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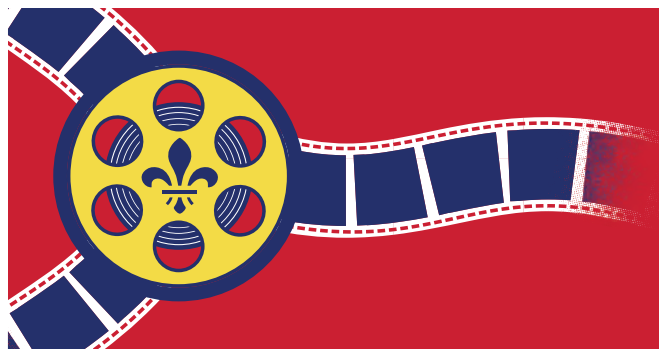


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Because of the Covid-19 health crisis, the **29th Annual Whitaker St. Louis International Film Festival** will be presented virtually in 2020.

This [short video](#) provides more information on CSL's decision to move all of its 2020 festivals and events online.

CSL is partnering with [Eventive](#), which also handles our ticketing, to present the virtual festival.

Although many elements of this year's Whitaker St. Louis International Film Festival will remain familiar to longtime supporters, the fest is obviously not unspooling in its usual fashion. Here are the key elements of the virtual festival:

- **PROGRAM AVAILABILITY:** The majority of SLIFF's lineup of features and shorts programs will be available to view on demand anytime from Nov. 5-22. Eighteen films will have a more limited window of availability (e.g., 24 hours, 48 hour, 7 days) and have a defined date range for access. That information is noted in each film's listing, but complete information on those films can be found in the Time-Limited Events section.
- **WATCH WINDOW:** Once a ticket-holder begins watching a program, access to it remains available for 48 hours. (The one exception is the film "The Dark Divide," which has a watch window of 8 hours.)
- **GEO-RESTRICTIONS:** Please note that access to most SLIFF programs will be restricted to Missouri and Illinois, but select programs are available either in the full U.S. or throughout the world. Check the listing for the film or program on the [SLIFF](#) section of the CSL website or on the [Eventive Virtual Festival Catalog](#) to determine whether it's available in your area.
- **LIVESTREAMS:** Special Events (opening-night event, closing-night awards presentation, New Filmmakers Forum roundtable, and master classes) will be offered as livestreams at specific times/dates.
- **Q&As:** Although no guests can attend the festival, recorded Q&As with filmmakers and/or documentary subjects will accompany many of the programs.

Full information on access, including system requirements, is found in the [Virtual Fest FAQ](#).

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

TICKET & PASS INFORMATION

TICKET PRICES

Individual tickets are \$10 for general admission, \$8 for Cinema St. Louis members and students with valid and current photo IDs. (There will be a credit-card/handling fee of \$1.50 for all tickets.) To obtain a student discount code, contact Brian Spath (brian@cinemastlouis.org) and provide an image of a currently valid student ID.

In addition to paid shows, SLIFF offers 57 free programs.

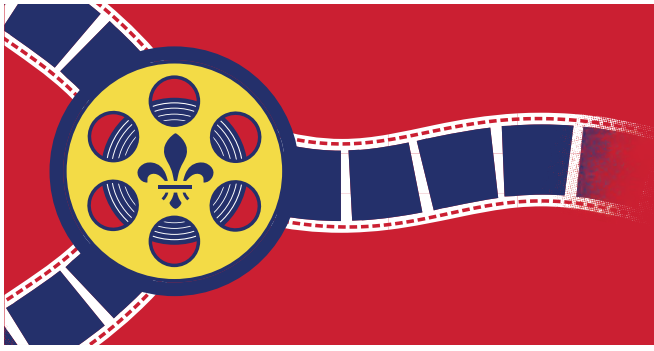
PASS PRICES

Three forms of passes are available:

- **5-Film Passes** are \$45, \$35 for CSL members. (There will be a credit-card/handling fee of \$3.34 for the \$45 pass and \$2.83 for the \$35 member pass.)
- **10-Film Passes** are \$85, \$75 for CSL members. (There will be a credit-card/handling fee of \$5.40 for the \$85 pass and \$4.89 for the \$75 member pass.)
- **All-Access Passes** are \$150, \$125 for CSL members. (There will be a credit-card/handling fee of \$8.74 for the \$150 pass and \$7.46 for the \$125 member pass.)

CONTRIBUTIONS

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



TIME-LIMITED *events*



Thou Shall Not Hate



Dramarama



Asia

The majority of SLIFF's lineup of features and shorts programs will be available to view on demand anytime from Nov. 5-22.

Twenty films will have a more limited window of availability (e.g., 24 hours, 48 hours, 7 days) and have a defined date range for access.

Special Events (opening-night event, closing-night awards presentation, New Filmmakers Forum roundtable, and master classes) will be offered as livestreams at specific times/dates.

Below is a list of all time-limited special events and films:

SPECIAL EVENTS AVAILABLE ONLY AT SPECIFIC TIMES/DATES

Thursday, Nov. 5, 7:30 PM: Opening-Night Event: 8:46 with Q&A with Dave Chappelle

Saturday, Nov. 7, 4 PM: Master Class: Editing with Karen Pearlman

Sunday, Nov. 8, 1 PM: Master Class: Microbudget Filmmaking with Blake Eckard and Kristian Day

Saturday, Nov. 14, 1 PM: Master Class: Directing with Ken Kwapis

Sunday, Nov. 15, 1 PM: Master Class: Behind the Camera with Rachel Reichman

Saturday, Nov. 21, 11 AM: New Filmmakers Forum Roundtable

Saturday, Nov. 21, 1 PM: Master Class: Screenwriting with Beau Willimon

Sunday, Nov. 22, 1 PM: Master Class: Documentary Filmmaking with Anne de Mare and Jeff Truesdell

Sunday, Nov. 22, 7:30 PM: Closing-Night Awards Presentation

FILMS AVAILABLE ONLY DURING SPECIFIC TIME WINDOWS

The following 20 films have limited time windows of availability:

Nov. 5-11: Transhood

Nov. 5-12: Fish & Men

Nov. 5-15: The Reunited States

Nov. 6: 9to5

Nov. 6-8: Asia and The Crossing

Nov. 6-8, 13-15, and 20-22: Dramarama

Nov. 8, 15, and 22: The Dark Divide

Nov. 9-15: 9,75 and Mayor

Nov. 13-15: Here We Are, On Broadway, and The Sign Painter

Nov. 15-22: And I Was There

Nov. 16-22: Lights of Baltimore, Omar and Us, and Paper Spiders

Nov. 20-22: Sapelo and Thou Shalt Not Hate

Nov. 21-22: Zappa



Proud to support local filmmakers through Master Classes and the annual Essy Award.

The Chellappa-Vedavalli Foundation is dedicated to promoting global understanding and alleviating poverty through arts education and entrepreneurship.

Learn more at facebook.com/Chellappa-Vedavalli-Foundation.

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Centre Francophone at Webster University

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

Contact info: *Salim Ayoub, Ph.D., Jane and Bruce Robert Endowed Professor, Director of the Centre Francophone, Dept. Global Languages, Cultures & Societies, Webster University | 314-246-8619 | francophone@webster.edu*



Alliance Française de St. Louis

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

Contact info: *314-432-0734 | alliancestl.org*



American Association of Teachers of French

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

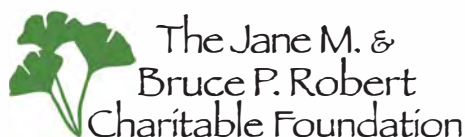
Contact info: *Audra Merfeld-Langston, President | frenchteachers.org*



Les Amis ("The Friends")

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

Contact info: *616-882-5946 | les-amis.org*



Cinema St. Louis offers French programming at the annual Robert Classic French Film Festival and the Robert French and French-Language Focus at the Whitaker St. Louis International Film Festival (Nov. 5-22, 2020).

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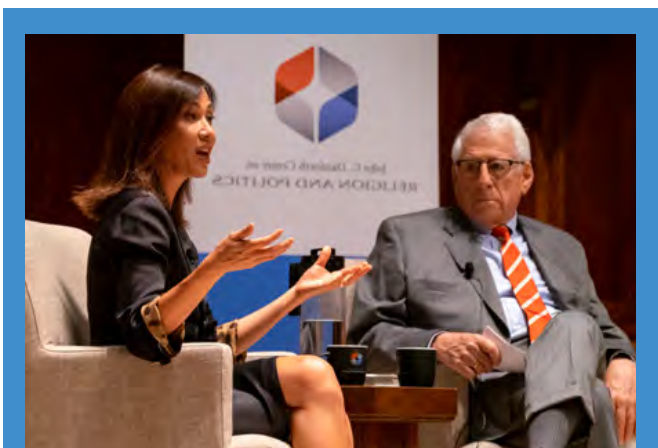
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Cinema at Citygarden.

Call for Entries

Cash Prizes

First Place: **\$1,500**

Second Place: **\$1,000**

Third Place: **\$500**

Submission Deadline: April 9, 2021

The sixth edition of Cinema at Citygarden – a biennial co-presentation of Cinema St. Louis (CSL) and the Gateway Foundation – invites St. Louis-area filmmakers to let their imaginations blossom by creating short works that incorporate **Nature** as a key element.



GATEWAY FOUNDATION

Among the most beloved public spaces in St. Louis, Citygarden is a two-block oasis of plants and trees, water and internationally renowned sculpture in the heart of downtown's Gateway Mall. Opened in 2009, the garden is free and open to the public 365 days a year. It's been a hit since the day it opened, and the garden continues to attract visitors from all over the St. Louis area, the nation, and the world with its blend of beauty and serenity and fun. In 2011, it received one of the nation's most prestigious honors in urban planning, the Urban Land Institute's Amanda Burden Urban Open Space Award.

The video wall, on which the competition works will play, is set within a limestone wall that arcs across two blocks.

For more information about Citygarden, visit citygardenstl.org. For more information about Cinema St. Louis, visit cinemastlouis.org. For additional information about Cinema at Citygarden, contact CSL executive director Cliff Froehlich at 314-289-4151 or cliff@cinemastlouis.org.



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8:46

Kenneth S. Powell III

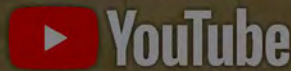
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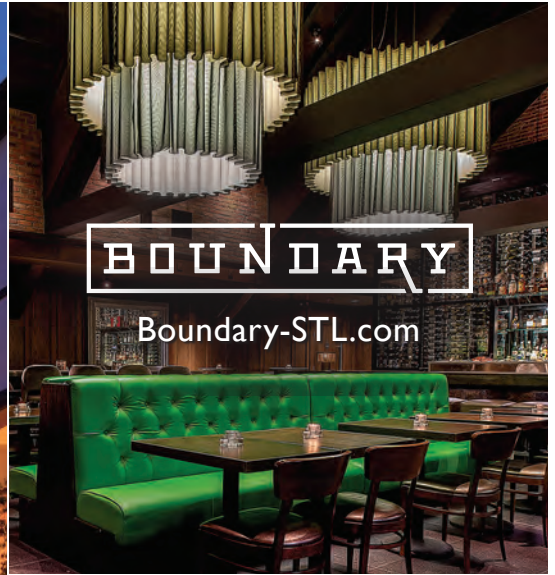
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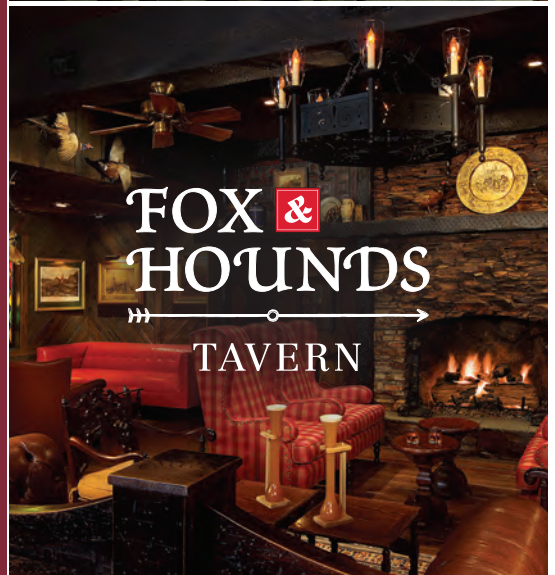
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As a member of Cinema St. Louis, you'll receive an array of year-round benefits and perks, including a discount off the regular admission to all Cinema St. Louis programs. In 2020, that's a savings of \$2 off our regular admission price.

2020 Virtual Festivals

- Classic French Film Festival | July 17-23
- QFest: LGBTQ Film Festival | June 19-28
- St. Louis Filmmakers Showcase | July 10-19
- Golden Anniversaries: Films of 1970 | Aug. - Oct. 2020
- St. Louis International Film Festival (SLIFF) | Nov. 5 - 22

You can both help support our efforts and receive significant benefits by becoming a Cinema St. Louis member.

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"The stories we tell each other matter. The images we consume matter. Cinema should reflect us all."

- Ava DuVernay

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The department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at Washington University offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean.

EALC supports a variety of event programming that is free and open to the public. For information on current events, visit ealc.wustl.edu/events, write to ealc@wustl.edu or call 314.935.4448.

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Dave Chappelle

The 29th Annual Whitaker St. Louis International Film Festival (SLIFF), an annual presentation of the nonprofit Cinema St. Louis (CSL), continues to provide the opportunity for St. Louis filmgoers to view the finest in world cinema — international films, documentaries, American indies, and shorts that can only be seen at the festival.

Although many elements of the fest will remain familiar to longtime supporters, SLIFF will obviously not be able to take place in its usual fashion.

Because of the Covid-19 health crisis, SLIFF will be presented virtually in 2020. This [short video](#) provides more information on CSL's decision to move all of its 2020 festivals and events online. CSL is partnering with [Eventive](#), which also handles our ticketing, to present the virtual festival.

This year's festival kicks off with a free opening-night special event featuring the short "8:46" — which records a powerful performance by comedian Dave Chappelle in response to the killing of George Floyd — and a live conversation with Chappelle and the film's Oscar-winning directors, Steven Bognar and Julia Reichert.

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

THE DIVIDED CITY

SLIFF's The Divided City program focuses on the racial divide in St. Louis and other U.S. cities. The program also offers an international perspective with "Lost Lives" and "Mayor." The program is supported by The Divided City: An Urban Humanities Initiative, an initiative of Washington U.'s Center for the Humanities that addresses one of the most persistent and vexing issues in urban studies: segregation.

Sponsored by the Center for the Humanities at Washington University

FREE PROGRAMS

SLIFF continues its tradition of offering a large selection of free events to maximize its outreach into the community and to make the festival affordable to all. In addition, for the 17th year, we present the Georgia Frontiere Cinema for Students Program, which provides free screenings to St. Louis-area schools.

Among this year's 56 free programs are the following: all programs in The Divided City and Human Rights Spotlight; 17 of the 21 programs in Race in America: The Black Experience; three special-event livestreams; six master classes (and four film supplements to those classes); 12 documentary-shorts programs; and two family-film shorts programs.

See the Free Events section for full details.



“Somewhere Between New York and LA,” see ***Master Class: Microbudget Filmmaking with Blake Eckard and Kristian Day*** in ***Special Events***

“Plastic,” see ***Master Class: Editing with Karen Pearlman*** in ***Special Events***

GEORGIA FRONTIERE CINEMA FOR STUDENTS PROGRAM

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

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

HUMAN RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT

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

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

MASTER CLASSES

SLIFF provides six free master classes. See the Special Events section for full information.

**Co-presented by Webster University Film Series
Sponsored by the Chellappa-Vedavalli Foundation**

NEW FILMMAKERS FORUM

The New Filmmakers Forum (NFF), a juried competition of works by first-time feature filmmakers, is an annual highlight of SLIFF. The featured films this year are “Easy-Bake,” “Killing Eleanor,” “The Last Rafter,” “A Shot Through the Wall,” and “Small Time,” and the filmmakers will participate in a free roundtable discussion. The screenings and roundtable are hosted by the Missouri Film Office’s Andrea Sporcic Klund. The NFF Emerging Filmmaker Award — nicknamed the Bobbie in honor of the late Bobbie Lautenschlager, NFF’s longtime curator — is presented at SLIFF’s Closing-Night Awards Presentation.

Sponsored by Barry & Jackie Albrecht and Pat Scallet



"Sonnie," see Doc Shorts: The Black Experience in Shorts

RACE IN AMERICA: THE BLACK EXPERIENCE

Because the 2014 uprising in Ferguson continues to resonate in St. Louis and the country, SLIFF again offers a large number of programs organized under the title Race in America: The Black Experience. To maximize accessibility and promote dialogue, 17 of the 21 programs in Race in America are offered for free, including the opening-night special event featuring the short "8:46" and a livestreamed conversation with comedian Dave Chappelle and directors Steven Bognar and Julia Reichert.

Sponsored by Engagedly

SHOW-ME CINEMA

Films made in St. Louis and Missouri or by current and former St. Louisans and Missourians are an annual focus of SLIFF. This year's lineup of Show-Me Cinema is especially strong, featuring 24 programs.

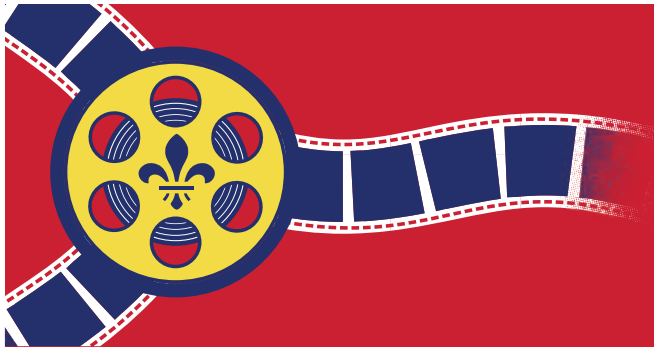
Sponsored by the Missouri Division of Tourism and Missouri Film Office

SLIFF/KIDS FAMILY FILMS

Cinema St. Louis presents a selection of five family programs, including two free collections of shorts.



"o28." see SLIFF/Kids Family Shorts 2 in Shorts



FREE events

SLIFF continues its tradition of offering a large selection of free events to maximize its outreach into the community and to make the festival affordable to all. This year, we offer **56 free events**, which are detailed below.

Among the free offerings: all programs in The Divided City and Human Rights Spotlight; 17 of the 21 programs in Race in America: The Black Experience; three special-event livestreams; six master classes (and four film supplements to those classes); 12 documentary-shorts programs; and two family-film shorts programs.

In addition, for the 17th year, we present the **Georgia Frontiere Cinema for Students Program**, which provides free access to film programs to St. Louis-area elementary, middle, and high schools. For more information, visit the [Cinema for Students](#) section of the CSL website.

SPECIAL EVENTS

LIVESTREAMS

Opening-Night Event: 8:46 with Q&A with Dave Chappelle (7:30 PM Thursday, Nov. 5)

New Filmmakers Forum Roundtable (11 AM Saturday, Nov. 21)

Closing-Night Awards Presentation (7:30 PM Sunday, Nov. 22)

MASTER CLASSES

Master Class: Editing with Karen Pearlman (4 PM Saturday, Nov. 7)

Master Class: Microbudget Filmmaking with Blake Eckard and Kristian Day (1 PM Sunday, Nov. 8)

Master Class: Directing with Ken Kwapis (1 PM Saturday, Nov. 14)

Master Class: Behind the Camera with Rachel Reichman (1 PM Sunday, Nov. 15)

Master Class: Screenwriting with Beau Willimon (1 PM Saturday, Nov. 21)

Master Class: Documentary Filmmaking with Anne de Mare and Jeff Truesdell (1 PM Sunday, Nov. 22)

MASTER CLASS SUPPLEMENTS

#ThisEditingLife

The Films of Rachel Reichman

The Girl with the Rivet Gun

Somewhere Between New York and LA

FEATURE FILMS

Aggie

And I Was There

The Annotated Field Guide of Ulysses S. Grant

Ask No Questions

The Ballad of John Henry

Cachada: The Opportunity

City So Real

Cured

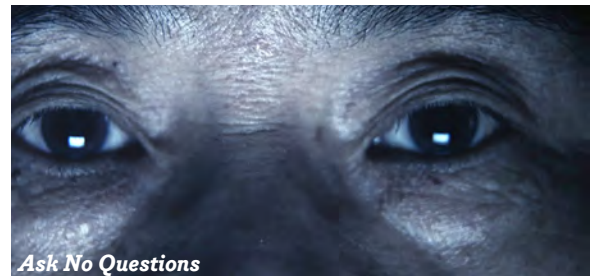
Fish & Men

For the Love of Rutland

Hamtramck, USA

Lights of Baltimore

Lost Lives



Ask No Questions

Mayor

Opeka

Our Gorongosa

The Place That Makes Us

A Place to Breathe

The Rabbi Goes West

The Reunited States

River City Drumbeat

The Road Up

Sapelo

The Sit-In: Harry Belafonte Hosts "The Tonight Show"

Transhood

Unapologetic

Waging Change

Wake Up

Women in Blue

SHORTS PROGRAMS

Doc Shorts: Animals & Nature

Doc Shorts: Behind the Bars

Doc Shorts: The Black Experience

Doc Shorts: Family Matters

Doc Shorts: Immigrants & Refugees

Doc Shorts: Life Animated

Doc Shorts: Making Music

Doc Shorts: Method M

Doc Shorts: Queer Stories

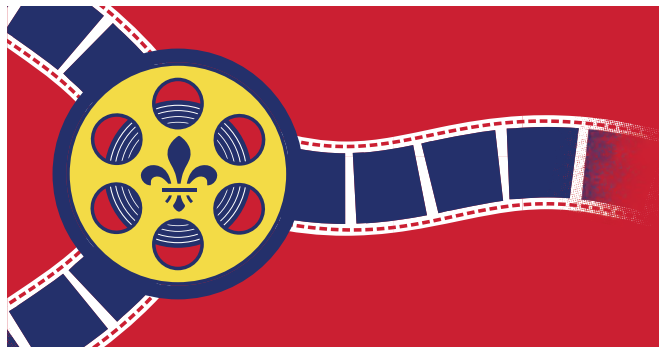
Doc Shorts: Showcase Sampler

Doc Shorts: Stars of the '70s

Doc Shorts: Women's World

SLIFF/Kids Family Films 1

SLIFF/Kids Family Films 2



SLIFF 2020 awards

AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARDS

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

BEST FILM AWARD

LEON AWARD FOR BEST DOCUMENTARY

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

TV5MONDE AWARD FOR BEST INTERNATIONAL FILM

In addition to SLIFF's annual audience awards, the fest is partnering with the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality to present a new award. Attendees of the organization's virtual conference, which coincides with SLIFF, have viewed the three films — "Cured," "The Dilemma of Desire," and "Transhood" — in the program that SSSS is co-presenting with the fest. They have voted on the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality Documentary Film Award, which is accompanied by a \$500 cash prize.

SOCIETY FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF SEXUALITY DOCUMENTARY FILM AWARD

Sponsored by Zoe Dawn Peterson and Brian Woodman

JURIED COMPETITION AWARDS

ESSY AWARD FOR BEST ST. LOUIS FILM

Sponsored by the Chellappa-Vedavalli Foundation

SLIFF inaugurates a new juried competition at this year's festival: The Essy Award, which honors a work — short or feature — either made in St. Louis or by a filmmaker with ties to the area. The award is accompanied by a \$500 prize underwritten by the Chellappa-Vedavalli Foundation.

FILMS: *33 and Counting, 46 Years, Always Coming Back, America's Last Little Italy, The Annotated Field Guide of Ulysses S. Grant, Are You Alright?, Augustus, The Ballad of John Henry,*



The Black Artists' Group, Dear Leo, Descend, Diary of a Teenage Zealot, Driving Louise, Easy-Bake, Encounters, Flannery, For Ismet, For Plant's Sake, Green Cheese Moon, Growing for Good, The Hat, The Honest Work of Farming, The King and the Pawn, The Lineman, Momma's Boy, Natchez, Not Suitable, On Task, One Brick Shy: Episode One, One Cold Morning, The Oratorio, Orville + Bob, Queen of Hearts, Taboo Teaching, Test Pattern, Thoughts and Prayers, A Threat to Justice, Tin Box, Turf Nation, Underground, Valley Relics, Wake Up, Within the Silence, Zappa

The jury is **Diane Carson**, former professor of film at St. Louis Community College at Meramec, longtime film critic for the Riverfront Times and KDHX, and co-director of "Other People's Footage"; **Jody Mitori**, former A&E editor of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and director



of development and communication for the True/False film fest, and current managing editor in the Office of Strategic Communications and Marketing for the University of Missouri-Columbia; **Jack Snyder**, director of the narrative features “Ghost Image” and “Fatal Call” and the TV movie “Family of Lies”; **Andrew Wyatt**, editor of and film critic for Cinema St. Louis’ The Lens film blog; and **Sam Zvibleman**, co-creator, co-writer, and director of Hulu’s “PEN15.”

INTERFAITH AWARDS

Juries give Interfaith Awards to both a documentary and a narrative, choosing from among eight films in each category, which were selected for their artistic merit; contribution to the understanding of the human condition; and recognition of ethical, social, and spiritual values. The selected films:

DOCUMENTARIES: *Ask No Questions*, *Hamtramck*, *USA*, *Opeka*, *The Oratorio*, *A Place to Breathe*, *The Rabbi Goes West*, *The Reunited States*, *Wake Up*

NARRATIVES: *9,75*, *Here We Are*, *I Am You*, *My Name Is Sara*, *Oligase*, *Omar and Us*, *Papicha*, *There Is No Evil*

The documentary jury is **Delcia Corlew**, **Janet Herrmann**, **Bruce MacKenzie**, **Pier Marton**, **Dr. Phil Moy**, **Sandra Olmsted**, and **Pat Scallet**.

The narrative jury is **Greg Hoeltzel**, **Jane Hoeltzel**, **Paul Marsh**, **Pier Marton**, **Alma Merabet**, **Sandra Olmsted**, **Saruul Purev**, and **Joya Uraizee**.

NFF EMERGING DIRECTOR AWARD: THE BOBBIE

The New Filmmakers Forum (NFF) annually presents the Emerging Director Award. Five works by first-time feature filmmakers compete for the prize, which includes a

\$500 cash award. The selected films:

NFF FILMS: *Easy-Bake*, *Killing Eleanor*, *The Last Rafter*, *A Shot Through the Wall*, *Small Time*

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

The NFF jury is **David Edelstein** (head), contributor to “CBS Sunday Morning” and former film critic for New York magazine, NPR’s “Fresh Air,” Slate, New York Post, Village Voice, and Boston Phoenix; **Catherine Dudley-Rose**, director of “Parallel Chords” (NFF competitor at SLIFF 2018); **Andy Friedenberg**, founder and director of the Cinema Society of San Diego; **Cait Lore**, contributor to Cinema St. Louis’ The Lens film blog; and **Calvin Wilson**, theater critic and former film critic for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

SHORTS AWARDS

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

Best of Fest

Best Animated Short

Best Documentary Short

Best International Short

Best Live Action Short

Best Local Short

Best Short Short (less than 5 minutes)

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



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

The narrative-shorts jury is **Chris Aaron**, filmmaker and assistant professor of film and animation at Webster University; **Lindsay Berkebile**, a stop-motion animator and director for Adult Swim and projects such as “Robot Chicken,” “Super Mansion,” “Crossing Swords,” and “Psycho Psalms”; **Britta Buescher**, a member of Women in Animation and a creative director specializing in the development of original animated content; **Alexandra “Alex” Mitchell**, shorts programmer and interim film competition director at Austin Film Festival and former CSL intern; **Colin O’Brien**, theater, festival, and concert producer; **Brad Schiff**, head of animation at LAIKA (“Coraline,” “ParaNorman,” “The Missing Link”) and Oscar nominee for “Kubo and the Two Strings”; **Kenya Vaughn**, journalist, film critic, and St. Louis American contributing editor; **Keith Watson**, attorney, film critic, and co-owner of Arkadin Cinema & Bar.

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

SPOTLIGHT ON INSPIRATION
DOCUMENTARY AWARD

Sponsored by The Albrecht Family

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

FILMS: *The Black Artists’ Group, For the Love of Rutland, Opeka, The Place That Makes Us, The Reunited States, Revival, The Road Up, Waging Change*

The jury is **Barry Albrecht**, partner with the Bodley Group and director of the Albrecht Family Foundation; **Kayla McCulloch**, contributor to Cinema St. Louis’ The Lens film blog; **Joshua Ray**, contributor to Cinema St. Louis’ The Lens film blog; **Orlando Thompson**, filmmaker and SLIFF documentary-shorts programmer; **Wilmetta Toliver-Diallo**, assistant dean in the College of Arts & Sciences, senior lecturer in African and African-American Studies, and coordinator of the African Film Festival at Washington University.

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

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

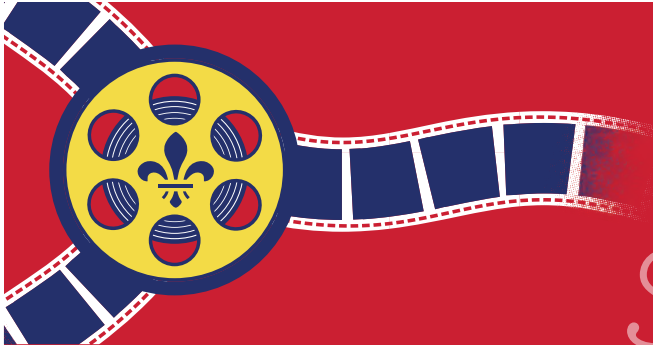
DOCUMENTARIES: *9to5, Cured, The Dilemma of Desire, Finding Yingying, MLK/FBI, Queen of Hearts, River City Drumbeat, Unapologetic*

NARRATIVES: *Aleksi, Beasts Clawing at Straws, Coming Home Again, The Invisible Witness, La Nave, The Night of the Beast, Nina Wu, Test Pattern*

The documentary jury is **Lynn Venhaus** (chair), Webster-Kirkwood Times and KTRS; **Robert Hunt**, Riverfront Times; and **Carl Middleman**, KTRS.

