NEW ZEALAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

WELLINGTON
26 JULY – 11 AUGUST 2019

BOOK AT NZIFF.CO.NZ
CELEBRATING THE LEGACY OF COLIN McCAHON AS AN ARTIST AND TEACHER, AND 100 YEARS OF MODERN ART IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND
Bringing colour to kiwi life since 1946

Resene’s big screen story began back in 1946 when Ted Nightingale started making paint from his Wellington garage. Over 70 years later and the Resene name lives on as a truly homegrown success story, known for its quality paint, colour and innovation. Our paints are designed and made in New Zealand for our harsh weather conditions and our colours are inspired by everyday kiwi life. So you can be sure they will look great in your home, while also looking after it.

Proud supporters of the NZ films in the International Film Festival.
WELCOME

2019 brings a year of significant change to NZIFF. After 40 years of dedicated service, Director Bill Gosden handed in his keys and retired at the end of March. His legacy is monumental. Under his leadership, NZIFF has developed from its humble beginnings to the prominent cinema event it is today. In this period of transition, we have endeavoured to uphold the curatorial mission established during Bill’s tenure: to celebrate, with New Zealanders, the best that world and homegrown cinema has to offer, and to ensure that our audience’s appetite continues to be surprised, delighted, rewarded and challenged.

Our role is to be a conduit between filmmakers – through the stories their films recount – and the community NZIFF serves. This year some of these tales take us from the jungles of Vietnam to the moon landing, from the gritty streets of a Parisian banlieue to a small farm in far north New Zealand, from the desolate saértó of northeastern Brazil to the high seas of the Atlantic Ocean – and, ecstatically, to the concert stages of musical greats.

We cannot emphasise enough how NZIFF, being a non-profit enterprise, depends on you, the audience. Though the Wellington event calendar is much more crowded in 2019 than it was in 1972 your enthusiastic support ensures our spot as the major cultural event of the New Zealand winter.

We would also like to acknowledge the generous support of our partners. The longstanding major sponsorship we receive from the New Zealand Film Commission is invaluable in allowing us to select, deliver and promote our choice of New Zealand work. We are pleased that the Wellington City Council and Wellington Community Trust continue to recognise our significant contribution to Wellington’s cultural landscape. Resene joins us for their sixth year as sponsors of another stellar selection of films from Aotearoa. Our media partners Flicks.co.nz, The Breeze, NZ Herald and Metro magazine ensure that our audience engage with, and delve into, the diverse films in our programme. Creative New Zealand joins us for the second year as our Artistic Development Partner and Russell McVeagh returns as our standing Gala sponsor. And this year we are delighted to welcome Green & Black’s on board as our World strand partner. To these and all our partners, we say thank you.

Bill bowed out in style last year with Wellington – both his and the festival’s home for over four decades – celebrating record attendances. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to work alongside him. The team at NZIFF would like to dedicate this year’s festival to Bill, in recognition of his inestimable contribution to film culture in New Zealand.

The NZIFF team
TICKET PRICES

A CODED SESSIONS
Sessions starting after 5.00 pm weekdays, all weekend sessions (unless otherwise indicated), and sessions of *La Flor* starting after 4.00pm.

- Full Price $18.50
- Film Society/Film Industry Guilds/Nurses $15.00
- Student/Community Services Card $15.00
- Child (15 and under)/Senior (65+) $12.50

*A coded* evening sessions of *La Flor* (p25) start at the earlier time of 4.00 pm to accommodate the film's extra-long runtime.

B CODED SESSIONS
Sessions starting before 5.00 pm weekdays or of a shorter duration and others as indicated.

- Full Price $15.00
- Child (15 and under)/Senior (65+) $12.50

C CODED SESSIONS
- All tickets $11.50

D CODED SESSIONS Long Day’s Journey Into Night (partial 3D)
3D glasses will be provided if required, however we encourage you to consider the environment by reusing and bringing your own.

- Full Price $19.50
- Film Society/Film Industry Guilds/Nurses $16.00
- Student/Community Services Card $16.00
- Child (15 and under)/Senior (65+) $13.50

E SPECIAL EVENT ROXY CINEMA VWOAP The Biggest Little Farm

Monday August 5 at 8.00pm

- All tickets $50.00 (includes vegetarian garden plate with a non-alcoholic beverage)

ONLINE DISCOUNT
Purchase ten Full Price tickets or more in one online transaction and automatically receive a discount of $2.00 per ticket (not additional to group discount).

TEN-TRIP PASS
Valid for all sessions (excluding Special Events), subject to seat availability. Venue sales only.

- Ten-Trip Pass $150.00

The Ten-Trip Pass can be purchased in advance from the NZIFF box office at the Embassy Theatre (or from NZIFF venues during NZIFF dates). It can be used to book tickets in advance or on the day at NZIFF box offices for any session that is not sold out. The Ten-Trip Pass cannot be used for online, phone or mail bookings.

TICKETING FEES
A $1.00 per ticket transaction fee is already included in the price of the ticket. There are no additional service fees except for where a courier delivery is selected ($5.50).

CONCESSION DISCOUNTS (Film Society/Film Industry Guilds/Nurses/Student/Community Services Card)
Students, Film Society members, Film Industry Guild members, Nurses and Community Services Card holders are entitled to purchase one ticket per session at the discount rate. Student/Membership/Staff or CSC ID is required – please ensure you bring it with you to the venue to present to staff on request; failure to do so will result in the full price being charged for attendance. Film Society ‘Three Film Sampler’ holders are not entitled to the concession discount.

Prices are GST inclusive and in NZD.

REFUNDS
Please note that NO REFUNDS will be given for tickets (either unused, uncollected or collected late) and Ten-Trip Passes (either in part or in full). Bookings once made cannot be altered. Please choose carefully as there are no seat swaps, exchanges or refunds, except as required by law.

BUYING TICKETS

BOOKINGS OPEN ON THURSDAY 4 JULY AT 10.00 AM
Advance bookings will be available for all NZIFF screenings.

ONLINE www.nziff.co.nz
You have the option to select your own seats if you book online, using the ‘CHANGE SEAT’ button before you complete your purchase. Tickets purchased online will be emailed to you, allowing you to print them at home. Please ensure you print your ticket, not just your confirmation letter, and bring your ID if you have booked concession discount tickets. You may also present your ticket on your mobile. Please ensure your ticket is loaded and ready for presentation (along with concession ID).

IN PERSON BEFORE NZIFF (from Thursday 4 July to Thursday 25 July)
Advance tickets for all NZIFF screenings will be available at the NZIFF box office downstairs at the Embassy Theatre, 10 Kent Terrace.
10.00 am – 6.00 pm Monday to Friday, 11.00 am – 4.00 pm Saturday and Sunday.

IN PERSON DURING NZIFF (from Friday 26 July)
Embassy, City Gallery, Penthouse Cinema, Roxy Cinema: From Friday 26 July tickets to all NZIFF screenings are available from these box offices. Each box office will open 45 minutes prior to the first NZIFF session of the day and close 15 minutes after the start of the final NZIFF session.

Te Papa: Tickets to all NZIFF screenings are available from the NZIFF box office outside Soundings Theatre. This will open 45 minutes prior to the first NZIFF session of the day at Te Papa and close 15 minutes after the start of the final NZIFF session.

Light House Cuba, Light House Petone, Reading Cinemas Porirua: The box offices at these sites can only sell tickets for their own NZIFF screenings. The box office opens 45 minutes before each NZIFF session commences and closes 15 minutes after each session starts. Box offices are closed between sessions.

Please note: Patrons buying tickets for sessions about to start may be given priority over patrons seeking advance bookings.

MAIL BOOKINGS
A booking form can be found on the NZIFF website. Once printed and completed, post to: New Zealand International Film Festival, PO Box 9544, Marion Square, Wellington 6141. Alternatively, you can call (04) 801 6483 and we can post you a booking form.

TELEPHONE – Please note that we have very limited phone booking services
Hours prior to NZIFF (Thursday 4 July to Thursday 25 July)
10.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday, 11.00 am – 4.00 pm Saturday and Sunday.
Ph: (04) 801 8054

Hours during NZIFF (from Friday 26 July to Sunday 11 August)
10.30 am – 5.00 pm daily.
Ph: (04) 801 8054

SCHOOLS AND GROUP BOOKINGS
For groups of 20 or more people, contact Emma Carter at outreach@nziff.co.nz

METHOD OF PAYMENT
Cash: Accepted for box office and venue bookings.
EFTPOS: Accepted for box office and venue bookings.
Visa/Mastercard: Accepted for all bookings.
Cheque: Personal cheques are accepted for mail bookings only, and must be received five working days prior to your first screening. Cheques payable to NZ Film Festival Trust.

TICKET COLLECTION
For phone and mail bookings, tickets can be mailed or couriered out if booking is received at least nine days prior to your first screening. Otherwise they will be held for collection at the cinema box office of your first screening. Please bring your reference number and/or credit card and any concession ID as verification of your ticket purchase.

GENERAL ENQUIRIES
Prior to NZIFF (until 25 July)
Ph: (04) 801 6483, 9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday
During NZIFF (from 26 July – 11 August)
Ph: (04) 801 6483, 10.30 am – 8.00 pm daily
GENERAL INFORMATION

ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS VISIT www.nziff.co.nz

INFORMATION DESK
The information desk is located on the ground floor of the Embassy Theatre from July 26 where you will find up-to-date information about censorship, short films, session ending times and more.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS
Please advise the ticket seller when purchasing your tickets if you would like to transfer to a seat or remain in your wheelchair, or if you have any special requirements. Wheelchair accessible seats can also be identified and purchased online.

HEARING IMPAIRED
Please note that where films are indicated as having subtitles, this is not the same as full captioning for the hearing impaired. Please advise the ticket seller when purchasing your tickets if you have any special requirements.

Please see p7 for venue hearing loop support.

PROGRAMME CHANGES
We reluctantly reserve the right to change the schedule by amending dates or replacing films. From Friday 26 July, confirmation of daily session times will be available on NZIFF’s website www.nziff.co.nz and in our daily newsletters.

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 disturbance to other patrons. Session starting times will not be delayed in deference to late arrivals. If collecting tickets prior to a screening please 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.

FILM CLASSIFICATION
- 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
- R13 – Restricted to persons 13 years and over, unless they are accompanied by a parent or guardian
- R16 – Restricted to persons 16 years and over, unless they are accompanied by a parent or guardian
- R18 – Restricted to persons 18 years and over

Classifications will be published in NZIFF’s daily newspaper advertising and displayed at the venues’ box offices. Children’s tickets are available only for films classified G, PG and M.

At the time of printing some films have not been classified. Until they receive a classification, 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.

Please note: ID may be requested for restricted films.

SPONSORSHIP, BROCHURE AND WEBSITE ADVERTISING
Contact: Sharon Byrne Ph: (04) 802 2570

FURTHER INFORMATION
Contact us: info@nziff.co.nz, www.nziff.co.nz

EXPLORE THE PROGRAMME ONLINE AT www.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, and check out our ‘Must See’ recommendations from staff and friends of the NZIFF
- Register Sign up to receive monthly news and daily session updates during NZIFF, and to create wishlists that you can easily 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 peaks, trailer reveals and giveaways.

www.facebook.com/nzfilmfestival
Become a friend, watch trailers and take part in competitions and discussions.

www.twitter.com/nzff
Keep up to date with our Twitter feed.

www.youtube.com/nzintfilmfestival
Watch trailers, interviews and much more.

www.instagram.com/nziff
Take a peek behind the scenes.

KEY TO ICONS

- Guest Appearance Meet the makers. Films programmed with introductions and post-screening Q+As with the artists in person. Correct at the time of printing. See website for latest updates.
- Short Preceding Feature Shorts paired thematically with selected feature films in the programme.
- World Premiere Brand new features and documentaries – often homegrown – that we have the privilege of debuting to New Zealand audiences.
- Cannes Selection 2019 Direct from the Competition and Croisette in the South of France, we bring you the movies making waves at the most famous film festival of them all.
- Major Festival Award Films judged the best and brightest at A-list film festivals around the world, from Venice, to Berlin, to Sundance and Cannes.

KEY TO VENUE CODES

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A proud sponsor of the New Zealand International Film Festival since 2002

Russell McVeagh

Auckland
Vero Centre, 48 Shortland Street  P +64 9 367 8000

Wellington
Dimension Data House, 157 Lambton Quay  P +64 4 499 9555

russellmcveagh.com
VENUES

1 EMBASSY THEATRE (EMB) & EMBASSY DELUXE (ED)
10 Kent Tce
Ph (04) 801 6483
Embassy Deluxe is a 70-seat cinema downstairs at the Embassy.

2 SOUNDINGS THEATRE, TE PAPA (TP)
55 Cable St, Te Aro
Ph (04) 381 7000
Level 2, top of the stairs and sharp right. No food or beverages permitted in the theatre.

3 CITY GALLERY WELLINGTON (CG)
101 Wakefield Street, Te Ngākau Civic Square
Ph (04) 913 9032
Nikau Café will be open extended hours for NZFF screenings providing food and drinks to take into the auditorium.

4 LIGHT HOUSE CINEMA CUBA (CUBA)
29 Wigan St, Te Aro
Ph (04) 385 3337

5 PENTHOUSE CINEMA (PH)
205 Ohio Rd, Brooklyn
Ph (04) 384 3157
Take buses 7, 17e or 29e from Victoria St at Dixon St. Paid parking available on-site. Check www.metlink.org.nz for timetables.
All screenings this year will be held in Cinema 3.

6 ROXY CINEMA (RX)
5 Park Rd, Miramar
Ph (04) 388 5555
Take buses 2, 30x or 31x from Courtenay Pl to Miramar shops.
Check www.metlink.org.nz for timetables.

7 LIGHT HOUSE CINEMA PETONE (LHP)
52 Beach St, Petone
Ph (04) 939 2061
Take the Hutt Valley train or buses 81 or 83 from Courtenay Pl.
Check www.metlink.org.nz for timetables.

8 READING CINEMAS PORIRUA (RCP)
North City Shopping Centre,
2 Titahi Bay Rd, Porirua
Ph (04) 237 1070
Take Bus 60x or the KPL Train to Porirua Station. North City just a short two-minute walk across the road. Reading is located on the lower level. Free parking available at the bottom level of the New World car park, for up to four hours.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS
All venues are accessible by wheelchair.

HEARING IMPAIRED
The Embassy, Te Papa, City Gallery Wellington and Reading Cinemas Porirua are equipped with hearing loops that guests with hearing aids can tune into. City Gallery is the front three rows only. Reading Cinemas is the middle of the middle row. All other venues have amplified infra-red headphones (used without hearing aids), which can be obtained from the box office.
NEW GREEN & BLACK’S
ETHICAL & INDULGENT

GREEN & BLACK’S AND ASSOCIATED TRADE MARKS ARE USED UNDER LICENCE

Mondelez International, Level 9, 75 Dorcas Street, South Melbourne VIC 3205, Australia   www.wlt.com   t+0420 728 891

number of colours: 4
CYAN MAGENTA YELLOW BLACK

Ocean Design

58028787
V4
La Belle Époque

The perfect film to open NZIFF 2019 is also perfect for first dates, 40th anniversaries and solo filmgoers alike. La Belle Époque is that rarest of treats: a certified crowd-pleaser that cinephiles can shamelessly enjoy.

A 21st century riff on second chances at first love, La Belle Époque takes a giant conceit – an agency can grant you the chance to play the lead role in any point in history, with full cast and costume on an authentic set – and focuses on a sad, aging cartoonist (Daniel Auteuil, in a late career peak) who’s feuding with his VR-obsessed wife (Fanny Ardant, equally terrific). Instead of drinking with Hemingway or fighting Nazis, he chooses to return to the happiest day of his life: 40 years prior, when a beautiful woman walked into a cafe...

La Belle Époque premiered out of competition at Cannes this year. Perhaps that designation led the press to overlook what seemed at a glance to be a forgettable crowd-pleasing comedy. They got ‘crowd-pleasing’ right, but in the stunningly assured hands of director Nicolas Bedos, this charming mix of The Game, The Truman Show and After Life commands respect, jumping effortlessly and assuredly across timelines with tight scripting and clever editing while coaxing winning performances from its cast (also featuring Non-Fiction’s [p30] Guillaume Canet, and Doria Tillier).

In a year where three other French films took home prizes from Cannes, the omission of La Belle Époque from competition feels less like a slight and more like Gallic hospitality: it would have been rude to add such a sure-fire hit into the mix. — Doug Dillman

Portrait of a Lady on Fire

Between Water Lillies, Tomboy and Girlhood, outstanding French director Céline Sciamma has explored notions of gender and identity, especially for adolescent or younger girls, through a distinctively female prism. As diverse as her films have been, all of which have tied scripting and clever editing while coaxing winning performances from its cast (also featuring Non-Fiction’s [p30] Guillaume Canet, and Doria Tillier). In a year where three other French films took home prizes from Cannes, the omission of La Belle Époque from competition feels less like a slight and more like Gallic hospitality: it would have been rude to add such a sure-fire hit into the mix. — Doug Dillman

"The very up-to-the-minute script pivots on a Westworld-like dramatic conceit... Everything clicks here, all the time.”
— Todd McCarthy, Variety

"An exquisitely executed love story, formally adventurous and emotionally devastating.”
— Leslie Felperin, Hollywood Reporter

Centrepiece

La Belle Époque

Opening Night

Director/Screenplay: Nicolas Bedos
France 2019 | 115 mins
Producers: François Kraus, Denis Puech-Valencienne
Photography: Nicolas Bolduc
Editors: Arnaud Darché, Florent Vassault
Music: Nicolas Bedos, Anne-Sophie Veron
With: Daniel Auteuil, Guillaume Canet, Doria Tillier, Fanny Ardant
Festivals: Cannes (Out of Competition) 2019
In French with English subtitles
Censors rating tbc

Portrait of a Lady on Fire

Director/Screenplay: Céline Sciamma
France 2019 | 120 mins
Producer: Bénédicte Courret
Photography: Claire Mathon
Editor: Julien Lacheray
Music: Jean-Baptiste de Laubier, Arthur Simonini
With: Noémie Merlant, Adèle Haenel, Jean-Baptiste de Laubier, Arthur Simonini
Festivals: Cannes (In Competition) 2019
Best Screenplay, Cannes Film Festival 2019
In French with English subtitles
M nudity

BIG NIGHTS AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS
**Bacurau**

Do you like going blind into a film that consistently surprises you with shifting genres, bloody surprises and unexpected, audacious choices? Read no further and book yourself a ticket on this year’s most exhilarating cinematic rollercoaster.

**Closing Night**

“Bacurau bristles with anxiety and menace... balancing flat-out genre fun with a reminder of the bloody legacy of the region.”

— Isabel Stevens, *Sight & Sound*

**Amazing Grace**

In 1972, 29-year-old Aretha Franklin, ‘Queen of Soul’, wishing to return to her gospel roots, chose to record an album live at the New Temple Missionary Baptist Church, a disused movie theatre, in Watts, Los Angeles. She was ably accompanied by the accomplished musicians of her regular touring band; the heavenly Southern California Community Choir, conducted by a rocking Alexander Hamilton; mighty Reverend James Cleveland, himself a gospel singer, songwriter and arranger, who taught Franklin piano; and her own father, the great preacher C.L. Franklin.

Warner Bros. brought in Sydney Pollack to shoot the recording, which took place over two nights and resulted in a double album that went on to become the highest-selling live gospel music album of all time. Technical hitches relating to the syncing of sound and image, later resolved by more modern technology, and Franklin’s subsequent repudiation of the film – but Bacurau is as concerned with revolutionary history as delivering genre thrills. “Don’t you want to visit the museum?” will never sound like an anodyne question again, and the face of revolutionary Brazilian politics has never been so vivid or thrilling. — Doug Dillaman

**Special Presentation**

As a document of an iconic musician’s skills, the film is essential... it is a transcendent, spine-tingling, uplifting, utterly joyous experience.”

— Anastasia Tsioulcas, NPR
Come to Daddy

For one hell of a night out, don't miss the New Zealand premiere screenings of this blackly comic, gleefully unhinged thriller by one of our biggest film culture champions.

Elijah Wood stars as Norval, a thirtysomething wannabe-DJ who receives a letter from his estranged father, inviting him to reunite at his remote home on the Oregon coast. As soon as Norval arrives, however, things feel off; his dad (played with noxious relish by Stephen McHattie) seems surprised to see him, drinks constantly and frequently trades in menacing remarks. After some cringeworthy attempts at father-son bonding, Norval guns for a confrontation, and suddenly, things take an unexpected turn… And then from there, the turns just don’t stop coming.

Already recognised as producer, programmer and film festival founder, Kiwi genre-giant Ant Timpson can now add ‘feature director’ to his credentials with this genre-bending mystery train tailored to surprise even the savviest seasoned movie-goers. A film that switches gears when you least expect it, the final 15 minutes alone credibly veer from guffaws to grimaces to genuine emotion without breaking a sweat. If you like your thrillers loose, violent and frequently hysterical, this is one evening you won’t want to miss.

― IF

“[A] funny exploration of the fraught familial relationship, defying genre and expectation at every hairpin turn… Provocative and bawdy… those who stay on its wavelength are in for something insanely entertaining.” — Kimber Myers, The Playlist

Herbs: Songs of Freedom

NZIFF is thrilled to present the premiere screenings of the latest film by Tearepa Kahi (Poi E: The Story of Our Song, NZIFF16), a timely and affectionate tribute to iconic Aotearoa band Herbs.

Almost 40 years after their first gig as the support act to Stevie Wonder, Kahi connects with core Herbs members as they reunite in preparation for an anniversary concert. Set against a soundtrack rich with the band's popular songs, the documentary traces Herbs' backstory and brings it up to date.

Kahi gives founder Toni Fonoti, guitarist Dilworth Karaka and producer Hugh Lynn (among others) ample room to recall Herbs' creation and formation. With its unique mix of Māori, Pākehā and Pasifika musicians, Herbs had shifting iterations, at one point growing to 23 members.

Interviews, past and present, loop us back to social and political flashpoints, including the occupation of Bastion Point, the 1981 Springbok tour demonstrations, and the dawn raids targeting the Polynesian community. Reminiscences interweave with rehearsals and the concert itself, celebrating songs which harbour strong political messages within superb harmonies and distinctive South Pacific-infused rhythms. Their power and appeal remain undiminished.

We, and the ‘next generation’ of such concern to Toni ‘the originator’ and Dilworth ‘the cornerstone’, are grateful that Kahi had the foresight to make this rousing film when he did, thereby capturing later band members Thom Nepia, Carl Perkins and Tama Renata (who all died in 2018) in action and rocking the house. — SR

“Herbs wasn’t just a band. Herbs is a movement.”
— Toni Fonoti

Special Presentation

Ant Timpson

Director: Ant Timpson
New Zealand/Canada/Ireland 2019
94 mins

Producers: Matte-Maie Kingsted, Laura Tustin, Daniel Bekerman, Katie Holly, Emma Slada, Toby Harvard
Screenplay: Toby Harvard
Photography: Daniel Katz
Editor: Dan Kircher
Music: Karl Steven
With: Elijah Wood, Stephen McHattie, Martin Donovan, Michael Smiley, Madeleine Sami, Simon Chinn, Garfield Wilson, Ona Grauer, Ryan Bel, Oliver Wilson
Festivals: Tribeca, Sydney, Melbourne 2019
R16 violence, sexual references & offensive language

Declaration of interest:
The staff and trustees of NZIFF congratulate Incredibly Strange programmer Ant Timpson on his directional debut feature.

“A sentimental story about death and rediscovery that explodes into violent mayhem… [A] wild, unpredictable [film].”
— Eric Kohn, Indiewire

Tearepa Kahi

Director: Tearepa Kahi
New Zealand 2019 | 90 mins

Producers: Reikura Kahi, Cliff Curtis
Photography: Fred Renata, Chris Mauger
Editors: Tearepa Kahi, Francis Glenday
Sound: Dick Raade
With: Dilworth Karaka, Toni Fonoti, Tama Renata, Willie Hona, Carl Perkins, Charlie Tamahai, Thom Nepia, Hugh Lynn, Will Tosaia, Tama Lundon, Joe Hawke, Aniie Crammer

Declaration of interest:
The staff and trustees of NZIFF congratulate fellow trustee Tearepa Kahi on his terrific film.

“Herbs wasn’t just a band. Herbs is a movement.”
— Toni Fonoti
The Farewell

Elevating Asian American cinema to new heights, director Lulu Wang’s beautiful portrait of a Chinese family’s gathering to farewell its ailing matriarch frames an immigrant experience that’s deeply relatable, not least for Asian diaspora communities, but also any persons scattered to different parts of the globe, away from their roots or loved ones. Joining us for these limited screenings comes with an advisory: bring tissues, because there will be tears.

The Farewell begins with struggling New York artist Billi (Awkwafina, the crazy best friend in Crazy Rich Asians) learning the news that her beloved Nai Nai (grandma) is dying of cancer. In China, Nai Nai’s loyal sister withholds the diagnosis, letting Nai Nai think she has a clean bill of health. Relatives from Japan and the USA fly home under the pretence of a wedding — surrounded by her entire clan, there’s no happier occasion for Nai Nai — and while pretending to celebrate must bear the burden of sadness so she can live her last days in blissful ignorance.

Eschewing broad stereotypes for a nuanced everydayness, Wang’s film is of course sad, but also warm, perfectly strange (the absurdity and illegality of the ruse does not go unnoticed), rich with delicious food, and naturally funny in situations that, as a normal response to death, demand it. The wonderful ensemble cast, particularly Billi’s parents played by veterans Tzi Ma and Diana Lin, subtly agitate and support Awkwafina’s breakthrough central performance; her face and body language a marvel of whole emotions fighting against quiet, dutiful restraint.

— Tim Wong

Sorry We Missed You

Though conspicuously absent from the Cannes winners’ podium, Ken Loach and screenwriter Paul Laverty left no stone unturned with their latest impassioned portrait of Britain’s working class. This firecracker of a film — which many are calling better than 2016 Palme d’Or triumph I, Daniel Blake — tackles the ground level struggle of raising a family of four against the wall of zero-hour contracts and zero-benefits employment.

“Sorry We Missed You finds Loach at his most insightful and clear-eyed... Kris Hitchen plays Ricky Turner, a Newcastle father of two who turns to delivery driving in an attempt to scrape together a mortgage deposit. He and his wife Abby (Debbie Honeywood) were ready to buy a decade ago, but Northern Rock’s collapse put paid to that, and they have been renting ever since... Ricky’s supervisor at the depot, Maloney (Ross Brestner), talks a lot about choices and self-employment... But when work begins, everything looks suspiciously like old-fashioned factory-floor graft... The perks of employment — stability, comradeship, sane hours... time off in an emergency — are nowhere to be seen. Even Abby’s work as a carer is on a zero-hours basis, which leaves her zig-sagging from dawn to dusk between... patients... while parenting by mobile phone. Parcel by parcel, client by client, the film reveals the regime to be a cup-and-ball con trick.” — Robbie Ryan, The Telegraph

“Loach has... done it again. Sorry We Missed You is another intimate and powerful drama... A fraught, touching, and galvanizing movie.” — Owen Gleiberman, Variety

B | PH | Fri 26 Jul, 11.15 am
A | EMB | Sun 28 Jul, 3.30 pm

B | PH | Fri 2 Jul, 6.15 pm
A | EMB | Tue 6 Aug, 12.30 pm
A | EMB | Sat 10 Aug, 6.30 pm
Maiden

After discovering a love of sailing in her teens, Tracy Edwards dreamed of circumnavigating the globe in yachting's most prestigious competition: the Whitbread Round the World Race (now the Ocean Race), a gruelling four-month journey of 32,018 nautical miles. Infuriated by the inherent sexism in the sport, Edwards was determined to enter the race on her own terms. Team Maiden Great Britain was born, and Edwards was to helm the first all-female crew to compete in the event in 1989–90. No easy feat: they had to first find a seaworthy boat.

The road to the Whitbread was an arduous trek, and as soon as Maiden crossed the starting line in Southampton, the press began taking bets on when the boat full of incompetent girls would drop out of the race. Unbeknownst to their critics, the crew were on course to become icons and inspire young sailors around the world, including those in New Zealand.

A testament to female strength, commitment and endurance, Maiden is this year’s power ballad for feminism and lifelong friendships that were forged at sea. This stirring tale is sure to inspire every audience member – and to be greeted with the same rousing cheers that welcomed Maiden when she sailed into Auckland’s harbour on a balmy night in January 1990. — Kailey Carruthers

The Whistlers

“Romanian director Corneliu Porumboiu makes playful movies with a lot to say. From the chatty historical inquiries of 12th East of Bucharest to the deadpan musings on the language of justice in Police, Adjective… Porumboiu has managed to mine compelling ideas out of slow-burn narrative techniques loaded with unpredictability… With his entertaining noir The Whistlers, a polished mashup of genre motifs that suggests what might happen if the Ocean’s 11 gang assembled on the Canary Islands… [Porumboiu] has made a bonafide commercial movie.

