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OPENS ONLINE APRIL 29, 2021
CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL
DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL

FILM GUIDE
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PHOTO: DAHLIA KATZ

WELCOME TO HOT DOCS 2021

We are thrilled to offer 219 official Festival selections on our Hot Docs at Home streaming platform, April 29–May 9.

Use this guide to find films or you can read full descriptions online at [HOTDOCS.CA](https://hotdocs.ca).

BUY YOUR TICKETS



Crave Online Box Office available at
HOTDOCS.CA

TICKETS & TICKET PACKAGES

SINGLE TICKET:	\$13	(\$11.50 MEMBERS)
5-PACK:	\$55	(\$49.50 MEMBERS)
12-PACK:	\$125	(\$112.50 MEMBERS)

Please Note: As at the live Hot Docs Festival, a limited number of tickets are available for each film. Please purchase your ticket or book using your ticket package early to avoid disappointment.

Ticket packages are not shareable and cannot be used for multiple streams of the same film.

HOT DOCS UNLIMITED FESTIVAL PASS

The ultimate Festival experience for doc lovers!

- guaranteed access to all Festival films—no advance booking required!
- extended 10-day post-Festival viewing window—more time to see more docs!
- new user-friendly interface—just log on and start watching!
- best value for money—save as you stream!

HOT DOCS UNLIMITED FESTIVAL PASS: \$259 (\$233.10 MEMBERS)

Hot Docs Members save on tickets, packages and passes. Learn more at hotdocs.ca/membership.

STREAM YOUR FILMS



Watch on the Hot Docs at Home platform available at
HOTDOCS.CA

All films will be available to stream online during the Hot Docs Festival, April 29–May 9, subject to ticket availability.

You may purchase your tickets or book a film using your ticket package at any time. Once you press play and start viewing your stream, you will have 48 hours to finish watching the film.

Please note that all films are geo-blocked to Canada.

Please visit hotdocs.ca/streaming-faqs for answers to frequently asked questions.

Further assistance? Please contact streamingsupport@hotdocs.ca.

CAPTIONING

CC This icon identifies films that offer closed captioning. Viewers can turn captions on by clicking the CC button in the video player.

OC This icon identifies films that offer open captioning. Captions cannot be turned off.

Live captioning (CART) for live-streamed events provided by AI Media.

Accessible films are supported by The Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation.

Hot Docs was established in 1993 as an initiative of the Documentary Organization of Canada/Documentaristes du Canada, and was separately incorporated as an independent, charitable organization in 1996.

A GREAT CINEMATIC EXPERIENCE CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE

When a powerful film is projected into a room full of people, hearts and minds collectively open, conversations are ignited, and community bonds are forged. We've seen it happen countless times.

With the pandemic having shuttered independent cinemas across the country for over a year, many are now fighting for survival.

Canadian communities need their independent cinemas to survive and thrive.

Hot Docs wants to help ensure that future generations can continue to have life-changing cinematic experiences. We invite you to Pay It Forward to independent cinemas across Canada.



**HELP HOT DOCS PAY IT FORWARD
VISIT [HOTDOCS.CA/FILMLOVERS](https://hotdocs.ca/filmlovers)
TO GET STARTED**

Hot Docs is a registered charity (895921880-RR0001).



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2020*

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Members also save on new releases and our wildly popular Curious Minds Speaker Series.

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BRONZE \$59

\$54 FOR UNDER-30S
AND SENIORS

SILVER \$99

\$94 FOR UNDER-30S
AND SENIORS

GOLD \$359

\$354 FOR UNDER-30S
AND SENIORS

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hotdocs
MEMBERSHIP



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Artificial Immortality: Livestreamed Opening Night Q&A

Celebrate the opening of Hot Docs with a livestreamed Q&A featuring director Ann Shin and special guests—both real and virtual—to discuss this year's opening night selection, *Artificial Immortality* (p. 13).

THU, APR 29 7:30 PM ET
LIVESTREAM FREE AT [HOTDOCS.CA](https://hotdocs.ca)



Hot Docs Awards Presentation

Join us for a livestream of our annual Awards Presentation, where the winners in our competitive programs will be announced and we celebrate all the outstanding filmmakers in this year's Festival. Over \$70,000 in cash and prizes will be awarded.

FRI, MAY 7 7:00 PM ET
LIVESTREAM FREE AT [HOTDOCS.CA](https://hotdocs.ca)



Rogers Audience Award Announcement

On the Festival's final night, join us to celebrate our Canadian filmmakers and to announce the winners of this year's Rogers Audience Award for the best Canadian documentaries. The top five films as determined by audience poll will split the \$50,000 cash prize, courtesy of the Rogers Group of Funds.

SUN, MAY 9 7:00 PM ET
LIVESTREAM FREE AT [HOTDOCS.CA](https://hotdocs.ca)

SPECIAL EVENTS

WORLD PREMIERE

Citizen Minutes

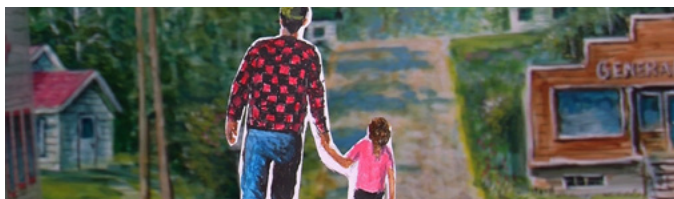
Commissioned by Hot Docs, Citizen Minutes is a short doc collection aimed at celebrating and inspiring civic engagement. Be among the first to see the incredible stories of ordinary Canadians doing extraordinary things to make their communities better places. Citizen Minutes is the cornerstone of an exciting new national educational initiative Hot Docs is launching this fall.



BODY POLITICS

D: Aisha Fairclough | Canada | 7 min

In a fatphobic image-conscious world, educator, activist and eccentric cat lady turned politician Dr. Jill Andrew takes her fight for body justice, human rights, representation, access and equity to the legislature as the first queer Black person elected as a member of provincial parliament. Here's a glimpse into a 40-year story of becoming told through the eyes of her filmmaking partner...Don't blink!



THE GIFT

D: Rachel Garrick | Canada | 3 min

A lesson in compassion and generosity results in a lifelong gift. Set in a small Northwestern Ontario town, a father takes an opportunity to pass on important teachings to his daughter.



MENDING A CRACK IN THE SKY

D: Roble Issa, Zach Jama | Canada | 8 min

Shamso Mohamoud and Shamso Elmi both lost their sons to gun violence and watched their alleged killers walk free without so much as a legal prosecution. Now, the two Somali-Canadian mothers have organized the group "Mending a Crack in the Sky" to collectively combat gun violence and hardship while facing cultural and racial barriers.



NOURRIR LES RÊVES

D: Kimberley Ann Surin, Aïcha Morin-Baldé | Canada | 7 min

In 2007, Lasallien Center opened their doors in St-Michel—one of the most disadvantaged boroughs on the island of Montreal. Meet Paul Evra, the young altruistic director who grew up there and is leading the centre and their mission to help feed the numerous families in the area who are food insecure.

STREAM FREE DURING THE FESTIVAL AT **HOTDOCS.CA**



EXCLUDED BY DESIGN

D: Simon Madore, Gabriel Tougas | Canada | 3 min

Writer and community organizer Dave Meslin thinks that bad public notices are hurting our democracy—and he's calling on graphic designers to show us what we're missing.



JEAN SWANSON: WE NEED A NEW MAP

D: Teresa Alfeld | Canada | 7 min

Jean Swanson: We Need A New Map is a short documentary profiling veteran activist and first-term Vancouver city councillor Jean Swanson as she works alongside the next generation of anti-poverty activists fighting systemic inequality.



MILITANT MOTHER

D: Carmen Pollard | Canada | 8 min

To get to class on time, children from the Raymur Place social housing project were forced to jump shunting train cars that stood in their path. In 1971, after months of petitioning for a safe crossing, a group of mothers made their voices heard by blockading CN Rail from delivering goods.



RIDE FAIR

D: Javier Lovera | Canada | 7 min

Three fearless community organizers with a history of standing up against big tech corporations, embark on an uphill political fight to regulate Uber and Lyft in Toronto so that these companies operate in the public interest, respecting communities, drivers and passengers.

BIG IDEAS

Scotia Wealth Management.

Big Ideas events will be held as free livestreamed discussions with featured directors and guests at the dates and times noted below. All Big Ideas events will be recorded and made accessible to viewers who watch the films after the live discussions have been livestreamed. Big Ideas events are free, but streaming tickets to Big Ideas films must be purchased.



STREET GANG: HOW WE GOT TO SESAME STREET

Meet *Sesame Street* original cast member Sonia Manzano (Maria) along with director Marilyn Agrelo, and producers Ellen Scherer Crafts and Trevor Crafts, as they discuss the enduring legacy and lessons of this iconic show and the feat (and fun!) of capturing the origin story of *Sesame Street* in *Street Gang: How We Got to Sesame Street* (p.11).

