting diagnosis of the abeyance of kindness where land and stars bare silent witness, but their collective mourning is felt in every sequence. — Tearepa Kahi

“For Indigenous people, and people of colour around the world, ‘dystopia’ is not a concept relegated to sci-fi films or Orwellian novels, but a lived reality.”

— Luke Buckmaster, *The Guardian*

Director, Screenplay:
Rolf de Heer

Australia 2023 | 96 mins

Producers: Julie Byrne, Rolf de Heer

Cinematography: Maxx Corkindale

Editor: Isaac Coen Lindsay

Production Designer: Maya Coombs

Cast: Mwajemi Hussein, Deepthi Sharma, Darsan Sharma

Language: No dialogue

Festivals: Berlin 2023

Award: FIPRESCI Prize, Berlin International Film Festival 2023

Q&A: Rolf de Heer*

An open captions screening of *The Survival of Kindness* will screen on **Tuesday 8 August**. The Q&A will be NZSL-interpreted.

Screenings

A EMB Mon 7 Aug, 6.15 pm*
B LHC Wed 9 Aug, 11.00 am*

M Violence

Last Summer

L'été dernier

“It began in the son's room, when the father was away on business. *L'enfant* thought it was *l'amour*, but for her, 30-odd years his senior, the sex, lies and audiotape were a mistake. Wild at heart, she'd yielded to the taste of... oh, never mind. Competing for the Palme d'Or at Cannes, Catherine Breillat's *Last Summer* echoes films that have come before—most notably, 2019 Danish drama *Queen of Hearts*, on which it's based—but it proves most daring in the ways the film departs from its more conventionally moralistic source, and especially in Breillat's refusal to call either party a parasite.

Yes, the affair between a lawyer and her 17-year-old stepson is a betrayal—of her marriage, of her parental responsibilities, of everything she stands for as an attorney—but that's nothing compared with how the 50-ish woman deals with it when word gets out in this thought-provoking domestic drama. In reviewing the original, *Variety*'s Guy Lodge wrote, “You can practically envisage a Robin Wright-starring U.S. remake”—which isn't far from the truth. Backed by fearless producer Said Ben Said (*Elle*), Breillat gives us the great Léa Drucker (who played far more responsible moms in *Close* [NZIFF 2022] and *Custody* [NZIFF 2017]) in the role of Anne, who's introduced representing an underage girl in a sex-crimes case.



The differences between *Last Summer* and its source material serve to reveal Breillat's fascinations as a filmmaker, especially in the latter scenes, when Anne's fellow adults consciously decide what they're willing to accept. In keeping with the controversial director's earlier work, the answer may well be: a lot more than most audiences.” — Peter Debruge, *Variety*

“Catherine Breillat certainly hasn't pulled back from her vocation to dumbfound the bourgeoisie... Outrage is her weapon. In *Last Summer*, every shot finds its target.”

— Stephanie Bunbury, *Deadline*

Director: Catherine Breillat

France 2023 | 104 mins

Producer: Said Ben Said

Screenplay: Catherine Breillat, Pascal Bonitzer. Based on the film *Queen of Hearts* by Maren Louise Käähne and May El-Touhky

Cinematography: Jeanne Lapoirie

Editor: François Quiqueré

Production Designer: Sébastien Danos

Costume Designer: Khadija Zeggai

Music: Kim Gordon

Cast: Léa Drucker, Samuel Kircher, Olivier Rabourdin, Clotilde Courau, Serena Hu, Angela Chen

Language: French with English subtitles

Festivals: Cannes (In Competition) 2023

Screenings

A EMB Tue 8 Aug, 8.45 pm
A PEN Wed 9 Aug, 6.15 pm
B EMB Thu 10 Aug, 11.00 am
B PEN Fri 11 Aug, 11.15 am

TBC NZ classification TBC

Showing Up

“Williams plays Lizzy, an introverted sculptor in Portland, Oregon, who makes clay figures of women. She has a local show of her work coming up, and she’s racing to finish her sculptures in time. But the universe isn’t making it easy for her. She works full-time in the office at an art college, where her boss is none other than her mom, who, like almost everyone else, doesn’t take Lizzy’s creative pursuits too seriously. And so Lizzy has to do her sculpting in her spare time, in the apartment she rents out from her friend Jo, terrifically played by Hong Chau.



Jo is also an artist, and a more successful one: Her elaborate mixed-media installations have all the wow factor that Lizzy’s lovely but modest sculptures don’t. It only adds to the tension that Jo isn’t the most attentive landlord.

Reichardt’s movie is all about the challenge of finding the time, the space, the money and the energy to pursue your calling. It’s also about how making art can be both a joy and incredibly hard work... We get a lot of biopics about creative geniuses, but nothing like the richness of texture and insight that Reichardt gives us.”

— Justin Chang, *NPR*

“Kelly Reichardt, one of the most exciting filmmakers working today, nails this insular vibe and the unspoken supersonic buzz of competition and envy... the

piercing specificity of Reichardt’s vision, and her insights into the dynamics of an art scene like the one in Portland, are spot on.”

— Sheila O’Malley, *Roger Ebert*

“This beautifully acted, expertly modulated film is a work of such enveloping gentleness that even the worst crises are simply absorbed into the fabric of life and work... We don’t deserve Kelly Reichardt.”

— David Rooney, *Hollywood Reporter*

Director, Editor:
Kelly Reichardt

USA 2022 | 108 mins

Producers: Neil Kopp, Vincent Savino, Anish Savjani

Screenplay: Jon Raymond, Kelly Reichardt

Cinematography: Christopher Blauvelt

Production Designer: Anthony Gasparro

Costume Designer: April Napier

Music: Ethan Rose

Cast: Michelle Williams, Hong Chau, André Benjamin, Todd-o-Phonic Todd, Lauren Lakis, Denzel Rodriguez, Jean-Luc Boucherot, Ted Rooney, Maryann Plunkett

Festivals: Cannes (In Competition), New York 2022, Rotterdam 2023

Screenings

- B EMB Mon 7 Aug, 10.30 am
- A EMB Tue 8 Aug, 6.15 pm
- A LHP Wed 9 Aug, 8.00 pm



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When the Waves Are Gone

Kapag wala nang mga alon



Director, Screenplay, Editor, Production Designer: Lav Diaz

Philippines 2022 | 187 mins

Cinematography: Larry Manda

Cast: John Lloyd Cruz, Ronnie Lazaro, Shamaine Buencamino, Don Melvin Boongaling

Language: Tagalog with English subtitles

Festivals: Venice, Busan 2022; Rotterdam, Sydney 2023

Turning heads with his crime and punishment epic *Norte, the End of History* (NZIFF 2013), Lav Diaz is a master of long-form cinema whose portraits of Philippine society are as potent as they are prolific. *When the Waves Are Gone* is made with consummate anger and despair, but also an allegorical surrealism that serves up bizarre humour and searing moral inquiry in equal measure.

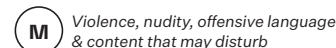
Centred on Hermes, a maverick detective disgraced for his uncompromising anti-drug methods, the film charts his exile from crime-riddled Manila to the countryside against the revenge-obsessed Primo, a veteran police officer jailed for misconduct by Hermes a decade earlier. Primo’s release from prison unfolds in strangely horrifying fashion, a botched baptism just one of his errors of judgment along the way to tracking down Hermes. Leading us on this

hypnotic journey into darkness, Diaz juxtaposes the absurd derangement of these characters with lengthy and poetic philosophising on a culture of fear and corruption, where the ominous horizons observed in Lauren Greenfield’s outstanding documentary on Philippines politics, *The Kingmaker* (NZIFF 2020), are brought grimly into focus.

— Tim Wong

Screenings

- B LHC Thu 10 Aug, 1.00 pm
- A LHC Sat 12 Aug, 1.00 pm



Schedule

EMB: Embassy Theatre
DEL: Deluxe Cinema, Embassy Theatre
LHC: Light House Cinema Cuba
LHP: Light House Cinema Petone
PEN: Penthouse Cinema
RXY: Roxy Cinemas

	Page		Page		Page			
Thursday 27 July								
A 6.30 pm	Anatomy of a Fall (EMB) 151	7	A 3.45 pm	Tótem (LHC) 95	50			
Friday 28 July								
B 10.45 am	Ennio (PEN) 156	67	A 5.30 pm	EO (PEN) 86	10			
B 10.45 am	Saint Omer (EMB) 123	36	A 5.30 pm	Anatomy of a Fall (EMB) 151	7			
B 12.00 pm	Seven Winters in Tehran (LHC) 97	62	A 5.45 pm	Sweet As (LHP) 89	50			
B 12.45 pm	The Eternal Memory (RXY) 85	60	A 6.00 pm	The Paragon (LHC) 85	20			
B 1.30 pm	Chocolat (EMB) 104	19	A 6.00 pm	River (RXY) 86	74			
B 1.45 pm	Afire (PEN) 102	40	A 7.30 pm	Paris Memories (PEN) 105	33			
B 2.00 pm	Orlando, My Political Biography (LHC) 98	61	A 8.00 pm	Fantastic Machine (LHP) 88	59			
B 2.30 pm	Little Richard (RXY) 101	67	A 8.00 pm	How to Blow Up a Pipeline (RXY) 103	51			
B 3.00 pm	Shin Ultraman (DEL) 113	75	A 8.15 pm	Hello Dankness (LHC) 70	77			
B 3.45 pm	How to Blow Up a Pipeline (EMB) 103	51	A 9.00 pm	Holy Spider (EMB) 117	29			
B 4.00 pm	Hello Dankness (LHC) 70	77	Monday 31 July					
B 4.00 pm	Merkel (PEN) 99	63	B 10.15 am	Pray For Our Sinners (PEN) 82	57			
B 4.45 pm	EO (RXY) 86	10	B 11.15 am	Red Mole: A Romance (EMB) 88	23			
A 6.15 pm	Subject (LHC) 92	57	B 12.00 pm	Space: The Longest Goodbye (PEN) 87	60			
A 6.15 pm	I Like Movies (LHP) 99	30	B 1.15 pm	The Corridors of Power (LHC) 135	64			
A 6.15 pm	Riceboy Sleeps (PEN) 117	36	B 1.45 pm	Reality (EMB) 85	35			
A 6.15 pm	Reality (EMB) 85	35	B 2.00 pm	Ama Gloria (PEN) 83	26			
A 6.30 pm	Disco Boy (RXY) 91	28	B 3.15 pm	Grant Sheehan... (RXY) 119	23			
A 8.15 pm	Mars Express (LHC) 87	76	B 3.45 pm	Inshallah a Boy (PEN) 116	29			
A 8.15 pm	Sanctuary (LHP) 96	34	B 3.45 pm	Asteroid City (EMB) 104	15			
A 8.30 pm	Sisu (RXY) 91	77	B 4.00 pm	Autobiography (LHC) 115	46			
A 8.30 pm	The Inspection (EMB) 95	31	B 4.00 pm	Is There Anybody Out There? (RXY) 91	59			
A 8.45 pm	Charcoal (PEN) 109	26	A 6.00 pm	De Humani Corporis Fabrica (DEL) 122	58			
Saturday 29 July								
A 10.30 am	Rock Hudson... (PEN) 106	68	A 6.00 pm	Bobi Wine... (RXY) 114	65			
A 10.30 am	L'immensità (EMB) 97	31	A 6.15 pm	Banel & Adama (LHC) 87	48			
A 11.00 am	Brainwashed... (LHC) 107	58	A 6.15 pm	Smoke Sauna Sisterhood (LHP) 92	57			
A 11.45 am	Space: The Longest Goodbye (RXY) 87	60	A 6.15 pm	On the Adamant (PEN) 109	40			
A 12.45 pm	Ama Gloria (PEN) 83	26	A 6.15 pm	Casa Susanna (RXY) 97	58			
A 1.00 pm	Bread and Roses (EMB) 202	17	A 6.15 pm	I Like Movies (EMB) 99	30			
A 1.15 pm	The Tuba Thieves (LHC) 91	50	A 8.00 pm	Nam June Paik... (LHC) 110	70			
A 1.45 pm	The Inspection (RXY) 95	31	A 8.15 pm	Seven Winters in Tehran (LHP) 97	62			
A 2.00 pm	EO (LHP) 86	10	A 8.15 pm	Mami Wata (RXY) 107	48			
A 2.45 pm	If Only I Could Hibernate (PEN) 99	29	A 8.30 pm	Afire (PEN) 102	40			
A 3.15 pm	Kokomo City (LHC) 73	47	A 8.30 pm	Mars Express (RXY) 87	76			
A 3.45 pm	Are You There God? It's Me... (LHP) 106	53	A 8.30 pm	Beyond Utopia (EMB) 119	65			
A 4.30 pm	Animation Now! #1 (RXY) 79	73	Tuesday 1 August					
A 4.45 pm	Shin Ultraman (LHC) 113	75	B 11.30 am	Salvatore... (PEN) 109	69			
A 5.00 pm	Carmen (PEN) 116	27	B 12.00 pm	Mami Wata (LHC) 107	48			
A 6.00 pm	May December (LHP) 113	13	B 12.00 pm	Radical (EMB) 127	35			
A 6.00 pm	Asteroid City (EMB) 104	15	B 1.45 pm	Sweet As (PEN) 89	50			
A 6.15 pm	Hello Dankness (RXY) 70	77	B 2.15 pm	Brainwashed... (LHC) 107	58			
A 7.00 pm	The Delinquents (LHC) 180	47	B 3.00 pm	Perfect Days (EMB) 123	11			
A 7.30 pm	Pacifiction (PEN) 162	38	B 4.00 pm	Paris Memories (PEN) 105	33			
A 8.15 pm	Blue Jean (LHP) 97	27	B 4.00 pm	Lost Love (RXY) 92	30			
A 8.30 pm	The Paragon (RXY) 85	20	B 4.15 pm	Good Boy (DEL) 76	74			
A 8.45 pm	Earth Mama (EMB) 97	49	B 4.15 pm	The Inspection (RXY) 95	31			
Sunday 30 July								
A 10.00 am	Close to Vermeer (EMB) 75	71	B 4.30 pm	Animation Now! #1 (LHC) 79	73			
A 11.00 am	Dounia & The Princess... (PEN) 72	52	A 6.00 pm	Casa Susanna (RXY) 97	58			
A 11.15 am	Animation for Kids 8+ (RXY) 65	55	A 6.15 pm	Fantastic Machine (LHC) 88	59			
A 11.45 am	Lost Love (LHC) 92	30	A 6.15 pm	Reality (LHP) 85	35			
A 12.15 pm	Red Mole: A Romance (EMB) 88	23	A 6.15 pm	Banel & Adama (PEN) 87	48			
A 12.45 pm	The Giants (PEN) 117	61	A 6.15 pm	Sorcery (RXY) 101	37			
A 12.45 pm	The Munekata Sisters (RXY) 114	16	A 6.15 pm	New Zealand's Best 2023 (EMB) 82	25			
A 1.00 pm	Salvatore... (LHP) 109	69	A 8.00 pm	Riceboy Sleeps (LHC) 117	36			
A 1.45 pm	If Only I Could Hibernate (LHC) 99	29	A 8.00 pm	Disco Boy (LHP) 91	28			
A 3.00 pm	Grant Sheehan... (RXY) 119	23	A 8.00 pm	Shin Ultraman (RXY) 113	75			
A 3.00 pm	Robot Dreams (EMB) 96	53	A 8.15 pm	My Name Is Alfred Hitchcock (PEN) 120	68			
A 3.15 pm	Perfect Days (LHP) 123	11	A 8.15 pm	Holy Spider (RXY) 117	29			
A 3.15 pm	L'immensità (PEN) 97	31	A 9.00 pm	Of an Age (EMB) 100	32			
Wednesday 2 August								
B 11.15 am	Carmen (PEN) 116	27	B 12.30 pm	Kidnapped (EMB) 125	11			
B 12.00 pm	Bobi Wine... (RXY) 114	65	B 1.45 pm	The Eternal Memory (PEN) 85	60			
B 12.15 pm	Tiger Stripes (LHC) 95	51	B 2.15 pm	New Zealand's Best 2023 (LHC) 82	25			
Thursday 3 August								
B 12.30 pm	Close to Vermeer (LHP) 75	71	B 2.15 pm	Kim's Video (RXY) 88	56			
B 11.00 am	Anatomy of a Fall (PEN) 151	7	B 3.15 pm	The New Boy (EMB) 116	14			
B 11.45 am	Riceboy Sleeps (LHC) 117	36	B 3.30 pm	Saint Omer (PEN) 123	36			
B 11.45 am	EO (RXY) 86	10	B 4.00 pm	Riceboy Sleeps (RXY) 117	36			
B 12.15 pm	La Chimera (EMB) 130	39	B 4.15 pm	Sorcery (LHC) 101	37			
B 1.30 pm	A Storm Foretold (RXY) 99	63	B 4.45 pm	Chop & Steele (DEL) 77	76			
B 2.00 pm	Pictures of Ghosts (LHC) 93	56	A 6.00 pm	Perfect Days (PEN) 123	11			
B 2.00 pm	Banel & Adama (PEN) 87	48	A 6.15 pm	Fremont (LHC) 91	28			
B 3.00 pm	Bad Behaviour (EMB) 107	21	A 6.15 pm	Close to Vermeer (LHP) 75	71			
B 3.30 pm	River (DEL) 86	74	A 6.15 pm	Pictures of Ghosts (RXY) 93	56			
B 4.00 pm	Even Hell Has Its Heroes (LHC) 110	66	A 6.15 pm	Afire (EMB) 102	40			
B 4.00 pm	Palm Trees and Power Lines (PEN) 110	47	A 6.30 pm	The Tuba Thieves (DEL) 91	50			
B 4.15 pm	Disco Boy (RXY) 91	28	A 8.00 pm	Paris Memories (LHP) 105	33			
A 6.15 pm	Suzhou River (LHC) 79	19	A 8.15 pm	Orlando, My Political Biography (LHC) 98	61			
A 6.15 pm	Midwives (LHP) 99	32	A 8.15 pm	Autobiography (RXY) 115	46			
A 6.15 pm	Tótem (PEN) 95	50	A 8.30 pm	Palm Trees and Power Lines (PEN) 110	47			
A 6.15 pm	Squaring the Circle (RXY) 101	71	A 8.45 pm	A Storm Foretold (EMB) 99	63			
A 6.15 pm	The New Boy (EMB) 116	14	Friday 4 August					
A 6.30 pm	Inshallah a Boy (RXY) 116	29	B 11.00 am	L'immensità (PEN) 97	31			
A 8.00 pm	Tiger Stripes (LHC) 95	51	B 11.15 am	Afire (EMB) 102	40			
A 8.15 pm	Nam June Paik... (LHP) 110	70	B 12.00 pm	Disco Boy (RXY) 91	28			
A 8.15 pm	#Manhole (RXY) 99	76	B 12.15 pm	Smoke Sauna Sisterhood (LHC) 92	57			
A 8.30 pm	Total Trust (PEN) 97	64	B 1.00 pm	Fremont (PEN) 91	28			
A 9.00 pm	Passages (EMB) 91	33	B 1.30 pm	Passages (EMB) 91	33			
Friday 4 August								
B 11.00 am	L'immensità (PEN) 97	31	B 2.00 pm	On the Adamant (RXY) 109	40			
B 11.15 am	Afire (EMB) 102	40	B 2.15 pm	Only the River Flows (LHC) 101	32			
B 12.00 pm	Disco Boy (RXY) 91	28	B 3.00 pm	Pacifiction (PEN) 162	38			
B 12.15 pm	Smoke Sauna Sisterhood (LHC) 92	57	B 3.30 pm	Sisu (DEL) 91	77			
B 1.00 pm	Fremont (PEN) 91	28	B 3.45 pm	Of an Age (EMB) 100	32			
B 1.30 pm	Passages (EMB) 91	33	B 4.15 pm	Omen (LHC) 90	48			
B 2.00 pm	On the Adamant (RXY) 109	40	B 4.15 pm	Holy Spider (RXY) 117	29			
B 2.15 pm	Only the River Flows (LHC) 101	32	A 6.00 pm	Chop & Steele (RXY) 77	76			
B 3.00 pm	Pacifiction (PEN) 162	38	A 6.15 pm	Salvatore... (LHC) 109	69			
B 3.30 pm	Sisu (DEL) 91	77	A 6.15 pm	Merkel (LHP) 99	63			
B 3.45 pm	Of an Age (EMB) 100	32	A 6.15 pm	No Bears (PEN) 107	39			
B 4.15 pm	Omen (LHC) 90	48	A 6.15 pm	Bad Behaviour (EMB) 107	21			
B 4.15 pm	Holy Spider (RXY) 117	29	A 6.30 pm	Kokomo City (RXY) 73	47			
A 6.00 pm	Chop & Steele (RXY) 77	76	A 8.00 pm	Phantom (RXY) 133	34			
A 6.15 pm	Salvatore... (LHC) 109	69	A 8.15 pm	Palm Trees and Power Lines (LHP) 110	47			
A 6.15 pm	Merkel (LHP) 99	63						

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A 8.30 pm Good Boy (LHC) 76	74
A 8.30 pm May December (PEN) 113	13
A 9.15 pm The Settlers (EMB) 97	37

Saturday 5 August

A 11.00 am The Giants (RXY) 117	61
A 11.00 am Chocolat (EMB) 104	19
A 11.30 am Little Richard (LHC) 101	67
A 11.30 pm Space: The Longest Goodbye (PEN) 87	60
A 1.15 pm Arnold Is a Model Student (RXY) 84	46
⊕ 1.15 pm Anselm 3D (EMB) 93	69
A 1.30 pm Plan 75 (LHC) 112	34
A 1.30 pm Inshallah a Boy (PEN) 116	29
A 1.45 pm Is There Anybody Out There? (LHP) 91	59
A 3.00 pm The Delinquents (RXY) 180	47
A 3.30 pm Radical (EMB) 127	35
A 3.45 pm Building Bridges (LHC) 83	22
A 3.45 pm On the Adamant (LHP) 109	40
A 4.00 pm Close to Vermeer (PEN) 75	71
A 4.15 pm The Eternal Memory (RXY) 85	60
A 5.45 pm Sweet As (PEN) 89	50
A 6.00 pm Monster (LHP) 127	15
A 6.00 pm Billion Dollar Heist (RXY) 90	61
A 6.15 pm Charcoal (LHC) 109	26
A 6.30 pm Omen (RXY) 90	48
A 6.30 pm Past Lives (EMB) 106	8
A 8.00 pm La Chimera (PEN) 130	39
A 8.30 pm Sanctuary (LHC) 96	34
A 8.30 pm Holy Spider (LHP) 117	29
A 8.30 pm King Loser (RXY) 90	23
A 9.00 pm How to Blow Up a Pipeline (EMB) 103	51

Sunday 6 August

A 10.15 am Animation for Kids 8+ (EMB) 65	55
A 10.30 am Smoke Sauna Sisterhood (PEN) 92	57
A 10.45 am Ama Gloria (LHC) 83	26
A 11.00 am Animation for Kids 4+ (RXY) 62	55
A 12.00 pm La Chimera (EMB) 130	39
A 12.30 pm Arnold Is a Model Student (LHC) 84	46
A 12.30 pm The Strangest of Angels (PEN) 57	22
A 12.30 pm Detour (RXY) 69	16
A 1.30 pm Carmen (LHP) 116	27
A 2.00 pm GAGA (RXY) 112	28
A 2.15 pm King Loser (LHC) 90	23
A 2.30 pm Robot Dreams (PEN) 96	53
A 3.00 pm Monster (EMB) 127	15
A 3.15 pm Bobi Wine... (RXY) 114	65
A 3.45 pm The New Boy (LHP) 116	14
A 4.45 pm Pacifiction (LHC) 162	38
A 4.45 pm Ennio (PEN) 156	67
A 5.00 pm Rock Hudson... (RXY) 106	68
A 5.30 pm De Humani Corporis Fabrica (RXY) 122	58
A 6.00 pm Afire (LHP) 102	40
A 6.00 pm Ms. Information (EMB) 100	20
A 7.15 pm Good Boy (RXY) 76	74
A 7.45 pm The Corridors of Power (LHC) 135	64
A 8.00 pm The Inspection (LHP) 95	31
A 8.00 pm War Pony (PEN) 115	50
A 8.45 pm Sisu (EMB) 91	77
A 9.00 pm Animation Now! #2 (RXY) 79	72

Monday 7 August

B 10.30 am Showing Up (EMB) 108	42
B 11.30 am The Strangest of Angels (PEN) 57	22
B 12.30 pm Arnold Is a Model Student (LHC) 84	46
B 1.00 pm Ms. Information (EMB) 100	20
B 1.30 pm The Giants (PEN) 117	61

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B 2.15 pm Billion Dollar Heist (LHC) 90	61
B 3.15 pm GAGA (RXY) 112	28
B 3.45 pm Beyond Utopia (RXY) 119	65
B 3.45 pm The Settlers (EMB) 97	37
B 4.00 pm Building Bridges (LHC) 83	22
B 4.00 pm Tótem (PEN) 95	50
A 6.00 pm Chop & Steele (RXY) 77	76
A 6.15 pm Autobiography (LHC) 115	46
A 6.15 pm Space: The Longest Goodbye (LHP) 87	60
A 6.15 pm Plan 75 (PEN) 112	34
A 6.15 pm Mutt (RXY) 87	48
A 6.15 pm The Survival of Kindness (EMB) 96	41
A 6.30 pm Only the River Flows (DEL) 101	32
A 7.45 pm De Humani Corporis Fabrica (RXY) 122	58
A 8.00 pm Hong Kong Mixtape (LHP) 87	62
A 8.15 pm Fantastic Machine (RXY) 88	59
A 8.30 pm Pray For Our Sinners (LHC) 82	57
A 8.30 pm The Grab (PEN) 104	65
A 9.00 pm Blue Jean (EMB) 97	27

Tuesday 8 August

B 10.45 am May December (EMB) 113	13
B 11.30 am Are You There God? It's Me... (PEN) 106	53
B 12.30 pm Nam June Paik... (LHC) 110	70
B 1.15 pm I Like Movies (EMB) 99	30
B 1.45 pm No Bears (PEN) 107	39
B 2.45 pm Hong Kong Mixtape (LHC) 87	62
B 3.30 pm How to Have Sex (EMB) 88	49
B 3.45 pm The Munkata Sisters (RXY) 114	16
B 4.00 pm Mutt (PEN) 87	48
B 4.30 pm Animation Now! #2 (LHC) 79	72
B 4.30 pm Fantastic Machine (RXY) 88	59
A 6.00 pm Billion Dollar Heist (RXY) 90	61
A 6.15 pm Seven Winters in Tehran (LHC) 97	62
A 6.15 pm Little Richard (LHP) 101	67
A 6.15 pm Red Mole: A Romance (PEN) 88	23
A 6.15 pm Lost Love (RXY) 92	30
A 6.15 pm Showing Up (EMB) 108	42
A 8.00 pm A Storm Foretold (RXY) 99	63
A 8.15 pm Kim's Video (LHC) 88	56
A 8.15 pm Brainwashed... (LHP) 107	58
A 8.15 pm Beyond Utopia (PEN) 119	65
A 8.15 pm The Settlers (RXY) 97	37
A 8.45 pm Last Summer (EMB) 104	41