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





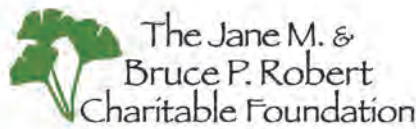
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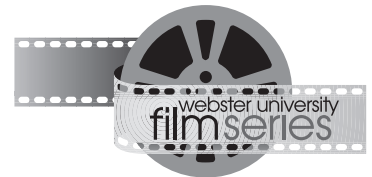
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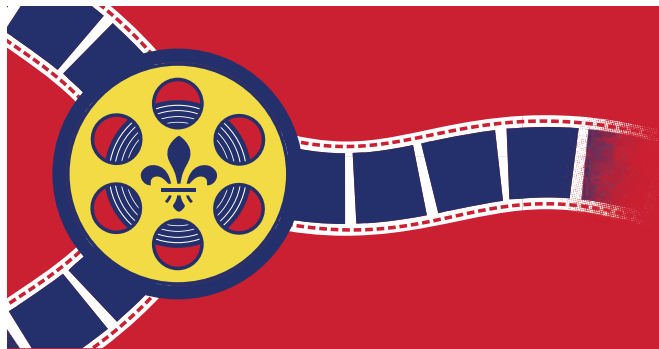
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James Harrison	Shawn Krause	Daniel Neman	Chris Sagovac	Jeff Truesdell
Ray Hartmann	Ken Kwapis	Colin O'Brien	Judee & Richard Sauget	John Tucci
Rachel Hatfield	Julie Lally	Tom O'Keefe	Pat Scallet	Jim Tudor
Paul Hibbard	Mel Lambert	Sandra Olmsted	Brad Schiff	Andy Uhrich
Robert T. Herrera	Jeremy Laskey	Robert O'Loughlin	AJ Schnack	Emily Underwood
Janet Herrmann	Novotny Lawrence	Tom Oyer	Becca Schock	Joya Uraizee
Greg Hoeltzel	Janet & Rob Levy	Matt Pace	Ben Scholle	Ledy VanKavage
Jane Hoeltzel	LaShana Lewis	Madalyn Painter	Ben Schwartz	Kenya Vaughn
Brian Hohlfeld	Barbara Liebmann	Kathy Parks	Steph Scupham	Honna Veerkamp
Art Holiday	Sean Logan	Michael Tilly Parks	Timothy J. Sexton	Lynn Venhaus
Joe Holleman	Cait Lore	Jean-Louis Pautrot	Brien Seyle	Pat Vogelsang
Jennifer Hollenkamp	Willis Loy	Karen Pearlman	Amy Shaw	Cindy Walker
Sheila K. Holm	Bruce MacKenzie	Zoe Dawn Peterson	Ranell Shubert	Kara Wall
Jim Hone	Tom Malloy	Scott Phillips	Daniel Blake Smith	Rebecca Wanzo
Rebecca Housel	Pete Maniscalco	Robert Pohrer & Donnie Engle	Barbara Smythe-Jones	Natalie Warren
Melissa Howland	Marvin Marcus	Frank Popper	Jack Snyder	Keith Watson
Tom Huck	Cate Marquis	Cynthia A. Prost	Chris Sommers	Wyatt Weed
Robert Hunt	Paul Marsh	Joseph Puleo	Jenny Song	Robert A. Weiss
Ignacio Infante	Lerone Martin	Saruul Purev	Mike Steinberg	Marlon West
Keiko Ishida	Pier Marton	Kathleen "Kitty" Ratcliffe	Ron Stevens	Lynelle White
Patricia Jackson	Kayla McCulloch	Joshua Ray	Kimberly Steward	Joe Williams, in memoriam
Wendy Jaffe	Van McElwee	Jesse Raya	Cody Stokes	Beau Willimon
Brent Jaimes	Alma Merabet	Mark Reardon	Tom Stockman	Calvin Wilson
Georgia & George James	Avis Meyer	Rachel Reichman	Gaylyn Studlar	David Wilson
David Johnson	Carl Middleman	Ann Repetto	bobEE Sweet	Alex Winter
Brian Jun	Keith Miller	Donald Rice	Jen Sweet	John & Cindy Winter
Jay Kanzler	Andrew Millians	David Rocco	Joni Tackette	Stacey Woelfel
Betsy Kellerman	Dan Mirvish	Rosemary Rodriguez	Charles Taylor	Brian Woodman
Chris King	Jody Mitori	Chip Rosenbloom	Orlando Thompson	Amanda Woytus
Jim Kirchherr	Jack Morrissey & Bill Condon	Brian Ross	Matt Tierney	Andrew Wyatt
David Kirkman	Joe Moskus	Stefene Russell	Pete Timmermann	Kerri Yost
Barbara Klein	Krystal Mowery		Wilmetta Toliver-Diallo	Sam Zvibleman
	Phil Moy		Andy Triefenbach	

VOLUNTEERS

**A SPECIAL THANK-YOU TO ALL OF
CINEMA ST. LOUIS' DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS.
CSL HOPES TO SEE YOU IN PERSON NEXT YEAR.**





SPECIAL *events*

SLIFF kicks off with a special Opening-Night Event livestream: a Q&A with comedian Dave Chappelle in conjunction with a screening of the documentary short “8:46.” SLIFF also offers an array of education-oriented livestreams: six Master Classes focused on various aspects of filmmaking (four with free film-program supplements) and a New Filmmakers Forum Roundtable. The festival concludes with a Nov. 22 livestream of the Closing-Night Awards Presentation, in which CSL presents the juried and audience-choice awards. If you can’t participate in the livestreams, recordings of the presentations will also be archived and available on Cinema St. Louis’ YouTube channel.



OPENING-NIGHT EVENT: 8:46 AND LIVE Q&A WITH DAVE CHAPPELLE

SPECIAL EVENT

90 min.

Thursday, Nov. 5, 7:30 p.m., **FREE**

SLIFF is proud to kick off its 2020 edition with a special event featuring the documentary short “8:46” (U.S., 2020, 28 min.) and a livestreamed Q&A with comedian Dave Chappelle and directors Steven Bognar and Julia Reichert, Oscar winners for last year’s “American Factory.” Documentarian Kamau Bilal, director of “Baby Brother” and assistant teaching professor of film studies at the University of Missouri-Columbia, will moderate the discussion. The film captures a performance by Chappelle on June 6, 2020, at the Wirrig Pavilion in Yellow Springs, Ohio. The title references both the eight minutes and 46 seconds that police officer Derek Chauvin knelt on the neck of George Floyd and Chappelle’s time of birth, which was coincidentally 8:46 AM. Chappelle pointedly addresses Floyd’s murder and the protests it inspired, and discusses the history of violence against African Americans in the U.S. Bognar and Reichert’s other new documentary, “9to5: The Story of a Movement,” will play SLIFF on Friday, Nov. 6. “8:46” is also featured in the free program Doc Shorts: The Black Experience, where it will be available throughout SLIFF’s run. A recording of the Q&A will be available with that program beginning Nov. 6.

Sponsored by Powell Law Firm



MASTER CLASS: EDITING WITH KAREN PEARLMAN

SPECIAL EVENT

120 min.

Saturday, Nov. 7, 4 p.m., **FREE**

People often say that good editing is invisible, but if that is the case, how do we know it's good? Karen Pearlman, author of "Cutting Rhythms: Intuitive Film Editing" (Focal Press) and two-time Australian Screen Editors Guild Award winner, will use clips, stories, and provocations to reveal that good editing is not invisible — and neither are the women who do it. Although now based in Australia, Pearlman grew up in St. Louis. Her dance training at University City High School of the Arts and in the Washington University dance department resulted in a distinguished international career as a dancer and choreographer, and still influences her thinking about editing rhythms. She is now a director of the multi-award-winning Physical TV Company, which makes dance, drama, and documentary films, and Pearlman also teaches filmmaking at Macquarie University, one of the top film schools in Australia. Physical TV films have been commissioned or purchased for multiple broadcasts by ABC and SBS-TV in Australia and picked up for broadcast in China and Europe and on cable TV in the U.S. Their screen productions have traveled to more than 300 film festivals or public screenings on five continents, including the most selective and prestigious dance-film festivals in the world, and garnered more than 80 nominations or awards. As a complement to her master class, SLIFF offers free access to #ThisEditingLife, a program of Physical TV shorts. Pearlman's most recent film, "I Want to Make a Film About Women," plays as part of the free program Doc Shorts: Women's World.



Co-presented by
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#THISEDITINGLIFE

SPECIAL EVENT

57 min.

Available Nov. 5-22, **FREE**

As an adjunct to Master Class: Editing with Karen Pearlman, SLIFF offers a free program of films from the Physical TV Company that were edited, and sometimes directed, by Pearlman.

After the Facts (Karen Pearlman, Australia, 2018, 5 min.) In the early years of cinema, editors were usually women. This short documentary looks at how they wielded power — and how their work was made invisible.

"... the dancer from the dance" (Karen Pearlman, Australia, 2013, 28 min.) Where does dance come from? What is it for? Where does it go when it leaves a dancer's body? "... the dancer from the dance" is a documentary that reveals the compelling stories and philosophies of culturally diverse, creative, and poetic dancers of all ages.

Digital Afterlives (Richard James Allen, Australia, 2018, 5 min.) A man in white-winged angel shoes awakes in infinite black to the strains of Liszt's "Dance of the Dead."

Plastic (Samuel Lucas Allen, Australia, 2018, 4 min.) "Plastic" is a real and surreal story of love, loss, and renewal, counterpointed by the minimalist electronic music of Micra. The work is a collision of emotionally rich psychological drama and cerebral construction — think "Before Sunrise" meets "Inception."

Woman with an Editing Bench (Karen Pearlman, Australia, 2016, 15 min.) Inspired by the woman who edited Dziga Vertov's "Man with a Movie Camera" (1929), "Woman with an Editing Bench" reveals the personal impact of Stalin's censorship of cinema on a woman navigating politics, bureaucracy, and the impetuous outbursts of collaborators to create something beautiful despite the odds.



MASTER CLASS: MICROBUDGET FILMMAKING WITH BLAKE ECKARD AND KRISTIAN DAY

120 min.

Sunday, Nov. 8, 1 p.m., **FREE**

In this class on microbudget filmmaking, Blake Eckard will share the hard lessons he's learned over two decades of writing and directing (and producing, shooting, editing, and sound-recording) DIY narrative features in his hometown of Stanberry, Mo. (population 1,186). Working in rural isolation in the northwest corner of the state, he's developed a distinctive filmmaking style and sensibility and a devoted cadre of collaborators. Inspired by iconoclastic, defiantly independent director Jon Jost, a SLIFF Lifetime Achievement Award honoree, Eckard has made a half-dozen films, beginning with "A Simple Midwest Story" in 2001. His other features — all of which have screened at SLIFF — include "Backroad Blues" (2006), "Sinner Come Home" (2007), "Bubba Moon Face" (2011), "Ghosts of Empire Prairie" (2013), and "Coyotes Kill for Fun" (2017). He also co-wrote and made a memorable acting debut in Jost's "They Had It Coming" (2015). Gary Topp, co-founder of the distribution company Films We Like and a devoted supporter of Eckard's work, wrote of "Coyotes," his most recent film: "I think it is his most accomplished to date; skilled, intriguing and provoking, with authentic performances and some phenomenal staging. (Blake's) films can't be confused with anyone else's, and I can't believe he's still an untapped talent." Eckard's career is chronicled in the new documentary short "Somewhere Between New York and LA," which SLIFF offers as a free special event. Eckard is joined in the master class by the short's director, Kristian Day.

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SOMEWHERE BETWEEN NEW YORK AND LA

SPECIAL EVENT

29 min.

Available Nov. 5-22, **FREE**

As an adjunct to Master Class: Microbudget Filmmaking with Blake Eckard and Kristian Day, SLIFF offers free access to Day's documentary short "Somewhere Between New York and LA" (U.S., 2020), which chronicles Eckard's career. Eckard has written and directed six feature films in his hometown of Stanberry, Mo. (population 1,186), but other than a short distribution deal in Canada and a few festival screenings, his movies have largely (and unfairly) gone unseen.



Photo: Mark Shafer

MASTER CLASS: DIRECTING WITH KEN KWAPIS

120 min.

Saturday, Nov. 14, 1 p.m., **FREE**

Ken Kwapis, who grew up in Belleville, Ill., and attended Saint Louis University High, is a former Cinema St. Louis Award winner. This master class on directing will draw on material from his terrific new book, “But What I Really Want to Do Is Direct: Lessons from a Life Behind the Camera.” The Library Journal hails it as “an enjoyable memoir that offers lessons of filmmaking, what counts as success in Hollywood, and the magic of film.” Kwapis is an award-winning director who has moved easily between the worlds of feature filmmaking and television directing. He made his feature debut with “Sesame Street Presents: Follow That Bird,” and his 11 films include “A Walk in the Woods,” with Robert Redford and Nick Nolte; “License to Wed,” with Robin Williams and John Krasinski; “The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants” and “He’s Just Not That Into You,” two highly successful adaptations of best-selling books; “Sexual Life,” which he also wrote; and “He Said, She Said,” co-directed with his wife, Marisa Silver. For television, Kwapis helped launch nine series. He directed the pilot of the Emmy Award-winning series “The Office,” receiving a 2007 Emmy nomination for directing the episode “Gay Witch Hunt.” Kwapis also earned an Emmy nomination for his work as a producer-director of “Malcolm in the Middle.” He directed the pilots for the groundbreaking “The Larry Sanders Show” and the Emmy Award-winning “The Bernie Mac Show.” His other TV work includes multiple episodes of “The Santa Clarita Diet,” “Happyish,” “One Mississippi,” and “Freaks and Geeks.”

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MASTER CLASS: BEHIND THE CAMERA WITH RACHEL REICHMAN

SPECIAL EVENT

120 min.

Sunday, Nov. 15, 1 p.m., **FREE**

When she encountered the work of Antonioni and Bergman, Rachel Reichman was electrified by the emotionality and beauty of cinema. For a teenager in St. Louis, this was life-changing. But how do you pay the bills when art movies are your passion? Against the odds, for more than 40 years, Reichman has built an impressively diverse film career. After first establishing herself as an independent director, she's worked since 2000 as an editor, co-producer, and co-director on award-winning documentaries. In this master class, Reichman will explore her life in film. Accompanied by clips, still photos, and the odd pop song, she'll share insights into the influences that shaped her craft. Reichman's narrative films — which have won numerous awards and shown in dozens of festivals and museums around the world — are the shorts “A Child's Introduction to the Wonders of Space” (1979) and “In the Twilight” (1980) and the features “The Riverbed” (1986) and “Work” (1996). She served as the editor on Martin Scorsese and Kent Jones' “Lady by the Sea: The Statue of Liberty” (2004) and “Letter to Elia” (2010) and Jones' “Hitchcock/Truffaut” (2015). Reichman is the co-director of “Queen of Hearts: Audrey Flack,” which plays at this year's fest. The Films of Rachel Reichman, a program of her four narrative films, can be streamed for free during SLIFF.

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THE FILMS OF RACHEL REICHMAN

SPECIAL EVENT

209 min.

Available Nov. 5-22, **FREE**

A supplement to Master Class: Behind the Camera with Rachel Reichman, this program provides free access to the filmmaker's narrative shorts and features in the first two decades of her career.

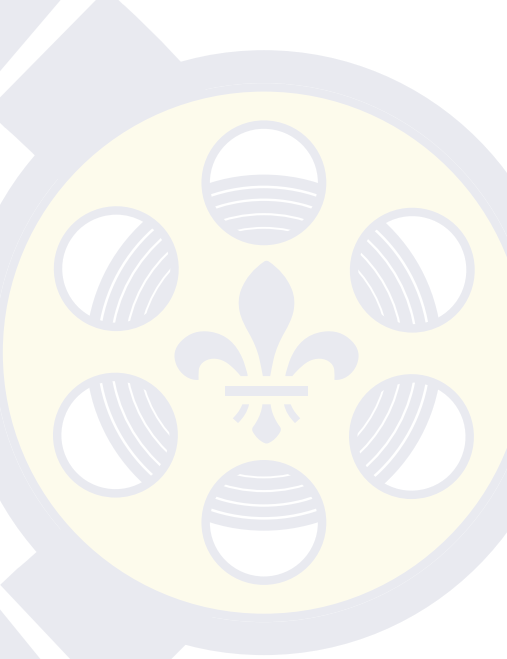
A Child's Introduction to the Wonders of Space (U.S., 1979, 12 min.) Alone in a big city, a young woman finds it easy to slip into a world of her own.

In the Twilight (U.S., 1980, 12 min.) Early one evening, a boy ponders the past and recognizes that there are tough times ahead.

The Riverbed (U.S., 1986, 95 min.) Evoking a mythic American South, “The Riverbed” follows a drifter who insinuates himself into the lives of a mother and daughter. He finds there is little to win and much to lose.

Work (U.S., 1996, 90 min.) Jenny (Cynthia Kaplan), white and working class, lives in a failing mill town. She is frustrated by her job hunt and traditional marriage, and finds joy in a passionate affair with her young African-American neighbor, June (Sonja Sohn, “The Wire”). But June is on her way out of town, to college and a new life.





**New Filmmakers Forum
sponsored by Barry & Jackie
Albrecht and Pat Scallet**



NEW FILMMAKERS FORUM ROUNDTABLE

SPECIAL EVENT

90 min.

Saturday, Nov. 21, 11 a.m., **FREE**

As part of the New Filmmakers Forum (NFF), SLIFF holds a conversation with the participating directors: Carlos R. Betancourt & Oscar Ernesto Ortega (“The Last Rafter”), Niav Conty (“Small Time”), Zoë Kennison (“Easy-Bake”), Aimee Long (“A Shot Through the Wall”), and Rich Newey (“Killing Eleanor”). The event is hosted by Andrea Sporcic Klund, the film commissioner at the Missouri Division of Tourism, who leads the discussion of both the directors’ five films and general issues related to American-independent filmmaking.



Photo: Mark Mann

MASTER CLASS: SCREENWRITING WITH BEAU WILLIMON

SPECIAL EVENT

120 min.

Saturday, Nov. 21, 1 p.m., **FREE**

Former St. Louisan Beau Willimon — a Cinema St. Louis Award honoree in 2012 — will offer a master class on screenwriting. Willimon made a memorable film debut in 2011, when he earned his first screen credit as co-writer of “The Ides of March,” based on his play “Farragut North.” Collaborating with director/star George Clooney and Grant Heslov, Willimon received an Oscar nomination for Best Adapted Screenplay. Since then, Willimon has been highly active in film and TV, including as showrunner, writer, and executive producer on the first four seasons (2012-16) of the Netflix series “House of Cards,” which he developed with director David Fincher. He also created the Hulu series “The First” (2017), whose impressive cast was toplined by Sean Penn. He wrote the screenplay for “Mary Queen of Scots” (2018) and was executive producer of Jonathan Demme’s “A Master Builder” (2013). A graduate of John Burroughs, Willimon received a B.A. in fine arts and an M.F.A. in playwriting from Columbia University. His plays include “The Parisian Woman” (2013) and “Breathing Time” (2014). Willimon worked in politics before his film and TV career, and more recently helped found the progressive Action Group Network. He’s also served two terms as president of the Writers Guild of America, East.

**Co-presented by
Webster University Film Series**

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MASTER CLASS: DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING WITH ANNE DE MARE AND JEFF TRUESDELL

120 min.

Sunday, Nov. 22, 1 p.m., **FREE**

Anne de Mare explores the process of making a documentary film, focusing on the use of character as a means of exploring complex issues and offering practical advice on interview strategy, vérité filmmaking techniques, and documentary story structure. Joining de Mare for the class will be Jeff Truesdell, executive producer of the St. Louis-set “For Ahkeem” (SLIFF 2017) and a writer for People magazine, who will both ask questions and offer his own insights. An Emmy Award-winning documentary filmmaker, de Mare is a fierce believer in the power of story to affect change. Her first feature, “Asparagus! Stalking the American Life” (2008), explored the relationship between asparagus farmers in rural western Michigan and the changing global economy. Her next documentary, “The Homestretch” (2014), about the realities of youth homelessness, screened at SLIFF, was broadcast on PBS’s “Independent Lens,” and received an Emmy Award. More recently, she directed another documentary featured at SLIFF, “Capturing the Flag” (2018), a portrait of four friends who volunteer to do voter-protection work during the 2016 presidential election. She also served as co-producer on the PBS documentary “Deej,” winner of the prestigious 2017 Peabody Award. A former Sundance Institute Fellow, de Mare was awarded a MacArthur Foundation Media & Journalism Grant and is an associate artist with Chicago’s legendary Kartemquin Films. Her newest work, the short animated documentary “The Girl with the Rivet Gun,” plays at SLIFF with the feature “9to5” and is also available as a free stand-alone program as a complement to the master class.

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THE GIRL WITH THE RIVET GUN

15 min.

Available Nov. 5-22, **FREE**

As a complement to Master Class: Documentary Filmmaking with Anne de Mare, SLIFF offers free access to the documentary short “The Girl with the Rivet Gun” (U.S., 2019), which was co-directed by de Mare with Kirsten Kelly. A mix of live action and animation, the film relates the adventures of three real-life World War II-era Rosie the Riveters. The short also plays on a program with “9to5: The Story of a Movement.”



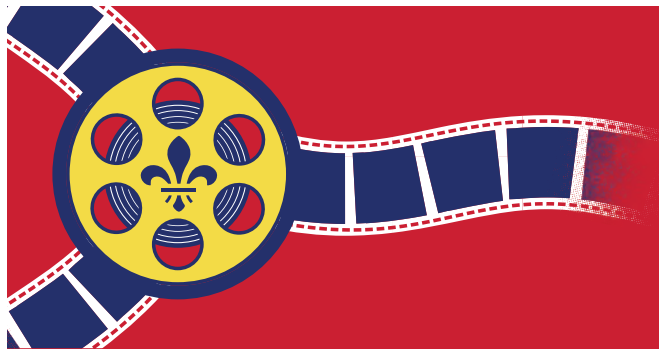
CLOSING-NIGHT AWARDS PRESENTATION

SPECIAL EVENT

60 min.

Sunday, Nov. 22, 7:30 p.m., **FREE**

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



SLIFF 2020

features



9,75

NARRATIVE

Uluç Bayraktar, Turkey, 2020, 117 min., Kurdish & Turkish

Available from Nov. 9-15

Based on the novel “9,75 Square Centimetres” by acclaimed Turkish author Mehmet Eroğlu, the film tells the story of the troubled Ahmet. During his military service in 1990s Southeast Turkey, Ahmet experiences an event that will haunt him for the rest of his life, triggering post-traumatic attacks in unexpected moments and leading to a distressing alcohol addiction. In 2013, during the chaotic days of the Gezi Park protests in İstanbul, far from the bitter lands of the Southeast, Ahmet’s difficulties are compounded when he learns he has a brain tumor. Then, just as the lines between truth and fiction, dream and reality, start to blur for Ahmet, he meets the love of his life, Serap (her name, significantly, means “mirage”). But time is ticking, his painful past weighs down on him every day, and he’s plagued by a recurring question: Who is the child that plays hide-and-seek with him?



9TO5: THE STORY OF A MOVEMENT

DOCUMENTARY

Steven Bognar & Julia Reichert, U.S., 2020, 89 min.

Available only on Nov. 6

“9to5” is the latest film from heralded documentarians Julia Reichert and Steven Bognar, whose “American Factory” won the most recent Oscar for Best Documentary Feature. In the early 1970s, a group of secretaries in Boston decided that they had suffered in silence long enough. They started fighting back, forcing changes in their workplaces and creating a unique intersection of the women’s movement with the labor movement. Although the movement became national, it’s now a largely forgotten story of U.S. 20th-century history. But the awareness these secretaries brought to bear on women’s work reverberates even today. America now confronts the growing reality of deep income inequality, and the stories and strategies of these bold, creative women resonate in contemporary America. The Hollywood Reporter writes: “The film ends with a recent chart listing disparities in earnings. Asian women are at the top of the list, making only .85 for every dollar a man does, with white women following at .77, Black women at .61, Native American women at .58 and Latinas the worst off with .53. As always, Reichert and Bogart are not preachy, even about this inequity. They let their compelling evidence speak for itself in a beautifully crafted film.” **Q&A with directors Steven Bognar and Julia Reichert, moderated by documentary filmmaker AJ Schnack (“We Always Lie to Strangers,” “Convention,” “Caucus”).**

Shown with **The Girl with the Rivet Gun** (Anne de Mare & Kirsten Kelly, U.S., 2019, 15 min.) A mix of live action and animation relates the adventures of three real-life World War II-era Rosie the Riveters.

**Sponsored by
Kathy Corley**



AFRICAN VIOLET *Banafsheh Afrighaei*

NARRATIVE

Mona Zandi Haghghi, Iran, 2019, 93 min., Persian

Available from Nov. 5-22

Middle-age Shokoo finds out that her elderly ex-husband, Fereydoun, has been placed in a nursing home by their children. With second husband Reza, she decides to remove Fereydoun from the facility and take care of him in their own home. By bringing her ex back into her life, the relationship between Shokoo and Fereydoun — which had been acrimonious during their divorce — is significantly transformed. This new situation inevitably affects Reza and Shokoo's own daily existence, and the unexpected changes soon alter the lives of all three characters. Film Festival Today writes: "The entire film is beautifully photographed by cinematographer Farhad Saba, who captures the vibrant colors of Shokoo's threads, the weathered lines of everyone's faces and the fading petals of the titular flower (Fereydoun's favorite) with equal intensity. More than just an intimate family drama (though a gripping one at that), 'African Violet' transcends its singular setting to become a universal meditation on the bonds that tie us all together in our collective human experience. May the violet bloom forever."



AGGIE

DOCUMENTARY

Catherine Gund, U.S., 2020, 92 min. FREE

Available from Nov. 5-22

"Aggie" explores the nexus of art, race, and justice through the story of art collector and philanthropist Agnes "Aggie" Gund's life. Emmy-nominated director Catherine Gund focuses on her mother's journey to give viewers an understanding of the power of art to transform consciousness and inspire social change. Aggie is internationally recognized for her robust and prescient support of artists — particularly women and people of color — and her unwavering commitment to social-justice issues. After falling in love with art as a high-school student, Aggie discovers a new way of looking at the world. The film opens with Aggie selling Roy Lichtenstein's "Masterpiece" for \$165 million to start the Art for Justice Fund. The proceeds from one of the highest-grossing artworks ever sold fuel a monumental effort to reform the American criminal-justice system and end mass incarceration. The film captures Aggie as a true maverick, who demonstrates the unique role and potential of collectors and benefactors to use art to fight injustice. Film Threat writes: "Aggie" is a film every art center in the country should show to its supporters and community as its positive message is inspiring, aspiring, and beautiful. **Q&A with subject Aggie Gund and director Catherine Gund, moderated by NPR's Maria Hinojosa.**

Sponsored by Jessica and Andy Millner and the Robert and Grace Brod Family Foundation

Co-presented by Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis

Shown with **Before He Starts** (Xin Fang, U.S., 2020, 24 min., Chinese) In this exploration of the relationship between art and politics, Zhang Hongtu — who fled China for the U.S. — journeys from New York to Kansas to paint bison and rediscovers the reason he became an artist.



ALEKSI

NARRATIVE

Barbara Vekarić, Croatia, 2019, 90 min., Croatian & English

Available from Nov. 5-22

Aleksi, a troubled 28-year-old who has failed to find a job as a photographer after graduating from college, returns home to live under her parents' roof. With few options to stave off her boredom, Aleksi ignores pressing responsibilities by following her impulses with various men: Christian, an American photographer with whom she bonds because of similar interests; Goran, a local musician whom she can't stand because of his traditional values but with whom she has an intense physical chemistry; and Toni, an older, richer, charming Slovenian playboy, who tries to lure her with the extravagance of yachts, parties, and expensive drugs. Shot entirely on the beautiful Croatian coast, "Aleksi" is an indie-style dramedy that tackles the topic of a "second coming of age," exploring the struggles of someone on the brink of her 30s as she attempts to fulfill her life goals in realistic fashion. "Aleksi" made its international premiere at South by Southwest in 2019 and has screened in more than 50 festivals, winning 20 awards.



AMERICA'S LAST LITTLE ITALY: THE HILL

DOCUMENTARY

Joseph Puleo, U.S., 2020, 70 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

"America's Last Little Italy" explores the deep historic roots of the Hill, St. Louis' iconic Italian neighborhood. Italians who immigrated to St. Louis in search of the American Dream built a "Little Italy" in the city's heart that still flourishes to this day. Similar neighborhoods in other urban areas have long ago lost their specifically Italian character, making the Hill the last of a dying breed. The first feature by St. Louis Filmmakers Showcase alum Joseph Puleo, whose short "Top Son" won Best Comedy at the 2016 event, "America's Last Little Italy" was the audience-choice winner as Best Documentary at this year's Showcase. **Q&A with director Joseph Puleo.**

Sponsored by
Ward & Carol Klein



AND I WAS THERE

DOCUMENTARY

Eran Paz, Israel, 2020, 65 min., Arabic, English & Hebrew, FREE

Available from Nov. 15-22

“And I Was There” provides a distinctive and potent take on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that feels divorced from larger political or cultural concerns. Instead, the film chronicles a small, surreal world detached from reality — a place where Palestinian homes were turned into soldiers’ party playgrounds — and a contemporary effort by those soldiers to make sense of their former selves. A random trance party in a living room is fairly common when it comes to young people. But what happens when the young people are Israeli soldiers and the living room is owned by a Palestinian family that is locked up in one of the rooms of the house? It’s like watching a frat-boy nightmare play out in the homes of non-consenting victims of war. Eighteen years after serving in the Israeli Army, director Eran Paz finds a box of videotapes with rare footage of himself and his squad mates invading Palestinian homes in the Territories. Combining that footage and current interviews with his fellow unit members, Paz sets out on a journey to explore the people, the memories, and the places that haunt him and give him no peace.

*Shown with **My Brother’s Keeper** (Laurence Topham, Mauritania/U.K./U.S., 2020, 22 min.)* A former Guantánamo detainee and his one-time American guard form an unlikely friendship that changes both of their lives.



THE ANNOTATED FIELD GUIDE OF ULYSSES S. GRANT

DOCUMENTARY

Jim Finn, U.S., 2020, 61 min., FREE

Available from Nov. 5-22

For four years in the 1860s, half of the United States was held hostage by an unrecognized white-supremacist republic. Shot on 16mm in national military parks, swamps, forests, and the suburban sprawl across the former battlefields, “The Annotated Field Guide of Ulysses S. Grant” follows Gen. Grant’s path liberating the Southern United States. It focuses not only on his battles but on massacres committed by Confederate armies and the role of enslaved people in the war. An experimentally inclined documentary by avant-garde filmmaker Jim Finn — a former St. Louisan and Cinema St. Louis Award honoree — the film overlaps in subject matter with Ken Burns’ “The Civil War” and presents an abundance of historical information and context, but “The Annotated Field Guide” offers a distinctly different perspective. Interwoven with the long-take shots of fields, woods, and buildings — with the grain of the 16mm stock, different printing exposures, and a conscious use of lens flares lending them a tactility and appropriately “old-timey” feel — are clever, postmodern means of portraying battles and tactics, with Finn employing Civil War battle board games (using stop motion to move the games’ tiles and figures) and other pop-cultural artifacts (such as Topps trading cards) in lieu of Burns’ characteristic slow pans of photos. Because of Grant’s ties to St. Louis, some of the film was shot here, at both the Grant Historical Site and Calvary Cemetery. **Q&A with director Jim Finn.**

*Shown with **William Jefferson Wilderness** (Ben Young, U.S., 2020, 7 min.)* A personal exploration of Bill Clinton’s strange legacy as president of the United States and ringmaster of the 1990s, and of the tangled process of consigning a former political hero to history.

**Sponsored by
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THE ARTIST'S WIFE

Tom Dolby, U.S., 2019, 94 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

Claire (Lena Olin) lives a domestic life in the Hamptons as the wife of celebrated artist Richard Smythson (Bruce Dern). Once a promising painter herself, Claire now lives in the shadow of her husband's illustrious career. While preparing work for his final show, Richard's moods become increasingly erratic, and he is diagnosed with dementia. As his memory and behavior deteriorate, she shields his condition from the art community while trying to reconnect him with his estranged daughter and grandson from a previous marriage. Challenged by the loss of her world as she knew it, Claire must now decide whether to stand with Richard on the sidelines or step into the spotlight herself. Variety writes: "Olin subtly expresses an impressively diverse array of complex and often contradictory emotions as Claire is driven alternately by her love and empathy as a faithful spouse. Her scenes opposite Dern crackle with intensity, whether their characters are interacting at the top of their lungs or enjoying rare moments of quiet, tender intimacy. For his part, Dern — giving easily his best performance since his Oscar-nominated turn in 'Nebraska' — manages the difficult feat of stopping well short of going completely over the top in a role that requires carefully calibrated measures of excess to achieve maximum impact."

