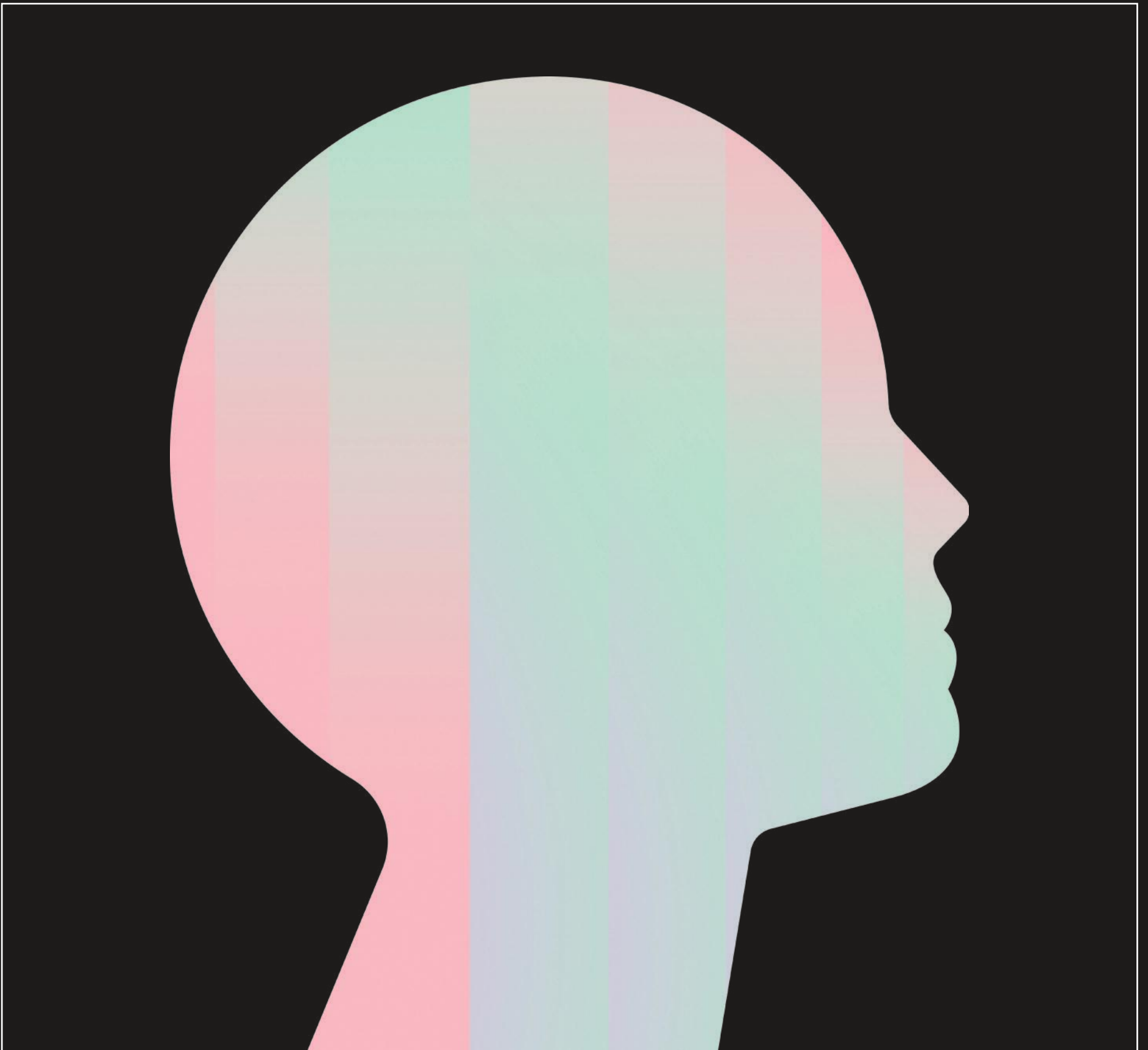


Melbourne International Film Festival

7—24 August
2025

Look Closer



MIFF

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Wominjeka Welcome

MIFF is back with a massive program showcasing the best in local and international cinema.

Welcome to MIFF 2025 – our 73rd edition – offering a kaleidoscope of cinema that promises to transport you around the globe, and premiering the most exciting voices and anticipated releases of the year.

MIFF is proudly the world's largest showcase of new Australian cinema, and MIFF 2025 offers a sensational line-up of homegrown storytelling, including seven MIFF Premiere Fund-supported films presenting a rich diversity of local perspectives. As always, MIFF is a place where bold storytelling thrives, communities come together and Australian cinema takes its place on the global stage.

Congratulations to the many thousands of filmmakers, creatives and technicians across 275+ features, shorts and XR works for the awe-inspiring talent and imagination you are sharing with MIFF audiences.

Delivered across MIFF's opening week, 37th South Market continues to strengthen in impact as a dynamic catalyst for inspiration, collaboration and meaningful connections that empowers participating Australian and New Zealand producers to advance the development and financing of their screen projects. Companion Industry initiative Accelerator Lab will again be a hothouse of talent for short filmmakers carving their paths to feature films, and Critics Campus will once more mentor emerging voices in Australian screen criticism. Our talent programs incubate the next generation of storytellers who define what Australia is – and what it can be.

I am so proud of MIFF's outstanding team and volunteers, who work tirelessly to bring you the best festival possible. On behalf of the Board and team, our deep gratitude to all MIFF Circle Patrons, philanthropic and corporate partners, the Victorian Government through VicScreen, Australian Government through Screen Australia, and the City of Melbourne.

Thank you to you, our audience and MIFF community, for your enthusiasm, passion and patronage of this most marvellous Melbourne event. It is time to explore the program. I look forward to seeing you in the cinema.



Damien Hodgkinson
Chief Executive Officer, MIFF

MIFF returns to Melbourne for sheer winter illumination. Echoing in audiences' conversations and artists' ideas, the festival showcases a world's worth of creativity into an array of cinematic adventures: unexpected, eclectic, celebratory. In a world of distractions, MIFF is the festival that invites you to Look Closer.

From the fiercely personal to the globally conscious, and from our place in the world to its far-flung reaches, we present films that will endear, entertain, challenge – those that deepen our understanding of the world around us or provide an escape hatch to flights of fantasy.

Music is everywhere at MIFF, including two extraordinary Special Events, both Australian exclusives: *Julia Holter: The Passion of Joan of Arc* and *Parasite Live in Concert With Composer Jung Jae-il*, both incredible experiences that bookend this year's festival.

We also mark the 75th anniversary of Chantal Akerman's birth with the largest Director in Focus retrospective in MIFF's history – presenting a 27-film cinephile sprawl spanning the legendary director's career.

The world's first feature film, *The Story of the Kelly Gang*, was made in Melbourne. Hollywood, you're welcome.

Today, Melbourne International Film Festival brings our movie-loving city more than 200 new titles from the global industry we started.

Our city includes everyone. You'll find accessible events, plus baby-friendly sessions without risk of being shushed!

We're always proud to support MIFF – a festival that delivered \$11.4 million in economic value last year, attracted thousands of visitors and supported hundreds of jobs.

Explore the program as you would Melbourne: enjoy the celebrated landmarks, but don't miss the secret laneways.

Happy viewing!



Nicholas Reece
Lord Mayor of Melbourne

MIFF's Bright Horizons Competition remains the prestige apex of our program, a space to recognise auteurs on the ascent competing for one of the world's richest film prizes. Bright Horizons also opens MIFF 2025 with the Australian premiere of *If I Had Legs I'd Kick You*, a stunning, darkly comic ode to maternal stress that won Rose Byrne the Silver Bear for Best Leading Performance at the Berlinale.

Meanwhile, MIFF continues to meet audiences where they are: in weekend expansions to regional Victorian communities, or at your place anywhere in Australia through MIFF Online via ACMI Cinema 3.

Thank you, as ever, for your love of film – for this wonderful occasion that brings us together as an audience and a community. Time to light up Melbourne once again.



Al Cossar
Artistic Director, MIFF

As the Southern Hemisphere's biggest film festival, MIFF proudly returns with the world's largest showcase of Australian cinema. The Victorian Government is a proud partner of MIFF, which continues to be a springboard for local stories taking on the world.

This year, seven titles will premiere at MIFF 2025 as part of the MIFF Premiere Fund, supported by the Victorian Government through VicScreen, including Victorian-made films *Pasa Faho*, *Spreadsheet Champions* and *One More Shot*. In addition, five emerging Victorian filmmaking teams will premiere their short documentaries as part of Footy Shorts, a uniquely Victorian joint initiative of the AFL, MIFF and VicScreen.

We're also proud to again support the MIFF Bright Horizons Award, recognising filmmaking excellence and boosting the festival's standing on the international calendar. MIFF has plenty on offer for all Victorians to enjoy, taking over cinemas across Melbourne and regional Victoria.



The Hon. Colin Brooks MP
Minister for Creative Industries

Contents

Welcome	3
Your Guide to MIFF	4
Galas & Special Events	6
Bright Horizons	8
Headliners	12
Australian	14
Asia Pacific	16
Europe & UK	18
Africa & Middle East	21
North America	22
Latin America	23
Chantal Akerman: Traces	24
Critical Condition	24
Restorations	26
Tales of Cinema	27
Animation	30
Doc Visions	30
Experimentations	31
Documentaries	32
The Body Is a Battlefield	34
Crime & Punishment	35
MIFF Regional	35
Music on Film	36
MIFF XR	37
MIFF Online	37
MIFF Schools	38
Family Films	39
Night Shift	40
MIFF Industry	40
MIFF Talks	41
MIFF Shorts	42
MIFF Awards	43
Food & Film	44
Film Index	46
Accessibility	47
Credits & Acknowledgements	47

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Martyn Thompson

Sandra Velik
Pinky Watson
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Teresa Zolnierkiewicz

And those wishing to remain anonymous.

We're always looking for new people to join our incredible donor group.

To find out more:
miff.com.au/patron

The Melbourne International Film Festival acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we live, learn and work, and pays respect to their Elders past and present, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. MIFF celebrates the history and contemporary creativity of the world's oldest living culture.

Your Guide to MIFF

In cinemas
7–24 August

Tickets are strictly limited. Book ahead to make sure you don't miss out.

MIFF Box Office

Phone
03 8660 4888

PRE-FESTIVAL

ACMI Ticket Desk

Daily: 10am–4pm

Call Centre

Daily: 11am–4pm

DURING THE FESTIVAL

ACMI Ticket Desk

Daily: 10am until 15 minutes after the last session

Call Centre

Daily: 10am–9pm

Box Offices at festival screening venues open one hour prior to the first session and close 15 minutes after the start of the last session.

The expert MIFF Box Office team can help you navigate the festival from start to finish. Please treat them with kindness.

Get the MIFF App

Browse the program, watch film trailers, make a shortlist of your favourites and access all your tickets in one place.



Available for
iOS & Android

Proudly supported
by Ferve Tickets

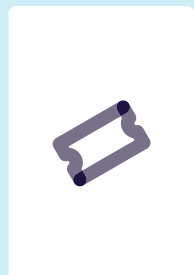
Schedule Your Festival

The complete MIFF 2025 program schedule grid is available online.

Make a shortlist, compare session times and schedule your festival at miff.com.au.

Tickets and Passes

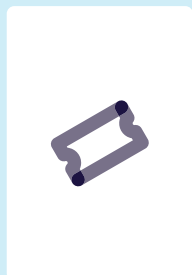
Book tickets online: miff.com.au



Standard Admission Peak

(Monday–Friday evening sessions & weekends)

FULL: \$28
CONCESSION: \$25.20
MEMBERS: \$23.80



Standard Admission Off-peak

(Monday–Friday daytime sessions)

FULL: \$24.40
CONCESSION: \$22
MEMBERS: \$20.80

Become a Member

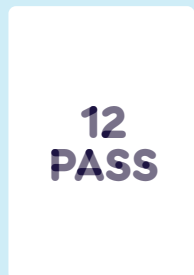
Join MIFF and unlock exclusive benefits!

- discounted tickets in cinemas and on MIFF Online
- four-day ticket pre-sale access
- year-round Member screenings
- year-round parking benefits
- industry concession entry to all our cinema partners.

FULL: \$80
CONCESSION: \$70
U26: \$26

See more films for less with a MIFF Multipass

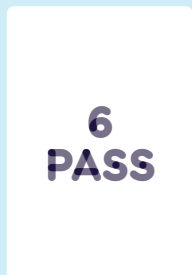
Passes can be redeemed for standard festival admissions, which you can enjoy by yourself or share with friends.



Multipass-12

The best way to see as much as you can at the cheapest rate.

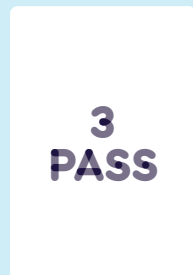
FULL: \$285.60
CONCESSION: \$257.10
MEMBERS: \$242.80



Multipass-6

Maximise your MIFF experience and minimise the cost.

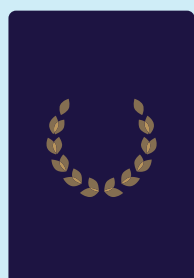
FULL: \$151.20
CONCESSION: \$136.10
MEMBERS: \$128.60



Multipass-3

Ideal if you're interested in select highlights or attending with a couple of friends.

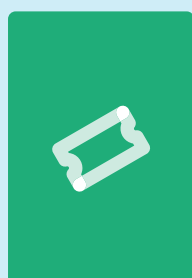
FULL: \$79.80
CONCESSION: \$71.90
MEMBERS: \$67.90



Bright Horizons 3-Pass

See any three films in the prestigious Bright Horizons Competition at a discounted rate.

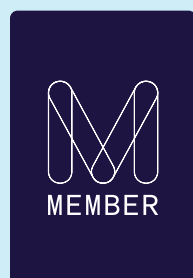
FULL: \$67.20
CONCESSION: \$60.50
MEMBERS: \$57.20



Festival Passport

Included with a MIFF Deluxe Membership.

A Festival Passport grants you admission to every standard session at MIFF 2025.



Deluxe Membership

Passes are valid for standard in-cinema sessions only unless otherwise stated.

For full terms and conditions, visit miff.com.au/tickets.

Group bookings available – email miff@miff.com.au.

Passes are valid for standard in-cinema sessions only unless otherwise stated. For full terms and conditions, visit miff.com.au/tickets.

Allocated Seating

There will be allocated seating at ACMI, Forum Melbourne and The Capitol. Skip the queues and choose your seat in advance.

Standby Queues

For all sessions listed as 'standby', MIFF will operate a standby queue at the venue. The queue commences from one hour prior to session start, and patrons may be admitted up to 15 minutes after the commencement of the film.

Please see a Front of House team member to be added to the queue. Admission to standby sessions is not guaranteed.

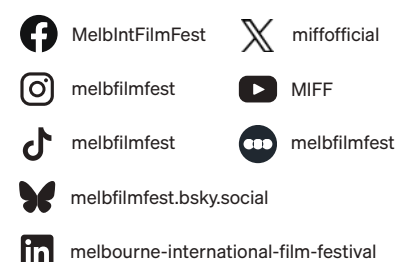
Stay Connected

Follow us for the latest news, events, giveaways, announcements and encores.

#MIFF2025



Sign up to MIFF's news *Widescreen*
miff.com.au/subscribe



Access and Inclusion

Everyone has a place at MIFF. We offer a range of accessible services across our venues, screenings and events so that every audience member can engage, participate and feel valued.

All metro cinemas have step-free and wheelchair access.

MIFF offers the following access services at select sessions:

- Open Captions
- Audio Description
- Sensory Friendly
- Baby Friendly
- 100% subtitled films
- Auslan-interpreted events

If you require an access service that MIFF offers, please email boxoffice@miff.com.au, call **03 8660 4888** or visit the MIFF Box Office in person.

Get in touch with MIFF's Access Coordinator via access@miff.com.au.

For more information, see **page 47** and visit miff.com.au/access.

Viewer Advice & Classification

MIFF offers Viewer Advice for films that contain scenes and/or themes that some audiences may find sensitive. Where applicable, Viewer Advice will be prominently displayed in each film's listing on the MIFF website and app.

Please refer to the Viewer Advice prior to booking your tickets.

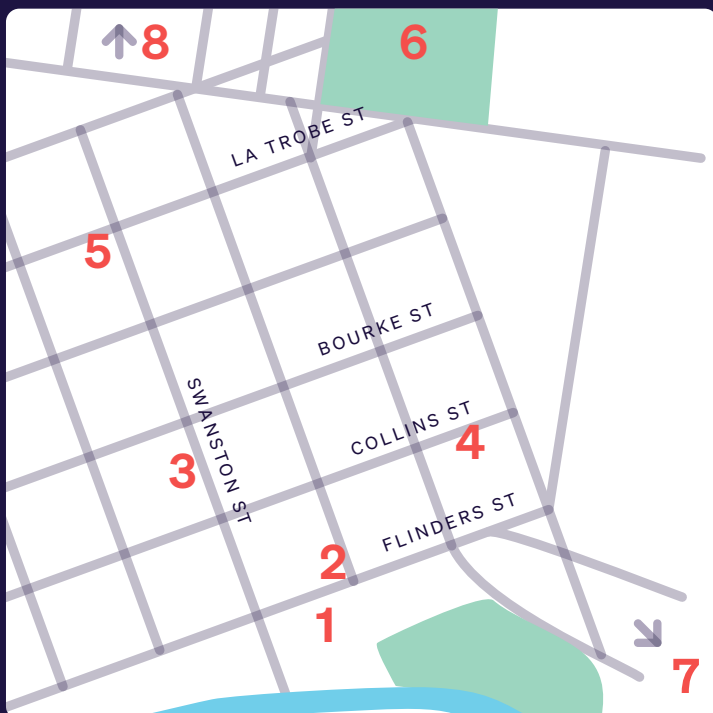
The Classification Board has granted MIFF special classifications and clearances. Except where indicated online, no-one under 18 (including infants) can attend sessions. For MIFF Schools films (page 38), no-one under the age of 15 will be admitted unless in the company of an adult guardian.

For more detailed information, visit miff.com.au/classification.

MIFF Merch

100% Organic Cotton Tote Bag

FULL: \$20
MEMBERS: \$18
Purchase at MIFF Box Office



Metro Venues

- 1 ACMI + MIFF Box Office
Fed Square
- 2 Forum Melbourne
154 Flinders St (cnr Flinders St & Russell St)
- 3 The Capitol
113 Swanston St
- 4 Kino Cinema
Lower Ground Level, 45 Collins St
- 5 Hoyts Melbourne Central
Level 3, cnr Swanston St & La Trobe St
- 6 IMAX
Rathdowne St, Carlton
- 7 The Astor Theatre
1 Chapel St, St Kilda
- 8 Cinema Nova
380 Lygon St, Carlton

Driving to MIFF? Park smart, pay less!

Get exclusive discounted parking with Secure Parking.

Apply the below promo codes on the booking page:

MIFFDAY25 for \$25* Day Rate (Mon to Fri)
MIFF25 for \$14* Night & Weekend Rate

Pre-book your parking and save:
secureparking.com.au/miff

Esecure P

*Terms & Conditions and car park quotas apply.

THE PLACES TO SEE AND BE SEEN AT MIFF



MIFF Festival Hub

A home for MIFF audiences to eat, drink and discuss cinema

OPEN DAILY, MIDDAY TO
LAST SESSION AT ACMI

CAMEO AT ACMI,
FED SQUARE



Wax Music Lounge

A new late-night venue for MIFF after hours

OPEN DAILY, 5PM - LATE

250 FLINDERS ST

MIFF ONLINE

Available to stream via ACMI Cinema 3.

MIFF PREMIERE FUND

A title from this year's slate of MIFF co-financed films.

MIFF REGIONAL

Available to view at one or more of the festival's nine regional cinemas.

FESTIVAL GUEST

Select sessions may feature festival guest introductions or Q&As.

Galas & Special Events

Lights, camera, action! Celebrate MIFF's 73rd edition in style with these unmissable special events.

Scan code for booking information
miff.com.au/special-events

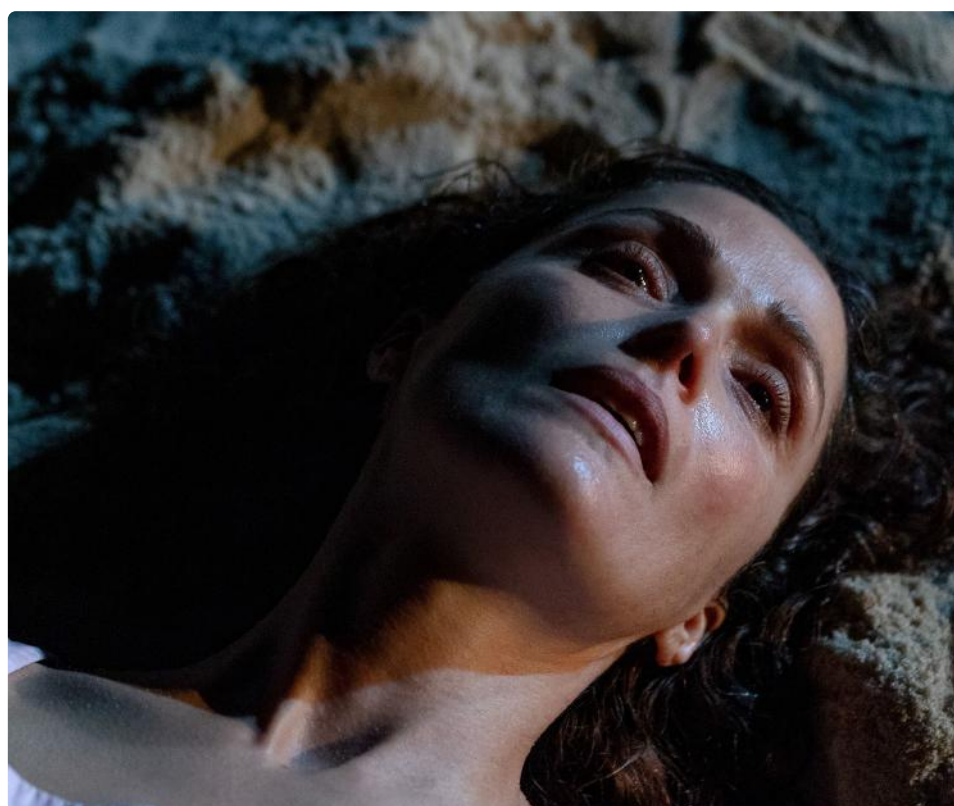


Opening Night Gala Thursday 7 August

MIFF 2025 kicks off in style with one of the most anticipated screenings of the year: the Australian premiere of Mary Bronstein's acclaimed, Berlinale-awarded *If I Had Legs I'd Kick You*.

Mingle with the brightest stars of the film industry on the red carpet, enjoy a drink on arrival and settle in for a transformative night at the cinema.

Audiences can take in the atmosphere of the red carpet and the screening at Hoyts Melbourne Central with a film-only ticket, or book a spot at the legendary afterparty across the road at the gorgeous State Library Victoria with a film-and-party ticket.



If I Had Legs I'd Kick You

Dir. Mary Bronstein USA

Judged the best performance at this year's Berlinale, Rose Byrne's phenomenal star turn propels writer/director Mary Bronstein's devastatingly honest, darkly comic vision of motherhood.

Linda is a therapist who can barely help herself, let alone anyone else. Her daughter is ill and seems unable, or unwilling, to get better; her husband is little more than a judgemental voice on the other end of the phone; her patients are more distractions than anything; and even her own therapist seems over her! So when Linda's apartment ceiling collapses, it might just push her over the edge – if a belligerent hamster or surly motel receptionist don't do so first.

Rose Byrne won the Berlinale Silver Bear for Best Leading Performance for her nerve-eviscerating portrayal of Linda, while the onscreen talent in Mary Bronstein's long-awaited second feature – which also includes fellow Australian Danielle Macdonald, funnyman Conan O'Brien and artist A\$AP Rocky – is ably matched by the skill behind the camera. Funny, claustrophobic, a little surreal and always anxiety-inducing, *If I Had Legs I'd Kick You* is a whirlwind that – much like modern motherhood itself – will leave you breathless.

"Hilarious and harrowingly brilliant ... one of the rawest and most honest movies ever made about contemporary motherhood." – *IndieWire*

113 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



The Bad Guys 2

Dir. Pierre Perifel USA

The felonious critters are back for one last caper – and this time, they're doing it for the girls.

Beastly heist team the Bad Guys are out of jail early for good behaviour! But law-abiding life isn't easy for getaway driver Mr Wolf (Sam Rockwell), grumpy safecracker Mr Snake (Marc Maron), sensitive master of disguise Mr Shark (Craig Robinson), hacker Ms 'Webs' Tarantula (Awkwafina) and hot-tempered Mr Piranha (Anthony Ramos). Forced to accept one last job from crime crew the Bad Girls, they join ice-cold snow leopard Kitty Kat, wild boar Pigtail and snarky raven Doom to ruin the wedding of evil billionaire Mr Moon and steal his MoonX rocket mid launch. Is being good worth it when being bad is this much fun?

Selling millions of copies, the 20 books in Aussie actor turned author Aaron Blabey's *Bad Guys* series are a staple of children's bedroom shelves around the world. If French director Pierre Perifel's 2022 animated adaptation was a kid-friendly *Ocean's Eleven* meets *Baby Driver*, this bigger, badder sequel takes its explosive action cues from *Fast & Furious* and *Mission: Impossible*. Joining the all-star original voice cast are Oscar nominees Danielle Brooks (*The Color Purple*) as Kitty Kat and Maria Bakalova (*Borat Subsequent Moviefilm*) as Pigtail, plus comedy icon Natasha Lyonne (*Russian Doll*) as Doom, whose smouldering screwball banter with Mr. Snake provides some highlights for grown-ups.

104 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST

Family Gala Sunday 17 August

MIFF's Family Gala returns in 2025! A fun-filled afternoon for adults and kids alike, this centrepiece event features the Australian premiere of *The Bad Guys 2* accompanied by an all-ages red carpet.

Premiere With Purpose Thursday 14 August

A black-carpet event presented by DECJUBA

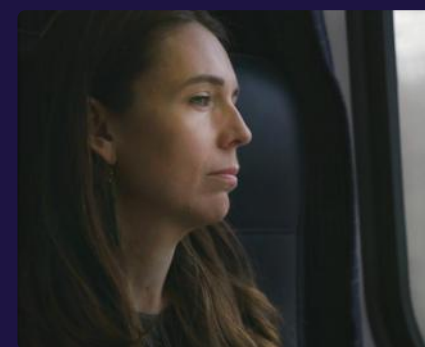
The spotlight shines on both style and storytelling as the Premiere With Purpose returns for its second year. The Victorian premiere of *Prime Minister* will see the city's most inspiring leaders and changemakers gather for an unforgettable fusion of film, fashion and purpose.

Hosted by broadcaster Jo Stanley.

Join us on the black carpet to celebrate compassionate leadership. Limited tickets available.

PRESENTED BY

DECJUBA



Prime Minister

Dir. Michelle Walshe, Lindsay Utz New Zealand, USA

Enter Jacinda Ardern's private world in this Sundance award-winning documentary.

The world's youngest female world leader when elected at just 37, Jacinda Ardern went on to guide New Zealand through tumultuous times and major crises – all as a mum to a young daughter. Through vulnerable moments and unguarded observations, this intimate five-year portrait reveals the private beliefs and emotions underpinning Ardern's public decisions.

103 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



Footy Shorts Tuesday 12 August

PRESENTED WITH
AFL W VICSCREEN

MIFF and the AFL, supported by VicScreen, present five short works that combine two of Melbourne's greatest loves: film and footy.

Five filmmakers have created authentic, emotionally resonant stories that capture the deep love, traditions, myths and connections people share through Australian Rules football, whether as players, fans, families or communities – showcasing how the game, across its many different forms, unites and shapes Australian life.

Films in this package: *Breaking the Line: The Peta Searle Story* (dir. Grace Anna Cardona), *Bush Boots* (dir. Kynan Clarke, Isabel Dilena), *Eye of the Game: The Deaf Ruckman* (dir. Ramas McRae), *House Divided* (dir. Danielle Baynes) and *No Prior Opportunity* (dir. Alexandra Walton).

75 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST MIFF ONLINE MIFF REGIONAL



The Texas Chainsaw Massacre – Retro Screening Experience Saturday 9 August

Dir. Tobe Hooper USA 1974

Relive the mayhem as it was originally experienced by Australian horror and genre fans.

When released in 1974, Tobe Hooper's sweaty, panic-inducing experiment was as much a seething comment on society as it was a surprise cinematic tour de force. In this special one-off screening, step back in time and watch the film as so many fans experienced it for the first time: on a scanned degraded VHS tape, bringing out the film's vérité rawness in all its squalid glory.

83 MINS



Special Preview: Eddington Saturday 9 August & Sunday 10 August

Dir. Ari Aster USA

Enter the epicentre of COVID-era chaos in this black comedy from horror maestro Ari Aster.

It's May 2020, and the world's about to lose its mind... but nowhere more so than the fictional New Mexico town of Eddington. Screening in competition at Cannes, the latest absurdist nightmare vision from *Midsommar* director Ari Aster – starring Joaquin Phoenix, Pedro Pascal, Emma Stone, Deirdre O'Connell, Austin Butler, Amélie Hoeferle and Micheal Ward – cuts a slice of rotten Americana straight from the headlines.

145 MINS



Julia Holter: The Passion of Joan of Arc Monday 11 August & Tuesday 12 August

Acclaimed singer-songwriter Julia Holter presents a live score to a visionary cinematic work.