Wednesday 9 August

B 11.00 am The Survival of Kindness (LHC) 96	41
B 11.00 am Past Lives (EMB) 106	8
B 11.15 am La Chimera (PEN) 130	39
B 1.15 pm Ennio (RXY) 156	67
B 1.30 pm Inside (EMB) 105	30
B 1.45 pm Charcoal (LHC) 109	26
B 1.45 pm On the Adamant (PEN) 109	40
B 3.45 pm Blue Jean (EMB) 97	27
B 4.00 pm Plan 75 (LHC) 112	34
B 4.00 pm The Grab (PEN) 104	65
B 4.15 pm #Manhole (DEL) 99	76
B 4.15 pm How to Blow Up a Pipeline (RXY) 103	51
A 6.15 pm War Pony (LHC) 115	50
A 6.15 pm Banel & Adama (LHP) 87	48
A 6.15 pm Last Summer (PEN) 104	41
A 6.15 pm Merkel (EMB) 99	63
A 6.15 pm Tiger Stripes (RXY) 95	51
A 6.30 pm Orlando, My Political Biography (RXY) 98	61
A 6.30 pm Even Hell Has Its Heroes (DEL) 110	66
A 8.00 pm Showing Up (LHP) 108	42
A 8.30 pm The Elephant 6 Recording Co. (LHC) 93	66
A 8.30 pm I Like Movies (PEN) 99	30
A 8.30 pm How to Have Sex (EMB) 88	49
A 8.30 pm Seven Winters in Tehran (RXY) 97	62

Thursday 10 August

B 11.00 am Last Summer (EMB) 104	41
B 11.30 am Smoke Sauna Sisterhood (PEN) 92	57
B 11.45 am Kidnapped (RXY) 125	11
B 1.00 pm When the Waves Are Gone (LHC) 187	42
B 1.15 pm The Innocents (EMB) 115	17
B 1.30 pm Midwives (PEN) 99	32
B 2.15 pm Subject (RXY) 92	57
B 3.15 pm Late Night with the Devil (DEL) 92	75
B 3.45 pm My Name Is Alfred Hitchcock (PEN) 120	68
⊕ 3.45 pm Anselm 3D (EMB) 93	69
B 4.15 pm The Elephant 6 Recording Co. (RXY) 93	66
B 4.30 pm Animation Now! #3 (LHC) 75	73
A 6.00 pm Is There Anybody Out There? (RXY) 91	59
A 6.15 pm Mami Wata (LHC) 107	48
A 6.15 pm Building Bridges (LHP) 83	22
A 6.15 pm Pray For Our Sinners (PEN) 82	57
A 6.15 pm Kim's Video (RXY) 88	56
A 6.15 pm Saint Omer (EMB) 123	36
A 8.00 pm Only the River Flows (LHP) 101	32
A 8.00 pm Radical (PEN) 127	35
A 8.00 pm Home Kills (RXY) 110	22
A 8.30 pm #Manhole (LHC) 99	76
A 9.00 pm Inside (EMB) 105	30

Friday 11 August

B 11.15 am Last Summer (PEN) 104	41
B 11.15 am Fallen Leaves (EMB) 81	9
B 11.30 am Total Trust (RXY) 97	64
B 11.45 am De Humani Corporis Fabrica (LHC) 122	58
B 1.15 pm Merkel (EMB) 99	63
B 1.30 pm War Pony (PEN) 115	50
B 1.30 pm Home Kills (RXY) 110	22
B 2.15 pm The Tuba Thieves (LHC) 91	50
B 3.15 pm Mars Express (DEL) 87	76
B 3.30 pm Monster (EMB) 127	15
B 4.00 pm If Only I Could Hibernate (PEN) 99	29
B 4.15 pm Ngā Whanaunga Māori... 2023 (LHC) 89	24
B 4.15 pm Sanctuary (RXY) 96	34
6.00 pm The Elephant 6 Recording Co. (RXY) 93	66
A 6.15 pm Sorcery (LHC) 101	37
A 6.15 pm How to Blow Up a Pipeline (LHP) 103	51
A 6.15 pm Mutt (PEN) 87	48
A 6.15 pm EO (EMB) 86	10
A 6.30 pm Earth Mama (RXY) 97	49
A 8.15 pm Of an Age (LHC) 100	32
A 8.15 pm Beyond Utopia (LHP) 119	65
A 8.30 pm Fremont (PEN) 91	28
A 8.30 pm Late Night with the Devil (RXY) 92	75
A 8.30 pm Loop Track (EMB) 94	21

Saturday 12 August

A 10.30 am Carmen (PEN) 116	27
A 10.30 am No Bears (EMB) 107	39
A 11.00 am Total Trust (LHC) 97	64
A 11.30 am Subject (RXY) 92	57
A 1.00 pm When the Waves Are Gone (LHC) 187	42
A 1.00 pm Merkel (PEN) 99	63
A 1.00 pm Squaring the Circle (EMB) 101	71
A 1.30 pm Loop Track (RXY) 94	21
A 1.45 pm Ama Gloria (LHP) 83	26
A 3.00 pm The Corridors of Power (RXY) 135	64
A 3.15 pm Saint Omer (PEN) 123	36
A 3.30 pm Ennio (LHP) 156	67
A 3.30 pm Kidnapped (EMB) 125	11
A 4.15 pm Suzhou River (RXY) 79	19
A 4.30 pm Pictures of Ghosts (LHC) 93	56
A 5.30 pm Even Hell Has Its Heroes (RXY) 110	66
A 6.00 pm Salvatore... (PEN) 109	69

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A 6.00 pm Ngā Whānaunga Māori... 2023 (RXY) 89	24
A 6.30 pm River (LHC) 86	74
A 6.30 pm Fallen Leaves (LHP) 81	9
A 6.30 pm May December (EMB) 113	13
A 8.15 pm The Grab (LHC) 104	65
A 8.15 pm Of an Age (LHP) 100	32
A 8.30 pm Reality (PEN) 85	35
A 8.30 pm Mars Express (RXY) 87	76
A 9.15 pm Phantom (EMB) 133	34

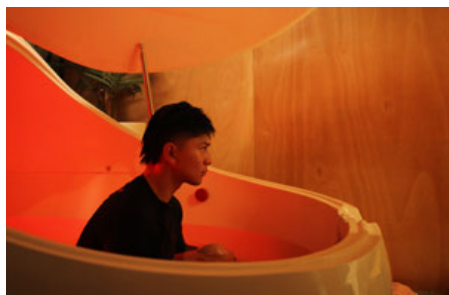
Sunday 13 August

	Page
A 10.00 am Animation for Kids 4+ (EMB) 62	55
A 10.30 am The Eternal Memory (PEN) 85	60
A 11.00 am Bobi Wine...(LHC) 114	65
A 11.45 am The Innocents (EMB) 115	17
A 12.15 pm Robot Dreams (RXY) 96	53
A 12.30 pm Are You There God? It's Me... (PEN) 106	53
A 1.15 pm Casa Susanna (LHC) 97	58
A 1.30 pm Dounia & The Princess... (LHP) 72	52
A 2.15 pm Shin Ultraman (RXY) 113	75
A 2.30 pm Perfect Days (EMB) 123	11
A 3.00 pm Radical (LHP) 127	35
A 3.00 pm Kidnapped (PEN) 125	11
A 3.15 pm Omen (LHC) 90	48

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A 3.15 pm My Name Is Alfred Hitchcock (RXY) 120	68
A 4.30 pm Tiki Taane in Session with CSO (RXY) 68	22
A 5.00 pm Detour (LHC) 69	16
A 5.30 pm The Giants (LHP) 117	61
A 5.30 pm Little Richard (RXY) 101	67
A 5.30 pm Theater Camp (EMB) 94	13
A 5.45 pm Midwives (PEN) 99	32
A 6.00 pm Sanctuary (RXY) 96	34
A 6.30 pm Hong Kong Mixtape (LHC) 87	62
A 7.45 pm Charcoal (LHP) 109	26
A 8.00 pm Blue Jean (PEN) 97	27
A 8.00 pm Fallen Leaves (EMB) 81	9
A 8.15 pm Late Night with the Devil (LHC) 92	75
A 8.15 pm Animation Now! #3 (RXY) 75	73

Shorts Before Features

Five short films by New Zealand filmmakers have been selected to screen as the perfect companions ahead of feature films. These gems have been matched with films that have thematic or tonal commonalities.



Cetology

Aotearoa NZ 2023

Director, Screenplay: Catherine Bisley **Producer:** Aaron Watson **Cast:** Ruby Pledge, Johanna Nyberg Rydström, Isha Bhatnagar-Stewart, Nisha Jolliffe, Madison Wade, Shervonne Grierson, Mojtaba Nazari
13 mins | Rating TBC

Scientists recently documented that pods of orca hunt blue whales. Cetology uses this hunt to explore contemporary human brutality at a corporate wellness retreat.

Screening with Disco Boy (p28)



Maunga Cassino

Aotearoa NZ 2022

Director: Paolo Rotondo | **Screenplay:** Rob Mokaraka, Paolo Rotondo | **Producers:** Andrew Marshall, Te Kohe Tuhaka, Luke Robinson **Cast:** Te Kohe Tuhaka, Paolo Rotondo
 B&W | Italian and te reo Māori with English subtitles
15 mins | Rating TBC

A Māori warrior, an Italian deserter and a scrawny rooster are trapped behind enemy lines. What could possibly go wrong?

Screening with Sweet As (p50)



That Workman's Arm

Aotearoa NZ 2022

Director, Screenplay: Simon London **Producers:** Simon London, Emma Mortimer | **Cast:** Matthew Sunderland, Donogh Rees, Erroll Shand
13 mins | Rating TBC

Struggling to hold his own life together, a standover man is sent to collect from a woman in debt. His usual tactics fail him as he is thrown off-balance by her threadbare but rich existence and the two discover a connection that lays the foundation for hope.

Screening with Sanctuary (p34)



Find Where I Belong

Aotearoa NZ 2023

Director, Screenplay: Kahu Kaiha | **Producer:** Carrisse Uta'i **Cast:** Kahu Kaiha, Steve Ciprian, Carrisse Uta'i, Jase Manumua
14 mins | Rating TBC

Life on the streets of New Zealand for two homeless men: John, the older man, who seems to like this life and be at home here; and Elvis, the Marquesan, dreams of returning to his island.

Screening with Tōtem (p50)



Sunshine City

USA/Aotearoa NZ 2023

Director, Screenplay: Arthur Elias Gay | **Producers:** Heather Francis, Celine Sutter | **Cast:** Amrita Newton, Garrett Silvey
16 mins | Rating TBC

Siblings Stellar (23) and Max (17) are living out of their car and trying to get back on their feet. However, when Max makes a foolish mistake and puts their livelihood on the line, Stellar finds herself questioning how much longer she can support him.

Screening with Mutt (p48)

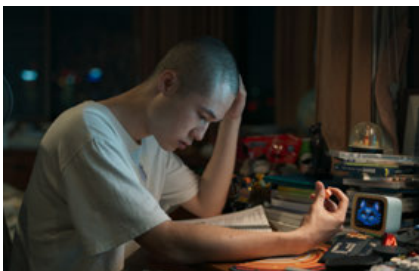
We line up the films that caught our attention for their energy and originality in terms of subject, technique and sensibility.

Not every film that feels like a harbinger of the future is the work of a young filmmaker, although an encouraging number in this collection are.

Fresh

Arnold Is a Model Student

Arnon pen nakrian tuayang



Director, Screenplay:
Sorayos Prapapan
Thailand 2022 | 84 mins
Producers: Donsaron Kovitvanitcha, Sorayos Prapapan
Cinematography: Teck Siang Lim
Editor: Carlo Francisco Manatad
Cast: Korndanai Marc Dautzenberg, Winyu Wongsurawat
Language: Thai with English subtitles
Festivals: Locarno, Busan, Singapore 2022; Rotterdam 2023

Teenage pressures to succeed are acutely made clear in Thai director Sorayos Prapapan's debut feature *Arnold Is a Model Student*. Arnold is a star pupil, who finds himself caught up in Thailand's "Bad Student" movement, in which students sought to push back at contemporary Thai teaching methods and the crushing barriers put in place.

Prapapan's black comedy highlights a schooling system that is captured by bribery and illusory success. Incessant standardised testing is used to open doors, but some students find themselves forced to consider "work arounds" through the form of cheating companies in order to get jobs or progress in their schooling. With its calm and detached pace, the film showcases the energy of its teenage protagonists, while also maintaining enough distance to highlight the corrupt and hypocritical schooling system.

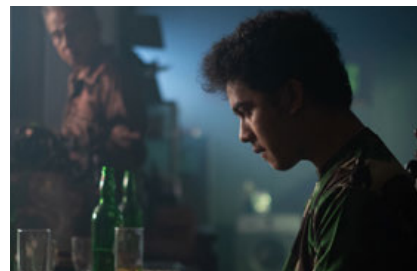
The film ultimately focuses on Arnold's choice, whether to continue in a system where he is already successful, or to join his peers in rebelling against the status quo. Arnold's dilemma becomes existential: what does it mean to succeed in an environment where no-one actually wins? — Brannavan Gnanalingam

Screenings

A RXY Sat 5 Aug, 1.15 pm
A LHC Sun 6 Aug, 12.30 pm
B LHC Mon 7 Aug, 12.30 pm

M *Offensive language*

Autobiography



Director, Screenplay:
Makbul Mubarak
Indonesia 2022 | 115 mins
Producer: Yulia Evina Bhara
Cast: Kevin Ardilova, Arswendy Bening Swara, Yusuf Mahardika
Language: Indonesian with English subtitles
Festivals: Venice, Toronto, Busan, London 2022
Awards: FIPRESCI Prize Horizons, Venice International Film Festival 2022

Housekeeping in an opulent compound on the outskirts of a small Indonesian town, young Rakib (Kib) is surprised by the sudden return of the absent landlord. Retired military general, Purnawinata (Purna), returns home to run as a mayoral candidate, with Kib assuming the role of trusted assistant. The pair begin to form a surrogate father-son bond, but is "the General" really the father figure Kib is hoping for?

Purna's veneer of beneficence quickly recedes when his reputation is threatened and Kib witnesses a disturbing side to his would-be benefactor. Those Purna names "friend" are reminded in no uncertain terms the cost of that friendship, and Kib realises that his privileged position is no different. Unquestioning obedience is expected, personal unease swept aside; Kib is left questioning the choices he is willing to live with.

Inventive cinematography underscores themes of pretence and complicity in this tense morality tale. Visual obfuscation, via shots composed through windows, fences, tree branches, or using mirrors or mirrored surfaces, enhance a sense of psychological disconnection. Writer-director Makbul Mubarak obliquely critiques the violent history of his homeland, and the abuses of power at its centre, seeing *Autobiography* earn a FIPRESCI prize at the 2022 Venice Film Festival. — Jacob Powell

Screenings

B LHC Mon 31 Jul, 4.00 pm
A RXY Wed 2 Aug, 8.15 pm
A LHC Mon 7 Aug, 6.15 pm

M *Violence & content that may disturb*

The Delinquents

Los delincuentes

In what might be cinema's most facile bank robbery of all time, disaffected Morán (Daniel Elías) casually saunters out of the Buenos Aires bank at which he works with enough money to retire twice-over stuffed into his grubby backpack. In a delightful subversion of genre, the caper is a dawdle and getting away with it was never part of the working-class masterplan for *The Delinquents'* endearingly mundane criminals.

Making off with 600,000 pesos completely unnoticed by either bank or cops, the newly minted thief recruits fellow workaday rube Román (Esteban Bigliardi) to help safeguard the ill-gotten gains after Morán turns himself in. He's done the maths and is happy to cash in three-and-a-half years in prison for freedom from white-collar drudgery upon release. That's provided Román can keep the cash stashed safely and not succumb to the pressure of his own guilt and an unyielding insurance investigator until his partner's done his time.

The caper rapidly begins to unwind when jailhouse life proves more dire—and expensive—than Morán had bargained for, while Román is tempted to heed the call of Argentina's rustic wilds and the beautiful bohemians who inhabit it. Work sucks, but it's entirely possible these two drab rascals self-destruct before happening upon a better alternative. Alternating adventurously



in tone, the bemusing two-part narrative is anchored by a fascinating cast with consummate comic poise.

At three-hours long, the film moves lightly through its playful parable, musing on the duality of labour and leisure with inscrutable humour and moments of unexpected joy. From the echoed confines of 80s-hued office and prison to the beautifully lensed Córdoba countryside, *The Delinquents* is a laconic ramble through a beautifully realised world under Moreno's assured direction. — Adrian Hatwell

“Wears its cleverness so lightly you barely realize how expertly Moreno is weaving together characters and themes.”

— Jay Weissberg, *The Film Verdict*

Director, Screenplay:
Rodrigo Moreno

Argentina/Luxembourg/
Chile/Brazil 2023 | 180 mins

Producer: Ezequiel Borovinsky

Cinematography: Alejo Maglio,
Inés Duacastella

Editors: Karen Akerman, Manuel Ferrari

Production Designers: Laura Caligiuri,
Gonzalo Delgado

Costume Designer: Flora Caligiuri

Cast: Daniel Elías, Esteban Bigliardi,
Margarita Molino, German De Silva,
Laura Paredes, Marina Chaud,
Cecilia Rainero, Javier Zoro Sutton,
Gabriela Saidon

Language: Spanish with English subtitles

Festivals: Cannes (Un Certain Regard),
Sydney 2023

Screenings

A LHC Sat 29 Jul, 7.00 pm
A RXY Sat 5 Aug, 3.00 pm

M *Nudity & sex scenes*

Palm Trees and Power Lines



Director: Jamie Dack

USA 2022 | 110 mins

Screenplay: Jamie Dack,
Audrey Findlay

Cast: Lily McInerney,
Gretchen Mol, Jonathan Tucker

Festivals: Sundance,
San Francisco, Melbourne,
London, Busan 2022

Awards: Directing Award
(US Dramatic), Sundance Film
Festival 2022

Set in a dreamy California summer, 17-year-old Lea fills her days sunbathing, hanging with friends, and wallowing in teen girl ennui. Living with her single mother—who is distracted by her own rotating roster of “friends”—Lea's late nights out lead to an encounter with the charming Tom, a man that will irrevocably change the course of her young life. Playing the kind and thoughtful “good guy”, Tom's subtle and persistent manipulation of Lea plays directly to her teenage naïveté, exploiting her loneliness and desire to be special.

Based on her 2018 short film of the same name, *Palm Trees and Power Lines* took home the U.S. Dramatic Competition Directing Award at Sundance last year. Dack's graceful handling of the subject matter ensures Lea serves as more than eye candy, framing the film's more harrowing scenes from an

uncomfortable distance to great effect. Audiences may well find themselves yelling to Lea through the screen, urging her to make a decision any sensible adult would. But this is where Dack's writing and directing shines; portraying the world through Lea's eyes, not those of the grown-ups in the room. — Kailey Carruthers

Screenings

A PEN Wed 2 Aug, 8.30 pm
B PEN Thu 3 Aug, 4.00 pm
A LHP Fri 4 Aug, 8.15 pm

TBC *NZ classification TBC*

Kokomo City



Director, Screenplay, Cinematography, Editor:
D. Smith

USA 2023 | 73 mins

Producers: D. Smith,
Harris Doran, Bill Butler

With: Daniella Carter,
Dominique Silver, Koko Da Doll

Festivals: Sundance, Berlin,
SXSW 2023

Awards: NEXT Innovator Award &
NEXT Audience Award, Sundance
Film Festival 2023

“*Kokomo City* takes up a seemingly simple mantle—to present the stories of four Black transgender sex workers in New York and Georgia. Shot in striking black and white, the boldness of the facts of these women's lives and the earthshaking frankness they share complicate this enterprise, colliding the every day with cutting social commentary and the excavation of long-dormant truths. Sharing reflections on knotty desire, far-reaching taboo, identification in labor, and gender's many meanings, these women offer an unapologetic and cutting analysis of Black culture and society at large from a vantage point that is vibrating with energy, sex, challenge, and hard-earned wisdom.” — Sundance Film Festival

This Sundance and Berlin audience award-winning film has been made tragic by the recent murder of star Koko Da Doll who was shot and killed in April 2023. In a statement to Variety, director D. Smith said: “I created

Kokomo City because I wanted to show the fun, humanised, natural side of black trans women. I wanted to create images that didn't show the trauma or the statistics of murder of transgender lives. I wanted to create something fresh and inspiring. I did that. We did that! But here we are again. It's extremely difficult to process Koko's passing, but as a team we are more encouraged now than ever to inspire the world with her story. To show how beautiful and full of life she was. She will inspire generations to come and will never be forgotten.”

Screenings

A LHC Sat 29 Jul, 3.15 pm
A RXY Fri 4 Aug, 6.30 pm

R16 *Sexual material, nudity, drug use & offensive language*

Banel & Adama

Banel et Adama



Director, Screenplay: Ramata-Toulaye Sy
Senegal/France/Mali 2023
87 mins
Producers: Eric Névé, Margaux Juvénal, Maud Leclair-Névé
Cinematography: Amine Berrada
Cast: Khady Mane, Mamadou Diallo, Binta Racine Sy
Language: Pulaar with English subtitles
Festivals: Cannes (In Competition) 2023

The only first-time director screening at this year's Cannes Competition, Ramata-Toulaye Sy reveals a powerful new voice in her dramatically arresting African fable about two star-crossed lovers.

"Banel dreams of living with Adama in a house in the dunes. These dune houses are submerged in sand and progress to dig them out is Banel's measure of how close they are to happiness. Yet, traditions in this small Islamic village threaten to stall their scheme. Adama is next in line to be village chief. When he refuses the role and does not turn up to prayers, his failure to do so, and by extension his romance with Banel, is held responsible when a drought persists, causing livestock and, eventually, people to die.

The greatest accomplishment here is there is no primacy between one version of events or another.

Banel isn't so much an unreliable narrator as she is the star of a fever dream where symbolism and reality meld. This being so—perhaps the villagers are right, perhaps her relationship with Adama did prevent the rains from falling, perhaps love is a selfish force that puts one at a remove from collective needs. Sy does not provide a definitive interpretation, conducting her images at a level of opaque remove, letting the dramatic emotions and weather conditions set a temperature of their own mysterious making."

— Sophie Monks Kaufman, *Indiewire*

Screenings

A LHC Mon 31 Jul, 6.15 pm
A PEN Tue 1 Aug, 6.15 pm
B PEN Thu 3 Aug, 2.00 pm
A LHP Wed 9 Aug, 6.15 pm

TBC NZ classification TBC

Omen

Augure



Director, Screenplay: Baloji
Belgium/Netherlands/DR Congo 2023 | 90 mins
Cast: Marc Zinga, Lucie Debay, Elaine Umhure
Languages: French, Swahili, Lingala and English with English subtitles
Festivals: Cannes (Un Certain Regard) 2023
Awards: Un Certain Regard New Voice Prize, Cannes Film Festival 2023

Within the first twenty minutes of Belgian rapper Baloji's energetic debut feature, protagonist Koffi is being berated and humiliated by his extended family, punishment for supposed spellcasting on his infant nephew, an unexpected nosebleed imparting signs of a devilish temperament... and you thought your family were tough to handle.

Koffi, an ostracised Congolese man returning to his homeland to seek his family's blessing before marrying his pregnant fiancé, is one of four characters throughout the film to be accused of witchcraft at one point or another, including his mother, Mujila, his sister, Tshala, and a young boy named Paco, the leader of a fierce group of fuchsia clad street wrestlers. In Swahili, "Baloji" means sorcerer, and the director pulls from personal experiences here to explore not only witchcraft, but the prejudices and

connotations that being associated with it entail.

At surface level, the eclectic palette of Joaquim Philippe's surreal cinematography and the simmering soundscape combine to create an eerie, trip of a film. But scratch beneath the phantasmagoria, and *Omen* is an engaging, enthralling examination of the struggle to break free from identities enforced and prejudices inflicted, no matter how fallacious they may be.

— Matt Bloomfield

Screenings

B LHC Fri 4 Aug, 4.15 pm
A RXY Sat 5 Aug, 6.30 pm
A LHC Sun 13 Aug, 3.15 pm

TBC NZ classification TBC

Mami Wata



Director, Screenplay: C.J. "Fiery" Obasi
Nigeria 2023 | 107 mins
Cast: Rita Edochie, Uzoamaka Aniunoh, Ily Juhen
Languages: Nigerian Pidgin, Fon and English, with English subtitles
Festivals: Sundance 2023
Awards: Special Jury Award: Cinematography (World Cinema Dramatic), Sundance Film Festival 2023

"Set in a small village called Iyi, *Mami Wata* tells the tale of three women whose lives have been shaped by their people's devotion to a powerful goddess of water, wealth, and health. Through her priestess Mama Efe (Rita Edochie), Mami Wata is said to dole out protection, advice, and good fortune to the faithful who are willing to honor the deity's traditions that have been passed down through their culture for generations.

Because Efe is Mami Wata's anointed priestess, she and her biological daughter Zinwe (Uzoamaka Aniunoh) as well as her adoptive daughter Prisca (Evelyn Ily Juhen) all enjoy a certain revered status among their peers. But when a young boy suddenly falls ill and dies from a viral infection that Efe can't save him from, long-held murmurs of doubt about Mama Efe's connection to Mami Wata begin to

turn into shouts, and many of Iyi's people start to question whether the goddess is even real.

When the women take in a mysterious man called Jasper (Emeka Amakeze), who washes up on Iyi's beaches one day, an infectious revolutionary spirit begins to take hold of the village and reveals just how tenuous the balance of power there truly is."

— Charles Pulliam-Moore, *The Verge*

Screenings

A RXY Mon 31 Jul, 8.15 pm
B LHC Tue 1 Aug, 12.00 pm
A LHC Thu 10 Aug, 6.15 pm

TBC NZ classification TBC

Mutt



Director, Screenplay: Vuk Lungulov-Klotz
USA 2023 | 87 mins
Editor: Adam Dicterow
Cast: Lío Mehiel, Cole Doman, Alejandro Goic
Language: English and Spanish, with English subtitles
Festivals: Berlin, Sundance, New Directors/New Films 2023
Preceded by short film: *Sunshine City*, 16 mins. See p45

"A compelling character-based drama that reveals the interior life of a young trans man over roughly 24 hours in New York City, *Mutt* follows Feña (Lío Mehiel) as he tries to navigate a series of events that would be stressful for anyone. Piling on setbacks that specifically challenge someone still working out how to reintroduce himself to old friends and family members, writer-director Vuk Lungulov-Klotz—who is also trans—makes audiences acutely conscious of Feña's emotional state at every turn. *Mutt* which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, sees the first-time director creatively using the medium to illustrate how small incidents can chip away at a trans person's self-confidence and the strength it takes to stay true to that identity." — Murtada Elfadl, *Variety*

"Vuk Lungulov-Klotz makes a solid debut with a personal story, shaping the standout moments with

an expressive attention to detail and a sensual edge. Executive produced by trailblazer of the genre Silas Howard, who along with Harry Dodge put the first trans-masculine character onscreen with their 2001 Sundance debut *By Hook or Crook*, *Mutt* signals an exciting evolution for contemporary trans cinema."