*Shown with **The Spiritual Exercises** (Lloyd Kramer & Scott Chestnut, U.S., 2020, 25 min.)* Terry, a rising star in the art world, and Therese, who works at the Metropolitan Opera, fall in love in 1960s New York, but their love story faces difficult odds because he's a Jesuit priest who has taken a vow of celibacy.

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ASIA

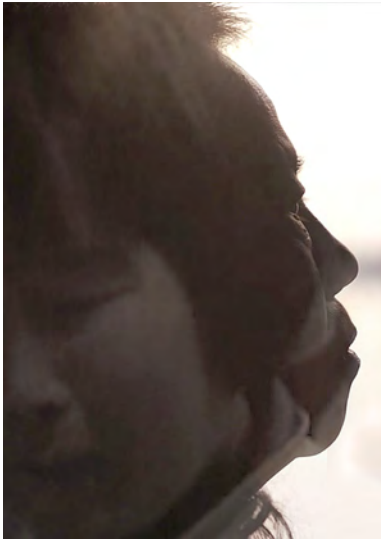
Ruthy Pribar, Israel, 2020, 85 min., Hebrew

Available from Nov. 6-8

In her debut feature film, Israeli filmmaker Ruthy Pribar focuses on a pair of Russian immigrants in Israel, candidly exploring the challenges of motherhood and the desires of the differently abled. Asia (Alena Yiv) and Vika (Shira Haas) are more like sisters than mother and daughter. Young mom Asia hides nothing about her work-hard, play-hard lifestyle and expects the same openness and honesty from teenage Vika. But Vika is at an age where privacy and independence are paramount, and she inevitably begins to rebel against her mom's parenting style. When health issues confine Vika to a wheelchair and her need for romantic experiences and sexual exploration becomes more urgent, Asia realizes she must get out of the way so that her daughter can live her life. IndieWire writes: "Pribar's subtle movie eschews sentimentalism for a patient and inquisitive character study, mining familiar territory and rejuvenating it with emotional impact that worms its way into the material from unexpected places. Much of its power comes from a hypnotizing performance by Shira Haas, most recently seen as the young Hasidic community escapee on Netflix's riveting 'Unorthodox.'"

NARRATIVE

NARRATIVE



Sponsored by East Asian Languages and Cultures at Washington University

ASK NO QUESTIONS

DOCUMENTARY

Jason Loftus & Eric Pedicelli, Canada/China/U.S., 2019, 81 min., Chinese & English, FREE
Available from Nov. 5-22

“Ask No Questions” offers a fascinating and damning investigation of the Chinese government’s concerted attempts to suppress and discredit Falun Gong, the Buddhist meditation practice. The film focuses on an incident that helped turn the Chinese public against Falun Gong: a putative organized protest in which a half-dozen adherents — including a mother and child — immolated themselves in Tiananmen Square in a mass-suicide attempt. When Chinese state television blames his faith for this fiery public suicide, Falun Gong practitioner Chen Ruichang is detained in a “Clockwork Orange”-style brainwashing facility and forced to accept the government’s account. But Chen, a former insider of the state-TV apparatus, believes it was all a government plot. “Ask No Questions” untangles an intricate conspiracy, with help from eyewitness Lisa Weaver, the CNN reporter who smuggled out footage of the event but was later muzzled by Chinese authorities. Film Threat calls “Ask No Questions,” which was featured at this year’s Slamdance and San Francisco DocFest, a “tantalizing, real-life thriller that couldn’t be more surreal if it were fiction.” **Q&A with directors Jason Loftus and Eric Pedicelli.**



THE BALLAD OF JOHN HENRY

DOCUMENTARY

Matthew Rice, U.S., 2019, 50 min., FREE
Available from Nov. 5-22

This ambitious documentary by St. Louis-based filmmaker Matthew Rice analyzes how an ex-slave became one of America’s greatest tall-tale heroes: John Henry. Based on Scott Reynolds Nelson’s book “Steel Drivin’ Man,” the film provides a fresh perspective on the song and folk tale by exploring a myriad of related subjects, including the convict-lease program, an unjust legal system developed after the Civil War as a replacement for slavery. Director Rice worked as an intern on Ken Burns’ “The Vietnam War” series, and his film shares some of that master documentarian’s sensibility. Rice’s debut film, the short “The Yodel Within,” played the 2011 St. Louis Filmmakers Showcase, and “The Ballad of John Henry” received the jury award for Best Editing at this year’s event. **Q&A with director Matthew Rice.**



THE BARE NECESSITY *Perdrix*

NARRATIVE

Erwan Le Duc, France, 2019, 99 min., French

Available from Nov. 5-22

“The Bare Necessity” — which debuted at Cannes last year — is an ebullient high point in the recent spate of eccentric French films whose young directors use comedy to express their generation’s uncertainty in the face of an increasingly crazy world. And the world of “The Bare Necessity” is as crazy as it gets: In the idyllic woods of the Vosges Mountains, amid explosive reenactments of World War II battles, the film chronicles the adventures of revolutionary nudists, obsessive earthworm scientists, and a host of other weirdos. Coping with the chaos is a regular-guy police officer, Capt. Pierre Perdrix, whose buttoned-up life starts to come unbuttoned when out-of-towner Juliette turns up after having all her earthly possessions stolen by a militant nudist. Naturally, the upstanding policeman and the itinerant young woman are fated to become an item, but they’ll have to climb mountains, dive into freezing lakes, and dodge overenthusiastic war reenactors before they fall into each other’s arms. “The Bare Necessity” features rising stars Swann Arlaud and Maud Wyler, and the great Fanny Ardant as Capt. Perdrix’s oddball mother. The Hollywood Reporter writes: “Festival audiences that like their films odd and engaging will eat this up. The unusual mix of deadpan comedy and heartfelt romance should also further consolidate the reputation for versatility of lead actor Swann Arlaud.”



BEASTS CLAWING AT STRAWS

NARRATIVE

Jipuragirado jappo sipeun jimseungdeul

Kim Yong-Hoon, South Korea, 2020, 108 min., Korean

Available from Nov. 5-22

A wild, fast-paced crime thriller that deftly crosses the Coen Bros. with “The Grifters,” “Beasts Clawing at Straws” is a pitch-black neo-noir. When a cash-stuffed Louis Vuitton bag is left in a sauna, it sends a group of hard-luck lowlifes on a desperate chase for a fortune. Fish-mongering gangsters, a greasy cop, an “innocent” gym cleaner, and a prostitute and her trio of men (wife-beating husband, ruthless boss, and clueless boyfriend) all violently scheme to get their hands on the elusive bag. Starring Jung Woo-sung (“Asura: City of Madness”) and Jeon Do-yeon (award winner in Cannes for her lead role in “Secret Sunshine”), first-time director Kim Yong-hoon’s film is a beautifully constructed puzzle whose pieces snap perfectly into place with each double-cross. Screen Daily writes: “Stridently over the top in everything from the colour scheme to the performances to the violence, the film at first appears to be a fairly routine underworld black comedy. It’s not until the final act that first-time feature director Kim Yonghoon’s assured handling of the convoluted structure fully reveals itself. Following its win at Rotterdam, where it took the Jury prize in the Tiger Competition, ‘Beasts’ pulpy appeal and dark humour should ensure that it will be well received at further festivals.”



THE BLACK ARTISTS' GROUP: CREATION EQUALS MOVEMENT

Bryan Dematteis, U.S., 2020, 48 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

SLIFF is pleased to present a work-in-progress screening of a documentary on the Black Artists' Group (BAG), which formed in the late 1960s as an arts collective devoted to raising Black consciousness, battling social injustice, and exploring the far reaches of experimental performance. Growing out of the Black Arts Movement, BAG was unique with its blending of music, poetry, drama, dance, and the visual arts. Through its interdisciplinary approach, BAG addressed many of the day's most pressing social issues and brought awareness to the struggles faced by Black city residents. Beyond St. Louis, BAG's musicians became influential in Europe and in New York, where members helped to found the Loft Jazz scene. Although BAG's life in St. Louis was brief, several of its number, including Oliver Lake and Julius Hemphill, have gone on to impressive careers as experimental jazz players. Locally, the group's spirit lives on in the many St. Louis musicians who cut their chops learning to play in BAG's community arts classes. Through rare archival footage and interviews with the collective's key players, "Black Artists' Group: Creation Equals Movement" shines a light on this untold St. Louis story of passion, creative vision, and community. Among those featured in the film are Lake, Hemphill, Charles "Bobo" Shaw, Malinke Elliott, Hamiet Bluiett, J.D. Parran, Portia Hunt, Shirley LeFlore, George Sams, Percy Green II, Patricia Cruz, Ben Looker, and Dennis Owsley. **Q&A with director Bryan Dematteis and subjects Malinke Elliott, Oliver Lake, and George Sams, moderated by Chris King, former editor of the St. Louis American.**

Sponsored by
Linda Brown Reed, Esq.



BUOYANCY

Rodd Rathjen, Australia, 2019, 92 min., Khmer & Thai

Available from Nov. 5-22

"Buoyancy," the moving coming-of-age story of a Cambodian teenager sold into forced labor, offers passionate testimony against social injustice. Spirited 14-year-old Chakra works the rice fields with his family but yearns for independence. Seeking out a local broker who can get him paid work in a Thai factory, he travels to Bangkok to make his fortune without telling his family. But when Chakra arrives in the city, he and new friend Kea are instead sold to a fishing captain as slaves. Trapped at sea, trawling fish 22 hours a day, they survive on just a handful of cold rice a day. Quickly weeding out those weakened by the conditions or trying to escape, the captain throws them overboard. As fellow slaves are tortured and murdered around him, Chakra must take desperate action. The New York Times writes: "Buoyancy,' from the Australian writer-director Rodd Rathjen, is a vivid fiction about the real catastrophe of contemporary slavery. Rathjen has said he was inspired to make 'Buoyancy' after reading a news article about conditions in the contemporary Thai fishing industry, and one of the strengths of his movie is that it remains tethered to the material world, to straining muscles, to sweat, to blood. He doesn't find spurious poetry in other people's pain or try to glean greater meaning from it. He knows that the suffering is meaning enough."

NARRATIVE



CACHADA: THE OPPORTUNITY

Marlén Viñayo, El Salvador, 2019, 82 min., Spanish, **FREE**

Available from Nov. 5-22

In “Cachada,” which screened at last year’s SXSW, five El Salvadoran women who have lived difficult lives of poverty and abuse — and have sometimes continued the cycle of abuse themselves — work through their traumas in a small, make-shift theater troupe. A powerful documentary, “Cachada” shies away from nothing: The subjects are brave and honest, and they allow their best and worst selves to show, including a performance about a woman hitting her own children and accounts of their experiences with sexual abuse. But the film’s observational tone resists judgment and allows the women to explore their feelings, talk about their guilt, and come to self-realizations through performance. And not all is dour. The women also reveal good senses of humor, and there is power in seeing them bond to one another as they reveal their darkest secrets, with the participants finding strength through performance. What begins as an experiment eventually turns into an opportunity to transform their lives: The cycle of violence is perverse, but the power of theater proves stronger.

*Shown with **Tending Clouds** (Joel Sandvos, Cambodia/U.S., 2020, 39 min.)* With a traumatic childhood and court case behind her, Reaksmey leaves the U.S. to return to Cambodia, but when it appears the man who hurt her might go free, she is forced to testify a second time.

AMERICA'S LAST LITTLE ITALY
THE HILL
A HISTORICAL DOCUMENTARY

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CITIZENS OF THE WORLD *Lontano Lontano*

NARRATIVE

Gianni de Gregorio, Italy, 2019, 90 min., Italian

Available from Nov. 5-22

Gianni Di Gregorio, Italy's laconic answer to Larry David, returns to the humanist comic territory of arthouse hits "Mid-August Lunch" and "The Salt of Life" with "Citizens of the World," which offers a delightful reflection on life and warmly sympathetic characters. Three retirees decide to move away from Rome to find a better standard of living in Bulgaria, a country where their meager pensions will go that much further. As they plan for the trip, the trio trawl the pubs and restaurants of a sun-saturated Rome and discover that even at an old age they can still learn one or two lessons about themselves and life. London's Time Out writes: "This sweet, meandering wisp of an Italian film salutes the well-meaning dreamers and schemers among us — those who conjure up big plans while eyeing up just one more drink at the bar. Rambling and conversational, 'Citizens of the World' is low-key but also undeniably heartwarming. It's a gentle celebration of good company, good wine and good intentions."



CITY SO REAL

DOCUMENTARY

Steve James, U.S., 2020, 340 min., FREE

Available from Nov. 5-22

In the five-part documentary series "City So Real," Oscar-nominated documentarian Steve James ("America to Me," "Hoop Dreams") — a former SLIFF Lifetime Achievement Award honoree — delivers a fascinating and complex portrait of Chicago, America's third-largest metropolis and his longtime hometown. The series begins in the haze of mid-summer 2018, as Mayor Rahm Emanuel, embroiled in accusations of a cover-up related to the police shooting of African-American teenager Laquan McDonald, shocks the city by announcing he won't seek reelection. An unprecedented 21 candidates emerge in a diverse and crowded field as they engage in a no-holds-barred battle for a chance to shape the city's uncertain future. In candid interviews with residents throughout the city, the series captures both Chicago's indomitable spirit and its seemingly insurmountable challenges. "City So Real" is a gritty and loving depiction of a quintessentially American city that is at once fiercely unique and a microcosm of the nation as a whole. Paste writes: "City So Real' takes a sweeping look at the public and private lives of Chicago, of the political machine and of everyday sidewalk stories, of life at work and sometimes at home. Exploring racial and cultural contradictions that often lurk just below the surface, James's camera seems to parse the dissonance and cacophony of city noise to locate each individual voice for a brief moment." **Q&A with director Steve James and producer/sound recordist Zak Piper, moderated by documentary filmmaker AJ Schnack ("We Always Lie to Strangers," "Convention," "Caucus").**

**Sponsored by Department
of African and African-
American Studies at
Washington University**



Sponsored by East Asian Languages and Cultures at Washington University

COMING HOME AGAIN

Wayne Wang, U.S., 2019, 86 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

Directed by Wayne Wang (“Chan Is Missing,” “The Joy Luck Club”) and based on a New Yorker personal essay by Chang-rae Lee, “Coming Home Again” is an intimate family drama about a mother, a son, and the burden of family expectations. The film’s main character, also named Chang-rae (the charismatic Justin Chon), a first-generation Korean-American, returns to his family home in San Francisco to care for his ailing mother (a powerful Jackie Chung), who is dying of stomach cancer. Wanting nothing more than to fulfill his role as the supportive son, he must come to terms with his own conflicted emotions. The film takes place over the course of one full day during which Chang-rae attempts to prepare a traditional Korean New Year’s Eve dinner — just like the one his mother always cooked for the family. The care and precision that goes into preparing this meal give him time to reflect on the intense relationship between them. Hammer to Nail writes: “Avoiding most of the pitfalls of maudlin stories of death and grief, Wang gives us, instead, a vibrant examination of filial love. The movie functions as a true testament to the way memory functions, mixing times in a resonant stew of regret, longing, desire and hope. It’s a profound experience, and by the end of ‘Coming Home Again,’ we feel at home, ourselves, and transported by the visit.”

NARRATIVE



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

THE CROSSING *Flukten over grensen*

Johanne Helgeland, Norway, 2020, 96 min., Norwegian

Available from Nov. 6-8

“The Crossing” — a film about the confidence, uncompromising loyalty, and great courage found in even the youngest of children — tells the story of adventurous 10-year-old Gerda and brother Otto, whose parents are in the Norwegian resistance movement during World War II. One day, just before Christmas 1942, Gerda and Otto’s parents are arrested, leaving the siblings on their own. Following the arrest, they discover two Jewish children, Sarah and Daniel, hidden in a secret cupboard in their basement at home. It is now up to Gerda and Otto to finish what their parents started: to help Sarah and Daniel reunite with their parents by fleeing from the Nazis and crossing the border to neutral Sweden.

NARRATIVE



Co-presented by
Society for the Scientific
Study of Sexuality

CURED

Patrick Sammon & Bennett Singer, U.S., 2020, 82 min., **FREE**

Available from Nov. 5-22

“Cured” illuminates a pivotal yet largely unknown chapter in the struggle for LGBTQ equality: the campaign that led the American Psychiatric Association (APA) to remove homosexuality from its manual of mental illnesses. Before this momentous 1973 decision, the medical establishment viewed every gay and lesbian person as diseased and in need of a cure. Business and government used the mental-illness classification to justify discrimination and bigotry. As long as lesbians and gay men were “sick,” progress toward equality was nearly impossible. Incorporating a trove of newly unearthed archival material — much of it unseen for decades — “Cured” takes audiences inside this riveting narrative to chronicle the strategy and tactics that led to a crucial turning point in the movement for LGBTQ rights. Indeed, following the Stonewall rebellion of 1969, the battle that culminated in the APA’s decision marked the first major step on the path to first-class citizenship for LGBTQ Americans. “Cured” sheds new light on this victory — which was far from inevitable — while situating the APA story within the larger context of the modern movement for LGBTQ equality. Previous work by co-director Bennett Singer includes “Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin,” “With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right,” and “Electoral Dysfunction.” Co-director Patrick Sammon was creator and executive producer of “Codebreaker.”

Q&A with co-director Patrick Sammon and subject Dr. Charles Silverstein, moderated by Dr. Jessica Hille, a gender and sexuality scholar and the assistant director for education at the Kinsey Institute.



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THE DARK DIVIDE

Tom Putnam, U.S., 2020, 107 min.

Available Nov. 8, 15, and 22

Based on the true story of renowned butterfly expert and nature writer Dr. Robert Pyle (David Cross), “The Dark Divide” recounts his perilous 1995 journey across one of America’s largest undeveloped wildlands. Pyle is struggling to finish his next book and help his wife, Thea (Debra Messing), navigate a relapse of her ovarian cancer. He’s a quiet introvert, and she’s a daredevil, and Thea pushes her husband to get out of the classroom and into the forests he writes about but seldom visits. After Thea’s death, Pyle finally accepts her challenge and spends a month hiking across Washington’s Gifford Pinchot National Forest — known as the Dark Divide — in search of new species of butterflies. The area also houses a rare species of spotted owl among its old-growth timber, creating a heated battle between environmentalists and big-business concerns. Between encounters with the warring factions and other forest-dwellers, Pyle glimpses something else in the wilderness, which is infamous for its many Bigfoot sightings. Turning his considerable skills toward solving the mystery of whether Sasquatch truly exists, Pyle finds out a few things about the notorious creature but discovers a lot more about the need for wilderness in our lives. The Hollywood Reporter writes: “For a movie about a lepidopterist, ‘The Dark Divide’ is awfully entertaining. The gorgeous and often forbidding scenery (there’s a harrowing episode set in an underground lava tunnel) should provide a visual balm to those suffering the claustrophobic effects of quarantining.” **Q&A with director Tom Putnam.**

NARRATIVE



DEAR LEO

Emma Rappold, U.S., 2019, 93 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

Change is never easy, even when the results are positive, and that's never more true than when a young person reaches the awkward threshold of adulthood and embarks on an uncertain future by entering college. Told in epistolary fashion, "Dear Leo" thoughtfully addresses friendship, queerness, and the complicated rites of passage that make growing up so difficult to navigate for all of us. St. Louis native Emma Rappold directs this charming coming-of-age tale, which uses the letters exchanged with her middle-school cousin to tell the story of Annie Duncan as she graduates from high school and tentatively starts adult life during her freshman year of college. **Q&A with director Emma Rappold and co-writer/star Jill Young.**

NARRATIVE



THE DILEMMA OF DESIRE

Maria Finitzo, U.S., 2020, 108 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

"The Dilemma of Desire" explores female sexual desire and the powerful gender politics that revolve around not acknowledging female desire. The female body is the primary metaphor for sexuality, saturating advertising and mainstream erotic imagery. But female sexual desire — what women actually want — is left out of the conversation. To make matters worse, cultural, religious, and political forces actually punish women for expressing their sexual desire. The bottom line is this: There can be no equality without equality of pleasure. Part vérité and part essay, "The Dilemma of Desire" — political, provocative, funny, edgy — reveals how we arrived at where we are today and why, despite the real gains that came with the '60s revolution, women must still navigate a powerful and at times outright misogynistic patriarchy. IndieWire writes: "Maria Finitzo's alternately very funny and intensely informational 'The Dilemma of Desire' will instill a brand new vocab word in its viewers' minds: 'cliteracy.' Following the unique stories of four bold women, Finitzo's film takes a thrilling look at female bodies. What the filmmaker and her subjects ultimately find goes beyond just questions of art, science, and representation (like that's not already enough), offering a full spectrum look at how ignoring anatomy feeds into all corners of existence." **Q&A with director Maria Finitzo and subject Dr. Lisa M. Diamond, professor of developmental psychology, health psychology, and gender studies at the University of Utah and co-editor of "APA Handbook of Sexuality and Psychology"; moderated by Dr. Robin Milhausen, award-winning professor of family relations and applied nutrition at the University of Guelph and lead editor of the fourth edition of "Handbook of Sexuality Related Measures."**

DOCUMENTARY

Co-presented by
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Study of Sexuality**

Shown with **The Strippers** (Yun Xie, U.S., 2020, 20 min.) A revealing dual portrait of two strippers in Los Angeles.



DRAMARAMA

Jonathan Wysocki, U.S., 2020, 91 min.

Available Nov. 6-8, 13-15, and 20-22

Cue the drama! It's summer 1994, and a group of conservative, nerdy teens throw their final murder-mystery party before heading off to college, but an unexpected visit by a rebel during the game makes them question their readiness for the "real world" to come. At the center of the group is Gene, who wants to come out as gay to his best friends before they leave but is terrified of the changes that revelation may bring. Jonathan Wysocki's debut feature film is a love letter to drama nerds, late bloomers, and the intense friendships of youth. Reviewing the film at its premiere, the Queer Review writes: "'Dramarama' was one of my most-anticipated titles at this year's Outfest, because I grew up a drama kid, exactly the sort of closeted theater geek that Gene is, desperate to tell my friends who I was before it was too late. I am happy to report that 'Dramarama' is everything I hoped it would be and more. 'Dramarama' makes one choice that sets it apart from the 'Love, Simon' and 'Alex Strangeloves' of the world, one that makes this coming-out-of-age film ring much truer to my own personal experience than any teen film I think I've ever seen. For a certain subset of what Wysocki calls 'the nerds and late bloomers,' 'Dramarama' has the potential to be a cult classic."

NARRATIVE



EASY-BAKE

Zoë Kennison, U.S., 2020, 94 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

In a story inspired by a real-life experience, 22-year-old college student Ivan (Zoë Kennison) is informed by her doctor that she is on an unexpected biological clock: Because of a medical issue, she has only one year to conceive a child. Though Ivan is a nanny and loves the kids in her care, until now she has given little thought to having a child of her own. But influenced by societal pressure — which assumes that all women want children — and the well-intentioned support of her roommate, Ivan begins to explore the possibility of motherhood. Writer-director-star Kennison is a former St. Louisan and recent Webster U. grad. "Easy-Bake" won the Audience Award for Best Narrative Feature at this year's St. Louis Filmmakers Showcase, and Kennison dominated the jury awards, winning Best Narrative More Than 20 Minutes, Best Drama, Best Actress, Best Director, Best Editing, and Best Screenplay. **Q&A with director Zoë Kennison, moderated by Andrea Sporcic Klund, film commissioner of the Missouri Film Office.**

NARRATIVE

**New Filmmakers Forum
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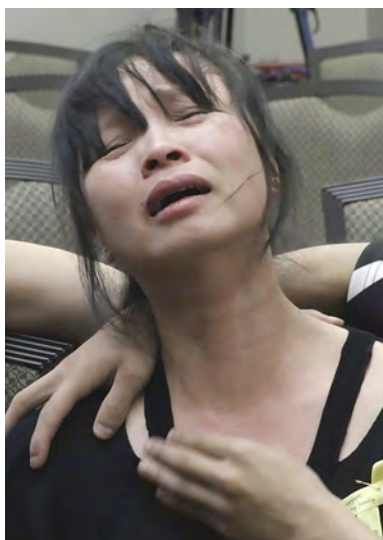
FAREWELL AMOR

Ekwa Msangi, U.S., 2020, 95 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

Forced to leave Angola and live in exile in New York City, Walter (Ntare Guma Mbaho Mwine, “The Chi”) finally is allowed to reunite with his family after 17 years. But soon after picking up wife Esther (Zainab Jah) and daughter Sylvia (Jayme Lawson) from the airport and bringing them home to his one-bedroom Brooklyn apartment, Walter discovers how the many years apart have turned the family members into absolute strangers. As they attempt to overcome personal and political hurdles, dance provides a way for the trio to find their way back “home.” Variety writes: “Ekwa Msangi’s insightful, compassionate Sundance competition debut divides its attention equally between the family members, and so provides a heartfelt, three-dimensional portrait of an aspect of the immigrant experience rarely examined: the frictions, recriminations and regrets that happen when the papers finally come through but whole lives have been lived in the interim. The simple humanism here makes the case for nurturing and celebrating America’s immigrant population in a more eloquent and persuasive way than a more polemical film ever could.”

Sponsored by Saint Louis Metropolitan Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Project A.R.T. (Actively Redefining Together)



FINDING YINGYING

Jiayan “Jenny” Shi, China/U.S., 2019, 96 min., Chinese & English

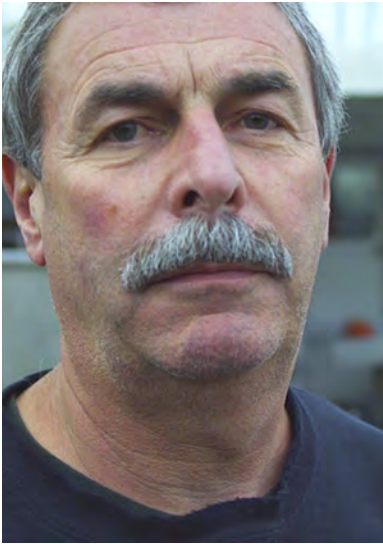
Available from Nov. 5-22

“Finding Yingying” chronicles the search for Yingying Zhang, a 26-year-old Chinese student who had only recently arrived at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign 2017 when she disappeared. The filmmaker, Jenny Shi, also a Chinese expatriate, was studying journalism at Northwestern University and volunteered to help in the search. When Yingying’s family members and boyfriend arrived in the States to engage in the hunt for the missing woman, Shi served as translator and guided them through the alien landscape. By recording events as they transpired, Shi captures the unfolding narrative from a particularly privileged and empathetic position. A moving and expertly told true-crime story, “Finding Yingying” also explores larger subjects within that framework: the ambitions of young Chinese students who come to the U.S. in great numbers to pursue an education, the cultural divides that they have to bridge, and the generational differences between more traditional Chinese parents and their modern-age children. The Hollywood Reporter writes: “The unfolding investigation is presented with a level of suspense that’s involving and never exploitive. Besides being an agile storyteller, Shi, who shared DP duties with Shilin Sun, has a strong eye. She crafts potent visuals without the slightest showiness, whether capturing moments of tenderness or raging despair, or examining existing footage to highlight chilling details.” **Q&A with director Jiayan “Jenny” Shi and co-producer Shilin Sun.**

Shown with **Unfinished Lives** (Yucong Chen, U.S., 2020, 23 min., Chinese & English)

After 24-year-old USC graduate student Xinran Ji was beaten to death by four teens when returning home from a study session, lawyer Rose Tsai tirelessly advocated on his behalf, representing his Chinese parents as they attempted to understand the senseless tragedy.

Sponsored by East Asian Languages and Cultures at Washington University



FISH & MEN

Darby Duffin & Adam Jones, Iceland/Norway/U.S., 2019, 85 min., FREE

Available from Nov. 5-12

“Fish & Men” explores the high cost of cheap fish in the modern U.S. seafood economy, exposing the forces threatening local fishing communities and public health, and revealing how our choices as consumers drive the global seafood trade. Centered on the fishing industry in Gloucester, Mass., the film looks at how disconnected Americans are from fish, particularly from the environmentally unsustainable methods used to get them from the ocean to our table. But “Fish & Men” also offers hope, documenting a new movement now underway that provides an opportunity to return sustainability to both fish and fishermen. Pioneering fishermen and celebrated chefs are promoting a revolutionary new model that shifts the focus away from imported fish. This “catch of the day” revival — based on local, seasonal, sustainable fish — is introducing consumers to new varieties of storied seafood and reconnecting them to those who risk their lives to harvest the bounties of the sea. **Q&A with directors Darby Duffin & Adam Jones and subject Russell Sherman, moderated by Stacey Woelfel, director of the Jonathan B. Murray Center for Documentary Journalism at the University of Missouri-Columbia.**

**Environmental
Focus sponsored by
Ward & Carol Klein**

*Shown with **Adaptation: Kentucky** (Alizé Carrère, U.S., 2019, 12 min.)* In a small town in western Kentucky, Angie Yu is turning the Mississippi River’s problem with the invasive Asian carp into an environmental and economic triumph.



FISHEYE

Michal Szczesniak, Poland, 2020, 97 min., Polish

Available from Nov. 5-22

In this unsettling and hypnotic Polish thriller, young scientist Anna Waterman (Julia Kijowska) is kidnapped after making a scientific breakthrough in a research project. Kept a prisoner, she’s held in isolation, with her captor communicating only through a speaker in the ceiling of her modest cell. Compounding her distress, Anna is horrified to discover that her prison is adjacent to her own apartment. Through a fisheye lens in the wall, she can see her partner, family members, and friends discuss her disappearance in vivid and sometimes awkward detail, which slowly begins to erode her sanity. While in captivity, Anna also learns uncomfortable new details about her life, and she’s ultimately required to solve a mystery from her past to break free.



Sponsored by Saint Louis University Departments of Communications, English, Film Studies, and Fine & Performing Arts
With support from Vincent Casaregola, in honor of James Scott

FLANNERY

Mark Bosco & Elizabeth Coffman, U.S., 2019, 97 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

Winner of the first-ever Library of Congress/Lavine/Ken Burns Prize for Film, “Flannery” is a lyrical, intimate exploration of the life and work of author Flannery O’Connor, whose distinctive Southern Gothic style influenced a generation of artists and activists. With her family home at Andalusia (the Georgia farm where she grew up and later wrote her best-known work) as a backdrop, a picture of the woman behind her sharply aware, starkly redemptive style comes into focus. “Flannery” features interviews with both those who knew her and those inspired by her, including Sally Fitzgerald, Mary Karr, Tommy Lee Jones, Alice Walker, Hilton Als, Mary Gordon, and Alice McDermott. Employing never-before-seen archival footage, newly discovered personal letters, O’Connor’s own published words (read by Mary Steenburgen), and striking animation, “Flannery” offers a revealing examination of an American literary icon. The film is co-directed by a former St. Louisan, the Jesuit priest and literary scholar Mark Bosco. **Q&A with co-director Mark Bosco, moderated by Dr. Avis Meyer, professor emeritus of communications at Saint Louis University.**



FOR THE LOVE OF RUTLAND

Jennifer Maytorena Taylor, U.S., 2020, 90 min., FREE

Available from Nov. 5-22

As her small, blue-collar city struggles to emerge from the opioid epidemic and gets caught up in battles over change, identity, and self-mythology, “For the Love of Rutland” closely follows the story of Stacie Griffin — a remarkable and resilient woman who lives in the toughest neighborhood of the heroin-battered town of Rutland, Vt. After 38 years of steady hardship and near-invisibility in a town that is overwhelmingly white and deeply stratified by class, Stacie yearns to improve her own situation and those of her neighbors — including three Syrian families who arrive in her town just before the federal government bans refugee resettlement. With a verité approach and a microcosmic lens, “For the Love of Rutland” traces almost three years in the life of Stacie, the town’s firebrand mayor Chris Louras, and an ensemble cast of supporting characters representing a cross-section of the town’s clashing ideological and cultural subgroups. Point of View magazine writes: “As a guide, Stacie is frank, candid, open, and quietly compelling. Characters as strong, dynamic, and complex are too rare, and the journey she undertakes in ‘For the Love of Rutland’ finds hope in a dire situation.” **Q&A with director Jennifer Maytorena Taylor.**

Shown with Anatomy of Hate (Emily Kassie, U.S., 2020, 30 min.) Five years ago — amid a surge in reports of bias-motivated attacks against Muslims in America — three Muslim college students were gunned down in their home by a white neighbor, but police failed to call it a hate crime.