FRI, APR 30

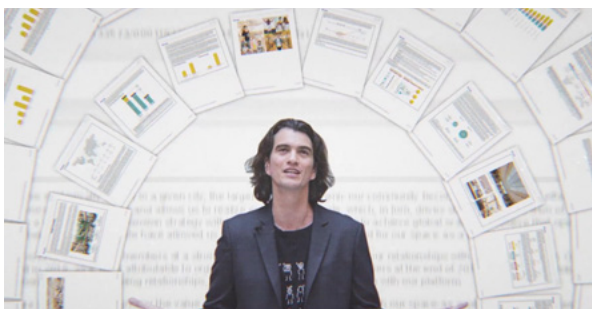
7:00 PM ET LIVESTREAM FREE AT [HOTDOCS.CA](https://hotdocs.ca)

PLAYING WITH SHARKS

Legendary marine conservationist and photographer Valerie Taylor, subject of *Playing with Sharks* (p. 11), joins director Sally Aitken and producer Bettina Dalton to discuss her pioneering work with sharks, commitment to ocean conservation and the experience of being the subject of the camera instead of the one wielding it.

SUN, MAY 2

7:00 PM ET

LIVESTREAM FREE AT [HOTDOCS.CA](https://hotdocs.ca)

WEWORK: OR THE MAKING AND BREAKING OF A \$47 BILLION UNICORN

Join the director of *WeWork: Or the Making and Breaking of a \$47 Billion Unicorn* (p. 12), Jed Rothstein, as well as subject and Wall Street Journal reporter Maureen Farrell and subject and former WeWork employee Megan Mallow, for a provocative discussion about the community-centric, people-first ideal that sent the little co-working venture skyrocketing into unicorn investment territory—and what was really going on behind the scenes.

TUE, MAY 4

7:00 PM ET

LIVESTREAM FREE AT [HOTDOCS.CA](https://hotdocs.ca)

MAU

Design visionary Bruce Mau and partner Bisi Williams Mau join *Mau* (p. 10) directors Benji Bergmann and Jono Bergmann for a fascinating conversation about creativity and the relationship between filmmaker and subject, maintaining optimism during times of crisis, designing your life and building a better world for all.

WED, MAY 5

7:00 PM ET

LIVESTREAM FREE AT [HOTDOCS.CA](https://hotdocs.ca)

SUBJECTS OF DESIRE

Jully Black (singer, songwriter, international recording artist) and Cheryl Thompson (author and assistant professor, School of Creative Industries, Ryerson University) join *Subjects of Desire* (p. 11) director Jennifer Holness for a timely, thought-provoking discussion about the cultural shift in beauty standards towards embracing Black aesthetics and features, and how this impacts our understanding of race, power and the construction of beauty.

THU, MAY 6

7:00 PM ET

LIVESTREAM FREE AT [HOTDOCS.CA](https://hotdocs.ca)

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INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

7 YEARS OF LUKAS GRAHAM

D: René Sascha Johannsen | Denmark | 77 min

Danish band Lukas Graham has an uncanny ability of setting audacious goals and achieving them, but after scoring a hit with "7 Years," Grammy nominations and a world tour, success and fame may have them changing their tune.

ALL LIGHT, EVERYWHERE

D: Theo Anthony | USA | 109 min **CC**

Exploring the connections between technology, vision and power, this Sundance prize winner offers an illuminating investigation of ever-increasing surveillance technologies, exposing the complexities of objectivity and the biases inherent in both human perception and the camera lens.

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

D: Daniel Andreas Sager | Germany | 90 min

For the first time, cameras embed with the German investigative unit that broke the explosive Panama Papers story, following the journalists' pursuit of the truth behind the political assassination of a Maltese reporter and yet another history-making financial scandal.

WORLD PREMIERE

COME BACK ANYTIME

D: John Daschbach | Japan | 81 min

Experience a year in the life of a self-taught Japanese ramen master, who considers his legendary noodle shop more than just a livelihood but his life, and his die-hard customers more than just regulars, but true friends.

SPECIAL SCREENING

CRACK: COCAINE, CORRUPTION & CONSPIRACY

D: Stanley Nelson | USA | 90 min **CC**

A cheap, powerful drug emerges during a recession, igniting a moral panic fueled by racism. Acclaimed filmmaker Stanley Nelson explores the complex history of crack in the 1980s.

WORLD PREMIERE

THE DEATH OF MY TWO FATHERS

D: Sol Guy | USA, Canada | 84 min **CC**

A man turns the experience of watching videotapes that his terminally ill father recorded into an unforgettable contemplation of race, death and the importance of family, composed as a letter to his own children.



ALL LIGHT, EVERYWHERE



THE DEATH OF MY TWO FATHERS



7 YEARS OF LUKAS GRAHAM

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

DIRTY TRICKS



MISHA AND THE WOLVES



HOMEROOM



REBEL HEARTS



MAU

WORLD PREMIERE

DIRTY TRICKS

D: Daniel Sivan | Israel | 100 min

At the elite level, bridge—the world's most popular card game—has become a million-dollar cut-throat business. When the best competitive player is accused of cheating, the ensuing scandal confounds experts, criminal science, celebrities and basic belief in this hilarious true-crime thriller.

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

HOMEROOM

D: Peter Nicks | USA | 90 min

The resilience and optimism of Oakland High School's 2020 senior class is captured in verité footage and social media videos as they confront anxieties over test scores, growing demands for social justice and the unprecedented uncertainty of a rapidly spreading pandemic.

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

HYSTERICAL

D: Andrea Nevins | USA | 88 min

Hysterical is a backstage pass into the lives of the hilarious, boundary-breaking women shattering stand-up comedy's glass ceiling. Featuring Margaret Cho, Fortune Feimster, Marina Franklin, Nikki Glaser, Jessica Kirson, Iliza Shlesinger, Sherri Shepherd and more. Premiering on FX Canada this summer.

IN THE SAME BREATH

D: Nanfu Wang | USA, China | 95 min

Nanfu Wang's (director of *One Child Nation*, Sundance's Grand Jury Prize winner) searing investigation into COVID-19's origins and spread exposes not only a global crisis of misinformation, but the leadership that misled the world about a still-unfolding emergency.

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

MAU

D: Benji Bergmann, Jono Bergmann | Austria, USA | 76 min

Revolutionary Canadian designer Bruce Mau reveals truths that have shaped his long and expansive career, from designing sustainable platforms to social movements. His way of seeing could be just what's needed in this critical time in history.

* *Big Ideas Series selection, p. 7*

MISHA AND THE WOLVES

D: Sam Hobkinson | UK, Belgium | 88 min

Misha Defonseca's 1997 Holocaust memoir about escaping the Nazis as a seven-year-old girl on foot across Europe with a pack of wolves took the world by storm. But when Hollywood comes knocking, an even more audacious story and darker deceptions come to light.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

NIKE'S BIG BET

D: Paul Kemp | Canada | 80 min 

Alberto Salazar was a coaching legend until his recent doping ban shocked the running world. Did his "Just Do It" attitude and questionable practices push the limits of human performance and technology too far?

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

PLAYING WITH SHARKS

D: Sally Aitken | Australia | 91 min 

From filming *Jaws*' near-lethal live scenes to saving a great white with her bare hands, underwater filmmaking legend Valerie Taylor faces her biggest challenge yet: fighting to conserve the world's remaining sharks.

** Big Ideas Series selection, p. 7*

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

REBEL HEARTS

D: Pedro Kos | USA | 103 min 

A group of pioneering nuns in 1960s Los Angeles stood up to the patriarchy in such revolutionary ways, demanding pay cheques, marching on Selma and making political pop art, they would change Catholicism and the face of faith forever.

THE RETURN: LIFE AFTER ISIS

D: Alba Sotorra Clua | Spain, UK | 90 min

This provocative doc reveals the deeper stories that drove several women to uproot their lives in the West and join ISIS in Syria. Now, infamous and reviled in the media, they yearn for absolution and the homelands that bar their return.

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

ROCKFIELD: THE STUDIO ON THE FARM

D: Hannah Berryman | UK | 91 min

Featuring candid interviews with rock legends Robert Plant, Ozzy Osbourne and Liam Gallagher, this is the unlikely tale of how two Welsh brothers turned their dairy farm into one of the most successful recording studios of all time.

SPECIAL SCREENING

THE ROSSELLINIS

D: Alessandro Rossellini | Italy, Latvia | 90 min

In this fascinating look inside a complicated cinema dynasty, the eldest grandson of Roberto Rossellini, one of the greatest filmmakers of all time, picks up the camera for himself and explores his family history.

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

STREET GANG: HOW WE GOT TO SESAME STREET

D: Marilyn Agrelo | USA | 107 min 

Featuring exclusive behind-the-scenes footage, this inspiring journey takes us inside the minds and hearts of *Sesame Street* creators, artists, writers and educators, who together established one of the most influential and enduring children's programs in television history.

** Big Ideas Series selection, p. 7*

SUBJECTS OF DESIRE

D: Jennifer Holness | Canada | 103 min 

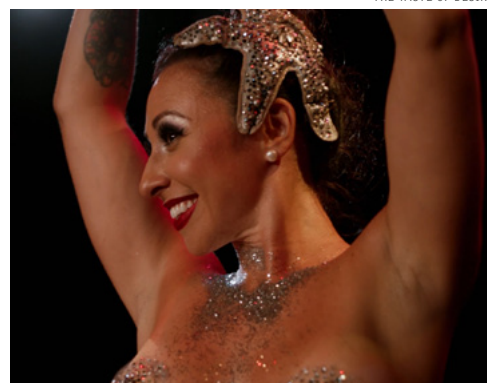
A much-needed deconstruction of race and the power of beauty, this thought-provoking doc lifts up the experiences of Black women in a moment when beauty standards are undergoing a cultural shift towards embracing Black aesthetics and features.

