



## AFI FEST 2025 PRESENTED BY CANVA ANNOUNCES FULL FESTIVAL LINEUP

### Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson



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**Global Cinema Spotlights Include Films by Paolo Sorrentino, Werner Herzog, Kaouther Ben-Hania, Ildikó Enyedi, and Charlie Kaufman, Plus World Premieres by William Means, Joan Bofill Amargós as Part of a Program of More Than 160 Films**

**Official Selections Represent 56 Countries and Include 19 Best International Feature Oscar® Submissions**

**Passes and Ticket Bundles Available Now**

**Tickets on Sale October 6**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, Los Angeles, CA, September 30, 2025** ?? Today, the American Film Institute (AFI) unveiled the full lineup of 161 films screening at this year's AFI FEST presented by Canva, taking place in Los Angeles from October 22-26. Passes are now available at [FEST.AFI.com](https://FEST.AFI.com).

10-ticket bundles are also on sale, with ticket selection opening Friday, October 3. Individual tickets will be available starting Monday, October 6.

This year's festival lineup includes 7 Red Carpet Premieres, 12 Special Screenings, 14 Luminaries selections, 15 Discovery films, 20 World Cinema selections, 15 Documentaries, 6 After Dark titles, 44 films in the Short Film Competition, and 23 films from the AFI Conservatory Showcase presented by AMC Networks. There are 5 World Premieres, 5 North American Premieres and 5 U.S. Premieres. Of the official selections, 39% are directed by women and 29% are directed by BIPOC filmmakers.



Jim Jarmusch's Venice Golden Lion Winner FATHER MOTHER SISTER BROTHER

Rounding out the impressive slate of already announced titles are highlights such as Jim Jarmusch's Venice Golden Lion Winner FATHER MOTHER SISTER BROTHER; Kaouther Ben-Hania's Venice Silver Lion Jury Prize winner THE VOICE OF HIND RAJAB; Werner Herzog's GHOST ELEPHANTS; Charlie Kaufman's highly anticipated short film HOW TO SHOOT A GHOST, starring Oscar®-nominee Jessie Buckley; Paolo Sorrentino's LA GRAZIA; Mascha Schilinski's SOUND OF FALLING; Charlie Polinger's (AFI Class of 2017) THE PLAGUE, starring Joel Edgerton; Ildikó Enyedi's SILENT FRIEND; Shih-Ching Tsou's LEFT-HANDED GIRL, co-produced, co-written and edited by Sean Baker; plus the World Premieres of William Means's (AFI Class of 2021) feature debut JUNKIE, executive produced by Patty Jenkins (AFI Class of 2000), and Joan Bofill Amargós's documentary THE HANGING OF STUART CORNFELD, a portrait of film producer Stuart Cornfeld (AFI Class of 2000) featuring close friends and collaborators, including Jack Black, Mel Brooks, David Cronenberg, Guillermo del Toro, David Lynch, Steven Soderbergh and Ben Stiller.