Julia Holter's music brilliantly crosses elements of art pop, chamber pop, baroque, experimental and ambient. Combining Carl Theodor Dreyer's 1928 French silent film *The Passion of Joan of Arc* with a spellbinding score by one of today's most remarkable artists, this exclusive Australian premiere event – originally commissioned by Opera North Projects – will see Holter craft an immense sonic tapestry, performed live with her band and The Consort of Melbourne, and conducted by renowned UK-based orchestrator and composer Hugh Brunt.

88 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



MIFF x Birrarangga FF: Free Leonard Peltier Saturday 16 August

PRESENTED WITH
BIRRARANGGA
FILM FESTIVAL

Dir. Jesse Short Bull, David France USA

The story of the fight to free a Native American icon.

In 1977, Ojibwe/Lakota activist Leonard Peltier was convicted of murdering two FBI agents. Over the 50 years he spent in prison, Peltier maintained his innocence as generations of Native Americans as well as public figures like Nelson Mandela and Pope Francis campaigned for his freedom. Integrating archival footage with new interviews, this rousing documentary is not to be missed.

110 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



1000 Women in Horror Surprise Double Feature Friday 22 August

Follow up one of the documentary highlights of this year's program with a terrifying double bill.

To celebrate the premiere of the documentary *1000 Women in Horror*, MIFF will be programming two rarely screened cult horror classics directed by women back to back. Provocatively exploring gender politics and the commodification of women's bodies, these two films – only to be revealed on the night – will unnerve you, thrill you and provide a perfect counterpart to the themes discussed in the documentary. Tickets for this special experience are limited, so book now!



Parasite Live in Concert With Composer Jung Jae-il Saturday 23 August

Dir. Bong Joon-ho South Korea 2019

A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see the South Korean maestro conduct and perform his own composition for Bong Joon-ho's masterpiece.

In this concert, Jung Jae-il performs piano and conducts Orchestra Victoria through a screening of Bong Joon-ho's *Parasite* – the film that won the rare double of a Cannes Palme d'Or and an Academy Award for Best Picture. This is his first visit to Australia, and this event, produced in association with Concert Lab, is exclusive to Melbourne.

132 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST

Elevating stories. Empowering creators.

screenaustralia.gov.au

Australian Government

Screen
Australia

Bright Horizons

SUPPORTED BY **VICSCREEN**

MIFF's film competition, Bright Horizons, celebrates filmmakers on the ascent, featuring an extraordinary international line-up of first- and second-time filmmakers competing for one of the richest film prizes in the world – supported by VicScreen. Explore this strand with a Bright Horizons 3-Pass!

Scan code for booking information
miff.com.au/bright-horizons

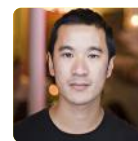


Bright Horizons Jury



Charlotte Wells (President)

Charlotte is a Scottish filmmaker based in New York. Her directorial debut *Aftersun* premiered at Cannes in 2022. Charlotte was a Fellow at the 2020 Sundance Institute Directors and Screenwriters Lab.



Nam Le

Nam is a writer whose work encompasses fiction, nonfiction, poetry and works for screen and stage. His collection *36 Ways of Writing a Vietnamese Poem* was named Book of the Year at the 2025 NSW Literary Awards.



Col Needham

Col is Executive Chair of IMDb, which he founded in 1990. Col is a board member of Into Film and Film Independent and serves as Global Brand Ambassador for the British Board of Film Classification.



Alex Ross Perry

Alex is an American filmmaker and actor whose award-winning works include *Listen Up Philip*, *Golden Exits* and *Her Smell*.



Tamala

Tamala is an Australian actor known for roles in *Reef Break*, *Cleverman* and *Nowhere Boys*. Alongside her work as an actor, she is a writer, singer and spoken-word performer.



Athina Rachel Tsangari

Athina is an acclaimed Greek filmmaker, whose feature work includes *Attenberg*, *Chevalier* and *Harvest*.



Caitlin Yeo

Caitlin is an award-winning Australian screen composer with over 75 film and TV credits. She is well known for her bold and inventive scores including *Bad Behaviour* and *The Rocket*.



April

Dir. Dea Kulumbegashvili France, Italy, Georgia

Local authorities close in on a rural Georgian doctor, leaving her with nowhere to run.

Nina is a licensed obstetrician with an illegal side-gig; administering black-market abortions to disadvantaged women in the villages of Georgia's Caucasus Mountains, which she performs in between anonymous roadside sexual encounters with men. When she is accused of negligence in her hospital day job after delivering a stillborn child, the ensuing investigation puts Nina's life under the microscope, and her career and safety at risk.

Winner of the Special Jury Prize at Venice, as well as Best Film and Best Performance at the 2024 Asia Pacific Screen Awards, the second feature from ascendant auteur Dea Kulumbegashvili (*Beginning*, MIFF 2021) has added an impressive array of accolades to its critically lauded appearances at major international festivals. Produced by Luca Guadagnino (*Call Me by Your Name*, MIFF 2017) and featuring a score by Matthew Herbert (*A Fantastic Woman*, MIFF 2017), *April* draws viewers deep into its disturbing nocturnal world through every meticulous frame.

134 MINS



First Light

Dir. James J. Robinson Australia, Philippines

A nun encounters a lethal criminal conspiracy and begins to question her beliefs in this poetic, sensory meditation on faith, power and corruption.

A gentle and mild-mannered middle-aged nun living in a neglected centuries-old convent, Sister Yolanda sees her mission in life as giving spiritual guidance to the people of her community and, particularly, young novice Sister Arlene. Her conscience is left shaken, however, when she bears witness to a strange and distressing sequence of events in a hospital room. At first puzzled, she soon realises that the incident may have more sinister and far-reaching implications – and that high-ranking figures are determined to stop her, or anyone else, from finding out the truth.

Shot in a verdant mountainous landscape in northern Luzon, this MIFF Premiere Fund-supported feature debut from celebrated Filipino-Australian photographer James J. Robinson evokes Ingmar Bergman's *Winter Light* and Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's *Black Narcissus* in its masterfully composed images and thought-provoking interrogation of faith. Starring veteran Filipina actor Ruby Ruiz and industry legend Maricel Soriano, *First Light* is a slow-burn crime drama you won't be able to tear your eyes from.

118 MINS MIFF PREMIERE FUND FESTIVAL GUEST MIFF REGIONAL



If I Had Legs I'd Kick You

Dir. Mary Bronstein USA

Judged the best performance at this year's Berlinale, Rose Byrne's phenomenal star turn propels writer/director Mary Bronstein's devastatingly honest, darkly comic vision of motherhood.

Linda is a therapist who can barely help herself, let alone anyone else. Her daughter is ill and seems unable, or unwilling, to get better; her husband is little more than a judgemental voice on the other end of the phone; her patients are more distractions than anything; and even her own therapist seems over her! So when Linda's apartment ceiling collapses, it might just push her over the edge – if a belligerent hamster or surly motel receptionist don't do so first.

Rose Byrne won the Berlinale Silver Bear for Best Leading Performance for her nerve-eviscerating portrayal of Linda, while the onscreen talent in Mary Bronstein's long-awaited second feature – which also includes fellow Australian Danielle Macdonald, funnyman Conan O'Brien and artist A\$AP Rocky – is ably matched by the skill behind the camera. Funny, claustrophobic, a little surreal and always anxiety-inducing, *If I Had Legs I'd Kick You* is a whirlwind that – much like modern motherhood itself – will leave you breathless.

113 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



The Mysterious Gaze of the Flamingo

Dir. Diego Céspedes Chile, France, Germany, Spain, Belgium

The winner of the 2025 Cannes Un Certain Regard Prize, this AIDS-era allegory follows a young girl and her found family as they confront a hostile, fearful society.

The Atacama Desert, 1982: a community of male miners survives in precarious coexistence with the drag queens and transgender women who perform in the local cantina, Alaska House. There, headliner Flamingo and her fabulous colleagues, led by matron Mama Boa, care for orphaned 11-year-old Lidia. Like them, she doesn't quite belong in town, but their communal love keeps any chauvinistic hostility at bay. When the men hear about a strange, deadly illness transmitted through exchanged looks, however, they waste no time casting aspersions – and blows – at the outsiders who they assume are the source.

Chilean writer/director Diego Céspedes's Cannes prize-winning first feature playfully melds the western's taut brutality and the telenovela's comic melodrama with the mystical flourishes of magic realism and the curiosity of coming of age. Touching and visually seductive, *The Mysterious Gaze of the Flamingo* is an eye-opening story of queer strength, acceptance and the importance of seeing the people society marginalises as human and whole.

104 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



A Poet

Dir. Simón Mesa Soto Colombia, Germany, Sweden

PRESENTED BY
The Guardian

In this sardonic Cannes Un Certain Regard Jury Prize winner, a washed-up poet tries to vicariously relive his glory days.

Once a lauded literary darling, middle-aged Óscar is now broke, unemployed and back at home with his ageing mother. The creative juices just won't flow anymore, so instead he spends his time starting bar fights, visiting his teenage daughter and signing up for last-ditch spoken-word gigs. When he finally lands a job – as a high school teacher – he meets Yurlady, a student whose impoverished origins belie her poetic gifts. Óscar's name may be all but forgotten, but perhaps he could scab a smidge of the spotlight if he takes this reluctant wordsmith under his wing.

Inspired by a real-life creative slump experienced by director Simón Mesa Soto – who won the Short Film Palme d'Or at Cannes for *Leidi* (MIFF 2014) – this portrait of artistic midlife crisis is at once witty and poignant. Anchored on newcomer Ubeimar Rios's pitch-perfect performance as the endearingly misguided Óscar, the film shrewdly sends up the art world's opportunistic fickleness. Yet, with its dreamy 16mm cinematography and undercurrent of hopefulness, *A Poet* also emerges as a touching and smartly funny satire about success, connection and the lyricism lurking in the prosaic.

120 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



Renoir

Dir. Chie Hayakawa Japan, France, Singapore, Philippines, Indonesia

This Cannes Competition highlight is a tender, memoir-etched coming-of-age portrait of formative loneliness and loss.

It's 1987 in Tokyo, and 11-year-old Fuki is a daydreamer stuck in a society fixated on work, wealth and diligence. Her father (Lily Franky, *Shoplifters*, MIFF 2018) is dying of terminal cancer, and her mother is preoccupied with both a new job and caring for her husband. With modern technology offering each member of the family distractions from their insurmountable problems, Fuki builds her own imaginary world via a dating hotline she secretly listens in on.

Screening in competition at the 2025 Cannes Film Festival, *Renoir* is the second impressive feature directed by Chie Hayakawa, whose euthanasia-themed *Plan 75* (MIFF 2022) previously bewitched audiences. Drawing from her own experience of losing her father to cancer in her childhood, Hayakawa crafts a finely honed coming-of-age tale free from clichés. Shot through with a sense of realism and humanity reminiscent of the subtle works of Hirokazu Kore-eda and Yasujiro Ozu, this is a beautiful, illuminating cine-memoir grappling with mortality, melancholy and the unspoken.

116 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



The Rivals of Amziah King

Dir. Andrew Patterson USA, UK

Matthew McConaughey is a banjo-playing beekeeper trying to cement his legacy in this boisterous ballad of the US South.

Amziah King is the unofficial mayor of his rural Oklahoma community. Southern charm personified, he works as an apiarist but spends his spare time jamming out bluegrass tunes with his ragtag group of buddies and hosting potluck lunches. When his former foster daughter Kateri suddenly reappears in his life, Amziah seizes the opportunity to reconnect, but his plans to teach her his trade hit a roadblock when his beekeeping rivals put the family business at risk.

The second feature of writer/director Andrew Patterson after the genre-blending *The Vast of Night*, *The Rivals of Amziah King* is all at once a revenge fable, a family drama and a heist movie peppered with rollicking musical interludes of songs by T Bone Burnett and The Avett Brothers. Matthew McConaughey (*The Beach Bum*, MIFF 2019) fits this role like an old cowboy boot, and his stellar supporting cast includes Kurt Russell, Cole Sprouse, Tony Revolori, Owen Teague and Jake Horowitz. But it's Angelina LookingGlass's composed performance as Kateri that stands out – she confidently holds her own opposite McConaughey in her debut film role.

130 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



Sound of Falling

Dir. Mascha Schilinski Germany

Four intergenerational stories anchored on one German farmhouse evoke impressions of girlhood across the 20th century in this Cannes Jury Prize winner.

At different points throughout the last century, Alma, Erika, Angelika and Lenka each spend a part of their childhood on the same farm in northern Germany. The farmhouse bears witness to events both global and personal, with two world wars and a divided Germany providing backdrops to the girls' more intimate experiences of growing up – innocent friendships, trauma and burgeoning comprehension of life's limitations for women under patriarchy.

A joint winner of the 2025 Cannes Film Festival Jury Prize, *Sound of Falling* is a novelistic epic, unfolding in nonlinear fashion and preferencing sense memory over specific, plot-driven events. The four protagonists are connected visually with mirrored gestures, objects and storylines, while Fabian Gamper's ethereal cinematography hovers through space with ghostlike movements and voyeuristic angles. Earning comparisons to the work of auteurs such as Sofia Coppola, Michael Haneke, Terrence Malick and Jane Campion, writer/director Mascha Schilinski's second feature is as elegant as it is assured.

149 MINS



Urchin

Dir. Harris Dickinson UK

Winning two awards at Cannes, Harris Dickinson's directorial feature debut is a remarkable social-realist – and occasionally surrealist – character study recalling the best of Mike Leigh and Ken Loach.

Sleeping rough on the streets of London, Mike seems unable to escape the chaos of his impulsivity and substance abuse. He's intelligent and charismatic, but when his addiction results in an act of unprovoked violence, he's quickly arrested. Upon release, having used his time in prison to get clean, Mike secures a job, a roof over his head, a tentative romance and a chance to change his life, one self-help tape at a time. But all it takes to spin everything out of control again is the slightest slip into temptation.

As an actor, Harris Dickinson has shown a penchant for considered, clever cinema in films such as *Triangle of Sadness* (MIFF 2022) and *Babygirl*. He demonstrates that amply in his feature directorial debut, which he also wrote and performs a key onscreen role in, while a revelatory Frank Dillane (*Harvest*, MIFF 2025), who added to the film's FIPRESCI Prize at Cannes by landing the Un Certain Regard award for Best Actor, embodies Mike with magnetic force. Deeply rooted in humane authenticity, *Urchin* reveals a stunning new filmmaking voice.

99 MINS



A Useful Ghost

Dir. Ratchapoom Boonbunchachoke Thailand

A wandering ghost with unfinished business possesses her husband's Hoover in this Cannes Critics' Week Grand Prix winner.

After Nat dies of dust poisoning, her ghost possesses a vacuum cleaner from her mother-in-law's factory and sets about rekindling her relationship with her grief-stricken husband March – both romantically and carnally. But March's family disapproves; they never liked Nat when she was alive, much less as a household appliance. So, in order to prove herself a useful ghost to her in-laws, she sets to work cleaning up the spectres of former workers who have taken up residence in the factory's other appliances.

Though Nat's quest is the central story, it's nested within several layers of this multi-tiered phantasmagorical horror-sex-comedy – a stylish and spirited debut from film theory teacher and critic Ratchapoom Boonbunchachoke that's surprisingly sincere, playful and polemical. Its deadpan humour will tickle fans of Yorgos Lanthimos or Aki Kaurismäki, but a sober message of social justice, remembrance and working-class resistance haunts its frames.

130 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST

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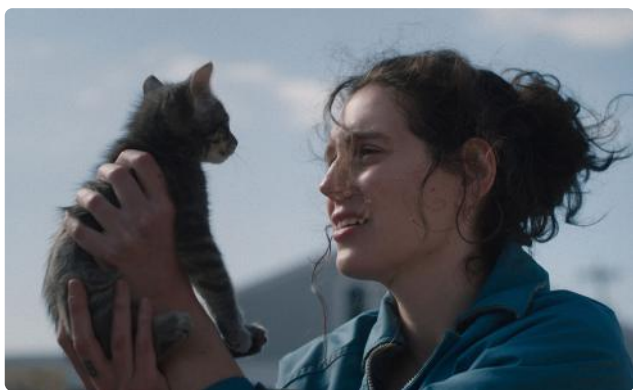


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Sorry, Baby

Dir. Eva Victor USA

One of Sundance's buzziest debuts, this A24-backed dramedy announces writer/director/star Eva Victor as a formidable new talent.

Agnes feels stuck. Unlike her best friend, who's expecting a baby, Agnes still lives in the New England house they once shared as graduate students, now working as a professor at her alma mater. A 'bad thing' happened to Agnes a few years ago and, since then, despite her best efforts, life hasn't gotten back on track. Writer/director Eva Victor's performance as Agnes is a breathtaking tonal balancing act between heartbreaking and hilarious, while the non-chronological story illuminates the smaller moments in her life. Produced by the same team behind *Aftersun* (MIFF 2022), *Sorry, Baby* is a funny, gentle and nuanced look at what it means to survive.

104 MINS **MIFF REGIONAL**



The Blue Trail

Dir. Gabriel Mascaro Brazil, Mexico, Netherlands, Chile

Taking home the Berlinale Silver Bear Grand Jury Prize, this brightly coloured odyssey is a spirited rebuke of ageism.

In a futuristic Brazil, retirement has questionable consequences. Placed under the guardianship of her daughter, 77-year-old Tereza will soon be forced to live in a colony for seniors. But she has one rather big dream left – to fly on a plane – and she soon embarks on a fantastical journey through the Amazon. Known for his penchant for vivid colour, director Gabriel Mascaro (*Divine Love*, MIFF 2019) once more brings his palette of saturated hues and surreal beauty to the screen, while veteran Brazilian stage and screen actor Denise Weinberg delivers a warm, luminous performance as Tereza in this richly imaginative tale of dignity, dreams and resistance.

86 MINS



Blue Moon

Dir. Richard Linklater USA

Ethan Hawke brings legendary Broadway lyricist Lorenz Hart to life in Richard Linklater's A-list ensemble portrait of fallen stardom.

It's 31 March 1943: the opening night of *Oklahoma!*, the first musical collaboration between Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II. But the celebratory afterparty at Sardi's is haunted by Rodgers's former collaborative partner Lorenz Hart, an embittered, sharp-tongued wordsmith drinking himself into an early grave. As Hart laments his failing career, questions about art, commerce and the audience take centre stage. Revered US filmmaker Richard Linklater (*Boyhood*, MIFF 2014) offers an incisive character study of a complicated protagonist, brilliantly played by Ethan Hawke alongside Margaret Qualley, Bobby Cannavale and Andrew Scott.

100 MINS



It Was Just an Accident

Dir. Jafar Panahi Iran, France, Luxembourg

Winning the Palme d'Or at Cannes, Jafar Panahi's revenge thriller is a triumph against authoritarian oppression.

When a traveller with a prosthetic leg arrives at his shop one night, Vahid is sure that it's the officer who tortured him in prison years ago. Seizing the opportunity for revenge, Vahid abducts the man and takes him to the desert, intending to bury him alive. But what if he's kidnapped the wrong person? Over a frenzied 24 hours, he searches for other former prisoners who can verify the man's identity, amassing an unlikely group of co-conspirators along the way. Combining pitch-black humour and devastating plot twists, this incendiary thriller from Iranian master director Jafar Panahi (*No Bears*, MIFF 2023) courageously interrogates the morality of retribution.

101 MINS



Enzo

Dir. Robin Campillo France, Belgium, Italy

A sensual queer coming-of-age tale of a bourgeois French teen and the Ukrainian labourer who shakes up his world.

Enzo's family have a villa with a pool and ocean views, but he doesn't feel at home there. So the 16-year-old drops out of school and gets a job at a nearby construction site, where he derives pleasure from working alongside the other labourers – especially Ukrainian immigrant Vlad. The latter is everything Enzo wishes he was, and his admiration soon evolves into something more. Opening the Directors' Fortnight section at Cannes, *Enzo* blends late co-writer Laurent Cantet's (*Heading South*, MIFF 2006) interest in class with the observant humanism of director Robin Campillo (*BPM*, MIFF 2017), capturing scenes of tender camaraderie and following Enzo as he finds himself.

102 MINS



Romería

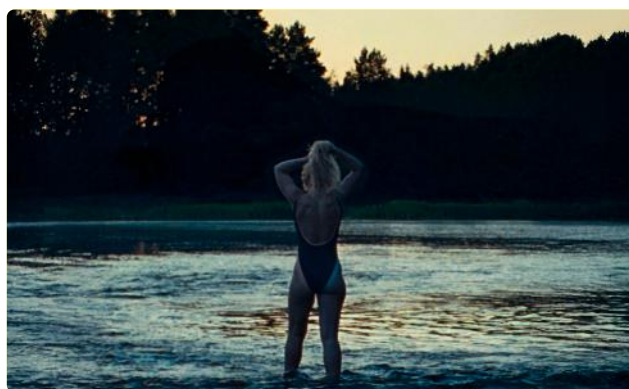
Dir. Carla Simón Spain, Germany

Rising auteur Carla Simón's Cannes Competition stand-out is a poignant coming-of-age tale interrogating hidden family history.

In 2004, 18-year-old orphan Marina arrives in the coastal Spanish city of Vigo to meet the affluent family of her father, who died when she was just a small child. But as she encounters a mix of hospitality and resistance, she begins to understand why so much of his life has been shrouded in secrecy. In her previous works, Carla Simón has shown herself to be a gifted chronicler of the world of children and the unspoken dynamics of families; her third feature is another cinematic bildungsroman drawing from her own experiences. Headlined by an impressive performance from Llúcia García, *Romería* is a gorgeously subtle and naturalistic tale of becoming.

115 MINS

PRESENTED BY



The Chronology of Water

Dir. Kristen Stewart USA

Kristen Stewart's splashy Cannes-premiering directorial debut poetically adapts writer Lidia Yuknavitch's memoir.

Lidia (Imogen Poots) only feels whole when she's in the water, where she can temporarily float free of the cold, rageful father who sexually abused her and her older sister Claudia (Thora Birch). Out of the pool, Lidia flounders, ruining her college swimming scholarship with booze, drugs and reckless sex and lashing out at anyone who shows her kindness. But when she joins a creative writing class led by countercultural hero Ken Kesey (Jim Belushi), Lidia finds the same fluid escape in writing. No average creative biopic, Kristen Stewart's first film as director tells Lidia's story in intense, elliptical vignettes that ebb and flow on currents of memory, while Poots is tender and fierce onscreen.

128 MINS



The Love That Remains

Dir. Hlynur Pálmason Iceland, Denmark, Sweden, France

An intimate and surreal dramedy from the director of *Godland* about an unconventional family navigating separation.

Once a loving couple, industrial herring trawler worker Magnus and his wife Anna split up. As they transition into co-parenting their three children while living apart, Magnus has trouble letting go. Anna, meanwhile, is juggling Magnus's visits with her ambition to be taken seriously as an artist. Over the course of a year, amid both the everyday and the moments of beauty found in their quiet life in the Icelandic countryside, the now-divided family reckon with their new normal. Writer, director and cinematographer Hlynur Pálmason, shooting on 35mm, captures the undercurrent of absurdity that can emerge from the struggle to make sense of losing what we once had.

109 MINS



Two Prosecutors

Dir. Sergei Loznitsa France, Germany, Netherlands, Latvia, Romania, Lithuania

Sergei Loznitsa's return to fiction is a Kafkaesque fable that echoes loudly amid contemporary political corruption.

In 1937, fresh-faced lawyer Kornyev receives a letter from a man alleging miscarriage of justice by the state secret police. Kornyev, a true believer and member of the party faithful, is horrified, and decides to investigate, facing administrative hurdles along the way. Later, believing Joseph Stalin will want to know, he vows to take the case to Moscow. Director Sergei Loznitsa's first fiction feature since *Donbass* (MIFF 2018) is based on a novella by dissident Georgy Demidov, who was imprisoned in the Gulag for 14 years. This bitingly topical, darkly absurdist legal drama is a terrifying vision of authoritarian abuse and malignant bureaucracy.

118 MINS



Splitsville

Dir. Michael Angelo Covino USA

Take two best friends and two marriages, shake and serve on the rocks with a garnish of irreconcilable differences.

Meek gym teacher Carey (Kyle Marvin) and his wife, life coach Ashley (Adria Arjona), are driving to the Hamptons to holiday with their wealthy friends Paul (Michael Angelo Covino) and Julie (Dakota Johnson) when Ashley demands a divorce. At their destination, Paul and Julie reveal the secret that has kept them together: an open marriage. Ashley adopts this idea with gusto, while Julie takes a shine to Carey as Paul's crooked financial dealings inspire her to contemplate divorce too. Packed with gutbustingly funny moments – including cinema's silliest, most chaotic fight scene in years – *Splitsville* is an anarchic throwback to golden-age screwball romances.

100 MINS



The Mastermind

Dir. Kelly Reichardt USA

Josh O'Connor headlines Kelly Reichardt's 1970s-set spin on the heist movie, a moving and wryly funny Cannes Competition highlight.

Aimless J.B. (Josh O'Connor), a former art student who's fallen on hard times, has hatched a plan to steal a handful of paintings from a small museum. It may seem like a bad idea, but he's got it all figured out ... save for what to do with his kids during the theft, and what to do with the paintings once he has them. Kelly Reichardt's empathetic portraits of characters consigned to the fringes have made her an icon of US independent cinema, and *The Mastermind* is both openly comedic and as artistically rigorous as anything she's previously turned her camera to. Deftly undoing the clichés of the heist movie, this Cannes-premiering tour de force conveys a national narrative in microcosm.

110 MINS



The Secret Agent

Dir. Kleber Mendonça Filho Brazil, France, Netherlands, Germany

Winner of three major awards at Cannes, Kleber Mendonça Filho's bravura political thriller is a wild widescreen odyssey.

It's 1977, and a man calling himself Marcelo (Wagner Moura) hopes to use the colour and chaos of Carnival as a cover to escape military-controlled Brazil – where dozens of left-leaning citizens are being disappeared each day – with his son. In an attempt to find freedom, Marcelo must dodge hitmen, navigate webs of corruption and journey deep into the dysfunction and darkness of a nation driving headlong towards a cliff. Kleber Mendonça Filho has delivered some of 21st-century cinema's most insightful studies of Brazilian society, and *The Secret Agent* – awarded Best Director, Best Actor and a FIPRESCI Prize at Cannes – is a playful, masterfully photographed trip into the past.

159 MINS



Sirât

Dir. Oliver Laxe France, Spain

Fresh from winning the Jury Prize at Cannes, this rave-at-the-end-of-the-world opus is an unforgettable, one-of-a-kind masterpiece.

Luis is travelling through southern Morocco with his son Esteban. They're searching for his daughter, who has been missing for five months, last seen at a dance festival in the desert. As the pair travel from party to party, they hear of a semi-mythical rave near the border of Mauritania. Descending into the scorched terrain as a not-so-distant global conflict encroaches, Luis and Esteban are soon drawn into a primal landscape in which they must walk a tightrope between heaven and hell. Produced by Pedro Almodóvar, Oliver Laxe's latest uncompromising vision offers a vivid example of cinema's power to shock, unnerve and move.

115 MINS



Young Mothers

Dir. Jean-Pierre Dardenne, Luc Dardenne France, Belgium

The Dardenne brothers return with a deeply human drama about the struggles of five girls living in a home for underage mothers.

At a state shelter for teenage mothers, young women are taught how to look after their newborns, make contact with adoptive parents and survive in an uncaring world. Perla wants her child's father to face his responsibilities; Julie is trying to overcome addiction; Jessica wants to reach out to her birth mother; and Ariane will do anything to shield her baby from its abusive, manipulative grandmother. Winning two awards including Best Screenplay at Cannes, Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne (*Two Days, One Night*, MIFF 2014) author another empathetic dramatic portrayal of young people battling to maintain their dignity in the face of an oft-hostile society.

105 MINS

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One More Shot

Dir. Nick Clifford Australia

An end-of-millennium house party becomes an endless, tequila-fuelled time loop in this ingenious comedy starring Emily Browning.

On New Year's Eve 1999, with Y2K anxieties in the air and 'Coco Jamboo' on the radio, Minnie jumps at the chance to attend a party with her ex Joe. But everything goes wrong when she realises that Joe is there with a new girlfriend. One swig from a bottle of tequila and Minnie has travelled back in time to the beginning of the party – a process that repeats with every drink. Will this newfound power allow her to win back Joe's heart or understand what it means to live with the consequences of her actions? A fresh twist on time-loop comedies like *Groundhog Day*, *One More Shot* is a fun trip back in time that shows some nights out are better left in the rear-view mirror.

92 MINS MIFF PREMIERE FUND FESTIVAL GUEST MIFF REGIONAL



Pasa Faho

Dir. Kalu Oji Australia

A shoe salesman struggles to save his small business and pass on his values to his son in this tale of life in a migrant community.

Running a shoe store in suburban Melbourne, Azubuike has a financially constrained but fulfilling life. When his son Obinna arrives from interstate, Azubuike is keen to teach him business, Igbo cultural traditions and what it means to be a man. But disaster strikes when Azubuike receives an eviction notice at his shop. Desperate not to lose his son's respect, Azubuike must find a way to keep all the pieces of his life together. Starring Okey Bakassi and Tyson Palmer as father and son, Kalu Oji's feature debut is a moving and gently funny portrait of suburban African-Australian life – and a reminder that, no matter where we're from, we all ultimately constitute *parts of a whole*.