Middle-aged police inspector Cristi (Vlad Ivanov…) arrives on the island of La Gomera, where he intends to get a corrupt businessman out of prison. In order to do that, however, he must first master the whistling language of the island, which criminals have used to communicate for generations… There’s the potential for a big score, the threat of police officers closing in, and even a love story… Before long, Cristi has been sat down by femme fatale Gilda (Catiinrel Marion, [a dynamic screen presence…]) for a lesson on the whistling language… Gilda… wields her sex appeal and shooting skills with equal determination as she draws Cristi into a plan to steal some hidden loot while keeping her full agenda a secret. The Whistlers could be ripe for an English-language remake… but that possibility carries a touch of irony, since [the film] is already a covert remake… It revisits the energy and wit of heist movies before it, as well as the filmmaker’s own… sophistication of his previous works, and revitalizes both traditions in the process.” — Eric Kohn, Indiewire

“[Porumboiu] amps up the entertainment, concocting something genuinely fresh from the familiar ingredients of the crime thriller. The Whistlers is just enormous fun.” — Phil de Semlyen, Time Out
Andrei Rublev

With only his second film, Russian director Andrei Tarkovsky created what by even his lofty standards must be considered a masterpiece. While ostensibly a biopic of a 15th-century painter of religious icons, such a description is misleading. Andrei Rublev contains volumes: it's a meditation on faith, a study of human cruelty, an intimate portrait of creative crisis and a screen epic of extraordinary scale. Few directors show equal acuity with the landscape of a human face and lavishly mounted war scenes with hundreds of extras, or could render both the tactile – the mud, the flames, the wind! – and the spiritual with such aplomb. While more approachable than Tarkovsky's later works, his artistic signatures, including long patient takes, rigorously beautiful photography and uncompromisingly serious worldview, are all on display.

Suppressed for several years after completion, championed by filmmakers from Ingmar Bergman to Martin Scorsese (who once smuggled a print out of Russia), and a fixture on any serious list of the world's greatest films, Andrei Rublev is an essential big screen experience (although those sensitive to animal cruelty are forewarned). Proudly presented in a new 4K restoration, in Tarkovsky's preferred 183-minute cut.

— Doug Dillaman

“[Tarkovsky's] admirers verge on the worshipful, with good cause, and to be deluged by his movies – this one in particular – is to be initiated into sacred mysteries for which no rational explanation will suffice... You may dread being ground down by this extraordinary film, but fear not. It will bear you aloft.”

— Anthony Lane, The New Yorker

Kind Hearts and Coronets

Celebrating its 70th birthday in a pristine digital restoration, director Robert Hamer’s Kind Hearts and Coronets upholds its position as one of the funniest, most perfectly pitched black comedies ever made. Dennis Price is the living embodiment of wronged entitlement as Louis Mazzini, a young draper’s assistant determined to avenge his mother’s disinheritance of murder; there’s lyricism, passion, and protest in it too.”

— Dave Kehr, Chicago Reader

British comedy, yet it’s several cuts better than practically anything else in the genre… Hamer’s direction is bracingly cool and clipped, yet he’s able to draw something from his performers (Price has never been deeper, Guinness never more proficient, and Joan Greenwood never more softly, purringly cruel) that transcends the facile comedy of murder; there’s lyricism, passion, and protest in it too.”

— Terence Davies, Chicago Reader

“Kind Hearts and Coronets is, for me, the greatest of all screen comedies. Not even Some Like It Hot can touch it!”

— Terence Davies

Director: Andrei Tarkovsky
USSR 1966 | 183 mins
Producer: Tamara Ogvoshovskaya
Screenplay: Andrei Konchalovsky, Andrei Tarkovsky
Photography: Vadim Yusov
Editors: Tatyana Egorovycha, Lyudmila Fyrgina
Music: V’ychodse Oshinovik
With: Anatoly Solonykh, Ivan Lapikov, Nikolai Grinko, Nikolai Gertsev, Irina Raush Tarkovskaya
Festivals: Cannes 1969
In Russian with English subtitles
B&W and Colour | PG cert

Director: Robert Hamer
UK 1949 | 106 mins
Producer: Michael Balcon, Michael Relph
Screenplay: Robert Hamer, John Dighton
Based on the novel Of a Criminal by Roy Horniman
Photography: Douglas Slocombe
Editor: Peter Tanner
Music: Ernest Irving
With: Dennis Price, Alec Guinness, Valerie Hobson, Joan Greenwood
Festivals: Venice 1949
B&W | PG cert

A EMB Sun 4 Aug, 11.00 am
A RX Sat 10 Aug, 12.45 pm
B RX Fri 26 Jul, 2.00 pm
B EMB Thu 1 Aug, 1.15 pm
A EMB Sat 3 Aug, 3.30 pm
B PH Thu 8 Aug, 1.45 pm
A PH Sun 11 Aug, 2.45 pm
Apocalypse Now: Final Cut

Forty years after it almost killed him, Francis Ford Coppola returns to the jungle one last time. Both a complete restoration and a new cut, Apocalypse Now: Final Cut represents his fully realised vision, trimming back some of the restored scenes from 2001’s Apocalypse Now Redux and returning to the original negatives and sound masters. Even if you’ve seen his legendary, phantasmagoric journey into the heart of darkness, you’ve never seen it like this. — Doug Dillaman

“Apocalypse Now is the best Vietnam film, one of the greatest of all films, because it pushes beyond the others, into the dark places of the soul.” — Roger Ebert

Koyaanisqatsi

Oft-imitated, never surpassed, Godfrey Reggio’s Koyaanisqatsi – a Hopi word roughly translating to ‘life in turmoil’ – opened in cinemas in 1983 after a six-year filming process and the endorsement of Francis Ford Coppola, only to be met by equal measures of grudging admiration and bewilderment from critics. (Vincent Canby called it “a frequently hypnotic ‘folly’,” while Ebert admitted it was “an impressive visual and listening experience” but called it “simplistic.”)

Devoid of story, dialogue or voiceover, and leaning on the beautiful time-lapse images of Ron Fricke (who would later direct Baraka and Samsara) and the otherworldly music of Philip Glass (working at the height of his powers), Koyaanisqatsi presents an uncomfortably alluring and undeniably epic globe-trotting portrait of a world overrun by technology. While critics scratched their heads, youth audiences made it a cult hit and MTV and Madison Avenue recognised its power and quickly pillaged its stylebook. But despite being imitated by Madonna and Watchmen and parodied by The Simpsons, its unique voice remains undimmed. In the climate emergency era, Koyaanisqatsi’s global vision has fresh potency and demands a giant canvas we’re only too happy to provide. Don’t miss the biggest big-screen experience of the festival. — Doug Dillaman

“Among the more remarkable debut films in American cinema history… it was and is engaging and often awe-inspiring.” — Scott McDonald, The Criterion Collection
Daguerréotypes

Director/Screenplay: Agnès Varda
France 1976 | 80 mins
Photography: Nurith Aviv, William Lubtchansky
Editors: Gordon Sweire, André Chatty
In French with English subtitles

“One of the great modern documentaries, Agnès Varda’s 1976 portrait of shopkeepers on the street where she lives – Rue Daguerre, in Paris – established a new genre, affectionate anthropology. Starting with the quirky pharmacy where her teenage daughter, Rosalie, buys homemade perfumes, Varda peeps in on the rounds of commerce that keep the street vital. In the process, she exalts the sights and sounds, the very savor of daily life – the crust of fresh-baked baguettes, the alkaline allure of fresh-cut steaks, the sumptuousness of hand-stitched fabrics. She also sees what makes the street run: money… and the migration from the countryside to the city in pursuit of it. Observing traditional crafts and trades with loving fascination, Varda empathetically evokes their paradoxes – the depth of practical knowledge, the lack of variety in experience. These small-business owners (mainly long-married couples) may have no bosses, but they’re tethered like serfs to their shops, even their dreams are colonized by the crush of daily details. Meanwhile, scenes of a local magician at work in a café hint at the origins of Varda’s own enticing craft.” — Richard Brody, New Yorker

Jacquot de Nantes

Director: Agnès Varda
France 1991 | 118 mins
Producers: Agnès Varda, Perrine Bauduin
Screenplay: Jacques Demy, Agnès Varda
Photography: Patrick Blossier, Agnès Godard, Georges Strouvé
Editor: Marie-Jo Audiard
Music: Joanna Bruzdowicz
With: Jacques Demy, Philippe Maron, Édouard Joubaud, Laurent Monnier
In French with English subtitles
B&W and Colour | PG nudity & coarse language

“Made in collaboration with Varda’s husband Jacques Demy [director of The Umbrellas of Cherbourg and The Young Girls of Rochefort] in the last year of his life, Jacquot de Nantes was the first of the director’s cinematic tributes to her longtime partner… With great affection and detail, Varda crafts a docudrama retelling of Demy’s childhood, focusing on his successive creative interests (from puppet shows to theatre to, finally, cinema) and pointing out episodes that would serve as sources of inspiration for his future films; interspersed throughout these biographical recreations is the present-day Demy himself, whether providing narration for onscreen events or simply being filmed by Varda in adoring close-up. With Varda putting her inimitable cinematic personality (her focus on the everyday, her energy and easy charm) selflessly in the service of her partner, Jacquot is a film of an artist and her muse.” — Toronto International Film Festival

“A film of an artist and her muse.” — Mark Salisbury, Empire

Agnès Varda’s influence was – and is – immense. Pushing cinema past traditional narrative and gender boundaries, she not only stood for the French New Wave as its lone female representative, but also galvanised the determination of women in film everywhere, right up until her death in March earlier this year, aged 90.

The late, great filmmaker’s lust for life inside and outside of the frame bursts through Varda by Agnès, a magical self-reflection on art, movies and invention. We present her swansong alongside a curated retrospective of Varda classics we know you’ll be inspired to see straight afterwards.
Varda by Agnès

Sitting centre stage, in her ubiquitous AGNÈS V. director’s chair, one of cinema’s (too) few doyennes reflects on her life’s work. Like many of her films, Agnès Varda’s masterclass – she prefers to call it a ‘causerie’ (a chat) – is a kind of self-portrait, spanning six decades. Strict chronology is not of the essence; instead, with her customary inventiveness, Varda skips from period to theme to subject to memory, liberally employing excerpts from her films as she takes us on a journey which began with stills photography, moved on to filmmaking and, most recently, led her to work as a visual artist, devising installation pieces for major museums and galleries.

Three things drove her: inspiration, creativity, sharing. And the belief that “nothing is banal if we have empathy and love the people we film, if we find people extraordinary.” Inspired and inspirational, she was; endlessly creative, an early embracer of digital technology, and in this, her final film, again generously sharing her vision and passions. For, “we don’t make films to watch them alone.” Extraordinary, yes. Vive Agnés! — SR

Varda’s charming and approachable film… [uses] footage from her speaking and galleries.

“[Agnès Varda’s] curious spirit and merging of radical politics with personal life made her one of contemporary filmmaking’s most inspiring figures.”

— Artforum

Le Bonheur

“The happiness alluded to in the title of Agnès Varda’s 1965 drama of adultery in a working-class Paris suburb stings with whiplash irony. A handsome couple, François and Thérèse (played by the real-life couple Jean-Claude and Claire Drouot), and their two young children (the actors’ own) live a life of old-fashioned sweetness. He’s a cabinetmaker, she’s a dressmaker; their sex life is active, and their social life is heartwarming. But François falls hard for a pert, uninhibited postal clerk (Marie-France Boyer).… Varda fills her frames with riots of nature and color, like Bonnard paintings come to life, and frames with riots of nature and color, (Marie-France Boyer)… Varda fills her hard for a pert, uninhibited postal clerk life is heartwarming. But François falls their sex life is active, and their social

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— Artforum

Vagabond

“Among the finest films of the 1980s, Agnès Varda’s powerful story of a young female drifter moving beyond the bounds of society remains essential viewing… Infused with a uniquely feminist sensibility… [and] set against the frigid winter landscape of rural France, it follows Mona (Sandrine Bonnaire), a complex and contradictory drifter, who survives on handouts and ephemeral liaisons with strangers. We begin at the end, with the discovery of her corpse in a ditch. Then, through flashbacks and interviews with people who came into contact with her, Varda’s film attempts to reconstruct the final days of her life…

Using a moody and desaturated colour palette, Patrick Blossier’s painterly photography sets the enigmatic Mona against a stark French landscape… From the dim abandoned rooms where Mona takes cover to the brightly lit homes where she’s excluded, every shot, every frame of Vagabond is expressed in sparsely poetic images.”

— Amy Simmons, BR

“There are moments of pure grace, dazzling and unexpected instances of the sublime [in Vagabond]… a celebration of everything human.”

— Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, The Criterion Collection
Billy and The Kids

Kiwi boxing great Billy Graham grew up with a troubled background and was destined to become another criminal statistic until the discipline and training of boxing turned him around. Today, Billy runs five boxing academies around the country and hopes to change the lives of young kids who were just like him. Mark Albiston’s uplifting short documentary Billy and The Kids tells the story of several “kids” from diverse backgrounds who have all benefitted from Billy’s mentoring.

The oldest, Latu, emigrated from Nauru in the 90s. As an overstayer on the run from the police, Latu’s residency was supported by Billy. Now 25 years old, Latu is a full-time coach at Billy’s Cannons Creek gym. 12-year-old runaway William is brought to the boxing gym by his auntie, who hopes it will provide some structure in his life. Teenager Tom has an anxiety disorder and isn’t a great boxer, but the gym helps him get through the tough times. After losing his father in Afghanistan and emigrating with his mother and siblings, Ali has found a second family at the academy. We also meet a sassy bunch of girls – Maddy, Mikala, Georgia and Genuine – who find it easier to connect at the gym rather than at school.

Births, Deaths & Marriages

In the depths of Upper Hutt, 1994, the Hart clan is going through a very bad-hair day. Hugh returns from a quick foray to the supermarket for emergency supplies to bolster morale after her cousin Sinead is jilted at the altar, only to find all the rellies facing another upset: grandma has gone. Well, she’s still at home, but she’s popped her clogs. At least the wedding food and flowers might be repurposed. Aunty Ngaire is on the case. And no way is a death going to interrupt Shannon’s plans to chase a bit of cheap trouser on a Saturday night. A girl has priorities, and if grandma were upright, she’d be all for it. Unfortunately, she’s out flat in the bed/birth room – soon-to-be-mum Katherine, floundering in the paddling pool, gives short shrift to hubby Ari’s concerns about this combo not being tikanga. What about Irish tikanga, eh? Sinead packs a sad in the bath. Reluctant groom Dean pathetically hovers. Storm vociferously offers unrequested grief therapy tips. And Aidan, originally tasked with filming the wedding, now has his eye on posterity. This spirited debut feature boasts snappy dialogue and sharp performances and adds a tangy Kiwi slant to classic domestic farce. — SR
Bellbird

Hamish Bennett's tender, often funny picture of life on a Northland farm delights and moves in equal measure, underplaying fundamental life dramas with a refreshing, truthful lightness of touch. Ross (Marshall Napier) is the third generation on the small family dairy farm and he's determined that son Bruce (Cohen Holloway) will follow suit. Bruce, however, makes for a squeamish farmer and would be perfectly content to stick with his job reinventing abandoned treasures at the town dump.

These are men of few words. "Mum used to do the talking for both of us," Bruce explains to his friend and boss, Connie (a wryly observant Rachel House). The loss of that wife and mother infuses the men's dogged continuation of farm routine with poignance – and aawning sense of her legacy gently pushing the two of them forward.

The sweet comic wisdom of the film lies in showing how father and son, apparently at cross purposes, respond to each other's unspoken needs – and in seeing how the community, starting with Marley, the cocky Māori kid next door (newcomer Kahukura Retimana), watches out for them.

The shared emotional intelligence in the men's performances is a joy to behold, the perfect corrective to any of us who mistake the underdemonstrative for the unfeeling.

Ross & Beth, Bennett's prequel to Bellbird, scooped the prizes at NZFF's New Zealand's Best short film competition in 2014. Check it out if you need any further persuasion to catch our premiere screenings of the year's most deeply charming debut feature. — BG

Capital in the 21st Century

A 700-page tome on the long-run effects of wealth inequality, Thomas Piketty's Capital in the 21st Century was an unlikely bestseller in 2014. Its account of how concentrated wealth shapes the world was so compelling that it went on to sell 1.5 million copies.

Brought to the big screen by New Zealand director Justin Pemberton, Piketty's thesis is crisply and engagingly presented in a documentary purposefully light on graphs and numbers, and heavy on top-notch talking heads (Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz, the FT's Gillian Tett, et al.), visuals of the rich and famous, and stylised historical recreations.

There is nothing inevitable about the march towards greater equality, argues Piketty. The normal order of things has been a world in which the wealthiest 1% owns around 70% of all assets. The 'golden age' of greater equality between 1950 and 1980 was an aberration. Pemberton relays this story in saturated, pop art-style colours. He also blends archival footage with film sequences, both old and new, into an almost hallucinatory cocktail, as if the bizarre excesses of wealth defied realistic description.

The film carries a warning too: that we could be rapidly reverting to Victorian-style levels of wealth inequality. But it also softens this prediction with a few key policy ideas. Piketty, whose classically Gallic charm and intensity make him the film's centrepiece, argues for greater taxation of wealth and wider ownership of it, too, so that we all enjoy its returns. That way, he suggests, we might avoid a 'pauperised' future. — Max Rashbrooke
For My Father’s Kingdom

Aotearoa isn’t always the land of milk and honey it promises to be. Throughout the life of Saia Mafile’o – a dad, a grandfather, a husband and a son – Aotearoa has given many fortunes and taken them away. But nothing has changed Saia’s resounding faith in the church and his absolute love for his country – Tonga. Through creative ways to make money for the church, Saia is content knowing that what he gives reserves his place in heaven.

Having grown up straddling two worlds, Saia’s adult children struggle to understand their father’s unmovable Tongan ways of life – that is, until a trip to Tonga. A proud ex-head prefect of the prestigious Tupou College, Toloa, Saia takes them with him to a school reunion which sees tradition, faith and feasting come into full view.

A loving portrait of a father told from the perspective of his four kids, For My Father’s Kingdom, having premiered in Berlin earlier this year, now returns home to audiences who know this experience intimately. In trying to understand her father, director Vea Mafile’o and Jeremiah Tauamiti capture a moving story about generational difference, resilience and unconditional love. With this brief glimpse into Tongan life, we are reminded of the longing Pacific elders have for home, while the next generations build on their sacrifices. — Lana Lopesi

“The heart of this film has always been about a father and his goal of being there for his family… Vea’s father tried to do what we all try to do as parents; and what we all want as children – to love or be loved with no barriers.” — Vea Mafile’o & Jeremiah Tauamiti

By the Balls

It may seem like the All Blacks have always been world beaters, but Charlotte Purdy and Simon Coldrick’s stirring new documentary looks back at one of the darkest chapters of our rugby history – one that ironically led to one of the All Blacks’ greatest triumphs.

In the lead up to the first Rugby World Cup in 1987, the All Blacks were in disarray. A rebel tour to South Africa led to deep divisions within the team and the nation as a whole. Only two players, David Kirk and John Kirwan, refused the lucrative payments on offer to what were then amateur players, to tour the Republic. Meanwhile, the bombing of the Rainbow Warrior and the protests against nuclear testing in the Pacific added a significant amount of spice to upcoming matches against the French national team.

By the Balls follows these turbulent events through the eyes of the players themselves, featuring revealing and frank interviews with Kirk and Kirwan, as well as rebel tourists Buck Shelly and Grant Fox. An extensive selection of archival material and seamlessly integrated re-enactments all serve to take us back to a time when sport and politics most definitely did mix. — MM

MO TE IWI – Carving for the People

Nearly 20 years after her documentary TU TANGATA: Weaving for the People (NZIFF00) examined the life and art of the late master weaver Erenora Puketapu-Hetet, Robin Greenberg has again collaborated with the Hetet whānau to produce this portrait of Rangi Hetet, a tohunga whakairo (master carver) trained in the traditional methods and a man responsible for carving many remarkable wharenui and other artworks held at the Dowse Art Museum in 2016, making it a fitting tribute to a life devoted to keeping the wonderful traditions of Toi Māori alive.

Greenberg’s documentary also follows Rangi’s children as they prepare for a new major exhibition of their parents’ artworks held at the Dowse Art Museum in 2016, making it a fitting tribute to a life devoted to keeping the wonderful traditions of Toi Māori alive.
Helen Kelly – Together

Brilliant, funny and indefatigable, Helen Kelly was a giant of social justice movements in New Zealand. When she was diagnosed with terminal cancer in 2015, she stood down as president of the Council of Trade Unions, but ploughed on in pursuing the causes and people she fought for: families of Pike River miners, families of forestry workers killed on the job, factory workers – pretty much anyone who could use her help.

For the last year of her life, filmmaker Tony Sutorius was granted extraordinary access to Kelly as she underwent hospital treatment, at home, butting heads with the bureaucracy in Wellington, and on the road. On the West Coast she rallies the Pike River families – with whose help Sutorius has secured extraordinary footage from within the mine – who refuse to be palmed off. In Tokoroa, she helps Maryanne Butler-Finlay win justice for her husband, whose death on the job had been written off as accidental.

Along the way, Kelly finds herself an accidental flag-bearer for a change in the law around medical cannabis, something which became a palliative necessity as she underwent round after round of battering treatment. Kelly’s lucid, experience-supported argument played a substantial role in leading to next year’s referendum.

Through it all, Sutorius – whose back-catalogue includes the sublime political documentary Campaign (NZIFF99) – captures the essence of Kelly: a commitment to listening to the most vulnerable and standing up to those in power. Combine that with staggering generosity, and you’re left with a legacy that will long embolden people to fight back. — Toby Manhire

“I want people just to be kind. It would make a hell of a difference.” — Helen Kelly

A Seat at the Table

“Are we deserving of a seat at the table of the world’s finest yet?” Filmmakers David Nash and Simon Mark-Brown pose the question in this vine-saturated visual feast of a documentary highlighting pivotal moments in our winescape, starting with a landmark blind tasting by the most influential wine writers in the UK. We see sauvignon blanc first arriving in Marlborough and watch the Cloudy Bay colossus open doors worldwide. We learn why Alan Brady (Gibbston Valley) planted pinot noir in the desert, how Clive Paton (Ata Rangi) based his vineyard on a mysterious clone taken from smuggled Burgundian cuttings destined for destruction, and how biodynamics has taken a firm hold downunder.

The warp-speed ascent of Kiwi wines to international recognition has hardly been a smooth road, but a series of sleekly shot (and sometimes snort-inducingly funny) interviews showcasing a smorgasbord of local wine pioneers and their French confrères pops the cork on how faith and fortune favour our brave fermenters. As Baroness Philippine de Rothschild offers, “Wine making is really quite a simple business. Only the first 200 years are difficult.”

The definitive New Zealand wine story benchmarked against some of the greatest producers in the world.
Peter Peryer: The Art of Seeing

Shirley Horrocks
Director/Producer: Shirley Horrocks
New Zealand 2019
82 mins
Photography: Craig Wright
Additional photography: David Pawl, Adam Luton, Adrian Greeshoff
Editor: Steven Mountray
82 minutes

Continuing her rich tradition of documenting Kiwi artists, Shirley Horrocks presents a comprehensive biopic of Peter Peryer, one of our most important photographers.

The access to Peryer at his home in Taranaki before his death in November 2018 makes this the most definitive documentary that will ever be produced on the artist. Clips from a 1994 TV doco add further depth to the richly told stories, but it is Horrocks’ one-on-one time with Peryer amongst his vibrant gallery of work that beautifully frames the man and the artist. His home is alive with work past and future, with curiosities on every shelf and nature ready to inspire in every corner.

Peryer’s well-known prints are richly illustrated on screen, including Dead Steer, the Mars Hotel series and the Enika portraits. Expert commentary from industry figures Jim Barr, Luit Bieringa and John McCormack access the importance of his photography in New Zealand’s art history. Anyone unfamiliar with Peryer’s work will become a ready convert through the course of the film. It is an essential homage to the great photographer’s life-long dedication to seeing and creating works of art out of the everyday. — Rebecca McMillan

Michael Smither 10

Michael Smither 10 celebrates ten years of Smither’s work, bringing a unique collaboration between an artist and a filmmaker to an end. For Tony Hiles, the rules were simple: there would be one documentary a year, filming would capture things as they happened; there were to be no rehearsals; each episode had to be different.

While Smither works intensely on several landscapes and a portrait, he talks of how the past nine months have taken a circular course, leading him back to earlier ideas, which he picks up and works with again. This is borne out by the study of a tree growing out of a cliff face, which inspired a now-finished work. Under the artist’s attentive paintbrush, this piece, which began as a sketch in which Smither neglected to take the hill in the background into account, thereby causing himself no end of trouble, transforms into a vibrant Sunset on the Hills.

The film offers viewers the privileged position of observing the creative process and Smither in a light-hearted and reflective mood as he ponders the questions that arise as a person approaches the end of their life.

Short Connections

79 mins approx. | Censors rating tbc

Five new Kiwi shorts that all examine the different ways we connect (and disconnect) with each other. From cross-cultural relationships that develop in a surprising manner, to intimate disconnect) with each other. From the different ways we connect (and the everyday. — Rebecca McMillan

Walk a Mile
NZ 2019 | Director/Screenplay: Judith Cowley
Producers: Sarah Anne Dudley | Photography: Yvaka Attewell | Editor: Jaine Fie | With: Jeffrey Thomas, Vili Aia | 16 mins

A grumpy old man hates living next door to a noisy family. That is until something happens to his neighbours. Judith Cowley’s moving Wellington-made short shows how reaching out can break down barriers.

Upstream

An immigrant from Portugal develops a close friendship with her Māori neighbour. Adriana Martins da Silva’s film offers a refreshing slant on Kiwi life and an elegant, understated portrait of female friendship.

Memory Foam
NZ 2019 | Director/Screenplay: Paloma Schneiderman
Producer: Esquilo Grant | Photography: Ryan Alexander Lloyd | Editor: Chia Hua | With: Alston Bruce, Andrew Foster | 15 mins

A middle-aged couple are shopping for a new bed, only to discover that their bed is not the only thing they have outgrown. Paloma Schneiderman delivers an all too recognisable portrait of a fading relationship.

Hush
NZ 2019 | Director: Arnagjan Ballantyne | Producer: Lario Tiffin | Screenplay: Arnagjan Ballantyne, Maria Inés Manchego | Photography: María Inés Manchego | Editor: Dan Kircher | With: Margaret Sydenham, Anthony Crum | 15 mins

A young woman surprises her brother and friends when she suddenly returns home with a secret. Made in collaboration with Toi Whakaiar, Arnagjan Ballantyne’s film is alive to the rhythms of small-town life.
Help give the year’s best New Zealand short films the homegrown recognition they deserve by voting for your favourite at this screening. A total of 91 films were submitted for this year’s New Zealand’s Best short film competition. NZIFF programmers Sandra Reid and Michael McDonnell and communications manager Rebecca McMillan viewed them all to draw up a shortlist of 12, from which director Jane Campion selected these six finalists. A jury of three will select the winner of the $5,000 Madman Entertainment Best Short Film Award, the $4,000 Creative New Zealand Emerging Talent Award, and the $4,000 Auckland Live Spirit of The Civic Award. The winner of the audience vote takes away the Audience Choice Award, consisting of 25 percent of the box office from the main centre NZIFF screenings. Jane’s comments on each film appear in italics.

### Nancy From Now On
**NZ 2019** | **Director/Screenplay:** Kaye Meachen  
**Producer:** Alastair Adair | **Photography:** Titus Sutherland  
**Editor:** Peter Anderson  
**With:** Bailey Poching, Wilson Dreams, Taneanga Emile | **20 mins**

A young man has a burning desire to be a drag queen. I liked this film for its light-handed yet authentic expression of alt-sexuality and the unforgettable charm of the lead, Bailey Poching.

### Egg Cup Requiem
**NZ 2019** | **Director/Producers:** Priska Bouchet, Nick Mayone  
**Photography:** Priska Bouchet  
**Editor:** Nick Mayone | **12 mins**

A collector reveals the story behind his lifelong obsession. This clever film builds a powerful and unexpected emotion, the likes of which felt new to me. There is not a wrong move in this exquisitely told portrait. It’s a bold, true and quietly brilliant achievement.

### Our Father
**NZ 2019** | **Director/Screenplay:** Esther Mauga  
**Producer:** Shari Meland Berrett | **Photography:** Finn Bowen  
**Editor:** River Hart  
**With:** Samara Alofa, Lovatara V a Hala Ali, Alofa S Tepue, Foua Moimoi Ruaru | **19 mins**

Two sisters are confronted by a dark history when their estranged father returns. I appreciated the subtlety of this family drama, especially the standout performance of the elder sister played by Samara Alofa.

### Golden Boy
**NZ 2019** | **Director/Screenplay/Editor:** Alex Fluri  
**Producers:** Alex Fluri, gorjan Markowski  
**Photography:** Eoin O’Loughlin  
**With:** Jared Blackton | **12 mins**

A day in the life of a young man with a desire to be noticed. I liked very much that Alex Plumb drew us into the mystical powers to reconnect with her absent father.