— Jude Dry, *Indiewire*

Screenings

A RXY Mon 7 Aug, 6.15 pm
B PEN Tue 8 Aug, 4.00 pm
A PEN Fri 11 Aug, 6.15 pm

M Drug use & offensive language

How to Have Sex

“The setting is the Greek town of Malia, where three teenage girls—Tara (Mia McKenna-Bruce), her sister Skye (Lara Peake) and their friend Em (Enva Lewis)—are taking their first unaccompanied holiday abroad while awaiting their exam results.

Em is a straight-A student, but Tara and Sky aren't, and they don't seem to care too much. The focus of the trip is to have sex, and Tara bears a particular burden, being the only virgin of the trio. At the hotel resort, Tara strikes up a friendship with their neighbor, the funny, flirtatious, self-deprecating northerner Badger (Shaun Thomas), but soon finds herself drawn to his best friend Paddy (Sam Bottomley), a much more sharp and cynical player...

Molly Manning Walker's film is precisely about the fact that Tara looks and believes herself to be, older than she is. Everyone here, in a world without any adjacent adults and in true teenage fashion, feels themselves to be older and wiser than they really are, and the drama comes entirely from the tensions that arise whenever reality becomes too real to ignore.

Thankfully, there is more than a suggestion of hope here, and the supporting cast make what for anyone over 30 would be the holiday from hell into something surprisingly relatable and really quite moving.”

— Damon Wise, *Deadline*



“*How to Have Sex* is equally likely to endure comparisons to Charlotte Wells' *Aftersun* (NZIFF 2022) last year's great British debut about regimented package-tour fun bringing out the latent melancholy of troubled holidaymakers.” — Guy Lodge, *Variety*

“With Walker's kinetic direction and appealing performances, particularly from lead Mia McKenna-Bruce... *How to Have Sex* is all too authentic and believable.”

— Alissa Wilkinson, *Vox*

Director, Screenplay:
Molly Manning Walker

UK 2023 | 88 mins

Producers: Ivana MacKinnon, Emily Leo, Konstantinos Kontovrakis

Cinematography: Nicolas Cannicconi

Editor: Fin Oates

Production Designer: Luke Moran-Morris

Costume Designer: George Buxton

Music: James Jacob

Cast: Mia McKenna-Bruce, Lara Peake, Samuel Bottomley, Shaun Thomas, Enva Lewis, Laura Ambler

Festivals: Cannes (Un Certain Regard) 2023

Awards: Un Certain Regard Prize, Cannes Film Festival 2023

Screenings

B EMB Tue 8 Aug, 3.30 pm
A EMB Wed 9 Aug, 8.30 pm

TBC NZ classification TBC

Earth Mama

“A devastating and evocative portrait of motherhood refracted through the prisms of race and class, Savannah Leaf's auspicious debut feature (expanding upon her documentary short, *The Heart Still Hums* [2020]) is a deeply affecting work of cinematic humanism. Set in the Bay Area, the film follows Gia (portrayed with immense complexity by Oakland rapper Tia Nomore) as she contends with pregnancy and poverty while longing for her children (who have been placed in foster care) and dodging Child Protective Services in the fear that they'll take her soon-to-be-born baby from her as well.

Facing an impossible situation, Gia warms to the idea of giving her baby up for adoption, and connects with a well-meaning, middle-class couple (Sharon Duncan-Brewster and Bokeem Woodbine), who could potentially give the child a better life. But a constellation of factors—especially Gia's own sense of guilt—lays bare the fact that, for Gia, there is simply no way to win. Lensed in richly textured 16mm by Jody Lee Lipès, *Earth Mama* is both a heartrending film about a young woman grappling with the most fundamental questions of motherhood amid utterly hostile socioeconomic conditions, and a formally sophisticated work that suggests and conjures rather than facily connecting the dots for us.”

— New Directors/New Films



“Any film tackling the petty and punishing bureaucracies of the foster care system risks wading into melodrama or cliché, but *Earth Mama* largely avoids those rookie traps, and with an unpredictable and fiercely focused actress at its roots.”

— Ryan Lattanzio, *Indiewire*

“*Earth Mama* is a quiet film, but it never once loosens its grip. Leaf's feature operates on an intimate register, a level that speaks to its characters instead of about them.”

— Lovia Gyarkye, *Hollywood Reporter*

Director, Screenplay:
Savanah Leaf

USA 2023 | 97 mins

Producers: Cody Ryder, Shirley O'Connor, Medb Riordan, Sam Bisbee, Savannah Leaf

Cinematography: Jody Lee Lipès

Editor: George Cragg

Production Designer:

Juliana Barreto Barreto

Costume Designer: Nastasha Hester

Music: Kelsey Lu

Cast: Tia Nomore, Erika Alexander, Doechii, Keta Price, Sharon Duncan Brewster, Dominic Fike, Bokeem Woodbine

Festivals: Sundance, New Directors/ New Films, San Francisco 2023

Awards: Best Narrative Feature Audience Award, San Francisco International Film Festival 2023

Screenings

A EMB Sat 29 Jul, 8.45 pm
A RXY Fri 11 Aug, 6.30 pm

M Offensive language, nudity, drug use & sexual references

War Pony



Directors: Gina Gammell, Riley Keough
 USA 2022 | 115 mins
Cinematography: David Gallego
Cast: Ashley Shelton, Robert Stover, LaDainian Crazy Thunder, Jojo Bapteste Whiting
Languages: English and Sioux with English subtitles
Festivals: Cannes 2022; SXSW 2023
Awards: Camera d'Or, Cannes Film Festival 2022

A swirling mélange of hardship and resourcefulness, disappointment and hope. *War Pony* mines the experiences of Lakota scriptwriters Franklin Sioux Bob and Bill Reddy into the proximal journeys of twentysomething hustler Bill and school-aged runabout Matho, who live within a dog's bark of each other on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, South Dakota.

Bill (Jojo Bapteste Whiting) can barely support himself, let alone his two young children and their respective mothers, but he is committed to improving his situation, possessed of an infectious, creative optimism, such as a hare-brained scheme to breed poodles for big money. Matho (LaDainian Crazy Thunder) spends his time larking with friends, wooing his crush, and attempting to impress his volatile father until circumstances conspire to rob the youngster of his childhood freedoms.

Despite their difficulties, Bill and Matho display a natural warmth, mirrored in the film's visual tone. First-time directors Riley Keough and Gina Gammell, alongside their writing partners, paint a rich portrait of community, exploring the challenges of navigating life with splintered identities in a society engineered to disempower and exploit indigenous bodies and indigenous labour.

— Jacob Powell

Screenings

A PEN Sun 6 Aug, 8.00 pm
 A LHC Wed 9 Aug, 6.15 pm
 B PEN Fri 11 Aug, 1.30 pm

R16 Violence, domestic violence, drug use & offensive language

The Tuba Thieves



Director: Alison O'Daniel
 USA 2023 | 91 mins
Producers: Rachel Nederveld, Alison O'Daniel, Su Kim, Maya E. Rudolph
Cast: Nyeisha Prince, Geovanny Marroquin, Russell Harvard, Warren Snipe, Sam Quinones
Languages: American Sign Language and English with English subtitles
Festivals: Sundance, CPH:DOX, San Francisco, Seattle 2023

Alison O'Daniel's superb, adventurous *The Tuba Thieves* provides a feast of visual and aural delights as it bounces around in time and space, gradually coalescing around a group of friends in the Los Angeles deaf community, in particular the relationship between drummer Nyke and peripatetic poet Nature Boy.

Our journey takes in the 1952 premiere of John Cage's epochal '4'33"', in a beautiful sequence that eloquently conveys the idea behind the piece; the brief flourishing of San Francisco's Deaf Club as a punk rock venue in 1979, where upcoming bands and their cohort would go wild while middle-aged ladies placidly played cards in their midst; and, yes, the mysterious theft of instruments from various local school marching bands.

Even once you've tuned in to the associative rhythm of this remarkable film, it continues to surprise and delight from scene to scene thanks to the

gorgeous cinemascope photography and inventive sound design. A choir of plants, sonic booms, ice hockey, narcocorridos, wildfires, mushroom sex—you can never predict which way the movie might turn as it builds into a whimsical and enlightening meditation on sound and silence, signal and noise. — Andrew Langridge

The Tuba Thieves will be screened with open captions. An audio-described screening will screen on **Tuesday 1 August**. See p79 for details about Accessibility Screenings.

Screenings

A LHC Sat 29 Jul, 1.15 pm
 A DEL Wed 2 Aug, 6.30 pm
 B LHC Fri 11 Aug, 2.15 pm

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

Tótem



Director, Screenplay: Lila Avilés
 Mexico 2023 | 95 mins
Cast: Naima Senties, Montserrat Maraño, Marisol Gasé, Saori Gurza, Mateo García Elizondo, Teresita Sánchez, Juan Francisco Maldonado, Iazua Larios, Alberto Amador
Language: Spanish with English subtitles
Festivals: Berlin, New Directors/ New Films 2023

Taking place over the course of a single day, *Tótem* is the story of a family navigating immense grief told from the perspective of seven-year-old Sol. While the matriarchs fret over preparations for that evening's party, Sol simply wants to see her father, Tona. Gently coaxed away by her family, she spends her time collecting snails, building pillow forts, and avoiding the growing tensions in the house. Almost in parallel, Tona is avoiding his family and the party being thrown in his honour.

Featuring sensitive, ardent performances by a cast of newcomers and mostly non-actors, lead Naima Senties delivers a heartbreaking performance of a young girl caught in-between. When Sol confides "sometimes I feel like my dad doesn't love me when he says he doesn't want to see me," to her father's nurse, it's as if she is noticed for the first time that day—a moment that will ring true

for anyone who has had to navigate loss in a familial setting. Packing an emotional punch with a searing finale, this semi-autobiographical sophomore feature from Lila Avilés is an intimate family portrait filled with hope. — Kailey Carruthers

Preceded by short film: *Find Where I Belong*, 14 mins. See p45

Screenings

A LHC Sun 30 Jul, 3.45 pm
 A PEN Thu 3 Aug, 6.15 pm
 B PEN Mon 7 Aug, 4.00 pm

M Offensive language

Sweet As



Director: Jub Clerc
 Australia 2022 | 89 mins
Cast: Shantae Barnes-Cowan, Mark Coles Smith, Ngaire Pigram, Carlos Sanson Jr, Pedrea Jackson
Festivals: Melbourne, Toronto 2022, Berlin, Māoriland 2023
Awards: Crystal Bear (Generation Kplus), Berlin International Film Festival 2023; People's Choice Award for Best Feature Drama, Māoriland Film Festival 2023

Visually spectacular and rooted in Indigenous Australian understanding of Country, *Sweet As* is authentic storytelling at its best and no wonder as Nyul Nyul, Yawaru filmmaker Jub Clerc based her multi award-winning debut feature on her own lived experience.

The film follows 16-year-old Murra who is one step away from entering the child protection system when she is sent on a photography safari into remote Western Australia. Through her camera, Murra begins a deep cultural healing. Her inner journey is finely performed by emerging star Shantae Barnes-Cowan alongside a tight and engaging cast whose nuanced expressions of youth are both familiar and timeless.

Funny and poignant, *Sweet As* is a new Australian classic, which has been picking up awards since its premiere at last year's Melbourne International. — Libby Hakaraia

Preceded by short film: *Maunga Cassino*, 15 mins. See p45

An open captions screening of *Sweet As* will screen on **Sunday 30 July**. A low-sensory screening of *Sweet As* will screen on **Sunday 13 August**. See p79 for details about Accessibility Screenings.

Screenings

A LHP Sun 30 Jul, 5.45 pm
 B PEN Tue 1 Aug, 1.45 pm
 A PEN Sat 5 Aug, 5.45 pm

M Offensive language & sexual references

How to Blow Up a Pipeline

Setting a match to feelings of environmental pessimism, *How to Blow Up a Pipeline* assembles a motley crew of would-be saboteurs ready to take direct action and make good on the film's explosive title. Fed up with the glacial pace of pacifist social justice, agitators from diverse backgrounds come together around the thesis of the 2021 nonfiction book from which the film takes its name, which argues for property damage as a valid and effective form of climate activism.

The target is an oil pipeline in Texas, the squad are a bunch of everyday people with no experience in industrial demolition, and the method is a patchwork of stolen chemicals and internet instructionals. Nerve-jangling adventures in amateur explosives and spycraft are cut with a series of flashbacks that make each player's motivations clear. The indigenous youth watching his land invaded and exploited, the dying young woman poisoned by chemical exposure, the farmer evicted from his family's land—we may not agree on tactics, but it would be heartless not to sympathise with the anger.

Championing what many would label an act of terrorism is an ambitious prospect, but the film is more than happy to get down in the mud and argue points of historical precedent, systemic collusion and the need to inspire hope. Taking the polemic at the heart of his source material, Goldhaber



applies the same clever suspense that successfully elevated his previous techno-thriller, *Cam* (2018).

Following the recipe of a punchy caper film with flavours lifted from *The Anarchist Cookbook*, *How to Blow Up a Pipeline* provides the audience with a team of relatable anti-heroes it can happily invest environmental frustrations in. If they don't blow themselves up first. — Adrian Hatwell

“A fiercely watchable thriller which had me biting my nails down to the wrists.”

— Peter Bradshaw, *The Guardian*

Director: Daniel Goldhaber
USA 2022 | 103 mins

Producers: Isa Mazzei, Daniel Goldhaber, Ariela Barer, Adam Wyatt Tate, David Grove Churchill Viste, Alex Black, Alex Hughes

Screenplay: Ariela Barer, Jordan Sjol, Daniel Goldhaber. Based on the book by Andreas Malm

Cinematography: Tehillah De Castro
Editor: Daniel Garber

Production Designer: Adiri Siriawatt

Costume Designer: Eunice Jera Lee
Cast: Ariela Barer, Kristine Froseth, Lukas Gage, Forrest Goodluck, Sasha Lane, Jayme Lawson, Marcus Scribner, Jake Weary, Irene Bedard

Festivals: Toronto 2022; Sydney 2023

Presented in association with



Screenings

B EMB Fri 28 Jul, 3.45 pm
A RXY Sun 30 Jul, 8.00 pm
A EMB Sat 5 Aug, 9.00 pm
B RXY Wed 9 Aug, 4.15 pm
A LHP Fri 11 Aug, 6.15 pm

(R16) Dangerous behaviour, drug use & offensive language

Tiger Stripes

An unapologetic debut from Malaysian director Amanda Nell Eu, this art-horror film set in the jungles of Malaysia captures the intensity and terror that puberty can be for a young girl through a tale of mystical transformation.

Zaffan (Zafreen Zairizal) is a carefree and rebellious twelve-year-old who does TikTok dances with her friends and faces stern rebukes for her behaviour from adults. When she becomes the first among her friends to get her period, things begin to change. One of her old friends Farah (Deena Ezral) begins to turn the other classmates against her, while she realises in horror that her body is transforming into something primal. As she tries to hide what she is becoming and the bullying becomes more vicious, Zaffan becomes increasingly isolated, but the transformation imbues her with a power to push back against those who torment her and want to keep her in check. Will she embrace the raw strength within her that others see as monstrous?

Winner of the Grand Prize of Critics' Week at this year's Cannes Film Festival and the first Southeast Asian film to win in its history, *Tiger Stripes* hails the arrival of a truly original voice. — Vicci Ho

“Interested arthouse crowds... will find much that is surprisingly universal and true in this well-observed, fiercely female-centred coming-



of-age drama... it truly growls in its depiction of the brutal nature of girl friendship and the shock of the menstrual metamorphosis. Whatever constraints Eu was working under here, and that includes the Pandemic alongside funding and numerous co-production elements, they seem unlikely to recur as she goes forward with a career which should be as striking as her debut.” — Fionnuala Halligan, *Screendaily*

“This latest addition to the monstrous feminine canon is a supple and engaging film that claws at your heart.”

— Catherine Bray, *Film of the Week*

Director, Screenplay:

Amanda Nell Eu
Malaysia/Taiwan/Singapore, France/Germany/Netherlands/Indonesia/Qatar 2023 | 95 mins

Producers: Foo Fei Ling, Patrick Mao Huang, Fran Borgia, Juliette Lepoutre, Pierre Menahem, Jonas Weydemann, Ellen Havenith, Yulia Evinna Bhara

Cinematography: Jimmy Gimferrer

Editor: Carlo Francisco Manatad

Costume Designer: Sharon Chin

Music: Gabber Modus Operandi

Cast: Zafreen Zairizal, Deena Ezral, Piqa, Shaheizy Sam, Jun Lojong, Khairunazwan Rodzy, Fatimah Abu Bakar

Language: Malay with English subtitles

Festivals: Cannes (Critics' Week) 2023

Awards: Critics' Week Grand Prize, Cannes Film Festival 2023

Screenings

B LHC Wed 2 Aug, 12.15 pm
A LHC Thu 3 Aug, 8.00 pm
A RXY Wed 9 Aug, 6.15 pm

(TBC) NZ classification TBC

Curated especially for the youngest cinephiles in the whānau, along with all young-at-heart audiences across the motu.

Our animation collections (one curated for ages 4+ and the other for 8+) offer a selective slate of short films for our littlest film fans.

We also bring you three full-length features—the much-anticipated film adaptation of Judy Blume’s ground-breaking novel *Are You There God? It’s Me Margaret*, Pablo Berge’s debut animated feature direct from Cannes, *Robot Dreams*, and the enchanting *Dounia & The Princess of Aleppo*.

Curated by **Nic Marshall** of Square Eyes Film Foundation, ardent promoters of international cinema for our youngest audiences and their movie-going companions.

Square Eyes



Dounia & The Princess of Aleppo

Dounia et la princesse d'Alep

“Bold of spirit and wild of hair, six-year-old Dounia lives joyfully with her family in Aleppo, where she spends her time traversing the bustling souks, or marketplaces, teeming with delicious ingredients just right for her grandmother’s amazing dishes. Life is filled with kind neighbours, shared stories, and music until a gradually intensifying conflict brings a growing troop of soldiers to town. When the family is forced to pack up and join the global ranks searching for a safer place to call home, Dounia’s grandmother stuffs rosewater sweets and other fresh-baked, homestyle delights into her bulging suitcase. But all Dounia takes with her is a handful of nigella seeds, known in Syrian lore to have magical properties. Her handful of hope just might bear rewards in the form of the legendary princess of Aleppo and her guidance as the group journeys across Syria, the dangerous sea, and the daunting borders of Europe.” — New York International Children’s Film Festival

At its heart, *Dounia* is a geopolitical story told through the eyes of a child, in which mythology and reality meet. It’s also a touching love letter to the grandparents who help raise us. It’s her grandmothers cooking, the cherished recipes that connect Dounia and her family so deeply to their heritage and beloved city; and her grandfather’s love of music,



which offers moments of celebratory lightness, even in the most challenging of times which add much enchantment to the story.

Seamlessly blending the magic of childhood with the difficult reality of life in a war-torn country, this endearing story poetically and delicately addresses exile, migration and the plight of refugees, offering a timely and pertinent all-ages entry point to discussion around the importance of respect and understanding for all global citizens. — NM

“Recounting the pain of exile with poetry and lyricism, *Dounia & The Princess of Aleppo* is a magnificent ode to both storytelling and art as an escape from the harshness of reality.”

— *Le Bleu du Miroir*

Directors: André Kadi, Marya Zarif
Canada/France 2022
72 mins

Producer: Judith Beauregard

Screenplay: Marya Zarif

Animation: Marie-Michelle Laflamme

Music: Pierre Yves Drapeau

Voices: Rachaf Ataya, Elsa Mardorissian, Manuel Tadros, Raia Haidar, Marya Zarif, Naim Jeanbart, Mustapha Aramis, Houssam Ataya, Irland Côté

Language: French with English subtitles

Festivals: Annecy 2022; New York International Children’s 2023

Square Eyes Age Recommendation 8+

Screenings

A PEN Sun 30 Jul, 11.00 am
A LHP Sun 13 Aug, 1.30 pm



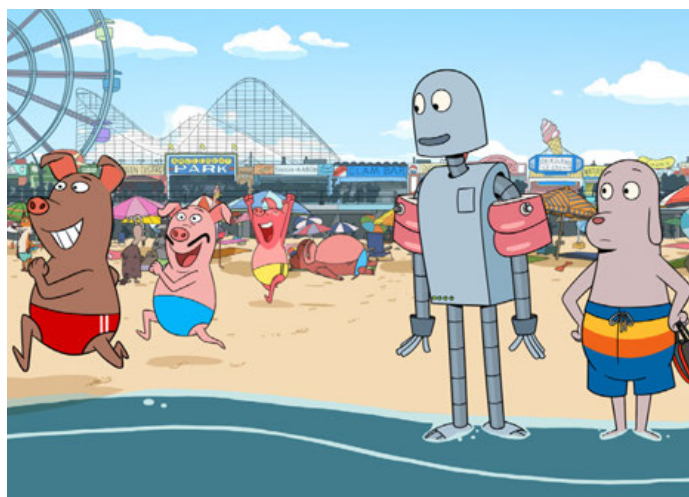
NZ classification TBC

Robot Dreams

Direct from this year's Cannes Film Festival, Spanish writer-director Pablo Berger (*Blancanieves*, NZIFF 2012) adapts Sara Varon's graphic novel, crafting a heartachingly brilliant dialogue-free animation that speaks to our universal need to find like-minded companions to share our days, as well as our ability to pick ourselves up, rebuild, and move on when life leaves us lonely.

Dog lives in a details-perfect illustrated version of early 80s New York City, the twin towers still framing the skyline—here is the home of anthropomorphised, bipedal animal residents of all kinds, going about their bustling Big Apple lives. Alone in his apartment, full of big-city meanderings and microwaved macaroni, Dog sees an ad for an android companion. After assembling him from a kit he receives in the mail, Dog is invigorated by the presence of his new pal Robot, who quickly fills his life with unbridled joy, unconditional friendship and adventurous antics. But, time passes, seasons change, and tragedy looms large.

Earth, Wind & Fire's dancefloor smash "September" gloriously underscores the film in various iterations, a sonic reminder of both closeness and abandonment. There's a steady undercurrent of melancholy as we follow Dog's attempts to make heart connections and the wistful dreams of Robot—there's also beauty,



hope and truth in these perfectly executed graphic frames. — NM

"Now the fierce battle for the title of the best animated film of the year has a new strong contender... With its soulful tin heart, *Robot Dreams* moves us to appreciate the fortune of having a precious pal. Whether for a season or a lifetime." — Carlos Aguilar, *Indiewire*

"Bolstered by the resilient spirit of New York City, this is one of the loveliest movies that you will see this year, animated or otherwise."

— Tomris Laffly, *The Wrap*

Director: Pablo Berger
Spain/France 2023 | 96 mins
Producers: Ibon Cormenzana, Ignasi Estapé, Sandra Tapia, Pablo Berger, Àngel Durández
Screenplay: Pablo Berger.
Based on the graphic novel by Sara Varon
Animation: Benoît Feroumont
Editor: Fernando Franco
Music: Alfonso De Vilallonga
Language: No Dialogue
Festivals: Cannes (Special Screenings) 2023
Square Eyes Age Recommendation 12+

A low-sensory screening of *Robot Dreams* will screen on **Saturday 5 August**. See p79 for details about Accessibility screenings.

Screenings

A EMB Sun 30 Jul, 3.00 pm
A PEN Sun 6 Aug, 2.30 pm
A RXY Sun 13 Aug, 12.15 pm

TBC NZ classification TBC

Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret

Judy Blume's beloved novel about an 11-year-old girl praying to hit puberty has proven a beacon of solace, transcending five decades and speaking to generations. Its enduring power lies in a hugely relatable protagonist, wavering on the cusp between childhood and adolescence—and an unflinching depiction of the trials of growing up.

When Margaret (Abby Ryder Fortson) reluctantly moves to her new home in New Jersey from New York with her parents Barbara (Rachel McAdams) and Herb (Benny Safdie), she leaves behind her beloved firecracker of a grandmother, Sylvia (Kathy Bates) and a much-loved life in the big city.

After being recruited into a friendship clique by her worldly cool-girl neighbour, Margaret must now worry about boys, bras and periods, while wrestling with her parents' different religious backgrounds and her own place in these worlds. Framed in a 70s Polaroid haze, raw and expressive Abby Ryder Fortson is knock-out as the iconic Margaret. As are her tween pals, their friend group chemistry authentic and sparky.

A touching and tender adaptation of a book which means so much to so many, *Are You There?* shows us generational relationships that balance humour and heart in a film that, like Margaret, curiously asks the big questions. — NM



"*Are You There God?* writer-director Kelly Fremont Craig's entry to the woefully underserved category of period dramas (make of that what you will), is destined to become a classic... an entertaining comedy that also happens to be a stunning evocation of the fear and yearning that come with standing on the precipice of adulthood." — Lauren Mechling, *The Guardian*

"By mining the timeless troubles of a girl wishing away her youth and yet unprepared for the perils of growing up, Fremont Craig delivers a film of disarming vulnerability and complexity."

— Beth Webb, *Empire*

Director: Kelly Fremont Craig
USA 2023 | 106 mins
Producers: Julie Ansel, Judy Blume, Amy Brooks, James L. Brooks, Kelly Fremont Craig, Aldric La'auli Porter, Richard Sakai
Screenplay: Kelly Fremont Craig.
Based on the book by Judy Blume
Photography: Tim Ives
Editors: Oona Flaherty, Nick Moore
Production Designer: Steve Saklad
Costume Designer: Ann Roth
Music: Hans Zimmer
Cast: Rachel McAdams, Abby Ryder Fortson, Elle Graham, Benny Safdie, Echo Kellum, Kathy Bates
Festivals: San Francisco 2023
Square Eyes Age Recommendation 10+

Screenings

A LHP Sat 29 Jul, 3.45 pm
B PEN Tue 8 Aug, 11.30 am
A PEN Sun 13 Aug, 12.30 pm

PG Sexual references

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Animation for Kids 4+

62 mins | Recommended for ages 4+

We've searched near and far, and high and low to collect this latest selection of short film delights, selected especially to charm and captivate our littlest film fans. — NM

Kiri And Lou: I'm a Rock

Harry Sinclair

Aotearoa NZ 2023 | English | 5 mins

Be the very first kiddos in the world to see the latest forest adventure of Kiri, a feisty little dinosaur, and Lou, her gentle and thoughtful best friend.

To Be Sisters

Anne-Sophie Gousset, Clément Céard

France 2022 | No Dialogue | 7 mins

Two sisters circle each other's orbits, laughing, shouting, playing and spinning each other in their own unique way.

What's in That Crate?

Bram Algoed, Pieter Gaudesaboos

Belgium 2023 | No Dialogue | 9 mins

Meet a pilot, a captain, a train driver, a van driver, a mailperson, a little girl... and one giant mysterious crate.

Spin & Ella

An Vrombaut

Belgium 2023 | No Dialogue | 7 mins

Ella the fairy and her eight-legged friend Spin weave the most whimsical webs, but only when they work together.

The Turnip

Piret Sigus, Silja Saarepuu

Estonia 2022 | No Dialogue | 7 mins

The age-old Slavic tale of The Enormous Turnip, this time told from the viewpoint of underground animals and insects.