86 MINS MIFF PREMIERE FUND FESTIVAL GUEST MIFF REGIONAL



Iron Winter

Dir. Kasimir Burgess Australia, Mongolia

Seeking to keep tradition alive, two friends battle extreme conditions as they herd 2000 horses through the icy Mongolian steppes.

Over the generations, herders have led thousands of horses on long treks across the frozen steppes. For young Batbold and his more experienced companion Tsagaana, this is an opportunity to reconnect with the traditions of their ancestors. But during their journey, they and the horses they've sworn to protect will face the dangers of hypothermia and wolf attacks. The expedition promises to be a transformative experience for Batbold – but with the comforts of the city serving as a lure, it may also be his last. *Iron Winter* is a remarkable window into one of the world's most breathtaking and forbidding environments, as well as the threat posed by climate change.

90 MINS MIFF PREMIERE FUND FESTIVAL GUEST MIFF REGIONAL



But Also John Clarke

Dir. Lorin Clarke Australia

For over 40 years, John Clarke tickled audiences' funny bones. Now, in this intimate documentary, hear his story in his own words.

When satirist John Clarke died in 2017, the world mourned an icon. A defining comedic voice who – in a beloved double act with Bryan Dawe – skewered political hypocrisy on current affairs shows, he gave away very little about his own life. At home, by contrast, he was an open book. In a remarkable series of recorded conversations between John and his daughter, writer/director Lorin Clarke, he offers delightful insights into his four decades in the entertainment industry. Weaving together anecdotes, a rich television archive, tales from comedy greats, and Clarke's work and letters, this is a deeply personal insight into a legend of the antipodean screen.

103 MINS MIFF PREMIERE FUND FESTIVAL GUEST MIFF REGIONAL



Spreadsheet Champions

Dir. Kristina Kraskov Australia

Six young people channel their dreams into a competition with a difference: a test of their elite mastery of Microsoft Excel.

Microsoft Excel as a competitive sport might sound like a range error – but for US child prodigy Mason, Queensland teen Braydon and Guatemalan would-be YouTuber Carmina, along with hopefuls from Vietnam, Greece and Cameroon, it's an opportunity for individual success and national glory. Selected for the Microsoft Office Specialist World Championships, each seeks to be crowned the world's best competitive spreadsheeter. Who will conquer the cells and sheets, and who will go home with #NULL! points? Suspenseful and heartwarming, *Spreadsheet Champions* captures the challenge of performing at an elite level while navigating adolescence.

86 MINS MIFF PREMIERE FUND FESTIVAL GUEST MIFF REGIONAL



Journey Home, David Gulpilil

Dir. Maggie Miles, Trisha Morton-Thomas Australia

After his passing, legendary Yolngu actor David Gulpilil is brought back to his home Country in a continent-traversing commemoration worthy of his transcendent talent.

David Gulpilil was one of Australia's greatest screen actors, beginning with 1971's *Walkabout* (MIFF 2015) and continuing through roles in landmark films including *The Tracker* (MIFF 2015). After his death, his body was repatriated from South Australia to be laid to rest in his homeland. An extraordinary odyssey across more than 3000 kilometres of outback road to Darwin, followed by a plane and helicopter flight to his birthplace in East Arnhem Land, Gulpilil's final journey is recorded in this moving, thoughtfully observed documentary that portrays the man through the eyes of his community.

88 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST MIFF REGIONAL



Yurlu | Country

Dir. Yaara Bou Melhem Australia

PRESENTED BY
The Monthly

A vivid ode to Country and an intimate, inspiring portrait of a Banjima Elder's fight to reclaim his asbestos-tainted homeland.

Maitland Parker calls his *yurlu* (homeland) in the Pilbara region "poison country"; this haunting truth is etched into his body as he lives with terminal mesothelioma, an aggressive cancer resulting from asbestos exposure. Six decades prior, the Wittenoom mines left behind millions of tonnes of waste rock laced with deadly asbestos fibres, turning 46,840 hectares of Banjima Country into a toxic exclusion zone. Following Maitland as he confronts government inaction in the hope of allowing his people to reconnect with and heal their ancestral lands, this powerful documentary is a rousing call to action to redress the wounds caused by colonisation and industry.

82 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



Signorinella: Little Miss

Dir. Shannon Swan, Angelo Pricolo, Jason McFadyen Australia

PRESENTED BY
R Y D G E S

Italian migrant women take centre stage in this new documentary from the directors of *Lygon Street – Si Parla Italiano*.

In 1940, Italian migrant families in Australia were forcibly separated, and women were left to carry on alone. Having little more than one another for company and the generations of tradition they had brought with them, these trailblazers would go on to transform the country they made home, leaving a lasting influence on fashion, business, community leadership and more. With its cast of wonderful nonnas and mammas and sublime archival footage of 20th-century Melbourne, this tale of empowerment and resilience will appeal to anyone who wants to understand more about the city, and country, in which MIFF is held.

86 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



Birthright

Dir. Zoe Pepper Australia

PRESENTED BY
TimeOut

Drawing battlelines between baby boomers and millennials, this pitch-black comedy offers a fresh slice of Australian Gothic.

Cory and Jasmine suddenly find themselves unemployed and evicted. With a baby on the way, they hatch a last-minute plan to crash at the home of Cory's parents, Richard and Lyn, whose accumulated wealth sits in stark contrast to the young couple's situation. Soon enough, generationally charged tensions build and the fights turn from verbal to violent – but which couple will end up on top? *Birthright* brings a distinctly Australian sense of humour to generational wealth disparity and the housing crisis. Award-winning director Zoe Pepper delivers a crackling feature debut: a menacing farce full of relatable emotions and absurdly heightened reality.

93 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST MIFF REGIONAL



The Golden Spurtle

Dir. Constantine Costi UK, Australia

PRESENTED BY
The Saturday Paper

In a Scottish village, kitchen amateurs and aficionados from across the globe vie for the title of World Porridge Making Champion.

The Golden Spurtle is an annual cook-off that brings the world's best and brightest porridge makers to the humble town of Carrbridge (population: approx. 700). In this documentary, Australian director Constantine Costi captures the drama and daring of the events leading up to and during the competition. But this is no mere *MasterChef* on the big screen: the film also interweaves the simmering rivalries with striking landscape shots and touching portraits of the passionate locals who, year on year, put on the best show possible. A feast for the eyes and a shot of glee to the soul, *The Golden Spurtle* is a whimsical and heartwarming film that will leave you sated.

75 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST MIFF REGIONAL



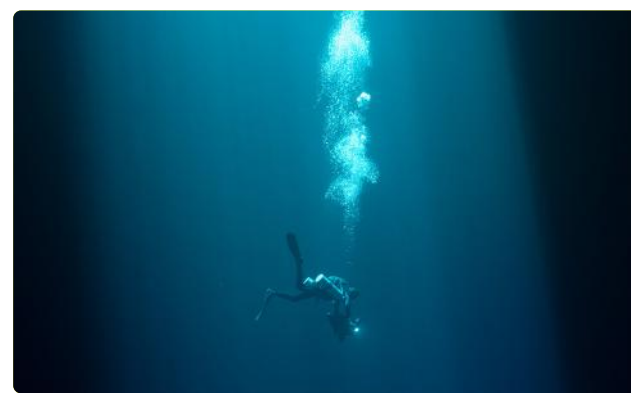
Alphabet Lane

Dir. James Litchfield Australia

A couple reinvigorate their relationship with parallel imaginary correspondences in this offbeat exploration of the mysteries of love.

Anna (Tilda Cobham-Hervey) and Jack (Nicholas Denton) have just moved from Sydney to a remote corner of New South Wales. As they settle in to life in the middle of nowhere, their relationship begins to suffer. When Jack claims to have made a new friend, a farmer named 'Joe', Anna invents a wife for him: 'Michelle'. Soon, the couple start exchanging letters with the imaginary pair – but this method of connection will carry some unsettling twists and turns. Shooting much of the film on a farm in the Monaro region, first-time feature director James Litchfield draws on a pointed sense of place for this exploration of the private universes lovers create for themselves.

80 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



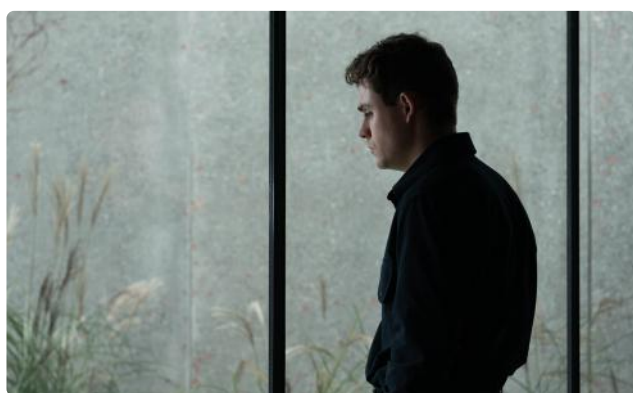
Deeper

Dir. Jennifer Peedom Australia

A lauded documentarian and one of the heroes of the Thai cave rescue come together for a gripping adventure into deep water.

Richard 'Harry' Harris knows a thing or two about diving. Named an Australian of the Year for his pivotal role in the 2018 Tham Luang cave rescue, he has already been the subject of nonfiction films and was portrayed by Joel Edgerton in Ron Howard's Netflix dramatisation of the remarkable mission. Now, he is returning to the waters – this time, in pursuit of perhaps the deepest-dived cave system in the world. Filmmaker Jennifer Peedom (*River*, MIFF 2021) captures the dangers lurking in the waters, the nervous excitement that comes with thrill-seeking and the yearning that compels a person to plunge into such a daring feat.

87 MINS MIFF REGIONAL



Went up the Hill

Dir. Samuel Van Grinsven New Zealand, Australia

Two strangers are possessed by grief, shared trauma and the same ghost in this chilly Antipodean Gothic.

Jack (Dacre Montgomery) travels to New Zealand for the funeral of his estranged mother Elizabeth, from whom he was separated by social services as a child. Though Jack claims he was invited by his mother's widow Jill (Vicky Krieps), she has no recollection of doing so. Nevertheless, Jill invites Jack to stay in her austere South Island home, an architectural marvel designed by her dead wife. As night falls, it becomes clear that Elizabeth's malevolent spirit lingers in the space – and that she has unfinished business with both of them. This Bergmanesque queer psychosexual two-hander explores the difficulty of reckoning with what the dead leave behind.

100 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



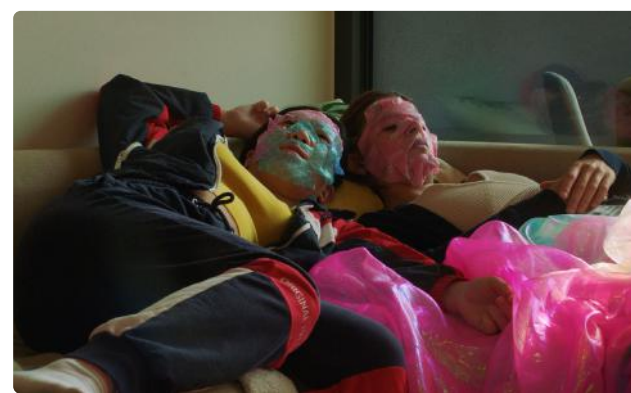
Westgate

Dir. Adrian Ortega Australia

Over the course of a single day, a single mother in Melbourne's west must draw on all her resources and confront the ghosts of her past.

It's 1999, and Netta is doing her best to raise her 12-year-old son Julian in West Footscray. But as she deals with financial woes, an unreliable ex-husband and the tragedy that has cast a shadow over her life – the death of her father during the collapse of the West Gate Bridge in 1970 – she is barely able to stay afloat. Attempting to keep a promise she made to her son on a day when her pressures come to a head, Netta has to face the grief she's been running from. In *Westgate*, writer/director Adrian Ortega turns his gaze to the multicultural communities who have shaped Melbourne, crafting a film that's anchored by rich period detail as well as a tightly framed aspect ratio.

94 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



Fwends

Dir. Sophie Somerville Australia

Estranged mates get lost in Melbourne and fall back in love with one another in this lilting indie ode to the city and slacker cinema.

Em is a young lawyer who can barely afford her rent in Sydney. On a whim, she scoots south by train to the Victorian capital for a weekend away. Staying with former bestie Jessie, Em quickly realises that reconnecting isn't easy: the twentysomething pair butt up against one another as they wander from lost coffee shops to playground drug pick-ups, hopefully rediscovering whatever it was that brought them together in the first place. Melbourne and its hidden-in-plain-sight landmarks are brought to life in this paean to young-adult friendship that's a must-watch for anyone who loves the city, or might have lived here just a little too long.

92 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST

Asia Pacific

Immerse yourself in the richness and variety of cinema from across the Asia Pacific. This year's selection features award-winning films and festival favourites from Indonesia, New Zealand, Japan, India and beyond.

Scan code for booking information
miff.com.au/asia-pacific



What Does That Nature Say to You

Dir. Hong Sang-soo South Korea

A meet-the-family dinner shifts from cordial to cringeworthy in the 33rd feature from indefatigable MIFF superstar Hong Sang-soo.

Junhee has been dating self-styled bohemian poet Donghwa for three years ... but she's never even mentioned his existence to her family. So Donghwa is well and truly thrown into the deep end when he's unexpectedly lured to a day at the family's bucolic lakeside home, where welcoming pleasantries soon give way to quiet judgement and a drunken dinner starts to feel like a cross-examination. Hong Sang-soo has been a MIFF constant since his debut, *The Day a Pig Fell Into the Well* (MIFF 1997), and his latest film – shot digitally in home-video style – offers an excellent exemplar of his singular cinematic brand.

108 MINS



To Kill a Mongolian Horse

Dir. Xiaoxuan Jiang
Malaysia, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, USA

Set on the plains of Inner Mongolia, this acclaimed drama depicts the slow demise of traditional cultures in modern China.

Saina is the latest in a long line of Mongolian herdsmen. But when he's forced to sell his sheep to pay his bills – so he can keep caring for his debt-ridden, alcoholic father and supporting his young son who lives with his ex-wife in the city – he turns to performing in a tourist show built on the myths of Mongolian horsemen. With shades of Chloé Zhao's elegiac breakout *The Rider* (MIFF 2018), Xiaoxuan Jiang's debut feature expertly mixes documentary with drama, utilising a cast of largely non-professional actors to paint a unique, heart-rending portrait of a vanishing culture.

97 MINS MIFF ONLINE



Stranger Eyes

Dir. Yeo Siew Hua Singapore

Lee Kang-sheng propels a slow-burn thriller – the first Singaporean film to compete for Venice's Golden Lion – that blurs the lines between vigilance, voyeurism and the hunger to be watched.

Little Bo vanishes in broad daylight, leaving her father distraught. Back home, he and his wife receive DVDs containing videos of the family. The police begin to suspect the shady Wu (Lee Kang-sheng), a peeping Tom who lives in the apartment block opposite. But what untold truths about culpability, neglect and desire will be revealed by the cascading footage? Evoking *Hidden* (MIFF 2005) and *One Hour Photo* (MIFF 2002), Yeo Siew Hua's film stands apart for its perspective on a screen-obsessed world – a harrowing yet deeply human masterwork from which we can't look away.

126 MINS



Ma – Cry of Silence

Dir. The Maw Naing Myanmar, South Korea, Singapore, France, Norway, Qatar

Factory workers on strike reflect a greater political resistance in this stirring cri de coeur set amid Myanmar's military occupation.

After her parents go missing in Myanmar's 2021 military coup, 18-year-old Mi-Thet is forced to take responsibility for her younger siblings. Accepting a live-in job in a Yangon factory, she's thrown into the Dickensian conditions of the local garment industry, living and working in indentured employment under threats of violence and instant dismissal. But when two months pass without pay, Mi-Thet and her fellow workers must confront their standover bosses to receive what they're owed and reclaim their humanity. Casting actual textile workers in key roles and juxtaposing its fictional narrative with real-life footage, *Ma – Cry of Silence* is a rousing call to arms.

74 MINS



Homebound

Dir. Neeraj Ghaywan India

Two Indian men, one Muslim and one Dalit, seek to rise above their stations in this drama about social division and friendship.

Childhood best friends Shoaib and Chandan have applied for jobs in the police force, convinced that donning the uniform will shield them from the oppression each has faced as a Muslim and a Dalit, respectively. It's a gruelling year before the pair receive an answer and, amid the familial difficulties the young men must shoulder, the pressure of the wait drives a wedge between them. Receiving a nine-minute standing ovation at Cannes and executive-produced by Martin Scorsese – the first ever contemporary Indian title to receive his support – *Homebound* is a parable about class, creed and the bonds that weather the harshest of trials.

119 MINS



Cloud

Dir. Kiyoshi Kurosawa Japan

Kiyoshi Kurosawa satirically skewers our belief in the anonymity of the internet in this unnerving, vicious psychological thriller.

Yoshii is a responsibility-averse twentysomething with a side hustle as an online reseller. As his business booms, Yoshii moves from Tokyo to a lavish rural house with his girlfriend and a newly hired assistant. But when his dissatisfied customers grow from a disgruntled few to an angry mob, Yoshii becomes increasingly paranoid, fearing violent IRL retribution. In *Cloud*, iconic director Kiyoshi Kurosawa (*Journey to the Shore*, MIFF 2015) turns his attention to the shady world of modern ecommerce, crafting ever-escalating tension from an online dystopia in which everyone's out to make a quick buck and nobody wants to be left holding the bag.

123 MINS



Workmates

Dir. Curtis Vowell | New Zealand

Business and pleasure collide for a pair of work colleagues in this warm-hearted Kiwi rom-com – an ode to the magic of the theatre.

Best friends Lucy and Tom run the Crystal Ballroom, a cash-strapped but vital creative space for Auckland's independent theatre scene. Patching up emergencies is all part of the job, but when an accident forces the business to shutter and Tom wants out, Lucy faces losing both the theatre and the man she can't admit she might be in love with. Drawn from the five years screenwriter and star Sophie Henderson spent running the Basement Theatre, her and director Curtis Vowell's third collaborative outing (after *Fantail*, MIFF 2014, and *Baby Done*) is buoyed by an endearing love story, a cast of theatre lovers and memorable cameos from local comedians.

102 MINS | FESTIVAL GUEST | MIFF REGIONAL



The Things You Kill

Dir. Alireza Khatami | France, Türkiye, Poland, Canada

In this cerebral thriller from Sundance award winner Alireza Khatami, a university professor sets out to avenge his deceased mother.

Reserved academic Ali is feeling emasculated on several fronts: the course he teaches might be cancelled; he and his wife just can't seem to conceive; and his father Hamit sees him as a failure. On top of this, he learns that his mother has died, and he suspects Hamit may be responsible. So when an opportunity to exact revenge presents itself by way of a strangely audacious drifter, how can Ali refuse? Writer/director Alireza Khatami keeps audiences on their toes by toying with conventions and precedents – here, evoking Iranian realism, the surrealist twists of David Lynch, the existentialist thrust of Franz Kafka and Fyodor Dostoevsky, and the intrigue of Alfred Hitchcock.

114 MINS



Brand New Landscape

Dir. Yuiga Danzuka | Japan

Fresh from its Cannes premiere, this poignant family drama is an assured portrait of emotional and urban isolation.

It's been 10 years since Hajime left his family to commit himself further to his work. Faced with the prospect of reconciling with their father, siblings Ren and Emi have wildly different responses. As each family member attempts to build a new life and escape the pain they've carried to date, they must also grapple with a Tokyo that's constantly reinventing itself. Drawing influence from Kiyoshi Kurosawa and Edward Yang and dotted with homages to Yasujiro Ozu, the debut feature from Yuiga Danzuka – the youngest Japanese filmmaker to ever feature in Cannes Directors' Fortnight – is shot with a designer's precision, and reveals him as a keen student of cinema.

115 MINS



Samsara

Dir. Garin Nugroho | Indonesia, Singapore

In this rousing collision of cinema, music and dance, a besotted Balinese man sells his soul and pays an unconscionable price.

Bali, circa 1932: the impoverished Darta falls madly in love with the affluent Sinta. Her family deems him unworthy, so Darta performs a ritual to summon the Monkey King, striking a deal with him to gain immense wealth – and, through that, the favour of Sinta's parents. Later, after being wed, the couple have a son and seem to have carved out a life of bliss ... until Darta discovers the extent of the bargain he has entered into. Perhaps Indonesia's greatest living auteur, Garin Nugroho (*Memories of My Body*, MIFF 2019) weaves wayang puppetry, gamelan symphonies and modern electronic music into an enchanting take on silent cinema.

85 MINS



Resurrection

Dir. Bi Gan | China, France, USA

Winner of the Cannes Prix Spécial, Bi Gan's latest opus is a sweeping sensorial odyssey and meditation on human and film history.

Somewhere in the future, humans have discovered the secret to immortality: not dreaming. While most of society has embraced this practice, rebellious Fantasmers continue indulging in nightly reveries, obligating the Big Others to put a stop to their defiance. As one such dissident escapes into the dream realm, the film shapeshifts across genres and epochs, prioritising a different bodily sense over each of its five chapters. This breathtaking, convention-defying phantasmagoria sees Bi Gan (*Long Day's Journey Into Night*, MIFF 2019) assemble myriad cinematic references with the skill of both a master storyteller and a true cinephile.

160 MINS



Cactus Pears

Dir. Rohan Parashuram Kanawade | India, UK, Canada

The unsaid speaks volumes in this Sundance Grand Jury Prize-winning, Marathi-language queer romance set in rural India.

After the death of his father, Mumbai call centre worker Anand returns to his family's village. While there, he reconnects with childhood friend Balya, now a farmhand. As both men find solace in each other, their conversations evolve into a blossoming relationship that offers freedom from stifling cultural expectations. The first ever film in Marathi to premiere at Sundance, Rohan Parashuram Kanawade's wistful debut feature took home the top prize in this year's World Cinema Dramatic section. Melancholic yet moving, this semi-autobiographical work is a masterclass in subtlety, with patient editing and warm-hued cinematography lending the pair's encounters a heady intimacy.

112 MINS | FESTIVAL GUEST



Sham

Dir. Takashi Miike | Japan

It's a case of perception versus reality in this twisty, slippery courtroom drama from prolific genre-loving cult hero Takashi Miike.

It's 2003, and Seichii is caught in the middle of a scandal. A primary school teacher in Fukuoka, he's been accused of a campaign of racially motivated abuse and bullying against a student, who has just attempted suicide. As the eventual court case proceeds, it becomes increasingly difficult to determine which details are actually true. The latest from indefatigable Japanese auteur Takashi Miike offers a change of pace from his usual high-impact, ultraviolent fare. Having depicted the courtroom as a madcap battle royale in *Ace Attorney* (MIFF 2012), Miike now helms a sincere interrogation of legal procedure in which notions like truth and fiction are blurred.

130 MINS



Black Ox

Dir. Tetsuichirō Tsuta | Japan, Taiwan, USA

A farmer descends from a mountain in this Zen Buddhist meditation on the modernisation of Japan that boasts stunning imagery.

In 19th-century Japan, an unnamed rural farmer (Lee Kang-sheng, *Stranger Eyes*, MIFF 2025) tills the land with his ox, keeping with the traditional farming methods of his isolated mountain community. But when his ox wanders off, he must venture down to a very different world below. Slow-cinema maestro Tetsuichirō Tsuta's film draws inspiration from *Ten Ox Herding Pictures*, a 12th-century Zen series of drawings and accompanying poems. Set to one of Ryuichi Sakamoto's last soundtracks, *Black Ox* is shot in a mix of black-and-white 35mm and colour 70mm, its largely wordless sequences creating a meditative cinematic tale with the elemental power of myth.

114 MINS

Europe & UK

A survey of Europe and the UK's most compelling contemporary cinema – featuring acclaimed new works from Athina Rachel Tsangari, Joshua Oppenheimer and Christian Petzold and stellar performances from Tilda Swinton, Carey Mulligan and Caleb Landry Jones.

Scan code for booking information
miff.com.au/europe-uk



The End

Dir. Joshua Oppenheimer Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, UK, Sweden, USA

Tilda Swinton and Michael Shannon sing and dance their way through the end of the world in acclaimed filmmaker Joshua Oppenheimer's post-apocalyptic musical.

After a cataclysmic environmental event, a former petroleum CEO and his family – along with a few lucky friends and domestic employees – live a life of luxury in a majestic doomsday bunker housed inside an abandoned salt mine. But when a girl from 'the surface' is found, she threatens to burst their bubble of privilege. Delivering real-world resonance in concert with absurdist musical numbers, *The End* marks documentarian Joshua Oppenheimer's transition to narrative filmmaking following *The Act of Killing* (MIFF 2013) and *The Look of Silence* (MIFF 2015).

148 MINS **MIFF ONLINE**



The Ballad of Wallis Island

Dir. James Griffiths UK

Can a rich, eccentric superfan reunite his favourite indie-folk duo? And can they mend his lonely heart?

Chatty oddball Charles lures his favourite band, now-estranged folk duo McGwyer Mortimer, to an extremely lucrative gig on the gorgeous, remote Welsh island where he lives. Charles's hapless hosting and effusive fandom, however, only remind Herb McGwyer how far he is from the solo stardom he craves – and, more awkwardly, his ex-bandmate and old flame, Nell Mortimer, has brought her American husband along. Resisting romantic clichés and full of comic charm, this wise and subtle meditation on the limits of music's emotional power stars three-time Oscar nominee Carey Mulligan alongside UK comedy veterans Tim Key and Tom Basden.

99 MINS **MIFF REGIONAL**



Love Letters

Dir. Alice Douard France

A lesbian couple expecting their first child navigate personal and political battles in this heartwarming testament to queer resilience.

Céline's wife Nadia is pregnant with their first child. In the months leading up to the birth, Céline must gather letters of support from family and friends – a requirement of the intrusive bureaucratic process to legally recognise her as one of the baby's mothers – including from her own mother, Marguerite, who was absent during much of her childhood. Forced to confront her estrangement from Marguerite, Céline must also grapple with her fears about first-time parenthood. Bringing a firsthand perspective, writer/director Alice Douard has crafted a tender feature that embodies the inextricability of the personal from the political for LGBTQIA+ families.

96 MINS



Little Trouble Girls

Dir. Urška Djukić Slovenia, Italy, Croatia, Serbia

School choir practice becomes the catalyst for a teenage girl's sexual awakening in this emotionally resonant coming-of-age story.

Not long after naive 16-year-old Lucia joins her Slovenian Catholic school's all-girls choir, she's taken under the wing of an extroverted senior student. Queen bee Ana Maria and her popular group enlighten Lucia on the essentials of girlhood that their strict religious education doesn't cover: they try on lipstick, practise kissing and compare experiences of puberty. When the girls' nascent desires come to a head, their precarious adolescent friendship is thrown off balance. Taking its title from a Sonic Youth song, Urška Djukić's sensual feature debut offers a fresh, frank feminine perspective on growing up.

89 MINS **MIFF ONLINE**



Late Shift

Dir. Petra Volpe Switzerland, Germany

In this nerve-racking hospital drama, an overworked nurse makes a fateful mistake that ups the ante on an already frenetic night.

Floria works in the surgical ward of one of Zurich's top hospitals. Over the course of eight hours, she'll have to tend to 26 patients: some terminally ill; some awaiting test results or treatment advice; others simply demanding her attention. As the clock ticks and a momentary error of judgement rebounds with major consequences, will she crumble under the pressure? Writer/director Petra Volpe's timely and galvanising Berlinale premiere provides a glimpse into an understaffed and underfunded world, with its ever-escalating stakes, breakneck rhythm and propulsive score depicting the chaos that can ensue even in the most sterile of environments.

92 MINS



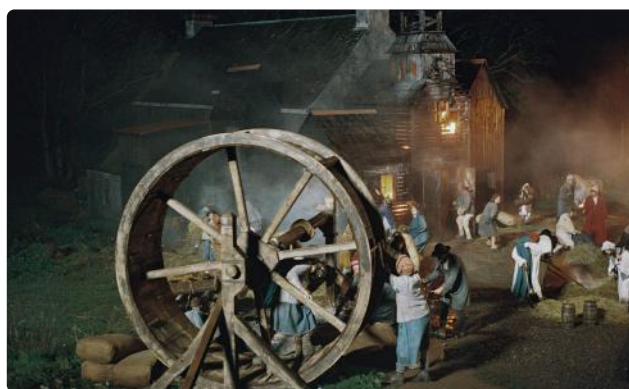
Kontinental '25

Dir. Radu Jude Romania

Do not expect too much from a system that continually fails those at the margins in this Silver Bear-winning firestorm from Romania's most provocative filmmaker.

Ion wanders the streets of Cluj, scraping together the little he can to get by. When officious bailiff Orsolya shows up at the basement space he's claimed and insists he move on, it leads to an all-too-avoidable tragedy. Badly shaken by the consequences of her actions, she seeks forgiveness, but it remains to be seen how deep her convictions are when it comes to effecting change. Shot guerilla-style on an iPhone, this razor-sharp social commentary from ambitiously experimental filmmaker Radu Jude (*Bad Luck Banging or Loony Porn*, MIFF 2021) is an unflinching dissection of the times we're living in.

109 MINS



Harvest

Dir. Athina Rachel Tsangari UK, Germany, Greece, France, USA

A magnetic Caleb Landry Jones stars in this moody medieval parable adapted from a Booker Prize–shortlisted novel.

Walter (Caleb Landry Jones) watches on as his rural English village is rocked by a series of arrivals: three unwanted outsiders; a cartographer, who seeks to literally put the town on the map; and a despotic new estate lord, who upends the locals' arcadian social order. With modernity and the possibility of ever more intrusions on the horizon, he and the townsfolk must face what will become of their beloved home. The first English-language feature from Greek auteur Athina Rachel Tsangari (*Attenberg*, MIFF 2011), this adaptation of Jim Crace's novel of the same name reaps a powerful and timely tale from a utopia on the verge of collapse.