** Big Ideas Series selection, p. 7*

THE RETURN: LIFE AFTER ISIS



THE TASTE OF DESIRE



PLAYING WITH SHARKS



ROCKFIELD: THE STUDIO ON THE FARM

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS



THROUGH THE NIGHT



WHO WE ARE: A CHRONICLE OF RACISM IN AMERICA



WUHAN WUHAN

WORLD PREMIERE

THE TASTE OF DESIRE

D: Willemiek Kluijfhout | Netherlands | 87 min

In this poetic trip around the world, the oyster acts as metaphor for life's passions and frustrations, linking stories of a New York burlesque dancer, French Michelin-starred chefs, a Swedish oyster diver, a Japanese pearl maker and a terminally ill English psychologist.

THROUGH THE NIGHT

D: Loira Limbal | USA | 72 min

Working multiple jobs, desperate to make ends meet for their families, two New York mothers drop off their children at a 24-hour daycare centre run by a woman that binds the neighbourhood together.

WORLD PREMIERE

VIRAL

D: Udi Nir, Sagi Bornstein | Germany, Israel | 75 min

Seven young people from across the world were innocently uploading shiny bright 2020 plans when "virus" started trending. Over a year's worth of real-time posts and massive reality checks chart their innocent optimism and surprising resilience to a global change no one saw coming.

WE ARE AS GODS

D: David Alvarado, Jason Sussberg | USA | 95 min

Environmental iconoclast Stewart Brand believes re-engineering woolly mammoth DNA and "de-extinction science" could reverse climate change. Is he an oracle envisioning a brave new world or will his controversial views cement him as eco-pariah?

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

WEWORK: OR THE MAKING AND BREAKING OF A \$47 BILLION UNICORN

D: Jed Rothstein | USA | 101 min

Utilizing interviews with journalists, experts, high-ranking former employees and former members, *WeWork: Or the Making and Breaking of a \$47 Billion Unicorn* explores the rise and fall of one of the biggest corporate flameouts and venture capitalist bubbles in recent years—the story of WeWork, and its hippie-messianic leader Adam Neumann.

* *Big Ideas Series selection, p. 7*

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

WHO WE ARE: A CHRONICLE OF RACISM IN AMERICA

D: Emily Kunstler, Sarah Kunstler | USA | 117 min

Interweaving lecture and personal anecdotes, ACLU deputy legal director Jeffery Robinson draws a stark timeline of anti-Black racism in the United States, from slavery to the modern myth of post-racial America.

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

WITH DRAWN ARMS

D: Glenn Kaino, Afshin Shahidi | USA, Mexico | 84 min

When track star Tommie Smith and his teammate raised black-gloved fists at the 1968 Summer Olympics, their defiant gesture would reverberate through generations of civil rights activists. Fifty years on, the full breadth of his impact—and depth of his sacrifice—is revealed as America still reckons with racial injustice.

WORLD PREMIERE

WUHAN WUHAN

D: Yung Chang | USA, Canada | 90 min

With unprecedented access to Wuhan, China, at the peak of the pandemic lockdown, award-winning director Yung Chang looks beyond statistics and headlines to reveal the emotions and resilience at the core of our shared humanity.



CANADIAN SPECTRUM


FEATURE FILMS IN JURIED COMPETITION

Sponsored by TVO

ZO REKEN

OPENING NIGHT FILM WORLD PREMIERE

A.RTIFICIAL I.MMORTALITY

D: Ann Shin | Canada | 74 min 

If computers could let you live forever, would you? When our minds and memories can be digitized, self-help guru Deepak Chopra and leading robotics engineers envision virtual clones that don't need a body to survive.

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

ARCHIPELAGO

D: Félix Dufour-Laperrière | Canada | 72 min

Evocative animation brings the landscape to life in this experimental exploration of the historic Saint Lawrence River and its famous thousand islands. Fluidly superimposed images mingle with performed dialogue to navigate the boundaries of cinema.

CANADIAN SPECTRUM SHORTS PROGRAM 1: STORIES OF GROWTH AND LEARNING

Reflecting on the inherent wisdom of our bodies, our families and our environment, these stories reveal how moments of profound growth happen when we honour the people and places that existed before us.

HEART BERRY

D: Kijātai-Alexandra Veillette-Cheezo | Canada | 3 min

WALKING WITH PLANTS

D: Trevor Dixon Bennett, Leigh Joseph | Canada | 24 min

REMEMBRANCE OF JÓZSEF ROMVÁRI

D: Sophy Romvari | Canada | 8 min

FOUR DAYS AT THE NATIONAL PRESERVATION CENTRE

D: Andrew Bateman, Lindsay Fitzgerald, Sean Stiller | Canada | 15 min

UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

D: Tiffany Hsiung | Canada | 28 min

CANADIAN SPECTRUM SHORTS PROGRAM 2: BODIES RELEASE

A mix of stories meditating on death, tradition and community care show us the countless ways we continue to survive, thrive and find joy in everyday acts of self-affirmation.

ROCKIN' THE COFFIN

D: Cailleah Scott-Grimes | Canada | 9 min

NUDE TO ME

D: Daniel Berish | Canada | 20 min

HAIR

D: Dominique Basi | Canada | 4 min

THE HAIRDRESSER

D: Lorraine Price | Canada | 13 min

MATHILDE AND THE LOVE ROOM

D: Chantal Limoges | Canada | 18 min

JONTAE

D: Siam Obregon, Kyana Lyne | Canada | 8 min



A.RTIFICIAL I.MMORTALITY



HELL OR CLEAN WATER



ARCHIPELAGO

CANADIAN SPECTRUM



SOMEONE LIKE ME



KÍMMAPIIYIPITSSINI: THE MEANING OF EMPATHY

WORLD PREMIERE

DROPSTONES

D: Caitlin Durlak | Canada | 57 min

After leaving an abusive husband, Sonya returns to Newfoundland's stunning but remote Fogo Island with her two sons, determined to raise them to be good men in the only place she knows how, despite having fled from it years before.

Screening with
INTO LIGHT

D: Sheona McDonald | Canada | 19 min

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

THE GIG IS UP

D: Shannon Walsh | Canada, France | 88 min

App developers lured a massive labour force by promising flexible hours with no offices or bosses—but with gig workers from Uber, Amazon, Lyft and more in front of the camera, the human cost of disruption runs deep.

WORLD PREMIERE

GREY ROADS

D: Jesse McCracken | Canada | 74 min

A Toronto filmmaker returns to his declining hometown to reconnect with his father and grandfather, the two men who have shaped his life. Beautifully shot in black and white, this tender film captures a rural town and family in flux.

WORLD PREMIERE

HELL OR CLEAN WATER

D: Cody Westman | Canada | 88 min

A diver devotes himself to cleaning up the ocean floors in Newfoundland's harbours, one tire at a time. As he edges closer to financial ruin in his effort to save the planet, his good deeds don't go unnoticed.

WORLD PREMIERE

KÍMMAPIIYIPITSSINI: THE MEANING OF EMPATHY

D: Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers | Canada | 125 min

Since 2014, the opioid crisis has claimed hundreds of lives on the Kainai First Nation in Alberta. Inspiring and urgent, this unflinching chronicle captures a community's efforts to heal by cultivating empathy through harm reduction.

WORLD PREMIERE

MY TREE

D: Jason Sherman | Canada | 105 min

In 1975, Jason Sherman received a tree for his bar mitzvah, planted in Israel in his name. Forty years later, he decides to look for that tree and along the way discovers many uncomfortable truths stemming from his gift.

WORLD PREMIERE

ONE OF OURS

D: Yasmine Mathurin | Canada | 88 min

After a Haitian-born youth is racially profiled at an Indigenous basketball tournament, he wrestles with his shaken sense of belonging in his Indigenous adoptive family while attempting to heal from his past.

WORLD PREMIERE

SOMEONE LIKE ME

D: Sean Horlor, Steve J. Adams | Canada | 80 min

After 11 strangers band together to help a queer youth escape to Vancouver from life-threatening violence in Uganda, the unexpected pandemic and conflicting opinions over his best interests test the limits of their commitment and jeopardize his fresh start.

WORLD PREMIERE

SPIRIT TO SOAR

D: Tanya Talaga, Michelle Derosier | Canada | 46 min

Following up on her groundbreaking and award-winning book *Seven Fallen Feathers*, journalist Tanya Talaga returns to Thunder Bay to see if anything has changed since the inquest into the deaths of seven First Nations high school students.

Screening with

MARY TWO-AXE EARLEY: I AM INDIAN AGAIN

D: Courtney Montour | Canada | 34 min

WORLD PREMIERE

STILL MAX

D: Katherine Knight | Canada | 79 min

Facing a cancer diagnosis, multidisciplinary artist Max Dean asks, "How do we fix ourselves?" Discarded animatronic figures from a decommissioned Ontario Place attraction and wild imagination drive this vivid journey of resilience and creativity in the face of illness.

WORLD PREMIERE

ZO REKEN

D: Emanuel Licha | Canada | 86 min

In Port-au-Prince, various citizens are shuttled through a city in crisis. Maneuvering around demonstrations and barricades, they speak candidly about the grim realities of colonialism, international aid and 11 years of unkept promises after the earthquake.