GIANNI BERENGO GARDIN'S TALE OF TWO CITIES DOCUMENTARY

Donna Serbe-Davis, France/Italy/U.K./U.S., 2019, 67 min., English & Italian

Available from Nov. 5-22

How can the endangered city of Venice be preserved? Gianni Berengo Gardin, Italy's most famous living photographer, addresses this question with his powerful photographs. "Gianni Berengo Gardin's Tale of Two Cities" both offers a compelling portrait of the photographer and his work, which celebrates the daily life of Venice and its people over many decades, and recounts the dramatic story of a controversial exhibition that triggered debate, protests, and an international outcry. Berengo Gardin's early work highlights the "lost" Venice of cafes, canals, and markets that made up a small and vibrant community, and his more modern work effectively shows the cost of tourism gone awry, with his images of the city always under the looming shadows of giant cruise ships. The documentary thus simultaneously examines the photographer's commitment to Venice and cogently makes the case for why cruise-ship tourism in Venice needs to be curbed to protect this Italian jewel.



A GIRL MISSING *Yokogao* NARRATIVE

Koji Fukada, Japan, 2019, 112 min., Japanese

Available from Nov. 5-22

One of Japan's current cinematic masters, Koji Fukada follows up his critically acclaimed "Harmonium" with a taut, expertly told slow-burn thriller. Home nurse Ichiko (Mariko Tsutsui of "Harmonium") regards the Oishos as her own family after many years working for its elderly matriarch. But Ichiko's quiet routine is shattered when a young member of the Oisho clan is kidnapped. After it is revealed that the kidnapper is none other than Ichiko's nephew, her life quickly begins to unravel. The Hollywood Reporter writes: "A tale of scandal and spite that keeps its burner set to low instead of exploiting a very fraught plot for seedy suspense, it centers on a slowly unveiled tit-for-tat. A good woman's life falls apart in the span of a day or two, through (almost) no fault of her own. (Any post-film discussion of that 'almost' may become heated.)"

**Sponsored by East Asian
Languages and Cultures at
Washington University**



GOD OF THE PIANO *Elohe HaPsanter*

NARRATIVE

Itay Tal, Israel, 2019, 80 min., Hebrew

Available from Nov. 5-22

In Itay Tal's "God of the Piano," Anat (Naama Preis, winner of the Jerusalem Film Festival award for Best Actress) has never been able to meet her pianist father's exacting musical standards. With Anat unable to fulfill the patriarch's elevated expectations, her family's hope of producing a musical prodigy rests on her unborn son. Anguished when the baby is born deaf, she resorts to extreme measures to ensure that her child will be the composer that her father always wanted. But when the boy grows up indifferent to his supposed destiny, Anat will have to stand up to her father and face the consequences of her own actions. The New York Times writes: "This is a psychological horror film played mostly at pianissimo. Its quietness yields devastating results. Tal's style has a simultaneous simplicity and density that has an affinity with the works of Lucrecia Martel and Michael Haneke. Rarely does a debut feature showcase a talent so fully formed. This is a remarkably potent film."



GOD SAVE THE WINGS

DOCUMENTARY

Adam Knapp & Kenneth Linn, Denmark/U.K./U.S., 2020, 102 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

"God Save the Wings" offers a rousing, highly entertaining look at the brief history of Wichita's MISL indoor-soccer franchise, narrated primarily by former Wings player Andy Chapman. The filmmakers delightfully convey the personality of the Wings team and the fervent devotion the franchise instilled in a Midwestern market eager for a taste of major-league sports glamour and glory. The documentary features plenty of deliciously dated archival footage — including doozies like low-budget local ads featuring endorsements from the Wings players and the original tryout footage for the Wings cheerleaders — and appears to round up nearly every living person involved in the franchise for an appearance. Made with affection for its subject, with an enthusiastic vibe and penchant for oddball meta-movie flourishes, "God Save the Wings" chronicles the team's journey through the '80s, recounting the thrills, wackiness, and flagrant debauchery, and recalling their triumphant victories and shattering defeats. St. Louis' own beloved MISL club, the Steamers, plays a prominent role in the documentary's narrative, with our boys serving as the thuggish American heavies to the Wings' more elegant, European style of soccer. There's plenty of vintage footage of the Steamers players and games at the old Checkerdome, and the legendary March 27, 1981, semi-final between St. Louis and Wichita features prominently, receiving a virtual play-by-play recap. **Q&A with directors Adam Knapp and Kenneth Linn and producers Tim O'Bryhim and Michael Romalis, moderated by Andrew Wyatt, editor of and critic for the Cinema St. Louis film blog, The Lens.**

HAMTRAMCK, USA

Justin Feltman & Razi Jafri, U.S., 2020, 93 min., Arabic, Bengali & English, **FREE**

Available from Nov. 5-22

Hamtramck, Mich. — part of the Detroit area — is a place built by immigrants. The city thrived thanks to Polish Catholic immigrants drawn to the industrial boom of America. In the late 1990s, Bangladeshi and Yemeni Muslim immigrants then revitalized this post-industrial city. The multi-ethnic Hamtramck — whose slogan is “The World in 2 Square Miles” — proudly boasts about its diversity, including the more than 30 languages spoken in the schools. However, when it comes to politics, the city quickly splits into factions, pitting its various ethnicities against each other. From these tensions, candidates emerge, hoping to serve as the voice for their community in City Hall. Karen Majewski, Hamtramck’s first female mayor in the city’s 100-year lineage of Polish leaders, is seeking her fourth term. Challenging her are two Bangladeshis: Kamal Rahman, a community activist leading a grassroots political movement, and Mohammad Hassan, who has served eight years on the city council. The film also follows the charming 23-year-old Fadel, who is not only the youngest candidate running for city council but also one of the area’s few Iraqis. Helping him overcome that outsider status is Abraham Aiyash, a young Yemeni community activist who grew up with Fadel. Beautifully capturing the rough-edged, working-class community, “Hamtramck, USA” explores the city’s multiple divisions but primarily celebrates its cooperative nature, the ways in which it unifies despite the diverse population’s sometimes-competing interests. **Q&A with directors Justin Feltman and Razi Jafri.**

Shown with **Immigrant at Home** (Sufian Abulohom, U.S., 2020, 20 min., Arabic & English) A portrait of a first-generation Yemeni-American pursuing her dreams and struggling with her dual identity.

Sponsored by
John C. Danforth Center on
Religion and Politics
at Washington University
in St. Louis



HERE WE ARE *Hine Anachnu*

Nir Bergman, Israel, 2020, 94 min., Hebrew

Available from Nov. 13-15

Aharon has devoted his life to raising Uri, his autistic son. They have established a gentle routine, keeping the real world at bay. But now, with Uri on the cusp of young adulthood, it appears time for him to move to a specialized home that can better meet his changing needs. While on their way to the institution, however, Aharon impulsively decides to run away with his son and hit the road. His father takes this abrupt action because he believes that Uri is not ready for the separation. But is it, in fact, Aharon who is not ready? “Here We Are,” which played the Toronto International Film Festival, was originally slated to premiere at Cannes before the fest’s cancellation. Director Nir Bergman is perhaps best known in the U.S. for his award-winning TV show “B’Tipul,” which was adapted as “In Treatment” by HBO.

NARRATIVE





Sponsored by
Greg & Jane Hoeltzel

I AM YOU

Sonia Nassery Cole, Afghanistan, 2020, 89 min., Dari, English & Turkish

Available from Nov. 5-22

“I Am You” offers an insider’s look at the Taliban’s rule in Afghanistan and the tragedy of its refugees. After the loss of his father at the hands of ISIS, young Masoud leaves the world he once knew to embark on a perilous journey to safety. Embarking on a perilous migration from Afghanistan into the unknown, he vows to honor his late father’s memory by securing a safe future for his mother and sister. As he and his family flee the country they once called home, he is accompanied by his best friend, an aged Muslim warrior, and a pregnant doctor. “I Am You” chronicles the horrendous conditions Masoud faces before his heroic journey, the heartbreaking indifference he encounters along the way, and the uplifting power and humanity ultimately found in hope, truth, and justice. Inspired by the stories of the world’s many refugees, the film provides an evocative, empathetic study of our current refugee crisis.

Shown with R.A.S. (Lucas Durkheim, France, 2019, 5 min., French) For months now, a group of five bored young soldiers have been stuck on a mission in the middle of the Afghan mountains, but the routine is finally broken during a support mission.

NARRATIVE



THE INVISIBLE WITNESS *Il testimone invisibile*

Stefano Mordini, Italy, 2019, 97 min., Italian

Available from Nov. 5-22

“When I woke up, the nightmare began.” So begins the account of Adriano Doria (Riccardo Scamarcio), a wealthy Italian entrepreneur, describing the murky events of the worst night of his life, when he discovers himself in a resort hotel room with a nasty cut on his forehead and the lifeless body of his young mistress, Laura (Miriam Leone), lying on the floor amid a pile of scattered banknotes. Though he protests his innocence, Adriano is the obvious prime suspect. With just hours to go before his arrest, he arranges a meeting with Virginia Ferrara (Maria Paiato), a notoriously tough attorney who has never lost a case, to plan his defense strategy and find evidence to exonerate him. Largely told in flashback, this noir-ish thriller from director Stefano Mordini re-creates the days of intrigue that lead up to that terrible night. As more facts are coaxed out by Virginia, the characters’ motivations begin to blur until no one is quite who they first seemed, leading to a pulse-pounding conclusion that will leave audiences guessing until the final shot. The Chicago Reader, which says the locked-room mystery “sure is fun to watch,” writes of “The Invisible Witness”: “Its relative artlessness underscores the gratifying, though somewhat unwieldy, plot. The best parts occur when you think you’ve clinched the plot, only to have it go one — or two or three — steps further. The overserious giallo vibes add to the fun.”

NARRATIVE



NARRATIVE

KILLING ELEANOR

Rich Newey, U.S., 2019, 106 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

Recently out of another stint in rehab, Natalie (Annika Marks) is hiding her persistent painkiller habit while living back at home and working for her mom (Jane Kaczmarek, “Malcolm in the Middle”) on the condition she’s clean. When Eleanor (Jenny O’Hara), a terminally ill old woman, sneaks out of her nursing home and surprises Natalie with a longforgotten IOU, her repayment request is shocking — she wants Natalie to help her die. Natalie dismisses Eleanor, but after a family intervention — led by her Type A sister, Anya (Betsy Brandt, “Breaking Bad”) — she needs to get her hands on clean urine. So the two strike a deal: Eleanor will pee in a cup, and Natalie will help kill her. Their right-to-die odyssey is filled with complications as Eleanor’s past and Natalie’s lies catch up with them. But, ultimately, helping Eleanor die with dignity might just teach Natalie to live with dignity. **Q&A with director Rich Newey, moderated by Andrea Sporic Klund, film commissioner of the Missouri Film Office.**

New Filmmakers Forum
sponsored by **Barry & Jackie**
Albrecht and Pat Scallet

Sponsored by
AARP in St. Louis

*Shown with **The Roommates** (Cameron Penn, U.S., 2019, 15 min.)* In a scheme to land a free cruise to the Bahamas, two senior citizens living in a retirement home plot to kill their obnoxious roommate.



NARRATIVE

LAPSIS

Noah Hutton, Angola/U.S., 2020, 104 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

“Lapsis” takes place in an alternate-present New York in which the quantum computing revolution has begun and investors are lining their pockets in the quantum trading market. Building the network, however, requires miles of infrastructure to be laid between huge magnetic cubes by “cablors” — unprotected gig workers who compete against robots to pull wires over rough terrain. Queens deliveryman Ray Tincelli is skeptical of new technology, and the buy-in to start cabling is steep, but he struggles to support himself and his ailing younger brother, who suffers from a mysterious illness. So when Ray scores a shady permit, he believes their fortunes may have finally changed. What he doesn’t expect is to be pulled into a conspiracy involving hostile cablers, corporate greed, and the mysterious Lapsis, who may have previously owned his permit. Called “a smart class-conscious sci-fi parable” by the Hollywood Reporter, “Lapsis” is a darkly comic and timely look at the failed utopian promises of big tech. Variety writes: “This tale of a floundering gig-economy worker straddles both the bleak present-tense reality of Ken Loach’s ‘Sorry We Missed You’ and the subversive near-future political satire of Boots Riley’s ‘Sorry to Bother You’ while arriving at a whimsical critique all its own.”

Sponsored by
Chris Schuster



NARRATIVE

THE LAST RAFTER *El último balseiro*

Carlos R. Betancourt & Oscar Ernesto Ortega, Cuba/U.S., 2019, 82 min., English & Spanish

Available from Nov. 5-22

After risking his life crossing the Florida Straits on a raft, young Ernesto searches Miami for his missing father. When a political shift makes him America's first Cuban undocumented immigrant, he must both battle the new fear of deportation and deal with a legacy of intolerance and hate that still haunts him. As he searches for clues about his past, Ernesto works to close old wounds while embracing new possibilities. Through Ernesto's emotional journey, "The Last Rafter" intelligently addresses ideas about identity, freedom, and toxic masculinity, and shines a revealing light on the nightmare aspects of the American Dream. The story of "The Last Rafter" synthesizes many of the personal experiences of co-directors Carlos R. Betancourt and Oscar Ernesto Ortega—Cuban immigrants who, like the film's protagonist, felt like fish out of water when arriving in a highly polarized America. ScreenAnarchy writes: "This isn't just a film about the immigrant experience; it's also a film about Miami. It's the shining city of dreams to so many Cubans, with a strong and vital community, but there is an underbelly: one filled with those who would exploit, those who continue to suffer, or those who must hide even if they seem to be in a safer place." **Q&A with co-directors Carlos Betancourt and Oscar Ernesto Ortega, moderated by Andrea Sporcic Klund, film commissioner of the Missouri Film Office.**

New Filmmakers Forum
sponsored by Barry & Jackie
Albrecht and Pat Scallet



DOCUMENTARY

THE LESSON

Elena Horn, Germany, 2019, 60 min., English & German

Available from Nov. 5-22

German schools mandate that students learn about National Socialism and its devastating impact on the country and the world, and this hour-long vérité doc follows four students over five years as they engage with lessons about the Nazi era and the Holocaust. Although it's heartening that Germany requires that its youth become familiar with — and, it's hoped, inoculated against — fascism and anti-Semitism, the film makes dismayingly clear that the lessons don't necessarily take: Some of the teens exhibit a nonchalance and skepticism that can be frightening. The students' lessons are also set against a national backdrop in which neo-Nazis are increasingly vocal — despite specific prohibitions in the law — and far-right parties are on the rise, indicating that the admonition "Never forget" is not being heeded.

Shown with Colette (Anthony Giacchino, France/Germany/U.S., 2019, 24 min., French & German) Colette Catherine, now 90, revisits the terrors of her childhood, when she fought the Nazis as a member of the French Resistance. *And Zaida* (Sophie Parens, U.S., 2020, 32 min.) His filmmaking granddaughter profiles Henri Parens, who escaped the Holocaust at the age of 12 and went on to become a globally recognized psychoanalyst who dedicates his life to the prevention of prejudice.

LIGHTS OF BALTIMORE

Sabrina Bouarour, U.S., 2020, 81 min., FREE

Available from Nov. 16-22

“Lights of Baltimore” tells the story of the war of images surrounding Baltimore in the aftermath of Freddie Gray’s death at the hands of the police in 2015 — images produced by factions fighting for the heart of one of America’s greatest and most troubled cities. Baltimore is America in microcosm: a place of rich history, vibrant art, and deep divides. The printed words and images of Baltimore’s history have shaped its present, and the social media and videos that prevail today will shape its future. The film does a particularly admirable job of unpacking the complexity of Baltimore, deftly providing the larger context by delving deeply into both the past and the present. “Lights of Baltimore” excels in exploring the bigger picture: the development of policing in Baltimore, early red-lining practices, the eruption of anger after the assassination of MLK, and the planned disinvestment in Black communities over many decades. Perhaps most importantly, the film doesn’t focus exclusively on poverty and the police sirens but also features footage of lived life in the community, with its engaged members taking cooperative action. “Lights of Baltimore” is produced by former St. Louisan Beau Willimon (“House of Cards,” “Ides of March”). **Q&A with director/producer Sabrina Bouarour, subject Verna Myers, and co-producer Beau Willimon.**



LITTLE FISH

Chad Hartigan, U.S., 2020, 101 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

Imagine waking up in a world where a pandemic has broken out. Imagine that it strikes with no rhyme or reason and causes victims to lose their memories. Imagine not remembering the person you love. This is the world that newlyweds Emma (Olivia Cooke) and Jude (Jack O’Connell) find themselves in not long after meeting and falling in love. When Jude contracts the disease, the young couple will do anything to hold onto the memory of their love. Cooke (“Ready Player One,” “Thoroughbreds”) and O’Connell (“’71,” “Seberg”) give deeply felt, nuanced performances that ground the film’s high concept in resolutely human terms. Anchored by beautiful cinematography and Chad Hartigan’s assured direction, “Little Fish” is a gorgeously melancholic and romantic meditation on memory. IndieWire writes: “A change of pace for the director of ‘Morris from America,’ Hartigan’s weighty romance takes place in a world afflicted by memory loss, with all the devastating results implied by that premise. Beautifully acted and grounded in relatable emotions despite the lofty premise, ‘Little Fish’ plays as both an effective metaphor for Alzheimer’s, and the disintegration of a relationship without closure or reason.”

Shown with **American Romance** (Chris Craymer, U.S., 2019, 7 min.) A series of interviews with New Yorkers in which couples open up about their love for one another.

**Sponsored by
Ward & Carol Klein**



LOST LIVES

Michael Hewitt & Dermot Lavery, Ireland/U.K., 2019, 93 min., FREE

Available from Nov. 5-22

Skillfully adapting a massive book of the same name that chronicles every one of the 3,700 deaths attributed to the Troubles in Northern Ireland, “Lost Lives” selects a few dozen representative stories, proceeding chronologically and including victims on all sides of the conflict, from uninvolved citizens (with a particular emphasis on infants and children) to British soldiers and members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary to the “soldiers” of the IRA and the Protestant paramilitaries. The film provides only the briefest of prologues to explain the origins and history of the Troubles: The focus is exclusively on the particulars of the deaths that the conflict caused. (The doc would work well on a double bill with Alan Clarke’s extraordinary “Elephant,” which consists of a series of contextless executions during the Troubles.) An all-star roster of Irish actors — including such boldface names as Kenneth Branagh, Roma Downey, Brendan Gleeson, Ciaran Hinds, Liam Neeson, and Stephen Rea — reads the selected entries, and their grave, respectful narration lends the film a properly funereal tone. Complementing the stark, unadorned accounts of the deaths are beautifully shot natural or urban landscapes (all from Northern Ireland). Well-chosen and effective archival footage is also woven into the visual tapestry, and an original choral/orchestral score provides gorgeous, appropriately solemn, and frequently moving accompaniment. The Guardian writes: “The variation of voices staves off any monotony inherent in the list format, and each story opens up some revealing front. Collectively, they provide a renewed sense of just how widespread and all-consuming the Troubles were, how they caught up combatants and civilians, young and old alike.”



LUCKY GRANDMA

Sasie Sealy, U.S., 2019, 87 min., English, Cantonese & Mandarin

Available from Nov. 5-22

In the heart of New York’s Chinatown, an ornery, chain-smoking, newly widowed 80-year-old grandma (Tsai Chin) is eager to live life as an independent woman, despite the worry of her family. When a local fortuneteller (Wai Ching Ho) predicts a most auspicious day in her future, Grandma Wong decides to head to the casino and goes all in, only to land herself on the wrong side of luck by suddenly attracting the attention of some local gangsters. Desperate to protect herself, Grandma employs the services of a bodyguard (Corey Ha) from a rival gang and soon finds herself in the middle of a Chinatown gang war. The New York Times writes: “The director Sasie Sealy’s feature debut has style and keenly observed visual humor. Each scene is paced as perfectly as a punchline, whether it’s Wong swaggering through the streets of New York, a cigarette dangling from her lips, or her tense maneuvers at the casino set to Andrew Orkin’s dramatic jazz score. ‘Lucky Grandma’ puts an older Asian woman center stage without infantilizing her or rendering her pitiful. Chin, best known for ‘The Joy Luck Club,’ exudes cool, and she’s effortlessly funny with her dagger eyes and sardonic jibes.”

NARRATIVE



THE LUNCHROOM *Planta permanente*

NARRATIVE

Ezequiel Radusky, Argentina/Uruguay, 2019, 78 min., Spanish

Available from Nov. 5-22

For 30 years Lila (Liliana Juárez) has been a cleaner in a provincial municipality building. She's an important figure in the office's carefully knit society because of the unofficial staff cafeteria, which she runs together with her friend Marcela (Rosario Bléfari). But times change with the arrival of a new director: When Lila receives the opportunity to refurbish the lunchroom and run it officially as the boss, this sudden elevation of her status causes Marcela's understandable envy and starts a slow decay of the office's delicate status quo. The darkly comic "The Lunchroom" took the best-actress award — for Juárez's performance — at Argentina's well-regarded Mar del Plata Film Festival. Director Ezequiel Radusky's previous film, "The Owners," played in Critics' Week at Cannes in 2013.



MACHINE

DOCUMENTARY

Justin Krook, Australia/Germany/Hong Kong/Japan/Switzerland/U.S., 2019, 87 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

"Machine" examines artificial intelligence (AI) — the most radical new technology of our time — from multiple perspectives. What is AI, how is it created, and what will it mean for the way we work, play, live and learn? What will happen when we're no longer the smartest ones on the planet? And who, if anyone, is controlling the rise of this new technology? "Machine" talks to world-renowned experts, the people who are creating, researching, and controlling this new technology. Among the interviewees is Dr. Eric Leuthardt, director of Washington University's Center for Innovation in Neuroscience and Technology, which gathers neurosurgeons, engineers, mathematicians, physicists, and computer scientists to collaborate and develop new technologies to improve the lives of patients with neurological diseases. "Machine's" story chapters address many of the key issues at stake — AI companions, driverless cars, autonomous warfare, use of AI to create human super-intelligence, and the very real possibility of a Robot Apocalypse. By turns optimistic and frightening, thought-provoking and awe-inspiring, "Machine" looks not only at the practical applications of AI but also the ethical questions raised by these new developments. Directed by Justin Krook, "Machine" is produced by the team behind "Chef's Table." **Q&A with director Justin Krook and subject Eric Leuthardt, M.D., neurosurgeon, chief of the Division of Neurotechnology, and director of the Center for Innovation in Neuroscience and Technology at Washington University School of Medicine.**

Shown with Signs of Life (Don Dixon & Bob Niemack, U.S., 2020, 35 min.) An examination of the chemistry and physics that created life on Earth and a search through the solar system for signs of life elsewhere.

Sponsored by Engagedly



MADRE

NARRATIVE

Rodrigo Sorogoyen, France/Spain, 2019, 128 min., French & Spanish

Available from Nov. 5-22

At the outset of “Madre,” Elena (Marta Nieto) receives a call from her 6-year-old son, who tells her that he is lost on a beach in France and that he cannot find his father. These desperate words are the last she hears from him, and she never learns his fate. Eventually, Elena finds herself on the same beach where her son disappeared, working as a manager in a restaurant and still living in the same dark emotional tunnel in which she has long been trapped. Her life is abruptly shaken, however, when she accidentally meets Jean (Julies Porier), a French teenager who eerily resembles her long-lost son. A strong bond develops between them, but it ultimately wreaks havoc and mistrust. Variety calls “Madre” — an expansion of director Rodrigo Sorogoyen’s 2016 Oscar-nominated short — “a languid puzzler that begins as out-and-out thriller and finally lands in roughly the same sad, shattered family as François Ozon’s ‘Under the Sand’ and Jonathan Glazer’s ‘Birth.’” The Hollywood Reporter writes: “Sorogoyen is a master filmmaker. His work with his actors is impressive, with Nieto, in a fully bilingual performance, and Porier both natural yet nuanced. The director also constantly creates visuals — often using distorting lenses or compositions — and audio cues that give the story a more metaphorical dimension without ever distracting from the characters. As they would say in Mexico, this ‘Madre’ is my padre.”

*Shown with **The Birthmark** (Bernhard Hetzenauer & Pia Ilonka Schenk Jensen, Mexico, 2019, 11 min., Spanish) In Mexico City, Consuelo waits for daughter Victoria to return home so they can celebrate the young woman’s birthday, but she never arrives, changing the mother’s life forever. *The screening of “The Birthmark” is supported by the Austrian Cultural Forum New York.**



MARONA’S FANTASTIC TALE

NARRATIVE

L’extraordinaire voyage de Marona

Anca Damian, France, 2020, 92 min., French & Romanian

Available from Nov. 5-22

This poetic and touching animated film from director Anca Damian follows an optimistic stray dog named Marona as she looks back on the human companions she has loved throughout her life. With dazzlingly colorful, sweeping designs produced in part by acclaimed artist Brecht Evens, “Marona’s Fantastic Tale” is a life-affirming tale told with the patient, boundless love of a dog — a film that reminds us that happiness is a small thing. The New York Times writes: “It’s often said that dogs are man’s best friend, but in the beautiful and original animated film ‘Marona’s Fantastic Tale,’ human beings are fickle companions. Marona has three real homes in her life, and past abandonments have taught her that heartbreak waits in every happiness. But fortunately, the film stays buoyant through its unique, boisterous animation. The director Anca Damian has a playful drawing style, and her kinetic frames are always creating something new for the audience to enjoy. Marona is the most plain of all, drawn as she is in inky black and white. Her simplicity in such a vibrant, eclectic frame makes her joys and sorrows all the more touching.”

**Sponsored by
Ward & Carol Klein**



MARTIN EDEN

NARRATIVE

Pietro Marcello, Italy, 2019, 129 min., French, Italian & Neapolitan

Available from Nov. 5-22

In this Italian adaptation, Jack London's 1909 novel becomes a sprawling tale of an idealistic young proletariat and a potent commentary on Italian politics. After saving Arturo, a young scion of the industrial middle class, from a beating, the sailor Martin Eden is invited to the boy's family home. Here he meets Elena, Arturo's beautiful sister, and falls in love with her at first sight. The cultured and refined young woman becomes not only the object of Martin's affections but also a symbol of the social status he aspires to achieve. At the cost of enormous efforts and overcoming the obstacles represented by his humble origin, Martin pursues the dream of becoming a writer. Under the influence of the elderly intellectual Russ Brissenden, he gets involved in socialist circles, bringing him into conflict with Elena and her bourgeois world. Variety writes: "Though best known in the States for his wilderness novels, London's key novel is 'Martin Eden,' a semi-autobiographical work tracing his background from unschooled sailor to celebrated writer, encompassing all his class anger, political musings and intense dissatisfaction with the life he created. Now Pietro Marcello ('The Mouth of the Wolf') has made it the subject of his sprawling first full-fiction film, sticking close to the narrative while setting it in an undefinable 20th-century moment to make his own statements about the creative process, class hypocrisy and the disappointment of most political theories."



MAYOR

DOCUMENTARY

David Osit, Palestine, 2020, 89 min., English & Arabic, FREE

Available from Nov. 9-15

A real-life political saga, "Mayor" follows Musa Hadid, the Christian mayor of Ramallah, during his second term in office. Surrounded on all sides by Israeli settlements and soldiers, most people in Ramallah will never have the chance to travel more than a few miles outside their home, which is why Mayor Hadid is determined to make the city a beautiful and dignified place to live. His immediate goals: repave the sidewalks, attract more tourism, and plan the city's Christmas celebrations. His ultimate mission: to end the occupation of Palestine. Rich with detailed observation and a surprising amount of humor, "Mayor" offers a portrait of dignity amid the madness and absurdity of endless occupation while posing a question: How do you run a city when you don't have a country? Variety writes: "Mayor Musa Hadid is a celebrity of sorts in Ramallah, the de facto Palestinian capital in the central West Bank, situated just a few miles north of Jerusalem. And we get to understand why throughout the gripping and surprisingly witty 'Mayor,' filmmaker David Osit's thoughtful study of a spirited man and his burgeoning city, anchored in Hadid's everyday dilemmas."

MINOR PREMISE

Eric Schultz, U.S., 2020, 95 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

Ethan Kochar (former St. Louisan Sathya Sridharan) is a reclusive young neuroscientist whose brilliance is overshadowed by the legacy of his father. Following his father's death, Ethan descends into his basement laboratory to complete a device designed to go beyond recording memories, as a machine invented by his father did, and push the limits of brain capture to their zenith — true consciousness control. But when he turns the experiment on himself, all does not go as intended: Rather than isolate his intelligence, Ethan fragments his consciousness into 10 emotional states, each in their own timeline. Every hour the cycle of behaviors resets, giving Ethan six minutes at a time to piece together what's happening and work toward a solution. Central to Ethan's efforts is his estranged girlfriend and academic colleague, Dr. Alli Fisher. With a focus on scientific authenticity and cutting-edge neurological theory, "Minor Premise" is a grounded, science-based thriller that poignantly explores our mind's fragility and our sense of self. Screen Queens writes: "Complex and intelligent, 'Minor Premise' is the type of film Christopher Nolan would be making if he were an emerging filmmaker today. Not unlike his 2001 breakthrough hit 'Memento,' 'Minor Premise' is a mind-bender of a film that will no doubt require repeat viewings in order to fully and properly grasp. Chock-full of plot twists and intricacies, it demands the audience's full attention." **Q&A with director Eric Schultz and lead actor Sathya Sridharan, a former St. Louis resident.**



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MLK/FBI

Sam Pollard, U.S., 2020, 104 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

"MLK/FBI," the first film to uncover the extent of the FBI's surveillance and harassment of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., tells an astonishing and tragic story with searing relevance to our current moment. Based on newly discovered and declassified files, the film uses a trove of documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act and unsealed by the National Archives to explore the government's history of targeting Black activists and the contested meaning behind some of our most cherished ideals. Featuring revelatory restored footage and interviews with key cultural figures — including former FBI Director James Comey — "MLK/FBI" is directed by Emmy Award winner and Oscar nominee Sam Pollard ("Two Trains Runnin'," "Sammy Davis, Jr.: I've Gotta Be Me"), a former SLIFF Lifetime Achievement Award honoree. IndieWire writes: "Recalling the archival-based approach of 'The Black Power Mixtape 1967-1975,' Pollard has constructed an absorbing tale of Black activism challenged by authorities and built it almost entirely out of the materials of the time, with interviews overlaid as voiceover. The result is a remarkable look at King's rapid emergence as a celebrity activist and authority figure who managed to grow so powerful that the White House couldn't afford to ignore his cause." **Q&A with director Sam Pollard and co-writer/producer Benjamin Hedin, moderated by Lerone Martin, Ph.D., director of American Culture Studies and associate professor of Religion and Politics, American Culture Studies, and African and African-American Studies at Washington University.**



**Sponsored by
American Culture Studies
(AMCS) Program at
Washington University**



THE MOLE AGENT

Maite Alberdi, Chile, 2020, 90 min., Spanish

Available from Nov. 5-22

Rómulo is a private investigator hired to investigate a retirement home in Chile where a resident may be regularly victimized by a thief. The only way to accomplish this, however, is to hire and train an elderly volunteer to blend in as a “mole agent” inside the home. Sergio, 83, thinks this will be a way to pass the time after losing his wife, but nothing can prepare him for the realities of senior living. Once he infiltrates the home, Sergio struggles with the surveillance technology and his role. As real-life feelings of abandonment, loneliness, and frustration begin to set in, Sergio also finds humor, compassion, and community among the elderly. Rogerebert.com writes: “The documentary succeeds with its tenderness, while vividly reminding us how easily society can forget its elders. Sonia, the woman Sergio has been sent to look after, is not the only resident who has family members who do not check in on them, and who ask others to do it. But thankfully there’s kind people like Sergio, and the sense that friendship knows no age.”