133 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



DJ Ahmet

Dir. Georgi M. Unkovski North Macedonia, Czech Republic, Serbia, Croatia

A charming coming-of-age story about finding your place in a world where tradition and modernity collide.

Like many 15-year-old boys, Ahmet dreams of something more. Living in a remote village in North Macedonia, he's tasked with tending to the family's sheep while his father seeks treatment for his five-year-old brother Naim, who hasn't spoken since their mother's death. So when the music-loving teen stumbles upon a forest rave – and his alluring neighbour Aya, with her own dreams of escape – his world is opened up. The debut feature from US-born, Macedonian-raised director Georgi M. Unkovski, *DJ Ahmet* won the Special Jury Award for Creative Vision in Sundance's World Cinema Dramatic Competition.

99 MINS MIFF REGIONAL



Deaf

Dir. Eva Libertad Spain

With the arrival of their first child, a couple – one deaf, one hearing – encounter unexpected roadblocks in their relationship.

Ángela and her partner Héctor are excitedly expecting their first baby, brushing off her overbearing parents' concerns over how her deafness will impact the happy situation – and soon enough, they're overjoyed to welcome a daughter into their family. But when their differing parenting approaches, shaped by their respective experiences of the world, begin to drive a wedge between them, will their bond survive? Fresh from this year's Berlinale, where it went on to win two awards, *Deaf* delivers a refreshingly honest look at motherhood, relationships and moving through a world that, for the most part, hasn't been designed to accommodate you.

99 MINS



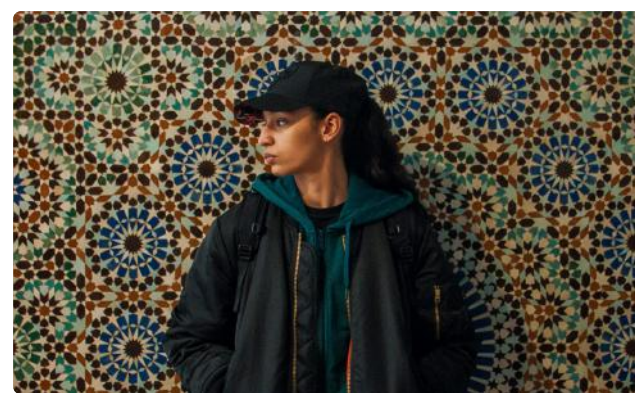
A Private Life

Dir. Rebecca Zlotowski France

Jodie Foster delivers a delightful bilingual performance as a neurotic therapist turned amateur sleuth in this slippery thriller that charmed Cannes.

Liliane (Jodie Foster) is an American psychiatrist working in Paris. Classy, controlled, ever the professional, she is thrown when her patient Paula unexpectedly dies. Suspecting that foul play may have been involved, she dives into her therapy session recordings for clues and starts hunting for possible suspects. Rebecca Zlotowski helms a zany thriller that balances Hitchcockian twists with an irrepressible sense of fun and features a who's-who of French cinema, including Daniel Auteuil, Mathieu Amalric, Vincent Lacoste, Irène Jacob and rising star Ji-Min Park (*The Little Sister*, MIFF 2025).

100 MINS



The Little Sister

Dir. Hafsia Herzi France, Germany

This tender coming-out drama blessed with a star-making lead turn won the Queer Palm as well as the Best Actress Award for Nadia Melliti at the 2025 Cannes Film Festival.

Seventeen-year-old Fatima (Nadia Melliti) is the youngest of three sisters in a vibrant suburban French-Algerian home. When she begins studying philosophy in Paris, she starts dating women, including the charismatic but troubled Ji-Na (Ji-Min Park, *A Private Life*, MIFF 2025). Embarking on a journey of self-discovery, Fatima has to make sense of how her desires and faith can be reconciled. Offering a warm-hearted, well-judged portrait of a personal and erotic transformation, the film features a brilliant, magnetic lead performance from newcomer Melliti.

107 MINS



The Ice Tower

Dir. Lucile Hadžihalilović France, Germany

Winning a Silver Bear at the 2025 Berlinale, Lucile Hadžihalilović's latest luminous cinematic fairytale is not to be missed.

When 15-year-old Jeanne runs away from her family, she stumbles onto the set of an adaptation of *The Snow Queen*, starring larger-than-life leading lady Cristina (Marion Cotillard). Worming her way into the production, Jeanne grows increasingly entranced with Cristina, who opens her eyes to the desires and horrors of adulthood. Reunited with Lucile Hadžihalilović two decades after *Innocence* (MIFF 2005), Cotillard heads a cast including Clara Pacini, August Diehl and Gaspar Noé. A cold, strange, impressionistic portrait of innocence lost, *The Ice Tower* is a vibrant cinematic vision from one of this century's most distinctive, uncompromising auteurs.

117 MINS



Kyuka Before Summer's End

Dir. Kostis Charamountanis Greece, North Macedonia

A languid summer sailing expedition is upended by family secrets in this visually stunning and inventive feature debut.

Babis takes his adolescent twins Konstantinos and Elsa on a sailing holiday. Amid attempts at fishing, frictions between father and son, and the twins' oscillations between squabbling and friendship, they cross paths with a woman named Anna who may hold the key to unlocking mysteries from their past. Kostis Charamountanis's Cannes-selected first feature is far from just another sun-drenched coming-of-age tale: his unconventional and experimental editing style stretches the narrative in unexpected ways, while the film is propelled by the charming, easy chemistry of young actors Konstantinos Georgopoulos and Elsa Lekakou.

105 MINS MIFF ONLINE



Adam's Sake

Dir. Laura Wandel Belgium, France

A harried nurse searches for answers about a malnourished boy in this gripping hospital drama directed by Bright Horizons alum Laura Wandel and produced by the Dardenne brothers.

Lying in a hospital bed with a feeding tube, Adam refuses to eat without his mum Rebecca (Anamaria Vartolomei) by his side. But is she the reason he is here, and does medically trained nurse Lucy (César winner Léa Drucker, *Last Summer*, MIFF 2023) know better? As they butt heads, Adam gets sicker, trapped within a broken system that may not have time to broker a life-saving solution. Opening Critics' Week at Cannes, the latest film from *Playground* (MIFF 2022) writer/director Laura Wandel throws us headlong into a documentary-style immediacy in which there's no room to breathe.

75 MINS



Heads or Tails?

Dir. Alessio Rigo de Righi, Matteo Zoppis Italy, USA

Looking like he was born to play the role, John C. Reilly is Buffalo Bill in this spectacularly beautiful Italian western that exposes the lies behind – and lines between – myth and history.

In the late 19th century, “Buffalo” Bill Cody is touring Italy with his theatrical show, amplifying his legend as an American frontiersman. His bluster comes undone, however, during a display of skill between his travelling cowboys and the Italian *butteri* – one of whom, Santino, takes flight with Rosa, a young woman seeking to escape an oppressive marriage. As Buffalo Bill joins the hunt for the young lovers, he narrates a version of events that doesn't exactly adhere to the truth, and Rosa learns that controlling her story in a man's world may just come down to a flip of a coin. Alessio Rigo de Righi and Matteo Zoppis (*The Tale of King Crab*, MIFF 2022) craft a sumptuous western that both lovingly adheres to and surrealistically subverts the touchpoints of the genre. John C. Reilly (*Stars at Noon*, MIFF 2022) is a gift as Buffalo Bill, while Alessandro Borghi and Nadia Tereszkiewicz are magnetic as Santino and Rosa. Shot on 35mm, 16mm and Super 16mm, *Heads or Tails?* is a witty interrogation of how the lies we tell ourselves can take on lives of their own.

113 MINS



Mirrors No. 3

Dir. Christian Petzold Germany

Christian Petzold's first film to screen at Cannes is a ghost story wrapped in a family drama, subtle and soft around the edges but with an enigmatic psychological ebb.

After music student Laura survives a deadly car crash, she's taken in by Betty, a middle-aged woman who witnessed the accident. Betty's home is calm and centring for the traumatised Laura, whose presence seems to have a similarly healing effect on Betty and, despite some initial resistance, on her husband and son. But the centre cannot hold; why is Betty so willing to let a stranger live in her home? Why does Laura so compliantly play along? And what will happen when the past comes back to haunt both women's present? Working again with muse Paula Beer (*Afire*, MIFF 2023), effortlessly mysterious here as the emotionally adrift Laura, MIFF regular Christian Petzold composes another intimate story of personal grief and human connection. Named after the Ravel piano suite that Laura plays in the final act, *Mirrors No. 3* is as tantalisingly ambiguous as it is sweetly humorous, and – like all the director's works – elegant, intriguing, restrained and deeply human.

86 MINS



Nineteen

Dir. Giovanni Tortorici Italy

Luca Guadagnino produces this electric, true-to-life tale of a young man's discovery of sex, self and cities as he tries to understand where it is that his journeys are taking him to.

Sicilian teenager Leonardo is embarking on a new life in London, staying in his expat sister's cramped living space. But he soon finds these new environs stifling and returns to Italy, pursuing a passion for literature in a picturesque medieval Tuscan city. Bursting with confidence and a bit too self-involved, Leonardo clashes with his professors and peers. As he dives into his books, dating apps and social media, however, he moves steadily forward on his own path, always in search of something. Produced by Luca Guadagnino (*Call Me by Your Name*, MIFF 2017) and shot on luscious 35mm in Palermo, London, Siena and Turin, Giovanni Tortorici's playful, semi-autobiographical debut feature emerges from rave receptions at Venice and Toronto. Obsessed with stories from the past but unsure of who he is supposed to be in the present, Leonardo is a character whose mixture of bravado, curiosity and fragility is as endearing and occasionally exasperating as it is easily recognisable for anyone who can recall their young-adult years with a wince.

109 MINS



Sex

Dir. Dag Johan Haugerud Norway

In this first tale in an acclaimed Norwegian trilogy exploring unexamined desires, a pair of middle-aged men wrestle with their identities and sexualities.

Two unnamed Oslo co-workers – a chimneysweep and his manager – are ostensibly straight middle-aged men with wives and children. Yet, in long on-the-job conversations, they open up to one another about recent experiences that have challenged their conceptions of gender and sexuality: for one, a random first sexual encounter with a man; for the other, dreams of inhabiting the body of a woman. These experiences create ripple effects in their lives, from how each man relates to his sons to how each is understood by his wife. Premiering to acclaim at the Berlinale, the first entry in novelist-turned-filmmaker Dag Johan Haugerud's Oslo trilogy (*Sex/Love/Dreams*) is a thoughtful, sensitive exploration of masculinity and identity. There's no sex in *Sex* – just nuanced, intimate discussions in which deftly penned dialogue unpacks deep themes.

118 MINS



Love

Dir. Dag Johan Haugerud Norway

While travelling by ferry – a popular cruising destination in more ways than one – a commitment-shy doctor has a life-changing brush with contemporary hook-up culture.

Marianne is a urologist at an Oslo hospital, tasked with delivering prostate cancer diagnoses to male patients. Reluctant to seek out any serious relationships, she lets her friend fix her up with a date on the nearby peninsula of Nesodden, just a short ferry ride away. When she meets work colleague Tor en route and he confides that he uses the cruise as a hotspot for Grindr hook-ups, Marianne begins to wonder if a random sexual encounter of her own might be a way to bring some frisson to her life. But as she and Tor each discover, nothing is ever simple in the realm of sexual intimacy. The second part of Dag Johan Haugerud's trilogy is an exploration of the differing expectations that are imposed on people of varied sexual orientations. Allowing its themes to unfold via meticulous character development – a skill Haugerud honed over his parallel career as a novelist – *Love* expertly interrogates the centrality of sex to the human experience.

119 MINS



Dreams (Sex Love)

Dir. Dag Johan Haugerud Norway

A teenage girl gives voice to her desires in this charming, thought-provoking Norwegian coming-of-age drama.

Johanne, 17, has written a novel in which a high school student falls in love with her newly arrived French teacher Johanna – an intimate bildungsroman of sexual awakening, budding obsession and eventual flirtation that, in the specificity of its details, appears to blur fact and fiction. Unbowed by any notion of shame, Johanne shares the story with the two most important people in her life: her single mother Kristin and grandmother Karin. Startled by this daring work, Kristin and Karin begin to wonder if its events are real or fantasy. But as they attempt to uncover the truth, they are forced to face the lack of passion in their own lives. Winner of the Golden Bear at this year's Berlinale – the first Norwegian film to ever claim the top honour – this achingly empathetic culmination to Dag Johan Haugerud's disarming cinematic triptych has been hailed for its uniquely sensitive depiction of a transformative first crush and the power of taking control of one's own narrative.

110 MINS MIFF REGIONAL

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Happy Holidays

Dir. Scandar Copti | Palestine, Germany, France, Italy, Qatar

Ripples of social coercion flow outwards in this tense, cleverly structured Palestinian family drama.

Between two Jewish holidays, a middle-class Arabic-speaking family in Haifa is flung into upheaval. Rami's Jewish girlfriend Shirley is pregnant, and each blames the other for the vague, ominous threats their intercultural relationship has been attracting. When a car crash puts Rami's free-spirited sister Fifi in hospital, their mum decides that a compensation payout could solve their financial problems ... but a secret in Fifi's medical history risks her family's reputation. In *Happy Holidays*, Scandar Copti consolidates his signature style of intricate, nonlinear storytelling, with the interdependence of his characters serving as a powerful reminder that our happiness depends on everyone's freedom.

123 MINS



1001 Frames

Dir. Mehrnoush Alia | Iran

Auditioning for the dream role of Scheherazade becomes a nightmare in this form-blurring thriller.

One by one, a series of mostly younger women sit down in front of the camera on an empty sound stage in Iran, trying out for the role of Scheherazade. But as each gives it her all, the increasingly insidious demands of the unseen director begin to feel, all-too-disturbingly, akin to those of the fable's abusive tyrant. Shot in Iran without a permit, Mehrnoush Alia's nerve-shredding feature debut feels like a #MeToo documentary spiced with a hint of psychological horror. Interrogating the authoritarian hierarchy of the film set and how it can be used to reinforce social power structures, this contemporary take on an ancient story asks what it might take to break out of the frame.

87 MINS **MIFF ONLINE**



I Only Rest in the Storm

Dir. Pedro Pinho | Portugal, Brazil, Romania, France

Garnering an acting award at Cannes for Cleo Diára, this sprawling, low-key odyssey puts First World assumptions about international aid in the crosshairs.

Sérgio travels from Portugal to Guinea-Bissau to conduct an assessment for a planned new roadway project. But as his workdays blow out into wild nights, he spends more and more time with an array of locals, including charismatic bar owner Diára (Cleo Diára). Through conversations touching on privilege and power dynamics, Sérgio's self-satisfied progressive values are gently pricked. Drawing on his work as a documentarian, Pedro Pinho blurs the lines between fact and fiction, crafting a sprawling, funny, taboo-busting conversational piece destined to spark further discussion among viewers.

211 MINS



Hanami

Dir. Denise Fernandes | Switzerland, Portugal, Cape Verde

Cape Verdean filmmaker Denise Fernandes's striking debut feature is a poetic meditation on belonging and becoming.

Nia makes the difficult decision to emigrate from the island of Fogo, off Africa's west coast, in search of better opportunities. As her daughter Nana grows up, she becomes attuned to the rhythms of the land and sea, until a mysterious illness draws her into a liminal dreamscape. At times rendering the island's beauty and volatility with a magic-realist lens, Denise Fernandes captures the transience of life in an isolated community in which departures are frequent and reunions uncertain. This enchanting, indelible coming-of-age tale invokes the spirit of its Japanese title: the transformative act of contemplating moments of ephemeral beauty.

96 MINS



Eagles of the Republic

Dir. Tarik Saleh | France, Sweden, Denmark, Germany

When he takes on one leading role too many, an Egyptian celebrity becomes a pawn for an oppressive regime he believes can't touch him.

Veteran Egyptian movie star George Fahmy thinks he can get away with anything. Even when government goons coerce him into starring in a propaganda biopic as president Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, George is confident he can control the narrative. But once Sisi's top officials have him in their talons, George begins to realise that an authoritarian leader might be less dangerous than those hovering in the background. In the Cannes-selected culmination of Tarik Saleh's Cairo trilogy of films about Egyptian institutional corruption, what begins as a rollicking satire on celebrity worship soon knife-twists into a violent political-conspiracy thriller.

129 MINS



My Father's Shadow

Dir. Akinola Davies Jr | UK, Nigeria

In the first Nigerian film to premiere at Cannes, a father tenderly reconnects with his young sons during a momentous day under the Lagos sun.

Remi and his younger brother Aki are shooting the breeze, waiting for their mother to return home from the village, when they are shocked by the unexpected arrival of their often-absent father Folarin. On a mission to hunt down unpaid wages, he takes them on a long journey to the sprawling metropolis of Lagos. The day that unfolds, in the shadow of the violently contested 1993 election, will dramatically reshape the boys' future. The semi-autobiographical debut feature of Nigerian-born, London-based filmmaker Akinola Davies Jr draws deeply from the well of memory in fictionalising a fraught real-life period in Nigeria's democratic history.

94 MINS



Once Upon a Time in Gaza

Dir. Tarzan Nasser, Arab Nasser | France, Palestine, Germany, Portugal, Qatar, Jordan

A young Palestinian man learns that revenge isn't just a vicious circle – it's cinematic.

In 2007, Yahya is working in a Gaza City falafel store when he witnesses a shocking crime. Two years later, he is plucked from obscurity to star in an action TV series – and, on a set where Palestinian actors play Israeli soldiers and real weapons are cheaper than replica props, is given an unexpected opportunity for a violent revenge showdown. Palestinian identical twin directors Tarzan and Arab Nasser's Un Certain Regard Prize for Best Director-winning feature rolls up political satire, crime melodrama and action-thriller beats into a tasty snack. Its darkly comic, Tarantino-esque vision slyly critiques violence as spectacle – in real life and onscreen, both in Gaza and everywhere else revenge is craved.

91 MINS



Promised Sky

Dir. Erige Sehiri | Tunisia, Qatar, France

Rising French-Tunisian auteur Erige Sehiri's drama is a poignant story of women creating community.

Living together in a house in Tunis, three Ivorian women of different ages do what they can to survive. Pastor Marie treats refugee Naney and student Jolie as found family, offering them a safe haven in a tense climate. Their household soon gains a fourth member through four-year-old orphan Kenza, the survivor of a shipwrecked boat carrying asylum seekers. Distrusting Tunisian authorities to do what's best for her, the trio decide to look after her as foster parents – but, without any legal documentation supporting her presence in the house, Kenza's situation remains perilous. Erige Sehiri's follow-up to the gorgeous *Under the Fig Trees* (MIFF 2022) explores and reflects on the experiences behind the phenomenon of intra-African migration.

95 MINS



The President's Cake

Dir. Hasan Hadi | Iraq, USA, Qatar

A young girl is tasked with baking a cake to celebrate Saddam Hussein's birthday in this playful fable that won the *Caméra d'Or* at Cannes.

In 1990, nine-year-old Lamia lives with her grandmother in Iraq's Mesopotamian marshes. Harsh international sanctions have sent basic living costs skyrocketing, but president Saddam Hussein still demands that the nation celebrate his birthday, replete with a lavish cake. Assigned to bake such a cake for her local school – with severe consequences on offer if she fails – Lamia undertakes an odyssey of procuring flour, eggs and sugar in a place where they're in desperately short supply. Returning to the site of his childhood experiences in Iraq, writer/director Hasan Hadi delivers a distinctive debut feature telling a timely tale of life under a dictatorship as seen through the eyes of a child.

103 MINS



Woman and Child

Dir. Saeed Roustaei | Iran, France

Reeling from a tragic event, a widowed mother swears revenge on the men who've wronged her.

Forty-year-old widow Mahnaz is juggling her work as a nurse, raising two children and spending time with her boyfriend Hamid, who has proposed marriage. On the day that Hamid's parents visit to approve of the wedding, tragedy strikes, upending Mahnaz's precariously balanced life. Her unspeakable grief twists into rage as she resolves to punish everyone responsible for her pain by whatever means necessary. Following in the footsteps of his Iranian contemporaries Asghar Farhadi and Jafar Panahi, director Saeed Roustaei – imprisoned for six months for making his previous film, *Leila's Brothers* (MIFF 2022) – adds another scathing critique of Iran's oppressive patriarchal structures to his growing oeuvre of morally knotty social dramas.

131 MINS

North America

From breakout indies to star-powered dramas, this strand captures the energy and complexity of North American cinema.

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The Baltimorons

Dir. Jay Duplass USA

In this SXSW award winner, a dental mishap plays cupid on a life-changing Christmas Eve.

En route to a Yuletide dinner, thirtysomething Cliff – who's recently quit both alcohol and the comedy scene, to his fiancée's relief – trips over and chips a tooth. He manages to set an appointment with dentist Didi, a middle-aged divorcee who's begrudgingly spending her holidays stuck at work. One repaired tooth and a towed car later, the pair are bonding over war stories and backing each other on petty mischiefs and payback, each little victory building up to a night that will change their lives forever. Jay Duplass's solo feature directorial debut is an uplifting crowdpleaser, rounded out with dreamy, postcard-perfect images of wintry Baltimore and a joyous soundtrack of jazzified holiday classics.

100 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



By Design

Dir. Amanda Kramer USA

A woman is magically transformed into a chair – and discovers everyone likes her better that way.

On an antique-shopping expedition, lonely and dissatisfied Camille (Juliette Lewis) is gripped by envy at the sight of a particularly sublime chair. Her yearning is literalised when she swaps bodies with the piece of furniture, inhabiting its unmoving wooden structure as her human body turns lifeless, motionless – chair-like. While her friends and mother love this new silent and compliant Camille, the chair ends up with heartbroken Olivier, who grows enchanted by it. Is he merely in love with its gorgeous design, or is he falling for the trapped soul of Camille? At once satirical and utterly deranged, Amanda Kramer's riff on the body-swap trope takes its premise to unhinged – and unupholstered – places.

91 MINS



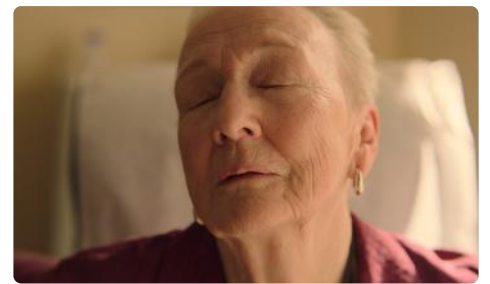
Drunken Noodles

Dir. Lucio Castro USA, Argentina

In this time-bending queer drama, an art student's internship interweaves with a series of hook-ups.

Arriving in Brooklyn to intern at an art gallery and cat-sit for his uncle, Adnan quickly dives into two of the Big Apple's indulgences: stress-free takeaway and cruising. As he starts something 'regular casual' with a delivery driver, the story catapults back to an earlier fling with the artist whose work is currently exhibited at the gallery as well as to a former monogamous relationship, and deeper insights about this young gay drifter emerge. Pairing a nonlinear narrative with striking visuals in which erotic surrealist breaks punctuate scenes of the city in summer, this sensual, astute and atmospheric feature from Argentinian-born director Lucio Castro reveals how solitude can be salvaged by transient interactions.

82 MINS



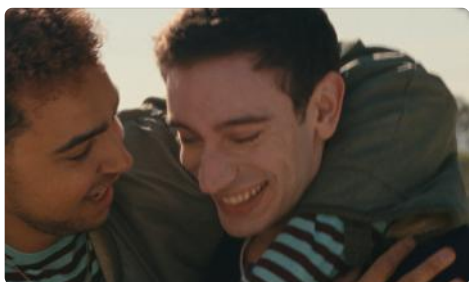
Familiar Touch

Dir. Sarah Friedland USA

Winning a trio of awards at Venice, this empathetic drama creatively portrays a woman's experience of dementia from her own vantage point.

In her eighties, Ruth Goldman is still impeccably groomed, charming and flirtatious, even when meeting friends in a country club or bustling round a new test kitchen. So it comes as a shock when she realises that her busy schedule is taking place within an aged-care home that she previously agreed to move in to. As Ruth's unreliable memory ebbs and flows, she wrestles with where she is and how she got there. A strikingly unusual representation of dementia that immerses viewers in Ruth's embodied experience through a kinetic, tactile cinematic vocabulary, *Familiar Touch* focuses on dignity and autonomy rather than brooding on what has been lost.

91 MINS



Lurker

Dir. Alex Russell USA, Italy

A cunning wannabe enters the orbit of an ascendant celebrity in this thrillingly tense debut about the hunger for, and hollowness of, stardom.

In a chance meeting in a clothing store, geeky shop attendant Matthew manages to charm Oliver, a pop star on the cusp of greatness. He quickly finds himself invited to his inner circle, where the musician's entourage are immediately suspicious of this interloper's presence. Despite their cattiness, Matthew gradually ingratiates himself. At Oliver's side, he finally feels like a somebody ... and he's not going to let anyone, or anything, take away his spotlight. Alex Russell's engrossing directorial debut is a striking, shrewd critique of exploitation and superficiality in the entertainment world that shows there are no winners in the battle for fame.

100 MINS



Omaha

Dir. Cole Webley USA

A single father's cross-state trip with his two children carries a slowly unfolding secret in this superbly shot road movie.

Evicted from his home and reeling from the loss of his partner, a single dad bundles his two children, nine-year-old Ella and six-year-old Charlie, into his car for a journey from Utah to Nebraska. Between the games, rest stops and push-starts that punctuate the drive, the perceptive Ella begins to sense that their trip may contain a hidden purpose. Led by affecting performances from John Magaro and young newcomers Molly Belle Wright and Wyatt Solis, *Omaha* captures moments of tenderness – as well as the expansive landscapes of salt flats and never-ending highway along their journey to the Midwest – with haunting beauty.

83 MINS MIFF ONLINE



Peter Hujar's Day

Dir. Ira Sachs USA, Germany

Ben Wishaw reunites with Ira Sachs for another revealing account of the queer experience, this time turning the lens on a brilliant photographer.

Peter Hujar was a gifted photographer. A contemporary of Susan Sontag and Andy Warhol, he had a particular fondness for downtown New York's diverse inhabitants. In 1974, a decade before he was tragically claimed by HIV/AIDS, writer Linda Rosenkrantz interviewed him about a day in his life. The tape of their conversation was lost, but in 2019, a transcript was discovered in Hujar's archives. Set entirely within an East Village apartment, Ira Sachs's love letter to the queer New York of yesteryear, starring Ben Wishaw and Rebecca Hall as Hujar and Rosenkrantz, portrays the bond between friends and the genius of a creative flame snuffed out too soon.

76 MINS



Rebuilding

Dir. Max Walker-Silverman USA

In this heart-wrenching rural drama, Josh O'Connor plays a rancher rising from the ashes of a wildfire that destroys his home.

When an inferno ravages the ranch that the family of Dusty (Josh O'Connor, *La Chimera*, MIFF 2023) have owned for four generations, he ends up in a FEMA campsite – a stone's throw from where his daughter Callie-Rose (young Australian actor Lily LaTorre) now lives with his ex-wife. As he settles in, he finds himself connecting not only with Callie-Rose, who frequently visits the site, but also with the other displaced residents, and soon learns that he needs to reconstruct more than just his fire-wrecked property. Max Walker-Silverman's follow-up to *A Love Song* (MIFF 2022) is another beautifully frank portrait of rural America.

95 MINS



Latin America

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The Wave

Dir. Sebastián Lelio Chile

Sebastián Lelio returns with an audacious Cannes-premiering musical inspired by Chilean student protests in the wake of #MeToo.

It's 2018, and a movement denouncing sexual harassment is gaining traction at universities all over Chile. Music student Julia is inspired to join the resistance, but as she spends time recording survivors' stories, she finds herself becoming an unexpected central figure of the protests. Set to an irresistibly catchy score, *The Wave* is a swelling, pulsing, defiant spectacle, staging dance numbers with hundreds of performers. Director Sebastián Lelio's (*A Fantastic Woman*, MIFF 2017) galvanising rallying cry is an unapologetically maximalist treatise on misogynistic violence and the failures of institutions to protect survivors.

129 MINS



Lucky Lu

Dir. Lloyd Lee Choi USA, Canada

An immigrant gig worker's fate is tied to a stolen e-bike in Lloyd Lee Choi's first feature.

Like many immigrants living in New York City, Lu works as a food-delivery driver, seeking to scrounge together enough cash to pay for a new apartment before the wife and daughter he hasn't seen in five years arrive from Taipei. But when his e-bike is stolen, he's thrown into a frantic search for both the missing vehicle and the money he needs now that his only source of income has been taken from him. With shades of Vittorio De Sica's neorealist classic *Bicycle Thieves*, *Lucky Lu* is an electric drama – shot entirely in Manhattan's Chinatown and Lower East Side – about the stress and hustle of life on the margins in a late-capitalist society, and the sacrifices and precarity embedded into the gig economy.

103 MINS



Magic Farm

Dir. Amalia Ulman Argentina, USA

Chloë Sevigny, Alex Wolff and Simon Rex star in Amalia Ulman's indie satire about a too-hip media company on a clueless quest in Argentina.

After successfully reporting on stories like niche Mexican fashion-footwear trends and teenage exorcists in Bolivia, a gaggle of self-involved documentary makers leave New York to find their next clickbait subject in San Cristóbal, Argentina. Stronger on vibes than actual investigative journalism skills, they soon realise they've gone to the wrong town and, rather than opening their eyes to the health crises affecting the local community, decide to stick around and make up a viral story instead. New York-based Argentinian filmmaker Amalia Ulman (*El Planeta*, MIFF 2021) brings a droll sense of humour and playfulness to this story of solipsistic culture shock.