### Our Atoll Speaks: Ko Talatata Mai Tō Mātou Wenua
**USA 2019** | **Director/Producer:** Gemma Cribbs del Barrio  
**Screenplay:** Amalia Rachel Heikala’s Bordboy, Gemma Cribbs del Barrio, Florence Ngatokorua ‘Johnny’ Tane Fredie | **14 mins**

A meditation on sustainability from the remote Pukapuka atoll in the Cook Islands. A serenade of narrative and captivating imagery – a political cry for help. — CF

### Liliu
**NZ 2018** | **Director/Screenplay:** Anemah Tauamiti (Samoa)  
**Producer:** Nepia Huia (Rotuman)  
**With:** Thomas Harvey, Harry Te Toa | **17 mins**

A court interpreter in colonial Samoan risks everything to help a wrongfully convicted chief. In the time of King George VI, it was time for guardianship of indigenous history as truth. — LK

### Ways To See
**NZ 2018** | **Director/Screenplay:** Jessica Sanderson  
**Producers:** Jeremiah Katrina Kuvuna, Te Ati Awa  
**With:** Damir Armstrong (Te Ati Awa) & Ngii Peneu | **15 mins**

A young Māori girl attempts to use mystical powers to reconnect with her absent father. A mysterious woman, beautiful and otherworldly, comes for a visit. — CF

### Yellow Roses
**NZ 2019** | **Director/Screenplay:** Paula Whetu Jones  
**Producers:** Paula Whetu Jones, Anuela Paccia (Ngati Toa Rangatira) | **16 mins**

An elderly Māori woman who pines for the company of her husband enlists the services of a male escort. Vicky Haughten shines in a story of lost love reawakened. — LK

A collection of Māori and Pasifika short films curated by Leo Koziol (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Rakauapaaka), director of the Wairoa Māori Film Festival, with guest co-curator Craig Fasi (Niue), director of the Polynesian Film Festival. Curators’ comments on each film appear in italics.

### Rū
**NZ 2019** | **Director/Screenplay:** Anawari Simich Pone  
**Producers:** Ngati Rau, Ngati Toa, Ngati Tairanga, Ngati Apakura | **Editor:** Lindsay Gough  
**Screenplay:** Anawari Simich Pone, Sebastian Humail | **16 mins**

A pregnant woman must fight for her life when she inadvertently becomes the victim of a violent initiation. A routine whānau errand turns dark in this unexpected native noir. — LK

### Ngā Whanaunga Māori Pasifika Shorts 2019
90 mins approx. | Censors rating Bc | In English, Māori, Samoan and Pukapukan, with English subtitles

A mysterious woman, with mystical powers to reconnect with her absent father.

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Help yourself to our pick of the features we have encountered in a year of intense engagement with international cinema. We do what we can to cover many bases, not least the Cannes Film Festival, yielding some of our most exciting choices in the frantic fortnight before we close our schedule.

**The Orphanage**

*Panwaresghah*

**Director/Screenplay:**
Shahrbanoo Sadat  
Afghanistan 2019  
90 mins

**Photography:**
Virginie Surdej

**With:**
Qodratollah Qadiri, Sediqa Rasuli, Masihullah Feraji, Hasibullah Rasooli

**Festivals:**
Cannes (Directors’ Fortnight) 2019
In Dari, Russian and Hindi, with English subtitles

**Rating:**
M violence, sexual references, & offensive language

Set on the eve of Soviet rule in her homeland, Afghan director Shahrbanoo Sadat’s poignant, realist portrait of a teen’s hardscrabble life in a state orphanage is wonderfully contrasted with her protagonist’s outlandish fantasies. Sadat lets these daydreams play out as wildly entertaining, over-the-top Bollywood sequences complete with gushy ballads and hilariously ropey action.

We first meet 15-year-old Qodrat (Qodratollah Qadiri) on the streets of Kabul scamming film fans by reselling used cinema tickets. Before long he is collared by the police and brought to a Soviet-run orphanage overseen by a kind-hearted administrator (Anwar Hashimi), but rife with bullying and petty theft. Qodrat quickly befriends a motley crew including chess whizz Masihullah, Masihullah’s nephew Fayaz, who is two years older than his uncle, and the war-obsessed Hasib. Sadat follows the boys through a picaresque series of adventures, including power struggles with the orphanage’s resident bullies, the discovery of an abandoned Soviet tank and a field trip to Moscow.

Meanwhile, war is raging beyond the walls of the orphanage and change is rapidly approaching. — MM

**Celeste**

**Director:**
Ben Hackworth  
Australia 2018 | 105 mins

**Producers:**
Ursula Attack, Raphael Cocks

**Screenplay:**
Ben Hackworth, Bille Brown

**Editor:**
Peter Carrodus

**Music:**
Jackson Milas, Antony Partos, Celeste Lazarenko

**With:**
Radha Mitchell, Thomas Cocquerel, Nadine Garner, Odessa Young

**Festivals:**
Melbourne, London 2018

**Rating:**
M sex scenes & offensive language

A fragrant tropical flower of a film, Ben Hackworth’s Celeste celebrates the vitality of a woman who has lived for love and music as she takes stock of her life. A radiant Radha Mitchell mesmerises in the title role, confronting early retirement from opera stardom and a tangled relationship with her roughhewn stepson (Thomas Cocquerel). The decadent splendour of North Queensland’s Paronella Park, a neo-Gothic folly built in the 1930s, provides an unforgettable setting.

“The lush tropical greenery of Australia’s north-eastern reaches makes a resplendent backdrop in Celeste, but it’s Radha Mitchell who blooms in this admirable, affecting and operatic drama… Co-writing the script with the late Australian actor and playwright Bille Brown, Hackworth demonstrates sensitivity in fleshing out Celeste’s complicated central relationship… always taking the time to revel in the emotional details. It’s an approach that gives the film’s characters room to grow, and its performances along with them, immersing the audience in a heady mix of loss, love, loyalty, redemption and deep-felt yet ever-shifting bonds.” — Sarah Ward, Screendaily

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La Flor

At the beginning of this unparalleled movie event, director Mariano Llinás, looking exactly like a man who’s spent the last ten years of his life completing a film, explains to the camera what we’re about to witness. Six stories – some without endings – and a multitude of genres, languages and destinations swirl around four actresses, who are on screen from start to finish. Llinás sounds eternally grateful – and a little apologetic – for their unerring devotion to his mad project, making it clear that La Flor is by and for these talented women.

In the consistently surprising 14 hours that follow, a cursed mummy attacks a team of scientists, an estranged musical couple reunite to record another hit ballad, a secret society schemes over the elixir of youth, and an outfit of secret assassins awaits a showdown with rival agents. Later, we meet a filmmaker who’s obsessed with shooting trees, and there’s even a silent black-and-white remake of Renoir’s A Day in the Country in the mix.

Easily the longest film this festival has ever programmed, Llinás’ follow-up in the mix.

— Rolando Gallego, EscribiendoCine

Danger Close: The Battle of Long Tan

Honouring the unheralded bravery of the Australian and New Zealand soldiers who fought in the ‘Battle of Long Tan’, one of the most savage and decisive engagements in ANZAC history, director Kriv Stenders’ film is a war story of uncommon emotional intensity. Daunting combat scenes recall the against-the-odds bravado of Lone Survivor and Black Hawk Down, but it is the internal fight of the men outnumbered – and how they chose to define heroism in the moment – that resonates loudest of all.

“On 18 August 1966, for three and a half hours in a rubber plantation called Long Tan, Major Harry Smith and his inexperienced company, of mainly conscripts, fought for their lives against 2,500 seasoned Viet Cong and North Vietnamese soldiers. With their ammunition running out, casualties mounting, and the enemy massing for a final assault, each man searches for the strength to go forward with honour, decency and courage. A tremendous cast… bring the battle and each soldiers’ heroism vividly to life. Danger Close: The Battle of Long Tan is the important story of men caught in a politically unpopular war, whose courage has long been under-acknowledged.” — Sydney Film Festival

The Nightingale

For her follow-up to The Babadook (NZIFF14), Aussie auteur Jennifer Kent pivots to an entirely different brand of horror. A bleak, bloody revenge Western, her sophomore effort The Nightingale takes a cold, hard stare at her country’s history of colonial violence – and the results are genuinely chilling.

Set in Tasmania 1825, the story follows Clare (Aisling Franciosi), a convicted felon whose freedom hinges entirely on the whims of a sadistic British lieutenant (Sam Claflin). After he instigates an act of sicknessing cruelty, Clare pursues him into the wilderness, hellbent on revenge and aided only by a weary Aboriginal tracker (Baykali Ganambarr), who has more in common with Clare than she might think.

“Mostly, The Nightingale is as dark a film as you’re going to see this year, with low-level humanity and brutality constantly at odds. But beneath the non-stop barrage of atrocities is a timely cry for compassion, a recognition that violence against individuals cannot unpick the oppression woven into the very fabric of our civilisation. It contains no easy answers for how to reck with such evils, but its uncompromising vision is truly difficult to shake.” — JF
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Still (in magnifying glass) from Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision’s online film and video collection: Across the Mountain Passes of New Zealand, 1910.

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The Invisible Life of Eurídice Gusmão
A vida invisível de Eurídice Gusmão

Brazilian director Karim Aïnouz’s glorious Un Certain Regard winner richly renders the myth and the making of two spirited sisters who grow up inseparable before each taking very different paths. Living years in the same city without ever knowing it, the tension of whether they will find each other or not hangs exquisitely over this sumptuous film.

“Lustrous textures, boldly saturated colors and lush sounds serve to intensify the intimacy of… Aïnouz’s gorgeous melodrama about women whose independence of mind remains undiminished, even as their dreams are shattered by a stifling patriarchal society… The film hinges on a heartbreaking separation that causes decades of yearning and unanswered questions. But its supple moods are sustained by a sense of warmth and of… Aïnouz’s expert modulation of tone ensures that the film keeps surprising us with new turns, frequently marked by ravishing use of Schiefer’s score, combined with piano passages from Liszt, Grieg and Chopin.”

— David Rooney, Hollywood Reporter

Florianópolis Dream
Sueño Florianópolis

Set in the 1990s in Florianópolis, a famed holiday destination in southern Brazil, Ana Katz’s film is awash with glorious summer light, sub tropical greens and white gold sand. Enter a chaotic Argentinian family of four in a clapped-out car that immediately runs out of petrol. The disorganisation, much of it stemming from skinflintery, runs out of petrol. The disorganisation, but its supple moods are sustained by a sense of warmth and of… Aïnouz’s expert modulation of tone ensures that the film keeps surprising us with new turns, frequently marked by ravishing use of Schiefer’s score, combined with piano passages from Liszt, Grieg and Chopin.”

— David Rooney, Hollywood Reporter

Genesis
Genèse

An achingly beautiful and astonishingly assured coming-of-age tale, Genesis chronicles straight and queer desire in millennial Montreal with rare acuity. Writer-director Philippe Lesage (Les Démons, NZFF16) returns to the autobiographical well with boarding school student Guillaume (Théodore Pellerin), who oozes insouciance but finds himself confronting unexpected desires. Meanwhile, his older half-sister Charlotte (Noée Abita) navigates her own passions in a sea of undeserving men.

From the outset, simmering tension lurks everywhere, accentuated by precision cuts and painterly shadows. Genesis isn’t a horror film as such, but deftly written scenes of mounting dread will leave you squirming in your seat; at the same time, a perfectly curated collection of needle-drops from Aldous Harding to the Trashmen score superbly choreographed long takes of dances and parties. With a closing coda that returns us to the earliest pangs of love — joining Les Démons’ lead character, Felix (Edouard Tremblay-Grenier), at a summer camp — Lesage challenges the viewer to close the gap between the purity of desire and the darkness of the world. — Doug Dillaman
**Long Day’s Journey Into Night**

*Di qiu zui hou de ye wan*

Heavy with atmosphere and intense longing, Bi Gan’s audacious arthouse noir – a sensation at Cannes 2018 and a hot topic in its native China – explores the memories and regrets of a world-weary loner searching for a woman from his past. Luo Hongwu (Huang Jue), drifting from one old haunt to the next in his home town of Kaili, begins to piece together fragments of his love affair with Wan Qwen, a melancholic beauty he can neither forget nor remember clearly from decades ago. The exact whereabouts of Wan – played by Chinese superstar Tang Wei (Lust, Caution) – remain unknown; that is, until Luo wanders into a dingy movie theatre and, while prompting us to don our 3D glasses, sets in motion the film’s heralded second act.

With this and his debut feature, *Kaili Blues*, director Bi has confirmed his stature as a poet laureate of the long take, and the 59-minute 3D tracking shot that transforms Luo’s fruitless search into a limitless dream state promises to be the most enthralling cinematic experience of this festival. Deeply committed to the aesthetics of memory, *Long Day’s Journey Into Night* is gloriously enigmatic and truest of all to the maxim that it’s not the destination, but the journey, that matters. — Tim Wong

“[Long Day’s Journey Into Night] reaches a new level of cinematic intrigue as an immersive experience, unfolding within a surreal context that combines technical wizardry with high art. The unexpected love child of Wong Kar-wai and Andrei Tarkovsky… it’s both languorous and eye-popping at once.” — Eric Kohn, Indiewire

The Wild Goose Lake

*Nan fang che zhan de ju hui*

Director of the terrific, Berlinale-winning police procedural *Black Coal, Thin Ice* (NZIFF14), China’s Diao Yinan wowed Cannes with this superlative film noir. Stacked with some of the most uniquely thrilling sequences you’ll see in a cinema this year, his lauded follow-up centres on a rogue gangster (Hu Ge) who’s wanted by the cops and the fists (or bullets, or strategically concealed booby-traps) start flying, this film’s greatness transforms from the kind that sneaks up on you to the kind that blows you away.” — Charles Bramesco, *Little White Lies*

“Diao… delivers a definitive Chinese crime noir, in which the ravishing style and inventive staging form the substance… [it] may just end up being the last word in Chinese crime noir, because it does not want (or need) to be anything else." — Jessica Kiang, *Variety*

“Diao Yinan’s twisting and turning nocturnal noir is full of moody attitude and glorious cinematography… a film of tense atmosphere and endless eye-grabbing moments.” — Dave Calhoun, *Time Out*
By the Grace of God
Grâce à Dieu

Based on a true, still-developing story, François Ozon's By the Grace of God is a deeply humane dramatisation of a victim-led campaign to seek justice against a paedophile priest and the church structures that enabled his destructive behaviour. Adjacent to Spotlight (the 2015 Best Picture Oscar winner is sneakily referenced via a poster on a wall in one scene), the veteran French director's film focuses on the lives of three very different men facing down a powerful institution and decades of trauma, in an effort to find peace and effect societal change.

— Jacob Powell

“It’s an admirably sober account of the often painful process for abuse victims of coming forward with testimony after living for 30 years or more with their painful secrets. Their stories echo those of countless other countries around the world, where exposure of pedophilia scandals has shaken the public’s trust in the Catholic Church, finally prompting the Vatican under Pope Francis to issue zero-tolerance statements. The gap between such statements and concrete action to remove the offenders is the gray zone into which Ozon digs.

This is a social justice film made with purposeful conviction and a quiet, never strident, sense of indignation. It’s persuasively acted, elegantly shot, subtly scored and briskly edited to keep the dense, procedural action moving forward as the narrative baton is passed among three adult men who take the difficult step of speaking out about their boyhood experiences.” — David Rooney, Hollywood Reporter

Les Misérables

About as far from being a rousing stage musical as is possible, Les Misérables is an exhilarating, engrossing portrait of war on the streets between a swaggering Anti-Crime Squad and the myriad gangs they are trying to police shared the Jury Prize at Cannes.

In sharp contrast to the opening scenes of a unified France celebrating its 2018 World Cup win on the Champs-Élysées, the film takes place in a troubled Paris suburb over the course of a tightly-wrought couple of days, recalling Training Day with its portrayal of compromised cops, the crossing of ethical lines and the conscience of a newcomer. But director Ladj Ly's rendition of the drug- and poverty-stricken banlieues of working-class France is less Hollywoodian and more naturalistic à la The Wire, with astonishing performances by everyone from his three lead thugs to the indigent crooks, beleaguered immigrant families and children caught in the crossfire.

Ly's 15-year career in documentary, focusing on sociopolitical issues arising from events such as the 2005 Paris riots, clearly informs his approach to this fictional, but all-too-relevant, tale. Les Misérables is his first dramatic feature, but his realist fingerprints are all over it, notably in a key plot point which remarkably derives from autobiographical experience. Complex in its morality, lacking judgement of its characters, Les Misérables is a high-energy, contemporary musing on the problems explored by Victor Hugo over 150 years ago. — Sarah Watt

“François Ozon delivers a film that is both strong and modest, implacable and sensitive, incisive and respectful.”

— Fabien Lemercier, Cineuropa

“Les Misérables] simmers with urgent anger… A buzzing, sunstruck street thriller.”

— Guy Lodge, Variety
Non-Fiction
Doubles vies

Long-time festival favourite Olivier Assayas (Cold Water, Summer Hours) takes on the contemporary publishing industry in this free-flowing and quintessential French comedy, which puts a new spin on an age-old question: where is the line between truth and fiction? In this affectionate and knowing portrait of the Parisian intellectual class, publishers and authors debate the literary merits of the tweet, consider the future of the e-book, and — naturally — sleep with people they shouldn’t. The latter is particularly ripe material for struggling mid-career writer Léonard (a gloriously unkempt Vincent Macaigne), but his publisher Alain (Guillaume Canet) is tired of Léonard’s auto-fiction. Meanwhile, Léonard’s unwilling subjects begin to assert their own autonomy.

The French title, which translates to ‘double lives’, is particularly fitting for Alain’s actress wife Selena (Juliette Binoche, reuniting with Assayas after her powerhouse turn in Clouds of Sils Maria). Fed up with being a TV cop – excuse us, ‘crisis management expert’ – she provides Non-Fiction with both its biggest laughs and its rawest emotion. “Assayas crafts films of marvelous depths, simultaneously cinematic and literary in the richness of their pleasures... Only actors of the caliber and intelligence of Canet and Binoche can toss off their sparring lines with the ease and conviction of stimulating dinner-party conversations, conveying warmth, brains and fallibility in equal measure: you want to join in the discussion around the table, hoping you can keep up.” — Jay Weissberg, Variety

“With its breakneck verbosity, Non-Fiction is a directly philosophical work... smartly offset by its own sense of lightness and comedy.”
— Alex Leininger, PopMatters

Director/Screenplay: Olivier Assayas
France 2018 | 107 mins
Producer: Charles Gillibert
Photography: Yorick Le Saux
Editor: Simon Jacob
With: Guillaume Canet, Juliette Binoche, Vincent Macaigne, Nora Hamzawi, Christa Théret, Pascal Greggory
Festivals: Venice, Toronto, New York, London 2018
In French with English subtitles
M offensive language & nudity
Sibyl

Writer-director Justine Triet explores psychotherapy, boundaries and obsession in Sibyl, one of the four films in competition at Cannes this year directed by a woman.

“Sibyl (a jittery Virginie Efira) is a psychotherapist so driven to write a novel that she drops her clients to buy herself some extra time. She’s barely started to contend with writers’ block… when a new client finds her way to her… Madeleine (an energized Adèle Exarchopoulos) calls Sibyl in tears over an accidental pregnancy; the father is Igor (Gaspar Ulliel), the dashing lead with whom she’s set to star in a new romance directed by revered German auteur Mika (Toni Erdmann star Sandra Hüller). And if that wasn’t thorny enough, Mika and Igor used to be an item as well… Sibyl, however, sees opportunity: hitting a covert record button as Madeleine spills her woes… Sibyl begins the sneaky process of transforming her patient’s story into the material for a novel…

Sibyl becomes a brighter, siller, film-within-a-film spoof of the Woody Allen variety, and sends Sibyl careening further into a black hole of drunken resentment and self-destruction.”
— Eric Kohn, IndieWire

“Triet manages to build a complex… portrait of a talented woman under the influence… who wants to have it all – career, family, creative inspiration and a good sex life – and winds up falling victim to her own ambition… It’s about as French as you can get… Triet handles the material gracefully and altogether skilfully, directing star Virginie Efira to one of her most impressive all-encompassing performances to date.”
— Jordan Mintzer, Hollywood Reporter

Who You Think I Am
Celle que vous croyez

Juliette Binoche delivers a sultry, complicated turn as a woman hiding behind a virtual alter ego in this haunting French psychodrama. Director and co-writer Safy Nebbou’s tale, based on Camille Laurens’ 2016 novel, opens with 50-something French literature lecturer Claire Millaud (Binoche) introducing herself to new psychologist Catherine (Nicole Garcia). Although initially reticent in her company, it doesn’t take long for the divorced mother-of-two to launch into her sordid backstory.

After a messy breakup with her much younger boyfriend Ludo, and upset at his sudden disappearance, Claire decides to create a new, younger persona online, with the aim of reconnecting via Ludo’s best friend Alex (François Civil). Posing as 24-year-old fashion intern Clara Antunes, Claire’s online banter and photogenic looks soon have Alex hooked and desperate to meet her in real life. But something about Claire’s story – and where she got Clara’s image from – doesn’t quite ring true.

While very much a reflection of modern-day mores (Claire describes social media as both “a shipwreck and a life raft” for her), there’s also a timeless aspect to what unfolds, mirrored in Claire’s choice of reading material for her latest batch of students – Les Liaisons dangereuses. Binoche, superb as ever, grounds the film’s riveting, sometimes surprising narrative turns with a performance to rival Isabelle Huppert’s icy music conservatory professor in The Piano Teacher and Charlotte Rampling’s repressed crime novelist in Swimming Pool.

“For anyone who’s ever been catfished… [this] evocation of exhilarated human connection and terrified self-sabotage is uncomfortably easy to empathize with.”
— Guy Lodge, Variety
A White, White Day
Hvítur, Hvítur Dagur

This gritty Icelandic drama captures the growing obsession of a widowed ex-cop (Ingvar Sigurðsson, in an award-winning performance recognised at Cannes Critics’ Week). Haunted by the tragedy of his wife’s death, Ingimundur seeks solace in the simplicity of DIY renovations, but his grief fuels a suspicious sense of betrayal when he stumbles across evidence of his deceased spouse’s infidelity. As his instincts to investigate and seek revenge take hold, the lawman begins to unravel.

“A taciturn former policeman in a small Icelandic enclave grows more complex before our eyes in the visually arresting and emotionally rewarding A White, White Day. Crusty widower Ingimundur… channels his grief into renovating a house whose isolated location shows off nature posing in a cycling-through-the-seasons medley of changing climate conditions in ever-exquisite light. Ingimundur loved his late wife unconditionally and has little patience for the grief counselor he is obliged to see once a week. But while going through a box of his wife’s things, his cop instincts kick in and the already cranky man starts behaving erratically – although there’s definitely a startling method to his madness.

Writer-director Hlynur Pálmason (Locarno prize-winner Winter Brothers) delivers a leisurely but never boring tale of hidden feelings percolating in a splendidly varied landscape. From sharp straight cuts to uncomfortably long awkward moments, a perfectly controlled sense of place permeates every frame.” — Lisa Nesselson, Screendaily

Director/Screenplay: Hlynur Pálmason
Iceland/Denmark/Sweden 2019
109 mins
Producer: Anton Máni Svansson
Photography: Maria von Hausswolff
Editor: Julius Krebs Damsbo
Music: Edmund Finnis
With: Ingvar Sigurðsson, Ída Mekkín Hlynsdóttir, Hilmir Snær Guðnason, Sara Dögg Ásgeirsdóttir, Björn Ingi Hilmarsson

Festivals: Cannes (Critics’ Week) 2019
In Icelandic with English subtitles
Censors rating tbc

Adam

Hardened hearts find kinship in writer-director’s Maryam Touzani’s quietly enthralling debut, a tale of female solidarity that never goes quite where seasoned filmgoers might expect. Keeping her condition hidden from her village family, Samia (Nisrin Erradi), unmarried and heavily pregnant, seeks work and refuge in Casablanca. Abla (Lubna Azabal) seems like the last person who might take her in. Bringing up a daughter alone and running a one-woman bakery business from her kitchen, Abla has more work than she can handle, and she intends to keep it that way. The evident happiness and security of Abla’s daughter may be the only clue Samia needs that the older woman’s bark is more severe than her bite, but the mutual accommodation they reach develops incrementally, in sideways shifts. The performances suggest depths of experience, with Samia, in particular, registering as a young woman of substantial character, bravely negotiating a manifestly unfair social system. When the baby (the boy for whom this female-centric film is named) is born, the joy and pain of maternal connection blaze from the screen. — BG

Director: Maryam Touzani
Morocco/Italy/Belgium 2019 | 98 mins
Screenplay: Maryam Touzani, Nabil Ayouch
Photography: Virginia Surdej
Editor: Julie Naas
With: Lubna Azabal, Nisrin Erradi
Festivals: Cannes (Un Certain Regard) 2019
In Arabic with English subtitles
Censors rating tbc

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Photograph

Ritesh Batra returns to the Mumbai streets of his festival favourite The Lunchbox with this delightful romance that doubles as a sensuous love letter to that bustling metropolis. The plot, in which a poor street photographer Rafi convinces a shy middle-class student Miloni to pose as his fiancée to fool his meddling grandmother Dadi, may sound like the stuff of Bollywood fantasy but Batra plays it with a graceful touch that proves deeply felt.

“The film, which deftly touches upon such big-picture themes as class, religion, tradition, family and happiness, features a wealth of delicately captivating moments and observations... Miloni’s sensitive relationship with her family’s humble maid, Rafi’s interplay with his buxomat friends and roommates (as well as their kindness and respect toward Dadi) and Rafi’s heartfelt pursuit of the defunct brand of cola Miloni loved as a child... Batra... captures the bustling, workaday sides of Mumbai life with vigor and passion while also treating us to several leafer, more urbane views of the city. Kudos to cinematographers Timothy Gillis and Ben Kutchins for the film’s many burnished, strikingly composed shots. It’s a beautiful, resonant film.” — Gary Goldstein, LA Times

“Nawazuddin Siddiqui is subtle yet dynamic as Rafi. Throughout, his eyes reveal the intense feelings he’s sorting through: the longing for Miloni, the love for his grandmother and his sense of how limited his own future might be. Siddiqui, who played the trainee who ingratiates himself with Irrfan Khan’s character in The Lunchbox, is a major screen presence.” — Caryn James, Hollywood Reporter

Photograph entrances when it’s swimming through the city with its star-crossed lovers.” — Fionnuala Halligan, Screendaily

Loro

Queasy and compelling in equal measure, Paolo Sorrentino’s sprawling portrait of former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi – played with oily charisma by the director’s regular leading man, Toni Servillo (The Great Beauty) – is presented in its feature-length international version. It’s 2006. Berlusconi’s third government has fallen, and his marriage is also about to collapse. Before meeting the man himself, we’re introduced to Sergio (a magnetic and suave Riccardo Scamarcio) and his unscrupulous partner Tamara. From southern Italy, the pair want to become part of Berlusconi’s closest circle in Rome, and they are ready to do whatever it takes. Enter Kira, a high-class hooker who encourages Sergio to rent a villa in Sardinia overlooking the former PM’s and fill it with scantily clad models fuelled by mountains of drugs and alcohol. It doesn’t take long before Berlusconi notices.

Until now his name has barely been spoken, and even his face has not yet been revealed. When he does at last appear, Berlusconi is in full make up, dressed as an odalisque attempting to impress his bored wife. Always in performance mode, he acts the crooner, an emperor bestowing gifts to prostitutes and politicians alike and, in one of the film’s best scenes, a salesman trying to close the deal on a non-existent apartment with a housewife fooled by his magic. The chameleonic Servillo is perfect as the orange, plastic surgery-addicted Berlusconi, his voice and mannerisms extraordinarly matching those of the Italian politician. It’s impossible to take your eyes off that smiling, creepy face. — Sibilla Paparatti

“A compelling mixture of the whimsical and the sleazy, the hedonistic and the sad. The Trumpian parallels are also impossible to ignore.” — Ian Freer, Empire
It Must Be Heaven

Droll and astute, Elia Suleiman’s (Divine Intervention, NZIFF02; The Time That Remains, NZIFF09) latest deadpan outing, which topped the international critics list at Cannes, utilises the Palestinian auteur’s expressive Buster Keaton-like visage as its vehicle for exploring national and personal identity in a shifting global context. A plethora of cities are framed into perfectly composed backdrops (by award-winning Timbuktu cinematographer Sofian El Fani) against which Suleiman observes the melancholy-laced humour of the everyday.

“Filmed in his charming hometown of Nazareth and an oddly deserted Paris, with visits to New York and Montreal, a gossamer story is built around ordinary events and chance encounters. Playing himself without speaking a word for the whole film, the writer-director is an attentive, ironic observer of the human comedy in a world of global tension and paranoia... Suleiman’s gift is his ability to convey this uneasiness in the lightest of moments, making each scene an amusing encounter between his silent Everyman and the oddities around him. He doesn’t need overtly political topics; even an ornerypigeon will do to illustrate the obstacles in life.” — Deborah Young, Hollywood Reporter

“Suleiman anchors the film as a quiet observer who takes in the absurdities of the world... and responds with a cockeyed look... that speaks 10 times louder than words.” — Ben Croll, The Wrap

The River

Ozen

Director/Screenplay/Photography/Editor: Emir Baigazin
Kazakhstan/Poland/Norway 2018 | 108 mins
Music: Astana Rastafary, Zhashatlan Ustarbayev, Ruslan Ustarbayev
Baigazin acted in the film and shares the screen with his real-life brother, Kazakh actor Adyl Akytbayev, in his directorial debut. The River is set in the Kazakh capital, Alma-Ata, and follows the lives of a group of taxi drivers. The main character, played by Baigazin, is a once-cruisy cabbie who has seen better days and is struggling to keep his business afloat.

“...the river’s always longed for but its waters are dangerous; everything in this world has two aspects.” — Lee Marshall, The Wrap

Fly By Night

Sebelum pagi berakhir

This Kuala Lumpur crime syndicate made up of cabbies will have you looking over your shoulder next time you’re dropped home. Working a lucrative racket, the crew is given a heads-up on wealthy passengers arriving at the airport and take detailed notes on their fares, figuring out later which information and threats can best extort cash out of them. Led by Taio (Sunny Pang), they’re on to a good thing until police start to take an interest and some of the gang grow reckless and greedy. Chaos is accelerated when Ah Wai (Fabian Loo) bites off more than he can chew on a side hustle and draws the ire of a criminally connected casino owner (a rivetingly over-the-top Frederick Lee).