Little Goat Man

Sheldon Lieberman

Australia 2021 | English | 2 mins

His mother was a mum and his father was a goat. Sing along now!

Pond

Lena von Döhren, Eva Rust

Switzerland 2023 | No Dialogue | 8 mins

When a little fish gets lost in a tidal pool, they must win over the various tricky sea creatures that dwell there.

Princess Aubergine

Dina Velikovskaya

Germany/Russia 2023 | No Dialogue | 8 mins

A king and queen have everything they could possibly want—love, castles, horses, gardens, pets... but something is missing.

T-Rex

Julia Ocker

Germany 2022 | No Dialogue | 4 mins

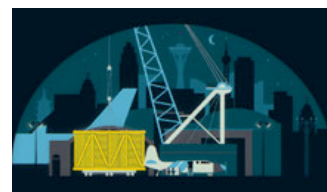
Unsurprisingly, the T-Rex is very bad at playing basketball.

Cat and Moth

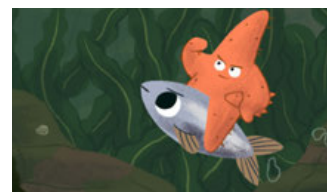
India Barnardo

UK/Canada 2021 | No Dialogue | 7 mins

A snoozy cat wants nothing more than to settle in the most comfortable spot in the room, but a sneaky little moth has their eye on it too. It's a cat chase moth world out there.



What's in That Crate?



Pond



Princess Aubergine

Screenings

A RXY Sun 6 Aug, 11.00 am
A EMB Sun 13 Aug, 10.00 am



NZ classification TBC

Animation for Kids 8+

65 mins | Recommended for ages 8+

Let your imagination be inspired by our latest eclectic collection of engaging animated short films. Curated for the curious, this is terrific viewing for inquisitive kids, budding animators, and indie-animation admiring adults alike. — NM

Sunflower

Natalia Chernysheva

France 2023 | No Dialogue | 4 mins

When a sunflower like no other decides to buck convention, they discover a whole new perspective.

Mall Stories: Atila the Grilla

Elizabeth Ito

USA 2022 | English | 7 mins

Any way you slice and dice this delightful anidoc, the girl-grill-boss and endearing staff of this food court eatery will win your hearts.

Paolo's Happiness

Thorsten Drössler, Manuel Schroeder

Czech Republic/Switzerland/Germany 2022
No Dialogue | 14 mins

Quiet Paolo loves to cry, but when his tears make him a local celebrity, life gets a little crowded.

Burry Man

Simon P Biggs

UK 2022 | English | 6 mins

Defying her father and his traditions, a teenage girl ventures out into the world in search of a mysterious figure who will bring spring to her family land.

You Sold My Rollerskates

Margaux Cazal, Jeanne Hammel, Louis Holmes, Sandy Lackhar, Agathe Leroux, Léa Rey-Mauzaize

France 2020 | French with English Subtitles
6 mins

Disaster! Lou's mum sold his beloved roller skates at the garage sale, leading to a series of strange and revealing encounters.

Shackle

Ainslie Henderson

UK 2023 | No Dialogue | 10 mins

Deep in the woods, in an alternative, time-lapsed world, Owl, Mammal and Reptile play out time-old archetypal human conflict.

Polar Bears Boredom

Yamamura Koji

Japan 2021 | Japanese and English | 7 mins

Even with an ocean of friends, a polar bear's got to bear some boredom sometimes.

The Queen of the Foxes

Marina Rosset

Switzerland 2022 | French with English subtitles | 9 mins

An ode to connection and the power of a great letter.

Sleepy

Rich Webber

UK 2022 | No Dialogue | 1 min

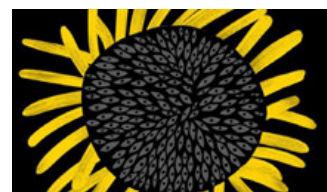
Hilarious things can happen when sleep catches up with you.

Somni

Sonja Rohleder

Germany 2023 | No Dialogue | 3 mins

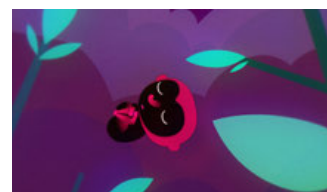
When it's time to drift off and we close our eyes, what do we see when we enter the realm of dreams?



Sunflower



Mall Stories: Atila the Grilla



Somni

Screenings

A RXY Sun 30 Jul, 11.15 am
A EMB Sun 6 Aug, 10.15 am



NZ classification TBC

The profusion of excellent documentaries available to us is staggering and we've found these gems tackling topics as varied as the history of film, travel to Mars, and a fascinating look inside the human body.

See also *Ms. Information* (p20), *Building Bridges: Bill Youren's Vision of Peace* (p22), *King Loser* (p23), *Grant Sheehan: Light, Ghosts & Dreams* (p23), *Red Mole: A Romance* (p23), *Kokomo City* (p47), *The Tuba Thieves* (p50) and the *Political States* (p62), *Music* (p66) and *Portrait of an Artist* (p68) collections.

Framing Reality

Kim's Video



Directors, Screenplay, Editors: David Redmon, Ashley Sabin
USA 2023 | 88 mins
Cinematography: David Redmon
With: Isabel Gillies, Robert Greene, Eric Hynes
Languages: English, Italian and Korean with English subtitles
Festivals: Sundance, Sydney, Tribeca 2023

Those expecting nostalgic reveries for the death-of-the-VHS-store will be satisfied and surprised by *Kim's Video*, a documentary about the fate of a legendary New York rental operation improbably transplanted to Sicily in 2008.

Beginning as a personal film essay in the style of Ross McElwee, co-director David Redmon integrates his own story of cinematic obsession into that of Yongman Kim, a South Korean immigrant, experimental filmmaker and innovative entrepreneur, with a scant regard for copyright laws, whose video rental empire came unstuck in the digital era.

For New Zealand cineastes worried about the fate of Aro Video's physical collection, the tale will be both cautionary and celebratory, incorporating corruption and possible Mafia intrigue, becoming a wider meditation on the relationship between culture, crime and politics.

Redmon's and Ashley Sabin's playful use of film clips to illustrate or ironically commentate on the narrative gives way to some faux movie making of their own, the dividing line between fact and fiction becoming deliberately blurred.

The enigmatic Kim, tall and charismatic but not always forthcoming, and the evasive Vittorio Sgarbi, an art historian-cum-politician with ties to Berlusconi and a shady entourage, make for colourful leading players. — Richard Swainson

Screenings

B RXY Wed 2 Aug, 2.15 pm
A LHC Tue 8 Aug, 8.15 pm
A RXY Thu 10 Aug, 6.15 pm

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

Pictures of Ghosts

Retratos Fantomas



Director, Screenplay: Kleber Mendonça Filho
Brazil 2023 | 93 mins
Producer: Emilie Lesclaux
Cinematography: Pedro Sotero
Editor: Matheus Farias
Additional Photography: Kleber Mendonça Filho, Maira Iabrudi, Marcelo Lordello
Language: Portuguese with English subtitles

Festivals: Cannes (Special Screenings) 2023

"As Baltimore is to John Waters, or Rome is to Federico Fellini, or Oregon is to Kelly Reichardt, that's what the sunny Brazilian city of Recife is to filmmaker Kleber Mendonça Filho, as proven in this completely charming cine-jaunt though the community's cinemas and the director's own family home...

The title alludes to a photograph that Mendonça Filho once took inside his living room which contained a blurred figure who most certainly wasn't standing in front of the camera when he clicked the shutter. Yet it also refers to the idea of ghostly structures, of places that once were teeming hubs of activity and excitement, and are now little more than over-sized tombstones littered on the landscape—a feast for the encroaching termite armies or, even worse, commercial developers." — David Jenkins, *Little White Lies*

"Shot over decades, the film cleverly intercuts archival and contemporary footage with scenes from *Neighbouring Sounds* and *Aquarius*. And then there's the ghost of course, and a curious cab driver with an unusual power. With a delightful, humorous narration by Mendonça Filho himself, *Pictures of Ghosts* is a glorious love letter to his historian mother Joselice, his neighbourhood and the films and cinemas that made him." — Sydney Film Festival

Screenings

A RXY Wed 2 Aug, 6.15 pm
B LHC Thu 3 Aug, 2.00 pm
A LHC Sat 12 Aug, 4.30 pm

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

Subject

What happens to the subjects of documentaries after the film crews go home and their stories are launched into the public eye? What if the film becomes a huge hit? What if it becomes a cultural phenomenon? Did the release you signed explain that your life might never be the same?

This entertaining and thought-provoking survey of documentary ethics explores the experiences of people caught in the maelstrom of exposure and scrutiny that a hit documentary can generate. Margaret Ratliff (*The Staircase* [2004]) is expected to revisit the trauma of her mother's death on demand; Ahmed Hassan had to relocate to a different country after appearing in the activist documentary *The Square* (2013). Arthur Agee, on the other hand, was able to translate the fame he attained in *Hoop Dreams* (1994) into new options after his basketball career failed to ignite. Even though *Capturing the Friedmans* (2003) ultimately led to Jesse Friedman's release from prison, he remains ambivalent about its fallout, and his mother Elaine still resents becoming collateral damage in its portrayal of family dysfunction.

The film also catches up with Mukunda Angulo, one of the brothers whose enforced isolation was exposed in *The Wolfpack* (2015), and whose subsequent process of socialisation was inextricable from that of publicising the film. Bing Liu



relates how he ended up as one of the subjects of his own film *Minding the Gap* (2018), and how exposing himself as a victim of abuse impacted on his relationship with his mother.

Camilla Hall and Jennifer Tiexiera pack a lot of thorny issues into a brisk hour and a half: How has streaming impacted on the non-fiction ecosystem? Should documentary subjects be paid? Should there be a budget line for therapy? *Subject* might just change how you look at non-fiction filmmaking. — Andrew Langridge

“It’s thought-provoking stuff, which also explores our own role, as audience members, in the voracious demand for other people’s stories.”

— Wendy Ide, *The Observer*

Directors: Jennifer Tiexiera, Camilla Hall

USA 2022 | 92 mins

Producers: Camilla Hall, Jennifer Tiexiera, Joe Caterini

Screenplay: Jennifer Tiexiera, Camilla Hall, Lauren Saffa

Cinematography: Zachary Shields

Music: Jonathan Kirkscey, Rafaël Leloup

Editor: Lauren Saffa

With: Arthur Agee, Ahmed Hassan, Michael Peterson, Mukunda Angulo, Jesse Friedman, Elaine Friedman, Susanne Reisenbichler

Festivals: Tribeca 2022; CPH:DOX 2023

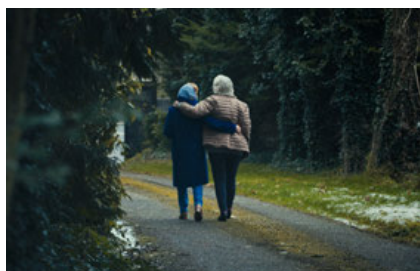
Join us for a panel discussion with New Zealand documentary filmmakers and documentary subjects reflecting on the themes of this film. Visit nziff.co.nz/discussions for details

Screenings

A LHC Fri 28 Jul, 6.15 pm
B RXY Thu 10 Aug, 2.15 pm
A RXY Sat 12 Aug, 11.30 am

M Violence, domestic violence themes & sexual abuse themes

Pray for Our Sinners



Director, Screenplay: Sinéad O'Shea

Ireland 2022 | 82 mins

Producers: Maya Derrington, Sinéad O'Shea

Cinematography:

Andrew Cummins, Brian Moore, Michael Lavelle, Enda O'Dowd

Editor: Enda O'Dowd

Music: George Brennan

Festivals: Toronto 2022; Sydney 2023

Irish filmmaker and journalist Sinéad O'Shea returns to her hometown of Navan in Co Meath to speak to those who stood up to the Catholic Church's maltreatment of women and children through the 60s and 70s. We meet women who fell pregnant and were forced through shame into brutal mother-and-baby houses and Magdalene Laundries as portrayed in films such as Stephen Frear's *Philomena* and Peter Mullan's *The Magdalene Sisters*; a doctor couple who established Ireland's first family planning clinic outside Dublin; a man who, as a child, was viciously beaten by his teacher for writing with his left hand, "the devil's hand"; and the town's complicated priest, a charismatic Kennedy type with a conservative streak. A revelatory look at the dignity of resistance and the impact individuals can have on an abusive system.

"Pulls no punches... A backward glance from a more enlightened, progressive time... powerfully documents what happened within living memory, the trauma still experienced by those who survived it and the inspiration from an often invisible resistance who helped to bring about change." — Allan Hunter, *ScreenDaily*

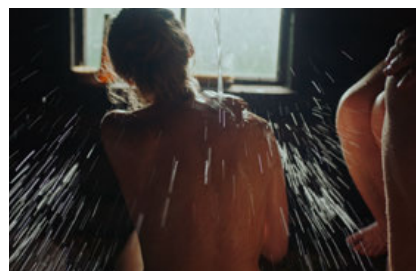
Screenings

B PEN Mon 31 Jul, 10.15 am
A LHC Mon 7 Aug, 8.30 pm
A PEN Thu 10 Aug, 6.15 pm

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

Smoke Sauna Sisterhood

Savvusanna sõsarad



Director, Screenplay: Anna Hints

Estonia/France/Iceland 2023 | 92 mins

Producer: Marianne Ostrat

Cinematography: Ants Tammik

Languages: Estonian, Seto and Võro with English subtitles

Festivals: Sundance, CPH:DOX, San Francisco, Hot Docs 2023

Awards: Directing Award (World Documentary), Sundance Film Festival 2023

Within the sheltering and intimate confines of a traditional smoke sauna (inscribed on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list) deep in an Estonian forest, women cleanse body and soul throughout the seasons. Beautifully shot, often in intense close-up, the camera is at one with bodies, flesh, water, steam. It doesn't coldly observe, instead inviting us on a lyrical, abstract appreciation of this communal space and to participate in the rituals associated with it. Here women are free to just be, baring all. They expose themselves, and there is no prurience in the way that director Anna Hints documents them.

The women's conversations—providing the soundtrack—range from the intensely personal to more banal social topics. They veer from the pungently funny (bad dick pics) to the profoundly moving and harrowing; this nurturing

environment encourages innermost secrets to be revealed. The setting may be rural Estonia, but the experiences evoked are universal to women the world over. This immersive film is also a celebration of natural beauty in a myriad of forms. — Sandra Reid

"The small, smoky, steamy miracle of this film is how it creates something so intangible, so lyrical, from the absolutely elemental: fire, wood, water and lots of naked female flesh." — Jessica Kiang, *Variety*

Screenings

A LHP Mon 31 Jul, 6.15 pm
B LHC Fri 4 Aug, 12.15 pm
A PEN Sun 6 Aug, 10.30 am
B PEN Thu 10 Aug, 11.30 am

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

Brainwashed: Sex-Camera-Power



Director, Screenplay:
Nina Menkes
USA 2022 | 107 mins
Producers: Nina Menkes,
Dehanza Rogers (Atlanta segment)
Cinematography: Shana Hagan
Editor: Cecily Rhett
Production Designer:
Mengqing Yuan
With: Rhiannon Aarons, Kathleen
Antonia, Rosanna Arquette
Festivals: Sundance, Berlin,
CPH:DOX, London 2022

A masterclass on unpacking the ubiquitous male gaze, *Brainwashed: Sex-Camera-Power* examines the language of cinema to reframe our own lens on visual power and pleasure. Based on director Nina Menkes' 2018 lecture *Sex and Power, the Visual Language of Oppression*, her documentary is more informative than an extended TED Talk. Featuring interviews with fellow directors, actors, and academics, and richly illustrated with clips from the history of the moving image, Menkes presents an accessible and engaging exploration of the insidious nature of cinematic tropes.

In her landmark 1975 essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, critic Laura Mulvey—who features in *Brainwashed*—proposed that sexual inequality is a controlling social force in the cinematic representations of women and men. In turn the male gaze, which

is only concerned with the aesthetic pleasures of the heterosexual male viewer, works as a tool of patriarchy. In this documentary, Menkes is asking us to consider how far we've come since then, and what work remains.

Brainwashed is by no means an attack on cinematic masters, it is a searing look at how cinema has trained us to look at bodies, and in turn decide their value. — Kailey Carruthers

Join us for a panel discussion with New Zealand filmmakers reflecting on the themes of this film.
Visit nziff.co.nz/discussions for details

Screenings

A LHC Sat 29 Jul, 11.00 am
B LHC Tue 1 Aug, 2.15 pm
A LHP Tue 8 Aug, 8.15 pm

M *Offensive language, sexual references & nudity*

Casa Susanna



Director: Sébastien Lifshitz
France/USA 2022
97 mins
Producer: Muriel Meynard
Cinematography: Paul
Guillaume
Editor: Tina Baz
With: Katherine Cummings,
Diana Merry-Shapiro, Betsy
Wollheim, Gregory Bagarozzy
Festivals: Venice, Toronto,
London, DOC NYC 2022;
CPH:DOX 2023

Casa Susanna was a bungalow camp in upstate New York that served as a safe space for cross-dressing men in the 1960s. In this documentary directed by Sébastien Lifshitz, two elderly women who visited Casa Susanna, Katherine Cummings and Diana Merry-Shapiro, return to the house and barn where the camp was based. They are joined by Gregory Bagarozzy, the grandson of Tito Valenti, who went by Susanna when dressed as a woman, and his wife Marie, who owned the camp.

Life at Casa Susanna was documented in a cache of Polaroid photographs discovered at a Manhattan flea market and published as a 2005 book. Casa Susanna was strictly for men and their wives. The film reveals that not everybody followed that path. The interviews and photographs are intercut with archival footage of queer and trans people from the period, most

famously Christine Jorgenson. *Casa Susanna* is a reminder of the courageous, everyday lives of trans people during a hostile time.

Lifshitz's gentle, understated approach, where the interviewer is never seen or heard, creates space for the characters to reminisce, culminating in a surprising, but beautiful denouement. — Paul Diamond

Screenings

A RXY Mon 31 Jul, 6.15 pm
A RXY Tue 1 Aug, 6.00 pm
A LHC Sun 13 Aug, 1.15 pm

E *Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements*

De Humani Corporis Fabrica



Directors, Screenplay, Cinematography, Editors:
Véréna Paravel, Lucien Castaing-Taylor
France 2022 | 122 mins
Producers: Pauline Gygax,
Max Karli, Valentina Novati
Languages: French with English subtitles
Festivals: Cannes (Directors' Fortnight), Toronto, New York 2022

To call *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*—named after 16th century anatomist Andreas Vesalius's ground-breaking text—a deep look into Parisian public hospitals is both strictly accurate and wildly misleading. At Cannes 2022, an unsuspecting audience intrigued by immersive, striking footage of subterranean parking lots and world-weary operating theatre conversations walked out in droves as the film turned to detailed intra-ocular surgery, an unflinching caesarean delivery, and a gruelling male urology procedure that leaves nothing to the imagination.

But while the latest film by *Leviathan* directors Véréna Paravel and Lucien Castaing-Taylor is decidedly not for the squeamish, their aim is not to induce queasiness. Fearlessly dogged anthropologists, the duo shot 350 hours of footage over five years in an exploration of not just the titular “fabric of the

human body” but also the labour of keeping said bodies alive and healthy. Members of Harvard's Sensory Ethnographic Lab (SEL), Paravel and Castaing-Taylor use their distinctive kinetic style to illuminate both our inner workings and unsettling realities: those who repair bodies brag, quarrel, and discuss property prices during your surgery, yet even the best struggle in a system with failings of its own. Like them, you may need a stiff drink afterwards. — Doug Dillaman

Screenings

A DEL Mon 31 Jul, 6.00 pm
A RXY Sun 6 Aug, 5.30 pm
A RXY Mon 7 Aug, 7.45 pm
B LHC Fri 11 Aug, 11.45 am

R16 *Graphic surgical scenes & nudity*

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Fantastic Machine

Trawling the infinite moving image repository that is YouTube, filmmakers Axel Danielson and Maximilien Van Aertryck have assembled a perfectly succinct yet startling history of photography—a found-footage essay that holds a mirror up to humanity from the moment the camera was invented.

Given the acceleration of technology and the intensity of our media consumption, no film on this subject can adequately encapsulate the evolution of image making over the past 200 years. But in taking us from the wonders of camera obscura to the horrors of a chimpanzee being trained to scroll through Instagram, *Fantastic Machine* smartly and ironically defines what is glorious, godawful, and terrifying about our ability to record and disseminate *everything*.

Citing powerful examples of the manipulation and commodification of imagery pre-digital era, the directors also tackle the age of the internet, content, monetisation and algorithms—no small feat, when literally billions of images are published and viewed daily. Matching Executive Producer Ruben Östlund’s pitch black sense of humour, there’s a gobsmacking absurdity to the reality—or sheer stupidity—of the situations compiled here that, depending on your view of the modern world, will either blow your mind or make you facepalm. — Tim Wong



“*Fantastic Machine* reflects on the manipulation of the truth in our present news landscape: Anyone with a mic, a camera, and a YouTube channel can call themselves a reporter. And anyone with a big enough mouth can shout ‘Fake News.’” — Robert Daniels, *Roger Ebert*

“By avoiding an approach that doesn’t speak to viewers pedantically or didactically, the filmmakers remind us of the camera’s greatest gift: the ability to balance our desire to be entertained, inspired, and intellectually intrigued.”

— Nason Gorber, *POV Magazine*

Directors, Producers, Cinematography:
Axel Danielson,
Maximilien Van Aertryck
Sweden 2023 | 88 mins

Editors: Mikel Cee Karlsson, Axel Danielson, Maximilien Van Aertryck
With: Maximilien Van Aertryck
Languages: English, Swedish, French, German and Arabic with English subtitles

Festivals: Sundance, Berlin, CPH:DOX 2023

Awards: Special Jury Award (World Documentary), Sundance Film Festival 2023

Screenings

A LHP	Sun 30 Jul, 8.00 pm
A LHC	Tue 1 Aug, 6.15 pm
A RXY	Mon 7 Aug, 8.15 pm
B RXY	Tue 8 Aug, 4.30 pm

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

Is There Anybody Out There?

A gentle, intimate addition to the growing lexicon of disabled cinema, director and subject Ella Glendining’s search for another person with her rare disability unfolds over four years, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the birth of her son.

Employing a patchwork blend of home videos, selfie-cam confessionals and traditional interviews, the premise of the documentary centres upon Glendining’s yearning for connection with other similarly-disabled people. This simple setup ultimately serves as a springboard into a far more visceral interrogation of the medical lens through which society still sees disabled people: as people to be “fixed”, or as Glendining puts it, “[seeing] disability as a fate worse than death”.

While clearly fighting the narrative demands of nondisabled producers (she emphatically denounces demands for a “nondisabled hero”) Glendining largely holds her own, treating disabled audiences to a particularly luxurious third act where the narrative pretence is cast aside, and the cast simply revels in collective disability joy.

Less raucous than *Crip Camp*, and more circumspect than *I Didn’t See You There*, this is nonetheless an intimate and moving discovery of the joys of disabled kinship. A must-see for disabled and disability-adjacent audiences, and anyone who has ever wondered what ableism really looks like. — Red Nicholson



“[The film explores] the complicated question of socialized ableism and consent—where parents are asked whether they’ll subject their toddlers to procedures with substantial risks and long recoveries. Will these kids have happier lives post-procedure? More “normal” ones? Is it a question that comes down to the individual, or is there an element of community and culture that should be considered?”

— Jacob Oller, *Paste Magazine*

“Glendining isn’t scared to ask questions in her film, not just of those around her but also of herself.”

— Amber Wilkinson, *Screendaily*

Director: Ella Glendining
UK 2023 | 91 mins

Producer: Janine Marmot
Cinematography: Annemarie Lean-Vercoe
Editor: Rachel Roberts

Festivals: Sundance, SXSW, CPH:DOX, 2022, Sydney 2023

Is There Anybody Out There? will be screened with open captions.

An audio-described screening will screen on **Saturday 29 July**. See p79 for details about Accessibility Screenings

Screenings

B RXY	Mon 31 Jul, 4.00 pm
A LHP	Sat 5 Aug, 1.45 pm
A RXY	Thu 10 Aug, 6.00 pm

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

Space: The Longest Goodbye



Director: Ido Mizrahy
 Israel/Canada 2023 | 87 mins
Producers: Ido Mizrahy, Nir Sa'ar, Paul Cadieux
Screenplay: Ido Mizrahy, Nir Sa'ar
Cinematography: Boaz Freund
Editor: Anouk Deschênes
Music: Ramachandra Borcar
Festivals: Sundance, Hot Docs 2023

Ido Mizrahy's engrossing documentary follows the work of Dr. Al Holland, a NASA psychologist charged with studying the loneliness of the long-distance astronaut. Using data gathered from astronauts doing months-long stints on the International Space Station in Earth's orbit, the scientist highlights the profound toll isolation is likely to take on a proposed three-year round trip to Mars.

Footage recorded on-mission and retrospective interviews provide a look at the daily lives of astronauts the public rarely sees: confined to an environment of microgravity and artificial light, constantly surveilled and scrutinised by mission control, stuck in close quarters with a small crew of relative strangers.

If life on the Space Station is hard, any theoretical mission to Mars will be much more challenging, as real time communication with Earth won't be possible. After a landbound experiment simulating these conditions ends in

abrupt failure, solutions straight out of sci-fi are explored, including VR home visits, hibernation chambers, and AI companions.

Forgoing hard science to focus on the soft, squishy human at the heart of mankind's grand galactic voyages, the documentary presents a poignant, caring, and complex look at the sacrifices that come with service in space. — Adrian Hatwell

Screenings

A RXY	Sat 29 Jul, 11.45 am
B PEN	Mon 31 Jul, 12.00 pm
A PEN	Sat 5 Aug, 11.30 am
A LHP	Mon 7 Aug, 6.15 pm

E Documentary Film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

The Eternal Memory

La memoria infinita



Director, Screenplay: Maite Alberdi
 Chile 2023 | 85 mins
Cast: Augusto Góngora, Paulina Urrutia
Languages: Spanish with English subtitles
Festivals: Sundance, Berlin, CPH:DOX 2023
Awards: World Cinema Grand Jury Prize, Sundance Film Festival 2023

A deeply moving portrait of enduring love, *The Eternal Memory* invites us into the lives of the celebrated Chilean journalist and author Augusto Góngora and his wife, actor and Chilean Minister of Culture, Paulina Urrutia. As one of Chile's greatest cultural commentators and archivists, Góngora dedicated his career to ensuring the reality of the Pinochet dictatorship was not erased from collective consciousness (keen-eyed viewers will spot the iconic *No* poster on the walls of their home). Following his Alzheimer's diagnosis in 2014, Urrutia took on the role of preservationist and began documenting their days together, capturing the joy and anguish of living with a neurodegenerative disease.