*Shown with **Dangfart & I** (Kaspar Synnevaag, Norway, 2020, 11 min., Norwegian)*

An anonymous comedian assumes the guise of an 88-year-old man and becomes a social-media phenomenon. *And **Stormy and the Admirals** (Dan Rybicky, U.S., 2020, 9 min.)* A group of elderly feminists living in the Admiral, a senior apartment building in Chicago, support Stormy Daniels by going to see her at another Admiral, the gentlemen’s club at which she’s performing.

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MY DOG STUPID *Mon chien Stupide*

Yvan Attal, France, 2019, 99 min., French

Available from Nov. 5-22

In this adaptation of a semi-autobiographical novella by cult American author John Fante — found in the writer’s “West of Rome” — Henri is a middle-age writer with fading inspiration. Feeling increasingly misunderstood by his family, he dreams of running away to start over again. Yet when he discovers a bad-mannered dog in his garden, he decides to adopt him, dubbing him with the unflattering name Stupid. Although beneficial for Henri, this unexpected man-and-dog friendship creates some inevitable upset for his family and neighbors. A bittersweet and moving comedy about love standing the test of time, “My Dog Stupid” stars iconic real-life couple Charlotte Gainsbourg and Yvan Attal, with the latter also serving as co-writer and director. The Hollywood Reporter writes: “In the French adaptation ‘Mon chien Stupide,’ actor-director Yvan Attal updates Fante’s novella to both the present day and to his own life, particularly his long-term relationship with co-star Charlotte Gainsbourg. The result is a well-written and -played remarriage dramedy that explores the Attal-Gainsbourg duo as they hit middle age and their kids gradually, and sometimes reluctantly, leave the nest. The film’s depiction of marital foibles feels clever and candid, focusing on the realities that couples face as they try to stick together into their 50s.”

NARRATIVE



MY LITTLE SISTER *Schwesterlein*

NARRATIVE

Stéphanie Chuat & Véronique Reymond, Germany/Switzerland, 2020, 99 min., English, French & German

Available from Nov. 5-22

Lisa (the wonderful Nina Hoss of “Phoenix” and “Barbara”), once a brilliant playwright, no longer writes. She lives with her family in Switzerland but her heart remains in Berlin, beating in time with that of her twin brother, Sven (Lars Eidinger), a famous theater actor. After Sven is diagnosed with an aggressive type of leukemia, the relationship between the two becomes even closer. Lisa refuses to accept this blow of fate and does everything in her power to return Sven to the stage. For her sibling soulmate, she neglects everything else, including her husband. But even as her marriage goes awry, Lisa only has eyes for her brother, who reflects her deepest longings and awakens in her the desire to be creative, to feel alive again. IndieWire writes: “Sven initially scans as the most formidable character in Stéphanie Chuat and Véronique Reymond’s moving drama ‘My Little Sister,’ but it’s Lisa who emerges as its fiery heart. Hoss and Eidinger easily slip into the twins’ close bond, with the actors adopting similar mannerisms and inflections, all the better to sell the sense that even the distance that has marked their adulthood is unable to crack what was forged in the womb. But can terminal illness? The answer is no, obviously, but Chuat and Reymond take their time unspooling a graceful drama that twists the tear-soaked conventions of the cancer drama into something raw and satisfying.”



MY NAME IS SARA

NARRATIVE

Steven Oritt, U.S., 2019, 111 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

“My Name is Sara” tells the true life story of Sara Goralnik, a 13-year-old Polish Jew whose entire family was killed by Nazis in September 1942. After a grueling escape to the Ukrainian countryside, Sara steals her Christian best friend’s identity and finds refuge in a small village, where she is taken in by a farmer and his young wife. But Sara soon discovers the dark secrets of her employers’ marriage, which complicate the effort to protect her own greatest secret — her true identity.

**Sponsored by Diane
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MY PRINCE EDWARD

Yee-Lam Wong, Hong Kong, 2019, 92 min., Cantonese

Available from Nov. 5-22

Serving countless newlyweds in Hong Kong's go-to one-stop shop of cheap wedding supplies doesn't exempt Fong from the social pressure to marry. Since nodding to fiancé Edward's proposal, she has been pushed beyond her limits by unaffordable housing, archaic customs, and intrusive in-laws. Vexing her further is the reappearance of ex-husband Shuwei, a mainlander she supposedly divorced after a sham marriage that solved her coming-of-age hardship. Zeroing in on the nuts-and-bolts of Hong Kong modern marriage, the whimsical gem "My Prince Edward" offers a rare humane take — both humorous and wise — on the worldly metropolis' divisions. As Fong redefines her best life in writer-director Norris Wong's debut, her courage will make viewers wholeheartedly cheer for a woman's independence. The South China Morning Post writes: "My Prince Edward' starts out as a sensitive relationship drama, and finds its purpose in the second half when Fong is forced to reconsider notions of happiness and personal liberty. Wong's film provides a nuanced yet unsentimental account of the worries of a Hong Kong woman in her thirties who feels obliged by social custom to marry yet sees no reason to abandon the possibility of living her life to the fullest."

NARRATIVE



THE NIGHT OF THE BEAST *La noche de la bestia*

Mauricio Leiva Cock, Colombia/Mexico, 2020, 70 min., Spanish

Available from Nov. 5-22

Using some of Iron Maiden's most famous tracks, including "Aces High" and "The Trooper," first-time director Mauricio Leiva-Cock — co-creator and showrunner for Netflix's "Green Frontier" — tells the story of two young metalheads coasting aimlessly through Bogota's alleys on the day of the band's first-ever appearance in Colombia. While biding their time before Iron Maiden's concert — their day is wrecked and friendship sorely tested when hoodlums steal their most valued possession: the tickets to see their favorite band perform live.

NARRATIVE

NINA WU

Midi Z, Taiwan, 2019, 103 min., Mandarin

Available from Nov. 5-22

After toiling for years in bit parts, aspiring actress Nina Wu (Wu Ke-Xi) finally gets her big break with a leading role in a spy thriller set in the 1960s. The part, which calls for nudity and explicit sex scenes, is made all the more challenging thanks to the director's unending belittlements. While seemingly on the brink of professional triumph, Nina's psychological resolve begins to crack under the pressure. As she rushes to her childhood home following a family emergency, Nina begins suffering from paranoid fantasies about a mysterious woman who stalks and attacks her. As Nina takes refuge in remembering happier times, it becomes increasingly apparent that she might be repressing a crucial memory. This sumptuous, stylized thriller is reminiscent of "Mulholland Drive," "Black Swan," and other poison-pen letters to the entertainment industry. Screen Daily writes: "The star of this psychological thriller, Wu Ke-Xi, is also the screenwriter of the picture, a vividly disorientating #MeToo-themed drama. It's clearly a personal work: Wu has drawn upon her own experiences as a young and vulnerable actress within the film and television industries for a story which gives a powerful account of the post-traumatic stress suffered by the victims of powerful and unscrupulous industry insiders."



NO MAN'S LAND

Conor Allyn, U.S., 2021, 115 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

This modern Western — which pointedly addresses contemporary immigration issues — is inspired by the real-life “no man’s land” areas along the Texas-Mexico border. While out on a father-son border patrol, Jackson (Jake Allyn) accidentally kills a Mexican immigrant boy. When his father (Frank Grillo) tries taking the blame, Jackson flees south on horseback, becoming a gringo “illegal alien” in Mexico. Chased by both Texas Rangers and Mexican federales, Jackson journeys across Mexico to seek forgiveness from the dead boy’s father only to fall in love with the land he was taught to hate. “No Man’s Land” — which also features George Lopez and Andie MacDowell — is a family affair: Director Conor Allyn co-wrote the film with brother (and star) Jake and father Rob.



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OLIGASE: DEMON OF FEAR

NARRATIVE

Icko Gonzalez & John Valdes Tan, Philippines, 2020, 100 min., Tagalog

Available from Nov. 5-22

“Oligase” tells the story of a “no-read and no-write” indigenous Matigsalug girl who rebels against her tribe’s strict beliefs about a monster who attacks and eats schoolchildren — the Oligase. Convinced that the monster is a folktale, Laha begins to see backwardness and ignorance in her elders, village, and life. Driven by a stubborn desire to study, learn, and gain knowledge, Laha runs away. Unbeknownst to her, however, greater and darker monsters await on her journey away from home. Laha begins to see that there are indeed monsters in the city — a deep evil that waits to devour and destroy in exchange for her dream. Will Laha be willing to pay the terrible price, or is there another path waiting for her?



OMAR AND US

NARRATIVE

Mehmet Bahadir Er & Maryna Er Gorbach, Turkey, 2019, 100 min., Arabic & Turkish

Available from Nov. 16-22

Turkish soldier Ismet (Cem Bender), who served at the border as a commander of the Coast Guard, has recently retired. Now, as a civilian, he struggles to communicate with his family members and the people around him. He feels increasingly isolated: Ismet’s only son abandoned him for the U.S., and now his wife wants to join her son, too. But Ismet’s circumstances change when he suddenly becomes neighbors with two Syrian refugees — Omar (Sher Yakub) and Mariye (Hala Alsayasneh) — at his house near the Turkish-Greek border. His experiences with the pair force Ismet to face his prejudices and question his political views. “Omar and Us” reflects today’s troubled reality not just in its story but also in its production: The actors who play Omar and Mariye are actual Syrian refugees who currently live in Turkey with temporary immigration status.



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ON BROADWAY

Oren Jacoby, U.S., 2019, 84 min.

Available from Nov. 13-15

In “On Broadway,” directed by Academy Award nominee Oren Jacoby (for the short “Sister Rose’s Passion”), an all-star cast tells the inside story of the Broadway theater and how it came back from the brink thanks to innovative work, a new attention to inclusion, and a sometimes uneasy balance between art and commerce. Legends of the stage and screen — including Helen Mirren, Christine Baranski, August Wilson, James Corden, Alec Baldwin, John Lithgow, Viola Davis, Hugh Jackman, and Ian McKellen — take the audience behind the scenes of Broadway’s most groundbreaking and beloved shows, from “A Chorus Line” to “Hamilton.” This hurlyburly ride through Times Square, once again the main street of American showbiz, features iconic performances by such dynamic performers as Lin-Manuel Miranda, Patti Lupone, Bernadette Peters, James Earl Jones, and Mandy Patinkin. The Hollywood Reporter writes: “Enhanced by a wealth of archival footage and clips from notable productions, the theatrical history lesson flows smoothly and proves consistently entertaining.”

DOCUMENTARY



OPEKA

**Cam Cowan, Argentina/Madagascar/U.S., 2019, 89 min.,
French, Malagasy & Spanish, FREE**

Available from Nov. 5-22

In Buenos Aires at the age of 16, Pedro Opeka declined an opportunity to become a professional soccer player so he could continue his studies to be a priest and help the poorest people in the world. After choosing the priesthood, Opeka befriended Parisian hippies and atheists who broadened his mind and his heart before his appointment to Madagascar, where he worked to not simply proselytize but to enact real-world change among the devastated communities living among the country’s “City of Flies” landfill. Through Akamasoa, a nonprofit he founded, Father Pedro helped thousands of poor citizens to build permanent communities with sturdy houses, available water, and active schools. After 30 years of construction, fighting increasing poverty and political instability, Father Pedro has created a highly functional city within this failing African country. His mission is to prepare the children he saves to one day save their own country. Nicknamed “Mother Teresa with Pants” and “The Insurgent of Madagascar,” Father Pedro has been nominated multiple times for the Nobel Peace Prize. **Q&A with director Cam Cowan.**

Shown with I’m Not Bad Luck: The True Story of Kesz Valdez (Marcos Negroa & Johanna Schnell, Philippines/U.S., 2020, 20 min.) Denounced by his parents as bad luck, Kesz Valdez was cast out to live alone on the streets at the age of 4, but a fateful encounter inspired him to help thousands of similar children, eventually leading to an International Children’s Peace Prize.

DOCUMENTARY



THE ORATORIO

DOCUMENTARY

Alex Bayer, Jonathan Mann & Mary Anne Rothberg, U.S., 2019, 67 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

In “The Oratorio,” filmmaker Martin Scorsese helps tell the story of an 1826 performance that forever changed America’s cultural landscape with the introduction of Italian opera to New York City. Taking place in Scorsese’s childhood church — St. Patrick’s Cathedral in Little Italy — this watershed event was lost to history, and the film explores both the oratorio’s rediscovery and its eventual re-creation in the church where it was performed nearly 200 years earlier. That larger narrative is further enhanced by several compelling subplots. Scorsese, of course, provides fascinating context for the oratorio by tying it to his own life growing up in Little Italy, as chronicled in such films as “Mean Streets” (which makes a few cameo appearances), and the history surrounding the cathedral also informs the director’s “Gangs of New York” and “The Age of Innocence.” In addition, the film provides a privileged glimpse into the operation of the church’s very old organ, which manages to still function on a combination of masking tape, inventive triage, and sheer grit. Perhaps most delightfully, “The Oratorio” relates a surprising biography: One of the people at the center of the oratorio was Lorenzo da Ponte, who before entering the grocery business in NYC was by turns a licentious priest, a running buddy of Casanova, and Mozart’s librettist for “Don Giovanni,” “The Marriage of Figaro,” and “Cosi fan tutte.” As the film entertainingly chronicles, da Ponte arrived in the U.S. after being chased out of a series of European countries because of his decidedly impious behavior. Although now a New Yorker, co-director Mary Anne Rothberg originally hails from St. Louis.

Q&A with directors Alex Bayer and Mary Anne Rothberg.



THE OTHER *L'Autre*

NARRATIVE

Charlotte Dauphin, France, 2019, 77 min., French

Available from Nov. 5-22

“The Other” — the directorial debut of Charlotte Dauphin, producer of Mia Hansen Love’s “Bergman Island” and “Maya” — is an intimate portrait of a woman’s mental distress as she drifts between dream and reality after experiencing loss. Marie (Astrid Bergès-Frisbey, “The Well-Digger’s Daughter”) is a young ballet dancer with the Paris Opéra. After the sudden death of her father on her 30th birthday, she decides to abandon her artistic career and pursue a reclusive existence. Her grief makes Marie live encased in her own memories and thoughts, obsessing over the mysterious writings left by her father in the family house. Only her love for Paul, a photographer who took the last portrait of her father — captured just before his death — has the potential to reawaken a vital force within Marie and help her evolve into another version of her grief-stricken self.



OUR GORONGOSA

James Byrne, Mozambique, 2019, 60 min., Portuguese, FREE

Available from Nov. 5-22

Gorongosa National Park in Mozambique has become one of Africa's most celebrated wildlife-restoration stories. Following years of exploitation, Gorongosa has rebounded with rich wildlife through holistic ecological practices that emphasize both animal conservation and socioeconomic infrastructure for the citizens who live nearby. After a decade of renewed protection, Gorongosa's large mammal population has increased tenfold, to more than 100,000 animals, and the park has found innovative ways to co-exist with the 200,000 people living near its borders. The film tells this hopeful story through Dominique Gonçalves, a young African elephant ecologist who strives to empower and inspire Africans, especially women, to become responsible stewards of the environment. By providing large-scale, long-term health care, agriculture support, and girls' education to surrounding communities, Gorongosa is helping redefine the identity and purpose of national parks. **Q&A with producer Gráinne Keegan and Gorongosa expert in girls' education Larissa Sousa, moderated by Joshua Ray, film critic for the Cinema St. Louis blog, The Lens.**

Shown with From Kurils with Love (Taylor Rees, Russia/U.S., 2020, 24 min.)

Vladimir, a scrappy but aging Russian marine-mammal biologist, is on a mission to understand and protect the Kuril Islands, with their seal and sea-lion populations, from the threat of climate change. *And Making Waves* (Laura Zéphirin, Faroe Islands/France/Mayotte/Morocco/U.S., 2020, 32 min., English & French)

Ocean activist Lamyra Essemli works to prevent overfishing and to protect marine turtles from being poached in the Indian Ocean and pilot whales from being hunted in the North Atlantic.

Environmental Focus
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PACARRETE

Allan Deberton, Brazil, 2019, 98 min., Portuguese

Available from Nov. 5-22

Russas, a small town in northeastern Brazil, is the home of Pacarrete, a grumpy retired dance teacher who lives with her sister and a domestic servant who is as slow and old as the siblings. Strict and surly, Pacarrete spends most days cleaning the sidewalk in front of their apartment and fighting with whoever crosses her path. But she nurtures a dream of starring in a new ballet during the city's big annual party, which is imminent. To that end, Pacarrete optimistically orders a new ballet outfit to be made and endeavors to convince city hall to include her dance spectacle as part of the proceedings. However, the public's profound lack of interest in such performances proves a major obstacle. The Hollywood Reporter writes: "An opening title proclaims this is based on a true story, which may account for the filmmaker's obvious affection for his batty but utterly understandable heroine. Though her story is set near Fortaleza, the film is as set-bound as a 1930s musical, and the tech work pulls together a very special atmosphere of a genteel old Brazil that lingers on in a crass new world. Fred Silveira's score and unexpected song choices are spot on and Christiana Garrido's costumes for Pacarrete are a delight, especially some spectacular tutus."

NARRATIVE



PAPER SPIDERS

Inon Shampanier, U.S., 2019, 110 min.

Available from Nov. 16–22

In this bittersweet story about coming of age in the shadow of mental illness, all Melanie (Stefania LaVie Owen, “The Beach Bum,” “The Carrie Diaries”) wants is a normal senior year. But her life turns upside down when her mother, Dawn (Lili Taylor, “Mystic Pizza,” “Perry Mason,” “American Crime”), begins to suffer from paranoid delusions. Melanie recently lost her father and cannot bear to watch her mother lose her mind. Melanie attempts a series of interventions, but challenging Dawn’s reality destroys their relationship. As Dawn’s paranoia spirals out of control, her daughter is forced to make the toughest of choices. The Hollywood Reporter writes: “Inspired by personal experience with a loved one, husband-and-wife screenwriting partners Inon and Natalie Shampanier take a straightforward and empathetic approach to their story of one woman’s persecutory delusional disorder, or what’s sometimes referred to in lay terms as paranoia. ‘Paper Spiders’ is a message film, but one that’s spiked with welcome humor, and its excellent cast is led by the reliably compelling Lili Taylor as the afflicted woman, tormented and tormenting, and Stefania LaVie Owen as her smart and sensitive daughter.”

NARRATIVE



PAPICHA

Mounia Meddour, Algeria/France, 2019, 105 min., Arabic & French

Available from Nov. 5–22

In 1997 Algiers, when the country falls into the hands of terrorist groups seeking to establish an Islamic and archaic state, women are particularly affected — oppressed by primitive diktats that seek to take control of their bodies and limit their passage through the public space. Nedjma (Lyna Khoudri, a star of Wes Anderson’s upcoming “The French Dispatch”), an 18-year-old student passionate about fashion design, refuses to let the tragic events of the Algerian Civil War keep her from experiencing a normal life and going out at night with her friends. As the social climate becomes more conservative, she rejects the new bans set by the radicals and decides to fight for her freedom and independence by putting on a live fashion show. RogerEbert.com writes: “Brisk, confident, and atmospheric, Mounia Meddour’s feature debut ‘Papicha’ promptly brings to mind certain female driven films of the 21st century, centered on young women’s camaraderie, resistance and unique struggles — movies like Deniz Gamze Ergüven’s moody ‘Mustang,’ Margaret Betts’ somber ‘Novitiate,’ Peter Mullan’s devastating ‘The Magdalene Sisters’ and even Talya Lavie’s darkly comedic ‘Zero Motivation.’ While set in different eras and dissimilar in tone, all these deeply feminist films share a language in speaking to the challenges (and in some cases, violence) teenaged and twenty-something women face in their respective cultures, guided by strict cultural or religious codes.”

NARRATIVE

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THE PENNY BLACK

William J. Saunders, U.S., 2019, 98 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

The twisty, head-spinning investigative thriller “The Penny Black” begins when Will, the estranged son of a conman, receives a stamp collection putatively worth between \$1 and \$2 million from his enigmatic Russian neighbor, Roman, who asks him to hold the stamps while he’s on a two-week trip. Far from a close friend, Will knows nothing of Roman beyond his first name. The filmmakers hear this outlandish tale from Will at a dinner with mutual friends shortly after he receives the stamps, and they ask to start filming to see what occurs. As it happens, Roman is absent for far longer than two weeks, and after several months pass, Will leaves the apartment building to move in with his girlfriend, taking the stamps with him. Questions abound: Given that Will has no contact information for Roman — not even a last name — what will he do with the stamps, which are in fact quite valuable? Is he potentially in any danger? The film then takes another whiplash turn when a significant piece of the stamp collection goes missing, forcing the filmmakers to re-examine Will — a slippery, elusive character throughout — and his capacity for honesty. Los Angeles magazine writes: “‘The Penny Black’ tells an impossible-to-look-away-from story.” **Q&A with director William J. Saunders, producer Alexander Greer, and subject Will Cassayd-Smith.**

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Shown with “Hello,” We Lied (Laura Gamse, U.S., 2020, 12 min.) A profile of Jestin Coler, dubbed “The King of Fake News” by NPR, who built a network of websites meant to “infiltrate the echo chambers” of the alt-right.



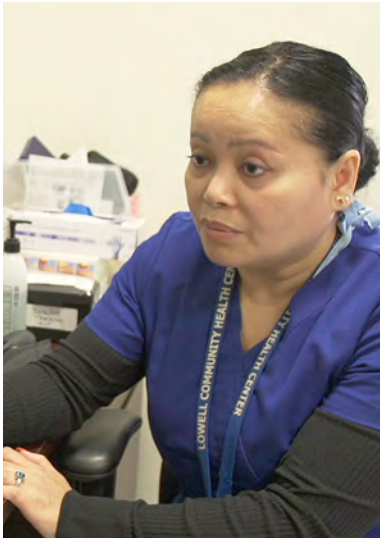
THE PLACE THAT MAKES US

Karla Murthy, U.S., 2019, 70 min., FREE

Available from Nov. 5-22

Although a portrait of the troubled Rust Belt city of Youngstown, Ohio, “The Place That Makes Us” offers a gratifyingly hopeful look at efforts to restore a town ravaged by the prolonged economic distress caused by the closure of its iconic steel mills and related industries. Like St. Louis, Youngstown has a huge number of decaying, abandoned houses that blight its neighborhoods and serve as attractive nuisances for squatting and drug use. The film provides historical perspective on the city’s decline, making deft use of archival footage, but primarily focuses on the present through a quintet of related figures who are attempting to infuse fresh blood into the city’s sickened body. Two are siblings: a sister who works for the mayor identifying structures that can’t be salvaged and require demolition — with the hope of improving the neighborhood environment — and a brother whose nonprofit restores salvageable houses that can be saved from the wrecking ball. Another of the nonprofit’s employees is also featured, and in her non-work hours she contributes to the community in a more personal way by hanging with and helping a trio of young Black brothers with a difficult family situation. In addition to its cohort of White subjects, “The Place That Makes Us” gives equal attention to the city’s Black population through a committed city councilman — a former drug dealer who now runs a small business detailing automobiles — and a health-care worker attempting to leave her distressed rental property and purchase her first home. **Q&A with director Karla Murthy, moderated by Rebecca Wanzo, Ph.D., chair and professor of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and affiliate professor of American Culture Studies at Washington University.**

Shown with **Shift Change** (Bill Roach, U.S., 2019, 35 min.) The economic engine of Janesville, Wis., was its massive General Motors Assembly Plant, but when the factory shut down, the townspeople refused to succumb to depression, helping create a vibrant civic renaissance.



A PLACE TO BREATHE

DOCUMENTARY

Michelle Grace Steinberg, U.S., 2020, 87 min., Central Khmer, English, French, Spanish & Swahili, FREE

Available from Nov. 5-22

A work of timely urgency, director Michelle Grace Steinberg’s “A Place to Breathe” toggles between immigrant and refugee communities in two cities — Lowell, Mass., and Oakland, Calif. — to illustrate their varied struggles to assimilate, preserve cultural identity, and, most prominently, heal from the traumas that sent them to the U.S., all assisted by determined healthcare and social workers. A series of small, intimate interactions illustrate how these challenges play out person to person, family to family, rather than in congressional shouting or mass protests. Interviews offer context, and animation is briefly used to portray past-life events in other lands that began in happiness before they turned horrific, but the film keeps the focus mostly narrowed on two families, with outside voices amplifying their experiences. At a time when some U.S. political leaders persist in demonizing the “other,” Steinberg provides a patient immersion in the quiet effort to revive lives whose dreams were momentarily extinguished and then are slowly brought back to life. **Q&A with director Michelle Grace Steinberg and producer Robyn Bykofsky, moderated by Joshua Ray, film critic for the Cinema St. Louis blog, The Lens.**

*Shown with **America, As in Us** (Andrew Batista & Mohammad Gorjestani, U.S., 2019, 13 min., English, Somali & Spanish) A portrait of five diverse immigrants from across the country who have come under threat because of the Trump administration. And **The Undocumented Lawyer** (Zach Ingrasci & Chris Temple, U.S., 2020, 19 min., English & Spanish) Lizbeth Mateo, an attorney in Los Angeles, is undocumented, but she hasn’t let that status hold her back, drawing from her own experiences to fight for immigrant rights.*

Sponsored by International Institute of St. Louis



QUEEN OF HEARTS: AUDREY FLACK

DOCUMENTARY

Rachel Reichman & Deborah Shaffer, U.S., 2019, 75 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

At 88 years old, Audrey Flack — feminist, rebel, mother, painter, sculptor, and teacher — holds a unique place in the history of contemporary art in America. Flack’s often-controversial 40-year career evolved from abstract expressionism in the 1950s to photorealism in the 1970s to monumental sculpture in the 1990s. One of the first women ever included in the famed “Janson’s History of Art,” Flack continues to create, explore, and inspire with her unique style and indomitable spirit, and “Queen of Hearts” follows the artist as she takes her work in yet another new direction. Although the focus remains on her work, the film also explores Flack’s personal life, especially the difficulty of balancing her career and her family, which included a severely autistic daughter (at a time when autism was not well understood and support was hard to come by). Her career also coincided with the rise of feminism, and the doc explores the specific challenges of women in the art world. “Queen of Hearts” is a moving portrait of an artist who is still testing, still experimenting, still searching. The film is co-directed by former St. Louisan Rachel Reichman — a SLIFF alum for her own film “Work” and as editor of “Hitchcock/Truffaut” — and executive-produced by local philanthropist Mary Strauss. **Q&A with directors Rachel Reichman and Deborah Shaffer.**

Sponsored by Ward & Carol Klein



THE RABBI GOES WEST

Amy Geller & Gerald Peary, U.S., 2019, 78 min., FREE

Available from Nov. 5-22

Yes, there are Jews in Montana! There's an evangelical strand of Hasidic Judaism — Chabad-Lubavitch — spreading across the world, and “The Rabbi Goes West” focuses on one Chabad rabbi, 34-year-old Chaim Bruk, who moved from Brooklyn to unlikely Bozeman, Mont., to bring his brand of Judaism to the American West. Part of his Chabad mission is to place a mezuzah, an encased prayer offering, on the doorpost of every Montana Jew. That's fewer than 2,000 families spread across a state 14 times larger than Israel. As he travels across this “big sky” landscape, Chaim not only confronts a terrifying neo-Nazi threat but also faces objections to his proselytizing from some skeptical Jews and the state's rabbis, both Reform and Conservative. Although they acknowledge that he is beloved by his congregants, they fear his larger goal to put up Chabad centers everywhere in Montana. Will Chaim succeed in his Chabad expansion? And is there a cost? The Boston Globe writes: “In their balanced, thorough, and wry ‘The Rabbi Goes West,’ filmmakers Gerald Peary and Amy Geller avoid taking sides as they intimately engage with the rabbi at home with his equally committed wife and their adopted children. They join him at his Scotch and Sushi Sukkot celebration, at a shooting range as he fires an AR-15 with his 12-year-old daughter, and on the road as he tirelessly drives across the state in search of new believers.”

Q&A with directors Amy Geller and Gerald Peary.

**Sponsored by
John C. Danforth Center
on Religion and Politics at
Washington University
in St. Louis**



THE REUNITED STATES

Ben Rekhi, U.S., 2020, 83 min., FREE

Available from Nov. 5-15

“The Reunited States” — both heartwarming and heartening — provides a much-needed balm in a time of bruisingly combative political division. Over the past several years, every aspect of American society — our communities, our workplaces, our friendships, even our own families — seems to have become increasingly polarized. “The Reunited States” consciously works to combat that movement to the extremes by profiling people who have dedicated their lives to promoting depolarization and communicating across the political divide. The film seamlessly toggles among a quartet of activists who are building bridges rather than erecting barriers: Susan Bro, mother of Heather Heyer, the protester struck and killed by a vehicle at a Charlottesville, Va., demonstration; Greg Orman, an independent candidate for governor of Kansas; Steven Olikara, founder of the nonpartisan Millennial Action Project; and the Leaverton family — former Republican strategist David, wife Erin, and their three daughters — who travel to every state to listen attentively to divergent voices from across the political spectrum. In addition, Mark Gerzon, whose book “The Reunited States of America” inspired the film, periodically offers brief but perceptive commentary. **Q&A with director Ben Rekhi and subjects David Leaverton and Greg Orman.**

*Shown with **Activized** (Eric Stange, U.S., 2019, 36 min.)* A profile of a handful of ordinary Americans who — for the first time in their lives — have left their comfort zones and thrown themselves into a political cause.