Their once-cruisy capers are now at risk of turning into a flaming wreck.

“A bloody, vivid, polished crime thriller with style to burn and a grim, fatalistic heart, and which adheres to its genre conventions while managing to make them seem fresh and unpredictable... Above all, it feels like there are actual emotional stakes involved as a secondary narrative about a family on the verge of collapse emerges amid the violent clutter.” — Elizabeth Kerr, Hollywood Reporter

Censors rating tbc

VS 2018
In English, French and Arabic, with English subtitles
CinemaScope | Censors rating tbc

B EMB Thu 1 Aug, 3.45 pm
A EMB Wed 7 Aug, 6.15 pm

100 mins
Mr Jones

Veteran film director Agnieszka Holland (In Darkness, NZIFF12), whose talents are in demand on series such as House of Cards, returns to her natural realm of the big screen with a wrenching historical drama, featuring a breakout performance from James Norton (McMafia, Happy Valley) in the lead role.

Set in 1933, Mr Jones recounts the story of a Welsh reporter and Russian-speaking Cambridge scholar, Gareth Jones, whose mission to report on Stalin's industrial machine ultimately brought to light the Holodomor, the man-made famine said miracle induced and which resulted in millions of deaths in Soviet Ukraine.

Jones’ accounts of the horrors he witnessed while covertly travelling through Ukraine were dismissed as lies by other journalists and intellectuals, determined for a variety of reasons to keep the truth at bay. For some, Stalin was an antidote to Hitler and the film shows how their desperate need to believe blinded them to reality. But not all were duped: George Orwell was said to be inspired by Jones’ work; quotations from Animal Farm dot the film.

“As only someone as experienced and cine-literate as Holland could have pulled off such an extensively detailed film, one that deftly tells us so much about the context of a largely true-life story while using genre conventions of Soviet propaganda against itself. It’s also a cinephile’s storehouse of nods to Soviet classics as well as films like Three Colours: Red, Citizen Kane and Diamonds of the Night… A gripping film that needs to be seen.” — Nick James, Sight & Sound

The Gangster, the Cop, the Devil
Ak-in-jeon

Action, thrills and humour collide after intimidating crime boss Jang Dong-soo (Korean star Ma Dong-seok, fast becoming Asia’s answer to Dwayne Johnson) survives a random roadside attack by a serial killer. The incident sets off a chain of events that sees Jang’s henchmen involved in smuggling, kickbacks and embezzlement schemes with the final 30 minutes offering three outstanding sequences: a squirmy heist with the final minutes offering a truly Lean-ian sweep.”

— Peter Bradshaw, The Guardian

The Realm
El reino

For any viewers weary of House of Cards-style chicanery, this blistering new political thriller from Spanish director Rodrigo Sorogoyen should prove that there’s still plenty of meat on the bone. The reliable Antonio de la Torre as cast of dirty politicians as Manuel Lopez Vidal, a fast-talking Spanish vice-secretary who enjoys a cushy lifestyle, courtesy of the kickbacks and embezzlement schemes he orchestrates with his colleagues. But when these dirty deeds come to light during a teen party, a high-octane car chase and a riveting head-to-head debate on live television. By the end, Sorogoyen has fired shots at his country’s entire broken system, ending on a closing note of implication that has a damning universal sting. — JF
In Fabric

A malevolent scarlet dress wreaks havoc in this mischievously entertaining and sophisticated genre-twister. Melding retro chills, anti-consumerist treatise and bongers social satire, with a good dollop of sensual witchery woven in, director Peter Strickland (Berberian Sound Studio, The Duke of Burgundy) once again nails the quality of strangeness inherent in giallo and Euro-horror.

Dentley & Sopers Trusted Department Store offers ladies all they could desire, and it is here that Sheila (Marianne Jean-Baptiste), a beleaguered bank employee and mother of an obnoxious teenage son, comes looking for something nice to wear on her first date with Adonis, encountered over the internet. She is beguiled into purchasing a vibrant dress – Demonic Red would describe it well – by the head salesclerk, who like the rest of the exceedingly strange staff, wears a voluminous black gown, accompanied by a bulbous, lacquered hairdo and razor-red lipstick and nail polish. The fetishist look is matched by convoluted enticements veering between loopy sales pitch, philosophical riddles and vaguely menacing flirtation. Unbeknownst to Sheila, her purchase possesses dark intentions unrelated to sartorial splendour; she won’t be the garment’s only victim…

In the outlandish world depicted, rippling with erotic undertones and entrancing colours and textures, the monotonous description of washing machine parts sends bank managers into raptures and customer garment-lust leads to a full-blown store riot. Mordantly funny and stylish. — SR

“[Peter Strickland’s] most audacious and bizarre film to date... a raucous, full-tilt descent into bishop-sleeved madness.”
— Hannah Woodhead, Little White Lies

High Life

Robert Pattinson and Juliette Binoche are on a suicide mission to the stars in this startlingly original space thriller from French master Claire Denis.

In the deepest reaches of the cosmos, a crying baby distracts lone astronaut Monte (Pattinson) as he tends to life-support systems on board a derelict vessel. Through unsettling recollections of the voyage from Earth, we learn where the child came from, what became of the crew and their role as convicts piloting a spacecraft towards a distant black hole. And then there’s the ship’s doctor – played by an astonishingly uninhibited Binoche – whose bizarre sex experiments unearth both latent desires and violent compulsions amongst the unstable prisoners.

Directing her first science-fiction movie, Denis distorts the genre in sharp and shocking ways by mining the exquisite tension between intimacy and horror that has distinguished her best films. Dark, unconventional and slippery with psychosexual energy, High Life’s vision of humanity lost in the void is also unmistakably Denis’s, delivered, true to form, on her own unique, unapologetic terms. — Tim Wong

Director: Claire Denis
France/Germany/USA/Poland/UK 2018
110 mins

Screenplay: Claire Denis, Jean-Pol Fargeau, with the collaboration of Geoff Cox
Music: Stuart A. Staples
With: Robert Pattinson, Juliette Binoche, André Benjamin, Mia Goth
Festivals: Toronto, San Sebastian, New York, Busan 2018; Rotterdam 2019
R16 violence, rape, sex scenes & offensive language

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A EMB Sun 28 Jul, 9.00 pm
A RX Thu 1 Aug, 8.15 pm

A EMBO Mon 29 Jul, 9.15 pm
B RX Tue 30 Jul, 4.00 pm
A LHP Thu 1 Aug, 8.00 pm
A RX Thu 8 Aug, 6.15 pm
B RX Fri 9 Aug, 2.30 pm
A PH Sun 11 Aug, 7.00 pm
Mrs Lowry & Son

Having already played J.M.W. Turner to great acclaim, Timothy Spall takes on another English painter with equally compelling results. Laurence Stephen (L.S.) Lowry was a Lancashire artist whose depictions of industrial life only found an audience and admiration once he reached middle age.

Focusing on the mid-1930s, the period just before Lowry was discovered, theatre director Adrian Noble’s film looks at the relationship between the then Pendlebury rent collector and his bed-ridden, domineering mother Elisabeth (Vanessa Redgrave). Struggling to pay off debts his father left behind, ‘Laurie’ also bears the brunt of his mum’s fragile physical and emotional state. “I’m never cheerful, not since 1868,” she opines, while grumbling about their working-class neighbours, her son’s apparent lack of ambition and his ‘hobby’. Seemingly taking delight in reading aloud a scathing review of one of his works in the local paper, she also casts doubt on the authenticity of a letter from London proposing an exhibition of his works. “Why can’t you paint something picturesque, tasteful? What about a bowl of fruit?”, Elizabeth chides.

Essentially a two-hander, Mrs Lowry & Son is a terrific, slow-burning showcase for the acting skills of Redgrave and Spall. Their scenes together crackle with tension and barely repressed anger, as Laurie finds his attempts to evolve stymied by his almost maniacal mum. The svelte Spall is particularly impressive, whether with brush in hand, or using the canvas of his face to portray the flickers of an artist’s pent-up emotions. — James Croot

Peterloo

The latest from Mike Leigh is an epic portrayal of the events surrounding the infamous 1819 Peterloo Massacre when British government forces attacked the crowd at a peaceful pro-democracy rally in St Peter’s Field in Manchester. Taking a wide scope that encompasses both the common citizens and their desire for fairer representation and the governmental players who are determined to block concessions by any means, Leigh delivers a multifaceted historical drama with unmistakable resonance for our current age.

“Leigh’s achievement is to have made a period film with the same immediacy and sense of anger that runs through contemporary dramas like Hillsborough or Bloody Sunday. He has a huge ensemble cast but that exhaustive attention to detail and fascination with the eccentricities of human behaviour which has always characterised his work is still there… At 75, the British director is still clearly at the peak of his powers. Whatever else, his latest film will ensure that the bloody events in St Peter’s Field nearly 200 years ago are put back on the radar of politicians, historians and cultural commentators alike.” — Geoffrey Macnab, The Independent

“Against the backdrop of cinematographer Dick Pope’s beautiful Manchester/Lancashire canvas, the film weaves multiple stories of everyday people into a socialist tapestry and depicts an act of police brutality with huge contemporary relevance. Warm, funny and incendiary, this is a major work of cinema.” — Kate Taylor, London Film Festival

“With this richly intelligent, passionate movie, Mike Leigh has fought a brilliant rearguard action on history’s political battlefield.” — Peter Bradshaw, The Guardian
Brittany Runs a Marathon

This charming debut feature from playwright Paul Downs Colaizzo features a winning performance from Jillian Bell as Brittany, a sharp-tongued, hard-partying twentysomething whose lifestyle choices are catching up with her. When a visit to a doctor to score drugs turns sour, she decides to take up running and pursue a wild dream of running the New York Marathon.

“An endearing and earnest comedy about self-acceptance and body positivity that sidesteps cheesy pitfalls, Brittany Runs a Marathon is based on the journey of a real-life friend of Colaizzo, whom Bell plays with a deft blend of sincerity and slapstick. Tired of being invisible and unable to afford a gym, Brittany decides to take it to the streets, running one city block at a time to build up her stamina… Along the way, she befriends Catherine (Michaela Watkins), a jogging obsessive, as well as fellow rookie Seth (Micah Stock), eventually persuading both to train with her for the annual 26-mile city marathon. Meanwhile, her new house-sitting gig introduces her to Jern (Utkarsh Ambudkar), a lovable troublemaker who convinces Brittany to move into the fancy digs they’re supposed to be taking care of in shifts.

Colaizzo successfully walks a fine line between inspiration and caution, never presenting Brittany as a patronizing role model for weight loss, nor a clichéd case of inner beauty… His film delivers where other admirable efforts on body image like I Feel Pretty fall short, gifting a rare amount of empathy to anyone in an abusive relationship with their bathroom scale.” — Tomris Laffly, Time Out

American Woman

Sienna Miller is superb as a mother struggling to move on – and move through life – in this decade-spanning story of a missing teenager in working-class Pennsylvania. Focusing on both small and significant happenings in the Rust Belt, director Jake Scott lets the desperation of his characters speak through everyday drama – and provides Miller with a platform for one of the best performances of her career.

“Deb (Miller) was never shy about being the bad girl in her family. She had her daughter Bridget young, her old boyfriend… and never returns. Deb’s mother (Madigan) and sister (Hendricks) join the entire community in a thorough search, but to no avail. Time passes… But just when her devastating loss seems far behind her, new truths come to light that change everything… Miller has never given new truths come to light that change everything… Miller has never given

The Art of Self-Defense

Imagine a Jared Hess movie penned by Paul Schrader and you’re halfway towards anticipating the dark, droll laughs of Riley Stearns’ latest. Led by a never better Jesse Eisenberg. The Art of Self-Defense is a serious character study on the toxic tribalism of modern masculinity that also happens to be seriously funny.

After being brutally beaten in the street by a group of bikers, mild-mannered accountant Casey (Eisenberg) enrolls in a local karate class to learn how to stick up for himself. But as he quickly subscribes to the pervasive machismo of his teacher ‘Sensei’ (a wickedly deadpan Alessandro Nivola), he starts to transform into precisely the kind of bully he sought to overcome. That trajectory could sound familiar on paper, but Stearns keeps things thrillingly off-kilter on screen, consistently throwing us nasty surprises. The result is one of the most memorable American comedies of recent times. — IF

“The best kind of crowdpleaser… a whip-smart comedy with some real emotional depth.” — Dennis Harvey, Variety

“Imagine a Jared Hess movie penned by Paul Schrader and you’re halfway towards anticipating the dark, droll laughs of Riley Stearns’ latest. Led by a never better Jesse Eisenberg. The Art of Self-Defense is a serious character study on the toxic tribalism of modern masculinity that also happens to be seriously funny.

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“The film has a lot to say but says it all in the weirdest, most surprising way possible… It’s just so damn funny – every line, every delivery, every bizarre plot point.” — Meredith Borders, SlashFilm

A

A PH Fri 26 Jul, 6.15 pm
A RCP Tue 30 Jul, 6.15 pm
B PH Wed 31 Jul, 1.30 pm
A EMB Thu 1 Aug, 6.15 pm
A LHP Sun 4 Aug, 3.00 pm
B EMB Fri 9 Aug, 4.00 pm

B

B RX Fri 26 Jul, 4.15 pm
A PH Tue 30 Jul, 8.15 pm
A RX Sat 3 Aug, 8.15 pm
A EMB Thu 8 Aug, 4.45 pm
A ED Sat 10 Aug, 6.15 pm
Under the Silver Lake

Fast becoming a cult favourite since its less than rapturous reception at Cannes last year, David Robert Mitchell's deliciously shaggy noir takes us down a sprawling So Cal rabbit hole of pop culture references and conspiracy theories. If you can get on its wacked-out wavelengths – which owes a big debt to The Long Goodbye and Mulholland Drive, as well as Hitchcock and Thomas Pynchon – you're in for a treat. And even if not, strap in for a wild ride. Pynchon – you're in for a treat. And Caterpillarplasty; Egg to-11 can look; the Jacques Tati turned-up-how stunning hand-drawn animation I'm OK Animation NOW! the best and brightest from this year's honcho at the Melbourne International programmer Malcolm Turner, also head Our longstanding animation 84 mins approx. | Censors rating tbc

“A tasty neo-noir that wilfully melds tones and sensibilities with a playful seductiveness… [and] a surreal, stoned portrait of LA that doubles as an oddball mystery.” — Tim Grierson, Screendaily

Per tutta la vita
France 2018 | Director: Roberto Catanzi | 5 mins
Quite simply, one of the most beautifully crafted films we have ever seen. A journey to the origins of memory.

I'm OK
UK 2018 | Director: Elizabeth Hobbs | 6 mins
Expressionist artist Oskar Kokoschka enlists in WWI after the end of a love affair.

Fest
Germany 2018 | Director: Nikita Diakur | 3 mins
The latest from the master of ‘glitch’ animation reveals in the featureless sub-culture of extreme urban exploration.

Where’s the Butter, Betty
UK 2018 | Director: Will Anderson | 3 mins
The bloody butter is around here somewhere, Betty, it has to be.

The Juggler
France 2018 | Director: Kikunma Jakute | 11 mins
A delicately jagged reminder that each of our individual little worlds are strung together by an invisible, infinite thread.

Winter’s Blight
New Zealand 2019 | Director: Claire Campbell | 14 mins
A reclusive old man living alone in a forest is saved by the very cycle of life he nurtured as a young boy.

Herman Brown is Feeling Down
UK 2018 | Director: Dan Castro | 6 mins
Herman Brown has every reason to be happy. Herman Brown has every reason to be unhappy. How to decide?

Trumpet-Trompette
New Zealand 2018 | Director: Max Woodward | 2 mins
A smooth, stylistic meditation on preparing to do something you love.

Caterpillarplasty
Canada 2018 | Director: David Barlow-Krelina | 5 mins
A glossy and scabrous takedown of the cosmetic surgery industry.

Egg
France 2018 | Director: Martina Scarpelli | 12 mins
Have you considered food as a choice rather than a requirement? One of the most awarded animated films on the circuit this year.

Finity Calling
The Netherlands 2018 | Director: Jasper Kuipers | 15 mins
An audacious stop-motion animation. When the fragile equilibrium of the group is broken, the results are explosive.

Animation NOW! 2019
84 mins approx. | Censors rating tbc

Our longstanding animation programmer Malcolm Turner, also head honcho at the Melbourne International Animation Festival, offers a selection of the best and brightest from this year’s Animation NOW! Festival. Highlights include Per Tutta La Vita and I'm OK, virtuoso examples of just how stunning hand-drawn animation can look; the Jacques Tati turned-up-to-11 Caterpillarplasty; Egg, one of the most talked about and awarded films on the circuit at the moment; and two outstanding – and completely different – Kiwi films, Winter's Blight and Trumpet-Trompette. If you're looking to sample the international animation ecosystem in all its multi-coloured, variously shaped glories, there's no better place to begin.

| A | ED | Wed 7 Aug, 6.30 pm |
| B | ED | Fri 9 Aug, 12.45 pm |
| A | ED | Sat 10 Aug, 2.15 pm |
| | IMAX | Fri 26 Jul, 8.45 pm |
| | B | RX | Thu 30 Jul, 1.15 pm |
| | B | ED | Thu 1 Aug, 3.30 pm |
| | A | RCP | Fri 2 Aug, 11.5 pm |
| | A | RX | Thu 8 Aug, 8.30 pm |
| | A | LHP | Sun 11 Aug, 7.30 pm |
We line up the films that held our attention with 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 – though an encouraging number on the pages that follow are.

**Angelo**

The life and times of Angelo Soliman, an African slave boy sold and assimilated into 18th-century Viennese aristocracy, is exhibited with quintessential Austrian precision – and a masterful undercurrent of irony – in this piercing dramatisation of an ignominious chapter in European history.

Groomed for court life from a young age by a wealthy countess, Angelo grows into a celebrated court jester and, along with this role, the upward mobility of a nobleman. But for witnesses to this privileged upbringing, the illusion of Angelo’s freedom is painful to behold. Even more telling is Angelo’s own quiet yet acute awareness of his reality, laid bare in silent encounters with less fortunate members of his race, the insult of having to perform alongside fellow courtiers in black face, or the hypocrisy of a society that swiftly turns on him after his marriage to a white woman.

Coolly and perceptively directed by Markus Schleinzer (a former collaborator of Michael Haneke), the film’s painterly compositions play their part in framing Angelo’s humiliating fate as a trophy and specimen – as well as shrewdly implicating dominant cultures, then and now, in the Othering of racial minorities. — Tim Wong

**Aniara**

Based on Harry Martinson’s scarily prescient epic poem on intergalactic doom, Aniara imagines the existential crisis of a human race without a planet to call home. The alternative? A shopping mall in space. With stark similarities to Claire Denis’ sensual and nightmarish High Life (p36), this eerie Swedish sci-fi odyssey is a stunningly realised vision of cosmic despair.

“[In] Aniara, a spacecraft designed to make the voyage from a ruined Earth to a colony on Mars hits both debris and disaster. The turbulence from the impact soon passes, allowing the ship… to stabilize. The film’s plucky protagonist, MR (Emelie Jonsson), returns to her job with the crew – placating anxious passengers with images of Earth before fires turned the blue marble brown. But once it becomes evident that the ship ejected its fuel… it is impossible to dream away brutal reality: Without fuel, the Aniara and its passengers are doomed to drift in the infinite emptiness of space.” — Teo Bugbee, NY Times

“A masterful example of smart, relevant sci-fi cinema” — Mark Hughes, Forbes
Animals

Australian director Sophie Hyde (52 Tuesdays, NZIFF14) explores friendship dynamics in an Irish setting in this refreshing look at what being female and thirtysomething feels like. Alia Shawkat (Arrested Development) shines as wild child BFF to Holliday Grainger’s more cautious yet still hedonistically inclined Laura, the struggling writer who’s now 32 and may be on the cusp of ‘growing up’. Dublin is their playground, but it could be any Antipodean city where happy hours are the beginning of a great night and those nights always run late. Laura’s younger sister, once a fellow party animal, is pregnant and settling down. And Laura’s just met a handsome pianist who’s focused on his craft. Maybe she wants that too?

With echoes of Bridesmaids and Girls, it is in the empowered female sexuality, with the male roles playing second fiddle, that Animals truly shines. Hyde allows her characters to make mistakes with levity and without moral judgement. In this modern look at the complexity of friendships, heterosexuality is an option not a given, alcohol and drugs are a necessary part of the fun, and the reality of getting older is getting harder to ignore. — Rebecca McMillan

“Hyde’s [film]… deserves all the praise it can get… Refreshingly frank and non-autocratic about sex, drugs and the uniquely female desire to be free of judgment, Animals dares to love the pair of imperfect friends that lead the way into their messy and undeniably fun world of consequence-free hard-partying, where men can be disposable and things will just work out.” — Tomris Laffly, RogerEbert.com

Beats

Dour reality meets its nemesis in 90s rave culture in this exuberant memoir of the underground music subculture in this exuberant memoir of the underground music subculture in this exuberant memoir of the underground music subculture in this exuberant memoir of the underground music subculture. Director Brian Welsh. Based on a play by Kieran Hurley

“Filled with remarkable insight and wit… a wonderful, utterly lived-in film about two women at a crossroads.” — Benjamin Lee, The Guardian

Crystal Swan

Instead of leaving Minsk for Chicago, where the house music she adores was born, a young DJ’s dream of relocating to the States is threatened by bureaucracy. Dressed like she’s ready to hit the clubs at any given moment, Alina Nasibullina is a ball of fire as Velya, who finds herself stuck in a bleak factory town and at the mercy of dodgy friends, even crazier locals and the US Embassy in Belarus.

“Crystal Swan may be set in the culturally specific context of mid-1990s Minsk, but there are restless young women like Velya… in every decade in every backwater town. A rainbow-haired bohemian butterfly dreaming of brighter lights in bigger cities, Velya is anxious to escape the stifling provincialism of her homeland and seek her fortune as a club DJ in America. At home in Minsk she has a clownish junkie boyfriend… and an eccentric hippie mother… who is a patriotic museum official who strongly disapproves of her daughter’s emigration schemes – which only makes Velya’s escape plan more enticing, of course…”

On learning that embassy officials will call to check her bogus employment references, Velya feels her American Dream slipping through her fingers.” — Stephen Dalton, Hollywood Reporter
**Beanpole**

Dylda

Set in Leningrad, 1945, Beanpole explores the devastating aftermath of war – and of one of the worst sieges in history – through the emotionally shattering portrayal of two women as they struggle to adjust to civilian life in the ravaged city. Drawn from Svetlana Alexievich’s remarkable The Unwomanly Face of War chronicling the memories of Russian women who fought in WWII, this accomplished film is informed by an authenticity of lived experience, framed within a heightened mastery of cinematic craft.

Iya, the ‘beanpole’ of the title, is a nurse at a hospital for patients suffering from wartime injuries. She is joined here by Masha, with whom she has an intense emotional bond, and whose young son she has been looking after while Masha was serving in the Red Army. Circumstances will have traumatic repercussions on their relationship and irredeemably shape their future...

“While Beanpole’s subject matter is lacerating… there’s a deep and inviting poetry to [Kantemir Balagov’s] mise-en-scène throughout, and his storytelling is unimpeachable for its reserve and delicacy. That poetry is to be found in the film’s extraordinarily tactile pictures… [and] in Balagov’s compositions too, which reframe our world in surprising, heartstopping ways… That Beanpole excels in so many discrete areas – we haven’t even spoken of its resourceful set design, or of Balagov’s assured direction of actors – is testament to the rigour and imagination of this gifted young director, whose psychological acuity and formal control over his sprawling story mark him as a valuable artist.”

— Caspar Salmon, Sight & Sound

**Fire Will Come**

O que arde

“It’s a quiet movie overflowing with feeling; there is the constant underlying threat of a destructive impulse simmering unchecked inside the human heart. Viscerally images of a raging forest fire are overwhelming and the cracking of its flames drown out the cinema. Fire Will Come may bear the ‘slow cinema’ label for much of its run time but it nonetheless demands to be seen on the big screen, executed with greater vision than any comparable blockbuster that employs incendiary CG effects.”

— The Playlist

32-year-old Petrunya (newcomer Zorica Nusheva) is not having a good day. On her way back home from a failed job interview and humiliated by a sleazy manager, she suddenly finds herself surrounded by a group of half-naked men. Readying themselves to compete for a crucifix thrown into the river by a priest – a male-only Macedonian religious custom – Petrunya on a whim dives in and beats them to the prize. Chaos ensues and she is whisked off to the police station where cops, church authorities and men ‘robbed’ of their cross argue over this so-called crime. But Petrunya refuses to be bullied into submission and to give the cross up – which tradition says will bring her a year of good luck. Inspired by a real-life incident, director Teona Strugar Mitevska’s award-winning drama combines feminism, fury and biting social commentary to often hilarious effect.

“This isn’t just an engaging tale of one woman challenging the male-dominated church and state, but a movie making a smart, impassioned statement against widely accepted subjugation in many forms.” — Sarah Ward, Screen Daily

**God Exists, Her Name Is Petrunya**

Gospod postoi, imeto i e Petrunija

Director: Teona Strugar Mitevska

Russia 2019 | 134 mins

Producers: Konstantin Balakirev, Ksenia Kutepova, Timofey Glazkov, Andrey Bykov, Igor Shirokov, Olga Dragunova

Festivals: Cannes (Un Certain Regard) 2019

Best Director (Un Certain Regard), Cannes Film Festival 2019

In Russian with English subtitles

Censors rating tbc

**[Balagov’s] ambitions… and his potential as [a]… celebrated filmmaker [are] entirely on display… The bold and exacting Beanpole sometimes feels damn-near radical.”**

— Jason Gorber, Slash

**Director: Kantemir Balagov**

Russia 2019 | 134 mins

Producers: Alexander Rodnyansky, Sergey Mekhontsev

Screenplay: Kantemir Balagov, Alexander Terestchik

Photography: Ksenia Sereda

Editor: Igor Litonovski

Music: Eugeni Galperin

With: Viktoria Meshchishchenko, Vasilia Perekhodkina, Timothy Galchuk, Andrey Rylov, Igor Shirokov, Konstantin Balakirev, Ksenia Kutepova, Olga Dragunova

Festivals: Cannes (Un Certain Regard) 2019

Best Director (Un Certain Regard), Cannes Film Festival 2019

In Russian with English subtitles

Censors rating tbc

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“This isn’t just an engaging tale of one woman challenging the male-dominated church and state, but a movie making a smart, impassioned statement against widely accepted subjugation in many forms.” — Sarah Ward, Screen Daily
A 8.00 pm Monos (RX) 102 48
A 8.15 pm Sorry We Missed You (LHP) 100 12
A 8.45 pm Mpc (RX) 91 40
A 8.45 pm Port Authority (TP) 94 49
A 9.00 pm Apocalypse Now... (EMB) 183 15
A 9.00 pm Fly By Night (CUBA) 100 34

Sunday 28 July
B 10.30 am Animation for Kids + (EMB) 62 57
B 11.00 am Modest Heroes... (PH) 54 54
A 11.00 am Le Bonheur (TP) 76 17
A 11.15 am This Changes Everything (CG) 69 69
A 12.00 pm PJ Harvey: A Dog... (ED) 90 71
A 12.15 pm Capital in the 21st... (EMB) 103 19
A 12.15 pm Monrovia, Indiana (CUBA) 143 65
A 12.15 pm Animation for Kids 8+ (RX) 72 57
A 12.30 pm The Third Wife (PH) 96 53
A 12.45 pm MT ME... (TP) 133 30
A 1.15 pm Stuffed (CG) 85 67
A 1.15 pm Mrs Lovoy & Son (LHP) 91 37
A 1.45 pm Carmin Street Guitars (RX) 80 70
A 2.00 pm Midnight Family (ED) 81 64
A 2.45 pm Celeste (PH) 105 24
A 3.00 pm Dark Sun (CG) 154 60
A 3.15 pm The River (CUBA) 108 34
A 3.15 pm Maria by Callas (LHP) 113 72
A 3.30 pm The Farewell (EMB) 100 12
A 3.30 pm Dilli in Paris (RCP) 95 55
A 3.30 pm Inventing Tomorrow (RX) 89 55
A 3.45 pm You Don’t Nomi (ED) 92 80
A 4.00 pm Birth of A Nation (LHP) 104 18
A 5.00 pm By the Grace of God (PH) 137 29
A 5.30 pm Meeting Gorbachev (CUBA) 91 64
A 5.30 pm Maiden (LHP) 97 13
A 5.30 pm Loro (RCP) 151 33
A 5.30 pm Ruben Brandt, Collector (RX) 94 50
A 5.45 pm La Flor: Part I (ED) 210 + 15 25
A 6.00 pm Escher: Journey... (CG) 80 59
A 6.00 pm 2040 (EMB) 92 59
A 6.15 pm Helen Kelly – Together (TP) 92 21
A 7.30 pm Crystal Swan (CUBA) 93 41
A 7.30 pm Non-Fiction (LHP) 107 30
A 7.30 pm Inna de Yard (RX) 99 70
A 7.45 pm Angela (CG) 111 40
A 7.45 pm The Realm (PH) 131 35
A 8.45 pm For Sama (TP) 95 62
A 9.00 pm In Fabric (EMB) 119 36