93 MINS



Dreams

Dir. Michel Franco Mexico, USA

Jessica Chastain reunites with Michel Franco for this enthralling drama about immigration, manipulation and a romance built on inequality.

Fernando illegally crosses the border and turns up at the San Francisco home of Jennifer (Jessica Chastain), the patron of his Mexico City ballet school – and his secret lover. While she welcomes her uninvited guest, she also distances him from her bubble of privilege. In retaliation, he spurns her apparent generosity and seeks to establish his own foothold in the US dance world. When love is held together by so many tenuous strings, something's bound to snap. With taut plotting and crisp cinematography, Michel Franco's Berlinale-premiering film exposes the toxic flip side of progressivism and how kindness can, when pushed, devolve into cruelty.

98 MINS



Lost Chapters

Dir. Lorena Alvarado Venezuela

Embarking on a literary treasure hunt, a young woman and her bibliophile father seek to unearth a whole missing chapter of Venezuelan history.

Visiting Caracas after many years abroad, Ena spends time with her father, book collector Ignacio, and grandmother, a former poet who now has dementia. One day, Ena discovers a handwritten letter alluding to a novel called *ElVia* by an author she's never heard of. Intrigued, she and Ignacio set off on a quest across the Venezuelan capital in the hope of locating a copy. Starring director Lorena Alvarado's real-life sister, father and grandmother, this gorgeously shot film is both a love letter to Caracas and a revelatory portrait of a country debilitated by economic and political turmoil.

67 MINS
SCREENS WITH ANA & OTO (16 MINS)



Twinless

Dir. James Sweeney USA

Two young men meet in a twin bereavement support group and form an unlikely bromance.

After meeting in a twin bereavement support group, Roman (Dylan O'Brien) and Dennis (James Sweeney) develop an unlikely bromance as they both search for solace and an identity without their better halves. They soon become inseparable, but old wounds reopen that will have permanent consequences for their friendship. Lauren Graham and Aisling Franciosi also star in this stirring, whip-smart, wholly original dark comedy from breakout multi-hyphenate director James Sweeney.

"A probing and personal dramedy about men and loneliness and grief's hollow aftermath ... announces the ascendancy of a thrilling filmmaker." – *Vanity Fair*

100 MINS



Night Stage

Dir. Filipe Matzembacher, Marcio Reolon Brazil

When an on-the-make actor hooks up with a hunky mayoral candidate, the stage is set for disaster in this fetish-forward thriller.

Amid a sweat-inducing summer in Porto Alegre, ambitious and gifted Matias will do anything to secure the lead role in an electrically abstract theatre show – even if it means pushing his roommate off a precipice in order to get there. When Matias meets closeted politician Rafael in the local park's heaving beat, their first encounter sparks a burning desire, blazing headlong into a dangerous craving for public sex. The latest intriguing offering from the directors behind *Hard Paint* (MIFF 2018), this hyper-sensual melodrama interrogates how queer people are still too often forced to hide their identities in order to achieve their goals.

119 MINS



Punku

Dir. J.D. Fernández Molero Peru

Two teenagers are mysteriously bound to one another – and to dark, supernatural spectres.

When Meshia discovers Iván on a riverbank, wounded and unresponsive, the two teenagers become inextricably connected. Iván is taken to the city to receive urgent medical care and reunite with his family, but withdraws into haunted silence. Meshia, meanwhile, embraces life in the city, but is pursued by a more terrestrial threat of violence. An experimental collage told in 21 chapters, *Punku* makes use of an array of film stocks along with visual imagery incorporating TikTok reels and shadow puppetry, drawing from influences as diverse as Amazonian folklore and Apichatpong Weerasethakul's dreamlike cinematic dances on the borderline between realities.

132 MINS



Twelve Moons

Dir. Victoria Franco Mexico

A haunting, bruising character study of a woman plunging headfirst into self-destruction.

Sofia, an architect in her 40s living and working in Mexico City, is spiralling. Grieving a recent miscarriage and struggling to accept what it means for her ability to have children, she begins to embrace the more immediate comforts of drugs and alcohol. As her career and marriage start to fall apart, she descends into an outburst of self-destruction that even a rehab stint can't curb. Amid this personal purgatory, the only person who can possibly save Sofia is herself – but what will it take for her to reach out for help? Shot in stark black-and-white, full of expressionistic flourishes and headlined by a powerhouse performance from Ana de la Reguera, Victoria Franco's first feature is incisive and provocative.

97 MINS

Chantal Akerman: Traces

MIFF presents an expansive survey of the singular, influential Belgian auteur's films, many newly restored. Celebrating the director's career, this retrospective places Akerman's iconic works alongside rarely screened titles, from student shorts to poetic documentaries and from avant-garde rigour to wry comedy.

PROGRAMMED BY KATE JINX

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Hotel Monterey

Dir. Chantal Akerman Belgium 1972

Akerman's debut feature silently captures a mesmeric night of down-at-heel accommodation in 70s Manhattan.

Shot over the course of an evening in an Upper West Side welfare hotel, Chantal Akerman's first foray into true durational filmmaking is a striking start to a singular career. Without narration, the camera takes in the various rooms and levels of the establishment, captured through mostly static shots and slow pans. After moving to New York in the early 1970s, Akerman sought out cinematographer Babette Mangolte, who would become a frequent collaborator on key films including 1975's *Jeanne Dielman*. *Hotel Monterey*, their first collaboration, is a radical and hypnotic exercise in observation.

63 MINS 2K RESTORATION
 SCREENS WITH LE 15/8 (42 MINS)



Je tu il elle (I, You, He, She)

Dir. Chantal Akerman Belgium, France 1974

Akerman plays the central role in her first narrative feature, a frank exploration of both disconnection and intimacy.

Hailed by B. Ruby Rich as the "cinematic Rosetta Stone of female sexuality", *Je tu il elle* is a film in three parts, all of which feature Chantal Akerman (who also wrote and directed) as a young woman adrift. Profoundly influential, its radical vision has been cited by many (particularly queer) filmmakers as having inspired their own work. The film's final 10-minute act remains an astonishing scene more than four decades on – a portrayal of non-performance lesbian sex in real time.

86 MINS 2K RESTORATION
 SCREENS WITH CHANTAL AKERMAN: HER FIRST LOOK BEHIND THE CAMERA (14 MINS) AND SAUTE MA VILLE (13 MINS)



Jeanne Dielman, 23, quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles

Dir. Chantal Akerman Belgium, France 1975

Voted the greatest film of all time in 2022, Akerman's masterpiece is a radically meticulous portrait of domestic disquiet – now restored in 4K.

Widowed Belgian mother Jeanne (a riveting Delphine Seyrig) goes about her daily life over three days in her small Brussels apartment. Amid routine chores, she undertakes sex work from her own bedroom, greeting a different male client each afternoon. Over time, an air of unease creeps in, destabilising her otherwise orderly environment. One of the most revered and debated films ever made, Chantal Akerman's hypnotically epic, rigorously composed film about so-called women's work and unspoken trauma disrupted the artform forever.

201 MINS 4K RESTORATION



News From Home

Dir. Chantal Akerman Belgium, France 1977

This poetic time capsule of late 70s Manhattan juxtaposes intimate missives from Akerman's mother with scenes from her temporary location.

In English, Akerman narrates over a series of magnetic but aloof shots of New York, reading from letters written by her mother Natalia that the director had received when previously living there. In this affecting documentary, the camera acts as a distant observer of the city's desolate streets and shabby subway cars before eventually coasting out onto the Hudson River. As conveyed through the increasingly inquisitive letters, *News From Home* is a meditation on a sense of dislocation, a theme that would continue to present itself through the director's body of work.

90 MINS 2K RESTORATION
 SCREENS WITH LA CHAMBRE (11 MINS)



Les Rendez-vous d'Anna (Meetings With Anna)

Dir. Chantal Akerman Belgium, France, Germany 1978

Beautifully restored in 4K, Akerman's fiction follow-up to *Jeanne Dielman* is an introspective portrait of a filmmaker on the road.

Director Anna (Aurore Clément) is on a solo promotional tour for a film, travelling for three days across Germany, Belgium and France. In each chilly location, she meets someone to spend time with – largely monologue-driven encounters that reach their emotional crest in a night Anna spends in a hotel room with her mother in Brussels, the interaction that proves most revealing about her life. Anna's itinerant lifestyle and detachment from her surroundings are paralleled by elegant, exacting cinematography and haunted by the echoes of war that would resound in Chantal Akerman's later work.

127 MINS 4K RESTORATION

Critical Condition

MIFF's Critical Condition series returns to reckon with the idea of cinema as nostalgia, as our internationally attending guest critics host a trio of films and conversations that explore the present through the lens of the past. Each screening will be introduced by a critic and will be followed by a panel discussion.

PROGRAMMED BY LUKE GOODSSELL

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miff.com.au/critical-condition





Toute une nuit (All Night Long)

Dir. Chantal Akerman Belgium, France 1982

A poetic exploration of a single, sultry night in the city, and of the people who occupy it.

It's a hot summer evening in Brussels, and across the streets and within the buildings that dot this metropolis, locals are yearning – looking for connection, or simply a distraction from their own malaise. Lovers, neighbours and strangers encounter one another over a series of unconnected vignettes set between the darkness of night, the optimism of dawn and the cold realities of the morning that follows. In this moody, Edward Hopper-esque melodrama, the dialogue between the many unnamed characters is pared back, allowing their stories to be told through movement and small gestures.

91 MINS 2K RESTORATION
SCREENS WITH RUE MALLETT-STEVENS (8 MINS)



L'Homme à la valise (The Man With the Suitcase)

Dir. Chantal Akerman France 1983

Akerman stars in this droll comedy about a director driven to paranoid hermeticism.

In this near-wordless, absurdist comedy, a filmmaker is unable to concentrate on the screenplay she needs to complete. Taking up too much room in her flat is Henri, a tall stranger who has unknowingly outstayed his welcome. Akerman's protagonist becomes increasingly irritated by his presence, ultimately barricading herself in her bedroom, where she sets up surveillance devices and a camping stove. Originally made for French television and shot in her own Paris flat, *L'Homme à la valise* is a sadly underseen film of Akerman's, as sharp as any of her more celebrated cinematic works.

61 MINS 2K RESTORATION
SCREENS WITH LE JOUR OÙ (7 MINS), LA PARESSE (8 MINS),
LETTRE D'UNE CINÉASTE (8 MINS) AND FAMILY BUSINESS (18 MINS)



D'est (From the East)

Dir. Chantal Akerman Belgium, France 1993

This impressionistic visual survey of a fraying Eastern Europe traverses time and borders.

Three years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Chantal Akerman returned to Eastern Europe to film the people and the landscape. Shooting on 16mm without a final plan for what would become one of her most influential experimental documentaries, she filmed bleak winter landscapes, bustling streets, drab but welcoming apartments, and the faces of many people as they went about their days and nights, often caught in the act of waiting. Presented without narration, and taking in both urban and rural Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine and Russia, Akerman's film allows a scene of post-Soviet-era uncertainty and upheaval to emerge.

110 MINS 2K RESTORATION



Portrait d'une jeune fille de la fin des années 60 à Bruxelles (Portrait of a Young Girl at the End of the 60s in Brussels)

Dir. Chantal Akerman France 1994

Akerman's portrait of teen anxiety and flirtation is an affectionate coming-of-age drama.

On the precipice of the May 1968 protests, 15-year-old Michèle drops out of school and heads to the cinema. There, she chances upon Paul, a young Frenchman. They kiss and wander the streets together, their shared air filled with big, youthful conversations. Later on at a party, however, in a scene that throbs with adolescent yearning, we meet the real object of Michèle's affection: her friend Danielle. Rarely screened and unrestored, Chantal Akerman's hour-long gem was commissioned for the TV series *Tous les garçons et les filles de leur âge*.

60 MINS 2K DIGITISATION
SCREENS WITH J'AI FAIM, J'AI FROID (12 MINS)



Chantal Akerman par Chantal Akerman (Chantal Akerman by Chantal Akerman)

Dir. Chantal Akerman France 1996

This auto-portrait made for TV offers a first-person insight into the director's life and artistic process.

When approached to make an episode for long-running French TV documentary series *Cinéastes de notre temps*, Chantal Akerman found that all her suggestions for directors to profile had already been taken. So, instead, she turned the lens on herself, choosing to address the camera in a casual setting at home and read a letter about her work, supported by clips drawn from a vast spectrum of her filmography. She speaks plainly about herself and her intentions, ending with a beautifully blunt summary: "My name is Chantal Akerman; I was born in Brussels – that's true. That's true."

63 MINS 2K DIGITISATION
SCREENS WITH DIS-MOI (45 MINS)



Sud (South)

Dir. Chantal Akerman Belgium, France 1999

A searing study of the effect a shocking hate crime has on the people and landscape of a Texan town.

Chantal Akerman originally intended to make a film meditating on the American South at large. But when she read about the murder of a local Black man named James Byrd Jr – who was brutally assaulted by three white men before they dragged his body behind a truck for three miles – in Jasper, Texas, she shifted her focus to the town. Akerman made numerous films in the United States, but *Sud* stands in stark contrast to her more personal works: a deeply felt documentary about community and the psychogeography of a landscape mired in racism, as seen through the eyes of an outsider.

70 MINS 2K DIGITISATION



Demain on déménage (Tomorrow We Move)

Dir. Chantal Akerman Belgium, France 2004

A playful, autobiographical comedy starring Sylvie Testud and Aurore Clément.

Catherine, a blustery widow, has moved in with her adult daughter Charlotte, a writer commissioned to pen an erotic novel. They begin to look for a new place to live, with Charlotte renting her own separate studio in order to write and Catherine occupying ever more space with her plans of becoming a piano teacher. But putting their duplex up for sale only invites more chaos, as potential buyers appear and, through a farcical sequence of events, fail to leave. This underappreciated film lends a screwball energy to a story that echoes Akerman's own deeply rooted relationship with her mother.

110 MINS MIFF ONLINE 35MM PRINT / 4K RESTORATION (ONLINE)



No Home Movie

Dir. Chantal Akerman Belgium, France 2015

An intimate portrait of her mother, Akerman's final film acknowledges their deep connection.

Chantal Akerman's last film, made a year before she died by suicide, is not only a fitting coda to her career but also her most personal work: a record of her relationship with her mother Natalia (Nelly) over the course of the latter's last year of life. Through webcam chats, conversations at the kitchen table and shots of lonely landscapes, Akerman constructs a touching, melancholy portrait of her mother, as well as of her own impending grief. In documenting some of their last conversations, *No Home Movie* is, most of all, a film about love – specifically, the love shared by two women, unbound by physical distance and mortality.

115 MINS

Guest Presenters



Angelica Jade Bastién is a Southern-born critic and essayist for *Vulture*, where she covers film and pop culture. She has written for *The Atlantic*, *Harper's Bazaar*, Criterion Channel Blu-ray releases and many other publications. She lives in Chicago with her two cats.



Beauty and the Beast

Dir. Juraj Herz Czechoslovakia 1978

Forget talking teacups and comic candelabra: you'll never think about the fairytale the same way after watching Juraj Herz's macabre, subversive fantasy.

It's a tale as old as time: a beautiful young peasant woman trades places with her father as the prisoner of a hideous beast, only to fall in love with him and uncover his princely human form. Under the eye of Czech New Wave auteur Juraj Herz (*The Cremator*), however, the leonine charmer of both Disney's musical and Jean Cocteau's *La belle et la bête* is transformed into an avian grotesque who struggles against the urge to murder his captive. Haunted by death, decay and debauchery, Herz's unforgettable film peels back our nostalgia for the fairytale to expose its unsettling, unresolved terror.

88 MINS HOSTED BY ANGELICA JADE BASTIÉN



Pennies From Heaven

Dir. Herbert Ross USA 1981

A glorious spectacle largely misunderstood in its day, MGM's daring musical takes an unsentimental approach to Hollywood's Golden Age.

Sheet-music salesman Arthur (Steve Martin) dreams of living in the optimistic world of the songs he sells – a tough gig in 1934 Chicago. When his wife Joan (Jessica Harper) refuses to support him, he seduces a doe-eyed schoolteacher (Bernadette Peters), who in turn takes up with a dapper pimp (Christopher Walken). MGM lavished a big budget on extravagant Busby Berkeley homages, tapping celebrated comedian Martin for his dramatic breakout in its remake of Dennis Potter's 1978 BBC miniseries. The film's deconstruction of the musical may have been too much for audiences as morning famously broke in America, but its power has grown over time.

108 MINS HOSTED BY AMY NICHOLSON



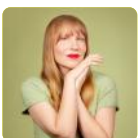
Sankofa

Dir. Haile Gerima Ghana, Jamaica, Burkina Faso, Germany, USA 1993

Vividly restored to 4K, this masterpiece of 90s African cinema follows a model who is transported back in time to a slave plantation.

At Ghana's Cape Coast Castle – a site from where thousands of enslaved Africans were transported – African-American model Mona poses for a white photographer. Enraged by this frivolous disregard for history, an elder magically sends her back in time to a North American plantation, where she becomes an enslaved woman. A formidable work by Ethiopian-born filmmaker Haile Gerima, *Sankofa* (meaning "go back to go forward") underlines the urgency of engaging with ancestral roots, while raising still-resonant questions over what it means to be Black in contemporary America.

125 MINS 4K RESTORATION HOSTED BY LOVIA GYARKYE



Amy Nicholson is the film critic of the *Los Angeles Times* and the host of the podcast *Unspooled*. She has contributed to *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Variety*, *Rolling Stone*, *MTV News* and *The Guardian*, and served on the juries for Berlin, Sundance and SXSW.



Lovia Gyarkye is a critic at *The Hollywood Reporter* whose work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, *Dissent*, *Aperture* and *The Nation*. In 2024, she won an ASME Next Award for Journalists Under 30. She teaches and lives in New York City.

Restorations

A curated selection of cinematic gems from across the globe: lovingly restored classics, rare finds and cult favourites, including seven debut features directed by women.

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Sweetie

Dir. Jane Campion Australia 1989

PRESENTED BY
 NATIONAL FILM AND SOUND ARCHIVE OF AUSTRALIA

Jane Campion's audacious theatrical debut feature, now restored in 4K, is a delightfully strange portrait of a dysfunctional family.

After anxiety-riddled Kay shacks up with her colleague Louis, her sister Dawn soon comes tumbling back into her life unannounced. With her brash and unpredictable behaviour, Dawn – or 'Sweetie', to their father – is the crux of the family's dysfunction, pushing Kay and her parents to their limits in her quest for attention and connection. Shot from an AFI Award-winning screenplay co-written with Gerard Lee, acclaimed director Jane Campion's Cannes-premiering first theatrical feature is a characteristically compelling entry in her impressive canon of intricate female characters wrestling with love and desire.

97 MINS 4K RESTORATION
 SCREENS WITH PASSIONLESS MOMENTS (13 MINS)



The Girls

Dir. Sumitra Peries Sri Lanka 1978

The extraordinary debut of trailblazing Sri Lankan filmmaker Sumitra Peries is a poignant study of two sisters battling class and gender restrictions.

Kusum (Vasanthi Chaturani), a shy girl born into a religious family, is driven to strive beyond her social status, in which she's resigned to the position of 'basketwoman's daughter'. A dutiful student, she soon catches the eye – and affections – of affluent classmate Nimal. Meanwhile, Kusum's sister Soma also yearns to escape, but her dreams of becoming a beauty queen butt up against cruel realities. Shot in luminous black-and-white and rich with empathy, *The Girls* lyrically adapts Karunasena Jayalath's novel of the same name, and is blessed with a tender leading turn from first-time actor Chaturani.

110 MINS 4K RESTORATION FESTIVAL GUEST



Model

Dir. Frederick Wiseman USA 1980

Frederick Wiseman offers a glimpse into the world of fashion photography before models were super and image was everywhere.

Aspiring models attend interviews at Manhattan's Zoli agency. Billowing around them are photographers, directors, make-up artists, casting agents – even, at one point, Andy Warhol – all working on the next big thing against the backdrop of a gorgeous and grimy 1980s New York. Restored to stunning 4K from the original 16mm negatives, Frederick Wiseman's 1980 documentary is an extraordinary snapshot of an industry at a fleeting moment in time. Dissecting the gap between reality and illusion, *Model* immerses us in the tantalising intersection between the fantasy of fashion and the instant it disappears in a puff of smoke.

129 MINS 4K RESTORATION



High Art

Dir. Lisa Cholodenko USA 1998

Restored to exquisite 4K, this psychosexual lesbian love-triangle drama unfolds in the heady heroin-chic days of the 90s New York art scene.

Radha Mitchell stars as Syd, a bright-eyed art magazine assistant editor whose chance encounter with famous but reclusive photographer Lucy Berliner (Ally Sheedy) leads to an intense affair that mixes business with pleasure. Syd seizes the opportunity to advance her career by bringing Lucy out of retirement, while Lucy sees Syd as a way out of her stagnant long-term relationship with Greta (Patricia Clarkson) and the heroin-addled daze that's become their norm. This intoxicating ballad of sexual dependency was the debut feature of writer/director Lisa Cholodenko – a richly textured evocation of ambition and artist-muse power struggles.

101 MINS 4K RESTORATION



Will

Dir. Jessie Maple USA 1981

One of the first independent feature films directed by an African-American woman, this fearless depiction of heroin addiction in 1980s Harlem has been restored to luminous 4K.

Former college basketball star Will (Obaka Adedunyo) is struggling to kick his heroin addiction and find a stable job, while his wife Jean (Loretta Devine) works hard to keep their household afloat. A renewed sense of purpose arrives in the form of a destitute 12-year-old he takes in: Will adopts a mentor role towards the boy in order to incentivise himself to do better, but returning to the straight and narrow path proves fraught with temptation. Recently restored from near obscurity and championed by directors such as Julie Dash, *Will* is unapologetically frank and deeply emotional.

71 MINS 4K RESTORATION



Philip Brophy Restorations

Dir. Philip Brophy Australia 1985/1988

Purge your body of the foul present day and immerse yourself afresh in 1980s Melbourne with two films from a legendary experimentalist.

As Melbourne took a punt on punk, new wave, new romanticism and electro, polymath Philip Brophy was mapping liminal spaces. In *No Dance*, he collects pocket 'portraits' of record buyers, breakdancers, pogo-stick jumpers and more. Brophy's fascination with bodies seeps through to his follow-up featurette *Salt, Saliva, Sperm and Sweat*, where a yuppie writer and his co-workers gratify urges and indulge appetites for violence. Restored to 4K by their cinematographer, Ray Argall, these films capture not only what was transgressive and disturbing about 1980s alt-Melbourne but also its slick consumerism and touchingly sincere intellectualism.

72 MINS 4K RESTORATION FESTIVAL GUEST



Nightshift

Dir. Robina Rose UK 1981

In this 4K-restored buried treasure, a remarkable feminist filmmaker checks you in for one dreamy night in London's lost punk underground.

Welcome to West London's Portobello Hotel. Will you be setting fire to your room tonight? How about a petticoat pillow-fight? As the city writhes in slumber, hum along to the vacuum cleaner's soft drone, and let small night-shift rituals transport you into a sensuous fugue. Over five nights, director Robina Rose and her cinematographer, maverick filmmaker Jon Jost, took over the hotel, populating it with guests including Anne Rees-Mogg, Mike Lesser, Heathcote Williams and Barb Jung, and imperiously enthroning punk scene queen Jordan at the reception desk. Painstakingly restored, this liminal mood masterpiece is a booking you'll want to make.

75 MINS 4K RESTORATION



The Arch

Dir. T'ang Shushuen Hong Kong 1968

This re-embraced, 4K-restored masterwork – made when its director was just 27 – was one of Hong Kong's earliest independent arthouse films.

In Qing dynasty China, the young widow Madame Tung has been such a symbol of virtue that the emperor has decreed she will receive an honorary arch erected at the entrance to her rural mountain village. When the soldier Captain Yang arrives to oversee the project, he and Tung share a clear connection. But when Tung's daughter Wei-Ling signals a romantic interest in the captain, the widow must weigh her own happiness against her social standing and her daughter's future. This gorgeous portrait of longing is at once classical and radical, climaxing in an avant-garde final-reel montage that summons all of cinema's expressive power.

95 MINS 4K RESTORATION



The Sealed Soil

Dir. Marva Nabili Iran 1977

The earliest surviving female-directed Iranian film presents a seething and sensual portrait of a teenager resisting the bonds of patriarchy.

At 18, Roo-Bekheir is ostracised by her fellow villagers for refusing a string of proposals from would-be suitors. When her family becomes convinced that their daughter's unruly defiance is the work of evil spirits, they seek help from a local exorcist, but Roo-Bekheir is determined to maintain any independence she can grasp. Shot in secret by filmmaker Marva Nabili and completed in exile, *The Sealed Soil* was never shown in its home country and has rarely screened abroad. Now, thanks to a recent digital restoration, the film is able to take its place in the cinematic canon as a feminist masterpiece and a miraculous artefact of pre-revolution rebellion.

90 MINS 4K RESTORATION

Tales of Cinema

Go behind the scenes of the artform with these documentary deep dives into classic and contemporary movies and movie-making.

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1000 Women in Horror

Dir. Donna Davies USA

Ever since the silent era, the nightmares that have haunted our screens have been sculpted by women, but many went unrecognised – an oversight this documentary takes a chainsaw to.

In 2020, award-winning Australian critic Alexandra Heller-Nicholas released *1000 Women in Horror, 1895–2018*, an encyclopedic book celebrating the many women who have shaped the genre since the moment cinema's light first flickered. In her complementary documentary, Donna Davies interviews a stack of powerhouse women in the horror scene and assembles a bevy of clips from classic and little-known films that women have left their mark on. It's a discussion that will continue even after you leave the cinema, and have you scrambling for a pen and paper to take notes.

96 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



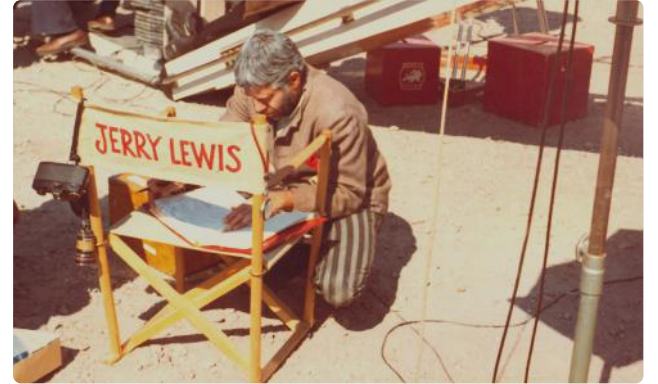
Chain Reactions

Dir. Alexandre O. Philippe USA

The winner of the Best Documentary on Cinema prize at Venice revs up and rips into perhaps the greatest slasher movie ever made: *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*.

Released to commemorate the 50th anniversary of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, the latest love letter to cinema from documentarian Alexandre O. Philippe (*Lynch/Oz*, MIFF 2022) carves out space for five of its most passionate devotees – Patton Oswalt, Karyn Kusama, Takashi Miike, Stephen King and Alexandra Heller-Nicholas – to expound on their enduring love for the film. Shot in an expressionistic replica of the original's farmhouse and intercut with iconic scenes and never-before-seen outtakes, *Chain Reactions* offers a fascinating insight into one of cinema's most influential genre works.

103 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST MIFF REGIONAL



From Darkness to Light

Dir. Eric Friedler, Michael Lurie USA, Germany

The truth behind Jerry Lewis's ill-fated and never-seen Holocaust comedy *The Day the Clown Cried* is finally revealed.

Myths abound regarding *The Day the Clown Cried*, the infamously misguided attempt by acclaimed Jewish funnyman Jerry Lewis to fictionalise the Holocaust. Remaining unfinished and unseen, it haunted the director to his grave while simultaneously gaining notoriety among cinephiles worldwide. Combining a tell-all interview given by Lewis shortly before his death with insights from talking heads including Martin Scorsese and actual footage from the film – once assumed lost – this documentary will at long last offer viewers the chance to decide for themselves whether Lewis's ill-fated opus was an ahead-of-its-time satire or a dud worthy of obscurity.

108 MINS



Marlee Matlin: Not Alone Anymore

Dir. Shoshannah Stern USA

In this heartfelt documentary, the Oscar-winning star reflects on a career of striving to change the system.

In 1987, aged 21, Marlee Matlin scooped the Academy Award for Best Actress in a Leading Role for her performance in *Children of a Lesser God* – the first of just two occasions a Deaf actor has won an Oscar. She made a career not only through her onscreen roles but also as an advocate for disability rights, a responsibility she took on with gusto. Her journey has been far from an easy one, however: given few acting opportunities, she worked hard to overcome addiction, industry prejudice and personal traumas. Filmmaker Shoshannah Stern, who is also Deaf, crafts a compelling tribute to a trailblazing talent and a resonant call for greater inclusion.

98 MINS



Videoheaven

Dir. Alex Ross Perry USA

Alex Ross Perry's decade-in-the-making essay movie, narrated by Maya Hawke, surveys the cultural impact of video stores via their representation on film and TV.