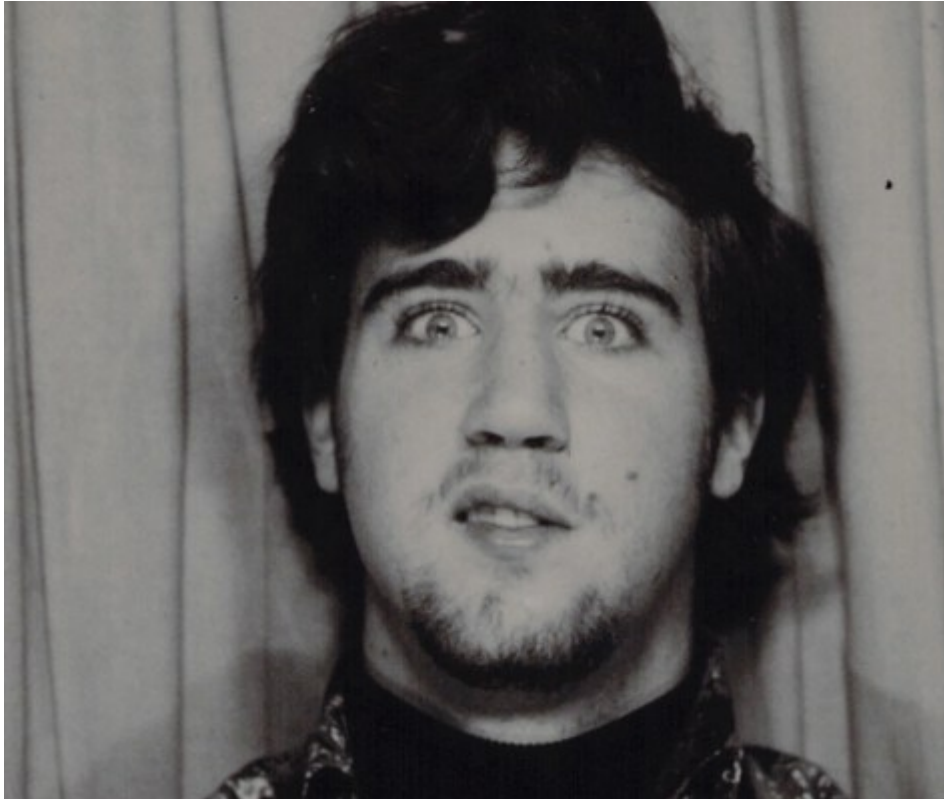
Toronto-premiered debut feature AMOEBA from Singaporean filmmaker Siyou Tan's (AFI DWW+ Class of 2019)

Additional highlights include several highly anticipated international titles making their U.S. or North American Premieres, including Singaporean filmmaker Siyou Tan's (AFI DWW+ Class of 2019) Toronto-premiered debut feature AMOEBA; Iranian filmmaker Ali Asgari's Venice-debuted DIVINE COMEDY; Thai filmmaker Pen-Ek Ratanaruang's San Sebastián-premiered MORTE CUCINA; Armenian filmmaker Tamara Stepanyan's MY ARMENIAN PHANTOMS, Armenia's Best International Feature Oscar® submission; Mexican filmmaker Fernando Eimbcke's Berlin-debuted OLMO, produced by Dede Gardner, Jeremy Kleiner and Eréndira Núñez Larios; Oscar®-nominated documentarian Daniel Raimon's (AFI Class of 1999) Venice-premiered THE OZU DIARIES; German filmmaker Julian Radlmaier's Locarno-premiered PHANTOMS OF JULY; UK filmmaker Oscar Hudson's Venice Critics' Week Award Winner STRAIGHT CIRCLE; and French filmmaker Stéphanie Demoustier's Cannes-debuted THE GREAT ARCH, starring Claes Bang, Xavier Dolan and Swann Arlaud.



Fatih Akin's AMRUM

This year's edition will also include new works from top auteurs like Fatih Akin (AMRUM), Cheri Dabis (ALL THAT'S LEFT OF YOU), Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne (YOUNG MOTHERS), Lav Diaz (MAGELLAN), Annemarie Jacir (PALESTINE 36), Radu Jude (KONTINENTAL #25), Nadav Lapid (YES), Sergei Loznitsa (TWO PROSECUTORS), László Nemes (ORPHAN), François Ozon (THE STRANGER), Amanda Kramer (BY DESIGN), Hlynur Pálmason (THE LOVE THAT REMAINS), Christian Petzold (MIROIRS NO. 3), Ira Sachs (PETER HUIJARS DAY), Lee Sang-il (KOKUHO), Hong Sang-soo (WHAT DOES THAT NATURE SAY TO YOU), Erige Sehiri (PROMISED SKY) and Carla Simón (ROMERÍA).



Clay Tweel's ANDY KAUFMAN IS ME

Among the other high-profile documentary selections screening at this year's festival are Clay Tweel's ANDY KAUFMAN IS ME; Gianfranco Rosi's BELOW THE CLOUDS; Laura Poitras and Mark Obenhaus COVER-UP; Ben Proudfoot's THE EYES OF GHANA; Brandon Kramer's HOLDING LIAT; Daniel Junge and Sam Pollard's I WAS BORN THIS WAY; Chai Vasarhelyi and Jimmy Chin's LOVE+WAR; Tamara Kotevska's THE TALE OF SILYAN; plus Brittany Shyne's SEEDS and Isabel Castro's SELENA Y LOS DINOS, both Sundance award winners.