Monday 29 July
B 10.15 am Capital in the 21st... (EMB) 103 19
B 11.15 am Litigante (CUBA) 95 47
B 11.15 am Shooting the Mafia (TP) 94 77
B 12.00 pm Adam (PH) 98 32
B 12.00 pm The Biggest Little Farm (RX) 91 61
B 12.15 pm Escher: Journey... (CG) 80 74
B 12.15 pm mids08 (ED) 85 49
B 1.15 pm Brittany Runs... (EMB) 104 38
B 1.15 pm What She Said... (CUBA) 96 68
B 1.30 pm Helen Kelly – Together (TP) 92 21
B 2.00 pm Monos (RX) 102 55
B 2.00 pm Non-Fiction (PH) 107 30
B 2.00 pm The Wild Goose Lake (RX) 110 28
B 2.15 pm Midnight Family (ED) 81 64
B 3.15 pm Loro (CUBA) 151 33
B 3.45 pm Les Misérables (EMB) 103 29
B 4.00 pm In My Blood It Runs (CG) 84 63
B 4.00 pm La Flor: Part II (ED) 313 + 2x 15 25

Tuesday 30 July
B 10.30 am 2040 (EMB) 92 59
B 11.15 am Floriandelooi (Phil) 93 27
B 11.30 am Martha: A Picture Story (RX) 84 75
B 12.00 pm Celeste (CUBA) 105 24
B 12.15 pm Hale County This Morning... (ED) 76 63
B 12.45 pm Judy & Punch (EMB) 105 48
B 1.15 pm God Exists, Her Name is... (PH) 101 42
B 1.15 pm Under the Silver Lake (RX) 139 39
B 2.00 pm You Don’t Nomi (ED) 92 80
B 2.00 pm The Third Wife (CUBA) 96 53
B 2.15 pm Be Natural... (CG) 103 68
B 3.30 pm By the Grace of God (PH) 137 29
B 4.15 pm The Whistlers (PH) 103 16
B 4.00 pm Animals (CUBA) 109 41
B 4.00 pm High Life (RX) 110 36
B 4.15 pm Half Satan? (CG) 95 62
B 4.15 pm Le Bonheur (CG) 76 17
B 4.15 pm Non-Fiction (EMB) 107 30
B 5.15 pm Celebration: YSL (CUBA) 73 74
B 5.15 pm Backtrack Boys (LHP) 104 58
B 5.15 pm Mrs Lovoy & Son (PH) 91 37
B 5.15 pm American Woman (RCP) 111 38
B 5.45 pm Working Woman (CUBA) 93 53
B 6.15 pm Who You Think I Am (PH) 102 31
B 6.15 pm Celeste (RCP) 105 24
B 6.15 pm Angelo (RX) 111 40
B 6.15 pm Walking on Water (TP) 100 77
B 6.30 pm Apocalypse Now... (LHP) 183 15
B 6.00 pm Cush (4G) 65
B 8.15 pm Meeting Gorbachev (CUBA) 91 64
B 8.30 pm PJ Harvey: A Dog... (PH) 90 71
B 8.30 pm Koko-di Koko-da (RX) 86 80
B 8.30 pm Vagabond (TP) 105 17
B 9.15 pm High Life (EMB) 110 36

Wednesday 31 July
B 10.30 am La Belle Epoque (EMB) 115 9
B 11.00 am Up the Mountain (TP) 126 67
B 11.30 am Dark Sun (ED) 154 60
B 11.30 am Bellbird (EMB) 96 19
B 11.00 am Lara (CUBA) 151 33
B 11.00 am Who You Think I Am (LHP) 102 31
B 11.30 am Non-Fiction (PH) 107 30
B 11.30 am Les Misérables (RCP) 103 29
B 12.00 pm A tale of two brothers (PH) 113 51
B 12.00 pm Children of the Sea (ED) 110 54
B 12.00 pm The Realm (PH) 131 35
B 12.00 pm Cold Case Hammarskjöld (CG) 128 61
B 4.00 pm Port Authority (TP) 94 49
B 4.15 pm The Third Wife (PH) 96 53
B 4.15 pm Beats (RX) 101 41
B 6.15 pm Lui: Bark: Real Swan (CG) 82 71
B 6.15 pm Judy & Punch (EMB) 105 48
B 6.15 pm Working Woman (CUBA) 93 53
B 6.15 pm Who You Think I Am (PH) 102 31
B 6.15 pm Celeste (RCP) 105 24
B 6.15 pm Angelo (RX) 111 40
B 6.15 pm Walking on Water (TP) 100 77
B 6.30 pm Apocalypse Now... (LHP) 183 15
B 6.00 pm Cush (4G) 65
B 8.15 pm Meeting Gorbachev (CUBA) 91 64
B 8.30 pm PJ Harvey: A Dog... (PH) 90 71
B 8.30 pm Koko-di Koko-da (RX) 86 80
B 8.30 pm Vagabond (TP) 105 17
B 9.15 pm High Life (EMB) 110 36

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**Wellington Schedule**

**Monday 5 August**

- **10.05 am** Koyaanisqatsi (ED) 86
- **11.30 am** La Belle Époque (PH) 105
- **11.45 am** Working Woman (CUBA) 93
- **12.15 pm** Children of the Sea (ED) 54
- **12.45 pm** As We Are Little Zombies (TP) 120
- **1.00 pm** Beasts (LHP) 101
- **1.15 pm** Push (CUBA) 92
- **1.30 pm** Manta Ray (ED) 105
- **2.00 pm** Mystify... (ED) 102
- **2.15 pm** Ask Dr Ruth (LHP) 115
- **2.30 pm** Push (CUBA) 92
- **3.00 pm** The Amazing Johnathan... (RX) 102
- **3.15 pm** British Empire (ED) 90
- **3.30 pm** Blackbird (ED) 90
- **4.00 pm** The White Parke White Day (LHP) 109
- **4.15 pm** Fire Will Come (CUBA) 85
- **4.30 pm** Where's My Roy Cohn? (LHP) 97
- **5.00 pm** A Stranger From Another Place (ED) 94
- **5.15 pm** Push (CUBA) 92
- **5.30 pm** Push (LHP) 101
- **6.00 pm** The White Parade (ED) 105

**Tuesday 6 August**

- **11.30 am** Halston (CUBA) 105
- **11.45 am** Maiden (PH) 97
- **12.00 pm** A Christmas Carol (PH) 96
- **12.15 pm** Inventing the Day (ED) 110
- **12.30 pm** Sorry We Missed You (PH) 100
- **1.00 pm** A Seat at the Table (EMB) 101
- **1.15 pm** The Debt (EMB) 93
- **1.30 pm** Song Without a Name (ED) 97 + 9
- **2.00 pm** Leftover Women (CUBA) 84
- **2.15 pm** Daughters of the Liberator (ED) 110
- **2.30 pm** Where's My Roy Cohn? (PH) 97
- **3.00 pm** The Amazing Johnathan... (ED) 91
- **3.15 pm** Halston (ED) 105
- **3.30 pm** Mrs Lowry & Son (RCP) 91
- **4.00 pm** A Stranger From Another Place (ED) 94
- **4.15 pm** People Like Us (ED) 110
- **4.30 pm** Sorry We Missed You (ED) 100
- **5.00 pm** Blackbird (ED) 90
- **5.15 pm** The Nightingale (LHP) 97
- **5.30 pm** Push (CUBA) 92
- **6.00 pm** The White Parade (ED) 109
- **6.15 pm** The Nightingale (EMB) 136
- **6.30 pm** Push (CUBA) 92
- **7.00 pm** The White Parade (ED) 109
- **7.15 pm** A Stranger From Another Place (ED) 94
- **7.30 pm** The Third Day (ED) 110
- **8.00 pm** Halston (ED) 105
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The Day Shall Come

‘Based on a hundred true stories’ reads the opening title card to Chris Morris’ latest political satire, his first film since the riotous Four Lions (NZIFF10).

Moses (impressive newcomer Marchánt Davis) is an impoverished preacher who heads the Star of Six, a congregation of six including his wife and child. However, the peaceful sect’s belief system and Moses’ prayers are unorthodox enough – he believes that both God and Satan communicate with him through a duck and that the CIA can summon dinosaurs with an air horn – to attract the attention of Kendrick (Anna Kendrick), an FBI agent keen to impress her boss. The film’s scathing vision of the war on terror lands plenty of big laughs as dysfunctional FBI agents try to tempt Moses while he finds new and weird ways of not biting.

“The Day Shall Come is an outrageous, farcical take on the FBI and their terrorist witch-hunts… Over-the-top and bittersweet – perhaps because reality isn’t as far off as we’d like – the irony resonates… Performances are convincing to the point of hilarity. The FBI is laughably inept, improvising their daily grind by incubating terrorists – with casual indifference to other lives.” — Dylan Kai Dempsey, ioncinema.com

“There are plenty of absurd and bleak turns in this crazy, satirical story about the misfortunate, their hopeless circumstances and the way callous, asshole law enforcement (played by… Kendrick, Denis O’Hare, Adam David Thompson, and Jim Gaffigan) abuses and manipulates the people in these communities to fit their own narratives, quotas, and agendas.” — Ryan Oliver, The Playlist

“The movie often nails the juggling act for Silva and her family will be even harder. On top of that, she’s been swept up in a simmering corruption charge… The movie often nails the fractiousness, fear and pain of caring for a dying loved one, driven home by immaculate performances from Sanin, Gomez and Sarria as two generations of women with more in common than they might like to admit.” — Leslie Felperin, Hollywood Reporter

“Despite the serious subject, Morris gives The Day Shall Come a brisk and upbeat tone. Some situations are so silly, you can’t help but laugh.” — Monica Castillo, The Wrap

Litigante

This fiercely lived-in maternal drama of a woman juggling extreme professional and familial pressures draws its compelling naturalism from Colombian director Franco Lolli’s real-life mother and cousin, who star in the lead roles.

“Coping with a mother dying of cancer… means the return of Leticia’s cancer… means the fractiousness, fear and pain of caring for a dying loved one, driven home by immaculate performances from Sanin, Gomez and Sarria as two generations of women with more in common than they might like to admit.” — Leslie Felperin

Manta Ray

“Concerns about the misfortunate, their hopeless circumstances and the way callous, asshole law enforcement… — Dylan Kai Dempsey, ioncinema.com

Veteran Thai cinemaphographer Phuttiphong Aroonpheng makes an enchanting feature debut with this intoxicating and mysterious film about a fisherman who rescues a mute refugee from a swamp somewhere near the Thai-Myanmar border. The fisherman calls the refugee Thongchai and a strong kinship blossoms between the pair. Then one day the fisherman doesn’t return from the sea and Thongchai is thrust into a new role by the sudden arrival of the fisherman’s ex-wife.

“Aroonpheng’s great achievement is to convey a sense of humanitarian outrage while telling an involving, sometimes headily perplexing story in a magical realist register… With a rich sound design and a haunting score… Aroonpheng and DoP Nawaroph Phunphboosophon create an impressionistic atmosphere that plays on contrasts of thick darkness and artificial, vibrant colour… The editing creates an unsettling fragmentation that thickens the existential mystery Aroonpheng, it should be noted, is an admirer of compatriot Apichatpong Weerasethakul, but claims he’s more influenced by David Lynch; enthralled viewers will certainly pick up intriguing undertones of both.” — Jonathan Romney, Screendaily.
Judy & Punch

Actor-turned-filmmaker Mirrah Foulkes directs this highly original, endlessly inventive feminist spin on the classic puppet show. Mia Wasikowska and Damon Herriman represent the titular duo, reimagined as a puppeteering couple whose artistic quarrels—and Punch’s mishandling of their baby—lead to an epic revenge fable awash with bloody satire and pitch-black comedy. “It’s the mid-17th century in the anarchic town Seaside… and The Enlightenment feels very far away indeed. Seaside has spiralled into violence, mob rule and God-fearing hysteria. Amongst the chaos, one glimmer of artistry remains: Punch and Judy’s puppet theatre. Once a master puppeteer, the charismatic Punch (Herriman) has fallen too much under the sway of whiskey, but his wife Judy (Wasikowska) is a puppeteering genius and ensures that their shows are a hit with the baying crowds. When a Punch bender goes disastrously and Judy decides to wreak vengeance on those who have wronged her and, as she discovers, many others… Taking cues from everything from Monty Python to The Crucible to Kill Bill, Judy & Punch is an ambitious film that finds its own singular path.” — Sydney Film Festival

“There’s a savage, sometimes surreal wit to this anarchic tale… The lurid extremes of the traditional Punch and Judy plot are faithfully replicated here – expect dog-based sausage shenanigans and crocodiles… and spousal abuse. And it’s a testament to Foulkes’ confidence as a director and to the world she has created that this outlandish story sits as comfortably as it does in film.” — Wendy Ide, Screendaily

“Utterly bonkers but also sort of brilliant.”
— Leslie Felperin, Hollywood Reporter

Monos

The Guardian called Monos “Apocalypse Now on shrooms” – a fitting description even if there isn’t an actual scene in the movie depicting our young soldier protags being ambushed in the middle of a mushroom-induced, ball-tripping stupor. Such hypnotic detours are frequent in the hallucinatory new thriller from Colombian director Alejandro Landes, which owes a significant debt to Kubrick, with visual bravado that echoes Kubrick, Malick, and Coppola’s Apocalypse Now.”

“Nothing short of an aesthete’s dream, a film crammed with visual bravado that echoes Kubrick, Malick, and Coppola’s Apocalypse Now.”
— Rory O’Connor, Cinewue
mid90s

At once hard-edged and heartfelt, Jonah Hill’s directorial debut draws knowingly on the banter behind his dudebro comedy persona, the seriousness of his acting work with heavyweight filmmakers Martin Scorsese and Gus Van Sant, and the battle scars of his own knockabout youth as a skater boy in ’90s Los Angeles.

“mid90s is the story of 13-year-old Stevie (Sunny Suljic), who takes up skateboarding as a way to make friends with the cooler, older boys who run a local skate shop... As Steve ingratiates himself with the group through his good nature and fearless attitude, finding sanctuary and a sense of identity away from hostile older brother Ian (Lucas Hedges) and loving but largely absent single mother Dabney (Katherine Waterston), the characters’ backstories are fleshed out to poignant effect, all to a catchy era-specific soundtrack curated by Hill... Shot on 16mm film... this is an authentic evocation of a specific time and place, a charmingly scuzzy coming-of-age drama that isn’t preoccupied with dispensing hard-won life lessons to its target demographic... [and] has tang Clan and Ren & Stimpy references don’t resonate, the portrait of finding your people and them schooling you in the world will. Sear-y and lovely in equal measures.” — Ian Freer, Empire

mid90s is a beast. Like American Graffiti and Lady Bird, it has a unique quality of feeling at once deeply felt, textured and personal... yet with enough distance and precise observation to obtain an almost documentary objectivity... If the Wu Tang Clan and Ren & Stimpy references don’t resonate, the portrait of finding your people and them schooling you in the world will. Sear-y and lovely in equal measures.” — Ian Freer, Empire

Port Authority

“Here is a heartfelt and unexpected love story from the streets of New York City by first-time writer-director Danielle Lessovitz, a film-maker interested in intimacy; she gets her camera in close to faces and bodies... Fresh off the bus from Pittsburgh is Paul [Ronin Whitehead]... who has naively trusted that his half-sister... will be there to take him in... A faintly sinister and predatory guy called Lee (McCaul Lombardi) saves Paul from being beaten up on the subway, and gets him a place in a hostel... Through the hostel, Paul makes the acquaintance of Wye, who is a dancer and part of New York’s Kiki ballroom scene – a carnivalesque LGBT club culture that evolved from voguing. Paul is captivated by the beautiful and charismatic Wye, but unable to cope with his feelings when he grasps that she is transgender. (Wye is played with charisma and style by the transgender dancer and model Leyna Bloom)... Soon Paul has to cope with feelings of worthlessness and self-loathing that run alongside his almost ecstatic sense of romance.” — Peter Bradshaw, The Guardian

“Bloom is making history as the first transgender person of color to star in a film at Cannes. Her resolute and mesmerizing eyes add not only to the allure but also toughness of Wye’s character. The physical chemistry between her and Paul radiates off the screen... Bloom’s dancing, as well as the rest of the voicing cast, is fantastic... Lessovitz’s film and casting decisions are steps in the right direction, leaving her audience with hope for the future of underrepresented BGLTQ voices in Cannes.” — Lucy Wang, The Harvard Crimson

“[Hill] makes mid90s resonate with universal poignancy and electric energy: his kids are the best, messiest kind of real, and they’re alright.” — Leah Greenblatt, Entertainment Weekly

Director/Screenplay: Jonah Hill
USA 2018 | 85 mins
Producers: Scott Rudin, Eli Bush, Ken Kao, Jonah Hill, Lila Yacoub
Photography: Christopher Blauvelt
Editor: Nick Hour
Music: Trent Reznor, Atticus Ross
With: Sunny Suljic, Lucas Hedges, Katherine Waterston, Na-kel Smith, Olan Prenatt, Gio Galicia, Ryder McLaughlin, Alexia Demie, Camila Alves
Festivals: Toronto, New York 2018; Berlin 2019
R16 violence, sexual references, offensive language, drug use & self-harm

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Port Authority

“Here is a heartfelt and unexpected love story from the streets of New York City by first-time writer-director Danielle Lessovitz, a film-maker interested in intimacy; she gets her camera in close to faces and bodies... Fresh off the bus from Pittsburgh is Paul [Ronin Whitehead]... who has naively trusted that his half-sister... will be there to take him in... A faintly sinister and predatory guy called Lee (McCaul Lombardi) saves Paul from being beaten up on the subway, and gets him a place in a hostel... Through the hostel, Paul makes the acquaintance of Wye, who is a dancer and part of New York’s Kiki ballroom scene – a carnivalesque LGBT club culture that evolved from voguing. Paul is captivated by the beautiful and charismatic Wye, but unable to cope with his feelings when he grasps that she is transgender. (Wye is played with charisma and style by the transgender dancer and model Leyna Bloom)... Soon Paul has to cope with feelings of worthlessness and self-loathing that run alongside his almost ecstatic sense of romance.” — Peter Bradshaw, The Guardian

“Bloom is making history as the first transgender person of color to star in a film at Cannes. Her resolute and mesmerizing eyes add not only to the allure but also toughness of Wye’s character. The physical chemistry between her and Paul radiates off the screen... Bloom’s dancing, as well as the rest of the voicing cast, is fantastic... Lessovitz’s film and casting decisions are steps in the right direction, leaving her audience with hope for the future of underrepresented BGLTQ voices in Cannes.” — Lucy Wang, The Harvard Crimson

“[Hill] makes mid90s resonate with universal poignancy and electric energy: his kids are the best, messiest kind of real, and they’re alright.” — Leah Greenblatt, Entertainment Weekly

Director/Screenplay: Danielle Lessovitz
USA/France 2019 | 94 mins
Producers: Rodrigo Teixeira, Virginie Lacombe, Zachary Luka Klsaintz
Photography: Jomo Fray
Editor: Clémence Samson, Matthew C. Hart
Music: Matthew Herbert
With: Ronin Whitehead, Leyna Bloom, McCaul Lombardi, Louisa Krause
Festivals: Cannes (Un Certain Regard) 2019
R16 violence, sexual references, offensive language, drug use & self-harm

PRESENTED IN ASSOCIATION WITH

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Ruben Brandt, Collector
Ruben Brandt, a gyűjtő

Art heist thriller, brooding neo-noir, bonobatic action blockbuster and hallucinatory freak-out all at once, Milorad Krstić's dazzling, dizzying curiosity Ruben Brandt, Collector marks a welcome escalation for modern animation. After suffering repeat nightmares in which paintings by Warhol, Botticelli, Manet and Hopper (to name just a few) transform into malignant apparitions that attack him, renowned psychotherapist Ruben Brandt decides to undergo a unique method of self-treatment: stealing every painting that is afflicting him. The wild ride that follows is about as innovative, hypnotic and flat-out entertaining as animation for adults will get. — IF

“There are no unintentional strokes of Milorad Krstić's moving canvas. Ruben Brandt, Collector, a 2D animated feature so densely ornate with auteur-adoring references and eye-popping design, a single viewing would only serve as an insufficient introduction to its bona fide one-of-a-kind panache...

Unbounded from all conventions of reality, shapes and colors roam free to form characters with a varying number of eyes, flat bodies, sharp-edged faces, and a potpourri of distorted features in unnatural shades...

[It's] a glorious cinephile's playlist and a graphic syllabus on art history encased in a thriller. As such, it merits being counted as one of the decade's best and most wildly original animated triumphs and one of this awards season's most unforgivable snubs. Time, the most reliable judge when it comes to art, will give Milorad Krstić his due praise." — Carlos Aguilar, The Playlist

"A voluptuously trippy, wildly original art-theft romp... Defies easy categorization save inclusion on any adult animation fan's must-see list." — Robert Abele, LA Times

Nina Wu
Zhōu rēn mǐ mǐ

"An actress loses her grip on reality shooting the film that will make her a star in Midi Z's uncompromising, noirish #MeToo-inspired tale.

Nina Wu was written by its luminous star [Wu Ke-xi], inspired by her own experiences as a young actress and by the Handsy Williams scandal – much of which happened in plush hotel rooms not far from the Cannes theater where this Un Certain Regard title had its debut. And as the first directly #MeToo-related narrative to play in this context, it is a deeply challenging one... as it resists, even contradicts the simplification of its central act of violation into an obviously empowering, triumph-over-adversity arc. One of the basic tenets of #MeToo is that we listen to women, but what if they do not say exactly what #MeToo needs to hear?... Z and Wu Ke-xi's bravery in refusing to neaten and de-clutter an impossibly untidy issue should not be underestimated... When this story finally resolves, it is not on an uplifting 'the truth will set you free' note... [but with] a more difficult question about these experiences than we are perhaps ready to hear: When the world tells you you have nothing to be ashamed of (because you don't), what do you do with all the shame?" — Jessica Kiang, Variety

Ray & Liz

British artist Richard Billingham's autobiographical debut feature is a vibrant and troubling portrait of family life in Thatcher's England. Expanding on Billingham's video installation Ray – itself an extension of his photographic book Ray's a Laugh – the film perfectly captures the milieu of a fraught, poverty-stricken childhood in a West Midlands council flat, surrounded by selfishness, addiction and loneliness. The family's reality is sketched via a series of vignettes: a babysitting episode gone wrong, a power outage due to unpaid bills, a significant incident of neglect. The filmmaker's reflections on his origins, while unsentimental and at times disturbing, are peppered with moments of warmth and humour.

Anchorred by immersive performances, Ray & Liz calls to mind the cinema of Mike Leigh and Ken Loach, though it is the artist's photographic eye that sets it apart. Alive with orange hues of sunsets and sunrises, as characters stare out into a world they seldom venture into, and the red tones of gas heaters warming cold nights, the images evoke the visual lyricism of Terence Davies films – and underscore the emotional nuance behind Billingham's work as an acclaimed photographer. — Jacob Powell

Director: Midi Z
Taiwan/Malaysia/ Myanmar 2019 | 103 mins
Screenplay: Midi Z, Wu Ke-xi
Photography: Florian Zihle
Music: Jie Gong
With: Wu Ke-xi, Kmi Hsa, Vivian Sung
Festivals: Cannes (Un Certain Regard) 2019
In Mandarin with English subtitles
Censors rating tbc

Director: Milorad Krstić
Hungary 2019 | 94 mins
Animation directors: Milorad Krstić, Marcel László
Producer: Péter Miskolczi, János Kuty-Ahále
Milorad Krstić, Hermina Roczkov, Radmila Roczkov
Screenplay: Milorad Krstić, Radmila Roczkov
Music: Tóbiás Cár
With: Ivan Kamarić, Csaba ‘Kor’ Márton, Guanzhù Han
Festivals: Locarno 2018
In Hungarian and English, with English subtitles
M violence & offensive language

Director/Screenplay: Richard Billingham
UK 2018 | 108 mins
Photography: Daniel Landin
Editor: Tracy Granger
With: Ella Smith, Justin Salinger, Patrick Romey, Debbie Kelly
Festivals: Locarno, Toronto, Vancouver, New York, London 2018; Rotterdam 2019
Special Jury Prize, Locarno Film Festival 2018
M violence & offensive language
Song Without a Name
Canción sin nombre

In 1980s Peru, Georgina, an indigenous woman, is lured to an anonymous maternity clinic by the promise of free care, but after giving birth, her baby is stolen and the clinic promptly vanishes. With the country in the midst of economic and political upheaval, only a young journalist is willing to help in her desperate search.

“The premise of Song Without a Name is at once fact-based and the stuff of shadowed, surreal nightmares, and Peruvian writer-director Melina León’s artfully affecting debut feature splits the difference: Earthly with social detail from a despairing period of Peru’s recent history, it’s also shot, scored and styled like the most beautiful of bad dreams. The film’s wistful, elegiac tone, immaculate monochrome cinematography and compassionate focus on disenfranchised indigenous women will inevitably prompt surface-level comparisons to Alfonso Cuarón’s Roma... But León’s far more modestly scaled Latin American period piece is entirely its own film, meshing vérité-style technique with passages of dark, folkloric reverie, as its characters’ investigation of a single kidnapping spirals into a heady vortex of institutional corruption.

“A bold, beautiful debut... Melina León’s visually striking period piece is a Kafka-esque crime thriller inspired by real events.” — Stephen Dalton, Hollywood Reporter

Take Me Somewhere Nice

A Dutch-raised Bosnian teen finds herself a stranger in a strange land when she returns to her homeland in this stylishly off-kilter coming-of-age flick turned road movie. Ena Sendijarević’s debut feature delivers the stuff of shadowed, surreal nightmares, and Peruvian writer-director Melina León’s artfully affecting debut feature splits the difference: Earthly with social detail from a despairing period of Peru’s recent history, it’s also shot, scored and styled like the most beautiful of bad dreams. The film’s wistful, elegiac tone, immaculate monochrome cinematography and compassionate focus on disenfranchised indigenous women will inevitably prompt surface-level comparisons to Alfonso Cuarón’s Roma... But León’s far more modestly scaled Latin American period piece is entirely its own film, meshing vérité-style technique with passages of dark, folkloric reverie, as its characters’ investigation of a single kidnapping spirals into a heady vortex of institutional corruption.

“To come of age is to be neither young nor old. To be Dutch or Bosnian, to be native or immigrant, to be citizen or nomad: adolescent uncertainty is twisted and stressed through these complex cultural affiliations... Alma is at the edge of womanhood, gazing into a fractured world that reflects – what else? – a fractured self... Delightful Take Me Somewhere Nice frames... this spatial and psychological confusion.” — Joseph Owen, The Playlist

“Handsomely shot, with a brash candy colour palette and skittish, off-kilter framing... [Take Me Somewhere Nice] captures perfectly the tone of insouciant adolescence.” — Wendy Ide, Screendaily
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Working Woman
Isha Ovedet

Israeli director Michal Aviad turns her eye to a common issue facing working women today: harassment in the workplace. At the centre of this gripping film, Orna (Liron Ben Shlush) is a mother of three whose husband is struggling to support the family as his restaurant gets off the ground. To her surprise, she is hired by her former IDF commanding officer, who remembers her from her mandatory military service. Now a real estate developer, Benny (Menashe Noy) offers Orna advice on how to dress ‘classy’ and wear her hair in the most attractive way. His guidance is generous and Orna proves to be a talented salesperson.

Orna initially ignores his increasingly inappropriate behaviour. But a kiss is too far, and she firmly rebukes him. Doggedly choosing to believe there will be no more problems, Orna’s promotion to sales manager is soon overshadowed by the dread of working with her boss. A trip to Paris triggers a Faustian battle of nerves. Can Orna stay the course, make the money and continue to provide for her children? Or will Benny’s harassment ruin her career, reputation and family?

Aviad’s ability to find the ambiguity in seemingly clear-cut situations is what makes Working Woman exceptional. Benny may be a lecherous boss, but he’s offering Orna the attention and professional respect her husband never has. Orna is an everywoman yet she’s facing an ordeal every woman is told they should never have to deal with – though many watching will find themselves saying #MeToo.

Working Woman proves that there is no such thing as the same old story. — Sarah McMullan

The Third Wife

Arranged to be wed to a wealthy landowner in rural Vietnam, 14-year-old May becomes the third wife to Hung in a polygamous marriage struggling to produce male heirs. Understanding a successful pregnancy is her only way out, May grows increasingly desperate to provide Hung with a baby boy. But as time passes, illicit affairs, power struggles and May’s sexual awakening threaten to tear her world apart.

The influence of artistic advisor and mentor Tran Anh Hung (The Scent of Green Papaya, Norwegian Wood) is felt throughout. The film quietly signals the passage of time – and May’s growth – through the ongoing silk harvest. Assigned to their fate, the women move like spirits through the luscious landscape that holds them captive. The evocative soundtrack is minimal – there is no dialogue in the first nine minutes – but hits all the right notes, revealing the dichotomy of an open yet oppressive environment.

Inspired by the life of her grandmother and great-grandmother, Ash Mayfield’s directorial debut is a sensitive and passionate exploration of the reality of young women in situations beyond their control, past and present. — Kailey Carruthers

We Are Little Zombies

A self-described super musical adventure RPG movie, this riotous cinematic explosion from noted music video and commercial director Nagahisa Makoto draws heavily from his love for retro video games, as well as featuring the catchiest Japanese teen pop tracks since Linda Linda Linda (NZIFF06).