When the first video stores emerged, they were regarded as a death blow for cinema; instead, the accessibility of VHS tapes went on to foster a deeper love of movies. By the 1990s, the immediately familiar space of the video store had itself become an onscreen staple – but the 2010s heralded its demise. Alex Ross Perry (*Pavements*, MIFF 2025) has assembled nearly 200 clips tracing changing tastes and times as they were immortalised through VHS. Loosely adapting Daniel Herbert's 2014 book *VideoLand*, this evocative treatise on the video-rental era is pure catnip for cinephiles.

173 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST MIFF ONLINE

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Letterboxd



All I Had Was Nothingness

Dir. Guillaume Ribot France

Four decades after the release of Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*, this contemporary reflection shines a light on the formidable documentary's making and legacy.

Without using any archival footage, Claude Lanzmann got to the chilling heart of the Holocaust by assembling the testimonies of survivors, witnesses and perpetrators over the course of more than a decade into his nine-hour epic *Shoah* (MIFF 1987). Drawing from 220 hours of raw footage and the director's own words 40 years on, Guillaume Ribot's essential companion to Lanzmann's documentary – produced by the late filmmaker's widow – reflects on the size of *Shoah*'s achievement, reveals how it was constructed and embraces the tragic intimacy of its subjects.

95 MINS

VICSCREEN

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Pasa Faho. Written and directed by Kalu Oji and produced by Mimo Mukii and Ivy Mutuku.
Made in Melbourne with the support of VicScreen. Photo John M. Tubera

James J. Robinson directs *First Light*



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James J. Robinson

MIFF Member, Bank Australia customer and director of *First Light*, nominated for MIFF’s Bright Horizons Award

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Animation

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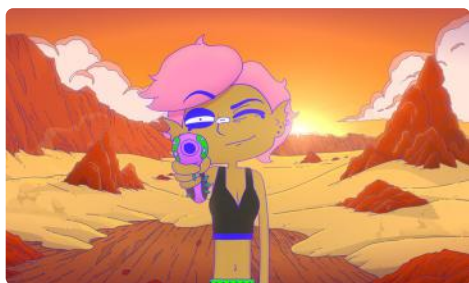
Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass

Dir. Stephen Quay, Timothy Quay UK, Poland, Germany

The first feature in 20 years from stop-motion animation legends Stephen and Timothy Quay is a shapeshifting, disorienting fairytale.

Amid a Gothic landscape, Jozef undertakes an arduous journey into the Carpathian Mountains to reach a sanatorium where his ailing father will spend his dying days. Upon reaching his destination, he discovers that his father exists in a liminal state between life and death, and that the facility warps perceptions of space and time. Adapted by the Brothers Quay from a novel by Polish Jewish writer Bruno Schulz – previously brought to screen in Wojciech Has's surrealist epic *The Hourglass Sanatorium* – this project is a rare opportunity to see the cult filmmaking duo's magic woven on the big screen.

76 MINS **MIFF ONLINE**



Lesbian Space Princess

Dir. Emma Hough Hobbs, Leela Varghese Australia

Set in a galaxy far, far away, this is the multi-award-winning Australian animated musical rom-com of your rainbow alphabet dreams.

Introverted and anxiety-ridden Saira's only escape from being heir to her planet's throne is extroverted bounty hunter Kiki the Destroyer. Unfortunately for Saira, Kiki's just dumped her ... and unfortunately for Kiki, she's just been abducted by a gang known as the Straight White Maliens, and only her ex-girlfriend can save her! A vibrantly animated, rapid-fire joke cannon with a terrific local voice cast, this Berlinale Teddy Award-winning independent debut feature from South Australian writer/directors and real-life girlfriends Emma Hough Hobbs and Leela Varghese has cult classic written all over it.

86 MINS **FESTIVAL GUEST**



The Square

Dir. Kim Bo-sol South Korea

In the depths of a North Korean winter, a Swedish diplomat's secret lover disappears. Can he find out what happened to her before it's too late?

Isak, a diplomat working in the Swedish Embassy in Pyongyang, lives a more privileged life than most in North Korea. He also finds himself under constant surveillance, which means that there's no way a budding romance with local traffic officer Bok-joo is going to proceed unnoticed. When Bok-joo mysteriously disappears, the diplomat is gripped by a growing paranoia as he tries to locate her. A lovelorn thriller set amid the snowy surroundings and palpable anxiety of Pyongyang in winter, *The Square* is a quietly profound portrait of life in a totalitarian regime.

73 MINS



Death Does Not Exist

Dir. Félix Dufour-Laperrière Canada

An existential modern fable told in surreal imagery, this transfixing hand-drawn animation is a vivid treatise on the personal cost of revolution.

When a group of activists stages an attack on a gated mansion, events turn to tragedy. One of the activists, Héléne, flees the scene, retreating to a wilderness filled with strange animals, primal vistas and echoes of her subconscious. As she makes her way through the woods, Héléne must decide whether to keep running or turn back. Conveying the strangeness of living in a time of climate crisis with vivid colours, mythical imagery and unexpected visual flourishes, *Death Does Not Exist* is a distinctive, disarming work that interrogates the difficulties of sticking to one's convictions.

75 MINS



Olivia & the Clouds

Dir. Tomás Pichardo Espallat Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic's third ever animated feature film is a mesmerising, *Rashomon*-like exploration of love and loss.

Olivia is struggling to get over Ramón. Reminiscing over good times and bad, she encounters a literal ghost from the past under her bed. Ramón, meanwhile, is reminded of the intimacy they shared as he faces off with an anthropomorphic pot plant. Elsewhere, Mauricio and his partner Barbara confront a crisis point in their own relationship: one yearns for commitment, while the other wishes to simply disappear. A striking kaleidoscope of visual techniques, *Olivia & the Clouds* plays with storytelling and subjectivity to portray how romance can both consume and corrode lonely souls.

81 MINS

Doc Visions

Between documentary and fiction lie fascinating works of cinema that reinterpret what reality looks like – offering new perspectives on the world and what film can be.

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Youth (Hard Times)

Dir. Wang Bing China

Human stories are brought to the surface in this shattering middle instalment of Wang Bing's trilogy about exploited sweatshop workers.

Life moves on, yet time seems to stand still for the overworked and underpaid live-in garment factory workers of Zhili's industrial district. Trapped in the industrial drudgery of their sweatshop setting, these rural youths try to maintain their humanity and dignity in the face of grim labour conditions, the ongoing erosion of their personal liberties and failed attempts at getting a pay rise. Wang Bing shot 2600 hours of footage across a five-year period for his *Youth* triptych. This monumental middle chapter – which continues the themes of *Youth (Spring)* (MIFF 2023) – features some of his most heartbreaking observational footage yet.

223 MINS



Youth (Homecoming)

Dir. Wang Bing China

Wang Bing's magnum opus on modern China culminates with this deeply human portrait of life beyond the factories.

Experiencing momentary escape from the Dickensian conditions of their sweatshops, Chinese garment industry workers from Zhili return to their provincial hometowns for national holidays, family gatherings and weddings. As the young subjects come face to face with the family members they support, both love and a sense of crushing responsibility linger in the air. Taking a different angle from the triptych's earlier depictions of the people whose labour makes the wheel of global capitalism go round, Wang Bing captures the moments of relief that can be grasped before they are sent back to create the comforts the developed world depends upon.

152 MINS

Experimentations

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Two Times João Liberada

Dir. Paula Tomás Marques Portugal

A trans woman seeks to rescue a gender-nonconforming pioneer from a flawed film in this gloriously form-exploding work.

Trans actress João is starring in an arthouse biopic about João Liberada, an 18th-century nun who made a break for sexual freedom. What appears to be a dream job takes a turn for the toxic, however, when João's suggestion to refocus the film away from its tragic denouement is poorly received – with even the spirit of the hard-done-by historical figure involving herself through the liminal space of João's dreams. Paula Tomás Marques's feature asks pointed questions about how we can present historical figures through a contemporary lens – and who ought to be taking that responsibility.

70 MINS



The Great History of Western Philosophy

Dir. Aria Covamonas Mexico

An unhinged animated journey through Western and Eastern philosophy, mythology, pop culture and stream-of-consciousness dream states.

A cosmic animator commits an unknown 'crime' that infuriates the Central Committee, which has condemned them to make an educational philosophical film. Mao Zedong goes even further, demanding the artist's death, but the Monkey King steps in to protect his master. Next step: chaos! Constructed from collages cut out of public-domain images, Mexican animator Ava Covamonas's visually striking and deliberately disorienting debut feature promises game MIFF audiences an anarchically funny and wild ride into the heart of anti-narrative absurdist animation.

73 MINS



little boy

Dir. James Benning USA

Veteran avant-garde director James Benning takes a tour through US history as experienced through one man's eyes, ears and hands.

Methodically painting and piecing together various model items, a pair of hands grows progressively older. As the models are completed, iconic songs from artists such as Pete Seeger, Sinéad O'Connor and Tracy Chapman make way for impassioned speeches marking various potential turning points in American history: calls for change that, for the most part, have gone unheeded. Experimental filmmaker James Benning charts American history from the 1960s to 2016 via a prehistoric introduction – "a film looking at the past to warn about the future, from a little boy's point of view".

74 MINS
SCREENS WITH DAILY WORKER (10 MINS)



Contact Lens

Dir. Ruiqi Lu China

In this sensory homage, *Jeanne Dielman* becomes a canvas for reimagining emancipation from the constraints of daily life and the cinematic frame.

A young woman goes about her day as a shot-by-shot remake of Chantal Akerman's *Jeanne Dielman, 23, quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (MIFF 2025) – complete with a Chinese actor in a wig – plays on a projector screen in her small apartment. Through this process, the protagonist becomes transfixed by the possibilities of changing her own perspective, both literally and symbolically. Ruiqi Lu's love letter to the empathetic power of cinema plays with focus and framing, while its heightened sound design hypnotically emphasises the confines of domestic life.

78 MINS



BLKNWS: Terms & Conditions

Dir. Kahlil Joseph USA

Poetry, politics and the layered history of the Black experience collide in this pulsating, kaleidoscopic essay film.

Crafting a subversive montage out of found footage, movie snippets, re-enactments, TikTok clips and memes, *BLKNWS: Terms & Conditions* traverses the past, present and future of African peoples. Filmmaker Kahlil Joseph – who has directed music videos for Beyoncé and Kendrick Lamar – takes inspiration from W.E.B. Du Bois's *Encyclopedia Africana*, employing segments, track titles and page numbers as structuring devices along with an electrifying techno soundtrack. This heady and groundbreaking piece of cinema is a living archive – one that reclaims the Black story from the buried and biased chapters of history.

113 MINS



Little, Big, and Far

Dir. Jem Cohen Austria, USA

A bewitchingly thought-provoking meditation on humanity's place within the universe.

Newly septuagenarian astronomer Karl is in a reflective mood. With his job at the museum under threat, his physicist wife Eleanor growing distant on the other side of the world and the future of his grandson's planet uncertain, Karl finds himself at a crossroads. Following a conference in Greece, he heads for the islands in search of untarnished night sky, and to ground himself once more by reaching for the stars. Told primarily via Karl's correspondences with Eleanor and grad student Sarah – played, respectively, by Leslie Thornton and Jessica Sarah Rinland – Jem Cohen's new docufiction hybrid draws as much beauty from a car park at night as from the vast expanse of the celestial sphere.

122 MINS



TWST – Things We Said Today

Dir. Andrei Ujică Romania, France

Immerse yourself in the heady optimism of being young in New York on a day when The Beatles seemed to herald a thrilling future.

August 1965: The Beatles are set to play in New York, cresting a global wave of teenage fandom. The city is also hosting the World's Fair, an enthusiastic celebration of humanity's innovations, while anger at police violence has just sparked the Watts Riots on the other side of the country. Writer Geoffrey and Beatlemaniac Judith roam the city, their hopes unfurling over undercurrents of social change. Named after a Beatles song that Paul McCartney described as "future nostalgia", this form-defying documentary is a groundbreaking time capsule – one that transports viewers to a future-present moment shimmering with possibilities.

86 MINS



Fiume o morte!

Dir. Igor Bezinović Croatia, Italy, Slovenia

In this vividly entertaining Rotterdam Tiger Award winner, citizens relive the strange post-WWI dictatorship that befell their city.

Following the conclusion of World War I, Gabriele D'Annunzio – a celebrated officer, as well as a renowned poet and playwright – decided to seize and annex the seaport city of Fiume (now Rijeka in Croatia). His 16-month dictatorial rule of Fiume, admired by Benito Mussolini, would become a template for darker things to come. Staging re-enactments involving 300 locals on the sites of historical events, Croatian director Igor Bezinović crafts a visionary, self-deprecatingly funny hybrid documentary exploring this brief moment of a century past and its long legacy – a potent reminder of how history lives on in the present.

112 MINS MIFF ONLINE

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Seeds

Dir. Brittany Shyne USA

A Sundance-winning portrait of Black generational farmers that captures the weight of history.

For well over a century across the Deep South, African-American families have farmed lands that their ancestors were once forced to work as slaves. Capturing the passage of time and the bonds of community, director Brittany Shyne tenderly chronicles the day-to-day experiences of these farmers as they struggle to make their way in an increasingly punitive economic climate. A distinctive meditation on the decline of generational farming and the shifts of American history nine years in the making, Shyne's first feature-length film won the US Grand Jury Prize: Documentary at Sundance, hailed by the jury for "its directing, cinematography, and dreamlike immersion".

123 MINS



Israel Palestine on Swedish TV 1958–1989

Dir. Göran Hugo Olsson Sweden, Finland, Denmark

A prime-time epic charting three decades of survival and power struggle, as watched from the living rooms of millions of Swedish homes.

For over 30 years, Sweden's public broadcaster, SVT, brought stories about the lives of Israelis and Palestinians to Swedish households night after night. Bound by a charter of neutrality, journalists embedded from Gaza to Jerusalem left behind a wealth of reportage on the region's contested landscape throughout the second half of the 20th century – an archive that serves as the basis for Göran Hugo Olsson's ambitious documentary. Spotlighting the effect that media reportage has had on the world's understanding, as well as how its representations have shifted and evolved over time, this is a decades-spanning archival chronicle like no other.

206 MINS



Put Your Soul on Your Hand and Walk

Dir. Sepideh Farsi France, Palestine, Iran

An inspiring portrait of a photojournalist whose defiant images of life in Gaza brought hope.

Fatma Hassona, a 25-year-old photojournalist from the Gaza Strip, dedicated her life to documenting the conditions in which Palestinians are forced to exist. In this documentary, beautifully and movingly pieced together from video calls recorded throughout 2024, she builds a visual diary of the suffering being inflicted upon displaced children. Even amid constant destruction, her message remained one of dignity, humanity and hope – until, in April 2025, the day after it was announced the film was going to premiere at Cannes, an Israeli missile killed Hassona and her family. Reminding us not to look away from the injustices of the world, this is a documentary that demands to be witnessed.

110 MINS



Holding Liat

Dir. Brandon Kramer USA

Humanity struggles under the weight of political machinations in this Berlinale award winner.

On 7 October 2023, 49-year-old schoolteacher Liat and her husband Aviv are abducted from their kibbutz in Southern Israel by Hamas operatives. As the situation in the Gaza Strip rapidly deteriorates, Liat's US-born father Yehuda ventures to the United States to advocate for their safe return. But Yehuda's progressive politics and opposition to Benjamin Netanyahu's government quickly put him at odds with US politicians – and even members of his own family – as he fights for his daughter's freedom. Co-produced by Darren Aronofsky, *Holding Liat* offers a rare glimpse into both the personal and the political realities of a family campaigning for peace at a time when it's in short supply.

93 MINS



My Undesirable Friends: Part I – Last Air in Moscow

Dir. Julia Loktev USA

A gripping documentary portrait of Russian journalists working under a hostile regime.

It's late 2021, and the journalists of online news channel TV Rain are among the very few still offering an independent account of the state of their country. When Russia invades Ukraine, further amping up domestic speech restrictions and hostility towards dissidents, these correspondents must decide whether to keep providing a voice or flee from a homeland in which they're no longer safe. Following six young female journalists over the course of four months, this real-life epic invites us into the lives of journalists striving to fight for the truth and maintain their humanity as the walls close in around them.

324 MINS



Mistress Dispeller

Dir. Elizabeth Lo China, USA

A woman is hired to break up an extramarital affair in this poignant documentary account of devotion, desire and the human thirst for connection.

For the innovative service providers of China's booming romance economy, infidelity presents just another business opportunity. When she discovers that her husband is being unfaithful, Mrs Li enlists 'mistress dispeller' Wang Zhenxi to unravel the affair and save her marriage. In no time, Wang ingratiates herself with Mr Li and the young Fei Fei in search of any fissures that could drive them apart. Far from being a cheap chronicle of messy infidelity, *Mistress Dispeller* is an empathetic study of individuals trying to heed what their hearts are telling them, and uses unbroken long takes to allow its subjects to lay their dreams and fears bare for the camera.

94 MINS MIFF REGIONAL



Trains

Dir. Maciej J. Drygas Poland, Lithuania

A stunning archival portrait of the human moments behind the highs and lows of the 20th century, via its defining mode of transportation.

Trains take families to the seaside, soldiers to the front, prisoners to their doom; they bring loved ones, and bodies, home. Assembled over the course of a decade from footage excavated from almost 100 different film archives from all over the world, and featuring neither commentary nor dialogue, this unconventional documentary crafts a story of humanity in the 20th century as it emerged across tracks, carriages and crossings. Far more than just a historical record of locomotion and what it symbolises, *Trains* is a story of people's hopes, dreams and tragedies as they hurtle towards destinations unknown.

81 MINS



Orwell: 2+2=5

Dir. Raoul Peck France, USA

War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength. 1984 is 2025.

In the late 1940s, on the Scottish island of Jura and in the grip of tuberculosis, George Orwell feverishly penned what would become his last – and most lasting – novel: *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Despite the book's obvious real-world catalysts, there is no way that Orwell could have known quite how eerily prescient his words would become. Raoul Peck is not the first to prosecute the case that our present reality is a little too similar to Orwell's imagined future; but, with his latest documentary, he uses the author's own words – read by Damian Lewis and juxtaposed against contemporary real-world imagery – to offer a searingly defiant polemic against the rise and spread of contemporary fascism.

119 MINS



Mr. Nobody Against Putin

Dir. David Borenstein, Pavel Talankin Denmark, Czechia

Through classroom recordings, a Russian teacher risks everything to expose how his government turns schools into propaganda factories.

Pavel "Pasha" Talankin is the cheerful, baby-faced 'cool teacher' at Karabash Primary School #1. As the school's videographer, it's his job to upload footage of lessons, marching drills and patriotic songs to a government website, but his unease grows as he documents the Russian education system's slide into military recruitment. Secretly sharing his footage with documentarian David Borenstein, Talankin puts his safety on the line. A powerful exposé on how Vladimir Putin's propaganda grooms the troops of the future that won a Special Jury Award at Sundance, *Mr. Nobody Against Putin* is a David-and-Goliath battle for Russia's soul.

90 MINS



Cutting Through Rocks

Dir. Sara Khaki, Mohammadreza Eyni
Iran, Germany, Canada, Chile, USA, Netherlands, Qatar

This Sundance award winner profiles a brazenly feminist, motorbike-riding Iranian trailblazer.

At the age of 37, Sara Shahverdi has accomplished many things, including making history as her village's first ever female councillor. As a forward-thinking rebel who cares not for what others think, her main objective has been to fight for the rights of women and girls, especially those at risk of child marriage. But in deeply conservative Iran, a woman on a mission will inevitably ruffle feathers. Shot in a vérité style by husband-and-wife team Mohammadreza Eyni and Sara Khaki, this portrait – as spirited, spiky and inspirational as its leading woman – was awarded the World Cinema Documentary Competition Grand Jury Prize at Sundance.

94 MINS



Remaining Native

Dir. Paige Bethmann USA

A Native American teen's desire to run embodies both career aspiration and ancestral connection.

Seventeen-year-old Kutoven "Ku" Stevens, of the Yerington Paiute Tribe, was born to run. But his passion and strides carry the weight of inherited trauma: his great-grandfather Frank "Togo'o" Quinn, then just eight, escaped his oppressive boarding school by running more than 80 kilometres across the Nevada desert. Ku's pursuit of a university track scholarship coincides with a more personal mission: retracing Quinn's route as a profound act of reclamation. Making her feature directorial debut, Haudenosaunee filmmaker Paige Bethmann presents a candid, inspirational account of how one young person's modern-day ambitions can offer a path towards healing historical wounds.

87 MINS



Folktales

Dir. Heidi Ewing, Rachel Grady USA, Norway

A heartwarming documentary following three teens on a journey of self-discovery at a remote folk school in Norway's far north.

At Pasvik Folk High School in Norway, three 19-year-olds are taking part in a nine-month program to learn survival skills, bushcraft, dog sledding and, most importantly, how to understand themselves better. We meet Hege, who is dealing with a traumatic family incident; Bjørn Tore, a socially awkward extrovert; and Romain, a timid and unsure young man from the Netherlands. Long-time collaborators Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady (*Jesus Camp*) examine the uniquely European concept of folk high schools, which focus on character, identity and community, in this gentle portrait of connection, discovery and transformation.

106 MINS



I, Poppy

Dir. Vivek Chaudhary India

A mother and son clash over how best to confront an unjust system in this compelling Hot Docs Best International Feature Documentary winner.

Mangilal is a schoolteacher and activist passionately fighting against the corrupt status quo. His mother, elderly poppy farmer Vardibai, however, worries that their lives are going to come crumbling down as a result of his protests. As these two strong-willed individuals – both members of the so-called 'untouchable' Dalit caste – struggle to make common cause in a changing world, their plight mirrors that of communities across India. Vivek Chaudhary's award-winning debut feature documentary, shot over four years, explores generational differences, ever-shifting class dynamics and political corruption.

82 MINS



Twiggy

Dir. Sadie Frost UK

How a cheerful, down-to-earth London girl became the iconic face of 1960s fashion ... and what she did next.

Working-class London girl Lesley Hornby was an unlikely fashion model: at only five foot six with an elfin figure, her childhood nickname was 'Twigs'. But in 1966, a new name and haircut launched 16-year-old Twiggy to worldwide fame as the face of London fashion's 'youthquake', before she embarked on an acting and singing career that would earn her two Golden Globes plus a Tony nomination. Sadie Frost's joyful film is brought to life by its irresistibly sunny, sincere subject, along with a who's who of film and fashion – including Joanna Lumley, Dustin Hoffman, Edward Enninfu, Barbara Hulanicki, Stella McCartney and Brooke Shields.

94 MINS



John Lilly and the Earth Coincidence Control Office

Dir. Michael Almereyda, Courtney Stephens USA

What do isolation tanks, dolphin intelligence and psychedelic therapy have in common? You're about to find out.

John Lilly was an inventor and scientist who became something of a New Age visionary through his attempts to communicate with dolphins, research brainwashing and mind control, and explore the benefits of psychoactive drugs. Directed by Michael Almereyda and rising indie auteur Courtney Stephens, narrated by Chloë Sevigny, and featuring interviews with the likes of Alejandro Jodorowsky, this freewheeling documentary sifts through a wealth of wacky archival material to dive into the mind of a man who may have been either a genius or a crackpot – or both.

89 MINS



The Python Hunt

Dir. Xander Robin USA

A group of eclectic Floridians embark on an annual python hunt in this madcap SXSW Special Jury Award winner.

Over 10 nights in Florida's Everglades, a bizarre annual ritual takes place: an enterprise worth \$10,000 wherein a cast of oddball characters brave dangerous, croc-infested swamps with all the chaotic zeal of *Tiger King* meets early Errol Morris. Join these misfit amateur hunters as, with wide-eyed abandon, they attempt to catch the elusive and invasive six-metre-long Burmese pythons – while dismayed observers seek to highlight just how environmentally crazy this whole thing is. Covering this serpentine story from all of its angles, Florida-born director Xander Robin's film may just have you wondering who the real invasive species is.

91 MINS



The Librarians

Dir. Kim A. Snyder USA

Amid the US war on books, passionate bibliophiles fight censorship on the frontlines.

At a time when US democracy is under threat, libraries are bulwarks of freedom of information. This is particularly the case in states like Texas, Florida and Louisiana, where local and state governments frequently request that books be banned from circulation. Devoted to serving their communities and fiercely committed to the importance of reading, librarians are often the only ones standing in their way, facing harassment, violence and public dismissal in the process. Following the women at the forefront of this campaign, this rousing documentary focuses on how these attacks on fundamental rights have changed – and how the fight must evolve accordingly.

92 MINS

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Careless

Dir. Sue Thomson Australia

In a country where ageing has become a business, this funny, moving documentary follows elderly people's fight to grow old their way.

When director Sue Thomson's 89-year-old mum Margaret begins to need additional help with day-to-day life, they face a decision that most families will encounter: whether to consider a residential aged-care facility and, if so, how to find a suitable one amid a sector with a reputation for neglect and mistreatment. Margaret's story becomes a springboard for an investigation of the political history of aged care in Australia, as discussed by advocates, journalists and senior citizens who have experienced the system. A warm, insightful and energetic exploration, *Careless* issues a timely and powerful response to a hidden crisis.

88 MINS MIFF PREMIERE FUND FESTIVAL GUEST MIFF REGIONAL



Ghost Boy

Dir. Rodney Ascher South Africa, UK

A SXSW award-winning documentary about one man whose body became a prison, and how he found a way out.

After coming home one day with a sore throat as a child, Martin Pistorius eventually found himself in a living nightmare: locked-in syndrome, a neurological condition in which a person is aware of their surroundings but unable to move or communicate. He would go on to spend more than a decade in a care home, encountering horrible mistreatment, until one carer realised that he was conscious – and could tell the world what he'd been through. Narrating this stranger-than-fiction story in his own words, Pistorius recounts his experiences of life before and after making first contact in a captivating documentary reminiscent of the best works of Errol Morris.

91 MINS MIFF ONLINE



GEN_

Dir. Gianluca Matarrese France, Italy, Switzerland

The humanity and diversity of trans people and IVF patients are foregrounded in this documentary about a passionate doctor.

Beneath Dr Maurizio Bini's kindly exterior is a maverick, outspoken powerhouse who specialises in fertility treatment and gender-affirming care, assisting would-be parents and transgender patients with the same caring, knowledgeable and judgement-free approach. This equitable perspective has garnered him fame and numerous clients, but it has also put him at odds with governments and corporations. Observing the steady stream of stressed individuals who visibly relax around this no-nonsense yet jocular doctor, *GEN_* offers an antidote to the hyperbolic headlines and cruel scare campaigns they have been subjected to.

104 MINS



Come See Me in the Good Light

Dir. Ryan White USA

From darkness into light, this poetic documentary brings us to the brink of what it means to love.

Celebrated poet Andrea Gibson and Megan Falley are partners and fellow artists. When Gibson is diagnosed with stage-four ovarian cancer and only given two years to live, they embark on a journey through trips to the oncology clinic, chemotherapy and the realities of life and death. Every step of the way, the couple speak openly about their experiences, determined to find happiness and inspiration where others might see defeat. *Come See Me in the Good Light* uses archival footage and Gibson's own words as a poet laureate to bring this story of queer love, catharsis and acceptance to life – a powerful reminder of the importance of art in times of personal and political turmoil.

109 MINS



Sanatorium

Dir. Gar O'Rourke Ireland, Ukraine, France

War rages outside, but within the walls of an ex-Soviet spa in Ukraine, the health kick continues.

On the outskirts of Odesa, popular health resort Kuyalnik Sanatorium sits by an estuary whose black mud is famed for its health-reviving properties. Despite the war being waged around them, resilient staff and guests go about their days within the large, Soviet-built brutalist building. Coming to the facility in search of healing, patients may just find love and connection in the process. Recent documentaries about Ukraine have won Oscars and garnered international attention, but none have quite been like *Sanatorium* – an at times irreverent, yet no less insightful, glimpse into a part of the war-ravaged country where something resembling normalcy is carrying on.

90 MINS



The Secret of Me

Dir. Grace Hughes-Hallett UK

One intersex person's journey of self-discovery forms the basis for an exposé of widespread medical mistreatment.

Jim Ambrose was born intersex, but a doctor convinced his family he was female and conducted surgery on his genitals. After a childhood marked by an attraction to girls but never feeling like one, in adolescence he learned the truth about his identity. What followed, over several years, would allow Ambrose to become the person he is today. Piercing a nefarious veil of silence, Grace Hughes-Hallett's feature directorial debut is an indomitable rallying cry for informed consent and bodily autonomy and a scathing critique of a medical framework more invested in enforcing orthodoxies than in empowering individuals.

97 MINS

Crime & Punishment

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Surviving Malka Leifer

Dir. Adam Kamien Australia

The inside story of a titanic struggle for justice crossing years and international borders.

In 2008, allegations emerged that Malka Leifer, the headmistress of an ultra-Orthodox Jewish school in Melbourne, had committed grievous crimes against three young students, sisters Dassi Erlich, Nicole Meyer and Elly Sapper. Before police investigations could get underway, Leifer fled overseas. Thus began an extradition battle that would last for the better part of a decade, and a broader quest for justice that revealed a web of international intrigue, legal loopholes and corruption as well as a deeper culture of silence around sexual abuse. Adam Kamien documents the struggle undertaken by the sisters and their supporters to bring Leifer back to Australia – a compelling portrait of courage in the face of unimaginable adversity.

95 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



Songs Inside

Dir. Shalom Almond Australia

A unique rehabilitation program offers a path to healing in this sensitively told documentary.