The well-deserved winner of this year's Sundance Festival, *The Eternal Memory* is far from the overwrought portrayals of scripted Alzheimer dramas. Seamlessly weaving archival footage of Góngora reporting on

the front lines of Pinochet's violent regime with home video and director Maite Alberdi's gentle and deft documentation of the couple's daily life, *The Eternal Memory* presents a rich tapestry of a life well worth remembering. — Kailey Carruthers

Screenings

B RXY	Fri 28 Jul, 12.45 pm
B PEN	Wed 2 Aug, 1.45 pm
A RXY	Sat 5 Aug, 4.15 pm
A PEN	Sun 13 Aug, 10.30 am

E Documentary Film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements



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Orlando, My Political Biography

Orlando, ma biographie politique

In Virginia Woolf's novel *Orlando*, the titular protagonist changes gender midway through the story of their life, waking up in a woman's body. In his new documentary-film-essay response, Paul B. Preciado (*Testo Junkie*) expands this trans allegory, from Orlando's singular gender journey to a collective constellation of modern trans experiences.

It is from this point that the film takes its thesis: what if Woolf's *Orlando* can be re-imagined as a modern-day biography of collective trans lives? *Orlando, My Political Biography* features a cast of twenty-six contemporary trans and non-binary people, aged 8 to 70, who all play Orlando. Supporting characters include players missing from the reality of the politicised trans experience—from psychiatrists and their receptionists, to doctors and judges.

Spoken lines from the novel meld with personal stories of trans actors in a surprisingly seamless manner, Orlando's white ruff serving as an accompaniment to modern queer fashion. Sets are reconstructed while interviews take place, a bizarre disco-dance scene rallies as a call-to-arms, and the documentary is as much a film about the making of art as it is a compelling re-imagining of history. Superbly experimental and deconstructionist, Preciado reclaims non-binary gender identities within the



trans spectrum, and explores what happens when people don't fit within society's strict confines.

Coming at a time that is crucial for global trans rights, the film feels deeply and joyously made by trans people, for trans people: "Look, Virginia, what we have become. Do you want to come with us?", although wider audiences will be rewarded with numerous treasures nestled within this intelligent work of art. — Emlou Lattimore

"Preciado has crafted a beguiling, dazzling gem of a film that manages to live proudly and beautifully in the fuzziness of gender, sexuality, humanity, and art."

— Ezra Winton, *POV Magazine*

Director, Screenplay:
Paul B. Preciado

France 2023 | 98 mins

Producers: Yaël Fogiel, Laetitia Gonzalez

Cinematography: Victor Zebo

Editor: Yotam Ben David

Music: Clara Deshayes

Production Designer: Anna Le Mouël

Costume Designers: Thomas Goudou, Caroline Spieth

Music: Clara Deshayes

Cast: Paul B. Preciado, Oscar S Miller, Janis Sahraoui, Liz Christin, Elios Levy, Victor Marzouk, Kori Ceballos, Vanasay Khampommala, Ruben Rizza, Julia Jimmy Postollec, Amir Baylly, Naelle Dariya, Jenny Bel'Air, Emma Avena, Lillie Vincent, Artur Verri, Eléonore Laurent, La Bourette, Noam Iroual, Iris Crosnier, Clara Deshayes

Festivals: Berlin, Sydney 2023

Awards: Special Jury Prize Encounters & Teddy Award for Best Documentary, Berlin International Film Festival 2023

Screenings

B LHC Fri 28 Jul, 2.00 pm
A LHC Wed 2 Aug, 8.15 pm
A RXY Wed 9 Aug, 6.30 pm

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

Billion Dollar Heist



Director: Daniel Gordon

Aotearoa NZ 2023 | 90 mins

Producer: Norman Merry, Matthew Metcalfe

Screenplay: Whetham Allpress, Tom Blackwell, Brendan Donovan, Bryn Evans, Matthew Metcalfe

Cinematography: Michael Timney

With: Eric Chien, Misha Glenny, Rafal Rohozinski

Debates, elections, wars; they are won now as much in cyberspace as they are in the real world. *Billion Dollar Heist* looks at a particular instance of cyber activity in which a group of hackers known only as "The Lazarus Group" plotted to steal just shy of a billion dollars from the Bangladesh Central Bank, capitalising on the bank's relatively lax security. The film sets out to retell the happenings of that fateful weekend, whilst offering an extensive history of cybercrime and the chaos that it can, and potentially will, inflict.

The thieves waited for almost a year after gaining initial access to the bank's servers before enacting their plan over Chinese New Year and a US Federal holiday, an impeccably timed criminal masterstroke that essentially doubled their window of opportunity. Had they been able to hold their nerve a little longer, and not been scuppered by something

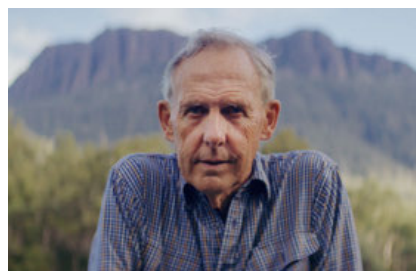
as trivial as a spelling mistake, they would have gotten away with a lot more than the reported \$81 million that was funnelled through the Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation in Manila. That the theft took place across multiple banks in several different countries goes to prove the vulnerability of even the biggest of fish in the increasingly murky pond of cyberspace. — Matt Bloomfield

Screenings

A RXY Sat 5 Aug, 6.00 pm
B LHC Mon 7 Aug, 2.15 pm
A RXY Tue 8 Aug, 6.00 pm

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

The Giants



Directors, Producers,

Screenplay: Laurence Billiet, Rachael Antony

Australia 2022 | 117 mins

Cinematography: Sherwin Akbarzadeh

Editor: Daniel Wieckmann

Animator: Alex Le Guillou

Music: James Henry

With: Bob Brown

Laurence Billiet and Rachael Antony's richly cinematic portrait of Bob Brown, the co-founder of the Australian Greens and the first openly gay Australian MP, draws on 50 years of inspiring activism. From the 1970s campaign to save the Franklin, Tasmania's last wild river, which catapulted Brown into national politics to the current fight to save the Tarkine rainforest from logging, the film tells Brown's story in his own words. Interwoven throughout the film are also the stories of the ancient trees wants to preserve, brought to life by cameras rigged high in the tree canopy, immersive animation and insight from environmentalist David Suzuki and biologist Merlin Sheldrake.

"We all know that old idiom 'can't see the forest for the trees'. Few people would accuse Brown of that; he always had his eyes on a larger prize. Similarly, the film-makers never lose sight of

the most important things, using the natural world to wrap an ancient context around contemporary politics and individual narratives. Their meditative tone could have felt starry-eyed or heavy-handed but instead *The Giants* is beautifully balanced, ruminative and rousing." — Luke Buckmaster, *The Guardian*

An open captions screening will screen on **Sunday 6 August**. See p79 for details about Accessibility Screenings.

Screenings

A PEN Sun 30 Jul, 12.45 pm
A RXY Sat 5 Aug, 11.00 am
B PEN Mon 7 Aug, 1.30 pm
A LHP Sun 13 Aug, 5.30 pm

M Offensive language

Films in this collection highlight the story of a woman who became one of the most powerful leaders in modern politics, delve into the alarming world of Trump's notorious (and now disgraced) "fixer", and explore stories of political power, documenting history and exposing the roots of our current geopolitical climate.

See also *Reality* (p35) and *Hello Dankness* (p77)

Political States

Seven Winters in Tehran

Sieben Winter in Teheran



Director, Screenplay: Steffi Niederzoll
Germany/France 2023
97 mins
Cinematography: Julia Daschner
With: Reyhaneh Jabbari, Shole Pakravan, Fereydoon Jabbari, Sharare Jabbari, Shahrzad Jabbari
Language: Farsi with English subtitles
Festivals: Berlin, CPH:DOX, Hot Docs 2023

In 2007, nineteen-year-old Reyhaneh Jabbari is attacked by a man trying to sexually assault her. She defends herself by stabbing him, and escapes. He dies, and she is arrested. It is revealed that he was a former intelligence agent. Reyhaneh Jabbari is convicted of his murder and sentenced to death.

During her seven years in prison, Jabbari is tortured and forced to confess to having premeditated the murder. Her family visits her often, secretly videoing their meetings. *Seven Winters in Tehran* is the result of that footage, smuggled illegally out of Iran and narrated with the letters Reyhaneh wrote from prison, intercut with candid interviews with Reyhaneh's parents and sisters. For seven years the Jabbari family fight for Reyhaneh's release, until they are told Reyhaneh could be pardoned on one condition—that she recants the sexual assault allegation.

This harrowing study of injustice is at once a brutal condemnation of Iran's corrupt, patriarchal legal system and a striking portrait of Reyhaneh Jabbari's enduring dignity. — Amanda Jane Robinson

Screenings

B LHC Fri 28 Jul, 12.00 pm
A LHP Mon 31 Jul, 8.15 pm
A LHC Tue 8 Aug, 6.15 pm
A RXY Wed 9 Aug, 8.30 pm

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

Hong Kong Mixtape



Director: San San F. Young
UK 2023 | 87 mins
Producers: Nikki Parrott, San San F. Young
Screenplay: Adam Thomas, San San F. Young
Cinematography: San San F. Young, Ed Lee
Editor: Adam Thomas
Music: Arran Price
Languages: Cantonese and English with English subtitles
Festivals: Hot Docs 2023

Defeated or defiant? San San F. Young's bittersweet documentary asks what remains of the 2019 Hong Kong protest movement, and what can still be done after the implementation of the 2020 national security law. The film follows a number of artists in the city in the wake of the highly controversial law, which essentially criminalises any and all opposition to Beijing, anything deemed offensive enough "to endanger national security". If the crime seems vague, it's because it is. The penalty? Up to life imprisonment.

Interspersed with footage of the brutal crackdown in 2019, where protesters were beaten in the streets and dragged away by police, we're offered a window into the lives of the artists who still remain; perhaps the most-striking, the sculptors behind the HK Lady Liberty statuettes, who erect their creation in clandestine operations across the city.

Most of the subjects of *Hong Kong Mixtape* are barely out of high-school, with the exception of outspoken performance artist, Kacey Wong. Like the eccentric Uncle Ben of the protest movement, Wong muses, "with great limitations... so comes great creativity". Their art blossomed throughout times of turmoil, and even as some are forced into exile, they will not go quietly. — Matt Bloomfield

Screenings

A LHP Mon 7 Aug, 8.00 pm
B LHC Tue 8 Aug, 2.45 pm
A LHC Sun 13 Aug, 6.30 pm

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

Merkel

Utilising a treasure trove of archival material, Eva Weber's documentary delivers an intimate portrait of the long-serving German chancellor who became the most powerful woman in the world.

"Eva Weber's engrossing documentary *Merkel* is the astonishing story of how a triple political outsider—a woman, a scientist, and an East German—became one of the most powerful politicians in the world.

For years Angela Merkel, the first female Chancellor of Germany, was Western Europe's most influential leader. Yet despite her historic 16-year Chancellorship of Germany, she remains something of an enigma. Clear-eyed, cool-headed, diligent, and methodical, she put her policies first, keeping her personal life private.

From Merkel's upbringing in East Germany, and studies in quantum chemistry, to her surprising start in politics and fast ascent, this fascinating documentary creates a rich portrait using a vast array of archival material and revealing interviews from friends and colleagues, including journalists, political allies, and critics.

A thoughtful examination of Merkel's life and career, from the Academy Award-winning producers of *Searching for Sugar Man*, her story is told with humour, subtlety, and poignancy." — German Film Festival Australia



"Through interviews with journalists and former world leaders like Tony Blair and Hillary Clinton, coupled with clips from Merkel's favorite childhood music and films, filmmaker Eva Weber paints a more human portrait of the woman who would grow up to save democracy." — Jude Dry, *Indiewire*

"Filmmaker Eva Weber has seized the challenge and created a thoughtful portrait of Merkel."

— Stephen Farber, *The Hollywood Reporter*

Director: Eva Weber

UK 2022 | 99 mins

Producers: Lizzie Gillett, Eva Weber, Sonja Henrici, Sigrid Dyekjaer

Cinematography: Reinhold Vorschneider, Konrad Waldmann

Editor: Daniel Greenway

Music: Jon Opstad

Cast: Angela Merkel, Tony Blair, Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton

Languages: German with English subtitles

Festivals: Telluride, IDFA 2022; CPH:DOX 2023

Presented in association with



Screenings

B	PEN	Fri 28 Jul, 4.00 pm
A	LHP	Fri 4 Aug, 6.15 pm
A	EMB	Wed 9 Aug, 6.15 pm
B	EMB	Fri 11 Aug, 1.15 pm
A	PEN	Sat 12 Aug, 1.00 pm

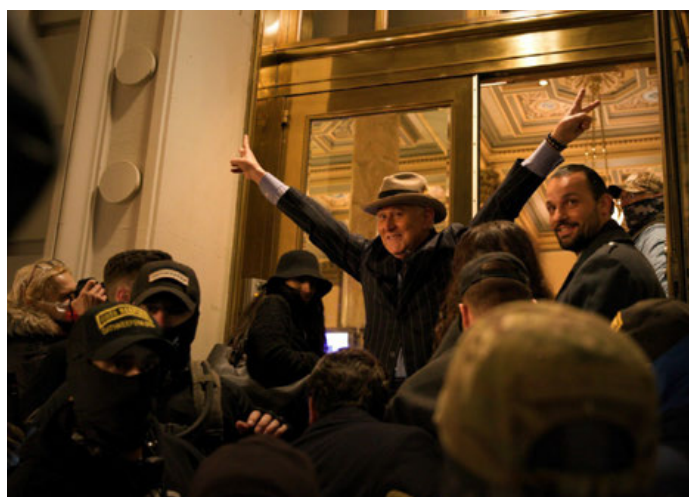
E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

A Storm Foretold

Using Donald Trump's notorious political fixer Roger Stone as his focal character, Danish documentarist Christoffer Guldbrandsen unpicks the prehistory of the January 2021 insurrection in Washington D.C.

This is a classic case of right-time, right-place filmmaking, as Guldbrandsen began his project in 2018, before Stone was arrested and convicted for witness tampering and lying to congress, pardoned by the president, and quietly reinstated in time to orchestrate his "Stop the Steal" masterplan that led to the attempted coup. The film crew are there for the entire rollercoaster ride, up until the immediate, acrimonious, aftermath of January 6, and capture major players being astoundingly candid—or astoundingly reckless—on camera. As the title implies, it's all laid out in plain sight for months and years before the "unthinkable" happened, and the film also marshals copious broadcast footage of Stone and his presidential and Proud Boys cronies clearly or codedly announcing how far they are prepared to go to hold on to power. As far as Stone is concerned, the biggest surprise on the day is a last-minute snub that sends him into a paranoid panic, seasoned with bursts of seething, impotent rage.

Guldbrandsen's own journey is possibly even more eventful. He is frank about the mutual exploitation that underpins his relationship with



Stone and at one point is "fired" when his subject thinks he's got a better offer. Then, in the middle of the project, something happens that you've probably never seen in any other film (no spoilers here!). Despite constant ribbing from Stone as a "Commie", Guldbrandsen quietly holds his ground and accumulates his evidence. After a particularly unhinged and unprecedented telephone rant, Stone's last words to the camera are: "Obviously, if you use any of that I'll murder you." — Andrew Langridge

"[This doco] captures the combination of toxicity and raffish charm, duplicity and candour that makes Stone such an influential (and to liberal minds at least) dangerous figure on the US political landscape."

— Wendy Ide, *Screendaily*

Director, Screenplay: Christoffer Guldbrandsen

Denmark 2023 | 99 mins

Producers: Peter Engel, Christoffer Guldbrandsen, Henrik Veileborg

Cinematography: Frederik Marbell

Editors: Malene Lykke Dreyer, Andreas Jonsson Hay

Music: Kristian Eidnes

With: Roger Stone

Festivals: CPH:DOX, Sydney 2023

Q&A: Christoffer Guldbrandsen*

Presented with the generous support of Gold Star patrons John and Jo Gow

Screenings

A	EMB	Wed 2 Aug, 8.45 pm*
B	RXY	Thu 3 Aug, 1.30 pm*
A	RXY	Tue 8 Aug, 8.00 pm

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

Total Trust



Director, Screenplay: Jialing Zhang
 Germany/Netherlands 2023
 97 mins
Producers: Knut Jager, Michael Grotenhoff, Saskia Kress, Jialing Zhang, Iris Lammerstma
Editors: Barbara Toennieshen, Anonymous
Language: Mandarin with English subtitles
Festivals: CPH:DOX, Hot Docs, Sydney 2023

Biometric tech, big data and a state intolerant of dissent have delivered China the Social Credit System, a tool to chart the trustworthiness of citizens. Though officials insist it is less centralised and invasive than claimed, *Total Trust* reveals a mesh—many millions of peering cameras, facial and vocal recognition—that appears much like Bentham’s panopticon, though made all-seeing by not one but trillions of eyes.

At its heart, however, this is a collection of personal stories, chronicling the courageous efforts of human rights lawyers and the implications for them and their families through legal battles, social denunciation, and ultimately incarceration. Jialing Zhang, who now lives in the US, unable to return to China after the release of her Sundance-winning *One Child Nation* (NZIFF 2019), shot the entire film remotely. She eschews

sweeping statements in favour of intimate scenes that paint agonising, everyday reality.

The film is “not just about China”, Zhang says. “We want the audience to look at their own countries.” Nor is it just about those whose heart-rending struggles are shown on screen. As one of the subjects in this chilling yet disarmingly tender film notes, the expectation of being watched is a censorship in itself. — Toby Manhire

Screenings

- A PEN Thu 3 Aug, 8.30 pm
- B RXY Fri 11 Aug, 11.30 am
- A LHC Sat 12 Aug, 11.00 am

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

The Corridors of Power



Director: Dror Moreh
 France 2022 | 135 mins
Producers: Vanessa Ciszewski, Estelle Fialon, Sol Goodman, Dror Moreh
Screenplay: Stephan Krumbiegel, Oron Adar, Dror Moreh
With: Colin Powell, Madeleine Albright, Hillary Clinton, Condoleezza Rice, Samantha Power, Henry Kissinger
Festivals: Telluride 2022; CPH:DOX 2023

Whether, when, how and for how long the United States should intervene beyond its borders remain the most contentious and consequential questions of international politics and human rights since the end of the Cold War. Here Dror Moreh (*The Gatekeepers*, *The Human Factor*) trains his camera on those at the centre of making such decisions. The cast list is astonishing. Among those who describe their motivations and experiences, recounting the tension and entanglement of moral imperative, practical consequences and expedient domestic political objectives are Hillary Clinton, Condoleezza Rice, Madeleine Albright, Colin Powell and Samantha Power.

Those perspectives come with a necessary and visceral juxtaposition. Spanning examples of action and inaction including the Balkans, Rwanda, Libya, Iraq and Syria, archival footage catalogues gruesome human

atrocities after atrocities—a visceral evocation of the challenge that Power, who would go on to become an adviser to President Barack Obama, explored in her Pulitzer winning book “*A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*.” Moreh’s unflinching, engrossing documentary picks up that challenge and asks: can the “Never Again” mantra that followed the moral stain of the Holocaust truly be said to endure today? — Toby Manhire

Screenings

- B LHC Mon 31 Jul, 1.15 pm
- A LHC Sun 6 Aug, 7.45 pm
- A RXY Sat 12 Aug, 3.00 pm

R18 Graphic depictions of genocide

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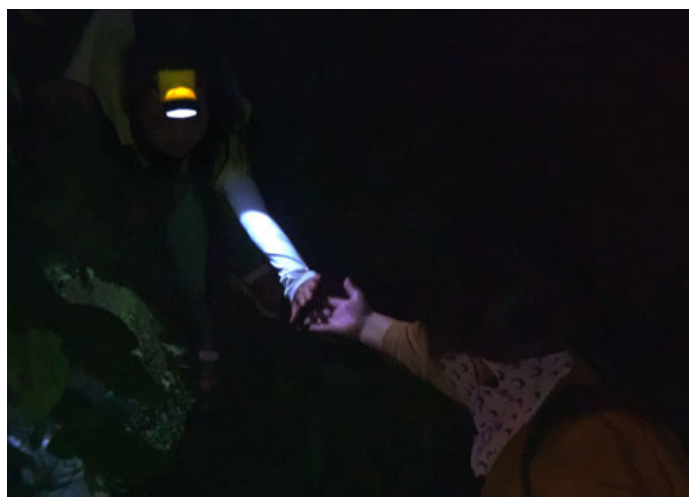
Beyond Utopia

In its third generation of dynastic dictatorship, North Korea remains one of the most impoverished, draconian, caged corners of the world. Across the border in Seoul, the unlikelyst of espionage action heroes, a middle-aged pastor called Seungeun Kim, has devoted his life to the near impossible: getting defectors out. *Beyond Utopia* chronicles first-hand the knife-edge attempts he plans and leads.

A mother who has escaped seeks to facilitate the exit of a son she has not seen for a decade. A family of five, with grandma and young daughters, embarks on a jaw-dropping journey over barbed wire, past watchtowers, crossing multiple rivers and mountain ranges, involving various “brokers” with various motives. To make it happen, Pastor Kim risks his own life time after time, motivated by the story of his North Korean wife and the loss of a son.

The personal stories of resettled defectors, who recall the paradise narratives they were fed as children, together with commentary from experts, wraps a context around proceedings. But the escapes themselves are the engine and the heart—missions as intimate as they are intense, the camera right alongside the defectors on their ineffably perilous, astonishing pursuit of freedom. — Toby Manhire

“When life hands you an opportunity to watch footage like this, you don’t



turn it down. From an 80-year-old woman scaling a jungle-covered mountain in the dead of night while military dogs bark in the background to a mother tearing up as she shows her daughter fruits and flowers for the first time, *Beyond Utopia* is filled with the kind of ‘holy shit how did they get this?’ footage that the documentary medium exists to preserve. Films like *Beyond Utopia* are the same as people like Pastor Kim—their existence is a miracle, and we need to cherish every one we get.” — Christian Zilko, *Indiewire*

Director, Editor: Madeleine Gavin

USA 2022 | 119 mins

Producers: Jana Edelbaum, Rachel Cohen, Sue Mi Terry

Cinematography: Hyun Seok Kim

Music: Adam Taylor, Taylor Page

With: Pastor Seungeun Kim, Soyeon Lee, Hyuchang Wu

Languages: English and Korean with English subtitles

Festivals: Sundance, CPH:DOX, Sydney 2023

Awards: Audience Award (US Documentary), Sundance Film Festival 2023

“This is a film you haven’t seen before from a place you’ll never visit, a first-class example of bravery and reportage melding into a filmed testament.”

— Fionnuala Halligan, *Screendaily*

Screenings

A	EMB	Mon 31 Jul, 8.30 pm
B	RXY	Mon 7 Aug, 3.45 pm
A	PEN	Tue 8 Aug, 8.15 pm
A	LHP	Fri 11 Aug, 8.15 pm

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

The Grab



Director, Screenplay: Gabriela Cowperthwaite

USA 2022 | 104 mins

With: Nate Halverson, JoeBill Muñoz, Mallory Newman, David Ritscher, Emma C. Schwartz, Holly Irwin, Brigadier “Brig” Siachitema

Languages: English, Russian, Ukrainian and Lala, with English subtitles

Festivals: Toronto, DOC NYC 2022; CPH:DOX 2023

Hailed after its Toronto premiere as “the ‘holy shit’ documentary of the year”, the new film from the director of *Blackfish* (NZIFF 2013) investigates the story of the increasingly rapid and ruthless contest for the planet’s water and food resources with the energy of a political thriller.

After unearthing the story of the Chinese government’s role in the acquisition of the world’s largest pork producer, the US Smithfield Foods, Nathan Halverson and his team at the Center for Investigative Reporting embark on an ambitious and sometimes dangerous project to join the dots between local disputes—from communities displaced in Zambia to wells running dry in Arizona—and the geopolitical currents that run beneath them.

The Grab shuttles from America to China, from the Arab World to Russia and the bludgeoned fields of Ukraine, laying bare the ways

the demands of developed and emerging economies reach far beyond territorial borders, hatching a new and frightening frontier of global conflict. The protagonists of this real-world drama are state and corporate forces, together with the middlemen who do their bidding. Such as Erik Prince, the founder of the shadowy mercenary contractor Blackwater, whose involvement is revealed in “the trove”, a massive cache of correspondence leaked to the investigators. — Toby Manhire

Screenings

A	PEN	Mon 7 Aug, 8.30 pm
B	PEN	Wed 9 Aug, 4.00 pm
A	LHC	Sat 12 Aug, 8.15 pm

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

Bobi Wine: The People’s President



Directors: Moses Bwayo, Christopher Sharp

Uganda/UK/USA 2022

114 mins

With: Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu aka Bobi Wine, Barbara Itungo Kyagulanyi

Languages: English and Luganda with English subtitles

Festivals: Venice, Telluride, London, IDFA 2022; CPH:DOX, 2023

At once astonishing, exhilarating and deeply moving, *Bobi Wine: The People’s President* charts the remarkable rise of a pop star who becomes leader of the Ugandan opposition movement. Despite intimidation, imprisonment and vicious state violence, Bobi—real name Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu—inspires millions to join in defiance of Yoweri Museveni, who has gripped ruthlessly to power since seizing control in a 1986 coup.

The mass rallies on the campaign trail are breathtaking, propelled by a soundtrack of Bobi Wine’s afrobeat protest songs. Across more than five years in the leadup to the 2021 election, directors Christopher Sharp and Moses Bwayo take us to the heart of the exuberant, hazardous, indomitable action that surrounds the self-styled “ghetto president”. That proximity extends into the family home of Bobi, his inspirational wife Barbie Kyagulanyi, and their four children. Here the stakes

of the mission take on an achingly intimate dimension. — Toby Manhire

“In the scope of other 2022 political documentaries, *Bobi Wine* has the most in common with Daniel Roher’s *Navalny* (NZIFF 2022)... It has a similar, almost unbelievable, and powerful spirit of not giving in when governmental forces threaten you and rule with no control. This is a profile of unfathomable courage that deserves to be seen.” — Nick Allen, *The Playlist*

Screenings

A	RXY	Mon 31 Jul, 6.00 pm
B	RXY	Wed 2 Aug, 12.00 pm
A	RXY	Sun 6 Aug, 3.15 pm
A	LHC	Sun 13 Aug, 11.00 am

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

Four films featuring very different music tastes—a memorial to one of the greatest film composers contrasts with a portrait of drone metal pioneer Dylan Carlson and his band Earth, along with portrait films of rock ‘n’ roll legend Little Richard and eclectic collective Elephant 6.

See also *The Strangest of Angels* (p22), *King Loser* (p23), and *Squaring the Circle (The Story of Hipgnosis)* (p71)

Music

The Elephant 6 Recording Co.



Director, Cinematography, Sound Recordist:

C.B. Stockfleth

USA 2023 | 93 mins

With: Bill Doss, Will Cullen Hart, Jeff Mangum, Robert Schneider

Festivals: DOC NYC 2022, CPH:DOX 2023

Early on in this spirited and sympathetic documentary, an interviewee, asked whether he can think of another scene that comes close, answers “absolutely not.” But audiences in New Zealand may be reminded of this country’s own legendary Flying Nun label, an equally do-it-yourself enterprise, which similarly combined pop and experimental sensibilities and flourished in apparent isolation.

With the sprawling nature of the collective and large number of interviewees—engagingly nerdy hipsters now approaching middle-age—it becomes hard to keep track of who did what in which band, especially as the line-ups frequently overlap. But there are four essential figures without whom there would be no story: The Apples in Stereo founder Robert Schneider; Bill Doss and Will Cullen Hart of the Olivia Tremor Control; and Neutral Milk

Hotel front man Jeff Mangum, who gave the collective its greatest hit before retreating from public view.