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## International Feature Oscar submissions, ALL THAT'S LEFT OF YOU. (Jordan)

This year's program represents 56 countries and includes 19 Best International Feature Oscar® submissions, including ALL THAT'S LEFT OF YOU (Jordan), EAGLES OF THE REPUBLIC (Sweden), FIUME OR DEATH! (Croatia), HAPPY BIRTHDAY (Egypt), KOKUHO (Japan), LEFT-HANDED GIRL (Taiwan), THE LOVE THAT REMAINS (Iceland), MAGELLAN (Philippines), MY ARMENIAN PHANTOMS (Armenia), THE MYSTERIOUS GAZE OF THE FLAMINGO (Chile), ORPHAN (Hungary), PALESTINE 36 (Palestine), A POET (Colombia), THE PRESIDENT'S CAKE (Iraq), SOUND OF FALLING (Germany), THE TALE OF SILYAN (North Macedonia), A USEFUL GHOST (Thailand), THE VOICE OF HIND RAJAB (Tunisia), and YOUNG MOTHERS (Belgium).



Todd Hitchcock,  
Director of AFI FEST  
and the AFI Silver  
Theatre and Cultural  
Center

“With more than 90 features and nearly 70 shorts, AFI FEST 2025 will be our biggest program in recent memory,” said Todd Hitchcock, Director of AFI FEST and the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center. “But more importantly, this year’s selection reflects a diversity of viewpoints, artistry and daring from filmmakers across the globe.”



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Abbie Algar, Director of  
Programming, AFI  
FEST and AFI Silver  
Theatre and Cultural  
Center

“AFI FEST’s unique mix of red carpet premieres, major works from established auteurs and impressive debuts from new talents makes for an action-packed five days of great cinema, which will spark conversation and stir imagination,” said Abbie Algar, Director of Programming, AFI FEST and AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center. “We look forward to welcoming the film lovers of Los Angeles back to the iconic TCL Chinese Theatre, as well as, this year, The Egyptian Theatre.”

Canva is the exclusive Presenting Sponsor of AFI FEST. FIJI Water is the festival’s Official Water Sponsor.



Frankenstein. Writer/Director/Producer  
Guillermo del Toro of Frankenstein. Cr.  
John Wilson/Netflix © 2025.

As previously announced, Academy Award®-winning filmmaker Guillermo del Toro will serve as Guest Artistic Director of this year’s festival. Del Toro’s selected screenings will include Stanley Kubrick’s BARRY LYNDON (1975), Federico Fellini’s CASANOVA (1976), Ridley Scott’s THE DUELLISTS (1977), and Pupi Avati’s ARCANO SORCERER (1996). The festival will open on October 22 with SPRINGSTEEN: DELIVER ME FROM NOWHERE and will close on Sunday, October

26 with the World Premiere of SONG SUNG BLUE. Gala Screenings include JAY KELLY on Thursday, October 23, NUREMBERG on Friday, October 24, DEAD MAN'S WIRE on the afternoon of Saturday, October 25, and CHRISTY on the evening of Saturday, October 25 and the World Premiere of THE SPONGEBOB MOVIE: SEARCH FOR SQUAREPANTS on the afternoon of Sunday, October 26.



Special Screenings section, BAD APPLES

AFI also announced the lineup for the Special Screenings section, which will include BAD APPLES, BUGONIA, THE CHORAL, THE CHRONOLOGY OF WATER, IS THIS THING ON?, A MAGNIFICENT LIFE, MERRILY WE ROLL ALONG, the World Premiere of NEBRASKA LIVE, REBUILDING, RENTAL FAMILY, THE TESTAMENT OF ANN LEE and TRAIN DREAMS.



Passes to AFI FEST 2025 are now available for purchase online at [FEST.AFI.com](https://FEST.AFI.com). Festivalgoers have the opportunity to purchase a Star Pass or upgrade to a Patron Pass. The AFI FEST Star Pass is a

five-day pass with access to all screenings (excluding Red Carpet Premieres), early screening selection before individual tickets go on sale, priority theater access, entry to the festival lounge, invitation to the festival mixer to mingle with filmmakers and guests, a complimentary AFI FEST tote and free Rush Line access to all screenings. The AFI FEST Patron Pass features all the benefits of the Star Pass plus two tickets to each of the star-studded Red Carpet Premieres held at the historic TCL Chinese Theatre and priority screening selection before Star passholders.