Four orphans meet outside a funeral home. Their parents have all suddenly died and the foursome bond over their shared lack of emotion. At 13 years old and alone in the world, they impulsively decide to run away together and form a kick-ass band. Dispassionately anointing themselves the Little Zombies, it’s not long before their addictive music takes the world by storm. “So Emo!!!” Just make sure to stick around all the way through the end credits.

“A rainbow-colored scream into the abyss, Nagahisa’s story of a quartet of orphaned tweens who start a chiptune rock band is as rigorous in its exploration of grief as it is stylistically exuberant… The film sends you out bopping along to the Little Zombies’ admirable four-on-the-floor dance-rock theme song, but also feeling as if you’ve been on a tough, honest-to-goodness journey of personal growth.” — Emily Yoshida, Vulture

FRESH
**Children of the Sea**
*Kaijou no kodomo*

**Director:** Watanabe Ayumu  
Japan 2019 | 110 mins  
**Producer:** Tanaka Eiko  
**Screenplay:** Based on the manga by Igarashi Daisuke  
**Animation director:** Konishi Kenichi  
**Music:** Joe Hisaishi  
**Voices:** Ashida Mana, Ishibashi Hiro, Inagaki Goro, Aoi Yu, Watanabe Toru, Tanaka Min, Fuji Sumiko

**Festivals:** Sydney, Annecy 2019  
In Japanese with English subtitles  
Censors rating tbc

Ruka begins spending time with...  
the brothers [and] discovers that she shares an almost magical connection to the ocean. Meanwhile, a mysterious gathering of aquatic life off the coast seems imminent...  
This is a film you experience on a deeper level, one that washes over you like a wave... It’s hard to overstate what an atmospheric triumph Studio 4°C has pulled off here.” — Matt Schley, *The Japan Times*

**Brave young heroes and thinkers lead the way in enchanting animations from Japan, a splendid new film from the master of French animation, an inspiring documentary about scientists of the future, and not one, but two animated short film collections.**

Selected by Nic Marshall of Square Eyes Film Foundation, ardent promoters of international cinema to our youngest audiences and their movie-going companions.
Dilili in Paris

Whip-smart and astute six-year-old Dilili finds herself caught up in an ominous and nefarious underground plot, through which she and her sidekick Orel see the beauty of Paris during one of its finest times of artistic, literary and musical enlightenment. Offering staunch defence of just causes and a more than loveable determined and curious main character, *Dilili in Paris* pays homage to the brightest moments of modernist Paris, while also shining a light on the emancipation and advancement of women and how we view and respect difference. Be sure to savour this wonderful new film from animator extraordinaire Michel Ocelot (*Kirikou and the Sorceress, Kirikou and the Wild Beasts, NZIFF06*) on the biggest screen possible. — NM

“It’s the turn of the century and Paris is a city of diversity, architecture, culture and home to Dilili, a Kanak girl who hails from a French territory in the South Pacific. With her new friend Orel, a delivery boy, Dilili investigates a mystery involving a daftly plan devised by a secret society called The Master-Men. Their investigation, that soon finds them being followed, finds Dilili and Orel encountering an unlikely but impressive rolcall of Parisian luminaries, from Marcel Proust, Claude Monet and Marie Curie to Louis Pasteur, Erik Satie and Sarah Bernhardt. Although there’s an unsettling sting in the tale that could prove challenging for very young viewers, Ocelot’s film employs his lovingly crafted trademark style, foregrounds the universal aspiration of good triumphing over evil, and features immensely likeable lead characters.” — Justin Johnson, *BFI

“Inventing Tomorrow

Join brilliant young minds from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds as they work with resourcefulness and imagination to develop practical solutions to their local eco challenges – and prepare projects for the largest convening of high school scientists in the world. The future is brighter than you think. — NM

“The competition is beside the point in Laura Nix’s inspiring film because she’s interested in showcasing a specific type of high school entrant: those who see an environmental threat in their backyard and are driven to fix it with science. Sixteen-year-old activist Sahithi, who lives in a region of India beset by pollution-caused lake fires, develops an app to make water testing crowd-sourcable. Spirited Bangka Island, Indonesia, students Intan and Nuha want to offset the corrosive effects of legal and illegal tin mining in their city by creating a filter for dredgers to use. Jared, a descendant of Hawaiians with survived tsunamis, works on how to track the spread of arsenic into cities from a pond where it had been dumped for decades. Meanwhile, three Monterrey, Mexico, kids, disturbed by their industrialized city’s terrible air quality, develop a photocatalytic paint that would halt the spread of pollutants the way trees curb global warming. Rooting for these appealing, thinking-globally/acting-locally adolescents is easy as they fret over and fine-tune their projects for the largest screen possible. — NM

“Michel Ocelot, creator of *Kirikou*, pushes the limits of enchantment and wonder once again using a breathtaking pictorial and chromatic creativity.” — Le Nouvel Observateur

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“A wonderfully hopeful profile of scientists who are old enough to grasp the problems facing their global community, and young enough to still believe they can solve them.” — Scott Beggs, *Nerdist*
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Animation is such an engaging art form – perfect for inspiring the wide-open imaginations of our youngest NZIFF audience members. Not that the inspiration stops there – these eclectic and entertaining films are sure to appeal to both the young and young at heart. — NM

Flipped
UK 2018 | Directors: Hend Elmat, Lamiaa Dibi | 5 mins
Little ones are in charge and grown-ups get to play in a flipped world where the roles of kids and adults are switched.

Kuap
Switzerland 2018 | Director: Nils Hedinger | 8 mins
It can be hard feeling like you’re different from those around you. One little tadpole realises that growth and transformation happen in their own good time.

1 mètre/heure
France 2018 | Director: Nicolas Dessaux | 9 mins
At an airport, on the wing of an aeroplane, a troupe of snails perform a magnificent choreographed dance.

Tony the Tiny Pony
NZ 2019 | Director: Hild Hirvikoski | 4 mins
Listen up cowboys, cowgirls and cow-everybody else too: gather round to hear the story of a tiny pony named Tony.

Saturday’s Apartment
South Korea 2018 | Director: Joon Seungbae | 7 mins
Noisy antics make life quarrelsome for a bunch of apartment dwellers – is peaceful coexistence possible?

Sloth
Germany 2017 | Director: Julia Ocker | 4 mins
This sleepy sloth really, really, really wants an ice-cream – but is he way too slow?

Doll’s Letters
Russia 2016 | Director: Natalia Greipel | 2 mins
When a little girl loses her doll, her new pal comes up with an inventive way to help her navigate her loss.

Monsters Don’t Exist
Denmark 2017 | Directors: Hanka Angelini, Luca Barbarini Organti, Nicola Bernardi | 3 mins
Trying to beat the boredom of detention, two frenemies engage in an epic battle for monster supremacy.

Mister Paper Goes Out for a Walk
Belgium 2018 | Directors: Ben Teusser, Steven De Boul | 9 mins
With trusty scissors in hand, Mister Paper crafts his ideal world.

Preschool Poets: Supergirl
USA 2018 | Directors: Nancy Kangas, Josh Kun | 1 min
Penny is a poet who shares the many ways she wants to be super.

The Swimming Lesson
Russia 2017 | Director: Tatiana Okhunova | 3 mins
Captivated by aquatic adventure stories, a brave kid soon must put his swimming skills to the test.

Scrambled
The Netherlands 2017 | Director: Bastiaan Schweerdtel | 6 mins
When Essa misses her train, a discarded classic cube tries to get her attention.

Link
Germany 2017 | Director: Robert Lübbel | 7 mins
Two characters are intrinsically linked as they influence each other with every move they make.

Listen Papa!
Russia 2019 | Directors: Olga Poleitkova, Tatiana Poleitkova | 13 min
A letter from a boy to his father shares all that had once been kept unspoken.

Best Laid Plans
USA 2017 | Director: John Monaco | 1 min
Follow the ups and downs of a Rube Goldberg contraption.

Vivat Musketeers!
Russia 2017 | Director: Anton Dyakos | 5 mins
The world is about to perish, everything seems hopeless. But then a real hero steps forward – a brave musketeer without fear!

Do Not Touch!
Czech Republic 2017 | Director: Fovolta Indrula | 1 min
One room. One button. A sign that clearly says, ‘do not touch’. What to do?

Lost & Found
Australia 2018 | Directors: Andrew Goldberg, Bradley Side | 7 mins
A dinosaur must unravel itself to maintain a tight-knit friendship.

A Good Heart
Russia 2018 | Director: Evgeniya Muraveva | 5 mins
The life of a prehistoric family is upset, little by little, by the arrival of numerous uninvited friends.

The Skellingtons of Wellington
NZ 2019 | Director: Ruth Temple | 3 mins
The Skellingtons ride – but if you look closely there is nobody there.

WORKOUT
UK 2018 | Director: Joe Wood | 2 mins
A successful gym session is all about maintaining excellent rhythm.

Running Lights
Lithuania/India/Finland 2017 | Director: Godinmas Siauly | 11 mins
A magical transfer of glowing energy and life is set in motion when one creature departs its earthly form.

Animation is such an engaging art form – perfect for inspiring the wide-open imaginations of our youngest NZIFF audience members. Not that the inspiration stops there – these eclectic and entertaining films are sure to appeal to both the young and young at heart. — NM

We again alternate big themes and existential musings with essential hilarity, showcasing 12 terrific short films from all corners of our big wide world. Certain to stimulate and charm and entertaining films are sure to appeal to both the young and young at heart. — NM

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Animation for Kids 4+
62 mins approx. | Censors rating tbc

Animation for Kids 8+
72 mins approx. | Censors rating tbc

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The profusion of excellent documentaries submitted to us is staggering. We try to steer a course that favours formal sophistication and complexity, while allowing ourselves on occasion to fall for the most forthright advocacy or (other)worldly spectacle.

You’ll find more fine examples filling the Big Nights and Aotearoa strands, and almost everywhere else in the programme. See also Women in Cinema (p68–69), a section of documentaries highlighting key female voices – some unheralded, some leading the charge – in the history and future of cinema.

**Ask Dr Ruth**

Director: Ryan White
USA 2019 | 100 mins

Producers: Rafael Marmor, Ryan White, Jessica Hargrave, Christopher Leggett
Photography: David Paul Jacobson
Editor: Helen Kearns
Music: Blake Neely

With: Dr Ruth Westheimer

Festivals: Sundance, Hot Docs 2019

Ask Dr Ruth

A mere four foot seven, but feeling six feet tall, Ruth Westheimer believes she has “an obligation to live long and make a dent in this world.” There’s no contesting that she has done both and continues to do so. She first came to the American public’s attention in 1980 with a New York radio show, Sexually Speaking, a 15-minute programme airing at midnight on Sundays. Within a few years, its popularity led to it being syndicated nationwide as the Dr Ruth Show and to Westheimer becoming a household name. As spirited as its subject, this film allows us to encounter the remarkable woman behind the phenomenon known as Dr Ruth. — SR

"A feminist icon before the term crystallized in popular discourse, Westheimer is perhaps best known as a media personality who frankly discussed sexual dynamics, AIDS, and women’s pleasure at the height of the Reagan era. But producer-director Ryan White, who follows the busy and ebullient Westheimer as she nears her 90th birthday, provides ample space for the luminary to tell her full story." — Leah Pickett, Chicago Reader

**Backtrack Boys**

Director: Catherine Scott
Screenplay: Catherine Scott
Photography: David Paul Jacobson
Editor: Andrea Lang
Music: Blake Neely

With: Bernie Shakeshaft

Festivals: Sydney, Melbourne 2018

Backtrack Boys

In this moving documentary we follow Bernie Shakeshaft’s mission to heal the most damaged and marginalised Australian boys through training dogs for showjumping. Bernie’s goals are simple: first, keep the boy alive; second, keep him out of prison; and only then encourage him to chase his hopes and dreams.

Centred on the daily lives of three boys at the residential programme in Wallah, rural New South Wales, over the course of two years, Catherine Scott’s film inspires hope without shying away from the harsh reality that looms beyond Backtrack. A genuine tension hangs over the film as all three boys face the possibility that their progress will be derailed by court intervention and imprisonment. The ultimate endorsement of Bernie’s positive impact on these boys lies in the sharing of their experiences and their reflection on their pasts and potential futures – all poignantly captured through a candid observational style and in deeply honest and heartfelt interviews. A hit with Australian film festival audiences. — Chris Kirk
Apollo 11

Experience the first moon landing as it happened 50 years ago, with Todd Douglas Miller's awe-inspiring and utterly epic documentary that takes us from the launch pad all the way to the lunar surface.

“Assembled from a newly discovered archive of 65 mm footage and more than 11,000 hours of uncatalogued audio recordings, Miller’s film opens with a shot of an enormous, hangar-sized crawler hauling the towering Saturn V rocket to the launch pad at Cape Canaveral. And the film looks so crisp and pristine, it feels like it was shot yesterday instead of a half-century ago…

Apollo 11, the mission that sent Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin to the moon (with Michael Collins… orbiting like a getaway driver), was a miracle of human endeavor and ingenuity from its fiery, booster-igniting takeoff to its ultimate splashdown. And the film chronicles each stage of the weeklong mission like a tick-tock procedural where everything could go wrong – but somehow didn’t. Miller’s visual collage charitably spreads the credit around beyond just the three men in space, too. The men and women back on terra firma are heroes as well as they crunch numbers and sweat over slide rules.” — Chris Nashawaty, Entertainment Weekly

“Apollo 11 could not be more matter-of-fact, direct or magnificent in its elemental simplicity.” — Stephen Schaefer, Boston Herald

2040

What’s your 2040? Global warming, sea level rise, civil unrest, marine degradation – or a world that’s healthier and fairer than the one we live in today? As reprieve from the usual doom and gloom stories about the future of our planet, Australian filmmaker Damon Gameau (That Sugar Film) jumps on a plane (offset with certified carbon credits) to travel the world in search of a better 2040. His daughter Velvet, whom we meet in the opening scene – they’re planting a tree – will be 27 in 2040 and Gameau’s narration – “So, Velvet…” – is addressed to her.

In this exercise in ‘fact-based dreaming’ Gameau explores only technologies and practices that currently exist and examines what the future would look like if we embrace these solutions today. His journey takes us from regenerative farming practices in rural Australia to a Bangladeshi village powered by distributed solar home systems; from marine permaculture experiments in Woods Hole, United States, to an on-demand autonomous electric vehicle in New York City.

Guided by expert commentary from the likes of Kate Raworth, author of Doughnut Economics, and Paul Hawken, founder of Project Drawdown, he zooms forward to 2040 to see how these technologies and practices could improve energy, transport, food production and more to create a better 2040 for Velvet and her friends.

“When you go beyond the dominant media discourse, and get closer to the ground, you will see, everywhere you look, incredible reasons for hope.” — Helena Norberg-Hodge, author, The Economics of Happiness
Chris the Swiss

Croatia, 1992. The body of a young Swiss journalist is found strangled in a field. His name was Chris. Who was responsible for his death? What drew him miles away from his homeland to cover the grisly Yugoslav wars? And why was he wearing the uniform of a mysterious unit of mercenary soldiers? These questions have troubled documentary filmmaker Anja Kofmel for decades, and understandably so: Chris was her cousin.

Kofmel embraces the mystery of her cousin’s story with an expressionistic visual approach, fantastical flourishes standing in for both the facts she cannot know and the horrors she cannot fathom. A genuinely striking work. — JF

“Any environmentalists and politicians arguing the need to combat climate change would do well to add Victor Kossakovsky’s Aquarela to their arsenal. The Russian filmmaker’s attempt to capture the raw power of the Earth’s water using 96 frames-per-second cinematography and considerable daring is an experience of shock and awe – as well as wonder.” — Demetrios Matheou, Screendaily


Aquarela

Victor Kossakovsky’s (A/Wan lac Antipodas, NZIFF12) latest mind- and documentary-bending opus captures water in all its guises: from a frozen-over lake to a flowing river; from breaching icebergs to cascading waterfalls; from a screen-filling, slow-breaking colossal wave to a beneath-the-ice plunge; from individual raindrops to a massive flood. Majestic, menacing, dangerous, deceptive, murderous, glorious, ferocious H₂O shapeshifts from element to sensory event in this epic and spectacular meditation which travels across the globe.

A visceral visual and aural poem, employing state-of-the-art digital technology which allows moving water to be shot without any loss of detail, Aquarela is an immersive experience likely to make your head and senses spin. It eschews narrative, although an undertow of environmental alerts about the havoc of climate change can be sensed in its rushing flow. Kossakovsky mainly lets the images do the talking, the equally incredible soundscape provided by water – thundering, crunching, raging, trickling – tell his tale, while occasionally overlaying it with a dense, heavy metal-infused score he commissioned from Finnish musician Eicca Toppinen. — SR

Dark Suns

A thorough and unsettling exploration of the widespread influence of organised crime on the life of everyday Mexicans, Canadian director Julien Elie’s Dark Suns surveys a Mexico in the grip of a merciless cycle of violence, where thousands ‘disappear’ to be found in mass graves – or not at all. From Ciudad Juárez on the US border to Veracruz on the Gulf of Mexico to the capital, Mexico City, in the south, the film tracks the intertwined mesh of cartel power and state complicity, encompassing seemingly the entire country, as criminals prey on the poor and vulnerable.

Elie’s documentary proves an essential antidote to the voyeuristic threats often afforded by tales of drug violence, as seen in films such as Sicario or Cartel Land. Rather than focus on gangsters vs lawmen, Dark Suns flips the script by giving voice to victims’ families, and to the journalists, lawyers, human rights activists and priests who struggle towards a justice that appears increasingly out of reach. The filmmakers utilise moody monochrome cinematography along with judicious application of a dark-edged soundtrack to lend weight to Dark Suns’ forcefully felt impact. — Jacob Powell

Aquarela

Director: Victor Kossakovsky
UK/Germany/Denmark/USA 2018
90 mins

Producer: Almira Reques, Heiko Deckert, Signy Dykyjær
Screenplay: Victor Kossakovsky, Almira Reques
Photography: Victor Kossakovsky, Ben Bernhard
Editors: Victor Kossakovsky, Mally Malene Stensgaard, Almira Vera
Music: Eicca Toppinen
In Russian, English and Spanish, with English subtitles
Presented at 48fps

“A compelling and artistic hybrid of memoir, biographical documentary and general discussion of why young men feel their pulses quicken at the idea of fighting in a foreign war… It’s a multi-colored wreath of roses to lay against America’s legacy, thorns and all.” — Jessica Kaing, Variety

[A] compelling and artistic hybrid of memoir, biographical documentary and general discussion of why young men feel their pulses quicken at the idea of fighting in a foreign war — Signy Dykyjær

“Chris the Swiss” — Jacob Powell

Dark Suns

Director/Producer/Screenplay: Julien Elie
Canada 2018 | 154 mins

Photography: Ernesto Pardo, François Messier-Rhault
Editors: Aube Foglia
Music: Miri Arland
In Spanish with English subtitles B&W

“[A] visceral visual and aural poem, employing state-of-the-art digital technology which allows moving water to be shot without any loss of detail, Aquarela is an immersive experience likely to make your head and senses spin. It eschews narrative, although an undertow of environmental alerts about the havoc of climate change can be sensed in its rushing flow. Kossakovsky mainly lets the images do the talking, the equally incredible soundscape provided by water – thundering, crunching, raging, trickling – tell his tale, while occasionally overlaying it with a dense, heavy metal-infused score he commissioned from Finnish musician Eicca Toppinen. — SR

“Chris the Swiss” — Jacob Powell

Dark Suns

Director/Screenplay: Anja Kofmel
Switzerland/Croatia/Germany/Finland 2018
93 mins

Photography: Simon Guy Fälster
Wills: Christian Wortenbergen, Anja Kofmel, Eduardo Rózsa Flores
Festivals: Cannes (Critics’ Week), Locarno, Amsterdam Documentary 2018
In German, Swiss-German, English and Spanish, with English subtitles

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Music: Eicca Toppinen
In Russian, English and Spanish, with English subtitles
Presented at 48fps
The Biggest Little Farm

Who hasn’t fantasised about ditching their city day job for a simpler life on the land? For John and Molly Chester, this journey begins with a barking dog, but you’ll soon wonder if they’re the ones who are barking mad.

Faced with eviction from their Los Angeles apartment block because their rescue dog’s incessant yapping is driving the neighbours to despair, Emmy Award-winning filmmaker John and his foodie wife Molly head for the foothills of California’s Ventura County, where they acquire an 80-hectare avocado and citrus orchard with a history of bank foreclosures. Undeterred by the barren landscape at Apricot Lane Farms, these wannabe farmers set out to regenerate the depleted soil using traditional farming methods.

What follows is a fairy tale, of sorts, complete with evil rogues (murderous coyotes, gobbbling gophers and a squadron of fruit-filching starlings) and a fairy godfather in self-proclaimed soil guru Alan York, a man who is either a biodynamic gardening genius or an idealistic crackpot with an evangelical belief in the powers of worm poo. Spoiler alert: he’s smarter than he looks.

Eight years in the making, this is a feel-good tale of the triumph of eco-philosophy over agri-practicality. With its gentle pace, captivating cinematography and an impossibly cute supporting cast of snail-scoffing ducks, fluffy sheep dogs and a very fertile sow named Emma, The Biggest Little Farm reminds us all that nature needs our nurture. A restorative pleasure, and one of the most delightful biggest little documentaries you’ll see this year. — Lynda Hallinan

Cold Case Hammarskjöld

On September 18, 1961, UN Secretary-General Dag Dag Hammarskjöld died in a mysterious plane crash in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) while en route to negotiate a ceasefire during the Congo Crisis. Last seen attempting to smuggle blood diamonds in The Ambassador (NZIFF12), Danish provocateur Mads Brügger reopens the case after 50 years of conjecture and speculation about what really happened.

Was Hammarskjöld assassinated because of his outspoken advocacy for African self-determination? With the assistance of Swedish investigator Göran Börkdahl, Brügger sets out to investigate in his inimitable style. Crisscrossing the continent on a search for the meagre scraps of truth, Brügger instead uncovers a murky conspiracy more chilling than anyone could have imagined.

“A conspiracy-fueled murder mystery with some hilarious meta-commentary on the genre, Cold Case Hammarskjöld is either a stunning piece of investigative reporting that builds to a revelations climax or a wily trickster’s dark critique of the audience’s desperate need for answers.” — Daniel Fienberg, Hollywood Reporter

“Cold Case Hammarskjöld unearths such a tissue of lies and prevarications that arguably it is only by offering this heady cocktail of fact, fictionalising and conjecture that some perspective on truth can be achieved… However sceptical you feel about Brügger’s approach, and his findings, this is an arresting, troubling work – and, for all the horror, an intensely entertaining one too.” — Jonathan Romney, Screendaily

“A singular experience that counts as one of the most honestly disturbing and provocative nonfiction films in years.” — Owen Gleiberman, Variety

Director/Photography: John Chester
USA 2018 | 91 mins

Producer: Sandra Keats, John Chester
Screenplay: John Chester, Mark Monroe
Editor: Arly Oaxacaca
Music: Jeff Baal
With: John Chester, Molly Chester, Todd the dog
Festivals: Toronto 2018, Sundance, Berlin 2019

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More FM

Visa Wellington on a Plate SPECIAL EVENT
All tickets $50.00 (includes vegetarian garden plate pared with a non-alcoholic beverage)
O RX Mon 6 Aug, 8.30 pm
Regular NZIFF prices apply for the remaining sessions.
B RX Mon 29 Jul, 12.00 pm
A EMB Sat 10 Aug, 10.45 am
A LHP Sun 11 Aug, 1.00 pm

Director/Screenplay: Mads Brügger
Denmark/Norway/Sweden/Belgium 2019 | 128 mins

Producer: Peter Engst, Bjørn Marnier Twart, Andreas Rodsahl
Photography: Ture Vollan
Editor: Nicolai Mångard Stafflund
Music: Kaada
With: Mads Brügger, Göran Börkdahl
Festivals: Sundance, Hot Docs 2019
Directing Award (World Cinema Documentary), Sundance Film Festival 2019
In English and French, with English subtitles
Hail Satan?

You would think an organisation named The Satanic Temple would be serious stuff, but these agitators are nothing like the devil worshippers portrayed in the media. Demanding true democracy, TST serves as a community for those willing to fight for the rights of every citizen in America, even if their approach seems a tad left-field.

Recalling ‘satanic panic’, the formation of Anton LeVay’s Church of Satan and the American moral panic of the 50s, Greaves eloquently justifies the creation of the Temple as a place of sanity and social conscience. The film features interviews with current members who have found a family in their local Temple group. It’s no surprise that following production, Lane announced she felt “very aligned with/ allied with TST’s mission.”

Through a wealth of archival footage and beautifully illustrated sequences, Hail Satan? explores the deep irony of America’s religious zealots, while providing viewers with hope that TST will continue its good fight. — Kailey Carruthers

“A devilishly fun documentary… provocative, hilarious, and latenely enraging.”
— David Ehrlich, Indiewire

For Sama

Sama means sky in Arabic and Syrian director Waad al-Kateab hopes the skies above Aleppo might soon be free of Russian warplanes and their bombs. Sama, al-Kateab’s baby, is named for the sky her mother dreams of, one simply populated by clouds and rain. Taking the form of an address to her daughter, al-Kateab’s documentary is an intimate and harrowing picture of motherhood and war.

In 2012, al-Kateab met her husband, a doctor, at protests against President Bashar al-Assad. They fall in love, marry, have a child. But this nonlinear family video diary is scored with shells and bombs. Much footage comes from the hospitals Sama’s dad sets up. Later, the family live onsite at the last hospital in Aleppo; it becomes Sama’s creche too. The ashen faces of dust-and-blood covered kids aren’t easily forgotten; they’re traumatised, grief-stricken. Some of them are dying or dead. The camera doesn’t break its stare. As al-Kateab witnesses the devastating cost of war on children she starts to question her own decisions. Co-directed by Edward Watts, this humanist film is a vital addition to a growing canon documenting the ongoing war crimes in Syria. — Catherine Binley

Margaret Hema

- BELOVED BY LIV TYLER -
SIR JON TRIMMER - DAME GAYLENE PRESTON
CHELSE PRESTON CRAYFORD

Margaret Hema was born in Wellington in 1946. Her skin is a living testament to her oils. She has nine diplomas in skincare, aromatherapy, beauty therapy & in Aestheticienne. In 1988, well qualified and with a purpose, she opened the door to her Wellington salon. She is known for her signature facial & hand-blended oils. Margaret’s son Quentin Hema created & drew the distinctive logo.

www.hemaproducts.co.nz
In My Blood It Runs

Director Maya Newell’s compassionate documentary offers insight into the problematic relationship between the Australian government and Aboriginal families through the intimate experience of 10-year-old Dujuan and his Amarene and Garnwa whānau.

Dujuan’s mother left her homeland so he could go to school in Alice Springs; however, in the weekends, she still goes bush. Together with Dujuan’s grandmother, she nurtures the boy’s gift for hunting and traditional medicine. They are committed to their kids learning Arrente, their own language, and receiving a balanced education.

Dujuan reveals himself to be an intelligent and astute pupil, but he struggles with an unsuitable educational system and is often running away or being suspended. We see a teacher earnestly retelling the story of Captain Cook planting the English flag on Australian soil — and offering a derisive reading of a dreamtime story.

Most of the film is from Dujuan’s perspective, some of it even shot by him. While there are occasional bursts of historical context, particularly reports of torture in Don Dale, a Northern Territory juvenile detention centre, the film is intimately located in the landscape of Dujuan’s life. “I’m a bush kid,” he says. “Before the cars wasn’t made, before the house wasn’t made, before the whole everything around the world wasn’t made, it was just Aboriginals on Australia.”

Made in collaboration with Dujuan’s family, this is a sensitive, impassioned contribution to the dialogue between persistent colonisation and the integrity of indigenous lifeways. — Chris Kirk

Leftover Women

Entering the public lexicon in 2007, ‘leftover women’ is the official term the Chinese government has reserved for educated women who are unmarried and over the age of 26. Facing incredible pressure from family and society, an entire generation of women are being ostracised for their choice to remain single or are being torn apart by their struggle to find ‘The One’.

Directors Shosh Shlam and Hilla Medalia follow Qiu Hua Mei, Xu Min and Gai Qi as they attempt to balance family expectation and their own pathways. Trying to please their families, the women dutifully attend government-sponsored matchmaking events, creating a public spectacle of their dating life. If that’s not the worst of it, Hua Mei is told in no uncertain terms by a matchmaker that she is not beautiful and is kidding herself if she thinks she is young and of good marrying age.

Complementary to this year’s Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner, One Child Nation, Leftover Women celebrates the bravery of those who have chosen their own path, while reflecting on the consequences of a patriarchal society that strips women of their autonomy. — Kailey Carruthers

Hale County This Morning, This Evening

RaMell Ross’ immersive Oscar-nominated documentary defies stereotypical representations of black communities through clear-eyed observation and impressionistic flair. Transporting us into the lives of African Americans in rural Alabama, Ross’ use of light, colour and situation — elevated by his award-winning photographic eye — is truly sublime.