**Sponsored by
John C. Danforth Center
on Religion and Politics at
Washington University
in St. Louis**



REVIVAL

Josefina Rotman Lyons, U.S., 2019, 65 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

The charming “Revival” documents a program by a New York City nonprofit — the interestingly named Dances for a Variable Population — that extols the benefits of movement through dance, with a focus on seniors. A 2017 project of DVP, Revival, enlisted a quartet of legendary senior-citizen performers — three of them (Ellen Graff, Marnie Thomas Wood, Stuart Hodes) associated with Martha Graham, the other (George Faison) with Alvin Ailey — to create dances for older folks without a significant dance background. The film provides abbreviated career retrospectives for the four choreographers, efficiently establishing their credentials, but prefers to dwell on the present rather than look backward to the past. “Revival” benefits enormously from the charismatic, engaging nature of its principal subjects, who are undeniably inspiring (the oldest, Hodes, is 92 but still razor-sharp and highly active). The documentary tracks the evolution of three group dances with the amateur participants (one each by Faison, Hodes, and the collaborating duo of Graff and Wood) and includes the creation of a “bonus” pas de deux — choreographed by Hodes and starring two aging dance pros (Graff and Broadway performer/choreographer Chet Walker) — that movingly explores a longtime relationship. Interspersed with vérité footage are interviews with the nonprofit’s founder, Naomi Goldberg Haas, and the four choreographers, with occasional brief words from the just-folks participants. The film, which also offers glimpses of the completed dances in its opening sequence, culminates with a celebratory public performance of the pieces. **Q&A with director Josefina Rotman Lyons.**

Shown with **My Father the Mover** (Julia Jansch, South Africa/U.S., 2019, 13 min., English & Xhosa) A dance teacher uses African electronic Gqom beats to motivate kids in the township of Khayelitsha, South Africa. *And* **Underground** (Jun Bae, U.S., 2019, 8 min.) An examination of freedom, culture, and identity through the thoughts of raw-battle b-boys in the Bay Area.



RIVER CITY DRUMBEAT

Anne Flatté & Marlon Johnson, U.S., 2019, 94 min., **FREE**

Available from Nov. 5-22

For nearly three decades, Edward “Nardie” White has led an after-school community drum corps (River City Drum Corp) in Louisville, Ky., drawing on Pan-African culture and music to reach and mentor youth in his West End neighborhood. Now in his 60s, Mr. White feels he must step down to allow the drum corps to evolve with a new generation. “River City Drumbeat” is the story of Mr. White’s final year and the training of his successor, Albert Shumake, a young man whose troubled life was transformed by the drumline. Over the years, the drumline has also proven a lifeline for other children navigating personal struggles and adversity, including those featured in the film: high-school seniors Imani and Jailen, and pre-teen Emily. “River City Drumbeat” gratifyingly proves a documentary of small, revelatory moments rather than big gestures. Although both kids and adults recount past and ongoing struggles, some of them significant, there are none of the major shocks — a gun death, a pregnancy — that often become the focus of films centered on youth in distressed Black communities. The New York Times writes: “The documentary is shot in a vérité style — there are no talking heads, and we learn who the subjects are by spending time with them, simply observing them at home and at the center. Though the movie does include footage of drum performances, it doesn’t move at the clip of sticks on snares. Instead, the film listens for this community’s heartbeat, finding its steady pulse just as expected: healthy and strong.” **Q&A with directors Anne Flatté and Marlon Johnson, moderated by Andy Uhrich, curator of Film & Media at Washington University Libraries.**

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



THE RIVERBED

Rachel Reichman, U.S., 1986, 95 min., **FREE**

Available from Nov. 5-22

Evoking a mythic American South, “The Riverbed” follows a drifter who insinuates himself into the lives of a mother and daughter. He finds there is little to win and much to lose. Jonathan Rosenbaum in the Chicago Reader writes: “Rachel Reichman’s independent black-and-white feature is a moody landscape piece that stays in the mind less for its minimal narrative (an alliance between a couple of drifters) than for its brooding, melancholy images. This could be termed ‘school of Jim Jarmusch,’ but without the urban humor.” “The Riverbed” plays as part of a free program of the director’s films, which serves as a complement to Master Class: Behind the Camera with Rachel Reichman (see Special Events).

NARRATIVE



THE ROAD UP

Greg Jacobs & Jon Siskel, U.S., 2020, 94 min., FREE

Available from Nov. 5-22

“The Road Up” follows four Chicagoans on the daunting journey from rock bottom to stable employment. Their lifeline: Mr. Jesse, a charismatic mentor with Cara, a nonprofit that helps the chronically unemployed find long-term jobs. Mr. Jesse’s own troubled past — which is eventually revealed — compels him to help his “students” find hope in the face of homelessness, addiction, incarceration, and trauma. The participants in the program are required to go through a month-long “boot camp” called Transformations, and the film records lengthy stretches of these sessions, with Mr. Jesse putting his charges through some serious emotional changes, forcing them to acknowledge and examine their own self-sabotaging behaviors and learn ways to change them. Taken together, their stories form a powerful portrait of the struggles millions of Americans face every day in a precarious and unforgiving economy — the subtle, often interconnected obstacles that prevent so many from escaping poverty, and the essential role that community, connection, and love play in overcoming them. Filmmakers Jon Siskel and Greg Jacobs’ “Louder Than a Bomb” won SLIFF’s Audience Award as Best Documentary in 2010, and “The Road Up” proves a similarly powerful and inspirational work. **Q&A with directors Greg Jacobs and Jon Siskel and subjects Kristen Robinson and Jesse Teverbaugh.**

**Sponsored by
Joan Miller**



SAPELO

Nick Brandestini, Switzerland/U.S., 2020, 92 min., FREE

Available from Nov. 20-22

On the Georgia barrier island of Sapelo — accessible only by boat — preteen brothers JerMarkest and Johnathan are growing up in the last remaining enclave of the Saltwater Geechee people, African-Americans who developed a unique creole language and culture in the coastal regions of the South. Their greatest joy is exploring the island in the same way that their adoptive mother, Cornelia Walker Bailey, did as a child. As Sapelo’s storyteller and elder matriarch, Cornelia works to preserve what remains of this unique community established by her ancestors. Reflecting on the complicated splendor of her youth, she strives to shepherd her sons through theirs. At the dawn of adolescence, the brothers inherit her hope, but begin to clash with each other and the wider world. Screen writes: “It is impossible to stem the tide of history in ‘Sapelo,’ a heartfelt elegy for life on an island that was once home to a thriving Saltwater Geechee African-American community. Nick Brandestini’s immersive approach explores the future of the community through the lives of a family inextricably linked to its past. The result is a measured but involving documentary with a tender human touch.” **Q&A with director Nick Brandestini, moderated by documentary filmmaker Alison Carrick (“The First Secret City”).**



THE SHIP *La Nave*

NARRATIVE

Batan Silva, Mexico, 2020, 99 min., Spanish

Available from Nov. 5-22

Based on a true story, this inspiring dramedy chronicles the slow rescue from despair of Miguel, the disillusioned host of a children’s radio program called “The Ship.” Miguel initially seems to grow ever more embittered and morbidly depressed: Even when a naive young boy dying of cancer calls in and pleads with Miguel’s character, the Captain, to take him to a deserted island on the show’s nonexistent ship, the dyspeptic host remains unmoved. Though pressed by his colleagues and the station manager — who is growing increasingly annoyed by Miguel’s inappropriate antics both on and off the air — to help the boy, he exhibits no interest in becoming involved and resists granting the request. But something changes in Miguel, and he ultimately endeavors to raise the money and attempt to fulfill this special dream for the child and his mother.



A SHOT THROUGH THE WALL

NARRATIVE

Aimee Long, U.S., 2020, 88 min., Chinese & English

Available from Nov. 5-22

After accidentally shooting an innocent Black man through a wall in Brooklyn, young Chinese-American cop Mike Tan (Kenny Leu) must deal with his guilt and try not to unravel as he attempts to navigate the charged and complicated worlds of media, justice, and racial politics in modern-day New York. Based on actual events — which are compellingly detailed in the documentary “Down a Dark Stairwell” — “A Shot Through the Wall” is the feature debut of director Aimee Long. The film premiered at the Bentonville Film Festival. **Q&A with director Aimee Long, moderated by Andrea Sporcic Klund, film commissioner of the Missouri Film Office.**

**Sponsored by The Japanese
American Citizens
League - St. Louis Chapter**



THE SIGN PAINTER *Pīlsāta pi upis*

NARRATIVE

Viesturs Kairiss, Czech Republic/Latvia, 2020, 114 min., German, Latvian, Russian & Yiddish

Available from Nov. 13-15

“The Sign Painter” is a tragicomedy about Ansis, a young Latvian man with simple goals: to marry the free-spirited and beautiful Zisla, the daughter of a local Jewish merchant, and to pursue a career as an artist while supporting himself as a sign painter. But his dreams are repeatedly swept away in wave after wave of totalitarian rule, from Latvian dictatorship to Soviet occupation to Nazi conquest to Soviet restoration. Ansis struggles to remain neutral and unobtrusive with each new regime, but it is difficult to cope with the shifting, opposing forces of resistance and conformity and somehow remain true to himself. Ansis also struggles on a personal front because of Zisla’s fascination with communist ideals and her father’s opposition to their marriage. As the pressures on him mount, a young Latvian beauty arrives on the scene and offers Ansis a less complicated path toward a seemingly more predictable future. But even that hope proves illusory. As stability crumbles and violence accelerates, Ansis begins to believe that simply surviving may be the only act of heroism that counts.



THE SIT-IN: HARRY BELAFONTE HOSTS “THE TONIGHT SHOW”

DOCUMENTARY

Yoruba Richen, U.S., 2020, 77 min., FREE

Available from Nov. 5-22

As the country was embroiled in a divisive election and racial tensions flared, civil-rights activist and trailblazing performer Harry Belafonte served as guest host of “The Tonight Show” for one memorable week in 1968. By then, Johnny Carson had turned this pioneering late-night show into one of the most powerful platforms of communication in the U.S. In an unprecedented move, Belafonte took a predominantly White institution and transformed it into a multicultural and political experience: 15 of the 25 guests featured in the five shows were Black. Award-winning director Yoruba Richen (“Promised Land,” “The New Black”) examines the importance of this lost broadcast history through vibrant interviews with Belafonte, Whoopi Goldberg, Questlove, and some of the week’s remarkable roster of talent, including Petula Clark, Dionne Warwick, and Freda Payne. Although the tapes of the shows were recorded over by NBC in a sadly misguided cost-saving effort, “The Sit-In” features rare archival footage that survived, including interviews with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, which are among their last television appearances before both were assassinated. The Washington Post writes: “Although largely forgotten, it was an astonishing moment in which Black culture burst forth on a show and time slot that was typically treated as a lighthearted prelude to bedtime. Whoopi Goldberg considers those episodes to have been a necessary wake-up call: ‘We’re here, we’re Americans — we’re part of this, we’re not going anywhere,’ she says.”

Q&A with director Yoruba Richen and producers Valerie Thomas and Joan Walsh.

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New Filmmakers Forum
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SMALL TIME

Niav Conty, U.S., 2019, 104 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

“Small Time” takes an empathetic and at times darkly humorous look at life, faith, and childhood. Though just a kid, Emma navigates a dysfunctional adult world of relentless addiction, stubborn patriotism, dogmatic faith, and the pervasive sexualization of young girls. Her challenge is to emerge with a sense of self. It can be brutal enough just growing up a girl, but when you add poverty, addiction, and God to the mix, it’s no wonder that Emma doesn’t know how to make friends. With a gun in her bag and fairy prayers on her tongue, she and her cat bravely go where too many girls have gone before. But are innocence and hope enough to save the day? The (San Jose) Mercury News writes: “There’s nothing small about the talent in this mighty feature from screenwriter/director Niav Conty, who is an astute observer of the human condition. She expands on her own short film to tell a harrowing, all-too real story about a young girl named Emma (Audrey Grace Marshall; you’ll fall in love with her) who is shuttled around rural Pennsylvania due to her parents’ battles with meth addiction and PTSD. Through it all, Emma retains her positivity.” **Q&A with director Niav Conty, moderated by Andrea Sporcic Klund, film commissioner of the Missouri Film Office.**

NARRATIVE



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STARDUST

Gabriel Range, U.K., 2020, 109 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

In 1971, a 24-year-old David Bowie (Johnny Flynn) embarks on his first road trip to America with struggling publicist Ron Oberman (Marc Maron), only to be met with a world not yet ready for him. “Stardust” offers a glimpse behind the curtain at the events that inspired the creation of Bowie’s first and most memorable alter ego, Ziggy Stardust, capturing the turning point that cemented his career as one of the world’s greatest cultural icons. Variety writes: “The Bowie we meet, who wears his long hair under a cool Western-brimmed hat and likes to put on a beige ‘dress’ that resembles something Liberace would have favored as one of Robin Hood’s merry men, thinks that he’s breaking boundaries, but actually he’s still playing it safe. He hasn’t gotten in touch with his inner rock diva of insanity yet. Ziggy Stardust, the stage persona that would launch him into the stratosphere, was less a character than an essence — at once an alien rocker, a pansexual rooster, and a fearless declaration of fractured identity. ‘Stardust’ is about how he finds his way there.”

NARRATIVE



STARS BY THE POUND *100 kilos d'étoiles*

NARRATIVE

Marie-Sophie Chambon, France, 2018, 88 min., French

Available from Nov. 5-22

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

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STRIDER

NARRATIVE

Mark Lewis, U.S., 2020, 85 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

Few protagonists are more compelling than the underdog sports hero, and “Strider” adds a new icon to the cinematic pantheon, upholding the grand tradition of “Rudy,” “Hoosiers,” and “Million Dollar Baby.” Jody (Yelena Friedman), a lonely teenage girl, joins forces with Hannah (Maggie Alexander), a disgraced track coach, and together they spend a summer training for the Pinnacle Games, the biggest track-and-field competition on the East Coast. An irresistibly inspiring indie, “Strider” is likely to have audiences cheering loudly in support as Jody and Hannah attempt to run down their mutual dream. **Q&A with director Mark Lewis.**

Sponsored by Claire Anderson



TALL TALES *Apró mesék*

NARRATIVE

Attila Szász, Hungary, 2019, 112 min., Hungarian & Russian

Available from Nov. 5-22

In 1945 Hungary, shortly after the end of World War II, chaos and insecurity reign supreme in the country, and conman Hankó (Tamás Szabó Kimmel) attempts to take advantage of the confused times. When he's forced to flee from Budapest, Hankó is given shelter in the woods by the mysterious Judit (Vica Kerekes). As he tries to confront his demons, Hankó finds himself in a passionate love affair with his savior, but the idyll can't last: Judit's husband is soon to return home from the front. Both a sweeping romance and a Hitchcockian thriller replete with unexpected twists and hairpin turns, "Tall Tales" also addresses such serious issues as domestic violence and PTSD. The film is the latest from three-time SLIFF alum Attila Szász ("Eternal Winter," "Demimonde," "The Ambassador to Bern").



THE TASTE OF PHO *Smak pho*

NARRATIVE

Mariko Bobrik, Poland, 2019, 84 min., Polish & Vietnamese

Available from Nov. 5-22

In this story about love, misunderstanding, and food, Vietnamese cook Long struggles to fit into a European culture that his 10-year-old daughter has already embraced as her own. Maja hides from her classmates the lunch of traditional meals prepared for her every morning by her father, a master of pho soup, who is trying to find his own path in the alien environs of Warsaw, where he still doesn't feel at home despite his many years of residence and Poland's substantial Vietnamese community. When his long-term boss decides to return to his homeland, Long must meet the demands of the new restaurant owner, but mastering new cooking skills proves a relatively minor challenge compared to raising his perceptive daughter as a single parent. The International Cinema Society writes: "This gentle film presents itself as unassuming, but quietly imparts lessons of tolerance and acceptance of our differences, and packs some emotional punches near the end."



TEST PATTERN

NARRATIVE

Shatara Michelle Ford, U.S., 2019, 82 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

“Test Pattern,” the gripping and powerful first feature by Shatara Michelle Ford, chronicles a young Black woman’s attempts to get help from an uncaring system after an assault. An interracial couple’s supportive relationship is put to the test after the woman (Brittany S. Hall, HBO’s “Ballers”) is sexually assaulted and her boyfriend (Will Brill, “The OA,” “Not Fade Away”) must drive her from hospital to hospital around Austin in search of a rape kit. Part psychological horror movie and part realistic drama, “Test Pattern” is set against the backdrop of our national discussions about an inequitable health system, #MeToo, and race relations. Film Comment writes: “‘Test Pattern’ offers a fresh way of examining sexual assault and its aftermath on screen, one that feels just as emblematic of its moment as ‘Thelma & Louise.’ ‘Test Pattern’ provides a distinctly American story of sexual assault. Not only does it illuminate the contempt with which the U.S. legal system treats women, it also examines how the race of the victim and perpetrator affects such treatment, and the burden that black women have learned to bear because of it.” Director Ford was raised in St. Louis. **Q&A with director Shatara Michelle Ford, moderated by Kenya Vaughn, arts & entertainment reporter at the St. Louis American.**



THERE IS NO EVIL *Sheytan vojud nadarad*

NARRATIVE

Mohammad Rasoulof, Germany/Iran, 2020, 151 min., German & Persian

Available from Nov. 5-22

“There Is No Evil” relates a quartet of stories — about the military executioners Heshmat, Pouya, Javad, and Bahram — that offer variations on both the theme of moral strength and the subject of capital punishment. The film, which won the Golden Bear for best film at this year’s Berlin International Film Festival, asks to what extent individual freedom can be expressed under a despotic regime with its seemingly inescapable threats. Acclaimed writer-director Mohammad Rasoulof (“Iron Island,” “The White Meadows,” “Manuscripts Don’t Burn”) creates only a loose narrative link between the film’s four tales, but they are all tragically and inexorably connected. Choices may seem limited when living in an oppressive society, but in each of its stories, the film urges viewers to consider how men and women can assert their freedom even in such grim circumstances. IndieWire writes: “‘There Is No Evil’ mutates into a riveting thriller, takes a sharp turn into romance, and winds up with a family drama that brings all the individual components together for a poignant open-ended finale. Along the way, Rasoulof deploys an inspired tonal uncertainty, as each chapter involves a new angle on the emotional stakes at hand. The scope of the storytelling combines ‘Pulp Fiction’ energy with the structural playfulness of Rasoulof’s fellow Iranian auteur Jafar Panahi, but radiates with a narrative urgency all its own.”



THOU SHALT NOT HATE *Non odiare*

NARRATIVE

Mauro Mancini, Italy, 2020, 96 min., Italian

Available from Nov. 20-22

In “Thou Shalt Not Hate” — which premiered at this year’s Venice Film Festival — Simone Segre (Alessandro Gassmann, son of famed actor Vittorio Gassman), a renowned surgeon and child of a Holocaust survivor, leads a quiet life in an elegant apartment in Trieste. That placid existence is upended when he finds himself assisting a victim of a hit-and-run accident. As Simone tends to the wounds, he discovers a Nazi tattoo on the man’s chest and abruptly stops treatment, abandoning him to certain death. Later, filled with guilt, he ends up tracing the man’s three orphaned children: eldest daughter Marica (Sara Serraiocco); teen neo-Nazi Marcello, who like his father is consumed with racial hatred; and little Paolo. Eventually, a night comes when Marica knocks at Simone’s door and unknowingly asks for payback.



TOMMASO

NARRATIVE

Abel Ferrara, Italy/U.K./U.S., 2019, 115 min., English, Italian & Russian

Available from Nov. 5-22

In his first dramatic feature since 2014’s “Pasolini,” Abel Ferrara (“Bad Lieutenant,” “King of New York”) reteams with frequent collaborator Willem Dafoe, who delivers a career-best performance as the title character, an actor and filmmaker. An older American expat, Tommaso lives in Rome with his young wife and their daughter. As he prepares for his next film, Tommaso is disoriented by unexpected blows to his self-esteem and struggles through this late chapter of his life with an increasingly impaired grasp on reality. “Tommaso” is easily Ferrara and Dafoe’s most personal and engrossing collaboration to date, a delicately surrealistic work of autofiction marked by the keen sensitivity of two consummate artists. The New York Times writes: “The movie enters fantasy realms often, but ‘Tommaso’ has a different feel than your average variant on Fellini’s ‘8 ½.’ Maybe it’s a sense of shame, something the older film’s Guido hadn’t much of. Whatever it is, it makes ‘Tommaso’ crackle with ideas and empathy, as Ferrara’s best work always does.”

Sponsored by Barbara Smythe-Jones & Howard Jones



TRANSHOOD

Sharon Liese, U.S., 2020, 93 min., FREE

Available from Nov. 5-11

Filmed over five years in Kansas City, “Transhood” follows four transgender kids — beginning at ages 4, 7, 12, and 15 — as they redefine “coming of age.” The documentary’s quartet of trans kids face typical growing pains — acne, sibling rivalry, divorcing parents, crushes, and breakups — but unlike their cisgender peers, they also must navigate body dysphoria, hormone treatments, threats of violence, and the weight of making life-altering decisions. And their struggles take place in the buckle of the Bible Belt, where the pursuit of political and social equality often meets stiff resistance. These trans kids and their families provide a privileged view into the intimate realities of how gender is re-shaping the family next door. A never-before-told chronicling of growing up trans in the heartland, the film is a nuanced examination of how parents and children tussle, transform, and sometimes find unexpected purpose in their identities as trans families. Variety writes: “Sharon Liese’s documentary ‘Transhood’ maintains an artful bifocal perspective, capturing both youthful impatience and parental whiplash as it tracks the physical and emotional development of four trans children over the course of five years. The title’s evocation of Richard Linklater’s ‘Boyhood’ can’t be accidental: In nonfiction form, Liese’s film aims for similarly striking, sensitive time-lapse rewards.” **Q&A with director Sharon Liese, moderated by Dr. Mark Schoen, founder of Sex Smart Films and author of “Bellybuttons Are Navels,” an award-winning children’s sexual-anatomy book and video.**

Co-presented by
Society for the Scientific
Study of Sexuality



TWO OF US *Deux*

Filippo Meneghetti, France, 2019, 99 min., French

Available from Nov. 5-22

Pensioners Nina (Barbara Sukowa) and Madeleine (Martine Chevallier) have hidden their deep and passionate love for many decades. From the point of view of those surrounding them, including Madeleine’s meddling daughter (Léa Drucker), they are simply two neighbors sharing a hallway during their sunset years. In reality, this landing is a bridge between two worlds: one belonging to a widowed, doting grandmother, the other to a free-spirited woman who longs to spend her life with the person she loves. Clandestinely, Nina and Madeleine share a tender life, moving freely between their apartments until an unexpected event closes the portal. But their secret cannot remain hidden if they are to stay together — and their unconditional love is put to the test. The legendary Sukowa is best known for her collaborations with Rainer Werner Fassbinder (“Lola,” “Berlin Alexanderplatz”) and Marguerite von Trotta (“Rosa Luxemburg,” “Marianne & Juliane,” “Hannah Arendt”). Variety writes: “Neither a hot-blooded tale of sexual discovery like 2013 Palme d’or winner ‘Blue Is the Warmest Color’ nor a coolly alluring bauble like Todd Haynes’ ‘Carol,’ Italian director Filippo Meneghetti’s debut feature ‘Two of Us’ is an entirely unique and uniquely vital lesbian love story. The tale of two older women whose decades-long secret relationship is threatened after tragedy strikes covers emotional and thematic ground that transcends the sexual preferences of the two main characters.”

Shown with **With Dad** (Soren Sorensen, U.S., 2020, 29 min.) Photographer Stephen DiRado uses his camera to document his father’s mental decline and eventual death from Alzheimer’s disease.

NARRATIVE



UNAPOLOGETIC

Ashley O'Shay, U.S., 2020, 82 min., FREE

Available from Nov. 5-22

“Unapologetic” vividly captures a community of millennial organizers confronting an administration complicit in state violence against its Black residents. Featuring a pair of Black, queer women activists — Ph.D. candidate Janaé Bonsu and rapper Ambrell “Bella Bahhs” Gambrell — and focusing on the Black Lives Matter protests in Chicago sparked by the police murders of Laquan McDonald and Rekia Boyd, the film chronicles the events that eventually helped change the city’s power structure, culminating in the 2018 election of Mayor Lori Lightfoot. As the film’s name implies, its protagonists are proudly unapologetic about the confrontational nature of BLM protests and their own uncompromising behavior and attitude. The film deftly entwines the personal stories of its two primary subjects, delving into their histories and following them in vérité style as they pursue their careers, and the political struggles in which they engage. The Broad Street Review writes: “The film does an excellent job of demystifying the lives and work of activists, who are ordinary people balancing their regular responsibilities with the weight of their sense of moral duty to justice and humanity. ‘Unapologetic’ reiterates the imperative of not looking away, and continuing to support and uplift the work of those who stay in the streets long after the headlines and hashtags fade.” **Q&A with director Ashley O’Shay, moderated by Tila Neguse, project coordinator of The Divided City Initiative at the Center for the Humanities at Washington University.**

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



UNDINE

Christian Petzold, Germany, 2020, 90 min., German

Available from Nov. 5-22

In “Undine” — the story of a life-or-death love, splendidly and effortlessly told — Christian Petzold (“Transit,” “Phoenix,” “Barbara”) reworks the myth of the mysterious water spirit as a modern fairy tale. An historian who works as a museum guide in Berlin, Undine (Paula Beer, who was named Best Actress at this year’s Berlinale) is nonchalantly beautiful, and the way she imparts her knowledge about the city is as professional as it is graceful. And yet, time and again, Undine’s gaze wanders over to the courtyard café at the Stadtmuseum in search of Johannes (Jacob Matschenz), but her lover is leaving, and the world is collapsing. This Undine, however, defies her role as a powerless and spurned woman when she meets Christophe (Franz Rogowski) and falls in love anew. Petzold’s deeply assured work reimagines the Undine legend by way of his own cinematic vision, in which precise everyday gestures are combined with ghostly hyperrealism. The Hollywood Reporter writes: “Petzold has reunited his stars from ‘Transit,’ the charismatic Paula Beer and Franz Rogowski, and gives them the love story they deserve — not necessarily an epic one, but one that’s heartfelt and profound in all its simplicity.”

Shown with **Bathtub by the Sea** (Ole-André Rønneberg, Norway, 2019, 15 min., Norwegian) A man of routine, Gunnar drinks coffee and fishes from his boat every day and takes an outdoor bath on Wednesday and Saturday, but things grow complicated when a mermaid comes in with the tides and must use his bathtub.

Sponsored by the Film and Media Studies Program at Washington University



Sponsored by **Tenacious Eats/Chef Liz Schuster**

WAGING CHANGE

Abby Ginzberg, U.S., 2019, 61 min., FREE

Available from Nov. 5-22

Directed by Peabody Award winner Abby Ginzberg — a two-time SLIFF alum with “And Then They Came for Us” in 2017 and “Agents of Change” in 2016 — “Waging Change” focuses on wage inequity in restaurants. Although the film gives particular attention to the lack of minimum-wage protection for tipped workers, it also explores other problems that plague the industry, including racial and ethnic disparities between the front and back of the house, sexual harassment and sexism generally, the lobbying power of the National Restaurants Association, and the stealing of tips by restaurant owners. Although “Waging Change” includes discussion of the related pursuit of a \$15 minimum wage, which is especially relevant to fast-food workers, it maintains clear focus on the outlandishly tiny minimum wage paid to tipped workers: a microscopic \$2.13 on the federal level. Using clear, succinct graphics, the film mixes the personal stories of a core group of representative restaurant workers with the voices of advocates (especially the charismatic Saru Jayaraman, co-founder of Restaurant Opportunities Centers United and president of One Fair Wage), academics, politicians (Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez), and supportive celebs (“9 to 5’s” Lily Tomlin and Jane Fonda). **Q&A with director Abby Ginzberg and subject Saru Jayaraman.**



WAKE UP

Nate Townsend, U.S., 2019, 89 min., FREE

Available from Nov. 5-22

In June 2014, Ryan Candice, a high-achieving student at the University of Missouri, took his life days before his 21st birthday. Shocked and saddened, his friends set out to learn and educate others about one of the fastest-growing causes of death in the United States. “Wake Up” weaves together stories from four different frontlines of suicide prevention across the country, highlighting some of the communities most affected by the epidemic. In Philadelphia, an LGBTQ activist photographs suicide-attempt survivors. In the Intermountain West, veterans from Iraq and Vietnam receive treatment at a renowned clinic. A Louisiana couple loses their only son — a standout student at LSU — and decides to tour the country educating college students about the risks and signs of suicide. Finally, a seemingly disparate group of politicians, gun lobbyists, and Harvard researchers take steps to combat firearm suicide in Utah. **Q&A with director Nate Townsend.**



THE WAR AND PEACE OF TIM O'BRIEN

DOCUMENTARY

Aaron Matthews, U.S., 2019, 83 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

Called “the best American writer of his generation” and “our poet laureate of war,” Tim O’Brien is one of the great voices in modern literature. The Library of Congress recently named his groundbreaking novel-in-stories about the Vietnam War, “The Things They Carried,” one of the 65 most influential books in American history, and O’Brien’s “Going After Cacciato” won the National Book Award in 1979. A compelling, often moving portrait, “The War and Peace of Tim O’Brien” chronicles the author’s struggles over several years to write his most recent and likely last work, “Dad’s Maybe Book,” which was published late in 2019. The book is essentially an extended letter to his two young-teen sons, whom O’Brien had late in life, at age 57. Now in his early 70s, O’Brien is acutely aware of his mortality — he’s an inveterate two-pack-a-day smoker — and recognizes that he’s not likely to be present in his children’s lives for too many more years. The book — and therefore the film — is an attempt to continue speaking to them after he’s absent. Sharing his thoughts on war, morality, writing, family, and life generally, O’Brien is by turns caustically funny, angry, thoughtful, and charming, and he allows filmmaker Aaron Matthews (a SLIFF alum with “A Panther in Africa” in 2004 and “The Paper” in 2007) extraordinary access, which is further enhanced by intimate video shot by his wife. Because he’s a frequent speaker at literary and veterans events, the film also features a generous but well-chosen sampling of O’Brien’s lectures and conversations, in which he decries both the folly and horror of Vietnam — he remains haunted by his experiences there as a highly reluctant draftee — and our current forever wars. **Q&A with director Aaron Matthews and subject Tim O’Brien.**



WOMEN IN BLUE

DOCUMENTARY

Deidre Fishel, U.S., 2020, 82 min., FREE

Available from Nov. 5-22

“Women in Blue” offers an unprecedented window on the inner workings of the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD), chronicling a department — and a community — grappling with racism and a troubled history of police misconduct long before George Floyd’s murder in May 2020. Filmed from 2017-20, the film follows Janeé Harteau, Minneapolis’ first female police chief, as she works to reform the city’s police department by dismissing bad cops, retraining the remaining officers, diversifying the ranks, and promoting women — who statistically use less force than their male counterparts — into every rank of leadership. “Women in Blue” gives particular attention to four women in Harteau’s department who are trying to redefine what it means to protect and serve. But after a pair of police shootings, community anger boils over, resulting in Harteau stepping down in favor of the current male police chief, Medaria Arradondo. Ironically, those unjust shootings, which were a reflection of a systemic problem, ended the tenure of a chief who was committed to progressive change and restored the MPD’s male-dominated culture. A sympathetic look at the lives of female officers in a controversial police force, “Women in Blue” reveals the limitations of reform through incremental change and asks questions that apply well beyond the city of Minneapolis: Could increased gender equity and more women — especially women of color — contribute to greater public safety? **Q&A with director Deidre Fishel, moderated by Joshua Ray, film critic for the Cinema St. Louis blog, The Lens.**



WORK

NARRATIVE

Rachel Reichman, U.S., 1996, 90 min., FREE

Available from Nov. 5-22

Jenny (Cynthia Kaplan), white and working class, lives in a failing mill town. She is frustrated by her job hunt and traditional marriage, and finds joy in a passionate affair with her young African-American neighbor, June (Sonja Sohn, “The Wire”). But June is on her way out of town, to college and a new life. Describing the film as “an unhappy, unsettling, deeply personal and rather relentless character study,” Seattle’s Stranger writes: “Although ‘Work’ lacks the visual elegance and narrative confidence of Todd Haynes’ 1995 masterpiece about a trapped housewife, ‘Safe,’ Reichman’s movie establishes a similar mood of unease and quiet desperation. By the time it’s over — provided you stick with it — it’s hard to shake.” “Work” plays as part of a free program of the director’s films, which serves as a complement to Master Class: Behind the Camera with Rachel Reichman (see Special Events).