INTERNATIONAL SPECTRUM

FILMS IN JURIED COMPETITION

Supported by the Donner Canadian Foundation

SONGS THAT FLOOD THE RIVER

WORLD PREMIERE

ANY GIVEN DAY

D: Margaret Byrne | USA | 93 min

A filmmaker with mental illness follows three defendants through a specialized mental health probation program. While sharing their rarely seen struggles, she faces her own challenges, making clear just how precarious the ties between people with mental illness, their families and society can be.

WORLD PREMIERE

GAUCHO AMERICANO

D: Nicolás Molina | Chile | 75 min

When two Chilean gauchos of different generations leave to pursue their cowboy dreams on an Idaho ranch, a humorous and touching tale of clashing cultures unfolds when they must adapt their expectations to the realities of North American agri-business and lifestyles.

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

OSTROV – LOST ISLAND

D: Svetlana Rodina, Laurent Stoop | Switzerland | 91 min

Abandoned after the USSR's fall, denizens of a once-vibrant fishing village in the Caspian Sea turn to poaching to survive. While some faithfully await Putin's promises of Russia's return to greatness, others dream of a more prosperous future beyond the confines of the island's shores.

WORLD PREMIERE

FOUR SEASONS IN A DAY

D: Annabel Verbeke | Belgium, Norway, Croatia | 77 min

As a ferry shuttles tourists and locals between British-controlled Northern Ireland and EU member Ireland, cameras eavesdrop on their frank conversations about the new/old border in this delightfully politics-free Brexit critique.

WORLD PREMIERE

MAGALUF GHOST TOWN

D: Miguel Ángel Blanca | Spain, France | 90 min

Every summer, a peaceful Spanish beach town explodes into a hellscape of budget European holidaymakers. Veering between horror story and fairy tale, tourists and locals navigate the daily tensions of risky behaviour, palpable excitement and genuine pleasure.

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

PEOPLE WE COME ACROSS

D: Mia Halme | Finland | 79 min

When 700 helpful Finnish tourists arrive in Benin to assist in a tropical disease vaccine study that could save the lives of millions of children, a unique cultural exchange reveals how humans can help and harm with the best of intentions.



FOUR SEASONS IN ONE DAY



GAUCHO AMERICANO

INTERNATIONAL SPECTRUM

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

SCHOOL OF HOPE

D: Mohamed El Aboudi | Finland, France, Morocco
| 78 min

Suffering from an extended drought caused by the climate crisis despite their own tiny carbon footprint, Morocco's Oulad Boukais tribe establishes a school to ensure their children's future, and combats isolation and desertification with optimism, dignity and education.

WORLD PREMIERE

THE SILENCE OF THE MOLE

D: Anaïs Taracena | Guatemala | 93 min

This gripping political mystery unravels how a courageous 1970s journalist dubbed "The Mole" risked his life to infiltrate Guatemala's government and uncover the truths behind one of the most violent and repressive periods in the country's history.

WORLD PREMIERE

SONGS THAT FLOOD THE RIVER

D: Germán Arango | Colombia | 72 min

As a child, Oneida sang traditional chants to guide the dead to the realm of souls. Now, after over two decades of brutal conflict along Colombia's Pacific coast, her songs become a plea for peace in this hypnotic tale.

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

THRESHOLD

D: Coraci Ruiz | Brazil | 77 min

Following the gender transition of her adolescent son over three years, the filmmaker crafts a beautiful and compassionate look at his deep search for identity and her own growth away from old paradigms, fears and prejudices.

THRESHOLD



SCHOOL OF HOPE



THE SILENCE OF THE MOLE



PEOPLE WE COME ACROSS



THE COLONEL'S STRAY DOGS

WORLD SHOWCASE

Sponsored by CBC Gem

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

ALL-IN

D: Volkan Üce | Belgium, Netherlands, France | 80 min

Fresh from the village, two new hires at an all-inclusive resort on the Turkish Riviera are confronted with the absurd excesses of tourism. Their eagerness to engage quickly turns to indifference—and eventually self-interest—after one too many guest complaints and foam parties.

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

BECOMING

D: Isabel Vaca | Mexico | 63 min

Coming of age in rural Mexico, an introspective 11-year-old boy spends his summer raising fighting bulls and dreaming of emulating the cowboys in his family, while dreading the start of school and pining for his distant father in America.

Screening with

SNOWY

D: Kaitlyn Schwalje, Alex Wolf Lewis | USA | 13 min

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

BETWEEN US

D: Dorota Proba | Poland, Canada | 53 min

An affair, a secret, a relationship on the verge of melting down—a simple box of cards posing questions on love sends three Polish couples on a deeply personal journey that unravels both tender and difficult truths.


Screening with

THE DOLL

D: Elahe Esmaili | Iran | 33 min

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

THE BIG SCARY "S" WORD

D: Yael Bridge | USA | 90 min 

A former Marine works as a Lyft driver and a single mother teaches in a public school. Finding themselves broke, in debt and questioning the capitalist status quo, they turn to socialism, seeking solutions to problems larger than themselves.

WORLD PREMIERE

BLUE BOX

D: Michal Weits | Canada, Israel | 79 min

The Jewish National Fund's Blue Boxes were a global fundraiser to purchase land in Israel. Weaving a co-founder's diary entries with his descendants' memories, *Blue Box* investigates the myths that constructed a national icon.

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

CHILDREN

D: Ada Ushpiz | Israel | 132 min

This observational doc captures a neighbourhood in Palestine, where courageous young girls influenced by three generations of tumultuous occupation come of age learning how to protect their family's land, rights and values.



THE BIG SCARY "S" WORD



ALL-IN

WORLD SHOWCASE



DEAR FUTURE CHILDREN



HOLY BREAD

WORLD PREMIERE

THE COLONEL'S STRAY DOGS

D: Khalid Shamis | South Africa, Libya, Qatar | 73 min

Recounting his father's dangerous life as an exile in London with a million-dollar bounty on his head, the director questions the cost of his decades-long opposition to Muammar Gaddafi and eventual return to an unrecognizable Libya on the brink of civil war.

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

DAUGHTER OF A LOST BIRD

D: Brooke Pepion Swaney | USA | 66 min

The impacts of transracial Indigenous adoption are revealed in the moving story of a young Indigenous mother seeking connection with her Lummi community, heritage and biological mother, who, as a child, was also an adoptee.

Screening with

THE TRAIN STATION

D: Lyana Patrick | Canada | 2 min

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

DEAR ELNAZ

D: Mania Akbari | Canada | 86 min

When Iranian forces shot down a Ukraine International Airlines passenger flight, Javad lost the love of his life. Now, picking up the pieces in Canada, where they moved only years prior, he shares memories of his late wife Elnaz and rages in the face of a grave injustice.

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

DEAR FUTURE CHILDREN

D: Franz Böhm | Germany, UK, Austria | 89 min

Fighting for social justice in Chile, democracy in Hong Kong and the environment in Uganda, three young women cope with the staggering personal impact of frontline activism, weighing their own fear of failure and the price of resistance in pursuit of change.

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

DESCENT

D: Nays Baghai | Australia | 65 min

Free diver Kiki Bosch takes us on breathtaking journeys into sub-zero waters, from the iceberg fjords of Greenland to the frozen lakes of Finland, pushing the limits of human endurance as she heals from the trauma of sexual assault.

Screening with

DIGGING FOR LIFE

D: João Queiroga | Cameroon, Qatar, Portugal, USA | 15 min

HOLY BREAD

D: Rahim Zabihi | Iran | 54 min

Shot over nine years, this harrowing doc exposes the plight of Kurdish kulbars, who smuggle back-breaking loads into Iran each day, braving extreme terrain and temperatures and the looming threat of violence from border guards, all to support their families.

Screening with

LOAD CYCLE

D: Daniel Martínez-Quintanilla | Canada, Peru | 6 min

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

IMAD'S CHILDHOOD

D: Zahavi Sanjavi | Sweden, Latvia, Iraq | 78 min

After nearly three years in ISIS captivity, a five-year-old Yazidi boy, abused and profoundly brainwashed, is reunited with his family—but displays only hatred for his mother and the world around him. Can he ever become the sweet child they remember?

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

LAST DAYS AT SEA

D: Venice Atienza | Philippines | 73 min

In an idyllic Philippine fishing village where catches are shared and breathtaking sunsets mark the days, the filmmaker befriends a young boy and captures memories of home during the last days of summer before he must leave for school in the city.

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

THE LAST FOREST

D: Luiz Bolognesi | Brazil | 76 min

Shaman and activist Davi Kopenawa Yanomami leads this cinematically rich documentary, weaving beautifully realized sequences of traditional stories with the ongoing struggles the Yanomami people face as they fight to preserve the Amazon.

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

THE LAST SHELTER

D: Ousmane Zoromé Samassékou | France, Mali, South Africa | 85 min

Weary refugees from Burkina Faso, Togo and Benin, in search of promising futures, stop over at the House of Migrants in Mali, where staff offer basic necessities, warm beds and legal advice for their long journeys ahead.

WORLD PREMIERE

LIFE OF IVANNA

D: Renato Borrayo Serrano | Russia, Norway, Finland, Estonia | 80 min

Seeking a fresh start from an abusive husband and increasingly difficult way of life, Ivanna, a young Nenets mother, quits the harsh Russian Arctic tundra and traditions of her nomadic people for the city, where she struggles to gain control of her life and future.