“[Ross] has carved a film of less than 80 minutes out of 1,300 hours of footage... The particularity and power of the larger cinematic image he has created through a multiplicity of moments are impossible to adequately describe in critical prose... The challenges these young people face here are not documented by means of dramatic situations or confrontations. Sometimes one of the subjects will address the camera, speaking of hopes and fears; other times they’ll just go about their business, quietly... His camera’s gaze has a quality of reserve, one that insistently imparts respect to his subjects... [Ross’] poetic logic is inextricable from his consciousness of race and community, and of his function and potential as an artist grappling with his own circumstances and those of the people he’s depicting.” — Glenn Kenny, of the NY Times

AED Sat 27 Jul, 12.00 pm
B ED Tue 30 Jul, 12.15 pm
BED Fri 2 Aug, 12.00 pm
AED Mon 5 Aug, 6.30 pm
A CUBA Sun 4 Aug, 2.00 pm
B CUBA Wed 7 Aug, 2.15 pm
A CUBA Sat 10 Aug, 11.45 am

Leftover Women

A ED Wed 30 Jul, 8.00 pm
B ED Fri 1 Aug, 8.00 pm
A ED Mon 4 Aug, 8.00 pm
B ED Thu 7 Aug, 8.00 pm
A ED Mon 4 Aug, 8.00 pm

Events:

- “An emotional journey through the fight to mend an educational schism between traditional culture and colonial ideas and solidify a future for youth.” — Heather Haynes, Hot Docs
Jawline

For some viewers, Liza Mandelup’s Sundance award winner Jawline will seem stranger than fiction. For others it will hit hard as an exposé of the reality of seeking internet fame. A dreamy blend of documentary and Instagram-worthy visuals, it may be steering into spoiler territory to confirm that its story and characters are indeed very real, even though they gear their lives towards fantasy.

Charting the rise of aspiring internet star Austyn Tester as he tries to escape his life in Kingsport, Tennessee, Mandelup captures Austyn promoting his personal brand of positivity, intermingled with romantic imagery of a carefree teen summer. In a style reminiscent of Andrea Arnold, Harmony Korine and Sean Baker, Jawline eschews traditional documentary tropes and forgoes introduction to the subjects aside from Tester. Those well versed in YouTube controversy may recognise 21-year-old ‘manager’ Michael Weist, whose flock of demi-celebrities, living together in an LA mansion, are so consumed with their online personas they can barely manage laundry or feeding themselves. It is this dream that Austyn is chasing.

If you had the pleasure of watching I Used to Be Normal (NZIFF18), Jawline is the perfect companion, featuring life on the other side of the barrier. In the interviews with the squealing fangirls… it’s clear that the engines driving this enterprise are the parasocial relationships forming between young women and their on-screen boyfriends. Far from casting judgement on any of the subjects, Mandelup presents a meditative narrative of contemporary digital teen life. — Kailey Carruthers

Meeting Gorbachev

The unifying global vision of Mikhail S. Gorbachev, the last leader of the Soviet Union, brought unprecedented openness to government, put nuclear disarmament on the international agenda and allowed Eastern Europe to escape the shacklehold of Moscow without a fight. In late 1991, he was ousted and the dismantling of the empire fell into less scrupulous hands.

Interviewing a rueful and forthright Gorbachev at 87, retracing his rise and fall in vivid strokes, and seeking testimony from other key players, director Luke Lorentzen straps us in the passenger seat with the Ochoa family, a ragtag unit of EMTs who make anyone else. In this thrilling verité doc, Russia, German and Polish, with English subtitles

Midnight Family

In Mexico City, the government provides fewer than 45 public ambulances to service a population of nine million. Picking up the slack are a large array of private ambulance companies, whose pay checks depend on arriving at the emergency before anyone else. In this thrilling verité doc, filmmaker Luke Lorentzen straps us in the passenger seat with the Ochoa family, a ragtag unit of EMTs who make their living transporting the injured to local hospitals and then negotiating for compensation. Every night, the family navigate a slew of stresses, which include high-speed races with competing ambulances, extortion from corrupt cops and the constant dice-roll of picking up patients who may be too impoverished to pay for the service.

By playing ride-along with a family in their own financial quagmire, Lorentzen embroils the viewer in a chewy moral tension, in which every accident comes with a sea of conflicting emotions.

While never foregrounding a political position, Lorentzen (the film’s director, producer, cinematographer and editor) offers an urgent and utterly enthralling document of the messy ethics of privatisation, where financial incentives distort our moral imperatives. — JF

A nuanced exploration of digital celebrity and the gap between ‘real’ and online lives.” — Adi Robertson, The Verge

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One Child Nation

Taking home the Grand Jury Prize at this year’s Sundance Film Festival, Nanfu Wang and Jialing Zhang’s One Child Nation is a powerful investigative work. Taking a frank and occasionally explicit look at the wide-reaching consequences of China’s one-child policy, their documentary pulls back the curtain on the policy’s true cost.

Introduced in 1979 to curb China’s explosive population growth, the one-child policy promised prosperity for the nation. In stark contrast, Wang shares heartbreakingly interviews with families in China who gave up or abandoned their children and are still mourning the senseless loss. Others put emotion aside to follow orders. Although the one-child policy ended in 2015, that the ramifications of those 35 years will be felt for decades to come. — Kailey Carruthers

“Using a remarkable personal lens, the film examines the reverberations of propaganda on broken families across multiple generations. The cumulative effect creates the sense that its destructive effects continue to be felt well beyond China’s borders… As a brilliant combination of cultural reporting and interpersonal reckoning, One Child Nation manages to encapsulate decades of undereported events within a palatable narrative accessible even to viewers with no prior understanding of the policy’s history. Lacing the edit with images of posters and music designed to reinforce the country’s repressive standards for family life, Wang reveals the intricate system that caused her and so many others to accept these restrictions throughout their youth and into early adulthood.” — Eric Kohn, Hollywood Reporter

Monrovia, Indiana

The indefatigable Frederick Wiseman (Ex Libris, At Berkeley) heads to the Midwest and deep into Republican heartland for his latest film, an elegiac portrait of small-town Americana in standstill. As this elder statesman of documentary leaders, and there’s a subtle poetry in the traditions that shape this particular place and its people, as well as the rituals and gatherings that are the lifeblood of communities anywhere in the world. — Tim Wong

Push

Urban planning documentarian Fredrik Gertten follows Leilani Farha, UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, on an eye-opening journey from Toronto to long-established communities under threat of annihilation in cities like New York, Uppsala, Seoul and São Paolo. Shadowy private equity firms have become the biggest landlords in the world, explain sociologist Saskia Sassen and economist Joseph Stiglitz, while journalist Roberto Saviano (Gomorrah) charts the links to tax havens, “where criminal capitalism and legal capitalism meet and merge.” The extent of the high-end land grab is illustrated by a map of London spotted like a measles outbreak, depicting a mass of foreign-owned residential property, 80%}

A CUBA Sun 28 Jul, 12.15 pm
A CUBA Tue 30 Jul, 8.00 pm
A CUBA Mon 5 Aug, 1.45 pm
A CUBA Sat 10 Aug, 1.30 pm

A EMB Fri 26 Jul, 6.15 pm
A RX Wed 31 Jul, 6.15 pm
A CG Sat 3 Aug, 8.15 pm
B RX Fri 9 Aug, 12.45 pm
A RCP Sat 10 Aug, 2.00 pm
A CG Sun 11 Aug, 1.00 pm

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NEY ROSAUNO

SHAYNA TWEED SOPRANO
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ORCHESTRA WELLINGTON PERCUSSION PLAYERS
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THE STATE AGAINST MANDELA AND THE OTHERS
L’État contre Mandela et les autres

DIRECTORS/SCREENPLAY:
NICOLAS CHAMPEAUX,
GILLES PORTE
FRANCE 2018 | 106 MINS
ANIMATION: OERD
PHOTOGRAPHY:
GILLES PORTE
EDITOR: ANDREAS LEWIS
MUSIC:
AURELIEN CHOUZENOUX
WITH:
WINNIE MANDELA,
SYLVIA NEAME, MAX SISULU,
TONY STRASBURG, DAVID YUTAR
FESTIVALS:
CANNES (OUT OF
COMPETITION) 2018

In English and French,
WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

CINEMACOPE

Through the prism of the Rivonia Trial, which handed down life imprisonment sentences to Nelson Mandela and nine other defendants in 1963, filmmakers Nicolas Champeaux and Gilles Porte throw the spotlight on the epic struggle against apartheid. Cameras were not permitted in court, but the whole trial was audio recorded. Key figures – defendants, their wives, their lawyers, the prosecutor’s son – spurred by the trial’s proceedings, which they listen to through headphones, recall events and the period. We also participate in crucial moments during cross-examinations: the dignity and reasoned statements by the defendants are devastating. The audio recordings are accompanied by black and white animation, bringing the voices to life, which intermingles with archival footage, to powerful effect. — SR

“[In] this… absorbing, uplifting documentary… the people interviewed are sharp and witty, carrying their heroism lightly and revealing a strength of character… All of them devoted their lives to what they believed to be right and seem all the more admirable for acting without the comforting knowledge of knowing that history would be on their side.”

— Allan Hunter, Screen Daily

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WHERE’S MY ROY COHN?

DIRECTOR: MATT TYNAUER
USA 2019 | 97 MINS
PRODUCERS: MATT TYNAUER,
COREY REESER, MARIE BRENNER,
JOYCE DEEP, ANDREA LEWIS
EDITORS: ANDREA LEWIS, TOM MARONEY
MUSIC: LORNE BALLE
WITH: ROY M. COHN, ROGER STONE,
BARBARA WALTERS
FESTIVALS: Sundance 2019

This searing portrait of notorious lawyer Roy Cohn, whose career spanned from Senator McCarthy’s anti-communist witch-hunt in the 1950s, through to advising Donald Trump, delves into the dark arts of American politics.

“Roy Cohn was a corrupt lawyer, political dirty trickster, mafia associate and scumbag. He was a self-hating Jew who powered the engine of one of the worst antisemitic moments in American history, the demonization and execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. He was a closeted man who refused to publicly identify as gay even as he was dying of Aids. He was so famous for being a mean bastard that there were not one but two jokes at his expense on The Simpsons. There are not too many lawyers that can make such a claim…

Tynauer’s film… a collection of talking heads and news clips… [deals] in an avalanche of facts… This film connects a direct line between Roy Cohn’s belligerent, boorish and obstructionist ways and our current, less eloquent nightmare. To answer the question ‘where’s my Roy Cohn?’ he is, unfortunately, in the White House.”

— Jordan Hoffman, The Guardian

B CUBA Fri 26 Jul, 2.15 pm
A CUBA Sat 27 Jul, 1.15 pm
A CUBA Wed 31 Jul, 8.15 pm
A LHP Mon 5 Aug, 8.15 pm
B CUBA Wed 7 Aug, 12.15 pm

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WITH: ROY M. COHN, ROGER STONE,
BARBARA WALTERS
FESTIVALS: Sundance 2019

This searing portrait of notorious lawyer Roy Cohn, whose career spanned from Senator McCarthy’s anti-communist witch-hunt in the 1950s, through to advising Donald Trump, delves into the dark arts of American politics.

“Roy Cohn was a corrupt lawyer, political dirty trickster, mafia associate and scumbag. He was a self-hating Jew who powered the engine of one of the worst antisemitic moments in American history, the demonization and execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. He was a closeted man who refused to publicly identify as gay even as he was dying of Aids. He was so famous for being a mean bastard that there were not one but two jokes at his expense on The Simpsons. There are not too many lawyers that can make such a claim…

Tynauer’s film… a collection of talking heads and news clips… [deals] in an avalanche of facts… This film connects a direct line between Roy Cohn’s belligerent, boorish and obstructionist ways and our current, less eloquent nightmare. To answer the question ‘where’s my Roy Cohn?’ he is, unfortunately, in the White House.”

— Jordan Hoffman, The Guardian

B CUBA Fri 26 Jul, 2.15 pm
A CUBA Sat 27 Jul, 1.15 pm
A CUBA Wed 31 Jul, 8.15 pm
A LHP Mon 5 Aug, 8.15 pm
B CUBA Wed 7 Aug, 12.15 pm
Stuffed

Stuffed takes us into the beautiful and bizarre world of taxidermy and on an eye-opening, globe-trotting encounter with passionate artists and experts stretching boundaries in this little-known field. Although the subjects featured in Erin Derham’s enlightening film have vastly different approaches to their art, none of them work with any animal that hasn’t died naturally or been acquired ethically.

“If taxidermy – the art of preserving animal remains – and conservation seem antithetical, then Stuffed is the film to reshape all those preconceptions. For many practitioners, taxidermy is not about trophies or death. It’s about preserving the animals so that people can understand and appreciate them. The taxidermists Derham studies love their subjects, studying them in life and death so that they are shown in natural positions, so that the muscles and motion are captured, so that aspects of their beauty that are hidden by speed or rarity or even the skin can be seen and understood and wondered at by viewers who may never see an ocelot or axolotl or alpaca in the wild. This is the art of seeing animals, and her subjects are, in their own very real way, conservationists.” — Richard Whittaker, The Austin Chronicle

“Stuffed is full of beautiful long shots… that show off all the little details and flourishes of each animal on display. From the skinning and washing to the creation of a mold body and fitting, to the posing and decoration, the documentary is filled with hypnotic imagery that vividly captures the efforts of the artists.” — Bobby Le Pire, Film Threat

Up the Mountain
Huo Shan

Set in a village settlement in Dali, Yunnan province, Up the Mountain is a lyrical and meditative celebration of creation and of finding inspiration in the simple rituals of unhurried, everyday life. Master painter and teacher Shen Jianhua shares his beautiful mountain home with his pregnant wife and their home-schooled teenage daughter. Here people gather to study under the master’s watchful guidance. His pupils include a group of elderly women from a village lower down the mountain. Colourful and talkative, this delightful granny cohort depict life around them, from leaping goats under blossoming trees to a wedding banquet, in vibrant folk paintings that turn everything into a festive occasion. The works all share the same square format, which also frames this exquisitely composed film, and act like a window to the world. The camera glides from them to the actual events they represent, thereby becoming immersed in village activities. The works all share the same square format, which also frames this exquisitely composed film, and act like a window to the world. The camera glides from them to the actual events they represent, thereby becoming immersed in village activities.

“A moving, funny, and increasingly surprising picture of shifting generations and deep rural roots and traditions.” — Nicolas Rapold, Film Comment

“Up the Mountain is as rich in visual splendor as it is [in] insight and information about this long-misunderstood art form… Enchanting.” — Kristy Puchko, Pajiba

The Austin Chronicle

“Stuffed is as rich in visual splendor as it is [in] insight and information about this long-misunderstood art form… Enchanting.” — Kristy Puchko, Pajiba
If you haven’t heard of Alice Guy-Blaché, by the end of Pamela B. Green’s documentary you will be singing her praises and seeking out her work. Utilising wonderful interview footage of Guy-Blaché recorded in 1957 and 1967, blended with recovered film clips, Be Natural is an energetic investigation into the legacy of the world’s first female director.

Trained in stenography, Alice Guy-Blaché was hired as an assistant to Léon Gaumont in 1894 and soon began directing demo films to sell Gaumont’s motion picture cameras. By the age of 23, she was named head of production and began her prolific career. A great comic director, Guy-Blaché was well ahead of her time, creating satirical and revolutionary feminist films that explored gender, sex and race. After moving to America in the early 1900s, she founded Solax studio and poured her life and soul into directing, producing and mentoring before her career abruptly ended in 1919.

With an eye on the current climate in Hollywood and its historical treatment of women, Green delivers a fast-paced film that celebrates the work of an oft-forgotten icon. — Kailey Carruthers

When movies were central to the cultural conversation in the 1960s and 70s, the voice of New Yorker reviewer Pauline Kael reverberated around the world. Few since have written about movies with her intellectual verve or visceral energy.

She famously went to battle for Bonnie and Clyde and made a cause célèbre of Bertolucci’s Last Tango in Paris. She celebrated the early films of Scorsese, De Palma, Altman and Spielberg in reviews that had the power to mobilise audiences and boost the careers of filmmakers. She explored her responses to actors and actresses with revealing candour, choosing sexually loaded titles for the published collections of her reviews, beginning with the best-selling I Lost It at the Movies in 1965.

Those of us for whom a Pauline Kael review was once an integral accessory to film-going will savour a bounty of pleasurable recollection in this complex, illuminating portrait. For younger audiences there is bounty to be discovered – her reviews remain readily accessible online and in print – alongside a fascinating consideration of the examined response to an art form as an art form in its own right. — BG
Making Waves: The Art of Cinematic Sound

Screened as part of Cannes Classics and met with upraoous applause at several points – particularly after its rousing opening scenes, before the title card was even up – this captivating, in-depth documentary extols the art of movie sound design and its unseen artisans.

Director Midge Costin (a feature film sound editor for over 25 years) and her crew of predominantly female film practitioners draw together interviews with an extraordinary line-up of filmmakers, editors and sound specialists to show the viewer just how crucial, and yet virtually ‘invisible’, the craft of sound design is to the movies we love.

Far from being of interest only to a niche audience of soundies and composers, Making Waves is essential viewing for anyone interested in how the magic of film casts its spell, frequently without our even noticing. Demonstrating the effect of sound design and musical score using key scenes from movies we thought we knew inside out (including an illuminating dissection of Apocalypse Now [p15]), Costin opens our ears to this subtlest of art forms. Revered luminaries including the legendary editor Walter Murch, directors Ryan Coogler, Barbra Streisand and George Lucas, and a surprisingly gender-balanced bevvy of working sound designers and editors walk us through this exhilarating master class. Ever wondered how Chewbacca got his voice? — Sarah Watt

“An erudite and impassioned documentary that does its damndest to prove that we experience movies with our ears as much as we do with our eyes – perhaps even more so.” — David Ehrlich, Indiewire

"Costin’s film underlines just how crucial is sound to our experience of cinema. Fascinating and informative, it’s a ‘must-watch’ for film students and fans alike.”

— Wendy Ide, Screendaily

This Changes Everything

First there was MeToo, then there was #TimesUp. The last few years have been touted as a reckoning for the film industry, with women pushing back against substandard and discriminatory behaviour. This timely, straight-talking documentary – made by a male director committed to highlighting and disrupting the male gender bias – goes beyond the hashtag movements to remind us that the struggle against substandard and discriminatory industry, with women pushing back across genres, the representation of women off-screen, and the treatment of women offscreen. Experts deliver stone-cold statistics, little-known Hollywood-history footnotes, and eventually clear-cut steps every man and woman can take to become an agent of change.”

— the Original Six

"We had one Oscar, a Fulbright, and two Emmys; but what we realised we were missing was a penis.”

— the Original Six
Both local (Herbs, p11) and global (Aretha Franklin, p10) music icons get their due at the top of this year’s programme. The following pages are by no means short of headline acts and special performing artists, either.

Elsewhere, see:

*Beats* (p41)
*Crystal Swan* (p41)
*We Are Little Zombies* (p53)

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### Carmine Street Guitars

A film for anyone who appreciates the art of guitar playing or the beauty of making things, or both, *Carmine Street Guitars* centres on Rick Kelly, who has been building and selling guitars from a Greenwich Village workshop for more than 40 years. Though he initially seems a man of few words, the documentary gradually reveals an artisan-philosopher, whose relationship with wood is practical as well as a little mystical. He’s a font of local knowledge, and in between discussions of pin routers and crystallised resins we hear about McGurk’s Suicide Hall, learn where Jackson Pollock lived, and discover the origins of the expression ‘86’ed’.

Over an apparently typical week, we watch the guitar maker at work while he is visited by a succession of reverential customers – including Bill Frisell, Eleanor Friedberger, Marc Ribot, Nels Cline and Jim Jarmusch – each of whom gives an impromptu performance on one of his instruments. We get to know Kelly’s 93-year-old mother Dorothy and Gen X apprentice Cindy Hulej, and director Ron Mann’s camera satisfies our nosiness as he pokes its lens into every gloriously cluttered corner of Kelly’s world. — Nick Bollinger

### Inna de Yard

Reggae legends including Cedric Myton, Kiddus I and Ken Boothe reminisce while jamming out their greatest hits in this vibrant celebration of Jamaica and its diverse cultural history. Sprinkled with festive scenes from a live performance in Paris, the documentary does for reggae, ska, rock steady and roots what *Buena Vista Social Club* did wholeheartedly for Afro-Cuban music.

“There are several lifetimes of music and memories shared between the subjects of *Inna de Yard*… The film, an appealing blend of accessibly toe-tapping music and likeable characters, creates an atmosphere almost as heady as the fug of smoke which… shrouds the heads of the dreadlocked old-timers who are invited to revisit their most iconic tracks…”

— Wendy Ide, *Screendaily*

The project which anchors the picture is the recording of an album, “unplugged and acoustic style… capturing the music in its virgin state.” Sprinkled through this is a dusting of Jamaican history and a fleeting but poignant commentary on the poverty and simmering violence which has marked the lives of most of the musicians in one way or another… For a warm, engaging love letter to the veteran talents who shaped a sound, the film has an infectious groove.”

— Wendy Ide, *Screendaily*
**The Gift: The Journey of Johnny Cash**

“There are music legends, and then there’s Johnny Cash... It’s long overdue that the Man in Black, who turned Dust Bowl folk into pop, made hippies love hillbilly gospel, and ended his career with one of the greatest four album runs of all time... receive a cinematic eulogy from a master of the music biographical documentary... Thom Zimny is arguably... the Ken Burns of American rock. His works are always to be anticipated and appreciated for their humor and rigor, both for newcomers to a subject and devotees... Like Burns, he has an established technique... to take a pivotal life moment and crystallize his subject’s life around it. With Cash... it’s the famous Fulsom Prison gig, where his defining traits – compassion for the underdog... righteous anger and wholehearted forgiveness – came together, and the Man in Black was truly forged. It’s a remarkable journey to and from that point, and Zimny shows how pivotal it was.

Zimny’s chorus of unseen voices – Cash’s family, peers, friends, and acolytes like Bruce Springsteen – meld so seamlessly with astonishing archive footage and poetic reconstruction that the man comes alive, in all his rough-hewn, self-destructive, humble, loving brilliance.” — Richard Whitaker, The Austin Chronicle

“Having made a series of laser-focused films on... Springsteen and a revelatory two-part doc on Elvis Presley, [Zimny] offers another portrait that rises above fannishness while fully acknowledging its subject’s legacy... Less a work of musicology than a spiritual portrait... it does right by Cash.” — John DeFore, Hollywood Reporter

**PJ Harvey: A Dog Called Money**

Several years ago, curious members of the public were afforded the chance to watch Mercury Prize-winner PJ Harvey record in a specially constructed space – part studio, part art installation. They looked on as Harvey translated travel experiences into songs that make up the album’s emergence at close range. The Hope Six Demolition Project is depicted in war correspondent

**Lil’ Buck: Real Swan**

Louis Wallecan’s energetic documentary follows the rise of Lil’ Buck, whose talent in jookin (a form of street dance) and ballet has made him one of the world’s most influential dancers. His journey has taken him from dance battles in Memphis parking lots to international stages, collaborating with the likes of Yo-Yo Ma and Damien Woetzel.

For Lil’ Buck, jookin was a reprieve to get up on your feet to dance down the street dancing and ballet worlds is certain art forms. Lil’ Buck’s bridging of any physiotherapist wince.

This is a film that affirms the importance of accessibility to the arts for all, particularly those who don’t normally see themselves represented in certain art forms. Lil’ Buck’s bridging of the street dancing and ballet worlds is a joy to watch and will have you itching to get up on your feet to dance down the aisles. — Chris Tie
Maria by Callas

The legendary opera singer, once described as “pure electricity” by Leonard Bernstein, eloquently recounts her life and career through interviews, unpublished letters, diaries and memoirs — and, especially, through her mesmerising performances — in a riveting self-portrait.

“By sifting through these materials four decades after Callas’s death, the movie aims to correct a popular perception — spread by the news media and interpretive biographies (Terrence McNally’s play Master Class) — that Callas was a diva offstage as well as on.

Whether the results qualify as a comprehensive portrayal is best debated by opera historians, but what is clear is that Maria by Callas provides an excellent introduction to Callas’s artistry. The director, Tom Volf, allows several arias to play in full, so that it’s possible to hear the astonishing sustained quality of her voice and to see, in performances of Bizet and Bellini, among others, what we are repeatedly told — that she was also a good actress.

The documentary runs, chronologically, through career highlights, including a ridiculed 1958 performance of Norma that was canceled after one act (Callas had bronchitis) and her eyebrow-raising more-than-friendship with Aristotle Onassis, which began when both were married to others and ended, for a while anyway, after she learned, apparently from news reports, that he was marrying Jackie Kennedy…

A documentary that revitalizes history through primary sources, to illuminating, at times enthralling effect.” — Ben Kenigsberg, NY Times

Miles Davis: Birth of the Cool

Miles Davis was without doubt one of the 20th century’s great creative forces. The narrative of Stanley Nelson’s Miles Davis: Birth of the Cool is drawn from passages of Davis’s 1989 autobiography, which actor Carl Lumbly delivers in a convincing 1989 autobiography, which actor

Carl Lumbly delivers in a convincing impersonation of the trumpeter’s signature rasp, and illustrated with montages of historical photos, live footage and interviews with Davis’s friends, family and fellow musicians.

Nelson guides us through the radical changes Davis made to jazz over nearly half a century. We learn something of his taste in clothes, cars and women; of the rarefied sense of style that was another facet of his self-expression. But Nelson also explores the racism Davis experienced living in America, his resultant anger, and the lovers and others who were often on the receiving end of this rage.

This is not the first film about Miles Davis, nor is it likely to be the last. Don Cheadle’s 2015 biopic Miles Ahead was more salacious; Murray Lerner’s 2004 Miles Electric: A Different Kind of Blue went deeper into the music. But for a primer on who Miles was, what he did and why he matters, Stanley Nelson’s documentary will be hard to beat.

— Nick Bollinger

“Mystify: Michael Hutchence”

This deeply affecting portrait of Michael Hutchence honours the INXS frontman’s legacy in the best ways imaginable: through his music; the friends, family and lovers he touched; and a nuanced study of the circumstances leading up to his suicide at the age of 37.

“22 years after Michael Hutchence’s death at the age of 37, Richard Lowenstein’s documentary… [on] the Australian singer justifies his status as a genuine rock god. The densely woven and worshipfully presented archival footage… is a reminder that in terms of wild talent and Dionysian sexiness, he belongs in the same company as Mick Jagger, Jim Morrison, and Robert Plant. Much more importantly, the film makes a powerful case that, despite a troubled upbringing, Hutchence was not naturally self-destructive… [Through] moving and insightful interviews with his [siblings] and… Hutchence’s lovers… Michelé Bennett… Kyle Minogue, and Helena Christensen… [it] cautions against treating the Michael Hutchence tragedy as part of a doomed rock star syndrome. In life and death, he carved his own niche, and Mystify is a more than worthy tribute.” — Graham Fuller, Screendaily
Marianne & Leonard: Words of Love

Nick Broomfield’s evocative memoir traces the enduring relationship between Leonard Cohen and Marianne Ihlen, the inspiration behind such seminal songs in the folksinger’s oeuvre as ‘So Long, Marianne’. Traversing time, from the early 1960s when the pair first met on Hydra, a sun- and drug-drenched Greek island that attracted a coterie of expat artists, until their deaths three months apart in 2016, this documentary is rich with archival material and insider knowledge. Broomfield knew and was one of Ihlen’s lovers back in the day, and he charts “a love story that had fifty chapters without being together.” Essential viewing, whether you’re a Cohen fan or not.

“There’s a lot of great Cohen footage, much of it taken from the invaluable 1974 tour diary Bird on a Wire, and you get his journey from early scribblings to late-tour comeback. What makes this film unmissable… is the fact that we get Marianne’s story more or less in full as well. It’s a fleshing out of someone who was more than just a muse, more than just an object of affection for a famous man (and an infamous bastard)...”

We’ve heard the now-famous letter that the musician wrote to her as she lay on her deathbed, of how he was ‘right behind her’ in terms of time running out. But to see that letter being read to her, and the run of emotions across her face as she processes her own ‘so long,’ is to feel that the narrative has been given back to her. Marianne is no longer just ‘Leonard’s muse.’ She’s a woman who’s lived and loved and lost completely apart from the songs.” — David Fear, Rolling Stone

"As much poetry as documentary – a gentle, rhapsodic film… and a moving portrait of a love that still resonates.”
— Steve Pond, The Wrap

Yuli

This adventurous depiction of the life and success of ballet superstar Carlos Acosta glides between childhood re-enactments and scenes of Acosta directing fellow dancers in artistically interpreted moments from his life. Director Icíar Bollaín mixes crowd-pleasing biopic conventions with a range of clever filmmaking techniques, affording the real Acosta the stage to convey his own history, expressed indelibly through the language of movement.