AFI FEST is recognized by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences as a qualifying festival for the Live Action, Animated and Documentary Short Film categories for the annual Academy Awards<sup>®</sup>. AFI FEST is also a qualifying festival for consideration for the British Short Film categories of both the BAFTA Film Awards and the British Independent Film Awards (BIFA).

AFI is a nonprofit, donor-powered organization. Join AFI's Premiere Circle to support the American Film Institute and enjoy access to exclusive one-of-a-kind opportunities at AFI events, including AFI FEST. To learn more, email [Advancement@AFI.com](mailto:Advancement@AFI.com).

Canva, the all-in-one visual communication and collaboration platform, returns as the exclusive Presenting Sponsor of AFI FEST 2025. Designed to empower entertainment professionals to visualize their ideas into impactful film and TV projects, Canva will be integrated throughout AFI FEST including hosting industry networking events, hands-on training workshops for filmmakers, and powering the festival's digital and printed materials. Entertainment professionals can explore resources to pitch projects, plan shoots, and bring creative visions to life at [canva.com/entertainment](https://canva.com/entertainment).







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## SONG SUNG BLUE

Based on a true story, two down-on-their-luck musicians (Hugh Jackman and Kate Hudson) form a joyous Neil Diamond tribute band, proving it's never too late to find love and follow your dreams. Written, directed and produced by Craig Brewer. DIR Craig Brewer. SCR Craig Brewer. CAST Hugh Jackman, Kate Hudson, Michael Imperioli, Fisher Stevens, Jim Belushi. USA

## SPRINGSTEEN: DELIVER ME FROM NOWHERE

SPRINGSTEEN: DELIVER ME FROM NOWHERE chronicles the making of Bruce Springsteen's legendary 1982 acoustic album "Nebraska," written and recorded at a pivotal time in the young musician's life, on the cusp of global superstardom. Starring Jeremy Allen White as the Boss and Jeremy Strong as his manager Jon Landau. DIR Scott Cooper. SCR Scott Cooper. CAST Jeremy Allen White, Jeremy Strong, Paul Walter Hauser, Stephen Graham, Odessa Young. USA

## THE SPONGEBOB MOVIE: SEARCH FOR SQUAREPANTS

Arrrr you ready? SpongeBob and his Bikini Bottom friends set sail in their biggest adventure yet, THE SPONGEBOB MOVIE: SEARCH FOR SQUAREPANTS. Desperate to be a big guy, SpongeBob sets out to prove his bravery to Mr. Krabs by following The Flying Dutchman - a mysterious swashbuckling ghost pirate - on a seafaring comedy-adventure that takes him to the deepest depths of the deep sea, where no Sponge has gone before. DIR Derek Drymon. SCR Pam Brady, Matt Lieberman. CAST Tom Kenny, Clancy Brown, Rodger Bumpass, Bill Fagerbakke, Carolyn Lawrence. USA

## \* PRECEDED BY: TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES: CHROME ALONE 2 - LOST IN NEW JERSEY

When a mysterious toy company exploits the Turtles' newfound fame, the brothers follow the clues to New Jersey where they stumble upon a shocking discovery. DIR Kent Seki. USA

## Special Screenings

**Highlighting the most acclaimed films of the season from both master filmmakers and emerging talents, these films stand apart for their artistry and unforgettable stories, characters and performances.**

## BAD APPLES

In this delectably dark satire, an exquisite Saoirse Ronan plays an overworked schoolteacher whose pupils' studies improve after she removes a foulmouthed and violent student from her classroom - by inadvertently kidnapping and locking him up in her basement. DIR Jonatan Etzler. SCR Jess O'Kane. CAST Saoirse Ronan, Eddie Waller, Nia Brown, Jacob Anderson, Rakie Ayola, Robert Emms, Sean Gilder. UK

## BUGONIA

Two conspiracy-obsessed young men kidnap the high-powered CEO of a major company, convinced that she is an alien intent on destroying planet Earth. DIR Yorgos Lanthimos. SCR Will Tracy. CAST Emma Stone, Jesse Plemons, Aidan Delbis, Stavros Halkias, Alicia Silverstone. UK