WORLD SHOWCASE

LOVE IT WAS NOT

D: Maya Sarfaty | Israel, Austria | 86 min

Fascinating witness accounts and meticulous research investigate the unfathomable relationship between a beautiful Jewish prisoner and an SS officer at Auschwitz. Thirty years later, the truth comes for them both at his 1972 war crimes trial.

WORLD PREMIERE

MY MOHAMED IS DIFFERENT

D: Ines Marzouk | Egypt, Tunisia, Italy | 70 min

Recently retired European women flock to Luxor, Egypt, in search of sun, sand and love from local men interested in money and security, in a modern love story that blurs the boundaries between romantic and business affairs.

WORLD PREMIERE

NEIGHBOURING THE MOON

D: Reza Farahmand | Canada, Iran, Syria | 75 min

In this lyrical coming-of-age story, two teenage girls take refuge with their mother in a cramped room inside an Aleppo hospital through the war, its aftermath and now a pandemic. But spirited Juli has awakened to its reality as a prison and dreams only of a life beyond.

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE


NOTHING BUT THE SUN

D: Arami Ullón | Switzerland, Paraguay | 75 min

Attempting to reconstruct the lived memory of his people, Mateo Sobode Chiqueno has traversed the desolate Paraguayan Chaco for decades to record others of the Ayoreo people, who lived free in the vast forest until colonization forced them from their land and dismantled their culture.

WORLD PREMIERE

A ONCE AND FUTURE PEACE

D: Eric Daniel Metzgar | USA | 95 min 

Through animated and live-action sequences, the failings of the criminal justice system are exposed and a more transformative approach through restorative justice and the Peacemaking Circle movement, which originated in the Yukon with First Nations Elders, is offered.

WORLD PREMIERE

ONLY I CAN HEAR

D: Itaru Matsui | Japan, Canada | 52 min 

Inhabiting an in-between world where their hearing is both a gift and a curse, children of deaf parents share their struggles and joys and band together against a culture that privileges the spoken word.

Screening with

THE VOICE BREAK CHOIR

D: Ina Holmqvist, Martina Carlstedt | Sweden | 29 min

RED HEAVEN

D: Lauren DeFilippo, Katherine Gorringer | USA | 84 min 

Offering a fascinating glimpse of a possible future, six people sign up for a year-long NASA experiment that has them living in an isolated habitat meant to simulate what life and society would be like on Mars.

WORLD PREMIERE

THE SAILOR

D: Lucia Kasova | Slovakia | 80 min 

After a life of freewheeling adventure spent sailing all over the world, Paul Johnson, now 80 with a frail body, a litre of vodka and a broken sailboat, contemplates his life and the cost of fulfilling an uncompromising dream.

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

SECRETS FROM PUTUMAYO

D: Aurélio Michiles | Brazil | 83 min

In 1910, Roger Casement, British consul in Brazil, investigated atrocities against Indigenous Amazonians, his journals capturing a harrowing picture of their enslavement and murder by the rubber industry. Through his words, their plight is traced all the way to their current struggle for self-determination.

LOVE IT WAS NOT



A ONCE AND FUTURE PEACE



RED HEAVEN

WORLD SHOWCASE

WORLD SHOWCASE SHORTS
PROGRAM 1: LOOK DON'T TOUCH

A selection of short films that spy, surveil and see things most miss. Whether it's a song on social media, a wolf caught on CCTV or an organism dancing under a microscope, the truth only expands with magnification.

HELP, I'VE GONE VIRAL!

D: Audun Amundsen, Petter Heggen | Norway, Indonesia | 20 min

DON'T HESITATE TO COME FOR
A VISIT, MOM

D: Anna Artemyeva | Belgium, Hungary, Portugal, Russia | 13 min

ANTELOPES

D: Maxime Martinot | France | 8 min

NAYA

D: Sebastian Mulder | Netherlands | 25 min

WOLF WHISPERS

D: Chloé Belloc | France | 24 min

THE PROBLEM OF THE HYDRA

D: Maija Tammi | Finland | 10 min


WORLD SHOWCASE SHORTS
PROGRAM 2: THE SCHOOL OF LIFE

Kids learn life lessons on the playground and in the classroom, through their friends and first-time experiences, in this quartet of cinematic initiations. Love and acceptance, remote learning and leaving the nest are all firsts that shape who we become and how we see the world.

JOYCHILD

D: Aurora Brachman | USA | 6 min 

THE SCHOOL BY THE SEA

D: Solveig Melkeraaen | Norway | 30 min 

AUDIBLE

D: Matt Ogens | USA | 39 min 

GOODBYE TORNIO

D: Emilia Hernesniemi | Finland | 15 min 

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

SILENT VOICE

D: Reka Valerik | France, Belgium | 51 min

Fleeing Chechnya and his homophobic brother's tyranny, a young gay MMA fighter finds himself adrift in Brussels. Struck mute by trauma, he struggles to build a new identity against the chilling backdrop of voicemails from home.

Screening with

LET MY BODY SPEAK

D: Madonna Adib | Lebanon, UK | 11 min

WORLD PREMIERE

SUNNY

D: Ketí Machavariani | Georgia | 64 min

An intrepid social researcher goes door-to-door in Tbilisi, popping controversial questions on topics such as sexuality, minority rights and nationalism on unsuspecting residents. As surprising conversations are sparked, she weighs out the hopes and fears of her fellow citizens.

Screening with

SQUIRREL WARS

D: Jill Morley | USA | 9 min



SUNNY



SECRETS FROM PUTUMAYO



WRITING WITH FIRE

WORLD SHOWCASE

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

VICENTA

D: Darío Doria | Argentina | 69 min

When Vicenta discovers her young, disabled daughter is pregnant as a result of rape, she overcomes overwhelming odds to wage the battle of her life, despite illiteracy and extreme poverty: a flashpoint case against Argentina's restrictive abortion laws that reaches the UN.

WRITING WITH FIRE

D: Rintu Thomas, Sushmit Ghosh | India | 93 min

In 2016, India's only newspaper run by Dalit women, the lowest social caste, goes digital. Armed with smartphones and sheer courage, these journalists rewrite the rules at work and at home of what it means to be powerful in Mother India.

WORLD PREMIERE

ZUHUR'S DAUGHTERS

D: Laurentia Genske, Robin Humboldt | Germany | 89 min

After escaping the war in Syria, a family learns to negotiate their new lives in Germany. But when the siblings begin to explore their transgender identities within their newfound freedom, their parents push back hard as they cling to strict religious and cultural ideologies.



MADE IN COLOMBIA

Presented in partnership with PROCOLOMBIA and ProimágenesColombia

BETWEEN FIRE AND WATER

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

BETWEEN FIRE AND WATER

D: Viviana Gómez Echeverry, Anton Wenzel | Colombia | 92 min

Adopted as a baby by a Quillasinga Nation family, Afro-Colombian Camilo grows up facing racism and ostracization by his Indigenous community, propelling him on a spiritual journey to discover his origins and the truth about his mother.

WORLD PREMIERE

ON THE OTHER SIDE

D: Iván Guarnizo | Colombia, Spain | 83 min

Seeking the truth behind his late mother's two years in FARC-EP captivity, the director and his brother pore over her journals to map out an extraordinarily perilous journey through Colombia's jungles and mountains, retracing her path to confront her captors.

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

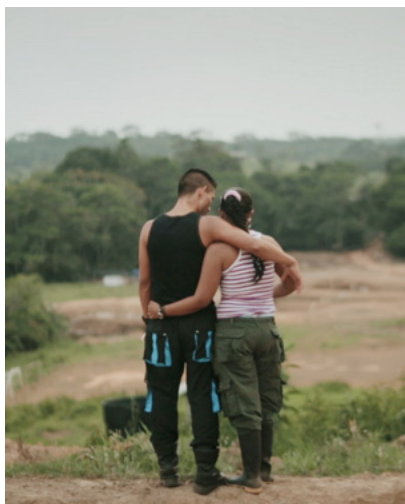
OPTION ZERO

D: Marcel Beltrán | Cuba, Brazil, Colombia | 80 min

When Obama abruptly ends the "wet feet, dry feet" policy aimed at expediting residency for Cuban nationals, hundreds of Cubans, who risked their lives to get to the US, are now left homeless in a migratory limbo in Panama.



ON THE OTHER SIDE



REBEL LOVE

WORLD PREMIERE

REBEL LOVE

D: Alejandro Bernal | Colombia, Canada, Brazil | 77 min

Their relationship forbidden while in ranks of the FARC-EP, two Colombian rebels have a chance at a fresh start for their young love after the peace accords. But new daily demands, estranged families and fears for their safety burden their burgeoning life together.

This event has been financially assisted by the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund of the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, administered by the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund Corporation.

Made possible by the support of PROCOLOMBIA.



THE NEW PLASTIC ROAD

THE CHANGING FACE OF EUROPE

Presented in partnership with European Film Promotion (EFP)

A BLACK JESUS

D: Luca Lucchesi | Germany | 92 min

At the height of Italy's migrant crisis, a tiny Sicilian town received over a thousand asylum seekers. But when an African refugee volunteers to carry the hallowed Jesus statue in the village's annual procession, traditional Christian values must reckon with new social realities.

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE EATNAMEAMET – OUR SILENT STRUGGLE

D: Suvi West | Finland | 74 min

The colonization of Sámi lands by Finland was an historic crime, and decolonization today is the only remedy. From demanding truth and reconciliation hearings to debating self-determination rights, this portrait of Sámi multi-front activism maps a blueprint of resistance.