THE XROSSING

NARRATIVE

Steven J. Mihaljevich, Australia, 2020, 109 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

When a suspicious death remains unsolved, three boys suspect a reclusive Indigenous man named Bobby (Kelton Pell) and relentlessly harass him until one of the trio breaks the toxic cycle to make amends. The man and boy form an unlikely friendship, but the inertia of past actions carries the film’s characters to a dangerous crossroads, leading to a dramatic climax. While delivering visceral thrills, “The Xrossing” also smartly confronts issues of race, hate, and ignorance, and demonstrates the power of human connection.



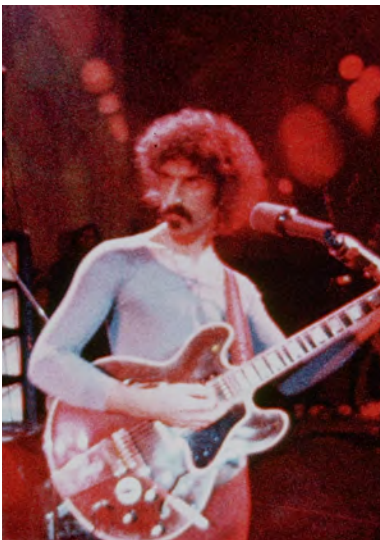
YONLU

NARRATIVE

Hique Montanari, Brazil, 2017, 88 min., English & Portuguese

Available from Nov. 5-22

“Yonlu” incorporates animation, music, and video clips to tell the story of an extraordinarily creative boy who lost his way along the pathways of the Internet, which seemed to be so bright and welcoming but which also concealed dark, dangerous corners. The film is based on the real story of a 16-year-old boy who, aided by the Internet, won over the world with his talent for music and art. An illustrator, photographer, and writer of experimental music — and fluent in five languages — Yonlu had a critical view of society and shared it through a network of virtual friends from all continents. However, in the seclusion of his bedroom, he also signed up to a forum for potential suicides, and Yonlu found encouragement there to take his own life. Despite his tragically short life, Yonlu’s musical legacy lives on in the posthumous album “A Society in Which No Tear Is Shed Is Inconceivably Mediocre,” which was released by the David Byrne-founded Luaka Bop label.



ZAPPA

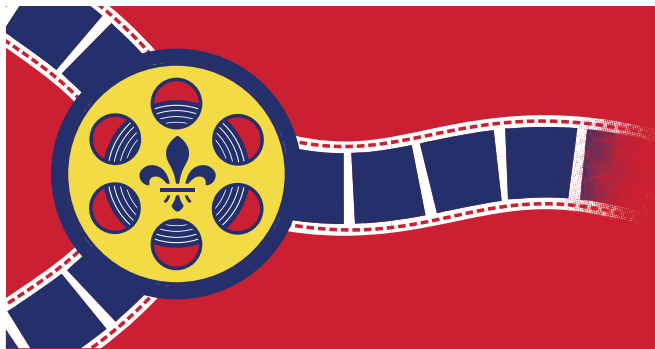
DOCUMENTARY

Alex Winter, U.S., 2020, 129 min.

Available from Nov. 21-22

Far from a typical music doc, “Zappa” is a multifaceted narrative that brings a complex artist to vibrant life, providing a nuanced look at visionary iconoclast Frank Zappa and the environment that formed him. A simultaneously intimate and expansive look into the iconic musician’s innovative career, the film had unfettered access to the Zappa family trust and its vast trove of archival footage. Exploring the private life behind a musical career that never shied away from the political turbulence of its time, “Zappa” features revealing interviews with Frank’s widow, the late Gail Zappa, and such collaborators as Mike Keneally, Ian Underwood, Steve Vai, Pamela Des Barres, Bunk Gardner, David Harrington, Scott Thunes, Ruth Underwood, and Ray White. “Zappa” is directed by former St. Louisan Alex Winter — a Cinema St. Louis Award honoree in 2015 — who recently returned to acting in “Bill and Ted Face the Music” but who has spent the last decade helming a string of impressive documentaries, including “Downloaded,” “Deep Web,” “The Panama Papers,” and “Showbiz Kids.” **Q&A with director Alex Winter, moderated by music critic Daniel Durchholz, author of “Rock ‘n’ Roll Myths: The True Stories Behind the Most Infamous Legends,” “Neil Young: Long May You Run — The Illustrated History,” and “MusicHound Rock: The Essential Album Guide”;** and former editor at Replay and Request magazines, STLtoday.com, and The Riverfront Times.

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Jon Mendelson
REALTORS



SLIFF 2020 *shorts*



The Women and the Sea

DOC SHORTS: ANIMALS & NATURE

126 min., **FREE**

Available from Nov. 5-22

Perspectives on animals, the environment, and the natural world.

Blue Frontier (Ivan Milosavljević, Serbia, 2020, 20 min., Serbian) An elderly fisherman has spent his entire life searching for the biggest fish that the blue Danube hides, attempting to lure the river giant using an ancient practice of clapping on the river surface with a hand-carved piece of wood.

The Honest Work of Farming (Rickie Ross, U.S., 2020, 15 min.) A chronicle of the life of a Missouri farmer and his family as they learn the art of regenerative agriculture.

Jacob's Ladder (Rupert Clague, Peru/U.K., 2019, 7 min., English & Spanish) The rare Peruvian plant toé creates intense, lucid dreams, and this film — made on location in the Amazon jungle under the guidance of Werner Herzog — transports viewers into this phantasmagorical realm.

Susana (Laura Gamse, U.S., 2020, 4 min.) Former slaughterhouse worker Susana returns to the scene at night to care for animals on their way to the kill floor.

Then Comes the Evening (Maja Novaković, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2019, 28 min., Serbian) A portrait of two grannies — who are intimately connected both to each other and to nature — as they go about their everyday life as herders in the isolated hills of Eastern Bosnia.

The Toxic Pigs of Fukushima (Otto Bell, Japan/U.S., 2019, 35 min., English & Japanese) Following the nuclear-plant meltdown in Fukushima, irradiated wild boars roam the abandoned streets and buildings, and hunters are recruited to dispose of the toxic pigs.

The Women and the Sea (Camila Guarda, Chile/U.S., 2019, 14 min., Spanish) Two women navigate life and death at sea in a remote Chilean fishing village.

Q&A with “The Honest Work of Farming” director Rickie Ross and subject Austin Williams.

Doc Shorts Programming sponsored by Barry & Jackie Albrecht and Pat Scallet

Environmental Focus sponsored by Ward & Carol Klein



Virtually Free

**Q&As with “33 and Counting”
director Aisha Sultan
and “Virtually Free” director
André Robert Lee.**

**Doc Shorts Programming
sponsored by Barry & Jackie
Albrecht and Pat Scallet**

DOC SHORTS: BEHIND THE BARS

92 min., **FREE**

Available from Nov. 5-22

A trio of films that examine different aspects of the prison system in the U.S.

33 and Counting (Aisha Sultan, U.S., 2020, 39 min.) A true-crime story about a 70-year-old grandmother from rural Missouri serving a life sentence for a murder she says her rapist committed.

Huntsville Station (Chris Filippone & Jamie Meltzer, U.S., 2020, 14 min., English & Spanish) Every weekday, inmates are released from Huntsville State Penitentiary, taking in their first moments of freedom with phone calls, cigarettes, and quiet reflection at the Greyhound station up the block.

Virtually Free (André Robert Lee, U.S., 2020, 39 min.) Three teens in a Richmond, Va., detention center speak truth to power by participating in the program Performing Statistics, in which they are taught to deliver powerful messages through art, including a virtual-reality jail cell they help create. Director André Robert Lee is a two-time SLIFF alum with “Prep School Negro” and “I’m Not Racist ... Am I?”



Huntsville Station



This Land

DOC SHORTS: THE BLACK EXPERIENCE

126 min., **FREE**

Available from Nov. 5-22

A program that explores the Black experience from a multiplicity of perspectives.

8:46 (Steven Bognar & Julia Reichert, U.S., 2020, 28 min.) Directors Steven Bognar and Julia Reichert (Oscar winners for last year's "American Factory") capture a special event by comedian Dave Chappelle on June 6, 2020, at the Wirrig Pavilion in Yellow Springs, Ohio. The title "8:46" references both the eight minutes and 46 seconds that police officer Derek Chauvin knelt on the neck of George Floyd and Chappelle's time of birth, which was 8:46 AM. In his performance, Chappelle pointedly addresses Floyd's murder and the protests it inspired, and discusses the history of violence against African Americans in the U.S.

A Fresh Perspective (Aaron Hosé, U.S., 2019, 12 min.) The story of three African Americans in Pittsburgh who create the nation's first-ever Black beer festival.

Larry from Gary (Dan Rybicky, U.S., 2020, 26 min.) A dedicated Black dance teacher continues working with and inspiring his current and former students even after his nationally recognized arts high school in Gary, Ind., is closed by the state.

The Lost Astronaut (Ben Proudfoot, U.S., 2019, 13 min.) In 1963, Ed Dwight Jr. was poised to be NASA's first Black astronaut, but he never made it into space.

Sonnie (Samuel Mirpoorian, U.S., 2020, 11 min.) Single father Deon "Sonnie" Casey, who has faced hardship, is determined to provide a better life for his son, and finds strength and solace in competitive weightlifting.

This Land (Whit Hassett & Chelsea Jolly, U.S., 2019, 10 min.) Faith E. Briggs runs 150 miles through three of the country's national monuments and explores the place of Black people in public lands.

The Torture Letters (Laurence Ralph, U.S., 2020, 13 min.) Through four letters to victims, author Laurence Ralph chronicles the history of torture in Chicago and the burgeoning activist movement against police violence.

Turf Nation (Jun Bae, U.S., 2019, 13 min.) On Bay Area Rapid Transit trains, street dancers engage in turfing, an Oakland-born dance form with roots in gang culture that combines elements of tutting, gliding, and bone breaking.

Q&A with "8:46's" Dave Chappelle and directors Steven Bognar & Julia Reichert, moderated by documentarian Kamau Bilal, director of "Baby Brother" and assistant teaching professor of film studies at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Doc Shorts Programming sponsored by Barry & Jackie Albrecht and Pat Scallet



A Fresh Perspective



Turf Nation



When Mom Is Gone

Doc Shorts Programming
sponsored by **Barry & Jackie**
Albrecht and Pat Scallet

DOC SHORTS: FAMILY MATTERS

125 min., **FREE**

Available from Nov. 5-22

Glimpses of family life — both fraught and inspiring — from around the globe.

Alimamy: A Father's Burden (Felix Golenko, Germany/Sierra Leone, 2020, 40 min., Krio & Temne) In a small village in Sierra Leone, a farmer fights to provide for his family and break the vicious cycle of poverty by helping his kids get an education.

No Crying at the Dinner Table (Carol Nguyen, Canada, 2019, 16 min., English & Vietnamese) A Vietnamese family deals with family secrets, confessions, and confrontations.

Sonny (Pawel Chorzepa, Poland, 2019, 40 min., Polish) Marcin, who was placed in an orphanage at age 12 because of the behavior of his alcoholic parents, attempts to repair the relationship with his father.

When Mom Is Gone (Zeynep Gulru Kececiler, Afghanistan/Turkey, 2020, 29 min., Persian) Single father Mohammed struggles to keep his family of six children together in a mountain village in Afghanistan.



The Crossing

Doc Shorts Programming
sponsored by **Barry & Jackie**
Albrecht and Pat Scallet

DOC SHORTS: IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

121 min., **FREE**

Available from Nov. 5-22

Stories of deportees, asylum seekers, and undocumented immigrants from Latin America.

Asylum (Jake Lefferman & Emily Taguchi, Mexico/U.S., 2020, 40 min., English & Spanish) The dual stories of Honduran asylum seekers Angel and Elmer, who risk everything to claw their way from Central America to the U.S., with the hope that their children can live free of the violence in their home country.

Call Center Blues (Geeta Gandbhir, Mexico/U.S., 2019, 25 min., English & Spanish) A lyrical portrait of an unlikely community of U.S. deportees and their loved ones as they struggle to rebuild their lives in Tijuana, Mexico.

The Crossing (Juliana Penaranda-Loftus, Colombia/U.S., 2019, 40 min., English & Spanish) In this moving portrait of conflict, suffering, and generosity, desperate refugees flee the crisis in Venezuela and are welcomed by a small Colombian border city, where a political firestorm erupts.

The Golden Cage (Shauna Siggelkow, U.S., 2019, 16 min., Spanish) The untold story of immigrant women who are trapped near the Texas border and fight for the rights of their communities, striving to create American towns from scratch.

Mother's Day (Dia de las Madres) (Moises Barba & David Hutchinson, Mexico/U.S., 2020, 10 min., Spanish) After 36 years apart, an undocumented immigrant and his aging mother share an emotional Mother's Day phone call.



Shaking a Singapore Spear

DOC SHORTS: LIFE ANIMATED

117 min., **FREE**

Available from Nov. 5-22

A collection of real-life stories told through a variety of animated techniques.

24 (Brian Yulo Ng, Philippines/Singapore/U.S., 2019, 3 min.) An exploration of culture, memory, and trauma through the lens of a person born between identities.

Black&White (Eluned Zoe Aiano & Anna Benner, Czech Republic, 2019, 19 min., Czech) A kaleidoscopic examination of a World War II legend involving nurses, Nazis, seduction, and syphilis in the small Czech town of Třeboň.

The Chimney Swift (Frédéric Schuld, Germany, 2020, 5 min.) A British chimney sweeper describes his everyday routine of forcing young kids to become workers.

A Head Shorter (Sasha Sivan Bortnik, U.S., 2019, 23 min.) Naftali recounts his harrowing journey as a 12-year-old boy in the Holocaust and how he survived multiple concentration camps.

Just a Guy (Shoko Hara, Germany/U.S., 2020, 15 min.) Three women share glimpses of their relationships with Richard Ramirez, a serial killer and rapist they contacted after he was convicted.

Le Futur (Matthew Miller, France/U.S., 2019, 12 min., English & French) A meditation on the storied life and career of fashion designer Pierre Cardin.

Powerless (Tamar Chetzroni, Sahar Habany, Ziva Jacobovici, Shahar Kerub, Nitzan Paz & Nitzan Weiner, Israel, 2019, 9 min., Hebrew) Through anonymous testimonies and interviews, abuse victims — mostly teenagers — tell stories of how they were harmed or helped online.

Shaking a Singapore Spear (Hannes Rall, Singapore/U.K., 2020, 17 min.) Made in collaboration with the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-upon-Avon, this delightful combination of live action and animation examines the relevance of Shakespeare's classical works to contemporary Singaporeans.

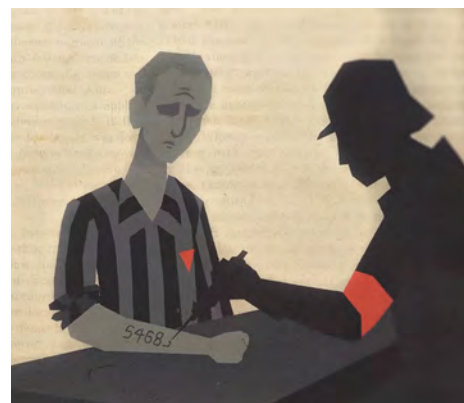
The Shallow Pond (Clay Thomas, U.S., 2020, 3 min.) Philosopher Peter Singer expands our understanding of what it means to care for each other on a global scale in this step-by-step walkthrough of his most famous thought experiment.

Tiger and Ox (Seunghye Kim, South Korea, 2019, 8 min., Korean) A single mother and her daughter talk about what divorce means to women in Korea's patriarchal society.

Doc Shorts Programming
sponsored by **Barry & Jackie**
Albrecht and Pat Scallet



24



A Head Shorter



King Lajoie

DOC SHORTS: MAKING MUSIC

123 min., **FREE**

Available from Nov. 5-22

An anthology of films about the lives of musicians.

1000 Songs (Marin Sander-Holzman, U.S., 2019, 10 min.) Ricky Rose, 83-year-old journeyman musician and R&B singer from Brooklyn, has been making music for 70 years, and despite a lack of “big time” success, his passion for playing live has never dimmed.

Birthday Song: Lewis Capaldi (Kevin Batchelor, U.K., 2020, 23 min.) Scottish singer-songwriter Lewis Capaldi shares his artistic process as he transforms his “birthday song” — the Chemical Brothers and Noel Gallagher’s “Setting Sun,” which was No. 1 on the U.K. charts when he was born — into a work uniquely his own.

Jesse (Anthony Janssen, U.S., 2019, 5 min.) The story behind trumpeter Jesse McGuire’s performance of “The Star-Spangled Banner” at the post-9/11 World Series’ Game 7 in 2001.

Junior (A.J. Wilhelm, Haiti/U.S., 2020, 11 min., Haitian) Acclaimed Haitian musician Jerome “Junior” Simeon struggles to keep the beat of his passion alive.

Kim I Am (Ben Proudfoot, U.S., 2019, 14 min.) Kim Hill was a rising singer when she met a young rapper named will.i.am, but she quit the Black Eyed Peas just before they became famous.

King Lajoie (Joannie Lafrenière, Canada/U.S., 2019, 26 min., French) A deep dive into the kitsch universe of an Elvis Presley impersonator who has been shaping his life around his idol for more than 40 years.

The Other Fab Four (Ben Proudfoot, U.K./U.S., 2019, 16 min.) In the mid-1960s, four teenagers from Liverpool were changing the face of pop music. Their names were Mary, Sylvia, Pam, and Val — the Liverbirds!

Yves & Variation (Lydia Cornett, Haiti/U.S., 2019, 15 min.) Concierge Yves Deshommes practices his violin behind the front desk of a Manhattan office building on a daily basis, but during the hours outside his shift, his life proves equal parts intrepid and inspiring.

Doc Shorts Programming
sponsored by Barry & Jackie
Albrecht and Pat Scallet



Kim I Am



Jesse



Diary of a Teenage Zealot

DOC SHORTS: METHOD M

108 min., **FREE**

Available from Nov. 5-22

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

46 Years (Catherine Hoffman, U.S., 2020, 20 min.) The filmmaker explores the broken, contradictory accounts of her grandfather’s murder in 1967, attempting to glue the pieces together and find the truth of an event that rocked both the family and the larger Black Muslim community across America.

Diary of a Teenage Zealot (Megan Smith, U.S., 2020, 14 min.) A self-portrait of a filmmaker’s ongoing crisis of faith that combines materials gathered both during and after her life in the Assemblies of God church, the world’s largest Pentecostal denomination.

Green Cheese Moon (Colleen Andrae, U.S., 2020, 16 min.) A chronicle of the fight by Robert Richardson, a father of three who spent nearly nine years in prison, to change Missouri’s outdated HIV criminalization laws.

The Hat (Thomas Rechenberg, U.S., 2020, 14 min.) An exploration of the visceral emotions evoked by the most politically divisive symbol of our time: President Donald Trump’s MAGA hat.

Natchez (Daniel Christian, U.S., 2020, 28 min.) A vibrant portrait of life in the small Mississippi tourist town of Natchez, where locals are stuck in the amber of a Confederate fantasy and locals eternally contend with questions of history and mythology, of industry and power.

Thoughts and Prayers (Sarah Sabatke, U.S., 2020, 15 min.) As Littleton, Colo., prepares to mark the 20th anniversary of the shooting at Columbine High School, two award-winning journalists reflect on their coverage of the event and community members remember their lost loved ones amid unrelenting media attention.

Q&A with shorts directors and Stacey Woelfel, director of the Jonathan B. Murray Center for Documentary Journalism.

Doc Shorts Programming sponsored by Barry & Jackie Albrecht and Pat Scallet



The Hat



Green Cheese Moon



Orville + Bob

DOC SHORTS: QUEER STORIES

111 min., **FREE**

Available from Nov. 5-22

A trio of nonfiction shorts examining hard-won triumphs and continuing challenges in the LGBTQ community.

Orville + Bob (Alan Griswold, U.S., 2019, 40 min.) A Washington U. grad tells the story of how an unlikely couple met and have remained together, despite seemingly insurmountable differences and societal pressures, for more than 48 years.

Personaje Personaje (Begoña Izquierdo & Renata Rezende, Spain, 2020, 35 min., Spanish) An intimate portrait of the struggles and groundbreaking performances of Personaje Personaje, a young queer transformist (aka drag queen), who moved from Ecuador to pursue his dream in Barcelona.

Unforgivable (Marlén Viñayo, El Salvador, 2020, 36 min., Spanish) A ruthless hitman for the 18th Street gang deals with his sexuality inside an evangelical Salvadoran prison, where he is guilty of the ultimate crime in the eyes of both God and gang: being gay.

Doc Shorts Programming
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Always Coming Back

DOC SHORTS: SHOWCASE SAMPLER

115 min., **FREE**

Available from Nov. 5-22

Nonfiction standouts from the 2020 St. Louis Filmmakers Showcase and new works by artists with ties to the region.

Always Coming Back (Nate Townsend, U.S., 2020, 9 min.) Webster Groves rallies around a man with a mental disability to support his greatest passion.

For Ismet (Christian Del Rio, U.S., 2020, 24 min.) A tribute by a Washington U. grad to Ismet, a Bosnian refugee, U.S. citizen, and exemplary father who touched the lives of everyone who knew him through his resilience, humility, and desire to help others.

For Plant's Sake (Jerod Welker, U.S., 2020, 4 min.) A young woman discusses her spiritual connection with plants.

Growing for Good (Vân Nguyen & Morgan Paar, U.S., 2020, 15 min.) A look at urban farmers Arthur and Nancy Culbert, who planted the initial seed that became the Central West End Farm in St. Louis.

On Task (Alex H. Rafi, U.S., 2019, 7 min.) In this profile by a Saint Louis University assistant professor, a young high-school teacher in San Jose, Calif., pushes himself and his students to work for their success.

Taboo Teaching (Dan Steadman, U.S., 2019, 27 min.) A profile of Missouri history teacher Rodney Wilson, who garnered national attention when he came out to his students in the early 1990s and nearly lost his job at Mehlville High School.

A Threat to Justice (Chris Files, U.S., 2020, 13 min.) The death of George Floyd in Minneapolis sparked a wave of protests and civil unrest worldwide, including in St. Louis, a city already marked by a strained relationship with its police force.

Valley Relics (Ashley Seering, U.S., 2019, 14 min.) A longtime St. Louis filmmaker offers a portrait of Tommy Gelinias, who has made it his mission to document and preserve the history and pop culture of the San Fernando Valley in Southern California.

Q&As with "Growing for Good" co-directors Vân Nguyen & Morgan Paar and subjects Arthur & Nancy Culbert, "Taboo Teaching" director Dan Steadman, and "Valley Relics" director Ashley Seering.

Doc Shorts Programming
sponsored by Barry & Jackie
Albrecht and Pat Scallet

Environmental Focus sponsored
by Ward & Carol Klein



Valerie

Q&A with “Linda and the Mockingbirds” director James Keach.

Doc Shorts Programming sponsored by Barry & Jackie Albrecht and Pat Scallet

DOC SHORTS: STARS OF THE '70S

76 min., **FREE**

Available from Nov. 5-22

This double bill of near-feature-length shorts explores the lives of two icons of music and movies who rose to fame in the 1970s — singer Linda Ronstadt and actor Valerie Perrine — and who are both now coping with Parkinson’s disease.

Linda and the Mockingbirds (James Keach, Mexico/U.S., 2020, 40 min., English & Spanish) “Linda and the Mockingbirds” is a song-soaked, foot-stomping trip straight to the heart of what it means to be Mexican, and to be American, and the complex joy of being both at the same time. Linda is Linda Ronstadt, and the Mockingbirds are Los Cenzontles (“mockingbirds” in the Nahuatl language), a band and a music academy for young people in the San Francisco Bay Area. Ronstadt, musician Jackson Browne, and a busload of Cenzontles travel from Arizona to the little town of Banámichi in Sonora, Mexico, where Ronstadt’s grandfather was born. Eugene Rodriguez, a third-generation Mexican-American and musician, founded the Cenzontles 30 years ago to reconnect working-class kids with the dignity and beauty of their ancestral music and culture.

Valerie (Stacey Souther, U.S., 2020, 36 min.) This profile of Oscar-nominated actress Valerie Perrine surveys her career — highlighted by her Oscar-nominated role in “Lenny” and charming turn in “Superman” — and chronicles her ongoing battle with Parkinson’s disease.



Linda and the Mockingbirds



I Want to Make a Film about Women

DOC SHORTS: WOMEN'S WORLD

121 min., **FREE**

Available from Nov. 5-22

A global survey of the myriad challenges faced by women both past and present.

City of Widows (Lacey Uhlemeyer, India/U.S., 2019, 11 min., Hindi) Though they number more than 46 million, widows in India remain one of the most stigmatized, neglected, and marginalized groups in the country, as tragically illustrated by the story of Hari Dasi.

Hysterical Girl (Kate Novack, U.S., 2020, 13 min.) An exploration of the influence that Sigmund Freud's theory of female hysteria — based on a case history of a 17-year-old girl whose parents brought her to therapy after she accused a family friend of sexual assault — has had on popular culture over the past century.

I Want to Make a Film about Women (Karen Pearlman, Australia, 2019, 12 min., English & Russian) A speculative love letter to Russian constructivist women in the 1920s Soviet Union, which championed equality for women and great innovation in the creative arts — until it didn't.

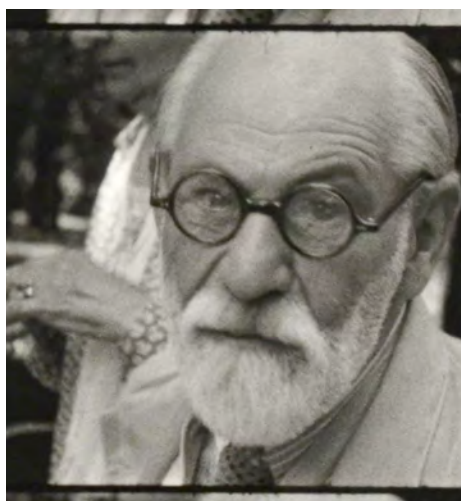
The Long Wait (Shuang Li, China/U.S., 2020, 26 min., Chinese & English) A look at three single women in China fighting for their reproductive rights in the aftermath of the country's one-child policy.

Messania's Story (Laki Karavias, Kenya/U.S., 2020, 20 min., West Pokot) Like many young girls from Africa, Messania was forced to undergo female genital mutilation to make her marriageable to a much older stranger, but she found the determination to escape abuse and challenge harmful cultural norms.

Ours to Tell (Rayka Zehtabchi, U.S., 2020, 17 min.) Four women share their stories of how the right to access abortion acted as a dynamic turning point in their journeys to freedom and self-love.

Where Were You? (María Trénor Colomer, Spain, 2020, 20 min., English, Portuguese & Spanish) Animated stories from the Phillipines, Mozambique, and Spain illustrate the universality of everyday violence against women.

Doc Shorts Programming
sponsored by Barry & Jackie
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Hysterical Girl



Messania's Story



Empty Places

NARRATIVE SHORTS: ANIMATION

117 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

Rousing adventures, complex introspections, and unconventional families highlight this animated collection.

10000 Ugly Inkblots (Dmitry Geller, China, 2020, 8 min., No Dialogue) Two calligraphy and painting masters share the same interests but have not met for a long time.

Bird (Wu-Ching Chang, Taiwan, 2019, 5 min., No Dialogue) A girl suffers from sudden panic attacks, and when an episode is accompanied by a flapping of wings, she begins a chaotic journey into her unconscious.

The Cat (Mary Apick, U.S., 2020, 13 min.) A happy little girl sells flowers on the street, but her idyllic world is enveloped by an oozing, malevolent darkness that destroys everything in its path.

Empty Places (Geoffroy de Crécy, France, 2020, 9 min., No Dialogue) An ode to the melancholy of machines.

Grand Adventure Railroad (Hsiao-Shan Huang, Taiwan, 2020, 15 min., No Dialogue) When a luxurious family touring train halts in a pitch-black tunnel, an uninvited creature sneaks on board.

Inside Blue (Yi-Chien Chen, Taiwan, 2019, 6 min., No Dialogue) To feel at peace, a man needs all the decorations of his home to be placed in a square frame made of adhesive tape.

Izzy's Demons (Greg Garay, U.S., 2020, 7 min.) Jealous of an old friend's success, Izzy struggles with the decision to reconnect.

Oxygen (Violette Belzer & Rocky Grispen, Belgium, 2020, 11 min.) On a far-away planet, an astronaut who's a doctor suffers from a lack of oxygen and must pay a high price to survive.

Tangle (Maliheh Gholamzadeh, Iran, 2019, 8 min., No Dialogue) When people lose their homes in a war, they are forced to leave all their memories and loved ones behind.

To the Dusty Sea (Héloïse Ferlay, France, 2020, 12 min., French) Left alone in the summer, Malo and Zoe try their best to catch their mother's elusive eye.

Too Late (Roy Stein, Canada, 2020, 5 min.) In the small hours of the night, drowning in black coffee and paperwork, a lonely office worker finds that sanity is slipping away.

Toomas Beneath the Valley of the Wild Wolves (Chintis Lundgren, Estonia, 2019, 18 min.) After losing a well-paid engineering job, a young, hot wolf is forced into working as a gigolo to support his family.



Feeling Flush

NARRATIVE SHORTS: COMEDY 1

108 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

Take a break from the weight of the world with this laugh-filled collection.

Blocks (Bridget Moloney, U.S., 2019, 11 min.) The mother of two young children begins to spontaneously vomit toy blocks.

Deceased Ones (Kate Hopkins, U.S., 2019, 14 min.) When two friends get involved in the niche service of role-playing the dead, they're forced to help heal grieving strangers through a surreal game of make-believe.

Distinguished Feelings (Keren Marciano, France, 2019, 11 min., French) Elena and Arturo are a couple fully in love until a friend sows seeds of doubt in their minds.

Feeling Flush (Erin Brown Thomas, U.S., 2019, 9 min.) Vicki idolizes her new girlfriend but draws the line when it comes to her time on the porcelain throne.

Freeze (Maya Albanese, U.S., 2020, 15 min.) When Joy's fairy-tale romance crashes and burns on the eve of her 35th birthday, her biological clock pushes her into a series of romantic misadventures and provokes wild hallucinations.

Monsters Be Here (Erin Greenwell, U.S., 2020, 7 min.) A woman house-sits during the height of the pandemic to escape a relationship, and when she gets stuck with six cats and two sugar gliders, a friend must help her make it through the night.

Not Today Missy (Isabelle McNally, U.S., 2019, 8 min.) When a retired cop overhears his neighbor plotting a robbery, he mistakenly thinks he's two steps ahead of her.