Filmmaker C.B. Stockfleth combines intimate interviews with VHS tape, old stills and home movie footage to tell the story of a community defined by strong artistic and personal bonds, though not without its tensions or its tragedies.

— Nick Bollinger

Screenings

A LHC Wed 9 Aug, 8.30 pm
B RXY Thu 10 Aug, 4.15 pm
A RXY Fri 11 Aug, 6.00 pm

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

Even Hell Has Its Heroes



Director, Editor:

Clyde Peterson

USA 2023 | 110 mins

Screenplay: Clyde Peterson, Earth

Cinematography:

Clyde Peterson, Benjamin Kasulke, Britta Jognson, Corey J. Brewer, Craig Murray, Rich Myers

Music: Earth, Dylan Carlson, Adrienne Davies, Mell Dettmer

Festivals: CPH:DOX, Seattle 2023

Eschewing more traditional rock doco trappings, Pacific Northwest artist Clyde Peterson has created a singular portrait of drone metal pioneer Dylan Carlson and his band Earth. The incredibly cinematic soundtrack produced by the band themselves demands a big screen sound system and pairs perfectly with atmospheric Super8 footage of the band and their Seattle environs.

“Since 1989, the slowest metal band on the planet has conjured some of music’s most striking tectonic changes. Not only did the band Earth create a glacially paced subgenre of metal and play a pivotal role in the popularization of grunge, but visionary leader Dylan Carlson also did it while battling small-town boredom, heroin addiction, and the tragic death of his roommate and best friend, Kurt Cobain.

Despite the high volume of its beloved and beautiful drone metal, Earth has rarely had much to say for itself. For the first time, in a moving saga that respects the music as much as the ragtag cast of eccentrics and surreal Pacific Northwest majesty that shaped it, Clyde Petersen gets to the core of the could-have-been-tragic triumph of Earth, the slow band that changed everything it touched.”

— Grayson Church

Screenings

B LHC Thu 3 Aug, 4.00 pm
A DEL Wed 9 Aug, 6.30 pm
A RXY Sat 12 Aug, 5.30 pm

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

Ennio

Some films demand the big screen for their images, and one cannot deny the pleasures of seeing excerpts from the likes of Sergio Leone's westerns, *The Mission*, and *The Untouchables* writ large. But it's the act of hearing Ennio Morricone's music at length through a cinema sound system that makes *Ennio* a truly essential filmgoing experience.

Blessedly filmed shortly before Morricone's passing in 2020 by *Cinema Paradiso* director Giuseppe Tornatore, *Ennio* captures the composer of 500 film scores in fine fettle, composing, conducting and guiding us through ninety years of life, from growing up the son of a musician (and classmate of Leone) through music school, the record industry, and—oh, yes—his film scores. Morricone's stubborn, idiosyncratic approach shines through in anecdotes from a bevy of collaborators including Bernardo Bertolucci, the Taviani Brothers, Oliver Stone and, naturally, Tornatore himself. With such a sprawling career, there's more than a passing chance that one of your favourites will be overlooked—sorry, fans of *The Thing*—but lengthy dissections of the likes of *Investigation of a Citizen Under Suspicion* and *Once Upon a Time in America* are so rewarding that you'd have to be a pedant to care.

It's unsurprising that a veritable boatload of film and music luminaries,



from Bruce Springsteen and Pat Metheny to Wong Kar-Wai, testify to Morricone's greatness. But *Ennio* knows when to let the music do the talking, and lengthy excerpts of Morricone's work luxuriate in the legend's impossibly rich and diverse compositions.

Victory laps have rarely been so richly deserved, and *Ennio* just may convince you of Quentin Tarantino's closing opinion that Morricone isn't just the best film composer—he's the best composer, full stop. — Doug Dillaman

“A beautiful portrait of iconic Italian composer... a successfully meandering exploration of Morricone's motivations, and the way in which his imagination works.”

— Saskia Lloyd Gaiger, *Little White Lies*

Director, Screenplay:
Giuseppe Tornatore
Italy 2021 | 156 mins

Producers: Gianni Russo, Gabriele Costa
Cinematography: Fabio Zamarion, Giancarlo Leggeri

Editors: Massimo Quaglia, Annalisa Schillaci

Music: Ennio Morricone
With: Ennio Morricone, Clint Eastwood, Quentin Tarantino, Oliver Stone, Hans Zimmer, Dario Argento, Bernardo Bertolucci, John Williams

Languages: English and Italian with English subtitles

Festivals: Venice, IDFA 2021, Melbourne 2022

Screenings

B	PEN	Fri 28 Jul, 10.45 am
A	PEN	Sun 6 Aug, 4.45 pm
B	RXY	Wed 9 Aug, 1.15 pm
A	LHP	Sat 12 Aug, 3.30 pm

M Violence & nudity

Little Richard: I Am Everything

Out of the raw materials of rhythm and blues, drag performance, gospel music and medicine show, Richard Penniman, better known as Little Richard, created the template for rock 'n' roll. His first hit, 'Tutti Frutti', was released in 1955, the same year black teenager Emmett Till was lynched. He represented, as scholar Jason King puts it in the film, "a complete upheaval of the existing social system". He took "all of this post-war aching, yearning, teenage horniness and desire to be erotically free, and put it into a musical form that people could feel".

But his innovations would quickly be usurped and sanitised by a white-dominated music industry. "What would it do to the American mythology of rock music to say its pioneers were black queer people?" asks ethnomusicologist Fredara Hadley. Director Lisa Cortés explores both the evidence and the answer in a rock documentary that takes a refreshingly African-American angle on the rock 'n' roll myth.

Drawing on rich archives and fresh interviews, Cortés shows how Little Richard's electrifying synthesis came about and the impact it had, with plenty of footage of the artist in his prime. Cortés illustrates the effects of racism on his career and Richard's own conflicts around his queerness and religion, creating a complex story that is ultimately as much a tragedy as a triumph. — Nick Bollinger



“Lisa Cortés's richly enjoyable film examines the alter egos and queer theories surrounding a conflicted star who was way ahead of his time.”
— Mark Kermode, *The Guardian*

“Lisa Cortés's film, in perceiving Little Richard as a wild genius of Black and queer culture, sees him more clearly than ever.”

— Owen Gleiberman, *Variety*

Director: Lisa Cortés
USA 2023 | 101 mins

Producers: Caryn Capotosto, Lisa Cortes, Robert Friedman, Liz Yale Marsh, Jarobi Moorhead

Cinematography: Keith Walker, Graham Willoughby

Editors: Nyneve Laura Minnear, Jake Hostetter

Music: Tamar-kali
With: John Waters, Billy Porter, Tom Jones, Mick Jagger, Paul McCartney, Pat Boone, Nile Rodgers, Nona Hendryx

Festivals: Sundance, SXSW, CPH:DOX, Sydney 2023

Screenings

B	RXY	Fri 28 Jul, 2.30 pm
A	LHC	Sat 5 Aug, 11.30 am
A	LHP	Tue 8 Aug, 6.15 pm
A	RXY	Sun 13 Aug, 5.30 pm

M Offensive language, sexual references & drug references.

One of the world's greatest film directors, the famous painter Vermeer, a celebrated shoemaker and the designers of some of the most iconic album covers in rock history feature among this eclectic collection of seven films which bring artists into the frame.

See also *Grant Sheehan: Light, Ghosts & Dreams* (p23) and *Red Mole: A Romance* (p23)

Portrait of an Artist

Rock Hudson: All That Heaven Allowed



Director: Stephen Kijak
USA 2023 | 106 mins
Producers: George Chignell, Will Clarke, Carolyne Jurriaans, Greg Berlanti, Sarah Schechter
Cinematography: Tim Flower, Brian Hubbard, Derek Wieseahn, Stuart Luck
With: Doris Day, Linda Evans, Mark Griffith, Ross Hunter, Douglas Sirk, Illeana Douglas
Festivals: Tribeca 2023

For a period of time in Hollywood, you couldn't find a sturdier paragon of old-school American masculinity than Rock Hudson. The chiselled and charismatic star of *All that Heaven Allows*, *Giant* and many other American classics enjoyed a meteoric rise to fame and the adoration of filmgoers. Hudson, born Roy Harold Scherer Jr, was a gay man, who spent much of his life in the closet, dodging the rumours and prying eyes of gossip columns and struggling with the bigoted social mores of the 1950s and 60s. Hudson was only ever outed after his death from AIDS in 1985, a tragic footnote to a life spent simultaneously in the spotlight and behind the curtain.

Acclaimed filmmaker Stephen Kijak directs this illuminating portrait of the life and many loves of Rock Hudson, following his rise to fame and the terrible burden of having to hide his true self from

the world. The story is constructed from unparalleled access to archival footage and imagery, as well as snatches of interviews from Hudson himself, his co-stars, handlers and lovers. All the while, Kijak weaves into the story clips from Hudson's films which take on a new meaning with the added context of the life Hudson led. A stirring, heartbreaking tribute to one of the great stars of a bygone era. — Tom Augustine

Screenings

A PEN Sat 29 Jul, 10.30 am
A RXY Sun 6 Aug, 5.00 pm

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

My Name Is Alfred Hitchcock



Director, Screenplay, Cinematography: Mark Cousins
UK 2022 | 120 mins
Producer: John Archer
Editor: Timo Langer
Music: Donna McKeivitt
Narrator: Alistair McGowan
Festivals: Telluride 2022; San Francisco, Hong Kong 2023

Few filmmakers have been as revered, and mythologised, as Alfred Hitchcock. The director of such masterpieces as *Vertigo*, *Psycho*, *North by Northwest* and *Rear Window* continues to inspire and befuddle, a filmmaker with an impish sense of mischievous glee and a taste for the diabolical. The legend of Alfred Hitchcock has been told and retold in innumerable forms, but in Mark Cousins' *My Name Is Alfred Hitchcock* we are given a masterclass in Hitchcockian technique in a method just twisted enough to raise the eyebrows of the master himself. Cousins' has employed the talents of impressionist Alistair McGowan, who has a mighty Hitchcock imitation up his sleeve, to narrate the film from beyond the grave.

Extensively and intricately researched, *My Name is Alfred Hitchcock* weaves footage from virtually every film Hitchcock ever

made—over sixty films—finding remarkable connections between the films and convincingly laying out the six key emotions that guided his filmic sense throughout his career. Film savants will delight in the way the film maps out, in incisive detail, the way Hitchcock could manipulate film language to maximum effect, while newbies will be given a peek under the hood of one of cinema's most revered artists. — Tom Augustine

Screenings

A PEN Tue 1 Aug, 8.15 pm
B PEN Thu 10 Aug, 3.45 pm
A RXY Sun 13 Aug, 3.15 pm

M Violence

Anselm 3D

Wim Wenders delivers a fascinating 3D portrait of German Artist Anselm Kiefer.

"*Anselm* is a documentary that serves as a uniquely captivating and moving retrospective of Kiefer's life and body of work. When audiences consider 3D as a medium, the abiding image seems to be of items popping out from the screen—a limb here in *Jaws 3D*, a dildo there in *Jackass 3D*—and perhaps that is indeed how most filmmakers have used the medium. Not enough directors have capitalized on the ability of 3D to convey a sense of physical depth; fewer still have seized on the possibility of adding philosophical depth. Thank goodness, then, for Wim Wenders. The first of two new films by the German veteran in this year's Cannes official selection, *Anselm* is a tour-de-force 3D 6K portrait of the artist Anselm Kiefer, both rich in ideas and breathtaking in technical execution.

Though undoubtedly a powerful confrontation with some of the biggest themes art can tackle—mortality, permanence, being, nothingness, all the hits—*Anselm* remains an accessible experience, partly because of its manageable 93-minute runtime and partly because of its endlessly engaging imagery. There's no reason any reasonably curious audience shouldn't be able to switch on to its considerable pleasures.



It's easy for films about the importance of creativity to present it as a purely generative act, but Wenders carves out space to show how destruction can also be part of the artist's practice. We see Kiefer using flamethrowers to torch and distress his materials, and experience the brutal beauty of molten metal destroying the surfaces Kiefer ladles it onto. Plenty of terrible crimes against cinema have been committed in the name of 'immersive' art, but this focus on material helps *Anselm* to feel immersive in the best sense." — Catherine Bray, *Variety*

"An extraordinary post-pandemic endeavor that succeeds in reminding viewers of the thrill of being in the presence of great art."

Damon Wise, *Deadline*

Director: Wim Wenders

Germany 2023 | 93 mins

Producer: Karsten Brünig

Cinematography: Franz Lustig

Editor: Maxine Goedicke

Music: Leonard Küssner

With: Anselm Kiefer, Daniel Kiefer, Anton Wenders

Languages: German and English with English and French subtitles

Festivals: Cannes (Special Screenings) 2023

Special ticket pricing applies, see p80.

Screenings

- 📍 EMB Sat 5 Aug, 1.15 pm
- 📍 EMB Thu 10 Aug, 3.45 pm

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

Salvatore: Shoemaker of Dreams

Italian glamour, the pursuit of the American dream and Hollywood glamour are key touchpoints underpinning the life of one of the most revered shoemakers of our times. Who knew the origins of the 1947 creation of the "invisible shoe" or the rainbow-coloured platform sandal once worn by Judy Garland in 1938, an early precursor to disco fashion of the 70s?

Ferragamo's unrelenting passion is one stemmed from boyhood growing up poor in Bonito, Italy, when he first created shoes for his sisters' holy communion. His journey to California in 1915 aged 16 was perilous, yet it didn't take long for him to earn the sacred trust of Hollywood titans—including Cecil B. DeMille, Joan Crawford, Mary Pickford and Rudolph Valentino. His attention to detail marked him as a design genius entrusted with famous feet the world over, creating shoes often referred to as works of art. His scientific approach to the foot leaves much to be admired. As he elucidates "a good foot—its muscles firm, its arch strong—is a delight to touch. A masterpiece of divine workmanship. My desire to work with feet was unrelenting."

His return to Florence after 13 years in Hollywood is another fascinating look at this full-circle journey of taking Italian fashion to the world—then home again, redefining post-war glamour and asserting Italian-made luxury as one to be desired.



Director Luca Guadagnino (*Call Me By Your Name* [NZIFF 2017], *I Am Love* [NZIFF 2010]), lets his unapologetic eye for beauty permeate this insightful documentary, bringing to life Ferragamo's 1955 memoir of the same name with actor Michael Stuhlbarg's soothing narration; and cameo interviews with film titan Martin Scorsese, fashion journalist Suzy Menkes, shoe designer Manolo Blahnik and fashion editor Grace Coddington further add to Ferragamo's significant legacy. — Dan Ahwa.

"It's a perfect summation of Ferragamo's career, a harmonious union of craftsmanship and showbiz."

—Sandra Hall, *Sydney Morning Herald*

Director: Luca Guadagnino

Italy 2020 | 109 mins

Producers: Gabriele Moratti, Francesco Melzi d'Eril

Screenplay: Dana Thomas

Cinematography: Clarissa Cappellani, Massimiliano Kuvellier

Editor: Walter Fasano

Narrator: Michael Stuhlbarg

Cast: Martin Scorsese, Manolo Blahnik, Christian Louboutin, Jay Weissberg, Todd McCarthy, Deborah Naddoolman Landis, Jerry Ferragamo, Antonello Ricci, Ginevra Visconti, Emanuele Visconti

Languages: Italian, English and French, with English subtitles

Festivals: Venice 2020; Melbourne, Telluride, Golden Horse 2022

Screenings

- A LHP Sun 30 Jul, 1.00 pm
- B PEN Tue 1 Aug, 11.30 am
- A LHC Fri 4 Aug, 6.15 pm
- A PEN Sat 12 Aug, 6.00 pm

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

Nam June Paik: Moon Is the Oldest TV

“I make technology ridiculous”. Yes, but pioneering video artist Nam June Paik did far more than that, changing the art world forever. Most visitors to international modern art museums will have seen somewhere between one and a thousand screens of Nam June Paik’s artwork, from his many miniature *TV Buddhas* to the colossal *The More The Better*. Certainly, his canonisation is well deserved, and *Moon Is The Oldest TV* is as admirably thorough as a feature on such a major, complex and fecund artist could ever hope to be.

Paik’s migration from Korea to Berlin to New York and his concurrent aesthetic explorations in music, action painting, and performance art en route to his revolutionary video art are ably documented from Paik’s writings (narrated by Steven Yeun). First-time director Amanda Kim conducts numerous interviews with academics, gallery owners, artists, and surviving confederates such as Peter Brötzmann, Mary Bauermeister and Ulysses Jenkins. Other key figures, from composer John Cage (whose necktie he famously sliced) and Fluxus compatriot Joseph Beuys to cellist/collaborator Charlotte Moorman and video artist (and wife) Shigeo Kubota, feature via copious and well-selected archive footage.

Through it all, Paik emerges as a contradictory and fascinating character, whimsical yet carrying deep historical trauma. The enigmatic qualities of his work is reflected in



quotes that show him capable of piercing cynicism (“I use technology in order to hate it properly”) and wild optimism, best shown by 1984’s *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* (an international success, a catastrophic failure, or both, depending on who you ask). Paik’s vision was stunningly prescient, and *Moon Is The Oldest TV* (named after one of his pieces and chosen as the film’s title with the assistance of interviewee Marina Abramović in a hilarious mid-credit sequence) will leave novices and fans alike with plenty to contemplate. — Doug Dillaman

“There’s a great deal of charm and humour to Paik’s work, and to this film, but it’s anchored by his perceptiveness and ability to contemplate weighty themes—and, yes, to anticipate the future.”

— Fionnuala Halligan, *Screendaily*

Director: Amanda Kim

USA 2023 | 110 mins

Producers: Jennifer Blei Stockman, David Koh, Amy Hobby, Jesse Wann, Mariko Munro

Cinematography: Nelson Walker

Editor: Taryn Gould

Visual Effects: Hyung Cho, Helen Niu

With: Nam June Paik

Languages: English, German and Korean with English subtitles

Festivals: Sundance, CPH:DOX, Sydney 2023

Presented in association with

**City
Gallery
Wellington**
Te Whare Toi

Screenings

A LHC Mon 31 Jul, 8.00 pm
A LHP Thu 3 Aug, 8.15 pm
B LHC Tue 8 Aug, 12.30 pm

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements



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Squaring the Circle (The Story of Hipgnosis)

Photographer and designer Anton Corbijn (who directed the striking Joy Division drama *Control* [NZIFF 2007]) celebrates his forebears in this riotously enjoyable documentary about the amazing imagery produced by the legendary design studio Hipgnosis. The result is jam-packed with inside goss from the era of rock 'n' roll excess.

“Corbijn was responsible for... U2’s *The Joshua Tree* album cover, among many others. So it’s clear that the guy knows what he’s talking about—not that Corbijn himself does the talking in the film... Instead, he leaves the storytelling to the illustrious likes of Paul McCartney, Peter Gabriel, Led Zeppelin’s Robert Plant and Jimmy Page, Pink Floyd’s Roger Waters, David Gilmour and Nick Mason, and many others. All of those luminaries crossed paths with the curious London-based design company Hipgnosis, which for a stretch from the late 1960s to the early '80s was the go-to agency for a bewildering variety of album covers that pretty much defined an era in rock.

Hipgnosis was responsible for the prism on Pink Floyd’s *The Dark Side of the Moon* along with most of that band’s other covers; the all-star jailbreak on McCartney and Wings’ *Band on the Run*; the naked kids climbing a mystical stone landscape



for Led Zeppelin’s *Houses of the Holy*; Peter Gabriel’s first three solo albums, each a little weirder than the last; and lots more...

Squaring the Circle is a treat for anyone with a taste for rock, for rock imagery and for the glories that can be found in that piece of cardboard wrapped around a record.” – Steve Pond, *The Wrap*

“Corbijn... is the perfect person to be telling this story... Dispatches from a time when no detail was unimportant and anything was possible. Even pigs could fly.”

— Christian Blauvelt, *Indiewire*

Director: Anton Corbijn

UK 2022 | 101 mins

Producers: Ged Doherty, Trish D. Chetty, Colin Firth

Screenplay: Trish D. Chetty

Cinematography: Martin van Broekhuizen, Stuart Luck

Editor: Andrew Hulme

Animation: Matt Curtis

With: Aubrey “Po” Powell, Robert Plant, Jimmy Page, Roger Waters, David Gilmour, Nick Mason, Paul McCartney, Peter Gabriel, Noel Gallagher, Glen Matlock, Merck Mercuriadis

Festivals: Telluride 2022; Sundance 2023

Presented in association with



Screenings

A RXY Thu 3 Aug, 6.15 pm
A EMB Sat 12 Aug, 1.00 pm

TBC Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

Close to Vermeer

The Rijksmuseum’s blockbuster Vermeer retrospective, which sold out all tickets within a few days of going on sale in February, and closed on 4 June, was one of the art world’s most revered events of 2023—or any year. This enthralling documentary explores the painstaking mounting of the exhibition, bringing together the Delft master’s limited number of works (34 in all), treasured in museums, both major and minor, around the world, in the “largest Vermeer exhibition ever”.

Negotiations are sometimes fraught. Backroom trade-offs are required. Deft diplomacy primordial. Impassioned experts and connoisseurs share their wonder, drawing us close to details and nuance, debate brushstrokes and depiction of light—and whether certain hallowed Vermeer works are in fact the real deal, leading to fiery discussions. Always central to everything are the sublime paintings themselves and what they reveal about Vermeer, about whom little is known but speculation is rife.

Suzanne Raes (*The Rainbow Warriors of Waiheke Island*, [NZIFF 2010]; *The Successor of Kakiemon*, [NZIFF 2013]) offers an illuminating, forensic deep dive, more than compensating for the fact that most of us were deprived the privilege of beholding these bewitching, miniature masterpieces “for real”—and were



therefore also spared of having to contend with the thronging hordes, and hence not actually “seeing” them at all. — Sandra Reid

“In a world of ‘hot takes’ and uninformed ‘takedowns,’ where expertise is increasingly de-valued across the board, the experts in *Close to Vermeer* are a comforting bunch. They know a lot, they share what they know, and they help us to not just look at a Vermeer, but to see.” — Sheila O’Malley, *Roger Ebert*

“Planning the world’s most complete exhibition of the Dutch Golden Age master’s work led to unexpected discoveries as well as art historical heartbreak.”

— Sarah Cascone, *Artnet*

Director, Screenplay:

Suzanne Raes

Netherlands 2023 | 75 mins

Producer: Ilja Roomans

Photography: Victor Horstink

Editor: Noud Holtman

Music: Alex Simu

With: Gregor Weber, Pieter Roelofs, Abbie Vanivere, Anna Krekeler, Jonathan Janson

Festivals: Hot Docs 2023

Presented in association with



Screenings

A EMB Sun 30 Jul, 10.00 am
A LHP Wed 2 Aug, 6.15 pm
B EMB Thu 3 Aug, 10.30 am
A PEN Sat 5 Aug, 4.00 pm

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

When it comes to animation, there's no limit to imagination and our three Animation Now! programmes bring together a collection of treasures and oddities from some of the most brazenly creative minds around the globe. These programmes offer a varied look at the contemporary landscape of animated art.

Animation Now! is curated by **Malcolm Turner**, animation programmer at NZIFF for the past 35 years, and director of Melbourne International Animation Festival.

See also *Robot Dreams* (p53), *Dounia & The Princess of Aleppo* (p52) and *Mars Express* (p76)

Animation Now!

Animation Now! #1 International Showcase

79 mins approx.

Drawn from more than 3,000 submissions, our annual International Showcase brings the infinitely eclectic domain of independent animation to the big screen, where it shines brightest. Here the unique properties of animation drive the very creative DNA of every character, every story and every environment—imagined into life by some of the most imaginative filmmakers in the world. From the ultra-cool, ultra-clean digitally realised style of Andrzej Jobczyk's *Airborne* to the roughly hewn, hands-on painterly new Elizabeth Hobbs film *The Debutante*, this programme is a snapshot of the world's best new animated work.

— MT

Airborne

Andrzej Jobczyk
Poland 2021 | 8 mins

A surreal flight through a world blending nature and flying machines morphs into a psychedelic battle with no limits in which even aggression can be turned into love.

The Flying Sailor

Amanda Forbis, Wendy Tilby
Canada 2022 | 8 mins

When a nearby ship explodes, a sailor embarks on an unexpected near-death experience. Inspired by a real-life catastrophic Halifax explosion in 1917.

The Eastern Rain

Milly Yenchken
Estonia 2023 | 9 mins

If the rain were to fall indoors, where would we begin to look for shelter? The school bell would ring, but no one would hear it.

In the Upper Room

Alexander Gratzler
Austria 2022 | 8 mins

Every season a young mole visits his blind grandfather, and as the two grow older, their relationship becomes more intense and important questions arise.

Miles Davis - What's Love Got to Do with It

Irina Rubina
Germany 2022 | 5 mins

An astonishing "half abstract night-walk fantasy" based on drawings by the great Miles Davis backed by his interpretation of the Tina Turner classic.

Ana Morphose

Joao Rodrigues
Portugal 2023 | 10 mins

As a little girl reads herself to sleep, her physical world starts melting into an alternate reality where the contents of a book rule over the laws of physics.

Aleph

Slobodan Tomic
Croatia 2022 | 8 mins

Out there, somewhere, is a place where worlds touch and reengineer themselves over and over into a point of collective dissolution.

11

Vuk Jevremovic
Croatia 2022 | 6 mins

Three renowned masters of football, capable of the near-impossible on the field in the "beautiful game"—but what goes through their minds as they prepare to shoot for the goal?

Donks

Felix Colgrave
Australia 2023 | 7 mins

Ocean plastic, avatars and adaptive bottom feeders—the musical! The latest, over-oxygenated visual outburst from the master of the surreal.

The Debutante

Elizabeth Hobbs
UK 2021 | 8 mins

A spirited young woman persuades a hyena from London Zoo to take her place at a dinner dance being held in her honour.



Ana Morphose



The Debutante

Screenings

A RXY Sat 29 Jul, 4.30 pm
B LHC Tue 1 Aug, 4.30 pm

Animation Now! #2 Late Night Bizarre

79 mins approx.

Animated shorts with BIG personalities! A dependably depraved screening of animated specimens from the wrong side of the tracks. Every year connoisseurs of the strange make the pilgrimage to NZIFF's annual altar of the outlandish and the outrageous. Fiery death by speed dating miscalculation, the cruel post-reality of growing up as a banana, life inside a dog, the vicious revenge of chickens wronged one time too many, goats on speed, hounds in cakes... this is a programme for those who can only handle a certain kind of truth. — MT



The Dog Apartment

Alestorm – Shitboat (No Fans)

Simon Norton

Australia 2020 | 2 mins

Not your ordinary pirate ship... definitely not your ordinary pirate ship.

Honey Sweet

Inari Sirola

UK 2021 | 4 mins

A sticky, utterly lickable and mind-melting comment on a society dripping with nihilism and the addiction to capitalist baubles.

Speed

Ben Mitchell

UK 2021 | 2 mins

Speed dating is all about messaging and it's easy to get burned if you're not looking for the signals.