Inside Adelaide Women's Prison, a transformative process is unfolding. Over six months, a group of women will learn the ukulele and write original songs, and then perform alongside the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra in the largest concert ever staged within an Australian correctional facility. Led by Barkindji singer-songwriter Nancy Bates, this program offers an opportunity to reclaim their voices within a system that often silences them. Against the backdrop of rising incarceration rates for Australian women – a trend that disproportionately affects First Nations women – director Shalom Almond chronicles her subjects' journeys as they rediscover their confidence and self-worth in this stirring testament to the power of music as a tool for change.

93 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



Zodiac Killer Project

Dir. Charlie Shackleton UK, USA

One of history's most notorious unsolved cases forms the basis for a humorously insightful investigation into the true-crime genre.

After multimedia artist Charlie Shackleton fails to get a documentary off the ground – an adaptation of a book about the Zodiac Killer, the mysterious real-life serial murderer fictionalised in David Fincher's *Zodiac* – he instead takes us through how he *would* have made the movie. Interrogating every true-crime genre cliché with a wry gaze, Shackleton explores the intentions of content creators and the seeming insatiable bloodlust of audiences. Fresh from Sundance, where it won the NEXT Innovator Award, this funny and disquieting feature-length video essay offers a fascinating exploration of why we watch the things we watch.

92 MINS



Kamay

Dir. Ilyas Yourish Afghanistan, Belgium, France

The death of a young woman leads a Hazara family to look for answers and pursue justice on the eve of the Taliban's takeover.

Zahra Khawari was, like many young women, living away from home for the first time as a university student; but as a member of Afghanistan's Hazara minority, she was particularly vulnerable to persecution. When she was found dead at Kabul University in 2017, members of her family travelled from the mountainous province of Daikundi to the country's capital in pursuit of understanding. Taking its title from a hardy plant known for its resistance to the harsh landscapes in which it's found, Ilyas Yourish's debut feature documentary intimately depicts the life of the family in their rural home as the country descends into Taliban rule.

106 MINS



Never Get Busted!

Dir. David Anthony Ngo, Stephen McCallum Australia

A Texan narc turns maverick decriminalisation activist in this outrageous, colourful, hugely compelling saga set amid America's drug war.

Barry Cooper was a Texan narcotics officer during the height of the US 'war on drugs' in the 1990s. But in an inspired ideological pivot, Cooper changed his life, attempting to atone for his past by calling out crooked cops, distributing DVDs instructing users on how to outsmart law enforcement and, in the process, transforming into a countercultural thorn in the establishment's side. In a wildly entertaining documentary chronicle centred on one outsized personality, Cooper is given space to tell the story from his perspective – as are those on both sides of the law who've crossed paths with him along the way.

105 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



The Perfect Neighbor

Dir. Geeta Gandbhir USA

Winner of a Sundance Directing Award, this timely true-crime documentary exposes the racial violence at the heart of US society.

Like any parent, Ajike Owens wanted her children to enjoy their right to play outside. But after a series of escalating threats, she was fatally shot by Susan Lorincz, a white woman whose rental property abutted the field frequented by Owens's kids. Told primarily through police body-cam footage, intermingled with 911 calls and investigative interviews, multiple-Emmy-winning director Geeta Gandbhir's chilling film puts real faces and consequences to the so-called 'Karen' videos and jokes of recent years, revealing the still-coursing poison of race-based intolerance – as well as the insidious ways that prejudice can be institutionally enshrined.

97 MINS

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Butthole Surfers: The Hole Truth and Nothing Butt

Dir. Tom J. Stern USA

Their irreverent, X-rated and sometimes dangerous live shows were the stuff of legend – but now, the Texas psych-punk jesters finally bare all.

You'd hardly pick Paul Leary as lead guitarist of the Butthole Surfers, alt rock's most chaotic, hilarious band. Paul was a clean-cut MBA student when he bonded with wild-mannered accountant Gibby Haynes, but the pair spent the next 40-odd years building a cult reputation for absurd psychedelic noise-punk and bacchanalian live shows involving onstage nudity, fake blood, shotguns and gnarly projected visuals. Director Tom J. Stern summons the weirdo Butthole Surfers spirit through puppetry and zine-style animation, plus a cavalcade of talking heads including Flea, Dave Grohl and Richard Linklater.

110 MINS



Move Ya Body: The Birth of House

Dir. Elegance Bratton USA, UK

An oral history of the origins of Chicago house music, as told by the people who lived it.

House music was birthed in Chicago in the early 1980s, taking its name from downtown club the Warehouse. Everything else remains disputed, especially by those who were there. Passing the mic over to seminal figures including Vince Lawrence, Kevin Aviance and Jesse Saunders, Elegance Bratton's documentary tells the story of how house arose out of both disco and racial tensions in Chicago – and how a largely Black, queer genre was subsequently coopted, exploited and turned into an industry. Recreating stories of racism and homophobia, including the infamous Disco Demolition Night, *Move Ya Body: The Birth of House* offers an enlightening examination of a time when the music reigned.

92 MINS



Monk in Pieces

Dir. Billy Shebar, David C. Roberts USA

A kaleidoscopic mosaic of the life and work of interdisciplinary New York artist Meredith Monk.

When Meredith Monk sings, she doesn't just sing. She yodels, laughs, gasps, growls, squawks and squeaks. Her often-wordless compositions use her voice like an entire orchestra to convey emotions, tell stories and travel through time. Emerging from the male-dominated downtown New York art scene, she triumphed over critics' sexist condescension. But six decades on, Monk must now learn to entrust her creations to other artists if her work is to endure after she's gone. Interspersing animated sequences of her dream journals with contemporary footage of daily life and also featuring interviews with Björk, David Byrne and Philip Glass, *Monk in Pieces* is a vibrant collage of a profoundly influential artist's story.

95 MINS



Pavements

Dir. Alex Ross Perry USA

Irreverent indie rock pioneers Pavement go through the looking glass in Alex Ross Perry's multilayered documentary experiment.

As comedian Tim Heidecker explains onscreen, Pavement was "for kids who thought everything was stupid and everything sucked". As the Gen X slacker icons prepare for their first live shows in 12 years, parallel Pavement projects burnish their legacy: a pop-up museum; a proposed big-budget biopic; and an earnest new jukebox musical, rehearsed by an off-Broadway cast. These projects – some real, some not – are the brainchildren of Alex Ross Perry, whose genre mashup of sincere experimentalism, ironic detachment and prickly humour captures how the band flirted with mainstream popularity before skulking into underground legend.

128 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST MIFF REGIONAL



Marlon Williams: Two Worlds – Ngā Ao E Rua

Dir. Ursula Grace Williams New Zealand

Beloved artist Marlon Williams embarks on the most ambitious project of his career: writing and recording an album sung entirely in te reo Māori.

Exhausted by the touring cycle, acclaimed New Zealand singer and actor Marlon Williams returns to his quiet coastal hometown of Ōhinehou/Lyttelton to work on an album in his ancestral language. Delving into his Māori heritage, Williams uses music as a pathway to deepen ties with his community and reclaim his *reo*. Filmed over four years, this soulful documentary follows the artist's journey from the South Island to his adopted home of Melbourne, across international tours – where he shares stages with Lorde, Aldous Harding and Florence Welch (of Florence + the Machine) – and back again.

92 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST MIFF REGIONAL



The Extraordinary Miss Flower

Dir. Iain Forsyth, Jane Pollard UK

In this unconventional documentary, Emiliana Torrini is joined by an all-star cast in uncovering a life of hidden romantic intrigue.

After the passing of Zoe Flower's mother Geraldine, she discovered a box of love letters from men scattered across the globe. The discovery was puzzling: was her mother a free spirit, a prolific heartbreaker or a spy? Zoe handed the letters over to her friend, Icelandic musician Emiliana Torrini, who went on to craft an album dedicated to Geraldine, setting the pace for this chimeric, boundary-blurring film. Narrated by pop star Sophie Ellis-Bextor and built around Torrini's creative process, the film also features hilarious and touching letter readings from luminaries such as Nick Cave, Richard Ayoade and Angus Sampson.

73 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST MIFF REGIONAL



It's Never Over, Jeff Buckley

Dir. Amy Berg USA

In this Sundance-premiering portrait, a flame of love salvages the genius singer-songwriter's humanity from the shadow of his premature death.

The tragedy of brilliant US singer-songwriter Jeff Buckley – renowned for his stunning 1994 debut album *Grace* – is that his career barely got to take off. When he drowned in 1997, aged 30, he was immediately recruited into rock's pantheon of lost-too-soon talents. Amy Berg's long-gestating documentary gives voice to women who understood Buckley's vulnerabilities, including Aimee Mann, Joan "As Police Woman" Wasser and former girlfriend Rebecca Moore. Wisely and compassionately, this film depicts lasting love as the fuel of legend, keeping Buckley's legacy alive from his life's quickly extinguished embers.

108 MINS



Jimmy Barnes: Working Class Man

Dir. Andrew Farrell Australia

An Australian rock 'n' roll legend continues his story in this moving, fascinating tell-all doc.

After finding fame with pub-rock legends Cold Chisel, Jimmy Barnes became an Australian icon through a successful solo career. But drug use, gruelling tours and childhood trauma weighed upon him, eventually finding their release in words – as this intimate new account reveals. Much as Mark Joffe's *Working Class Boy* (MIFF 2018) drew from Barnes's bracing account of his childhood, this new documentary from Andrew Farrell picks up where that film left off, following the arc of the singer-songwriter's 2017 follow-up memoir *Working Class Man*. Exploring the successes and slippery slopes of his adult years, *Jimmy Barnes: Working Class Man* is driven by its subject's refreshingly unflinching honesty.

120 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST

MIFF XR

HOSTED AT **acmi**

MIFF's program of extended reality (XR) experiences – spanning virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and mixed reality (MR) – presents cutting-edge works that push the boundaries of storytelling through full-body immersion.

Scan code for booking information miff.com.au/miff-xr



8 Billion Selves

Dir. Tibor de Jong Netherlands

When there are eight billion humans roaming the earth, how do we conceive of ourselves as both unique and just like everybody else?

Inspired by the birth of the eight-billionth person on Earth, director Tibor de Jong – along with his partner and collaborator, 3D artist Doris Konings – has created a sensory exploration of our place in the world that fully utilises the medium of 360-degree VR. In this work, the viewer drifts through sets depicting humans in various forms: identical naked men, plaza dancers and graphic figureheads. Winner of the VR360 Narrative Award at the Kaohsiung Film Festival, and with an immersive soundscape provided by Dutch artist Spinvis, *8 Billion Selves* is a wild ride rich in sumptuous detail that will warrant much reflection and discussion.

22 MINS



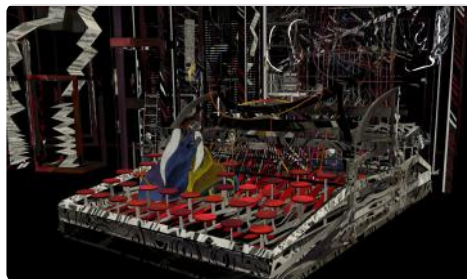
Dani: The Portrait of a Beauty

Dir. Cooper Yoo South Korea

Based on genre paintings by Shin Yun-bok, this interactive experience recreates the rituals, performances and daily life of the Joseon Dynasty in the 1700s.

As a *gisaeng*, Dani is a highly skilled performer. While she may not be traditionally beautiful on the surface, she composes herself with confidence and aplomb. She is in love with Yisaeng, the court's most eligible bachelor, but it's a secret she must bear along with the ridicule of the men around her. Everyone wants a piece of Yisaeng, and Dani will literally have to fight for his attention. With narration highlighting all of the protagonists' goofs and hidden desires, *Dani: The Portrait of a Beauty* is a fun, charming and transporting tale.

26 MINS



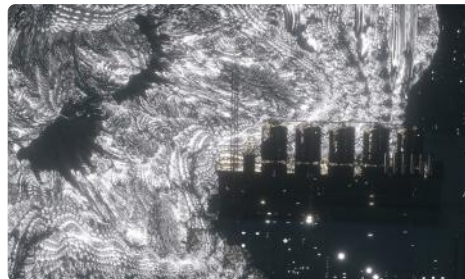
Ito Meikyū

Dir. Boris Labbé France

Literally meaning “the thread labyrinth”, *Ito Meikyū* uses 360-degree VR technology to weave together an interconnected compilation of spaces.

Your eyes are the key to movement in this experience: where you look is where you will go to explore. Seemingly connected and yet disparate, each space encourages you to spend as much time as you wish. The spaces themselves are drawn from the artist's love of Japanese classical art and literature, most notably *fukinuki yatai*, *The Tale of Genji* and *The Pillow Book*. Winner of the Venice Immersive Grand Prize in 2024, Boris Labbé's immersive work threads together an infinite labyrinth of spaces inhabited by figures, plants, animals, art and calligraphy.

15 MINS



Limbophobia

Dir. Hsieh Wen-Yee Taiwan

Explore an otherworldly society ruined by human ambition and self-interest in this beautifully dark continuation of Hsieh Wen-Yee's immersive science-fiction work *Limbotopia* (MIFF 2023).

In a muted black-and-white landscape, the viewer drifts through rainy backdrops amid a haunting soundscape. It's a virtual world that blurs the lines between dreams and reality, and that invites contemplation of the fragility of life, the consequences of losing it and the catastrophic impact of a world without empathy. The exquisite modelling rendered in the 360-degree sphere elevates this loose narrative into an eerie dream, affording space to contemplate the deeper thoughts the visuals provoke.

22 MINS



PRESENTED WITH NOW OR NEVER

The World Came Flooding In

Dir. Van Sowerwine, Isobel Knowles Australia

MIFF partners with Now or Never for the world premiere of this immersive installation and creative VR documentary centred on the intimate stories of life during a natural disaster.

Three flood-affected individuals share their personal stories of living through climate disaster. The lost homes of each storyteller have been recreated in miniature, then translated into virtual reality. Move through life-size digital scans of these miniature rooms, guided by the voice of the person who lived there. Separated by thousands of kilometres but united in their experience, their words create a powerful collective narrative. In the installation, augmented reality, photographs of furniture created during community workshops, projections and sound design combine to create a wondrous, multifaceted exploration of personal memory, loss and transcendence.

30 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST

MIFF Online streaming via ACMI Cinema 3

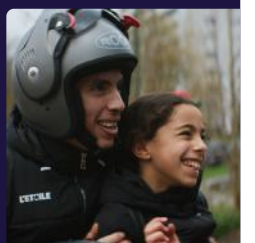
PRESENTED WITH



From 15 to 31 August, experience a curated selection of highlights from the MIFF program – available to stream at home, anywhere in Australia. Enjoy a mix of new releases and a selection of free short films.

Scan code to go to cinema3.acmi.net.au/miff

MIFF ONLINE



MIFF Schools

SUPPORTED BY **acmi**

Open to students and viewers of all ages, MIFF Schools presents films that foster curiosity, inspire critical thinking and deepen intercultural understanding.

Scan code for booking information
miff.com.au/schools



Maya, Give Me a Title

Dir. Michel Gondry France

Michel Gondry returns to his roots with this omnibus of two-dimensional adventures – all made to entertain his young daughter.

Living on a different continent to his four-year-old daughter Maya, iconic French filmmaker Michel Gondry comes up with a way to connect with her: she gives him a title for a story, and he turns it into a handmade animated adventure. Across the years, Maya is rendered as a mermaid, alien, detective, sea captain and photojournalist – but will she reach a point where she outgrows her dad's game? Recapturing the exuberant creative spirit of Gondry's legendary early music videos, *Maya, Give Me a Title* is a universal valentine to storytelling and its seminal place in the parent-child bond.

62 MINS
SCREENS WITH AN URBAN ALLEGORY (21 MINS)



Têtes Brûlées

Dir. Maja-Ajmia Yde Zellama Belgium

A young girl wrestles with her Tunisian heritage as she grieves the loss of her beloved adult brother.

Twelve-year-old Eya lives in Brussels with her Tunisian migrant family, whose cultural traditions she finds alienating. Her strongest ally is her 25-year-old brother Younès, who helps her with her schoolwork, encourages her TikTok dances and allows her to hang out with his big, boisterous friendship group. But when he is suddenly, tragically killed, Eya is left heartbroken. Struggling to make sense of her grief, she resolves to find some way to honour Younès while learning to live without him. A tender depiction of how ritual and community usher people through stages of grief, *Têtes Brûlées* is a coming-of-age tale imbued with dramatic weight and shot through with humanity.

86 MINS MIFF ONLINE



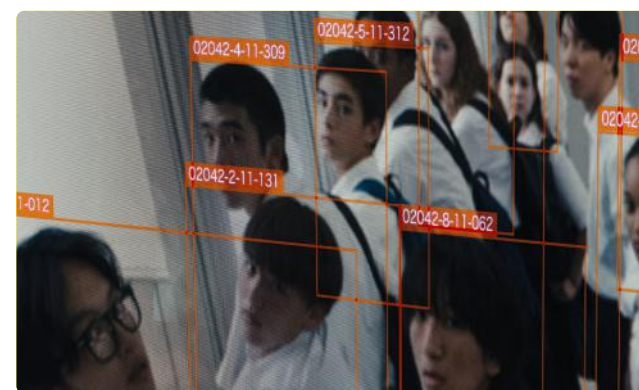
Looking for Alibrandi

Dir. Kate Woods Australia 2000

An award-winning, generation-defining Australian coming-of-age story is restored in tomato-rich 4K for its 25th anniversary.

Josie Alibrandi thinks she's cursed. She loves her strict nonna and mum, but finds Italian customs embarrassing and worries her working-class migrant heritage makes her a target for posh bullies. Heading into Year 12, Josie's already crushing on her debating buddy when she meets spunky rebel Jacob, who drives ... eww, a panel van? This year, Josie will study, party, fight, grieve, meet her long-lost biological dad, uncover buried secrets and maybe find who she is. This critical and commercial big-screen hit bottled Australia's millennial zeitgeist as lovingly as a jar of homemade tomato sugo – but in this new restoration, its magic is fresh for the teenager of every year.

103 MINS 4K RESTORATION FESTIVAL GUEST MIFF REGIONAL



Happyend

Dir. Neo Sora Japan, Singapore, USA

In a dystopia where technology is used to curb civil liberties, a group of teenagers struggle to maintain their long-held friendships.

Tokyo, sometime in the near future: against a backdrop of constant government warnings about a mega-earthquake that never seems to arrive, five music-loving high schoolers stage an elaborate prank. In response, their school installs an all-seeing facial-recognition surveillance system that uses AI to monitor and punish student behaviour. As both the school and Japanese society grow more repressive, the group's bond is put to the test. Winning director Neo Sora the Young Cinema Award at the Asia Pacific Screen Awards, *Happyend* is a coming-of-age story in which differences are entrenched and young lives are inherently political.

113 MINS



Greetings From Mars

Dir. Sarah Winkentette Germany

Is there life on Mars? One young lad wants to find out ... if only he can conquer four weeks at his grandparents' place in the country first.

Tom, a 10-year-old living with his widowed mum and two teenage siblings, dreams of becoming an astronaut and steering a rocket to Mars. He has the mathematical wit to make it work, but he's also afraid of disruptions to his routine. So when he's packed off to his grandparents' house with his elder sister and brother, Tom's world is turned upside down. To help him cope, his mum suggests that he treat his stay as a space-faring adventure – a mission he embraces wholeheartedly. Depicting the world from Tom's perspective through animated interludes and shifts in focus, this touching comedy approaches neurodivergence and grief with sensitivity and heart.

84 MINS MIFF REGIONAL



A Story About Fire

Dir. Li Wenyu China

In this animation based on an ancient Chinese myth, a cowardly monkey musters the courage to discover the secret of all warmth.

Insecure monkey Ran Bi Wa was raised by a tribe of humans; ever since, he has wondered about his place in the world. To understand his origins, he sets out for the mountain where the source of all the planet's warmth can be found. The trek is long and perilous, but he has a trusty companion by his side: a wolf who also doesn't fit in with his pack. When they finally reach their destination, things don't go quite as expected – and Ran Bi Wa is left forever transformed. Li Wenyu's impressive feature debut employs a striking 2D hand-drawn style that recalls Chinese ink-wash painting, depicting a largely monochrome world at once dreamily prehistoric and timeless.

85 MINS



I Saw a King

Dir. Giorgia Farina Italy

When an exiled Ethiopian prince is imprisoned at his grand family home, a young daydreamer awakens to the reality of fascist Italy.

In 1936, following Benito Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia, fascist fervour has gripped Italy. For young Emilio, however, living in a small seaside town outside Naples, politics couldn't be further away. So when a deposed Ethiopian prince is suddenly imprisoned at his home, the boy imagines that this prisoner of war is the fictional Italian pirate Sandokan, and the pair strike up a friendship. Slowly, Emilio begins to understand the horror, and the absurdity, of what's happening in his country. A colourful coming-of-age comedy, *I Saw a King* embellishes a stranger-than-fiction true story to chronicle the loss of innocence of a child and an entire nation alike.

95 MINS

Family Films

Feel-good films that spark imagination and joy – perfect for kids, teens and the young at heart.

Scan code for booking information and age recommendations
miff.com.au/family-films



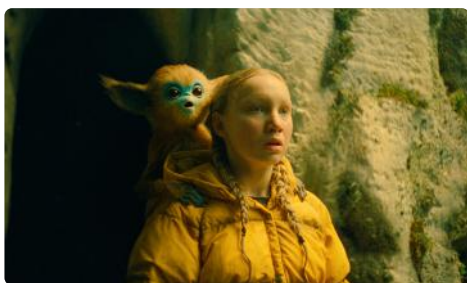
The Bad Guys 2

Dir. Pierre Perifel USA

The critters are back for one last caper – and this time, they're doing it for the girls.

Beastly heist team the Bad Guys are out of jail – but law-abiding life isn't easy for getaway driver Mr Wolf, safecracker Mr Snake, master of disguise Mr Shark, hacker Ms 'Webs' Tarantula and hot-tempered Mr Piranha. Accepting a job from crime crew the Bad Girls, they plot to ruin the wedding of evil billionaire Mr Moon and steal his MoonX rocket mid launch. Is being good worth it when being bad is this much fun? This bigger, badder sequel features a voice cast including Sam Rockwell, Marc Maron, Craig Robinson, Awkwafina, Anthony Ramos, Danielle Brooks, Maria Bakalova and Natasha Lyonne.

104 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



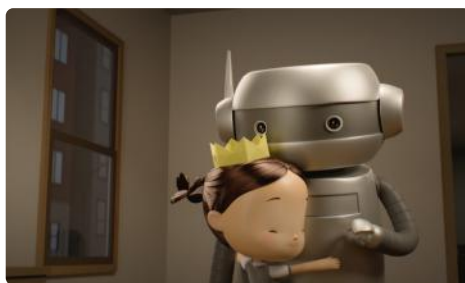
The Legend of Ochi

Dir. Isaiah Saxon USA, Finland, UK

This rare family film in the A24 canon is an imaginative, visually sumptuous creature feature.

Maxim (Willem Dafoe) is training young boys to fight and hunt enigmatic ochi – strange creatures blamed for attacks on livestock on the mythical island of Carpathia. When his daughter Yuri (Helena Zengel) stumbles across one of the injured primates, though, her instinct isn't to kill but to heal. Hiding the wounded creature, she resolves to outwit the bandits and return it to its home. Acclaimed music video auteur Isaiah Saxon lent on animatronics, matte paintings, puppetry and locations to craft the film's audaciously handmade landscape. Also featuring Emily Watson and Finn Wolfhard in key roles, *The Legend of Ochi* is a declaration of cinematic originality.

92 MINS



Space Cadet

Dir. Eric San Canada

Veteran DJ Kid Koala takes to the screen with this wordless, timeless tale of a robot and an astronaut who long to be reunited.

From when she was a small child, Celeste has harboured a lifelong dream to be an astronaut. By her side through the years has been her faithful robot, serving as teacher, companion and friend. When the now-grown Celeste departs on an interstellar space mission, the pair miss each other dearly – and Celeste's robot, left behind on Earth, has to figure out what to do with his life. Canadian music producer and turntablist Eric San – best known by his nom de plume, Kid Koala – makes his directorial debut with this dialogue-free, emotion-filled tale, featuring vocal performances from Karen O, Emiliana Torrini and Martha Wainwright.

86 MINS



Imagine

Dir. Jack Manning Bancroft, Tyson Yunkaporta Australia

A phone-obsessed teen is pulled into a vortex in this genre-bending fable that asks: what might we discover if we finally look up?

Fifteen-year-old Kim is overwhelmed by digital noise – until a claw rips through their bedroom and drags them off to a kaleidoscopic otherworld. There, a sardonic alien dog sets Kim on a cryptic quest for freedom: to travel to five islands over the course of 24 hours. Crossing surreal realms, Kim confronts their fears and addictions. Offering sage lessons for a generation seeking clarity, this multidimensional animated odyssey from First Nations filmmakers Jack Manning Bancroft and Tyson Yunkaporta – developed through a collaborative project involving over 150 young people – features the voices of Yael Stone, Wayne Blair, Ian Thorpe, Taika Waititi and more.

80 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



BMX Bandits

Dir. Brian Trenchard-Smith Australia 1983

No mere stackhat can restrain Nicole Kidman's irrepressible teenage curls in this freshly restored Aussie action classic.

PJ and Goose are BMX enthusiasts who spend their school holidays pulling sick stunts. After they cost trolley collector Judy (Nicole Kidman) her job, she joins them on a mission to repair their bikes and land the BMX bike and gear she's always dreamed of. But the freewheeling trio skid further into trouble when they stumble upon walkie-talkies that 'The Boss' and his goons were planning to use for an upcoming robbery – and the crims would've gotten away with it, too, if it weren't for those pedalling kids! In Brian Trenchard-Smith's free-range teenage dream, a 15-year-old Kidman commands the screen in her breakout role, and the craft absolutely pops in 4K.

88 MINS 4K RESTORATION

MIFF VOLUNTEERS

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Thank you for being the heart of everything we do.

Night Shift

See what's lurking on the screen after dark. Night Shift is a genre playground of midnight movies, cult curiosities and horror oddities – twisted, terrifying and totally unforgettable.

Scan code for booking information
miff.com.au/night-shift



We Bury the Dead

Dir. Zak Hilditch Australia

After a military experiment turns Tasmania into a wasteland, Ava hopes to find her missing husband.

A catastrophic US military blunder sees a WMD accidentally deployed off the coast of Tasmania, seemingly wiping out the island's entire population in an instant. Among the dead appears to be Ava's husband, caught in the blast while travelling for work. When Ava hears rumours of possible survivors, she flies from the US to Tasmania to volunteer for the army-led body retrieval unit, on the slim chance she might find her husband still alive. In this survival thriller starring Daisy Ridley, MIFF Premiere Fund alum Zak Hilditch reanimates the zombie genre with fresh ideas and disturbing philosophical quandaries about the boundaries of consciousness.

94 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



Touch Me

Dir. Addison Heimann USA

Two friends struggle with co-dependence and the orgasmic touch of a pansexual alien lover.

When a plumbing emergency leaves their place temporarily uninhabitable, Joey and her housemate Craig resort to staying with Joey's mysterious ex Brian (Lou Taylor Pucci), a hip-hop-dancing alien whose physical touch induces an addictive euphoric state. But textbook narcissist Brian has more nefarious plans afoot, and a menacing streak lurking underneath his matching tracksuits. Can Joey and Craig resist his intoxicating tentacled embrace long enough to notice the glaring red flags? With a kaleidoscopically camp aesthetic inspired by 1960s and 70s Japanese horror, this erotic extraterrestrial horror-comedy has a lot going on under the surface.

99 MINS



Zombucha!

Dir. Claudia Dzienny Australia

Hoping to strike it rich, a struggling couple inadvertently unleash a sentient killer kombucha.

After a catastrophic day at their respective workplaces, Maddie and Leo find themselves unemployed. Dreaming of a fresh start but needing reliable income, the couple have a chance encounter with Kai, a smouldering kombucha artisan raking in the cash. Seeing dollar signs, Maddie and Leo kickstart their own enterprise, but when they mix in some mysterious herbs, the culture gains sentience and proves deadly. Can Maddie and Leo unite to prevent a full-blown zombucha apocalypse? Taking the common contemporary conundrum of choosing between pursuing a career and starting a family as its scoby starter, this hilarious and big-hearted horror-comedy is as oddly relatable as it is uproarious.

106 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



Beast of War

Dir. Kiah Roache-Turner Australia

When an Australian warship is sunk by Japanese fighter jets, the surviving soldiers are thrown into an all-out battle for survival against a giant shark.

Leo (Mark Coles Smith), the only Indigenous soldier on an Australian World War II corvette, bonds with 17-year-old Will (Joel Nankervis) after each has been subjected to the bullying of other troops. As the ship heads across the Timor Sea, it's suddenly attacked by Japanese warplanes. Those lucky enough to survive face an even more deadly foe: a great white shark that can smell blood in the water. Inspired by the true story of the sinking of the *HMAS Armidale* in 1942, the latest film by Kiah Roache-Turner – maestro filmmaker of the popular *Wyrmwood* action-horror franchise – is both a sincere tribute to fallen soldiers and a rollicking monster movie.

87 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST

MIFF Melbourne International Film Festival INDUSTRY

MIFF's Industry arm reinforces Melbourne's standing as a key screen creative capital and supports the local screen sector with programs to enable creative connections and foster creative collaborations.

MIFF 37°South Market

Connects local screen content producers with international and local co-financiers, and hosts associated events for writers, directors, book publishers and other IP owners.

MIFF Accelerator Lab

Gives emerging short-film directors a chance to hone their skills as they transition to feature filmmaking. Alumni include the directors of *52 Tuesdays*, *Nitram*, *Animal Kingdom*, *Babyteeth* and *Shayda*.