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE FAITH AND BRANKO

D: Catherine Harte | Serbia, UK | 82 min

United by their passion for Roma music, cosmopolitan Faith and shy, sweet Branko marry on a whim—but their unlikely love story begins to crack as their clashing cultural values and lifestyles slowly tear them apart.



EATNAMEAMET – OUR SILENT STRUGGLE



A BLACK JESUS



FAITH AND BRANKO

THE CHANGING FACE OF EUROPE

RAISE THE BAR



A MARRIAGE



TAMING THE GARDEN



SEYRAN ATEŞ: SEX, REVOLUTION AND ISLAM

WORLD PREMIERE

A MARRIAGE

D: Kateřina Hager, Asad Faruqi (co-director) | Czech Republic, USA | 74 min

When Zdenka in the Czech Republic falls in love online with Tabish in Pakistan, they marry—but five years later, Czech immigration still refuses him entry. With humour and grit, the couple must prove “real love” to a government and themselves.

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

MOLECULES

D: Andrea Segre | Italy | 68 min

In February 2020, filmmaker Andrea Segre was locked down in Venice, his late father's hometown. Emptied of all distractions, the city and a grieving son confront the fragilities of their foundations, finding extraordinary beauty in the powerful presence of absence.

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

THE NEW PLASTIC ROAD

D: Myrto Papadopoulos, Angelos Tsaousis | Greece, Germany | 66 min

In 2004, China reopened Silk Road trading routes with former impoverished Soviet states like Tajikistan. One hard-working man discovers the unexpected costs of trading with a global economic giant.

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

RAISE THE BAR

D: Gudjon Ragnarsson | Iceland, Finland | 70 min 

How controversial can one basketball team of eight-year-olds be? With an unorthodox coach and training method, a tight-knit group of empowered Icelandic girls demand to play against boys and call time out on patriarchy.

SEYRAN ATEŞ: SEX, REVOLUTION AND ISLAM

D: Nefise Özkal Lorentzen | Norway | 81 min

A bullet to the neck, fatwas and 24-hour police protection are just part of being one of Europe's first female imams. When Seyran Ateş opens Germany's first liberal mosque, radical change meets modern Islam.

TAMING THE GARDEN

D: Salomé Jashi | Switzerland, Germany, Georgia | 91 min

Why dig up 15-storey-tall, hundred-year-old trees in Georgia to replant them in a mysterious private garden on the Black Sea? This fascinating glimpse at a powerful man's staggering whim is simply too strange not to be seen.

WORLD PREMIERE

WELCOME TO SPAIN

D: Juan Antonio Moreno Amador | Spain | 92 min

When Seville's last brothel is repurposed into a refugee reception centre, cameras move in to capture the newcomers' impressions of Spanish life. With 1970s style and satire, the migrant crisis comes into a refreshingly human focus.



ARTSCAPES

CREATIVE MINDS, ARTISTIC PURSUITS
& INVENTIVE FILMMAKING

Sponsored by Go RVing Canada

MAN IN THE FIELD: THE LIFE AND ART OF JIM DENEVAN

ARTSCAPES SHORTS PROGRAM

RAT TAIL

D: Chad Sogas | USA | 15 min

WE WERE THERE TO BE THERE

D: Jason Willis, Mike Plante | USA | 25 min

RECORDER QUEEN

D: Sophie Raymond | Australia | 28 min

DON'T GO TELLIN' YOUR MOMMA

D: Simon Davis, Jason Sondock, Topaz Jones | USA,
Germany, France, Italy | 36 min

A CONCERTO IS A CONVERSATION

D: Kris Bowers, Ben Proudfoot | USA | 14 min

WORLD PREMIERE

BANK JOB

D: Daniel Edelstyn, Hilary Powell | UK | 87 min 

When a mischievous filmmaking duo convinces a community to come together to create their own currency, they challenge an accepted economic system and dream up a debt-free future in which money works for us all.

WORLD PREMIERE

CEZANNE

D: Sophie Bruneau | Belgium | 61 min

In picturesque Provence, tourists and art lovers flock to the atelier of Post-Impressionist master Paul Cézanne. There, in a meditative space frozen in time, his methods and artistic legacy are not only seen, but felt.

Screening with

SHĀNZHÀI SCREENS

D: Paul Heintz | France | 23 min

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

COURAGE

D: Aliaksei Paluyan | Germany, Belarus | 90 min

During Belarus's presidential elections, three actors from a Minsk underground theatre are swept up in street protests that demand free speech and new leadership—until the movement is crushed, they're arrested and the country teeters on the brink of civil war.

FIRESTARTER – THE STORY OF BANGARRA

D: Wayne Blair, Nel Minchin | Australia | 96 min

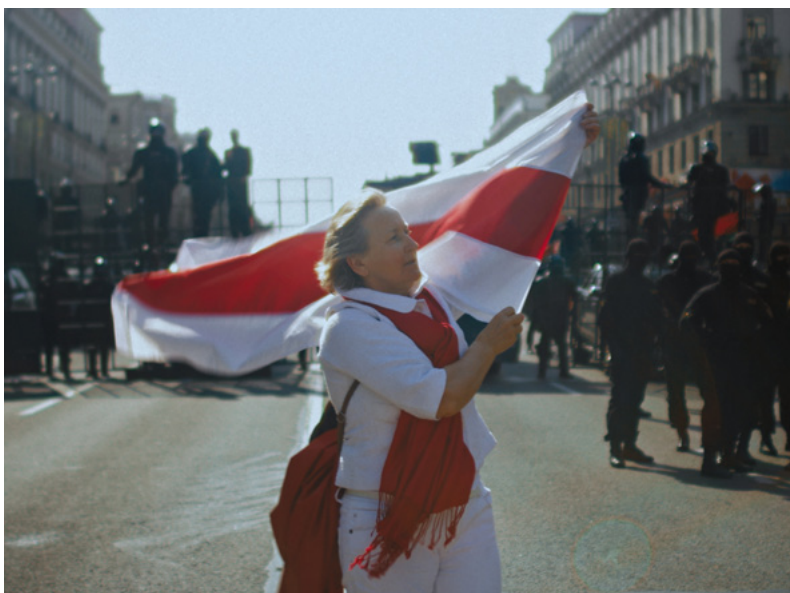
Against all odds and at great personal cost, three Aboriginal brothers turn a dance troupe into one of Australia's leading performing arts companies and forge a language in dance that speaks to the burden of intergenerational trauma and the joyful reclamation of culture.

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

GALLANT INDIES

D: Philippe Béziat | France | 108 min

On the stage of Paris's legendary Opéra Bastille, 30 dancers from non-traditional genres—hip-hop, krump, break and voguing—reprise and remix Jean-Philippe Rameau's baroque masterpiece *Les Indes galantes*, offering a dynamic take on the landmark opera.



COURAGE



FIRESTARTER – THE STORY OF BANGARRA

ARTSCAPES

IVAN'S LAND



THE MOST BEAUTIFUL BOY IN THE WORLD



I'M WANITA



THE MAN WHO PAINTS WATER DROPS

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE HIGH MAINTENANCE

D: Barak Heymann | Israel, Poland | 66 min

Dani Karavan, a cocksure Israeli artist in his 80s, sets out on a riotous journey across Europe to say farewell to his deteriorating large-scale environmental sculptures, while also contemplating a decision on the most controversial piece of his career.

Screening with

SCUM BOY

D: Allison Swank | South Africa | 17 min

WORLD PREMIERE I'M WANITA

D: Matthew Walker | Australia | 86 min 

After 25 years of hard partying and insane choices, Australia's "Queen of Honky Tonk" has burned every bridge in the business. Can she keep it together to record with a Nashville legend or will she crash her sad country song of a life for good?

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE IVAN'S LAND

D: Andrii Lysetskyi | Ukraine | 84 min

When an elderly, seemingly naïve rural painter, who enjoys singing to himself and dancing with animals, is acclaimed as Ukraine's last true folk artist, his work is exhibited in a major show in Kiev. Can fame or a corporate commission compete with the joy he finds in his land and his art?

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE MAN IN THE FIELD: THE LIFE AND ART OF JIM DENEVAN

D: Patrick Trefz | USA | 78 min 

In this graceful study of the balance between solitude and community, artist and chef Jim Denevan roams across the US, transforming landscapes into breathtaking, sustainable dining experiences framed by ephemeral installation art.

WORLD PREMIERE THE MAN WHO PAINTS WATER DROPS

D: Oan Kim, Brigitte Bouillot | France, South Korea | 79 min

When the filmmaker turns his lens on his elderly father, a renowned Korean artist, volumes are revealed about their relationship and his meditative silence and obsession with painting water drops, all rooted in the tragic past of the country he left behind.

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL BOY IN THE WORLD

D: Kristian Petri, Kristina Lindstrom | Sweden | 94 min

Anointed "the most beautiful boy in the world" by *Death in Venice* director Luchino Visconti, actor Björn Andrésen reflects on how his iconic beauty made him famous as an adolescent, catapulting him into a life of stardom and glamour, and unmade him as an adult.

ARTSCAPES

WORLD PREMIERE

NO HAY CAMINO – THERE IS NO PATH

D: Heddy Honigmann | Netherlands | 86 min

Facing terminal illness, legendary director Heddy Honigmann embarks on a self-reflective journey across the Netherlands and to her birthplace in Peru, weaving together visits to beloved places and people with moments from her most important films.