Little World Changers

Daniel Sweed

Israel 2021 | 4 mins

Three teens try to save the world from a giant butt who is threatening the world with a flood of pollution pouring from a huge magical pipe.

Krak

Stan Lievens

Belgium 2021 | 6 mins

A man crawls out of a banana and explains how he found himself inside this fruit in the first place—an unusual origin story (to say the least).

Juice

Mona Keil

Germany 2022 | 5 mins

In a musty, damp crevice a microcosm of fleshy creatures live in a dark, moist biome, exploring one another and continuously bathing in a seemingly nourishing viscous mucus.

The Dog Apartment

Priit Tender

Estonia 2022 | 14 mins

The strange life of a boozy ballet dancer living in a barking apartment trying to navigate the kind of world that could only be conjured up within the realm of animation.

Pussy Love

Linda Krauss

Germany 2023 | 4 mins

Cool Cat invites you to enjoy a show of lust and laziness. The claws are sharp, the soda is sparkling and the fur is getting wet.

Drunk

Nikita Meshcheryakov

Russia 2022 | 4 mins

An animated visual poem merging confessions of alcoholic remorse and the cubist art of Paul Klee.

Dessert Dachshund

Betina Bozek

Poland 2022 | 7 mins

A special dachshund, encased entirely within a wedding cake, bursts forth as a good luck talisman for the happy couple.

A Goat's Spell

Gerhard Funk

Germany 2022 | 9 mins

A conquest before breakfast, a clueless goat next to the house, a couple of promising airplanes far up in the sky... it's going to be an interesting day!

Le Sourire de la Courgette

Lucas Ansart

France 2020 | 8 mins

An imaginative love story of a girl in the desert who falls in love with a "cloud being" all the while trying to grow courgettes in the sand.

Scoundrels

Colin Estey White

USA 2021 | 3 mins

Three weirdos attempt a desperate and perverse get-rich-quick scheme that ends in savagely unfortunate consequences.

The Dip

Simona Mehandzhieva

UK 2020 | 5 mins

A dip, a shablam, a death drop is when a dancer strikes a pose and dramatically falls on their back.

The Poultry Punisher

Matt Bottos

Australia 2022 | 5 mins

It was always going to happen—one day the chickens were just going to get to the point where they've had enough. It's payback time.

Screenings

A RXY Sun 6 Aug, 9.00 pm
B LHC Tue 8 Aug, 4.30 pm



NZ classification TBC

Animation Now! #3 The Realm of Horror

75 mins approx.

Horror is an acid that burns the imagination before it goes to work on skin and bone—and there is no better vehicle to take you into the very middle of that invisible laceration than animation. Whether it is the darkly thoughtful noirishness of Mickey and Goofy strapping a deeply troubled Donald into a chair in Tom Bourgeois' caustic new film *Mickey's Descent into Madness* or the more gleefully deranged space zombie romp *Zombie Meteor* by Spanish dynamic duo Alfonso Fulgencio and Jose Luis Farias, if you have a taste for horror here is your cake, icing and dark cherry on top. — MT

Mickey's Descent into Madness

Tom Bourgeois

France 2021 | 18 mins

Vietnam vets Mickey, Donald and Goofy descend into a darkened post-ironic reckoning with all that that war brought them and the world they now inhabit.

Parallel

Sam Orti Marti

Spain 2022 | 9 mins

A man awakes dazed, disoriented, strapped to a stretcher and confronted by two strange creatures armed with lethal looking medical devices from a bygone era.

Beware of Trains

Emma Calder

UK 2022 | 13 mins

A woman with extreme anxiety is devoured by four major preoccupations—including the murder she dreams she has committed.

Scale

Joseph Pierce

UK 2022 | 15 mins

Driving along the motorway, Will loses his sense of scale. As his condition deepens, he struggles to unpick the sequence of events that led to this predicament, before he's lost forever.

Fury

Julia Studa

Poland 2021 | 5 mins

A bitter-sweet nightmare chronicling a gradually surging aura of frustration and aggression as our heroine loses control of her anger.

Zombie Meteor

Alfonso Fulgencio, Jose Luis Farias

Spain 2022 | 14 mins

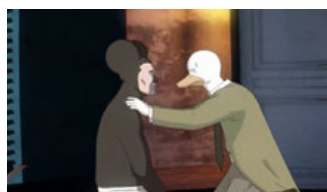
Orbiting in deep space, two very different cosmonauts encounter a peculiar phenomena that rapidly moves the needle from comedy to eviscerate.

Screenings

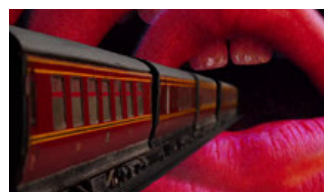
B LHC Thu 10 Aug, 4.30 pm
A RXY Sun 13 Aug, 8.15 pm



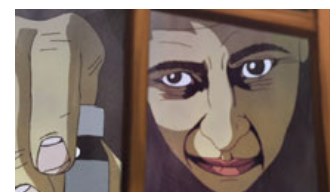
NZ classification TBC



Mickey's Descent into Madness



Beware of Trains



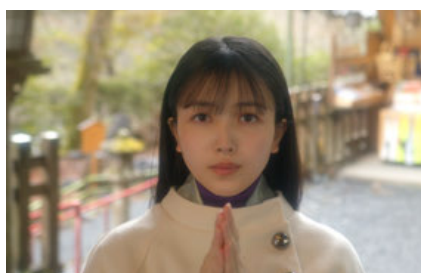
Scale

For 30 years, **Ant Timpson**—founder of the notorious Incredibly Strange Film Festival—has annually curated a programme of cinema provocations from all quarters of the globe.

Incredibly Strange

River

Ribā, nagarenaideyo



Director, Editor:
Junta Yamaguchi
Japan 2023 | 86 mins
Producer: Takahiro Otsuki
Screenplay: Makoto Ueda
Cast: Riko Fujitani, Yuki Torigoe, Munenori Nagano, Takashi Sumita, Yoshifumi Sakai, Masahi Suwa, Gota Ishida, Haruki Nakagawa, Kazunari Tosa, Kohei Morooka, Masahiro Kuroki
Language: Japanese with English subtitles

This time-loop comedy heralds the sophomore effort of the talented filmmaker Yamaguchi and Kyoto-based theatre troupe “Europe Kikaku” whose *Beyond the Infinite Two Minutes* (NZIFF 2021) was a surprise NZIFF hit after wowing genre fans around the globe. Yamaguchi and Kikaku’s cinematic ethos strives for a fusion of inventive humour, a theatrical framework and original concepts deeply rooted in bona fide ingenuity.

Building on the premise of their previous collaboration, *River* centres on Mikoto, a waitress who works in a traditional hot springs hotel in Kyoto. Life suddenly trips into the twilight zone when Mikoto is called back to work by the owner while standing by the Kibune River situated behind the hotel. However, two minutes later, for some mysterious reason, she finds herself once again facing the river, as time seems to be

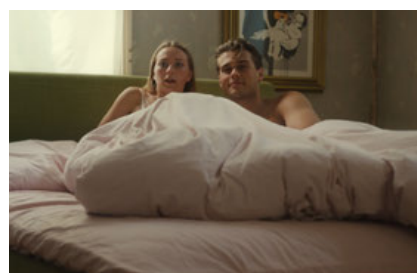
repeating itself every two minutes, a situation that is also experienced by her fellow waitresses, chefs and diners. Following each reset, time winds backward, propelling them back to their original locations, albeit with their memories intact. Some yearn to escape the repetitive loop, while others wish to remain, yet all grapple with their own predicaments demanding resolution. As Mikoto observes the collective effort to unearth the cause, an unsettling sense of isolation steadily envelops her. —AT

Screenings

A RXY Sun 30 Jul, 6.00 pm
B DEL Thu 3 Aug, 3.30 pm
A LHC Sat 12 Aug, 6.30 pm

TBC NZ classification TBC

Good Boy



Director, Screenplay:
Viljar Bøe
Norway 2022 | 76 mins
Producers: Marie Waade Grønning, Ane Marie Sletten, Karl Oskar Åsli
With: Gard Løkke, Katrine Lovise Øpstad Fredriksen, Amalie Willoch Njaastad
Language: Norwegian with English subtitles
Festivals: Beyond Fest, Bergen 2022

Just when you think you’ve seen every aspect of nightmarish online dating encounters along comes this perverse Norwegian nugget. When Sigrid (Katrine Lovise Øpstad Fredriksen) meets too-good-to-be-true handsome wealthy bachelor Christian (Gard Løkke) for a date, she’s slightly unprepared for what awaits her back at his mansion after they hook up.

This mysterious and sexually charged thriller kicks off like a loopy foreign *Fifty Shades of Grey* before discarding that template and introducing Frank—Christian’s dog—a man in a weird dog costume who acts like a dog. Pressed for answers, Christian explains that Frank is a friend who suffered a breakdown of sorts and is role-playing as a dog to heal past trauma and cope with the harsh realities of normal life. Suspicious at first, Sigrid begins to open up to the idea

of this hairy third-party being part of an exciting new relationship. After numerous bad dates and less than desirable hookups, this handsome millionaire with a friend dressed as a dog suddenly begins to look appealing.

When a romantic getaway to a secluded house with a stranger and his dog is suggested, it lays the precarious foundation for a weekend of weirdness that does not disappoint fans of dark visceral experiences. —AT

Screenings

B DEL Tue 1 Aug, 4.15 pm
A LHC Fri 4 Aug, 8.30 pm
A RXY Sun 6 Aug, 7.15 pm

M Violence & offensive language

Shin Ultraman

Shin urutoraman

Ever since the success of the original *Godzilla* feature film in the 50s, Japan has witnessed a galactic explosion of the *tokusatsu* genre (live-action film/tv centred around special effects) with many *kaiju* aka giant monsters causing architectural chaos. *Shin Ultraman* is the follow-up collaboration between Shinji Higuchi (*Attack on Titan*) and Hideaki Anno (*Neon Genesis Evangelion*), reimagining the revered Ultraman franchise with contemporary sensibilities as the duo previously did with the popular reboot *Shin Godzilla*.

This mesmerising opus blends blockbuster spectacle with existential contemplation, inviting audiences to ponder their earthly insignificance within a universe brimming with godlike beings. We follow S-Class Species Suppression Protocol (SSSP) as they battle colossal creatures while defying the government's destructive desire for nuclear weaponry. When the mysterious leviathan Neronga emerges and attacks Japan, the enigmatic Ultraman intervenes, leaving the SSSP to unravel the titular hero's secrets. Anchored by compelling performances, particularly by Hidetoshi Nishijima and Masami Nagasawa, *Shin Ultraman* captivates with breathtaking visuals that deftly pay homage to the franchise's origins. Anno's screenplay unfurls with breakneck velocity, employing



narrative shorthand to acquaint audiences with an ensemble cast, emphasising their inherent vulnerability and ineptitude in comprehending the intricate web of cosmic machinations. Propelled by an audacious narrative and thought-provoking themes, this irony-free mad monster mash transcends the confines of traditional blockbusters, offering an exhilarating nostalgia inducing chow-down while simultaneously being an intellectually profound cinematic experience. — AT

“Tongue-in-cheek but never campy, *Shin Ultraman* is an object lesson in how to reboot a superhero franchise for modern times.”

— Richard Kuipers, *Variety*

Director: Shinji Higuchi

Japan 2022 | 113 mins

Producers: Hideaki Anno, Kazutoshi Wadakura, Takehiko Aoki, Minami Ichikawa, Masaki Kawashima, Tomoya Nishino, Takayuki Tsukagoshi

Screenplay: Hideaki Anno

Cinematography: Osamu Ichikawa, Keizo Suzuki

Editors: Youhei Kurihara, Hideaki Anno,

Music: Kunio Miyauchi, Shiro Sagisu

Cast: Takumi Saitoh, Masami Nagasawa, Hidetoshi Nishijima, Daiki Arioka, Akari Hayami, Tetsushi Tanaka

Language: Japanese with English subtitles

Festivals: Fantasia, NY Asian, Fantastic Fest 2022; Sydney 2023

Screenings

B DEL	Fri 28 Jul, 3.00 pm
A LHC	Sat 29 Jul, 4.45 pm
A RXY	Tue 1 Aug, 8.00 pm
A RXY	Sun 13 Aug, 2.15 pm

PG Violence

Late Night with the Devil

Directed by Aussie genre mavericks Cameron and Colin Cairnes (*100 Bloody Acres*, *Scare Campaign*), *Late Night with the Devil* delves into the spooky unpredictability of live broadcasts by offering a long-suppressed master tape of an infamous episode of American television. Set in the 1970s, the film follows charismatic late-night host Jack Delroy (genre iconoclast David Dastmalchian), who in an effort to boost the ratings of his once hugely popular “Night Owls”, has invited an eerie tableau of guests for his Hail Mary of an occult-focused Halloween broadcast. His guests include a spirit medium, an ex-magician turned sceptic and finally a parapsychologist and her infamous patient, the lone survivor of a satanic cult who claims to be intermittently possessed by the Devil.

The Cairnes bros skillfully recreate the aesthetics and atmosphere of 70s late night TV, immersing viewers in a bygone era of collective viewership, interspersed with fourth wall breaks revealing behind-the-scenes theatrics and tension. Drawing inspiration from historical incidents like Christine Chubbuck's live suicide and the BBC's infamous *Ghostwatch*. Funny, scary and even poignant, the film expertly incorporates elements of the satanic panic, dark magic and the lingering influence of *The Exorcist*. It all culminates in creating one hell of an eerie midnight movie experience. Occasional deviations from the “lost



master tape” premise aside, the film remains a thought-provoking and enigmatic thriller that lingers in the mind, leaving viewers intrigued about what transpires beyond the camera's view. — AT

“The ingenuity, the painstaking period recreation, a riveting performance by Dastmalchian, and a showstopper of a finale make for one Halloween event you won't want to miss.”

— Meagan Navarro, *Bloody Disgusting*

Directors, Screenplay, Editors: Colin Cairnes, Cameron Cairnes

Australia/UAE 2023 | 92 mins

Producers: Derek Dauchy, Mat Govini, Steven Schneider, Roy Lee, Adam White, John Molloy

Cinematography: Matthew Temple

Production Designer: Otello Stolfo

Costume Designer: Stephanie Hooke

Music: Glenn Richards

Cast: David Dastmalchian, Laura Godron, Fayssal Bazzi, Ian Bliss, Ingrid Torelli, Rhys Auteri, Josh Quong Tart, Georgina Haig

Festivals: SXSW, Sydney 2023

Screenings

B DEL	Thu 10 Aug, 3.15 pm
A RXY	Fri 11 Aug, 8.30 pm
A LHC	Sun 13 Aug, 8.15 pm

TBC NZ classification TBC

#Manhole

Contained thrillers featuring trapped protagonists have always been popular with audiences, whether it's Colin Farrell holed up in *Phonebooth* or Ryan Reynolds six-foot under in *Buried*. The sub-genre's latest entry is *#Manhole*, a claustrophobic survival feature centred on the unfortunate predicament of handsome and charming Shunsuke, who drunkenly tumbles down a manhole on the way home from a surprise party. One second his friends and co-workers are celebrating his good fortune on the eve of becoming the apparent heir to his future father-in-law's real estate empire and in the next, he's waking up in an abandoned concrete shaft with a hangover from hell.

There's a great deal of cathartic entertainment in watching someone mine every available resource and problem-solve under ever increasing pressure. And for much of *#Manhole*'s runtime this is what unfolds as Shunsuke makes the most of a fully charged cell phone and items in his briefcase. That is until the film radically switches gears when Shunsuke finally turns to social media with a plan so-crazy-it-may-just-work—that is if the gas leaks, rising water, blood loss and poisonous foam don't seal his fate first. And just when you think you know how this plays out, the film delivers one final WTF twist that transforms everything you've just been watching. — AT



"*#Manhole* already stands apart from other confined escape thrillers by putting smartphone technology at the center of the plot. While thrillers and horror movies keep using the sudden lack of signal as a crutch to eliminate the complexities this brings to the table, this film is actually interested in exploring how dependent we are on our phones... While the collective knowledge of the internet can hold any kind of answer, the anonymity and speed of social media also allow people to make a bad situation worse." — Marco Vito Oddo, *Collider*

"An original single-location thriller, online cautionary tale and WTF ridiculousness to make for an enjoyable plunge into the unknown/unknowable."

— Jessica Kiang, *Variety*

Director:
Kazuyoshi Kumakiri
Japan 2023 | 99 mins
Producers: Tsuyoshi Matsushita, Hideki Hoshino
Screenplay: Michitaka Okada
Cinematography: Yuta Tsukinaga
Editor: Daisuke Imai
Production Designer: Norifumi Ataka
Costume Designer: Mari Miyamoto
Music: Takuma Watanabe
Cast: Yuto Nakajim, Nao, Kento Nagayama
Language: Japanese with English subtitles
Festivals: Berlin 2023

Screenings

- A RXY Thu 3 Aug, 8.15 pm
- B DEL Wed 9 Aug, 4.15 pm
- A LHC Thu 10 Aug, 8.30 pm

TBC NZ classification TBC

Chop & Steele



Directors: Ben Steinbauer, Berndt Mader
USA 2022 | 77 mins
Editors: Mike Saenz, Alex MacKenzie, Don Swaynos
With: Joe Pickett, Nick Prueher, Albertina Rizzo, David Cross, Bobcat Goldthwait, The Yes Men, Reggie Watts, Kurt Braunohler, Davy Rothbart, John Lee, Alyson Levy
Festivals: Tribeca, Fantastic Fest 2022

Those with sturdy memories will recall the hit doco *Winebago Man* (NZIFF 2009), a fave from eons ago. Filmmaker Ben Steinbauer was behind that hilarious portrayal, and graces us now with a funny and intimate study of Joe Pickett and Nick Prueher. After finding a discarded VHS tape these two pranksters created the now notorious Found Footage Festival, a roaming event that highlights the secret analogue world of VHS tapes found in second hand stores and other cultural recesses. *Chop & Steele* traces the journey of the dynamic duo taking their live-show on the road and the eventual toll on their friendship.

While on the road, the two amuse themselves by pranking breakfast television shows before parlaying their infamy and mounting legal pressure all the way to a now legendary (and blacklisted) performance on *America's Got Talent*.

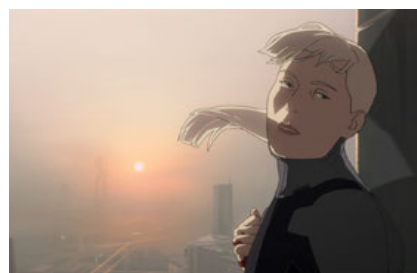
Like *The Yes Men* but without any overt political chicanery, Pickett and Prueher are content with highlighting the banality of middle America and showcasing a country forever caught in a perpetual state of idiocracy. The doco is filled with fun interviews from those inspired by the duo's work—Bobcat Goldthwait, Howie Mandel and David Cross—alongside numerous jaw-dropping clips that built their reputation. — AT

Screenings

- B DEL Wed 2 Aug, 4.45 pm
- A RXY Fri 4 Aug, 6.00 pm
- A RXY Mon 7 Aug, 6.00 pm

E Documentary film exempt from NZ Classification labelling requirements

Mars Express



Director: Jérémie Périn
France 2023 | 87 mins
Screenplay: Laurent Sarfati, Jérémie Périn
Artistic Director: Mikael Robert
Animation: Nils Robin, Hanne Galvex, Nicolas Galvez
Voices: Léa Drucker, Mathieu Amalric, Daniel Njo Lobé
Language: French with English subtitles
Festivals: Cannes (Cinéma de la Plage), Annecy 2023

At this year's Cannes, the big discovery was this five-years-in-the-making, cyber-punk-noir animated feature from French director Jérémie Périn. This hard sci-fi creation of a colonised Mars shares genetic make-up in tandem with *Métal Hurlant Magazine*, *Ghost in the Shell*, *I, Robot*, *Robocop* and *Blade Runner* in a dystopian tale of a rogue code allowing androids to be jailbroken from their inbuilt (non-violent) hardline directives. The two P.Is thrown into this matrix-miasma are Aline—a human—and Carlos who is a "backup"; an android replica of Aline's deceased partner.

Both investigators go down a galactic rabbit hole in search of answers that start with a runaway cybernetics student who has discovered some strange coding while programming a robot. An ambitious space spectacle, features complex world-building (with input from

futurists, scientists and engineers) and attention to numerous clever details that will immediately immerse viewers and provide a rich hunting ground for repeat viewings. Noctis, the Martian capital, is a visual wonder of mecha-architecture and is the perfect environment for a clever script that intertwines a noir-ish robotic utopia alongside a tangled web of corrupt players at the highest echelon of Martian power. — AT

Screenings

- A LHC Fri 28 Jul, 8.15 pm
- A RXY Mon 31 Jul, 8.30 pm
- B DEL Fri 11 Aug, 3.15 pm
- A RXY Sat 12 Aug, 8.30 pm

TBC NZ classification TBC

Hello Dankness

Dan and Dominique Angeloro—the creative duo known as Soda Jerk—are digital-anarchists and pioneers of new narrative alchemy. Their artistry involves complex storytelling and questionable fair-use sampling from all manner of pop culture, primarily raiding magical morsels from movies, songs, speeches and even infamous memes. Painstakingly developed over four years, this hysterical amalgamation of initially discordant and disconnected memorable material, transforms into a glorious loopy portrait of the torturous political period before and after the 2016 American elections.

In a digital wilderness, recognisable images are rejigged and recycled to express ideas that have real political consequences. Whether you lean right or left, no side of the divide is left unscathed in this virtuoso piece of frenzied collated filmmaking that demands audiences are net-savvy enough to know the difference between a Harambe and a Pepe. Incorporating “acquired” footage from movies like *The ‘Burbs*, *American Beauty*, *Wayne’s World*, *Zombieland*, *Robocop*, *Sausage Party*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and a treasure trove of deep internet lore, this experimental mind-fuck is a towering achievement that should be celebrated by film fanatics, fake news/bizarro conspiracy



rubberneckers and anyone interested in new media manipulation. Guaranteed to be unlike anything you’ve ever seen before and if studio lawyers have their say, unlike anything you’ll ever see again. — AT

“A glorious ode to the power re-editing has to change meaning and reorganize a story... You’ve never seen a film quite like this one before.”

— Mark Vito Otto, *Collider*

Directors, Producers, Screenplay, Editors:
Soda Jerk

Australia 2022 | 70 mins

Sound: Soda Jerk, Sam Smith

Festivals: Adelaide 2022; Berlin, Sydney 2023

Q&A: Soda Jerk*

Screenings

B	LHC	Fri 28 Jul, 4.00 pm*
A	RXY	Sat 29 Jul, 6.15 pm*
A	LHC	Sun 30 Jul, 8.15 pm*

R13 *Offensive language, sexual references & drug use*

Sisu

Sisu is a Finnish concept that means stoic determination, tenacity of purpose, grit, bravery, resilience, and hardiness. It’s also the title given to this cathartic and bloody WWII Finnish action film that’ll give any Proud Boy a cinematic-aneurysm with its running time entirely made up of jaw-dropping and perversely funny methods for the dispatching of Nazis by a one-man army.

Director Jalmari Helander opens his deliriously gory war/western with Aatami Korpi, a lone mysterious Finnish miner discovering gold before being interrupted by a convoy of Nazis, favouring the scorched earth approach in their departure from the Lapland region. The whiff of a fortune is enough for these war-weary fascists to pivot their plans and focus all attention on the golden meal ticket named Korpi. One extremely *scheiße bauen* decision. The Nazi commander is warned by a cohort that Korpi is “one mean motherfucker you don’t want to mess with”, before ignoring this pertinent piece of intel and proceeding in an attempt to eliminate the Scandinavian version of John Wick (complete with dog). Don’t come along expecting any clever deconstruction of action genre tropes or an avant-garde approach to familiar material—this isn’t that movie. This movie’s *raison d’être* is to fuck-up Nazis six ways to Sunday. With chapter headings like “Kill



’em All”, fans of demented violent action will be pleasantly surprised by the never-ending display of innovative ways a human body can be disassembled. — AT

“Serving up stone-cold multiplex mayhem, *Sisu* makes no bones about it—this is a film about one mad bastard killing a gazillion Nazis. It’s almost impossible not to love it”.

— Alex Godfrey, *Empire*

Director, Screenplay:
Jalmari Helander

Finland 2022 | 91 mins

Producer: Petri Jokiranta

Cinematography: Kjell Lagerroos

Editor: Juho Virolainen

Production Designer: Otso Linnalaakso

Costume Designer: Anna Vilppunen

Music: Juri Seppä, Toumas Wainola

Cast: Jorma Tommila, Aksel Hennie, Jack Doolan, Mimosa Willamo, Onni Tommila

Languages: English and Finnish with English subtitles

Festivals: Toronto, Sitges 2022; Sydney 2023

Screenings

A	RXY	Fri 28 Jul, 8.30 pm
B	DEL	Fri 4 Aug, 3.30 pm
A	EMB	Sun 6 Aug, 8.45 pm

TBC *NZ classification TBC*



**Celebrating Creativity
Since Forever**



Whānau Mārama: New Zealand Film Festival **NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT**

The price of your ticket is just 50% of the cost of presenting the film festival. Becoming a NZIFF Festival Patron is a great way to show your support with annual patronage ranging from \$500 to \$5000.

NZIFF Festival Patrons are a special part of the festival whānau and all levels include a 10 trip pass/tickets and personalised booking service.

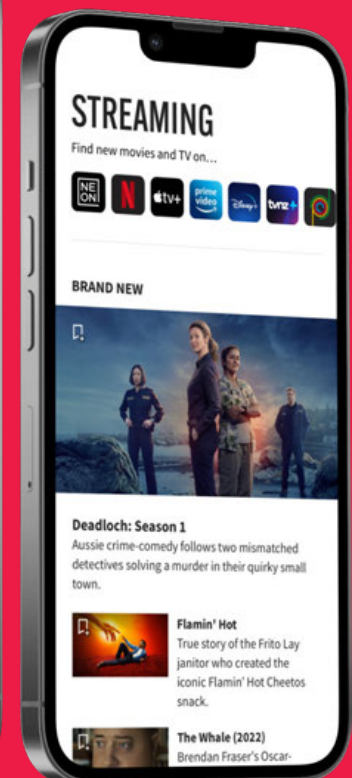
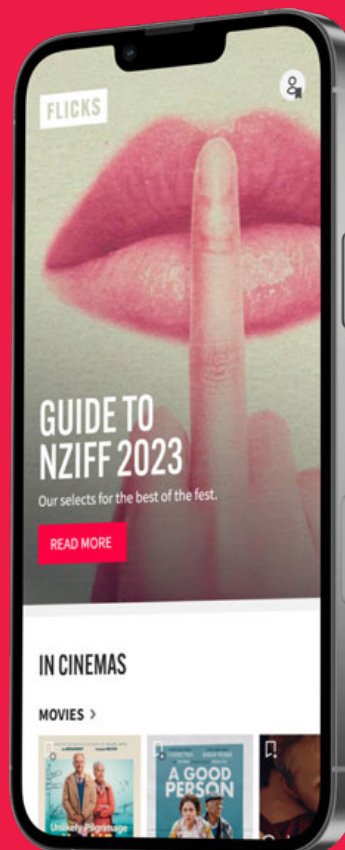
FIND OUT MORE AT

nziff.co.nz/patrons OR
email patrons@nziff.co.nz

FLICKS

NOT SURE WHAT TO WATCH?