## IS THIS THING ON?

Bradley Cooper's beautifully affecting comedic drama stars Will Arnett and Laura Dern in standout performances as a New York couple whose separation leads to major midlife self-reckoning and

reinvention. When Arnett's character attempts open-mic standup at a comedy club with confessional, self-deprecating material, a whole new world opens for him. DIR Bradley Cooper. SCR Bradley Cooper, Will Arnett, Mark Chappell. CAST Will Arnett, Laura Dern, Andra Day, Bradley Cooper, Amy Sedaris, Sean Hayes, Christine Ebersole, Ciarán Hinds, Scott Icenogle. USA

#### A MAGNIFICENT LIFE (MARCEL ET MONSIEUR PAGNOL)

In 1955, 60-year-old Marcel Pagnol is a well-known and acclaimed playwright and filmmaker. When the editor-in-chief of ELLE magazine commissions a weekly column about Pagnol's childhood, he sees this as a great opportunity to go back to his artistic roots: writing. Realizing his memory is failing him and deeply affected by the disappointing results of his last two plays, Pagnol starts doubting his ability to pursue his work. That is, until Little Marcel – the young boy he used to be – appears to him as if by magic. Together, they will explore Marcel Pagnol's incredible life and bring back to life his most cherished encounters and memories. DIR Sylvain Chomet. SCR Sylvain Chomet. CAST Matthew Gravelle, Lu Corfield, Jonathan Keeble, Celyn Jones, Jess Nesling, Flora Montgomery. France, Luxembourg, Belgium

#### MERRILY WE ROLL ALONG

Spanning three decades, Stephen Sondheim and George Furth's Merrily We Roll Along charts the turbulent relationship between composer Franklin Shepard and his two lifelong friends – writer Mary and lyricist & playwright Charley. Originally produced on Broadway in 1981, then becoming an inventive cult-classic ahead of its time, Merrily We Roll Along features some of Stephen Sondheim's most celebrated and personal songs. DIR Maria Friedman. SCR Music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, book by George Furth, based on the original play by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart. CAST Daniel Radcliffe, Jonathan Groff, Lindsay Mendez, Crystal Joy Brown, Katie Rose Clarke, Reg Rogers. USA

#### NEBRASKA LIVE

Bruce Springsteen performs the songs from his 1982 album – Nebraska – for the first time ever in its entirety in an intimate soundstage setting. Shot in moody black-and-white, the film is directed by Springsteen's longtime filmic collaborator Thom Zimny. DIR Thom Zimny. CAST Bruce Springsteen. USA

#### REBUILDING

Divorced and displaced Colorado rancher Dusty (Josh O'Connor) re-enters the lives of his ex-wife Ruby (Meghann Fahy) and young daughter when he loses his family ranch to a devastating wildfire. DIR Max Walker-Silverman. SCR Max Walker-Silverman. CAST Josh O'Connor, Meghann Fahy, Amy Madigan, Kali Reis, Lily LaTorre, Nancy Morlan, Zeilyanna Martinez. USA

#### RENTAL FAMILY

Academy Award® winner Brendan Fraser plays an American actor in modern-day Tokyo hired by a – rental family – agency to serve as a stand-in for clients. As he immerses himself in his clients' worlds, he begins to form genuine bonds that blur the lines between performance and reality. Confronting the moral complexities of his work, he rediscovers purpose, belonging, and the quiet beauty of human connection. DIR HIKARI. SCR HIKARI, Stephen Blahut. CAST Brendan Fraser, Takehiro Hira, Mari Yamamoto, Shannon Gorman, Akira Emoto. USA, Japan

#### THE CHORAL

1916. As war rages on the Western Front, the Choral Society in Ramsden, Yorkshire has lost most of its men to the army. The Choral's ambitious committee, determined to press ahead, decides to

recruit local young males to swell their ranks. They must also engage a new chorus master, and despite their suspicions that he has something to hide, their best bet seems to be Dr. Henry Guthrie (Ralph Fiennes) — driven, uncompromising, and recently returned from a career in Germany. As conscription papers start to arrive, the whole community discovers that the best response to the chaos that is laying waste to their lives is to make music together. DIR Nicholas Hytner. SCR Alan Bennett. CAST Ralph Fiennes, Roger Allam, Mark Addy, Alun Armstrong, Robert Emms, Lyndsey Marshal, Ron Cook, Amara Okereke, Emily Fairn, Shaun Thomas, Jacob Dudman, Oliver Briscoe, Taylor Uttley, Simon Russell Beale. UK