MIFF Premiere Fund

Offers minority co-financing to new Australian quality theatrical feature films that then premiere at MIFF. Past films include *Of an Age*, *Memoir of a Snail*, *Ellis Park*, *Shayda* and *This Is Going to Be Big*.

For more info, head to miff.com.au/industry





Good Boy

Dir. Ben Leonberg USA

Find out what your pet is always staring at in that empty corner of the room in this haunted-house horror told entirely from a dog's perspective.

Indy the retriever and his human, Todd, leave the bustle of the city behind to move to a dilapidated country cabin. But from the moment they arrive, Indy can sense something's off: he sniffs out a malevolent presence in the shadows and growls at looming figures in the woods, while his doggy dreams are haunted by visions of an unfamiliar phantom pooch with an urgent warning. The camera's commitment to Indy's dog's-eye view only intensifies the visual terror of the disproportionate surroundings, making for a frightening, innovative addition to the haunted-house genre that'll send you out of the cinema with your tail between your legs.

73 MINS



Dead Lover

Dir. Grace Glowicki Canada

A lonely gravedigger goes to extremes to resurrect her lover in this warped, malodorous rom-com.

The gravedigger has one major problem: she constantly smells of corpses and dirt, and it's affecting her dating life in a big way. The cure for her loneliness appears to come at last in the form of a new man who doesn't mind her smell, her teeth or her ghostly complexion. But when he dies attempting to find a cure for his low sperm count, she must dig deeper than ever before to revive him – and their love. Prioritising practical effects and handmade sets, *Dead Lover* is filled with wonderfully wacky DIY flourishes and a uniquely grotesque style all its own. Adventurous audiences with a taste for rotting flesh and abstract gender norms shouldn't let this potential suitor slip between their bloodied fingers.

82 MINS



Reflection in a Dead Diamond

Dir. H  l  ne Cattet, Bruno Forzani Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy, France

The filmmakers behind *Let the Corpses Tan* bring a brutally surreal aesthetic to their homage to sexy spy thrillers.

Waves crash and drinks fizz as a lonely old man lounges on the terrace of his luxurious C  te d'Azur hotel. But when a beautiful young woman winds up dead by the water, time folds in on itself. A quest to uncover her killer ignites flashes of his younger, sharp-suited days as a secret agent thwarting pulp fiction supervillains. Diamonds, leather and lashings abound as he battles the cobra's kiss of a shapeshifting agent and teams up with a glamorous, disco-ball-outfitted sidekick. In their latest feature, filmmaking couple H  l  ne Cattet and Bruno Forzani fuse Eurotrash flesh onto *giallo* bones to breathe life into a deliriously entertaining, drop-dead-gorgeous pastiche.

87 MINS



The Toxic Avenger

Dir. Macon Blair USA

Peter Dinklage's mutant eco-vigilante deals out blood and guts in this gleefully gory Troma reboot.

Winston Gooze (Peter Dinklage), a meek janitor at an environmentally devastating chemical factory, has been diagnosed with a fatal brain disease – but his evil boss (Kevin Bacon) won't even cover his medical treatment. When Winston accidentally topples into a vat of toxic waste and emerges profoundly, disgustingly changed, it's time for him to gruesomely protect his village using superhuman strength and a sludge-dipped, glowing green mop! Also featuring Elijah Wood, this remake of Troma Entertainment's 1984 vigilante B-movie was called "unreleasable" and shelved indefinitely after its 2023 premiere. Two years on, do you dare to contaminate your eyeballs with a film *this* outrageously silly?

102 MINS



It Ends

Dir. Alex Ullom USA

Four friends on a late-night drive find themselves trapped on an endless road to nowhere.

Recent college graduates Tyler, James, Fisher and Day head out for one of their last nights together before life inevitably sends them off in different directions. But after missing a turn and circling back only to find a dead end that isn't marked on Google Maps, the friends realise that they're stuck on an infinite highway ... and that something terrifying is lurking in the dense, dark forest on either side of them. Are they in purgatory? Is it a shared hallucination, or a portal to another dimension? Using this deceptively simple premise as a jumping-off point for detours into philosophically knotty places, *It Ends* speaks directly to a generation whose uncertain future can feel more frightening than any monster.

87 MINS



Redux Redux

Dir. Kevin McManus, Matthew McManus USA

Two women take a bloody journey through the multiverse, seeking revenge and redemption.

After Irene's daughter is kidnapped and murdered, no force in the universe can stop her vengeance. When she finds the man responsible, she kills him – then jumps to a parallel universe, where she finds him and kills him again. But when her dimension-hopping vendetta accidentally saves a different teen, Irene begins to find a new purpose in her soul-sapping multiversal journey – and, perhaps, a means of rediscovering her humanity. In Kevin and Matthew McManus's haunting, heartbreaking sci-fi meditation on the Pyrrhic nature of retribution, Michaela McManus gives a compellingly raw, nuanced performance, beautifully offset by the chaotic ball of adolescent anger embodied by Stella Marcus.

107 MINS



Exit 8

Dir. Genki Kawamura Japan

A Tokyo commuter gets trapped in an infinitely looping subway station in this mind-bending adaptation of the hit indie videogame.

A man steps off a busy Tokyo train into a nondescript subway passage. After walking ahead and taking a few corners, he finds himself back where he started. Then he notices a sign with an ominous set of rules: if you find an anomaly, turn back immediately; if you don't find an anomaly, keep going. The longer he stays, the weirder things get, and his only hope of ever leaving is by playing a deadly game of spot the difference. Adapted from the cult videogame and variously evoking *The Shining*, *Squid Game* and *Cube*, *Exit 8* establishes a distinctive, liminal setting – an uncanny labyrinth with sinister surprises around every bend.

95 MINS



Hallow Road

Dir. Babak Anvari USA, UK, Ireland, Finland

Rosamund Pike and Matthew Rhys face every parent's worst nightmare in this taut, folk horror-infused two-hander.

Maddie (Rosamund Pike) and Frank (Matthew Rhys) wake up to a chilling call from their daughter Alice (Megan McDonnell) in the dead of night. After storming out of their house earlier that evening following a family argument, she's hit a pedestrian on a remote forest road an hour's drive away. Racing to her location, the couple clash as they frantically advise their distraught daughter over the phone. Just when they think the situation can't get any worse, another voice appears on the line – Alice is not alone. Director Babak Anvari crafts a claustrophobic, morally knotty thrill ride that plays out almost entirely from the interior of Maddie and Frank's car.

80 MINS

MIFF Talks

Keeping the film chat going strong after the credits roll.

MIFF Talks offers an opportunity to hear from MIFF guests about their own work and cinema trends at large. This year, you'll find our panel talks and in-conversation events at The Wheeler Centre, The Edge at Fed Square and further afield as part of the MIFF Regional program.

This year also sees the next instalment of our audience-beloved Consuming Culture talk: a roundtable dedicated to what we're up to and how we're up to when it comes to watching, reading and otherwise consuming film and media, co-presented by The Wheeler Centre.



For more info, head to miff.com.au/miff-talks.



MIFF Shorts

The much-loved MIFF Shorts program highlights the art of saying more with less. This year's selection includes animation, documentary, experimental, and Australian and international fiction shorts.

Scan code for booking information
miff.com.au/miff-shorts



Australian Shorts

Homegrown work from dynamic filmmakers.

From our very own burnished shores come a queer rom-com from the co-director of *Lesbian Space Princess* (MIFF 2025), a quietly moving story of the growing dissonance between a father and his daughter, and an absurd university comedy about a group of dormmates forced to confront their values.

Films in this package: *The Eviction* (dir. Rebecca Metcalf), *Family Man* (dir. Kalani Gacon), *Howl* (dir. Domini Marshall), *I'm the Most Racist Person I Know* (dir. Leela Varghese), *Mango Seed* (dir. Bernice Jiang) and *Stranger, Brother* (dir. Annelise Hickey).

89 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST MIFF ONLINE



Three by Wim Wenders

Screening on the German auteur's 80th birthday, these shorts showcase his passion for cinema.

Wim Wenders's experimental side was present from his earliest forays into the form to his journeys into American movies and his reflection on the seventh art at the dawn of the home-video era. His 1967 student film *Same Player Shoots Again* finds the filmmaker taking his first steps; *Reverse Angle: New York, March 1982* catches him in production on the Hollywood noir *Hammett*; and *Room 666* sees some of cinema's biggest names (including Godard, Fassbinder, Herzog and Spielberg) offering reflections on an artform in flux.

77 MINS



International Shorts 1

Ambitious ideas. New sensations. The world's finest short-form cinema.

From clandestine romance to cursed crocodiles and a cosmic coming of age, this is a selection of the striking and the strange from cinema's most imaginative short-form auteurs.

Films in this package: *400 Cassettes* (dir. Thelyia Petraki), *Ali* (dir. Adnan Al Rajeev), *Common Pear* (dir. Gregor Božič), *Nervous Energy* (dir. Eve Liu), *Panadrilo* (dir. Marcela Heilbron) and *Two People Exchanging Saliva* (dir. Alexandre Singh, Natalie Musteata).

110 MINS



International Shorts 2

Award winners, eye-openers and tender tales from Cannes and beyond.

Catch a Cannes Palme d'Or-winning short plus acclaimed films from Brazil, the Philippines and Nigeria in this eclectic mix of drama, comedy and genre-bending oddity.

Films in this package: *Bleat!* (dir. Ananth Subramaniam), *A Brighter Summer Day for the Lady Avengers* (dir. Birdy Wei-ting Hung), *I'm Glad You're Dead Now* (dir. Tawfeek Barhom), *Inflatable Bear*, *Hourly* (dir. Elisabeth Werchosin), *Leaving Ikorodu in 1999* (dir. Rashida Seriki), *My Mother Is a Cow* (dir. Moara Passoni) and *Vox Humana* (dir. Don Josephus Raphael Eblahan).

108 MINS



Accelerator Shorts 1

Exciting new filmmaking voices from across Australia and New Zealand.

The future of local filmmaking looks bright with these shorts, including an award-winning Indigenous film exploring separation from Country, a lyrical journey through memory and a satirical look at true-crime TV starring a woman who specialises in playing corpses.

Films in this package: *The Body* (dir. Louris Van De Geer), *Faceless* (dir. Fraser Pemberton, William Jaka), *INFINIT3* (dir. Riley Blakeway), *Interview With a Hero* (dir. Andy Diep), *Rain Falls Still* (dir. Dǎng Tùng Bach) and *Womb* (dir. Ira Hetaraka).

93 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



Accelerator Shorts 2

Fresh talent. Bold stories. Meet the next generation of local filmmakers.

The region's hottest emerging talents bring us tales of a grieving man who sets out to gain an extra inch of height, a trans woman who unknowingly summons a demon to obtain gender-affirming surgery, a kid who conjures an imaginary motorcycle daredevil to deal with his parents' divorce – and much more.

Films in this package: *5'12"* (dir. Seth Gabriëlsson), *ACE* (dir. Raymond Edwards), *The Dysphoria* (dir. Kylie Aoibheann), *Lodestar* (dir. Maxine Zannoni), *Pack Rat* (dir. Lucy Suess) and *Pulp* (dir. Sarah Hegge-Taylor).

85 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST



Animation Shorts

A kaleidoscope of wonder from around the world.

Featuring a shaman who paints murals inside the body of a weather presenter, a hilarious encounter told via Indigenous soft sculptures and the strangest eye examination you're ever likely to see.

Films in this package: *As If the Earth Had Swallowed Them Up* (dir. Natalia León), *Caries* (dir. Aline Höchli), *The Fix-It-Man and the Fix-It-Woman* (dir. Nelson Armstrong, Cornelius Ebatarinja), *Glasses* (dir. Yumi Joung), *Murmuration* (dir. Janneke Swinkels, Tim Frijsinger), *Retirement Plan* (dir. John Kelly), *Shadows* (dir. Rand Beiruty) and *Water Girl* (dir. Sandra Desmazières).

92 MINS



Documentary Shorts

Nonfiction to challenge, inspire and change the way you see.

Travel back in time to pre-1948 Palestine, delve into a secret history of Iranian women filmmakers and experience a mysterious ritual held in the Alps. Plus: the Belarus border crisis through the eyes of a bison.

Films in this package: *Alice* (dir. Gabriel Novis), *Bloodline* (dir. Wojciech Węglarz), *The Flowers Stand Silently*, *Witnessing* (dir. Theo Panagopoulos), *In the Depths of Her Memory* (dir. Chloe de Brito), *Razeh-del* (dir. Maryam Tafakory), *Silvesterchlausen* (dir. Andrew Norman Wilson) and *Tiger* (dir. Loren Waters).

107 MINS



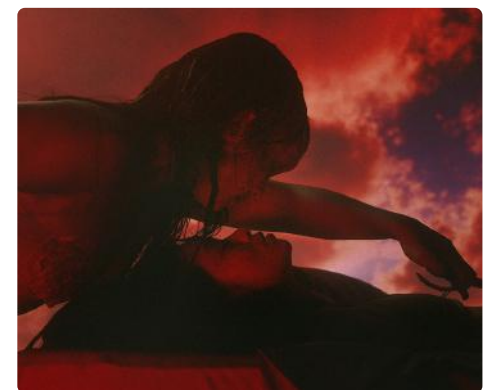
Experimental Shorts

Formally daring work from cinema's avant-garde.

See space from the inside of a tree, cats communing with UFOs and Wesley Snipes taking on systemic corruption.

Films in this package: *Another Other* (dir. Bex Oluwatoyin Thompson), *Archipelago of Earthen Bones — To Bunya* (dir. Malena Szlam), *Les Rites de Passage* (dir. Florian Fischer, Johannes Krell), *Our Lady Who Burns* (dir. Alice dos Reis), *Remote Views* (dir. Alexis McCrimmon), *Revolving Rounds* (dir. Johann Lurf, Christina Jauernik), *She Dolls With Dollies* (dir. Karin Fisslthaler), *Shedding* (dir. Vicky Smith), *This Is Not Your Garden* (dir. Carlos Velandia, Angélica Restrepo) and *The World Doesn't End When You Do* (dir. marlow magdalene).

108 MINS



WTF Shorts

Welcome to the world of the weird.

Scary monsters, super creeps and a dead body on trial – it's all here, for your head-scrumbling pleasure.

Films in this package: *The Eating of an Orange* (dir. May Kindred-Boothby), *God is shy* (dir. Jocelyn Charles), *Last Call* (dir. Winnie Cheung), *Loynes* (dir. Dorian Jespers), *The Shirt off Your Back* (dir. David Robinson-Smith) and *World at Stake* (dir. Susanna Flock, Adrian Jonas Haim, Jona Kleinlein).

82 MINS FESTIVAL GUEST

MIFF AWARDS 2025

PRESENTED BY *Penfolds*

The MIFF Awards recognise filmmaking excellence across a suite of award categories.

Amplifying and nurturing talent is in MIFF's DNA, and the MIFF Awards are a celebration and recognition of exceptional films and filmmakers.

Winners will be announced on Saturday 23 August.



MIFF 2024 Bright Horizons Award winners with MIFF CEO Damien Hodgkinson

Bright Horizons Award supported by VicScreen

VICSCREEN

Awarded to a film by an outstanding filmmaker on the rise, with the winner chosen from among the Bright Horizons Competition line-up by an esteemed international jury. Awarding \$140,000, it is one of the most lucrative film prizes globally.

Blackmagic Design Best Australian Director Award

Blackmagicdesign

This award recognises an outstanding Australian director of a film playing in the MIFF 2025 program with a \$50,000 cash prize and a fully kitted URSA Cine 12K camera valued at \$27,500.

Intrepid Audience Award

Intrepid

Don't waste good taste! MIFF's much-loved Audience Award returns in 2025, to be presented to the creative team behind viewers' favourite film from this year's program. Vote to go into the running to win an Intrepid trip for two to Japan!

MIFF Schools Youth Jury Award presented by Collarts

COLLARTS
AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

This award is decided on by the 2025 winners of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority's Top Screen. The winning film from the MIFF Schools program receives a \$10,000 cash prize.

The Uncle Jack Charles Award in collaboration with Kearney Group

Kearney Group

Recognises an outstanding Australian First Nations creative within a film playing in the MIFF 2025 program. The recipient is awarded a \$20,000 cash prize and \$25,000 worth of financial services with Kearney Group.

MIFF SHORTS AWARDS 2025

MIFF hosts one of the most highly regarded short-film competitions in the Southern Hemisphere. The MIFF Shorts Awards are Academy Awards accredited and BAFTA qualifying.

Winners will be announced on Friday 15 August.

City of Melbourne Grand Prix for Best Short Film

VicScreen Erwin Rado Award for Best Australian Short Film

Award for Emerging Australian Filmmaker

Award for Best Fiction Short Film

Award for Best Documentary Short Film

Award for Best Animation Short Film

Award for Best Experimental Short Film

Food & Film

Melbourne's best restaurants and bars are walking distance from MIFF. For a unique night out to delight the senses, we've collaborated with our favourite restaurants and hospitality partners

to curate bespoke film-and-dining experiences. Fire up the group chat, book your cinema tickets and reserve a table for a fabulous meal and conversation. Tickets for each experience are limited, so book early!



Scan code for booking information
miff.com.au/food-film

PRESENTED BY BROADSHEET



Cumulus Inc.
The Extraordinary Miss Flower
Monday 11 August

A staple of Melbourne's culinary scene, Cumulus Inc. is known for elevating the classics and bringing a modern, artful edge to seasonal dining. This beautifully performative documentary captures the inspiration for acclaimed Icelandic singer Emiliana Torrini's latest album and is similarly full of enchanting drama.



CUMULUS INC.
45 Flinders Lane,
Melbourne

CUMULUS INC.



Barra
The Blue Trail
Friday 15 August

Evoking a lively cantina, with a relaxed menu inspired by the traditions and flavours of Latin America, and shining a spotlight on that region's specialty spirits, Barra is the perfect place to pair with the extraordinary cinematic odyssey that follows a spirited Brazilian woman on a journey down the Amazon.



BARRA
73 Little Collins Street,
Melbourne

BARRA



Bossley Bar and Restaurant
Rebuilding
Wednesday 20 August

Showcasing top-tier produce from the region in a classic setting, Bossley offers a reprieve from the hustle and bustle outside – whether serving up something hearty from the grill or a chic cocktail moment. Cue: a heartwarming portrait of a young American rancher whose world is changed by the elements.



BOSSLEY BAR AND RESTAURANT
186 Exhibition Street,
Melbourne

BOSSLEY



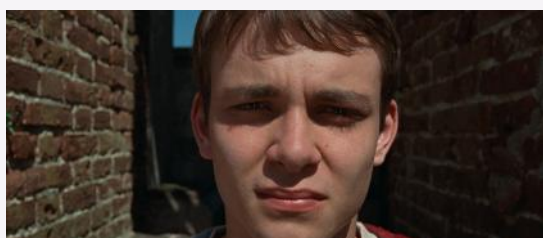
Supernormal
A Useful Ghost
Wednesday 20 August

Influenced by the cuisine and restaurants of Tokyo, Shanghai, Seoul and Hong Kong, classic dishes are revisited and some new favourites born at Supernormal. The film pairing goes beyond matching its genre to the restaurant's name; this Thai Cannes winner is a haunted love story about a woman whose spirit possesses a vacuum cleaner, setting off a wild chain of events.



SUPERNORMAL
180 Flinders Lane,
Melbourne

SUPERNORMAL



Elio's Place
Nineteen
Thursday 21 August

An instant classic, Elio's Place celebrates the traditions of warm European hospitality. Echoes of old-world charm are in the bones of this contemporary all-day bistro, and so too in *Nineteen*, a film that evocatively captures the life of a young literature-loving Italian student who's slightly out of step with the modern world.



ELIO'S PLACE
1/238 Flinders Lane,
Melbourne

Elio's PLACE



MIFF Festival Hub
Mirrors No. 3
Friday 22 August

It wouldn't be a film festival without dinner and a movie, and MIFF mainstay director Christian Petzold's new Cannes-premiering feature – set in a small German town with a few city flourishes – is a perfect cinematic springboard for conversation. Enjoy a European-inspired meal at the Festival Hub just steps away from the cinema screening for a sophisticated evening.



MIFF FESTIVAL HUB
ACMI, Flinders Street,
Melbourne

THE FRESH COLLECTIVE



Antara
The Love That Remains
Saturday 23 August

Seasonality and beauty are revered at Antara, a restaurant and bakery where the menu is charged by an emphasis on cooking with coals and flame. Creativity and fire are also alive in this stunning new film, which recently premiered at Cannes, about a young Icelandic family (the mother is an artist, while the father works at sea) facing tricky and tender terrain.



ANTARA
128 Exhibition Street,
Melbourne

ANTARA

2011

CINEMAS



Mulholland Drive (2001) © Canal+

**Cinema worth talking about.
Every week.**

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**CREATIVE
VICTORIA**

Film Index

#		Dreams (Sex Love)	20	J	Night Stage	23	Sound of Falling	10	
1000 Women in Horror	27	Drunken Noodles	22	Je tu il elle (I You He She)	24	Nightshift	26	Space Cadet	39
1000 Women in Horror Surprise Double Feature	7	E		Jeanne Dielman, 23, quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles	24	Nineteen	20	Splitsville	13
1001 Frames	21	Eagles of the Republic	21	Jimmy Barnes: Working Class Man	36	No Home Movie	25	Spreadsheet Champions	14
8 Billion Selves	37	Eddington	7	John Lilly and the Earth Coincidence		O		The Square	30
A		The End	18	Control Office	33	Olivia & the Clouds	30	A Story About Fire	38
Accelerator Shorts 1	42	Enzo	12	Journey Home, David Gulpiill	14	Omaha	22	Stranger Eyes	16
Accelerator Shorts 2	42	Exit 8	41	Julia Holter: The Passion of Joan of Arc	7	Once Upon a Time in Gaza	21	Sud (South)	25
Adam's Sake	19	Experimental Shorts	42	K		One More Shot	14	Surviving Malka Leifer	35
All I Had Was Nothingness	27	The Extraordinary Miss Flower	36	Kamay	35	Orwell: 2+2=5	32	Sweetie	26
Alphabet Lane	15	F		Kontinental '25	18	P		T	
Animation Shorts	42	Familiar Touch	22	Kyuka Before Summer's End	19	Parasite Live in Concert		Têtes Brûlées	38
April	8	First Light	8	L		With Composer Jung Jae-il	7	The Texas Chainsaw Massacre – Retro Screening Experience	7
The Arch	26	Fiume o morte!	31	Late Shift	18	Pasa Faho	14	The Things You Kill	17
Australian Shorts	42	Folktales	33	The Legend of Ochi	39	Pavements	36	Three by Wim Wenders	42
B		Footy Shorts	7	Les Rendez-vous d'Anna	7	Pennies From Heaven	25	To Kill a Mongolian Horse	16
The Bad Guys 2	6, 39	Free Leonard Peltier	7	(Meetings With Anna)	27	The Perfect Neighbor	35	Touch Me	40
The Ballad of Wallis Island	18	From Darkness to Light	27	Lesbian Space Princess	15	Peter Hujar's Day	22	Toute une nuit (All Night Long)	25
The Baltimoreans	22	Fwends	15	L'Homme à la valise	30	Philip Brophy Restorations	26	The Toxic Avenger	41
Beast of War	41	G		(The Man With the Suitcase)	25	A Poet	9	Trains	32
Beauty and the Beast	25	GEN_	34	The Librarians	33	Portrait d'une jeune fille de la fin des années 60 à Bruxelles (Portrait of a Young Girl at the End of the 60s in Brussels)	25	Twelve Moons	23
Birthright	15	Ghost Boy	34	Limbophobia	37	The President's Cake	21	Twiggy	33
Black Ox	17	The Girls	26	Little, Big, and Far	31	Prime Minister	6	Twinless	23
BLKNWS: Terms & Conditions	31	The Golden Spurtle	15	little boy	31	A Private Life	19	Two Prosecutors	13
Blue Moon	12	Good Boy	41	The Little Sister	19	Promised Sky	21	Two Times João Liberada	31
The Blue Trail	12	The Great History of Western Philosophy	31	Little Trouble Girls	18	Put Your Soul on Your Hand and Walk	23	TWST – Things We Said Today	31
BMX Bandits	39	Greetings From Mars	38	Looking for Alibrandi	38	The Python Hunt	33	U	
Brand New Landscape	17	H		Lost Chapters	23	R		Urchin	10
But Also John Clarke	14	Hallow Road	41	Love	20	Rebuilding	22	A Useful Ghost	10
Butthole Surfers: The Hole Truth and Nothing Butt By Design	22	Hanami	21	Love Letters	18	Redux Redux	40	V	
C		Happy Holidays	21	The Love That Remains	13	Reflection in a Dead Diamond	41	Videoheaven	27
Cactus Pears	17	Happyend	38	Lurker	22	Remaining Native	33	W	
Careless	34	Harvest	19	M		Renoir	9	The Wave	23
Chain Reactions	27	Heads or Tails?	20	Ma – Cry of Silence	16	Resurrection	17	We Bury the Dead	40
Chantal Akerman par Chantal Akerman (Chantal Akerman by Chantal Akerman)	25	High Art	26	Magic Farm	23	The Rivals of Amziah King	10	Went up the Hill	15
The Chronology of Water	13	Holding Liat	32	Marlee Matlin: Not Alone Anymore	27	Romeria	12	Westgate	15
Cloud	16	Homebound	16	Marlon Williams: Two Worlds – Ngā Ao E Rua	36	S		What Does That Nature Say to You Will	26
Come See Me in the Good Light	34	Hotel Monterey	24	The Mastermind	13	Samsara	17	Woman and Child	21
Contact Lens	31	I		Maya, Give Me a Title	38	Sanatorium	34	Workmates	17
Cutting Through Rocks	33	I Only Rest in the Storm	21	Mirrors No. 3	33	Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass	30	The World Came Flooding In	37
D		I, Poppy	33	Mistress Dispeller	38	Sankofa	25	WTF Shorts	42
Dani: The Portrait of a Beauty	37	I Saw a King	38	Model	26	The Sealed Soil	26	Y	
Deaf	19	The Ice Tower	19	Monk in Pieces	36	The Secret Agent	13	Young Mothers	13
Death Does Not Exist	30	If I Had Legs I'd Kick You	6, 9	Move Ya Body: The Birth of House	36	The Secret of Me	34	Youth (Hard Times)	30
Deeper	15	Imagine	39	Mr. Nobody Against Putin	42	Seeds	32	Youth (Homecoming)	30
Demain on déménage (Tomorrow We Move)	25	International Shorts 1	42	My Father's Shadow	42	Sex	20	Yurlu Country	15
Dest (From the East)	25	International Shorts 2	42	My Undesirable Friends: Part I – Last Air in Moscow	14	Sham	17	Z	
DJ Ahmet	19	Israel Palestine on Swedish TV		The Mysterious Gaze of the Flamingo	32	Signorinella: Little Miss	15	Zodiac Killer Project	35
Documentary Shorts	42	1958–1989	32	N		Sirāt	13	Zombucha!	40
Dreams	23	It Ends	41	Never Get Busted!	35	Songs Inside	35		
		It Was Just an Accident	12	News From Home	24	Sorry, Baby	12		
		It's Never Over, Jeff Buckley	36						
		Ito Meikyū	37						

Encore Screenings & Late Announcements

Check the website for up-to-date information, including late additions to the MIFF 2025 program.

Schedule Your Festival

The complete MIFF 2025 program schedule grid is available online.

Make a shortlist, compare session times and schedule your festival at miff.com.au.

INTREPID AUDIENCE AWARD

Win a trip for two on Intrepid's Japan Highlights with return flights included!

Rate your favourite MIFF film in this year's much-loved Audience Award.



SCAN TO FIND OUT MORE

*Entrants must be Australian residents (excluding SA & ACT) and aged 18 years and over. Films must be narrative or documentary features. Terms and conditions apply.

 Intrepid



Accessibility

Access at MIFF is delivered across three categories – Physical, Communication and Sensory. All other equity-focused offerings are presented under the category Inclusion.

Physical Access

Venue Information

Detailed venue information for each screening venue at MIFF this year is available on the MIFF website.

Step-Free and Wheelchair Accessibility



All metropolitan venues at MIFF 2025 have step-free access, are wheelchair-accessible and have accessible seating. Options such as aisle seats or seats close to an exit are also available.

Guide Dogs and Assistance Dogs



Guide dogs and assistance animals are welcome in all venues at MIFF.



To view all in-cinema and online sessions with accessible services and to filter the program by specific services, visit the MIFF website or use the MIFF 2025 App.

For more detailed information about Access at MIFF 2025, visit miff.com.au/access.

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Sensory Access

Sensory Friendly Screenings



MIFF will run Sensory Friendly Screenings at select sessions this year. Sensory Friendly Screenings are designed to make the cinema experience accessible and are for anyone who would benefit from a more relaxed environment. This can include but is not limited to neurodivergent people who experience sensory processing differences (autistic people, ADHD people), people with learning disabilities, people with dementia as well as those living with anxiety or who have experienced trauma.

Inclusion



Baby Friendly

MIFF is offering select Baby Friendly Sessions this year, catering for parents and carers with babies and toddlers who wish to enjoy the festival in a welcoming environment.



MIFF Online – streaming via ACMI

MIFF's digital offering, available via the dedicated streaming platform ACMI Cinema 3, has a limited selection of festival highlights with select access services made available. Bookings via ACMI Cinema 3.

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REACH FOR THE CROWN



THE DAY-DATE



ACADEMY
OF MOTION PICTURE
ARTS AND SCIENCES