DOWNLOAD THE NEW FLICKS APP



NZIFF For Schools & NZIFF Access

Whānau Mārama: NZIFF for Schools

This year we're delighted to be back presenting our Whānau Mārama: NZIFF for Schools programme in-person. We're thrilled to welcome school groups back to four of Aotearoa's landmark theatres; The Civic (Auckland), The Embassy (Wellington), the Isaac Theatre Royal (Christchurch), The Regent (Dunedin), alongside our pilot programme partnership with the Len Lye Centre Cinema (New Plymouth).

Together with Square Eyes Film Foundation, we're providing an opportunity for tamariki and rangatahi to experience film on the big screen, see their own stories reflected, and engage with international cinema culture and the wider world. This year's **NZIFF For Schools** is an animated short film programme carefully curated to engage and inspire those aged 5-12, showcasing a diverse selection of brilliantly original visual styles, characters, settings and themes.

NZIFF For Schools is generously supported by Gold Star patrons Christine and Richard Didsbury.

'Pay-It-Forward'

You can help us make film more accessible for children who may have never experienced the magic of a collective cinema experience. With your donation we can extend the already popular NZIFF For Schools screenings to tamariki from low-decile-high-priority communities.

'Pay-It-Forward' by adding a \$5 ticket donation for one school-aged child to attend NZIFF For Schools.

'Pay-It-Forward' + Transport: Help make NZIFF even more accessible by adding a \$20 donation for one school-aged child to attend NZIFF For Schools, with transport. This donation covers both a ticket contribution, as well as charter bus return fare from school to the cinema.

When you complete your NZIFF ticketing transaction you'll be prompted to add your donation to your shopping cart. With every donation of \$5 or more you have the option to receive a tax-deductible receipt from NZIFF. Find out more at nziff.co.nz/donations

For information on booking a school group to our NZIFF For Schools screening, or to book school groups for any other NZIFF 2023 screening, please email schools@nziff.co.nz or head to our website nziff.co.nz/schools.

NZIFF Access

We want everyone to enjoy NZIFF 2023 and this year we have worked with filmmakers, distributors and venues to offer screenings for Deaf and/or disabled communities.

The inaugural NZIFF Access programme will provide greater accessibility to all members of the community.

NZSL Interpretation and Open Captioning

- Three screenings with open captions displaying important audio information and dialogue on-screen
- Ushers competent in New Zealand Sign Language will be onsite
- NZSL-interpreted Q&A following Rolf de Heer's *The Survival of Kindness*

Sweet As (p50)

Sun 30 Jul 10:30am
Deluxe Cinemas, Embassy Theatre

The Giants (p61)

Sun 6 Aug 10:00am
Deluxe Cinemas, Embassy Theatre

The Survival of Kindness (p41)

Tue 8 Aug 5:45pm
Deluxe Cinemas, Embassy Theatre (with Q&A)

PLUS: *The Tuba Thieves* (p50, in English and American sign language) and *Is There Anybody Out There* (p59) will both screen with open captions, and *Robot Dreams* (p53) is a dialogue-free film.

Audio Described screenings

Three screenings with the audio-described soundtrack played through the cinema speakers

The Tuba Thieves (p50)

Tue 1 Aug 6:00pm
Deluxe Cinemas, Embassy Theatre

Is There Anybody Out There? (p59)

Sat 29 Jul 10:00am
Deluxe Cinemas, Embassy Theatre

Loop Track (p21)

Sat 12 Aug 10:00am
Deluxe Cinemas, Embassy Theatre

Low-sensory screenings

- House lights will remain on at a low level
- Volume will be played at a lower level
- A more relaxed environment and patrons can move around as they need
- A breakout space will be available for use in the foyer area of the cinema

Sweet As (p50)

Sun 13 Aug 10:30am
Deluxe Cinemas, Embassy Theatre

Robot Dreams (p53)

Sat 5 Aug 10:00am
Deluxe Cinemas, Embassy Theatre

Physical access

We work across all our venues to ensure that accessibility information is readily available, including availability of wheelchair spaces, ramps, lift access and mobility parking. For more information on each venue, head to our venue page (p84) or nziff.co.nz/access.

Access screening tickets

Tickets for all NZIFF Access screenings are available to purchase on request.

Please email access@nziff.co.nz for details

Ticketing information

Ticket prices

A Coded sessions

Weekdays after 5.00pm and weekends

» Full Price	\$20.50
» Student/Community Services Card/Film Society/Film Guilds*	\$17.00
» Senior (65+)	\$14.50
» Child (15 and under)	\$13.50

B Coded sessions

Sessions starting before 5.00pm weekdays

» Full price/Student/Community Services Card/Film Society/Film Guilds*	\$17.00
» Senior (65+) and Child (15 and under) at A Coded prices	

King Loser: Film* + Gig

Saturday 5 August 8.30pm

» Full Price	\$30.50
» Student/Community Services Card/Film Society/Film Guilds*	\$27.00
» Senior (65+)	\$24.50

*Standard prices apply for film only

Anselm 3D: Film

Ticket price includes 3D glasses

Saturday 5 August 1.15pm

» Full Price	\$22.50
» Student/Community Services Card/Film Society/Film Guilds*	\$19.00
» Senior (65+)	\$16.50
» Child (15 and under)	\$15.50

Thursday 10 August 3.45pm

» Full price/Student/Community Services Card/Film Society/Film Guilds*	\$19.00
» Senior (65+) and Child (15 and under) at A Coded prices (see above)	

Animation for Kids 4+ and Animation for Kids 8+

» All tickets	\$13.50
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All prices are GST inclusive and in NZD.

* Discount available on presentation of current relevant ID/membership. Booking fee of \$1.00 is included in ticket price. Credit card fees apply.

Online Discount

Purchase 10 or more Full Price tickets in one online transaction and automatically receive a discount of \$2.00 per ticket.

Multi-Trip Passes

» 10-Trip Pass	\$170.00
» 5-Trip Pass	\$90.00

Multi-trip passes can be purchased in advance online at nziff.co.nz from the pop-up NZIFF box office or from NZIFF venues during NZIFF dates. It can be redeemed for tickets in advance or on the day at NZIFF box offices for any session that is not sold out.

Multi-trip passes are valid for all sessions, subject to seat availability, except *King Loser*, *Film + Gig* and *Anselm 3D*.

Passes are flexible and can be used in any configuration up to the number of tickets (e.g you may wish to use your pass for 10 tickets to one film or 2 tickets for 5 films).

Passes cannot be refunded, either in part or in full. Tickets booked via a pass cannot be refunded if a particular film is cancelled but may be transferred to a different film (subject to availability).

Concessions

Special price tickets are available for A-coded films for students, seniors (65+), children, Community Service Cardholders, film industry guild members, and Film Society members. Film Society 'Three Film Sampler' holders are not entitled to the concession discount.

Buying your tickets

Tickets for all film screenings at NZIFF 2023 are **only** available through nziff.co.nz and can be purchased in advance or at the pop-up box office or at relevant venues. We recommend you book **early** to secure the best seats.

Online bookings

nziff.co.nz

To select your own seats, use the 'CHANGE SEAT' button before completing your purchase. Tickets purchased online will be emailed to you, allowing you to print them at home or present them on a mobile device.

In-person bookings

7-27 July: NZIFF pop-up ticketing booth

Creative Capital Arts Trust, 17 Allen St, Te Aro
10.00am – 6.00pm Monday to Friday
11.00am – 4.00pm Saturday & Sunday

Please note: Ticketing booth will be closed for the Matariki public holiday on Friday 14 July and will close at 4.00pm on Thursday 27 July.

Embassy, Penthouse Cinema and Roxy Cinemas

Tickets for all NZIFF screenings available. Each box office opens 30 minutes before each NZIFF session commences and closes 15 minutes after the start of the final NZIFF session for the day.

Light House Cinema Cuba and Light House Cinema Petone

Only tickets for screenings at each cinema are available at these sites. Each box office opens 30 minutes before each NZIFF session commences and closes 15 minutes after each session starts. Box offices may be closed between sessions.

Please note: Patrons buying tickets for sessions about to start may be given priority over patrons seeking advance bookings.

Phone bookings (04) 802 4001

Limited phone booking service available and we strongly recommend booking online or in-person until:

Thursday 27 July

10.00am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday
11.00am – 4.00pm Saturday and Sunday

28 July – 13 August

11.00am – 5.00pm daily

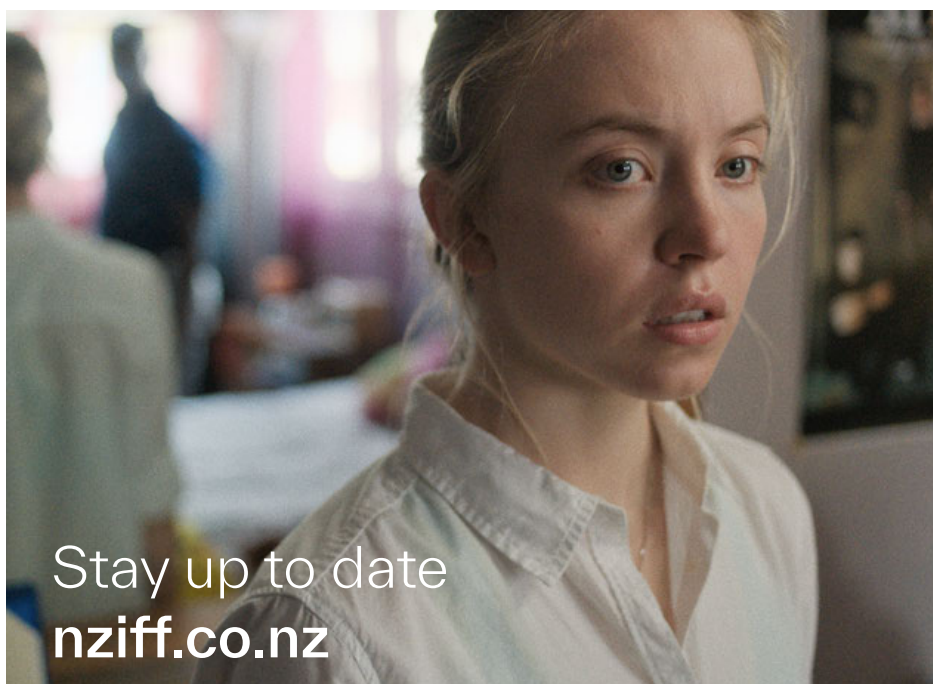
Groups and schools

For group bookings of 20 or more people please email:

» **Milicent Ghosh**, at audiencedevelopment@nziff.co.nz

For school bookings please email:

» **Nic Marshall** at schools@nziff.co.nz



Stay up to date
nziff.co.nz

For answers to frequently asked questions visit nziff.co.nz

Programme Changes

Information in the programme catalogue is correct at the time of printing. We reluctantly reserve the right to change the schedule by amending dates or replacing films. Any changes will be updated and communicated on NZIFF's website nziff.co.nz and in our daily newsletters.

Refunds

Please note that **NO REFUNDS will be given for tickets** (either unused, uncollected or collected late) except as required by law. **Bookings once made cannot be altered.** Please see below regarding COVID-19 related refunds.

Please arrive early

There are no advertising films or trailers at NZIFF. **We reserve the right to ask latecomers to wait until the conclusion of any introductions or short films before they are seated, or to seat latecomers in seats other than those originally purchased, to minimise disturbing other patrons.** Session starting times will not be delayed in deference to late arrivals. Any video recording is strictly prohibited. If collecting tickets prior to a screening allow extra time in case there are queues.

Mobile phones

Please ensure mobile phones and other electronic devices are switched off before entering the auditorium.

Classification

TBC – NZ classification pending
 E – Documentary film exempt from NZ classification labelling requirements
 G – Suitable for general audiences
 PG – Parental guidance recommended for younger viewers
 M – Unrestricted. Recommended as more suitable for mature audiences 16 years and over
 RP13 – Restricted to persons 13 years and over, unless they are accompanied by a parent or guardian
 RP16 – Restricted to persons 16 years and over, unless they are accompanied by a parent or guardian
 R13 – Restricted to persons 13 years and over
 R16 – Restricted to persons 16 years and over
 R18 – Restricted to persons 18 years and over

Classifications are published on the NZIFF website and displayed at venue box offices. Children's tickets are available only for films classified G, PG & M.

At the time of printing some films had not been rated. Until they receive a classification rating, they are considered R18 (unless clearly aimed at children) and can only be purchased by and for people aged 18 and over. For more information please visit the ticketing and venue information page on our website.

Child concession price tickets are not available for R13 films—student price applies.

Please note: ID may be requested for restricted films.



**Wellington
Film Society**

wellingtonfilms.nz
filmsociety@gmail.com

Our website has it all: nziff.co.nz

Find out more about the feature films and short film programmes we've selected for this year's NZIFF, access exclusive trailers and content, and curate your own shortlist and schedule of screenings to watch this winter.

- » **Films:** Explore films by theme, genre, country, language and more.
- » **Register:** Sign up to receive monthly news and daily session updates during NZIFF, and to create wishlists that you can share.
- » **Curate a wishlist:** Add any film to your own wishlist and then share your wishlist with friends (great for organising a crew), save sessions to your calendar, and create a handy shopping list to purchase from. You can even create a wishlist for every town and city where NZIFF screens.
- » **Schedule reminders:** Select the reminder on a film session to be alerted if tickets start selling fast, so you can book ASAP.
- » **News:** Read the latest film announcements, meet the filmmakers and peruse our guest profiles on the news section of the website.
- » **Galleries:** Browse NZIFF photos of special events, including world premieres, awards evenings and Q+As with leading filmmakers.

Follow us on social media

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for behind-the-scenes photos and footage, sneak peeks, trailer reveals and giveaways.



facebook.com/nziffilmfestival

Become a friend, watch trailers and take part in competitions and discussions.



twitter.com/nziff

Keep up to date with our Twitter feed.



youtube.com/nzintfilmfestival

Watch trailers, interviews and much more.



instagram.com/nziff

Take a peek behind the scenes.

How to save

We want everyone to experience NZIFF 2023 and we work to keep our ticket prices as low as possible (your ticket price only covers 50% of the cost of presenting each film you attend).

Here's how YOU can save:

- **See more!**
Buy a multi-trip pass (5-trip or 10-trip passes available) and save. These are flexible and can be used in any configuration (choose films for yourself or share with friends). Note: Multi-trip passes are not valid for *King Loser* Film + Gig or *Anselm 3D*.
- **Catch a daytime film!**
All weekday daytime (before 5.00pm) sessions are at a reduced price.
- **Check for concessions!**
We offer concession prices for Students (with valid ID), children (under 15), seniors (65+), film industry guild members, and Film Society members.
- **Grab your friends!**
Buy 10 or more Full Price tickets in one online transaction and automatically receive a \$2.00 per ticket discount.

Covid-19 guidelines

By entering a cinema or venue for a NZIFF screening, you agree to comply with the COVID-19 related requirements at the time and any specific requirements of individual venues. These requirements may vary from venue to venue and will be communicated on the NZIFF website and displayed at the venue.

Stay up-to-date, visit nziff.co.nz

- NZIFF asks that you do not attend a NZIFF film screening if the following applies to you or any members of your group:
- You have Covid-19 or are awaiting the results of a Covid-19 test
- You are currently isolating
- You are feeling unwell with symptoms associated with Covid-19.

For refunds due to Covid-19 related reasons, please email tickets@nziff.co.nz



MISSED YOUR FAVOURITE FILM IN WELLINGTON?

NZIFF 2023 is Nationwide:

How about a trip to....

WHAKAORIORI MASTERTON | 16-30 AUG

TE PAPAIOEA PALMERSTON NORTH | 17 AUG - 3 SEP

Visit nziff.co.nz
Select the city from the drop-down menu



THE WELLINGTON FILM QUIZ RETURNS!

Are you film fit? Know your Champion from Cronenberg? Gather your team together!

How many donkeys play the role of EO in *EO*?*

Saturday 5 Aug 1.30-3.00pm, venue TBC
Hosted by the Wellington Film Society

*not necessarily a film quiz question

Register your team at nziff.co.nz/wellingtonfilmquiz



Te Puna Ataata Aotearoa New Zealand Film Heritage Trust works proactively to ensure heritage New Zealand films remain available for future generations to enjoy by:

- partnering with Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision archives for film materials preservation
- having film materials created in digital formats
- managing the accessibility of films in our care for screenings

In 2023 we are proud to have funded the digitisation of *Bread & Roses* which is screening at this year's Whānau Mārama NZIFF.

We acknowledge our archival partner Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision, the work of Park Road Post and Images and Sound along with the generous support of Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga NZ Film Commission.

If you would like to know more about the Trust, please get in touch at:

info@nzfilmheritagetrust.co.nz

Meet the Filmmakers

We are delighted to once again bring international filmmakers to Aotearoa to present their films at selected screenings and answer questions following the sessions.



Laha Mebow

GAGA (p28)

RXY Sun 6 Aug, 2.00 pm
RXY Mon 7 Aug, 3.15 pm

Laha Mebow is the first female Indigenous film director in Taiwan. Her works focus mostly on the shared experience of indigenous peoples in Taiwan. Her previous feature film *Hang in There, Kids!* (2016) not only swept five Taipei Film Awards including best narrative feature, the grand prize and best director, but was also nominated for the Golden Horse Awards and selected as Taiwan's Oscar entry.



Soda Jerk

Hello Dankness (p77)

LHC Fri 28 Jul, 4.00 pm
RXY Sat 29 Jul, 6.15 pm
LHC Sun 30 Jul, 8.15 pm

Soda Jerk is an artist duo who make sample-based films with a rogue documentary impulse. They are fundamentally interested in the politics of images; how they circulate, whom they benefit and how they can be undone. Formed in Sydney in 2002, they've been based in New York since 2012. They have exhibited extensively within the fields of art and experimental cinema.



Elegance Bratton

The Inspection (p31)

EMB Fri 28 Jul, 8.30 pm
RXY Sat 29 Jul, 1.45 pm

Elegance Bratton is an award-winning and boundary-breaking director, writer and producer. He began making films as a US Marine after spending a decade homeless. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community, his work captures stories untold with an intention to show the universal power of our shared humanity. Bratton's films have played in over 200 film festivals worldwide.



Christoffer Guldbrandsen

A Storm Foretold (p63)

EMB Wed 2 Aug, 8.45 pm
RXY Thu 3 Aug, 1.30 pm

Christoffer Guldbrandsen's work is inspired by the observational style of the direct cinema movement. He trained as a journalist at universities in Denmark and the UK and his work has won several prizes, including the Peabody Award (USA) and The Danish Art Council's Grant. Guldbrandsen penetrates closed and secretive milieus like no other. His films are characterised by an expressive realism in structure, form, and content. In addition to his film work, Guldbrandsen has served as CEO for The Why Foundation, Commissioning Editor and Channel Controller for DR—The Danish Broadcasting Corporation.



Rolf de Heer

The Survival of Kindness (p41)

EMB Mon 7 Aug, 6.15 pm
DEL Tue 8 Aug, 5.45 pm*
LHC Wed 9 Aug, 11.00 am

Rolf de Heer writes, produces and directs feature films. His works include *Ten Canoes*, *Dance Me To My Song*, *The Quiet Room* and *Charlie's Country* (all seen at Cannes), *The Tracker* and *Bad Boy Bobby* (both at Venice); *Alexandra's Project* (Berlin) and currently *The Survival of Kindness*, winner of the FIPRESCI Critics Award in Berlin 2023. NZIFF is one of his favourite film festivals.

*Access screening with open captions. Introduction and Q&A will be NZSL-interpreted

Filmmaker introductions and Q&As will take place for all New Zealand films as indicated on the individual film pages. Check nziff.co.nz/aotearoconnections for details.

Entry to all Q&As is free.

As we go to print, we are hoping to confirm more international guests—stay up to date at nziff.co.nz

NZIFF Connect

Whānau Mārama: New Zealand International Film Festival provides New Zealand filmmakers with opportunities to broaden their knowledge and connect with each other and our visiting filmmakers.

As part of NZIFF 2023 we offer two key events for filmmakers.

Masterclass with Rolf de Heer

Master filmmaker Rolf de Heer will take filmmakers inside his craft and uncover his filmmaking process from project to project.

Masterclass attendees are encouraged to see *The Survival of Kindness* beforehand.

Date and time TBC

please check nziff.co.nz/masterclass

\$30 Full price / \$25 Industry guild concession

Tickets on sale 10 July.

Pre-register by emailing masterclass@nziff.co.nz

Limited to 50 participants.

In Discussion with Soda Jerk

Find out more about the creative practice behind filmmakers and artist duo Soda Jerk. This informal conversation is an opportunity to ask Soda Jerk about their body of work and approach to experimental art and cinema.

Free entry, but registration recommended.

Details available at nziff.co.nz/connect from 3 July.

NZIFF Engage

Join us at panel discussions to delve deeper into the themes of selected films in NZIFF 2023.

- **Brainwashed: Sex-Camera-Power (p58):** New Zealand filmmakers and creatives discuss themes raised in Nina Menkes' film
- **Subject (p57):** New Zealand documentary filmmakers and documentary subjects reflect on the themes of this film

Panel discussions are free and details will be available at nziff.co.nz/engage from 10 July.

NZIFF Engage and NZIFF Connect are supported by

Artistic Development Partner

 creative nz
ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND TOI AOTEAROA

 deganz
directors and editors guild of aotearoa new zealand
ngā kaitiakiwhakaari kiwhānau

Venues

Embassy Theatre (EMB) & Embassy Deluxe (DEL)

10 Kent Tce, Mount Victoria

The main Embassy cinema (EMB) is located on Level 1 and Embassy Deluxe (DEL) is located on the ground level.

Box Office: A dedicated NZIFF 2023 box office will be located on the ground floor from Friday 28 July to Sunday 13 August. Tickets for all NZIFF 2023 sessions in Wellington are available to purchase from this box office.

Information Desk: Located in the Embassy and staffed by Wellington Film Society committee members. Find out up-to-date information about the film festival here.

Accessibility:

- 6 wheelchair spaces in main cinema
- 2 wheelchair spaces in Deluxe
- Venue fully accessible via lift to Level 1 for the main cinema and ramp to Deluxe. Lift is located to the left of the main foyer
- Hearing loop available.

Parents: Please leave prams with staff.

Meet Up Eat Up: Candy Bar on Level 1 will be open for the duration of the festival for drinks (hot and cold) and snacks. Blondinis (Level 1) and Black Sparrow (Deluxe foyer) will be open in the evenings.

Penthouse Cinema (PEN)

205 Ohiro Rd, Brooklyn

All screenings will be in Cinema 3

Day Sales Box Office: Look out for the dedicated NZIFF 2023 cashier located near the entrance from Friday 28 July to Sunday 13 August. Tickets for all NZIFF 2023 sessions in Wellington are available to purchase from this box office.

Accessibility:

- 2 wheelchair spaces
- Venue fully accessible
- Infra-red headphones available from the box office
- Drop off outside cinema.

Parents: Changing tables in accessible toilet.

Meet Up Eat Up: A selection of hot and cold beverages, snacks and light meals available.

Roxy Cinemas (RXY)

5 Park Rd, Miramar

Screenings will be in Cinemas 1 & 2

Day Sales Box Office: Look out for the dedicated NZIFF 2023 cashier located upstairs in the Grand Lobby from Friday 28 July to Sunday 13 August. Tickets for all NZIFF 2023 sessions in Wellington are available to purchase from this box office.

Accessibility:

- 1 wheelchair space available in each cinema
- Venue fully accessible via lift (access through the right side of the restaurant and down the back corridor)
- Infra-red headphones available from the box office
- Cinema 1 is located on the upstairs floor and Cinema 2 is located on the ground floor down a corridor to the left of the restaurant
- The accessibility toilet is located on the ground floor only
- Drop off outside cinema.

Parents: Changing tables in accessible toilet.

Meet Up Eat Up: Roxy Café serves a wide range of hot and cold beverages, snacks and cabinet food daily. Coco restaurant is open Thursday to Sunday evenings and bookings are recommended.

Light House Cinema Cuba (LHC)

29 Wigan St, Te Aro

All screenings will be in Cinema 1

Box Office: Tickets only available for NZIFF 2023 sessions at Light House Cinema Cuba

Accessibility:

- 1 wheelchair space
- Venue fully accessible
- Infra-red headphones available from the box office
- Drop off outside cinema.

Parents: Changing tables in accessible toilet

Meet Up Eat Up: A selection of hot and cold beverages, snacks and light meals available

Light House Cinema Petone (LHP)

52 Beach St, Petone

Day Sales Box Office: Tickets only available for NZIFF 2023 sessions at Light House Cinema Petone.

Accessibility:

- 1 wheelchair space
- Venue fully accessible
- Infra-red headphones available from the box office
- Drop off outside cinema.

Parents: Changing tables in accessible toilet.

Meet Up Eat Up: A selection of hot and cold beverages, snacks and light meals available.

Getting there and parking

Check www.metlink.org.nz to plan your journey

Embassy Theatre

Multiple options to take buses to the Courtenay Place bus stop.

Parking: Paid street parking along middle island of Kent Tce/Cambridge Tce and limited parking on Majoribanks St.

Penthouse Cinema

Take buses 7 or 17 from Lambton Quay or Victoria St.

Parking: Paid carpark adjacent.

Roxy Cinemas

Take buses 2, 12e, 30x or 31x from Courtenay Place to Miramar shops.

Parking: Unrestricted car parking space on Tahiti Street, and further south on Park Road. Taxi stands are located directly outside The Roxy and there is a disabled drop-off zone directly outside The Roxy as well.

Light House Cinema Cuba

Easy walking distance from Courtenay Place.

Parking: Paid street parking with one mobility park outside venue. Paid carpark buildings nearby.

Light House Cinema Petone

Take the Hutt Valley train or buses 81 or 83 from Courtenay Place, or buses 110 or 130 from Lower Hutt.

Parking: Free on-street parking. Two mobility parks in council carpark across the road.



Sweet As

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**ENCORE ENCORE**

A selection of the most popular films at NZIFF 2023 will return for encore screenings at Embassy Theatre and Roxy Cinemas

Check nziff.co.nz for details and sign up to receive our daily email update

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Notes in this brochure are written and compiled by members of the NZIFF promotions and publications teams, Head of Programming Michael McDonnell, Senior Programmer Sandra Reid, programmers Vicci Ho, Ant Timpson, Nic Marshall, Malcolm Turner, Leo Koziol and Craig Fasi. Dan Ahwa, Tom Augustine, Nick Bollinger, Chris Bourke, Kailey Carruthers, Paul Diamond, Doug Dillaman, Doug Dillaman, Brannavan Gnanalingam, Libby Hakaraia, Adrian Hatwell, Tearepa Kahi, Andrew Langridge, Toby Manhire, Red Nicholson, Jacob Powell, Richard Swainson and Tim Wong also contributed notes. With thanks to proofreaders Rebecca McMillan and Cate Shave.

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Whānau Mārama
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