POLY STYRENE: I AM A CLICHÉ

D: Paul Sng, Celeste Bell | UK | 96 min 

The death of Anglo-Somali punk icon and X-Ray Spex frontwoman Poly Styrene sends her daughter on a journey across the world and through her mother's archives to reconcile their fraught relationship and her place in music history as a key architect of the riot grrrl and Afropunk movements.

PORTRAYAL

D: Billie Mintz | Canada | 96 min 

Haunted by a family secret revealed to him as a boy, a young man jeopardizes relationships and crosses continents to investigate the mystery behind the thousands of missing paintings his grandfather created during his lifetime.

WORLD PREMIERE

SET!

D: Scott Gawlik | USA | 105 min 

Competitive table setting? Yep, it's a thing, and it's fabulous. Seven cut-throat competitors feverishly prepare their entries for a prestigious county fair, serving up artistry, hilarity and serious frenemy vibes on a silver platter.

WORLD PREMIERE

THE STORY WON'T DIE

D: David Henry Gerson | Denmark, Germany, USA | 83 min

A rapper, tortured by Bashar Al-Assad, along with other exiled artists and performers who supported the Syrian uprising, explore resilience and resistance through art, dance and music, while also processing their trauma and love of homeland through creative expression.

WE ARE THE THOUSAND

D: Anita Rivaroli | Italy | 78 min

A thousand musicians come together to form the world's largest rock band, and go viral in the process, all in hopes of wooing the Foo Fighters to come play in their Italian town.

WORLD PREMIERE

YOU ARE THE DAYS TO COME

D: Ronja Yu | Sweden | 75 min

Travel back in time with six Chinese artists whose late-20th century creations represented the revolutionary dreams of a generation soon to be violently silenced by the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre.

POLY STYRENE: I AM A CLICHÉ



WE ARE THE THOUSAND



THE STORY WON'T DIE



LADY BUDS

PERSISTER

WOMEN SPEAKING UP AND BEING HEARD

Presented in partnership with Oxfam Canada

WORLD PREMIERE

BANGLA SURF GIRLS

D: Elizabeth D. Costa | Canada | 86 min

Three rebellious working-class teenage girls in Bangladesh escape daily hardships and stifling family lives by riding waves on their surfboards, chasing a fleeting and thrilling sense of freedom.

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

DYING TO DIVORCE

D: Chloe Fairweather | UK, Norway, Germany | 81 min

As rates of femicide and domestic abuse soar in Turkey and democratic rights for women are increasingly eroded, a lawyer and her clients bravely risk everything for their freedom by standing up to the government and putting violent men behind bars.

WORLD PREMIERE

FANNY: THE RIGHT TO ROCK

D: Bobbi Jo Hart | Canada | 92 min 

Ferocious female rockers Fanny shattered glass ceilings in the '70s, collecting fans like David Bowie before being buried in retro record bins. Fifty years later, they reunite with a new record deal and a chance to rewrite history.

FLY SO FAR

D: Celina Escher | Sweden, El Salvador | 89 min

Once accused and imprisoned for aggravated homicide for having a late-term miscarriage, Teodora Vásquez has become the spokesperson for all such victims of El Salvador's cruel anti-abortion laws, and a symbol of empowerment, resistance and solidarity.

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

FRUITS OF LABOR

D: Emily Cohen Ibañez | USA | 76 min 

Working in a food processing plant after class and in the fields on weekends, a California high school senior dreams of graduating while bearing the burden of being the family breadwinner and threats of separation as ICE raids increase in her community.

WORLD PREMIERE

LADY BUDS

D: Chris J. Russo | USA | 96 min 

From a Latinx LGBTQ activist to a Black Catholic school principal, six small businesswomen hit California's newly legal cannabis trade. But as aggressive regulations bogart the market, can they each keep their green American dream alight?



FANNY: THE RIGHT TO ROCK



DYING TO DIVORCE



FRUITS OF LABOR

PERSISTER

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

LA MADRINA: THE SAVAGE LIFE OF LORINE PADILLA

D: Raquel Cepeda | USA | 82 min

In this powerful story stretching over five decades, the former "First Lady" of the Savage Skulls gang emerges as a healer and matriarch, fiercely leading her South Bronx community through the perils of gentrification and gun violence.

WORLD PREMIERE

ONLY THE OCEAN BETWEEN US

D: Khaldiya Amer Ali, Marah Mohammad Alkhateeb, Karoli Bautista Pizarro, Christy Cauper Silvano | USA, Peru, Jordan | 82 min

Four young directors—Indigenous Shipibo filmmakers living in Lima, Peru, and Syrian filmmakers living as refugees in Jordan—share sisterhood, daily survival, displacement and first motherhood through their video letters.

PERSISTERS SHORTS PROGRAM 1: WORKFORCE

Women's work has always been ignored, underpaid and taken for granted. Domestic workers, farmers, artists, hairdressers, reindeer herders and strippers remind us that their labour is essential and that as taxpayers, voters and bosses, appreciation of their efforts may come by force.

MY GRANDMOTHER IS AN EGG

D: Wu-Ching Chang | Taiwan, UK | 8 min

A MOTHER'S BODY

D: Jonelle Twum | Sweden | 9 min

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

D: Amelie Befeldt | Germany | 20 min

SVONNI VS THE SWEDISH TAX AGENCY

D: Maria Fredriksson | Sweden | 5 min

AIN'T NO TIME FOR WOMEN

D: Sarra El Abed | Canada | 19 min

WEARABLE TRACY

D: Emily McAllister | USA | 13 min

LAST NIGHT AT THE STRIP CLUB

D: Nicole Bazuin | Canada | 12 min

PERSISTERS SHORTS PROGRAM 2

ALE LIBRE

D: Maya Cueva | USA | 17 min

THIS IS THE WAY WE RISE

D: Ciara Lacy | USA | 12 min

THE RITUAL TO BEAUTY

D: Shenny De Los Angeles, Maria Marrone | USA | 14 min

TELL ME MORE

D: Martyna Peszko | Poland | 29 min

GIRLSBOYSMIX

D: Lara Aerts, Els van Driel | Netherlands | 7 min

MY UNCLE TUDOR

D: Olga Lucovnicova | Belgium, Portugal, Hungary | 20 min

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

THE SPOKESWOMAN

D: Luciana Kaplan | Mexico | 82 min

When healer and human rights activist María de Jesús Patricio becomes the first Indigenous woman to run for president in Mexico, her revolutionary platform advocating unity and a new approach to progress becomes mired in structural racism.



FLY SO FAR



LA MADRINA: THE SAVAGE LIFE OF LORINE PADILLA



THE SPOKESWOMAN

MARKERS

FILMS THAT PUSH THE BOUNDARIES
OF THE DOCUMENTARY FORM

USERS

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

FAYA DAYI

D: Jessica Beshir | USA, Ethiopia, Qatar | 120 min

A stimulant with major cultural significance, the khat leaf is also Ethiopia's most lucrative cash crop. Weaving together lives shaped by its trade, this dreamy docudrama captures the spirit of a young generation longing for a different future overseas.

HER SOCIALIST SMILE

D: John Gianvito | USA | 93 min 

This experimental essay resurrects the political imagination of the iconic deaf-blind author Helen Keller, a passionate socialist and disability rights advocate whose radical views, while largely suppressed or sanitized over the years, remain remarkably pertinent today.

JUST A MOVEMENT

D: Vincent Meessen | Belgium, France | 110 min

West African revolutionary Omar Blondin Diop, known as the only real Marxist activist in Jean-Luc Godard's film *La Chinoise*, gets a vibrant tribute in this reimagining of the 1967 classic that explores the complex current relations between China and Africa.

MARKERS SHORTS PROGRAM

LETTER FROM EUSAPIA

D: Andrés Cornejo Pinto | Belgium, Portugal, Hungary | 19 min

INTERNATIONAL DAWN CHORUS DAY

D: John Greyson | Canada | 16 min

FIRE SEASON

D: Quinn Else | USA | 7 min

LISTEN TO THE BEAT OF OUR IMAGES

D: Audrey Jean-Baptiste, Maxime Jean-Baptiste | French Guiana, France | 15 min

VO

D: Nicolas Gourault | France | 20 min

NEW GODS

D: Loïc Hobi | Switzerland, France | 19 min

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

RIFT FINFINNEE

D: Daniel Kötter | Germany, Ethiopia | 79 min

On a journey through the periphery of Addis Ababa, engrossing architectural and landscape images provide the backdrop to a multi-voiced narrative that reveals rapid urbanization, socioeconomic disparity and the seeds of civil war.



RIFT FINFINNEE



HER SOCIALIST SMILE

This event has been financially assisted by the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund of the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, administered by the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund Corporation.

MARKERS



A RIVER RUNS, TURNS, ERASES, REPLACES



ZAHO ZAY

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

A RIVER RUNS, TURNS, ERASES, REPLACES

D: Shengze Zhu | USA | 87 min

In this gorgeous cinematic letter from the director to her hometown of Wuhan, ordinary human activities unfold against an evolving urban landscape, sculpted by nature and rising infrastructure, composing a series of surprising and poetic set pieces.