Now You See Us (Romina Schwedler, U.S., 2019, 11 min.) Two actresses "of a certain age" compete fiercely for a role in a TV commercial, but as their audition approaches, the lifelong rivals discover that they face a mutual threat.

The Robbery (Nika Belianina, Canada, 2020, 10 min.) Two gangs of gunmen simultaneously rob the same convenience store, and awkwardness ensues when one of them recognizes his ex-partner on the opposite side.

Sugar Crash (Liat Glik, Israel, 2020, 12 min., Hebrew) Aviva knows that she will never be skinny, but when she takes up acting, she finds new self-confidence.



Sugar Crash



Distinguished Feelings



My Dinner with Werner

NARRATIVE SHORTS: COMEDY 2

114 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

A second helping of hilarious shorts.

À la mode (Jean Lecointre, France, 2020, 9 min., French) In a kingdom tormented by fashion crazes, a queen and her court must always keep up with the newest trends or risk being consumed by an abominable monster: the Ridicule.

Düsseldorf (Mike Lars White, U.S., 2019, 10 min.) Graduates of an obscure German art school become guinea pigs for a young woman's mediation skills when their relationship turmoil reaches fever pitch in a shopping-mall parking lot.

I Can Change (Jim Jenkins, U.S., 2019, 15 min.) The night before his wedding, an underachiever receives the power to stop time, so he attempts to make the major life changes his fiancée wants before morning arrives.

Incurable (Michelle Bossy, U.S., 2019, 9 min.) Trina wants to tell the man she loves about the invisible illness she hides, but when her imagination gets the best of her, it leads her on a roller-coaster ride of rejection.

It's What She Would Have Wanted (Nate Trinrud, U.S., 2020, 13 min.) Maggie welcomes four of her oldest friends back home after the unexpected death of one of their own and convinces them to fulfill a childhood pact: to destroy all evidence of their friend's most embarrassing secrets.

My Dinner with Werner (Maverick Moore, U.S., 2019, 18 min.) Based on real events, real people, and the real things they actually said, this wildly bizarre and wacky farce chronicles a 1987 dinner date that features a murder plot as the main dish.

One Brick Shy: Episode 1 ("Randy") (CeCe O'Neill, U.S., 2020, 16 min.) Drew and Murphy face a few of life's harsh realities and attempt to remedy their lack of preparedness.

Snake Dick (David Mahmoudieh, U.S., 2020, 8 min.) Jill has the snake, Julia has the flute, and together they have a secret weapon to fight the darkness.

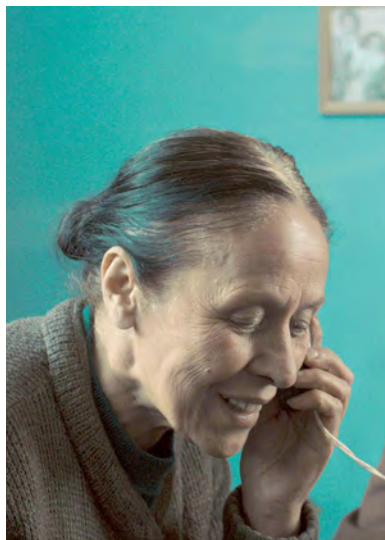
Try to Fly (The Affolter Brothers, Canada, 2020, 8 min.) When a baby owl is pushed from the nest by her mother, her anxiety and self-doubt trigger an existential crisis.



One Brick Shy: Episode 1 ("Randy")



Try to Fly



The News

NARRATIVE SHORTS: COSMOPOLITAN DELIGHTS

123 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

An eclectic mix of crowd-pleasing shorts that includes animation, dark comedy, and horror.

Black Boys Can't Cry (Victor Gabriel, U.S., 2020, 5 min.) A dutiful and loving Black father is haunted by a secret that he continues to bury in silence.

Carrousel (Jasmine Elsen, Belgium, 2020, 10 min., No Dialogue) Rose, who grows up with her snails in the park, is attacked by intruders — or is it the other way around?

Deux oiseaux (Antoine Robert, France, 2019, 12 min., French) Jean spends his holidays at his grandparents' farm playing cruel games on the surrounding animals.

Killing Small Animals (Marcus Svanberg, Sweden, 2020, 11 min.) When a woman kills a butterfly, she gets a sense of relief, a feeling of control, but only for a brief moment.

The News (Lorin Terezi, Albania, 2020, 15 min., Albanian) When an Albanian man working in Greece discovers a corpse, the townspeople back home compete with each other to get on national television.

Patriot Day (Nailah Robinson, U.S., 2020, 14 min.) An 11-year-old Muslim-American girl waits for her mother to come home from the Pentagon on 9/11.

Pieces (Dylan Boom, U.S., 2019, 7 min.) Four couples of differing ages and backgrounds face a similarly tenuous moment in their relationships.

Postcards from the End of the World (Konstantinos Antonopoulos, Greece, 2019, 23 min., Modern Greek) Trapped in their marriage, Dimitra and Dimitris try to endure a summer vacation with their two daughters on a remote island when human civilization unexpectedly collapses.

Sad Beauty (Arjan Brentjjes, Netherlands, 2020, 10 min.) In a heavily polluted world, a young woman mourns the disappearance of animal species, and when she falls ill, nature appears to send her a message in her hallucinations.

Saving Chintu (Tushar Tyagi, India, 2020, 25 min., English & Hindi) An LGBTQ American couple travels to adopt a child living with HIV from an Indian orphanage, but will they be able to cope with the cultural challenges?



Sad Beauty



Patriot Day



It's Nothing

NARRATIVE SHORTS: DRAMA

119 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

Powerful films making strong statements comprise this collection of dramatic shorts.

Broken Bird (Rachel Harrison Gordon, U.S., 2020, 10 min.) Birdie, a biracial girl raised by her Jewish mom, spends a rare visitation day with her father while preparing for her bat mitzvah.

Circus Person (Britt Lower, U.S., 2020, 17 min.) Inspired by the woman her fiancé left her for, a grieving painter joins a one-ring circus to reclaim her forgotten wildness.

Class (Enzo Cellucci & Ash McNair, U.S., 2020, 18 min.) When Max attends his first-ever acting class, he soon discovers that the lines between class and cult begin to blur.

It's Nothing (Anna Maguire, U.K., 2019, 16 min.) Encouraged by an impossibly perfect girl, a recent graduate who has returned to her parents' house obsessively starts to dig a hole and heads further down a path of self-destruction.

Josiah (Kyle Laursen, U.S., 2019, 20 min.) A Black actor auditions for a part in a period television series.

Post Rock (Jason Affolder, U.S., 2020, 13 min.) Tensions erupt between the members of a struggling rock band after the best show of their cross-country tour.

The Speech (Haohao Yan, U.S., 2019, 25 min., Chinese) When Beijing goes under lockdown during the SARS outbreak in 2003, three 8-year-old girls inside a private boarding school have to find a way to make sense of the world.



Circus Person



Crab

NARRATIVE SHORTS: EXPERIMENTAL

108 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

A collection of mind-bending, form-expanding work.

Big Touch (Christopher Tenzis, U.S., 2019, 3 min., No Dialogue) Through the power of touch, a giant woman and a tiny man experience an unexpected transformation.

Castle (Ryotaro Miyajima, Japan, 2019, 5 min., No Dialogue) A castle architect discovers the possible role of a tearoom as a place for warriors to regain humanity.

Crab (Shiva Sadegh Asadi, Iran, 2020, 11 min., Persian) A shy, withdrawn boy has his heart set on joining the school theater group, but the only role offered to him is that of a crab.

Jack (Faiyaz Jafri, U.S., 2019, 2 min., No Dialogue) Jack is naked. Jack is pretending to play guitar. Jack looks silly.

Kua Fu Chasing the Sun (Xia Mu, China, 2019, 12 min., Chinese) When Kua Fu is dumped by his girlfriend at the lantern festival, his instincts tell him to run toward the sun.

Ô (Chloé Dupeyrat, France, 2019, 8 min., No Dialogue) Dark and dreamlike underwater pictures engage citizens and cause them to consider their relationship with burning issues.

Releasing Spell (Markéta Magidová, Czech Republic, 2020, 11 min.) A small group of aliens from the future arrives on Earth for a unique birth celebration.

Savior (Christopher Oroza-Nostas, U.S., 2020, 5 min.) Using a century of presidential and political speeches as its threads, the film weaves a tapestry that represents a divided nation.

Serial Parallels (Max Hattler, Germany/Hong Kong, 2019, 9 min., No Dialogue) Hong Kong's signature architecture of horizon-eclipsing housing estates is reimagined as parallel rows of film strips.

Trackless Lines (Keita Kurosaka, Japan, 2019, 11 min., No Dialogue) 5,000 images are organized into seven chapters.

Tub Time (Jaffe Zinn, U.S., 2020, 14 min.) A dissociative journey through the stormy present.

Urban Sphinx (María Lorenzo, Spain, 2020, 5 min., No Dialogue) Faces look at us with wide-open eyes, as if to tell us that we exist. But do we?

Wake (Cartter Evans, U.S., 2019, 12 min.) Trapped in a world between life and death, Ophelia attempts to break free of grief over her father's suicide.



The Cut

NARRATIVE SHORTS: HORROR

93 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

Shorts to make your skin crawl and your spine tingle.

The Cut (Chloé Cinq-Mars, Canada, 2019, 18 min., French) Emma, who had a C-section, didn't see her son when he was born, and when she finally meets him, she doesn't recognize her baby.

The Dark Room (Adrienne Lovette, U.S., 2019, 22 min.) When adventurous strangers at a psychic party unexpectedly contact the spirit of a young murdered girl, they discover their host's intentions are much darker than anyone first believed.

The Fall (Jonathan Glazer, U.K., 2020, 7 min., No Dialogue) A masked mob cruelly punishes a lone masked man in this nightmarish short by Jonathan Glazer, director of "Under the Skin."

The House Abandon (Clint D'Souza, Canada, 2020, 6 min.) Will Cody survive an interactive horror text game or become another in its long line of victims?

Household Demons (John Gray, U.S., 2020, 9 min.) A young boy is forced to deal with the entity that possesses his mother.

Mask of Sanity (Fran Casanova, Spain, 2019, 21 min.) The renowned writer of the bestselling "The Killer of the Polaroid" is locked up by a man who will not reveal his identity until the end of the story.

Peaking (Daniel Rands, U.K., 2020, 7 min.) After a long day on set, a sound recordist starts to hear more than just toxic conversation, leading her on a descent into horror.

An Uninvited Guest (Richard B. Pierre, Canada, 2020, 3 min., No Dialogue) When a Black man is viciously assaulted by police right outside their window, all of the guests at a dinner party seem to consider the attack unremarkable except for one.



Household Demons



Cotton Candy

NARRATIVE SHORTS: IMMIGRATION STORIES

103 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

Tales from around the globe about people seeking — but not always finding — better lives in new countries.

Cotton Candy (Fredgy Noël, U.S., 2020, 11 min., English, Haitian & Spanish) Marie and David compete for a lucrative cotton-candy route that will allow them to send money to their respective home countries of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, but the conflict eventually leads to a recognition of shared challenges.

Cranberry Nights (Sara Robin, U.S., 2020, 16 min., English & Spanish) Juana's life is uprooted when her friend unwittingly reveals the secret that she's undocumented.

Dark Skin (Iñaki Velasquez, Chile, 2020, 8 min., Spanish) A woman offers help to a Haitian immigrant, but a police officer disrupts their conversation.

Green Grass (Michael Greco, Canada, 2020, 8 min., No Dialogue) Two hopeful migrants make an arduous journey only to discover that their destination may no longer offer them a better life.

Havana (Faith Strongheart, U.S., 2019, 12 min., Chinese & English) In Cuba in the 1970s, immigration officer Antonio sells exit visas illegally at exorbitant prices, but that's not his only secret: He's also hiding his homosexuality.

Masha (Krzysztof Chodorowski, Poland, 2020, 13 min., Polish & Russian) Vera, a Ukrainian woman working illegally in a Polish factory, tries to help Masha, a friend who suffered an accident at work.

Rebel (Pier-Philippe Chevigny, Canada, 2019, 15 min., French) A naive 6-year-old watches as his father leads a mysterious patrol in the woods.

White Eye (Tomer Shushan, Israel, 2019, 20 min., Hebrew) As a man attempts to retrieve his stolen bicycle, he struggles to remain human.



Green Grass



Gon, the Little Fox

NARRATIVE SHORTS: INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION

125 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

Animated tales from around the world.

400 Mph (Julia Chaix, Paul-Eugène Dannaud, Lorraine Desserre, Alice Lefort, Natacha Pianeti & Quentin Tireloque, France, 2019, 5 min.) On the Bonneville salt flats, a chimpanzee attempts to reach the ultimate speed of 400 mph, which is thought to be impossible for land vehicles.

The Fox and the Tomten (Are Austnes & Yaprak Morali, Norway, 2019, 9 min., Norwegian) A hungry fox hunts for food on a cold winter night.

Gon, the Little Fox (Takeshi Yashiro, Japan, 2019, 28 min., Japanese) When Gon, a playful orphaned fox, finds that a young boy has lost his mother, he tries to comfort him and make amends for his own earlier mischief by secretly bringing small gifts.

Homeless Home (Alberto Vázquez, France, 2020, 15 min., Spanish) No one can escape their roots.

Kapaemahu (Dean Hamer, Joe Wilson & Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu, U.S., 2019, 8 min., Ancient Hawaiian Dialect) Drawing on new research, the film explores the healing power of four mysterious stones on Waikiki Beach and the legendary transgender spirits within them.

Little Hilly (Huang Yun Hsien & Liao Pei Yu, Taiwan, 2020, 19 min., Chinese) Can silent 10-year-old Hilly, who suffers from depression and the pressures of everyday life, reach out to the adults in her life?

Malakout (Farnoosh Abedi, Iran, 2019, 10 min.) Music was his passion, and love was his masterpiece.

Me (Begoña Arostegui, Spain, 2020, 13 min., Spanish) For the film's hero, every day looks the same, but a simple board that says "Park" will shake his routine.

St. Moritz (Joseph Balaclav & Raz Sonnenfeld, Israel, 2019, 6 min., Hebrew & Russian) The relationship between a mother and son is tested during the preparations for the Passover cleaning ritual.

The Terrible Girls (David Orellana, Spain, 2020, 12 min., No Dialogue) While being watched by an odd guard, a group of kids work on a strange monument, but the lack of connection within the group creates a conflict.



She Who Wears the Rain

NARRATIVE SHORTS: LOVEY'S LOVELIES

122 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

Janet “Lovey” Herrmann, who programmed the first SLIFF shorts program and continues to help evaluate submissions, chooses her favorites from this year’s selections.

Black Goat (Yi Tang, Nepal/U.S., 2019, 12 min., Nepali) A new girl at a nunnery has her first period after hearing a late-night ghost story and believes that she has been cursed, requiring her to sacrifice a black goat to avoid further misfortune.

Cueball (Brandon C. Lay, U.S., 2020, 14 min.) Sara is a TikTok and Instagram model stuck at home during the pandemic with her layabout boyfriend.

Duo (Francesco Saviano, U.S., 2020, 16 min.) A New York City songwriting team takes one last shot to do something they have never done before: write a hit song.

Leaving to Live (David Rodrigues, France, 2019, 8 min., French) Alexandra plans to leave her husband but needs to ensure her daughter mentions nothing of the plan.

Out of Place (Peier “Tracy” Shen, U.S., 2019, 20 min., Chinese, English & Spanish) A young aspiring Chinese pianist and a Mexican house painter, unaware that they are neighbors, go through a day of disillusionment in symphony.

She Who Wears the Rain (Marianne Métivier, Canada, 2019, 17 min., French) After a difficult visit with her dying father, Agnes escapes to a pension in the forest but must confront her grief.

Ungubani (Who Are You?) (Booker T. Mattison, U.S., 2019, 16 min.) A young Black man puts himself at risk to save a young White woman in distress.

The Way We Roll (Matt Marencik & Steve McWilliams, U.S., 2019, 19 min.) Crime caper meets road movie in this inspired effort co-written one letter at a time by Frankie Kineavy, who was born with cerebral palsy and is non-verbal, communicating only through an alphabet board.



Cueball



For Rosa

NARRATIVE SHORTS: PERIOD PIECES

127 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

These dramatic shorts transport you to a specific moment in time.

Augustus (Jon Alston, U.S., 2020, 16 min.) Augustus, a literate carpenter and family man who is living free as a fugitive slave, is faced with a decision to speak or die when denied the wages he's earned.

Chi Chi (Chelsey d'Adesky, U.S., 2020, 15 min.) A naive student meets a smooth-talking, wealthy man and gets swept into a world of excess, luxury, drugs, and partying.

The Empire's Surgeon (Guillaume Main, Switzerland, 2019, 9 min., French) At Waterloo in 1815, as the soldiers of Emperor Napoleon fight with desperation, a man braves all danger to come to their aid with an ambulance.

For Rosa (Kathryn Boyd-Batstone, U.S., 2020, 20 min., English & Spanish) A group of Latina women who were sterilized without consent while giving birth at Los Angeles County USC Medical Center during the 1970s join with a fierce Latina attorney in a lawsuit against the hospital.

Lunch Hour with the President (Pamela Perrine, U.S., 2020, 5 min.) As a married couple talk politics over morning coffee, a grandfather shares his excitement about a gift to his grandson.

Ma'am (Joy Wilkinson, U.K., 2020, 15 min.) Queen Victoria, the original "Instamum," struggles with postnatal depression while facing a photo shoot to show off her perfect family to the world.

The Shot (Adan Canto, U.S., 2019, 21 min.) In 1844 in the Republic of Texas, a young mother is forced to extreme measures when a Texas Ranger and his mysterious partner seek shelter from the rain.

Tiro Dominical (Pablo Riesgo Almonacid, U.S., 2019, 15 min., English & Spanish) Things get messy for three friends who pick up a hitchhiker while traveling to Las Vegas.

A White Horse (Shaun O'Connor, Ireland, 2019, 11 min.) In 1970s Ireland, a young female patient escapes a psychiatric hospital and phones home, but her parents are already waiting for the call.



Are You Alright?

NARRATIVE SHORTS: SHOWCASE SAMPLER

122 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

A selection of some of the best narrative shorts from the 2020 St. Louis Filmmakers Showcase.

Are You Alright? (Alessio Summerfield, U.S., 2020, 15 min.) When a day job becomes an every-waking-moment job, Wallace reaches a melting point.

Descend (Zlatko Cosic, U.S., 2020, 4 min., No Dialogue) A minimalist exploration of society as it heads toward an uncertain future.

Driving Louise (Isaac Knopf, U.S., 2019, 22 min.) When 19-year-old Ezra drives widowed 70-year-old neighbor Louise to visit her husband's out-of-state grave, she confronts a newfound insecurity about her sexual identity while Louise silently recalls a hidden relationship with a woman 50 years before.

Encounters (Ariana Nasi, U.S., 2020, 9 min., Spanish) A Venezuelan college girl is stuck outside her country when the Covid-19 pandemic starts, and her mom attempts to help her from a distance.

Momma's Boy (Lily Kerns, U.S., 2020, 7 min.) When 16-year-old Gordon, a socially awkward boy with a passion for disco, wins the annual dance competition and becomes a part of the high-school "it crowd," he discovers just how cruel teenagers can be.

Not Suitable (Cooper Shaw, U.S., 2020, 21 min.) Ben is trying — to connect, to laugh, to love — but his friends just don't get it.

One Cold Morning (Josh Herum, U.S., 2020, 18 min.) When three young men are found dead in a suburban house, was it self-defense or a drug deal gone south?

Tin Box (Andy Compton, U.S., 2020, 18 min.) A homeless addict breaks into a home and discovers a person being held captive behind a locked door.

Within the Silence (Zack Beining, U.S., 2020, 8 min.) During a global pandemic that terrorizes the world, an ill father realizes that life with his wife and daughter has come to an end.

Driving Louise





Season

NARRATIVE SHORTS: SILENT ANIMATION

112 min.

Available from Nov. 5-22

Short films that prove a picture is worth a thousand words.

Alienated (Nicole Yoshinaga, U.S., 2019, 5 min., No Dialogue) An alien learns how to utilize and accept his differences.

Beyond the Line (Jinuk Choi, U.S., 2020, 3 min.) A wheelchair dreams of one day being fast like a racing car and decides to hold its own race.

Candela (Marc Riba & Anna Solanas, Spain, 2020, 12 min., No Dialogue) Mrs. Candela spends the last days of her life in a dying suburb of a big city.

Forget-me-not (Katarina Lundquist, France, 2019, 7 min., No Dialogue) When a lifelong friend departs, a stubborn old man has to face his inner fears to restore his peace of mind.

If Anything Happens I Love You (Michael Govier & Will McCormack, U.S., 2020, 13 min., No Dialogue) Grieving parents struggle with the loss of their daughter after a school shooting.

The Lineman (Jay Shipman, U.S., 2018, 4 min., No Dialogue) Hearing a hypnotic tone traveling down a power line, a weary lineman falls asleep atop an electric pole and sees his life passing before his eyes.

Navozande, the Musician (Reza Riahi, France, 2020, 15 min., No Dialogue) A young musician and the love of his life are separated during an attack, but when he is summoned to perform at the castle of the Mongols 50 years later, he finally finds his beloved.

On/Off (Nicolas P. Villarreal, Argentina, 2020, 7 min., No Dialogue) Endless distractions threaten to destroy creativity.

Routine: The Prohibition (Sam Orti, Spain, 2020, 8 min., No Dialogue) In a dark world devastated by lies and dominated by fear, the human race continues its self-destructive routines and heads toward extinction.

Season (Giovanna Lopalco, France, 2019, 8 min., No Dialogue) As a cortege of men dressed in white walk a young woman in a strange procession, her body begins to metamorphose.

Sogni al campo (Mara Cerri & Magda Guidi, France, 2020, 9 min., No Dialogue) A child arrives at the doors of time, where the dead disappear and the living let them go.

Sweet Horizon (Chiang Yao, Taiwan, 2020, 5 min., No Dialogue) After a journey with his master, a loyal travel shoe meets an attractive pink shoe and falls in love at first sight.

Under the Ice (Ismail Berrahma, Flore Dupont, Laurie Estampes, Luce Grosjean, Quentin Nory & Hugo Potin, France, 2019, 7 min., No Dialogue) A heron is fishing on a lake when winter arrives.

Windup (Yibing Jiang, U.S., 2020, 9 min., No Dialogue) A father tries to stay connected with his comatose daughter by playing a windup music box to help guide her back to consciousness.



Kindled

SLIFF/KIDS FAMILY SHORTS 1

90 min., **FREE**

Available from Nov. 5-22

This eclectic program is tailored for children ages 4 to 8.

Burp (Ethan Barrett, U.S., 2019, 10 min.) A scrappy little earthworm tries to be a caterpillar but finds fitting in to be more trouble than expected.

The Great Milestone (Ignasi López Fàbregas, Spain, 2020, 13 min., No Dialogue) The destinies of two characters will intersect atop a nearly insurmountable mountain summit.

Hipposterous (John T. Hill, U.S., 2019, 3 min., No Dialogue) A hippopotamus leads two toddlers on a wild chase around a zoo.

Kindled (Natasha Bishop, New Zealand, 2019, 3 min., No Dialogue) A flame sprite and a wood sprite show that friendship can win no matter the obstacles.

Lilly Goes to the Dogs (The Bum Family, Canada, 2020, 6 min.) Lilly, a 10-foot-tall orange monster, visits a dog show, but her friend Fluffle gets sequestered in the mutt pen!

Master Moley by Royal Invitation (Leon Joosen, U.K., 2019, 30 min.) A young mole must pick a rose from the queen's garden, not knowing that this simple act will change the life of all moles.

The Meteor & the Moon (Sarah Feldlaufer & Beorn Leonard, U.K., 2019, 5 min.) A meteor crashes into a lonely moon, kick-starting an unlikely relationship.

Picnic in the Park (Emily Howells, U.K., 2019, 4 min.) Two dinosaurs get into mischief on a picnic in the park.

The Sad Little Fact (Drew Christie, U.S., 2019, 3 min.) This adaptation of an award-winning children's book tells the story of a fact locked away for telling the truth.

Skinny & Fluffy (Max Gregoriou & Jonathan Klug, U.K., 2019, 6 min.) Fluffy the cat hates dogs, but Skinny the dog hasn't received the message and chases her everywhere.

To Gerard (Taylor Meacham, U.S., 2019, 7 min.) A sprightly elderly man uses magic to inspire a little girl to follow her dreams.



Master Moley by Royal Invitation



The Meteor & the Moon



The Butterfly Affect

SLIFF/KIDS FAMILY SHORTS 2

100 min., **FREE**

Available from Nov. 5-22

This program of family films will appeal to kids ages 8 to 13.

The Butterfly Affect (Stephanie Blakey, Canada, 2019, 5 min.) A young worm tries to find her place in a butterfly's world.

Kimono (Alissa Goldberg, U.S., 2020, 9 min.) Tensions rise between two friends when they both want to wear the kimono in their school's Around the World Fashion Show.

The King and the Pawn (Caleb Blue, U.S., 2020, 7 min.) When an energetic boy attempts to connect with his busy and hardworking father over prolonged games of chess, his world is transformed.

Lapis de Lumine (Kalee DeHamer, U.S., 2020, 8 min., American Sign Language & English) A young herbalist sets out on her own to take up the family business with the help of a magical family heirloom.

The Mirror (Joel Kohn, Australia, 2020, 22 min.) When a young girl discovers a mysterious antique mirror in the basement of her ailing grandmother's house, she opens a window between time that allows her to cross over into Nazi-occupied Poland.

Mishou (Milen Vitano, Germany, 2020, 8 min., No Dialogue) The lives of four lively Arctic hares take a turn after they discover a strange new creature.

o28 (Otalía Caussé, Geoffroy Collin, Louise Gardel, Antoine Marchand, Robin Merle & Fabien Meyran, France, 2019, 5 min., No Dialogue) A married couple embark on a vertiginous race when the brakes go out on a tramway.

Spirit: A Martian Story (Stimson Snead, U.S., 2019, 14 min.) A chronicle of the historic mission of the rover Spirit in its quest to seek evidence of life on Mars.

The Tree (Van Maximilian Carlson, U.S., 2020, 6 min.) The life of a tree that falls in love with a rose bush.

Umbrella (Helena Hilario & Mario Pece, Brazil, 2019, 8 min.) While visiting a home for children, a little girl meets a boy whose only dream is to have a yellow umbrella.

Wiggle Room (Laura Gamse & Annie Munger, U.S., 2020, 8 min.) Kids discuss the loss of their baby teeth and the magic of the tooth fairy.

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for generations to come



Cinema St. Louis' programs, like SLIFF, offer glimpses of the human experience from around the world and thoughtfully address social, economic, cultural, and environmental issues. CSL believes that when we learn about others' cultures and perspectives, we discover something about ourselves.

Over our 29-year history, CSL has received funding from generous families, individuals, and businesses who share a passion for independent filmmaking. Their support provides every member of our community, regardless of their ability to pay, year-round access to innovative, educational, and inspirational storytelling through film.

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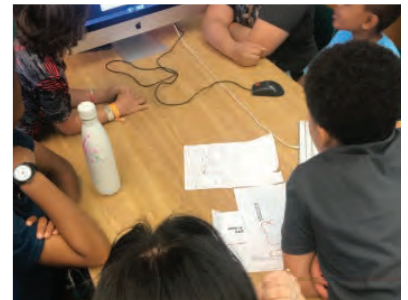
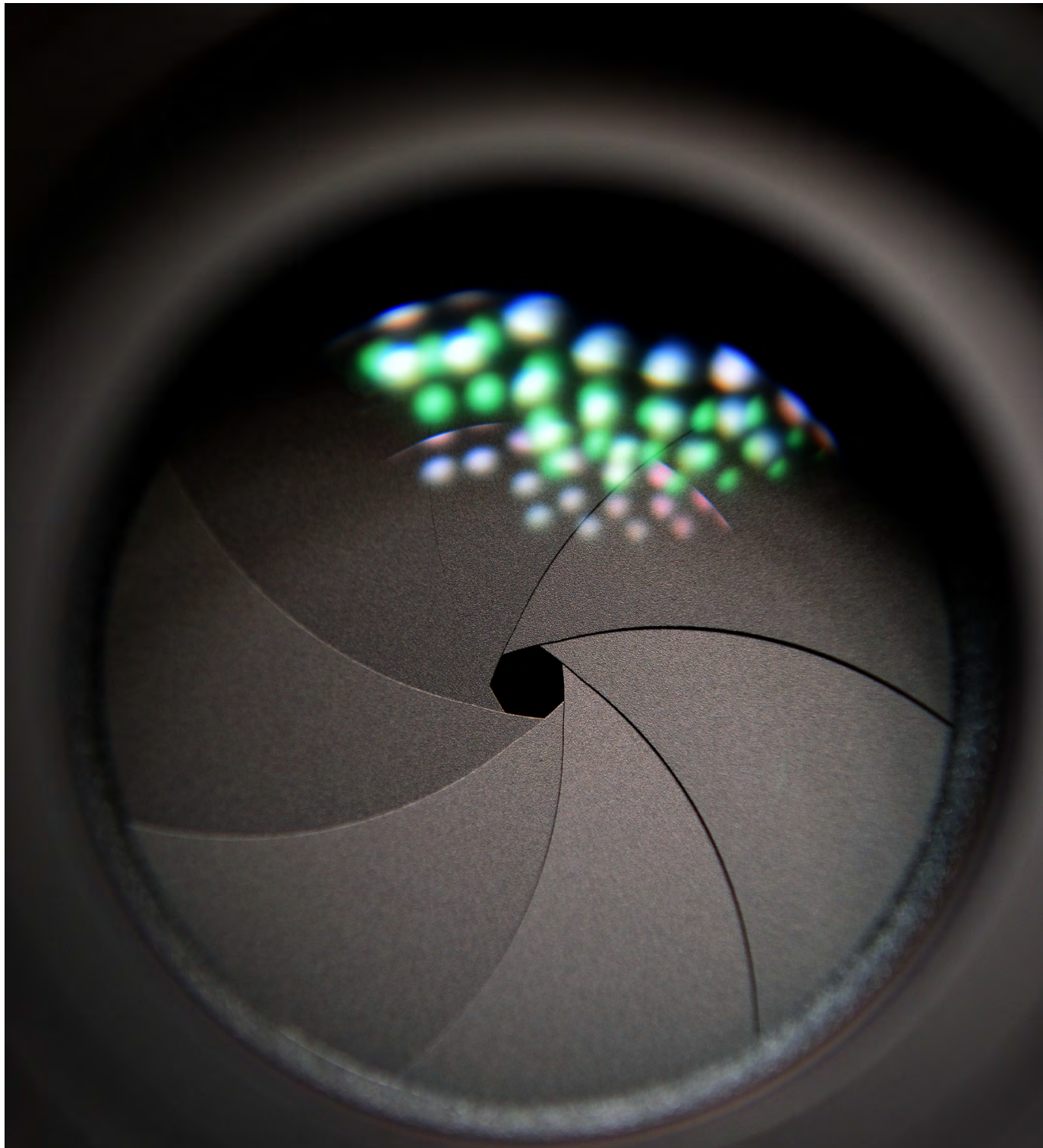


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Rachel Youn: Gather, Great Rivers Biennial 2020, installation view, Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, September 11, 2020–February 21, 2021. Photo: Dusty Kessler.

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