#### THE CHRONOLOGY OF WATER

Kristen Stewart's staggering directorial debut adapts Lidia Yuknavitch's memoir of abuse and healing, anchored by a raw and revelatory performance from Imogen Poots. DIR Kristen Stewart. SCR Kristen Stewart. CAST Imogen Poots, Thora Birch, Earl Cave, Kim Gordon, Jim Belushi, Tom Sturridge. USA, France, Latvia

#### THE TESTAMENT OF ANN LEE

A bold colonial-era musical, THE TESTAMENT OF ANN LEE follows visionary Shaker leader Ann Lee as she builds a radical utopian faith in 18th century America. Amanda Seyfried stars as Lee in a career-defining role. Academy Award® winner Daniel Blumberg composed the score and original songs for the film. DIR Mona Fastvold. SCR Mona Fastvold, Brady Corbet. CAST Amanda Seyfried, Thomasin McKenzie, Lewis Pullman, Tim Blake Nelson, Christopher Abbott. UK

#### TRAIN DREAMS

Based on Denis Johnson's beloved novella, Train Dreams is the moving portrait of Robert Grainier (Joel Edgerton), a logger and railroad worker who leads a life of unexpected depth and beauty in the rapidly changing America of the early 20th Century. DIR Clint Bentley. SCR Clint Bentley, Greg Kwedar. CAST Joel Edgerton, Felicity Jones, Kerry Condon, William H. Macy, Nathaniel Arcand, Clifton Collins Jr., John Diehl, Paul Schneider. USA

#### Luminaries

**The latest films from world-renowned filmmakers whose work continues to challenge and inspire.**

#### AMRUM

Germany, 1945: a 12-year-old boy on the isolated North Sea Island of Amrum begins to learn the truth about his country, which is on the precipice of total defeat, despite the propaganda fed to him. Fatih Akin directs, from an autobiographical screenplay by octogenarian filmmaker Hark Bohm. DIR Fatih Akin. SCR Hark Bohm, Fatih Akin. CAST Jasper Billerbeck, Laura Tonke, Lisa Hagmeister, Kian Koppke, Diane Kruger. Germany

#### FATHER MOTHER SISTER BROTHER

Winner of the Golden Lion at this year's Venice International Film Festival and starring Tom Waits, Adam Driver and Cate Blanchett, legendary indie auteur Jim Jarmusch's newest work is a wry gem about the timeworn drift of familial intimacy. DIR Jim Jarmusch. SCR Jim Jarmusch. CAST Tom Waits, Adam Driver, Mayim Bialik, Charlotte Rampling, Cate Blanchett, Vicky Krieps, Indya Moore, Luka Sabbat. USA, Ireland, France



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## GHOST ELEPHANTS

Part nature detective documentary, part fever dream, Werner Herzog's latest documentary journeys into Angola's remote highlands, alongside National Geographic explorer Dr. Steve Boyes, on a quest to document the existence of the mythic ghost elephant. • DIR Werner Herzog. SCR Werner Herzog. CAST Steve Boyes, Werner Herzog. USA

## HOW TO SHOOT A GHOST

This impressionistic short film, from visionary director Charlie Kaufman, stars Jessie Buckley as a ghost roaming the streets of Athens in search of the city's past and present. DIR Charlie Kaufman. SCR Eva H.D.. CAST Jessie Buckley, Josef Akiki, Eva H.D.. USA, Greece

## KONTINENTAL 25

Radu Jude won the Best Screenplay award at the 2025 Berlin Film Festival for this scabrous black comedy about a guilt-wracked civil servant's effort to clear her conscience, instead discovering that guilt is only a relative concept in contemporary Romania. DIR Radu Jude. SCR Radu Jude. CAST Eszter Tompa, Gabriel Spahiu, Adonis Tană, Oana Mardare, Éerban Pavl. Romania