“This energetic, emotionally reflective movie follows the rise of the Cuban dancer Carlos Acosta from scrappy juvenile tearaway to ballet superstar… Acosta even makes an appearance, playing himself now, in Cuba to put on a show about his life – a clever move by [screenwriter Paul] Laverty to include some electrifying performances… In a reverse of the Billy Elliot story, it’s his dad Pedro (Santiago Alfonso), who drags Carlos kicking and screaming to Havana’s state ballet school to get him off the streets – and gives him the nickname Yuli, a legendary warrior. The teachers instantly recognise this cocky kid’s natural talent. But Carlos is not convinced – he’d rather be playing football than flouncing about in tights…”

Ballet is his ticket out of poverty, but his loneliness at being separated from his family is agonising, even as he notches up accolades… What’s perhaps surprising given the insider involvement from Acosta is the film’s insight and emotional generosity... This isn’t one of those biopics that rearranges a life to hide the ugly awkward bits.” — Cath Clarke, The Guardian

"A consistently colorful hybrid: stirring when it leans into sentimental traditionalism, actively ravishing when it lets Acosta’s physical artistry take over.”
— Guy Lodge, Variety

Director: Nick Broomfield
USA 2019 | 102 mins
Producers: Nick Broomfield, Marc Hoefferlin, Shari Hinton, Kyle Gibbon
Photography: Barney Broomfield
Editor: Marc Hoefferlin
Music: Leonard Cohen, Nick Laird-Clowes
With: Leonard Cohen, Marianne Ihlen
Festivals: Sundance 2019
In English and Norwegian, with English subtitles
Colour and B&W

Director: Icíar Bollaín
Spain/UK/Germany 2018 | 104 mins
Producers: Andrea Calderwood, Juan Gordon
Screenplay: Paul Laverty, Based on Carlos Acosta’s autobiography No way home
Photography: Álex Catalán
Editor: Nacho Ruiz Capillas
Choreography: María Roiva
Music: Alberto Iglesias
With: Carlos Acosta, Santiago Alfonso, Keyvin Martínez, Edilson Manuel Olbera Nuñez
Festivals: San Sebastián 2018
In Spanish and English, with English subtitles
Cinemascope / M offensive language
Celebration: Yves Saint Laurent
Célébration

Shot over two years between 1998 and 2001, just before Yves Saint Laurent retired from the world of fashion, this poignant, intimate film, shaped from a mere 18 hours of footage, captures the great couturier in his twilight, creating his last collection. The subsequent portrait of a physically diminished and jittery figure whose reign was coming to an end dismayed Pierre Bergé, Yves Saint Laurent’s partner in business and, for a period, in life. Bergé initially prevented the film’s release, as the behind-the-scenes observation of the apparently adrift, chain-smoking designer – and of puppet master Bergé lurking in the background orchestrating affairs – was not the image that he wanted the world to see.

Although unmasking the erstwhile fashion icon and, thereby dismantling the myth Bergé strove to create and protect (and for which he jealously sought credit), the film isn’t a salacious exposé, but instead, a fascinating, almost anthropological account of a waning monarch and a label’s celebration of its storied status. — SR

“A priceless addition to our understanding of how Yves Saint Laurent – the man, the myth, la marque – operated.” — Peter Debruge, Variety

Escher: Journey into Infinity
Escher: Het oneindige zoeken

Although it’s highly probable that M.C. Escher, the visionary graphic artist, needs no introduction, this enlightening portrait is sure to reward enthusiasts and those less familiar with his oeuvre. Escher’s artistic universe is explored as if we’re seeing it through his own eyes – he narrates the film (voiced by Stephen Fry) via excerpts from his many diaries, letters and notes – and across a cornucopia of his works, many of which have never been shown before.

While Escher recounts his life and his constant search to turn his thoughts into visual form and to create the immaculate woodcut prints he could see in his mind’s eye, his works float on the screen, animation enhancing their innate movement.

Contributions from two of Escher’s elderly sons, among other people, further enrich the profile of this complex and driven man, at times bemused by the vast appreciation his visions on paper engendered and dismayed by the placemats or garish, psychedelic posters they were turned into without his consent, little imagining the enduring influence of his imaginings. — SR

See also:
Andrei Rublev (p14)
MO TE IWI – Carving for the People (p20)
Michael Smitther 10 (p22)
Peter Peryer: The Art of Seeing (p22)
Mrs Lowry & Son (p37)
Up the Mountain (p67)
Halston

In the year’s most spectacular fashion documentary, writer-director Frédéric Tcheng (Dior and I, Diana Vreeland: The Eye Has to Travel) applies his discriminating enthusiast’s eye to the rise and fall of American fashion legend Roy Halston Frowick. Halston, who as a milliner at Bergdorf Goodman gave Jackie Kennedy her signature pillbox hat, eschewed the countercultural look of the 1960s to establish a simpler, more dashing look that made New York the epicentre of women’s fashion into the 1980s. His brand expansion into perfumes, then – arguably fatally – into a $1 billion licensing deal with J.C. Penney, was dizzying. Tcheng frames Halston’s fall from grace as both personal tragedy and as a tale of business malfeasance to be investigated. Brimming with clips, music and testimony from those close to the action, Halston doubles as irresistible evocation of the glam ethos he was instrumental in shaping, and a classic tale of creative brilliance harnessed to a standoff by corporate ambition. — BG

“It’s mildly astonishing that we’ve had to wait until now for a comprehensive assessment of the style revolution of Roy Halston Frowick — his stratospheric ascent to become a business empire and the first bona fide American celebrity designer, his rejection by the fashion establishment after a misjudged venture, his sad decline and his indelible legacy. Frédéric Tcheng delivers all that in the succinctly titled Halston, a roller coaster of fabulousness and folly.” — David Rooney, Hollywood Reporter

Martha: A Picture Story

Meet Martha Cooper, the sprightly 75-year-old photographer and unlikely darling of the international graffiti scene. Selina Miles’ charming doco will open your eyes to a whole subculture inspired by the work of one woman who documented an art form once considered a crime.

Martha turned her lens on New York subway trains in the late 70s and early 80s, creating a permanent record with the publication of Subway Art, her 1984 photo essay co-authored with Henry Chalfant. While a small print run didn’t generate a profit, unknown to the authors it became a hot commodity among street artists (and shoplifters). Known as ‘the bible’, it influenced subcultures around the world.

The film chronicles Martha’s early struggle as a female photographer with dreams of being a photojournalist, yet her ideas weren’t taken seriously. It’s a frustration that is echoed throughout her career. Her break came as the first female photographer at the New York Post, where the briefs varied from paparazzi assignments to news events across the five boroughs of New York.

We see glimpses of her international portfolio, but it is through her work back home documenting South Baltimore’s streets on the verge of gentrification that we see Martha’s passion in action. Her love for people is infectious and the resulting body of work astounding. Not since Bill Cunningham New York has a documentary about a photographer so readily made you fall in love with both the images and the person behind the camera. She may be in her seventies but there’s no slowing down for Martha, a living legend who’s ‘still snappin’’. — Rebecca McMillan
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Walking on Water

Christo and his wife/creative partner Jeanne-Claude have long stunned the world with their monumental artworks – wrapping the Reichstag in fabric, dotting giant umbrellas across California, festooning Central Park with gates. Now, with the passing of both Jeanne-Claude and his long-time documentarian Albert Maysles, Christo takes on his first major solo work, The Floating Piers, a giant orange fabric walkway across Italy’s Lake Iseo.

Working from 700 hours of footage shot by Christo’s team, Bulgarian director Andrey Paounov focuses on Christo’s relationship with his assistant/nephew/sparring partner Vladimir, and spirited shunting matches between the two provide many of the film’s laugh-out-loud moments (along with the 20th-century artist trying to come to terms with 21st-century technology and selfie culture). As with any Christo project, the monumental construction feat is only half the battle. While the film stays relentlessly present tense, the fatal accident during his Umbrellas installation will resonate in some viewers’ minds. Throughout, Christo remains feisty as ever, and while Paounov refuses to mine the two provide many of the film’s heartwarming posthumous moments.

Director: Andrey M. Paounov
Producers: Isabella Terranova, Valeria Gajmperko
Editor: Anastas Petkov, Andrey M. Paounov
Music: Danny Baring, Saundrin Jamarus
With: Christo, Vladimir Yavachev, Wolfgang Volz
Festivals: Locarno, Toronto 2018
In English and Italian, with English subtitles

The Miracle of The Little Prince
Het Wonder van Le Petit Prince

The Little Prince is the third most widely translated book in the world, with versions in 300 languages. Travelling from the Moroccan desert to Tibet, and the snow-laden region at the border between Norway and Finland to El Salvador, this film focuses on versions in 300 languages.

Director/Photography: Marjoleine Boonstra
The Netherlands/Norway 2018 | 89 mins
Producer: Pieter van Huijstee
Screenplay: Marjoleine Boonstra, Lies Janssen, Pieter van Huijstee
Festivals: Amsterdam Documentary 2018; Hot Docs 2019
In English and Italian, with English subtitles

Shooting the Mafia

Charismatic Letizia Battaglia, an award-winning Sicilian photographer and photojournalist, may be best known for her harrowing images documenting the Mafia at a time when its internecine warfare seeped out into civil society and left corpses in Sicily’s streets. Taken over several decades starting from the mid-1970s, and published in L’Oro, a Palermo newspaper where Battaglia was employed (the first female photojournalist to work for an Italian daily), these photos established her as a fearless figure and a danger. Death threats and intimidation ensued.

Director: Kim Longinotto
Ireland/USA 2019 | 94 mins
Producer: Naomh Fagan
Editor: Olle Huddleston
Music: Ray Harman
With: Letizia Battaglia, Maria Chiaro Di Trapani
Festivals: Sundance, Berlin, Hot Docs 2019
In Italian and English, with English subtitles

In English and Italian, with English subtitles
INCREASINGLY STRANGE

Films selected to keep you wide awake and save NZIFF from respectability by Ant Timpson, founder of the legendary Incredibly Strange Film Festival – and this year, first-time director with Come to Daddy (p11).

The Hole in the Ground

As the foundation for some of the great modern film classics, including recent standouts The Babadook and Hereditary, the horrors of parenting never cease to fascinate. In director Lee Cronin's creepy take on the subject, a recently separated mum and her inquisitive boy start a new life in the Irish countryside. But while mum Sarah has escaped an abusive past, she looks to have moved straight into a new set of problems. There's an unnerving encounter with the town kook who thinks Sarah's boy Chris is not who he seems. There's also a massive sinkhole, hidden inside a circle of pines, which from above looks like a portal straight to hell. And then there's her son Chris, who misses his dad, and one night wanders off into the forest without a word.

As each day passes, Sarah's grip on reality begins to slip. Is her dark past catching up with her? And is Chris really her son? Heavy with dread and loaded with smart old-school theatrics, The Hole in the Ground never resorts to cheap scares. This is a genuinely terrifying film, especially for parents, who after watching it shouldn't be surprised if they find themselves nervously checking on their offspring after dark. — AT

Knife+Heart

1979. Giallo. Dildo Daggers. Cruising. Neon. Leather. Slasher. Voyeurism. Vanessa Paradis. Dark. Humour. If these words don't compel you to dive headfirst into Yann Gonzalez's mesmerising French psychodrama, then this festival has plenty of safer options. But if you're a fool in love would attempt, Anne decides to mount a project so enticing that Lois has no option other than to swallow her pride and return.

Opening with an arresting murder scene in a Parisian gay bar, this beautifully skeevy ode to the pre-AIDS lifestyle is a glorious evocation of pulpy who-dunnits. Paradis plays Anne, a bootzy auteur of gay porn who has recently snapped ties with her editor and lover, Lois. In a bravura move only

Knife+Heart

Un couteau dans le coeur

Director: Yann Gonzalez
France/Switzerland/Mexico 2018 | 102 mins
Screenplay: Yann Gonzalez, Cristiano Mangione
Photography: Simon Beaufils
Editor: Raphaël Lefèvre
Music: M83
With: Vanessa Paradis, Nicolas Maury, Kate Moran
Festivals: Cannes (in Competition), London 2018; Rotterdam 2019
In French with English subtitles
R18 violence, sexual violence, sex scenes & content that may disturb

Director: Lee Cronin
Ireland 2019 | 90 mins
Producers: John Kaville, Conor Barry
Screenplay: Lee Cronin, Stephen McDonnell
Photography: Tom Comerford
Editor: Colin Campbell
Music: Stephen McKeon
With: Seána Kerslake, James Quinn Markey, Simone Kirby, Steve Wall, Eoin Macken
Festivals: Sundance 2019
CinemaScope | M violence, offensive language & horror

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© A RX Thu 30 Jul, 8.30 pm
© B ED Fri 2 Aug, 4.15 pm
© A ED Tue 6 Aug, 8.30 pm
© B RX Wed 7 Aug, 4.30 pm

© A RX Thu 8 Aug, 8.30 pm
© A RX Fri 9 Aug, 9.00 pm
Deerskin
Le daim

France’s enigmatic Quentin Dupieux, whose breakout hit Rubber was about a homicidal car tyre, makes films unlike anyone else in the world. Deerskin, channeling cinema’s rich history of obsessive killers, is no exception.

French megastar Jean Dujardin plays Georges, a handsome greying man who purchases a long-fringed deerskin jacket – and quickly becomes obsessed with the ‘killer style’ it projects. Not your run-of-the-mill existential midlife crisis flick, all bets are off when Georges decides all other jackets must be destroyed – and his intimate conversations with the deerskin only fuel his rage and paranoia.

It gets weirder: Georges uses a camera to film himself, transforming his obsession into a meta-take on auteur theory. And when he meets Denise (Adèle Haenel), whose hobby is re-editing the likes of Pulp Fiction, he convinces her to help him produce his magnum opus.

Dupieux is a director with a laser-focused vision and an ungodly commitment to the conceit, no matter how batshit cuckoo it may be. Crafting a first-person hallucinatory vortex of madness and masculinity with the skill of a surgeon, his latest, at a blistering 76 minutes, is one hell of a ride. — AT

“Dupieux pulls off an unlikely but deftly oddball comedy about a man over the edge… [He] gives Dujardin full licence to display his comic verve… [and] Haenel… goes toe to toe with Dujardin in the comedy stakes… There is… pure joy to be found in the fumbling repartee between the leads, in the film’s absurd visual lexicon and use of props, and in the sheer lunacy of its vision.” — Caspar Salmon, Sight & Sound

“The famous line ‘It’s a mystery wrapped in a riddle inside an enigma.’ The famous line from JFK is the perfect way to describe the meta-hijinks that unfold in this unbelievably strange documentary. John Szeles is a comic magician who rose through the ranks to book a headline spot in Vegas. You’ll know his act if you’ve watched a lot of comedy shows – he’s the prop guy whose lowbrow routines (involving spikes through the tongue or eating doves) are delivered with infectious energy.

Diagnosed with a rare heart condition, the prognosis not good, Szeles is forced into retirement, and director Ben Berman gains unfettered access to his days wandering his Las Vegas mansion beside his ever-patient wife, Anastasia. If the disease doesn’t kill him, the boredom and meth will.

With what little gas he has left in the tank, Szeles decides to stage the greatest comeback tour of all time.

But the man who survived decades of extreme living has a bombshell to drop. Things quickly turn surreal for the performer, and filmmaker as The Amazing Johnathan, who purchased a long-fringed deerskin jacket – and quickly becomes obsessed with the ‘killer style’ it projects. Not your run-of-the-mill existential midlife crisis flick, all bets are off when Georges decides all other jackets must be destroyed – and his intimate conversations with the deerskin only fuel his rage and paranoia.

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“Prepare to be fooled, thrilled and surprised with a new classic… An eccentric, wild and gripping goose chase of a film, all the jester’s at the center of [The Amazing Johnathan Documentary] are fascinating… This unbelievable film and its rumination of trust and a rumination on the nature of non-fiction filmmaking, is nothing short of amazing.” — Jordan Ruimy, The Playlist

“Laugh-out-loud funny in a way that’s unexpected for a documentary about a deceitful, dying meth-addict magician on his final fumbling tour." — Fionnuala Halligan, Screendaily

“The Amazing Johnathan Documentary

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But the man who survived decades of extreme living has a bombshell to drop. Things quickly turn surreal for the performer, and filmmaker as The Amazing Johnathan, the performer, and The Amazing Johnathan Documentary spin out of control. When reality starts to blur, we’re left to wonder what final trick he has in store for us. — AT

“Prepare to be fooled, thrilled and surprised with a new classic… An eccentric, wild and gripping goose chase of a film, all the jester’s at the center of [The Amazing Johnathan Documentary] are fascinating… This unbelievable film and its rumination of trust and a rumination on the nature of non-fiction filmmaking, is nothing short of amazing.” — Jordan Ruimy, The Playlist

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The Playlist
You Don’t Nomi

You’re either Team Showgirls, or you’re not. In the brilliantly titled You Don’t Nomi, a documentary about one of the most ridiculed films of all time, director Jeffrey McHale investigates a true “masterpiece of shit” from every conceivable angle.

Showgirls, the tale of Nomi, a sassy small-town gal who goes to Vegas to become a star, was a pure product of the 90s. It was an era of peak-machismo, which saw Paul Verhoeven and writer Joe Eszterhas on a hot streak after the success of Basic Instinct. When Showgirls tanked, the men got off with a mild drubbing, while the film’s star, Elizabeth Berkley, took the full brunt of its commercial and critical failure.

Offering a fresh perspective on Berkley’s performance and the movie’s legacy, McHale mashes together clips from Verhoeven’s entire oeuvre like a mad celluloid alchemist. Leaving no thong unturned, he not only argues for Showgirls’ inclusion alongside camp classic hall of famers Valley of the Dolls and Mommie Dearest, but that it rightfully belongs on top of that prestigious list. — AT

“It’s hard to overstate what a big deal Showgirls was when it hit movie theaters in 1995. It was the first NC-17 movie in wide release. And it would also be the first big-screen splash from a Saved by the Bell cast member… Showgirls did become an instant classic. It was just for all the wrong reasons. McHale’s goal is twofold: to explore those reasons, and to wonder if we were mistaken all along. Showgirls is, we hear from various talking heads, a misunderstood effort with serious artistic value beyond its camp appeal.” — Elizabeth Weitzman, The Wrap

“You Don’t Nomi reminds us that it’s okay to like things with rough edges… and, more than anything, it’s okay to deeply love something that most other people loathe.” — Chuck Foster, Film Threat

Koko-di Koko-da

Full of indelible imagery and haunting déjà vu, this pitch-black fable depicting grief as a psychological nightmare follows a bereaved couple, three years after suffering an unimaginable loss. Attempting to repair their strained marriage on a camping trip, Elin (Ylva Gallon) and Tobias (Leif Edlund) instead find themselves at the mercy of a trio of dark fairytale characters: a menacing goliath; a sinister woman with a vicious dog on a leash; and the ringleader, a homicidal dandy resplendent in a bowler hat. As Elin and Tobias are tormented over and over again in a forest they can’t escape from, director Johannes Nyholm slyly introduces moments of animation and puppetry – including hypnotic cutaways of paper-marionette rabbits – that strikingly parallel the couple’s life. The couple’s ordeal is emotionally wrenching but also strangely poetic, and only by healing their relationship can they exorcise their trauma – and the demons baying for blood. Koko-di Koko-da is humorous and nihilistic, beguiling and repulsive in equal measure – and just like the titular nursery rhyme heard on loop throughout the film, never forgotten. — AT
**Vivarium**

A gripping dystopian nightmare to surpass the very best Twilight Zone and Black Mirror episodes, Vivarium centres on Gemma (Imogen Poots) and Tom (Jesse Eisenberg), a young couple who dream of purchasing a first home. After meeting Martin, a rather odd real estate agent, they agree to visit a surreal new housing development called “Yonder”. With rows and rows of identical houses appearing to stretch on forever, it seems as vague and interminable as the name suggests.

This ultimate version of suburbia takes a sinister turn when Gemma and Tom realise no matter how hard they try to leave Yonder, they keep returning to the same place. Soon, they discover they have no way of communicating with the outside world. All the other homes appear to be empty. Forced to act like real-life Sims as their dream home becomes more prison-like with each passing day, they eventually welcome someone – or something – else into their increasingly desperate situation.

Lorcan Finnegan’s debut feature, Without Name, was an eye-catching ecological spoof that never veered off into predictable Hollywood formula, and this superb follow-up will only raise his stock as a director of superior genre cinema. Smart and unexpected, Vivarium is the logical antidote to the overblown drivel that big-budget spandex studio tentpoles vomit on the apathetic public. — AT

“His second feature, Finnegan twists suburban banality into something altogether horrifying and unnerving... Unmistakably cinematic in scope... Vivarium impresses with its clarity of vision and originality.” — Bradley Warren, The Playlist

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**Mope**

A mope is a wannabe male pornstar who exists on the fringes of the adult industry. A mope doesn’t have the X factor to be successful, let alone the Y factor most of the time either. Why would anyone want the life of a mope? In this sordid drama, based on a you-won’t-believe-it’s-all-true story, we are treated to a perverse peek behind the stained curtains, where a chance meeting between two delusional dreamers, Steve Driver and Tom Dong (real names Stephen Clancy Hill and Herbert Wong), takes place. To say it goes horribly wrong for this less than dynamic duo would be like saying JFK had a bad headache.

The fungii at the bottom of the talent pool, Driver and Dong will do anything to claw their way up — and that includes auditioning for a kicked-in-the-testicles fetish production. When Driver’s erratic behaviour escalates, his relationship with Dong begins to slide, as does the film’s tone from sketchy offbeat character drama to something much, much darker.

Mope is sleazy and explicit, but within the grime it promises one of the most unusual and naked friendships you’ll ever see portrayed on film. That’s before it all goes to pieces, anyway. — AT

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**Violence Voyager**

This curiously made tale of youthful wanderings wholeheartedly dives the depths of the weird and wonderfully deranged. Don’t let its cardboard construction Violence Voyager delivers a discomforting gore-factor to match Mike Takashi at his grisly best. You’ve been warned.

“Following in the footsteps of 2013’s The Burning Buddha Man, the artist Uijcha once again incorporates his ‘gekimation’ style of 2D animation, employing cardboard dioramas reminiscent of a pre-digital world to deliver a wildly imaginative childhood adventure... but one told through a grotesque lens. American student Bobby (Yuki Aoi) and local chum Akkun (Takahashi Shigeo) already exist in an uncanny world... Yet things grow stranger still after the boys venture into the mountains and stumble upon a makeshift theme park known as Violence Voyager. It seems like a low-budget scam at first but soon reveals a rabbit hole of biomechanical body-horror concealing a tragic tale – a past whose present has mutated beyond repair. Rife with nods to B-horror and Kajiu fare, Violence Voyager is a brutally inventive nightmare born of a singular, disturbing vision.” — Siddhant Adlakha, Village Voice

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**Director:** Lorcan Finnegan  
**Ireland/Belgium 2019 | 98 mins**  
**Producers:** Brendan McCarthy, John McDonnell  
**Screenplay:** Garret Shanley  
**Photography:** MacGregor  
**Editor:** Tony Coisardouil  
**Music:** Kristian Edens Andersen  
**With:** Jesse Eisenberg, Imogen Poots, Jonathan Aris, Enna Hardwicke, Senan Jennings  
**Festivals:** Cannes (Critics’ Week) 2019

**Director:** Lucas Heyne  
**USA 2019 | 105 mins**  
**Producers:** Kelly Hayes, Danny Roth, BP Cooper, Dylan Vox, Keri Saxton, Elena Cristian  
**Screenplay:** Zack Newkirk, Lucas Heyne  
**Photography:** Bryan Kos  
**Editor:** Korn Saxton  
**With:** Nathan Stuart Jarrett, Kelly Suy, Brian Hukey, Max Adler, Tanya Cornelisse, David Arquette  
**Festivals:** Sundance 2019

**Director/Screenplay/Photography:** Uijcha  
**Japan 2018 | 84 mins**  
**Producers:** Anzai Ryo, Iono Kimita  
**Screenplay:** Jean-Paul Takahashi  
**With:** Yuki Aoi, Tanaka Naoki, Takahashi Shigeo  
**Censors rating tbc**
Meet the Filmmakers

As we go to print, the following international guests have confirmed their attendance at NZIFF in Wellington. These filmmakers will introduce their films and answer questions following the screening of the sessions indicated.

2040

Damon Gameau is a familiar face to New Zealand audiences; he was a festival guest when his debut feature, That Sugar Film, screened here in 2015 as part of NZIFF’s Autumn Events. The film went on to win Best Documentary at the Australian AACTA Awards. Australian-born Gameau is also an actor, producer and presenter, with credits in feature films including The Tracker and Balbo (NZIFF09), and television series such as Underbelly, Secrets and Lies and Gallipoli. His new documentary, 2040 (p59), presents positive, practical solutions to the environmental concerns facing the global economy, with a particular view on providing younger generations with the tools and knowledge to survive and thrive by the year 2040.

Jawline

Liza Mandelup is a New York filmmaker, currently based in Los Angeles, with a background in photography and short form commercial film work. Her early industry experience as a casting scout trained her eye for identifying talent for her photography and film projects. She has been a long-time collaborator with online platforms such as Vogue, Nowness; i-D and Dazed.

She recently won the US Documentary Special Jury Award for Emerging Filmmaker at Sundance for her debut film, Jawline (p64). Filmmaker Magazine featured her as one of ‘25 New Faces of Independent Film’. She is currently in production on her second feature.

Vivarium

Lorcán Finnegan is an Irish writer, director, photographer and editor. He studied graphic design in Dublin before moving into animation and live action filmmaking. He has written and directed many award-winning short films, TV commercials, comedy sketches and music videos. His supernatural short film Foxes premiered at SXSW in 2011, screened in competition at Tribeca and at the London BFI, and picked up an IFTA for Best Short. His first feature, the existential folk horror Without Name, premiered in the Vanguard section of the 2016 Toronto International Film Festival. Vivarium (p81), his second feature and third collaboration with writer Garret Shanley, premiered at this year’s Cannes Critics’ Week and won The Gan Foundation Distribution Award.

In My Blood It Runs

Maya Newell is an Australian filmmaker with a focus on social impact documentary. Premiering at Hot Docs 2019, her latest feature, In My Blood It Runs (p63), was selected for Good Pitch Australia 2016 and the Sundance Institute Documentary Fund. Previously, her short film Two screened at AFI Docs and Slamdance Film Festival, and won her best emerging talent at the Australian International Documentary Conference. She also directed Growing Up Gayby for the ABC in 2013, which evolved into her first feature documentary, Gayby Baby (2015). The film broke cinema-on-demand records in Australia and was nominated for an AACTA award. Newell is currently working on a range of documentary projects.
“I’m ready for my bonus round, Mr. DeMille.”

Saturday 3 Aug 1.30–3.00pm at Blondini’s | Hosted by the Wellington Film Society

To register your team, go to the 2019 WFS Film Quiz page on nziff.co.nz

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Without Whom

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Desry Armstrong, Ashleigh Muir, Australian High Commission; Ben Azahara, Awa Films; Steve Barr; Rachel Barrowman; Catherine Blesky; Simon Bowden; Penelope England, Brown Bread; Catherine Henderson; Gareth Shepard; Buddy Firely; Gus Sharp, Capital Creative Arts Trust; Kailay Caruthers; Sarah Catherall; Judith Cowley; Cath Cardil, Jasmin Chung, David Parnett, Creative New Zealand; Mark Cubey, Daniel Holwender, Dean Martellini, DOMi, Martin Durrant; Jamie Pipko, Electric Shearload Productions; Caroline Topsil, Embassy of the United States of America; Judi Ferrington; Ness Simmons, Fred Up Productions; Marie Fraser; Christian Kuhl, Ulrike Rosefeld, Geenroth-Institut; Bill Gates; Espeth Grant; Robbergenberg; Fradd Harper; Chris Kirk; Anna Lee; Bill C 080 Lee, Simon Wims, Light Entertainment; Athol McCredie; Malcolm McKinnon; Grant; Robin Greenberg; Frida Harper; Chris Kirk; Caroline Toplis, Embassy of the United States of America; Andrew Phil Jack and staff.

The Roxy Cinema:
Hadyn Bell-Norris;

Reading Cinemas Porirua:
Simon Werry; Blair Light

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Notes in this brochure are written and compiled by the publications team (unsigned), programmers Michael McDonnell (MM), Sandra Reid (SR), Ant Timpson (AT), Nic Marshall (NM), Malcolm Turner (MT), and former director Bill Gaden (BG), Rebecca McKillan (RM), Judah Frinkin (JF), Tim Wong, Kalay Camurhis, Sīkita Paparoti, Toby Manhire, Nick Bollinger, Chris Tao, Sarah Watt, Doug Dillon, Jacob Powell, Catherine Risk, Rebecca Priestley, Chris Kirk, Max Rushbrooke, Lana Lopesi, Sarah McMullan, James Croft, Mark Cubeby, Lynda Hallinan, Andrew Langridge, Yvonne Lorim and Steve Newall also contributed notes. The brochure was edited and managed by Tim Wong with the assistance of a squadron of ace proofreaders who labour beyond the call of duty. Views expressed in the brochure do not necessarily represent the views of the staff or trustees of the New Zealand Film Festival Trust.
Congratulations

Adriana Martins da Silva – Upstream
Ant Timpson – Come to Daddy
Alex Plumb – Golden Boy
Armagan Ballantyne – Hush
Awanui Simich-Pene – Rū
Beatrice Joblin – Birth, Deaths & Marriages
Becs Arahanga – Hinekura
Briar Grace-Smith – Krystal
Charlotte Purdy, Chris Dudman – By the Balls
David Nash, Simon Mark-Brown – A Seat at the Table
Esther Mauga – Our Father
Hamish Bennett – Bellbird
Harvey Hayes – Biggie & Shrimp
Jeremiah Tauamiti – Liliu
Jessica Sanderson – Ways to See
Josephine Stewart-Te Whiu – Ani
Judith Cowley – Walk a Mile
Justin Pemberton – Capital in the 21st Century
Keely Meechan – Nancy From Now On
Mark Albiston – Billy and The Kids
Paloma Schneiderman – Memory Foam
Paula Whetu Jones – Yellow Roses
Prisca Bouchet, Nick Mayow – Egg Cup Requiem
Robin Greenberg – MO TE IW I – Carving for the People
Shirley Horrocks – Peter Peryer: The Art of Seeing
Tearepa Kahi – Herbs: Songs of Freedom
Tony Sutorius – Helen Kelly – Together
Vea Mafile’o, Jeremiah Tauamiti – For My Father’s Kingdom

on your selection to screen in the NZIFF 2019!
“Kumeu Village is my house Chardonnay”
- Bob Campbell MW

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