USERS

D: Natalia Almada | USA, Mexico | 81 min

Intimate in scope yet epic in scale, this meditative Sundance Award-winning essay invites us to ponder how our addiction to technology may end up changing the social fabric of humanity forever.

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

ZAHO ZAY

D: Maéva Ranaivojaona, Georg Tiller | France, Austria, Madagascar | 78 min

Blending documentary with fiction and poetry, a young female guard in an overcrowded Madagascar prison daydreams of her father, a murderer who abandoned her as a child. But when a new inmate brings news of him, her daydreams turn to nightmares.



PHILLY D.A.

WORLD PREMIERE

THE CAVIAR CONNECTION

D: Benoît Bringer | France | 104 min

How do dictatorships like Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan launder their reputations from despotic to democratic? This investigative series exposes how Lady Gaga, luxury gifts and scandalous private wealth are used to wield a new "caviar diplomacy" around the world.

PHILLY D.A.

D: Ted Passon, Yoni Brook | USA | 440 min

Civil rights attorney Larry Krasner takes injustice personally. Having sued police over 75 times for misconduct, this most unlikely candidate for Philadelphia district attorney not only wins, but upends the whole system. A groundbreaking series follows his outrageous first term.

This event has been financially assisted by the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund of the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, administered by the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund Corporation.



BAJO FUEGO (UNDER SIEGE)

SYSTEMS DOWN

CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

APART

D: Jennifer Redfearn | USA | 85 min 

In the US Midwest, plagued with opioid abuse and rising incarceration rates for women, three unforgettable mothers return home from prison to rebuild their lives after years of separation from their children.

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

BAJO FUEGO (UNDER SIEGE)

D: Sjoerd van Grootheest, Irene Vélez-Torres | Colombia | 85 min

Caught between failed government promises and an occupation by armed militias, coca growers in Colombia confront displacement and mortal threats as they expose the relentless war in their countryside and shatter illusions of a successful peace process.

WORLD PREMIERE

DEAD MAN'S SWITCH A CRYPTO MYSTERY

D: Sheona McDonald | Canada | 78 min 

A riveting cryptocurrency thriller unravels the story of a Canadian blockchain wizard who mysteriously died on his honeymoon in India and the fate of his investors' \$200 million. Did it vanish into the digital void or does it remain locked away in password-protected accounts?

Screening with
JOBS FOR ALL!

D: Axel Danielson, Maximilien Van Aertryck | Sweden | 14 min 

WORLD PREMIERE

THE FACE OF ANONYMOUS

D: Gary Lang | Canada | 87 min

This timely portrait of 21st century activism follows Commander X, an iconic and divisive figure in the "hacktivist" network who spends his days dodging authorities across North America while surfing the web and surviving the streets.

WORLD PREMIERE

FACELESS

D: Jennifer Ngo | Hong Kong, USA, Canada | 82 min

Following four youth embroiled in protests against a controversial extradition bill, this immersive record bears witness to Hong Kong's collective awakening in 2019 to the larger fight against anti-authoritarianism to protect their freedom and democratic way of life.



APART



THE FACE OF ANONYMOUS

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SYSTEMS DOWN



GENERATION UTØYA



SIEGED: THE PRESS VS. DENIALISM



ROOM WITHOUT A VIEW

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

GENERATION UTØYA

D: Aslaug Holm, Sigve Endresen | Norway | 99 min

Four female survivors of the 2011 terror attack in Utøya, Norway, remain true to the social democratic values for which they were targeted, transforming their trauma into strength in their fight for inclusivity and against rising right-wing extremism in parliament.

WORLD PREMIERE

IT IS NOT OVER YET

D: Louise Detlefsen | Denmark | 94 min

Inspired by Florence Nightingale's methods from 150 years ago, a small Danish retirement home deploys a controversial new treatment for dementia patients. With hugs, conversation, eye contact and cake, they shift the focus from pharmaceuticals to care.

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

ROOM WITHOUT A VIEW

D: Roser Corella | Austria, Germany | 73 min

Migrant domestic workers from Africa and Southeast Asia hired under the Kafala system are targeted and exploited with broad impunity by employers and agents in Lebanon, in this chilling consideration of modern-day slavery.

SYSTEMS DOWN SHORTS PROGRAM

A GAME OF THREE HALVES: WHERE THE F%*CK IS HAMISH?

D: Matthew Bate, Case Jernigan | Australia, USA | 5 min

PRECIOUS BUNDLE

D: Kim Head | UK | 13 min

THE PERFECT PICTURE

D: Hala El Kouch | Lebanon | 31 min

AN UNINTERRUPTED VIEW OF THE SEA

D: Mika Yatsuhashi | Canada, USA | 16 min

TESTIMONY OF ANA

D: Sachin Dheeraj Mudigonda | India | 24 min

THE WHITE DEATH OF THE BLACK WIZARD

D: Rodrigo Ribeiro | Brazil | 11 min

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

SIEGED: THE PRESS VS. DENIALISM

D: Caio Cavechini | Brazil | 116 min

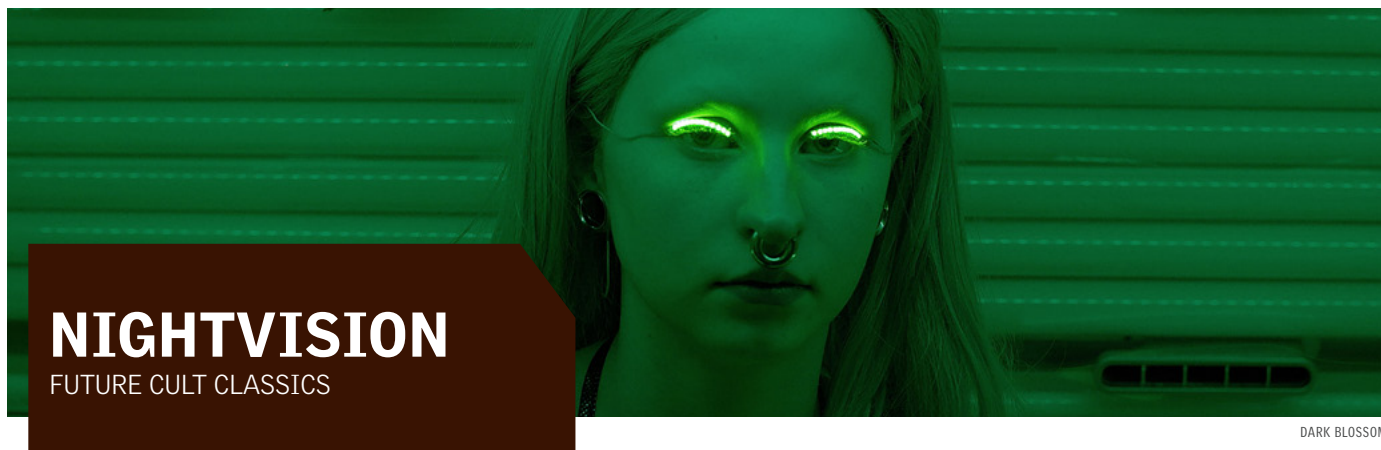
As Brazil's COVID-19 death toll soars, President Bolsonaro unleashes a relentless media campaign of misinformation, undermining the efforts of journalists desperate to inform a nation during the darkest months of the pandemic.

WORLD PREMIERE

YOU ARE NOT A SOLDIER

D: Maria Carolina Telles, Aleksei Abib (co-director) | Brazil | 110 min


To understand her father's death, director Maria Carolina Telles creates a portrait of the award-winning war photographer André Liohn—a man whose struggles to survive grief drive him away from his children and into some of the world's most notorious conflict zones.



DARK BLOSSOM

WORLD PREMIERE

ACTS OF LOVE

D: Isidore Bethel, Francis Leplay | France, USA | 71 min 

When his older boyfriend loses interest in him, a filmmaker relocates to Chicago and uses dating apps to cast new lovers in an amorphous project about romantic attraction, compatibility and attachment that his mother hates.

WORLD PREMIERE

BLOOM UP – A SWINGER COUPLE STORY

D: Mauro Russo Rouge | Italy | 88 min

An average middle-aged Italian couple by day, Hermes and Betta live out their unbridled sexual fantasies as swingers by night. With an unfiltered lens, this cinematic beauty plunges you deep into their world and the most intimate spaces of sex and love.

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

DARK BLOSSOM

D: Frigge Fri | Denmark | 80 min

A tight-knit trio of Danish Goths express their darkness through macabre make-up and fashion, and channel a shared fascination with death to combat loneliness and inner demons. But when rosy romantic love blooms, will it break their bond?

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

LOST BOYS

D: Joonas Neuvonen, Sadri Cetinkaya | Finland | 99 min

The director scours his footage and claustrophobic hotel rooms, seeking answers to the mysterious disappearance of two friends after they smoke and smash their way through bar girls and drugs in an endless bender through Bangkok and Phnom Penh.

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

CANNON ARM AND THE ARCADE QUEST

D: Mads Hedegaard | Denmark | 97 min

With the heroic outsiders and dreamers at Bip Bip Bar cheering him on, Kim Cannon Arm attempts a world record by playing the 80s arcade game Gyruss for 100 hours straight in this quirky comedy about friendship.



CANNON ARM AND THE ARCADE QUEST



LOST BOYS

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For more information contact Robin Mirsky, Executive Director, at (416) 935-2526.

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**Application deadlines for the Rogers Cable Network Fund are
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MAKE IT REAL

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IS NOW

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