## LA GRAZIA

Filmmaker Paolo Sorrentino reunites with actor Toni Servillo in this parable-like tale of parliamentary politics and ethical decisions, where Servillo's aging, depressive president must weigh up and decide on a series of increasingly difficult legal dilemmas. DIR Paolo Sorrentino. SCR Paolo Sorrentino. CAST Toni Servillo, Anna Ferzetti, Massimo Venturiello. Italy

## MAGELLAN (MAGALHÃES)

Gael García Bernal stars as infamous navigator Ferdinand Magellan in Filipino filmmaker Lav Diaz's monumental story of colonialism and resistance. DIR Lav Diaz. SCR Lav Diaz. CAST Gael García Bernal, Ângela Azevedo, Amado Arjay Babon, Ronnie Lazaro, Hazel Orencio. Portugal, Spain, France, Philippines, Taiwan

## MIROIRS NO. 3

The survivor of a car crash is taken in by a nearby family in this drama of mysterious connections from director Christian Petzold and his frequent collaborator, actress Paula Beer. DIR Christian Petzold. SCR Christian Petzold. CAST Paula Beer, Barbara Auer, Matthias Brandt, Enno Trebs. Germany

## PETER HUJAR'S DAY

Legendary photographer Peter Hujar (Ben Whishaw) spends an afternoon with writer Linda Rosenkrantz (Rebecca Hall), regaling her with the minute, gossip-filled details of his previous day. Recorded in 1974, the re-discovered transcript serves as the basis for Ira Sachs's luminous ode to a bygone New York. DIR Ira Sachs. SCR Ira Sachs. CAST Rebecca Hall, Ben Whishaw. USA, Germany

## SILENT FRIEND

This century-spanning drama from Ildikó Enyedi (ON BODY AND SOUL) unites the stories of three researchers, from the same university but separated by generations, who study the inner life of plants and expand their sense of time and perception in the process. DIR Ildikó Enyedi. SCR Ildikó Enyedi. CAST Tony Leung Chiu-wai, Luna Wedler, Enzo Brumm, Sylvester Groth, Martin Wuttke. Germany, France, Hungary

**THE STRANGER (L'ÉTRANGER)**

François Ozon brings Albert Camus's acclaimed 1942 novel to the big screen as a sun-baked, black-and-white neo-noir, a potent blend of psychological thriller and anti-colonial critique. DIR François Ozon. SCR François Ozon. CAST Benjamin Voisin, Rebecca Marder, Pierre Lottin, Swann Arlaud, Denis Lavant. France, Belgium, Morocco

**TWO PROSECUTORS**

Set in 1937 at the peak of Josef Stalin's Great Purge yet chillingly relevant today Sergei Loznitsa's dark parable of tyranny is based on a short story by the dissident writer and scientist Georgy Demidov, who was himself imprisoned for nearly 20 years. DIR Sergei Loznitsa. SCR Sergei Loznitsa. CAST Aleksandr Kuznetsov, Aleksandr Filippenko, Anatoli Beliy, Andris Keiņš, Vytautas Kaniūnas. France, Germany, Netherlands, Latvia, Romania, Lithuania

**WHAT DOES THAT NATURE SAY TO YOU**

Tensions arise when a struggling, idealistic poet meets his girlfriend's family at their idyllic, hillside countryside home in Hong Sang-soo's latest feature a quietly profound meditation on the complexities of filial love and familial strife. DIR Hong Sang-soo. SCR Hong Sang-soo. CAST Ha Seongguk, Kwon Haehyo, Cho Yunhee, Kang Soyi, Park Miso. South Korea

**YOUNG MOTHERS (JEUNES MÈRES)**

In a Liège group home, five teenage mothers navigate abandonment, fractured families, and the steep learning curve of parenthood finding unexpected strength and solace in each other's company in this tender, unflinching drama from the Dardenne brothers. DIR Jean-Pierre Dardenne, Luc Dardenne. SCR Jean-Pierre Dardenne, Luc Dardenne. CAST Babette Verbeek, Elsa Houben, Janaina Halloy Fokan, Lucie Laruelle, Samia Hilmi. Belgium, France

**Discovery**

**A showcase for exciting new voices that push the boundaries of contemporary cinema with cutting-edge themes and original visions.**

**A POET (UN POËTE)**

Winner of Cannes's Un Certain Regard Jury Prize, Colombian director Simón Mesa Soto's delightfully deadpan sophomore feature is an absurdist tragicomedy about a washed-up poet mentoring a gifted teen writer. DIR Simón Mesa Soto. SCR Simón Mesa Soto. CAST Ubeimar Rios, Rebeca Andrade, Guillermo Cardona, Allison Correa, Margarita Soto. Colombia, Germany, Sweden

**A USEFUL GHOST (PEE CHAI DAI KA)**

When Academic Ladyboy calls a repairman to fix his possessed vacuum cleaner, two interconnected stories of reincarnation unearth a heartfelt plea for the remembrance of personal history and a biting proclamation for collective labor dissent in Thai filmmaker Ratchapoom Boonbunchachoke's absurdist feature debut. DIR Ratchapoom Boonbunchachoke. SCR Ratchapoom Boonbunchachoke. CAST Davika Hoorne, Witsarut Himmarat, Apasiri Nitibhon, Wanlop Rungkumjad, Wisarut Homhuan. Thailand, Singapore, France, Germany

**AMOEBAS**

At an elite all-girls Chinese school in Singapore, 16-year-old Choo and her gang of misfits challenge the authoritarian faculty and the strict doctrines that bind them in this sharp-witted debut from rising

filmmaker Siyou Tan (AFI DWW Class of 2019). DIR Tan Siyou. SCR Tan Siyou. CAST Ranice Tay, Nicole Lee, Lim Shi-An, Genevieve Tan, Jack Kao. Singapore, Netherlands, France, Spain, South Korea

#### FANTASY LIFE

Recently laid-off Sam Stein is a lifelong neurotic who struggles with panic attacks, but his mental state starts changing for the better when he begins babysitting the grandchildren of his psychiatrist. DIR Matthew Shear. SCR Matthew Shear. CAST Amanda Peet, Matthew Shear, Alessandro Nivola, Judd Hirsch, Bob Balaban. USA

#### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Toha â?? the child maid of an upper-class Cairo family â?? forges an unlikely bond with her employerâ??s daughter Nelly and becomes fixated on planning her new friendâ??s ninth birthday celebration. DIR Sarah Goher. SCR Sarah Goher, Mohamed Diab. CAST Doha Ramadan, Nelly Karim, Hanan Motawie, Hanan Youssef. Egypt

#### HONEYJOON

In the beautiful Azorean Islands, an American woman and her Persian-Kurdish mother reckon with memory, exile and the complicated bond between them. HONEYJOON mixes humor, heartbreak and stunning landscapes to reveal how loss can fracture â?? and ultimately renew â?? the ties that hold us together. DIR Lilian T. Mehrel. SCR Lilian T. Mehrel. CAST Ayden Mayeri, Amira Casar, JosÃ© Condessa. USA

#### JUNKIE

AFI Conservatory alum William Meansâ?? (AFI Class of 2021) spirited debut is an eccentric odyssey through rural America â?? following meth-addicted, perpetual screwup Stevie (Rocky Shay) on a quest to evade rehab, repay her debts and reconcile with her estranged son. DIR William Means. SCR William Means. CAST Rocky Shay, Jessica Lea Risco, Kian Morr, Rett Keeter, Drew Faulkner. USA

#### LUCKY LU

After his e-bike gets stolen, delivery driver Lu goes on a desperate journey across New Yorkâ??s Chinatown in this visceral social realist drama about the cost of the American Dream. DIR Lloyd Lee Choi. SCR Lloyd Lee Choi. CAST Chang Chen, Fala Chen, Carabelle Manna Wei. USA, Canada

#### MY FATHERâ??S SHADOW

In 1993 Lagos, on the day of the first election in a decade, young brothers Akin and Remi reunite with their absent father on a hasty road trip. History, memory and nostalgia blends into a vividly realized work of autofiction in Nigeriaâ??s first ever Cannes selection. DIR Akinola Davies Jr.. SCR Wale Davies, Akinola Davies Jr.. CAST á¹¸á»•pá¹¸í•DÃ-rÃsÃ¹, Chibuike Marvellous Egbo, Godwin Egbo. Nigeria, UK

#### SILENT REBELLION (A BRAS-LE-CORPS)

Set in neutral Switzerland during World War II, this triumphant debut feature is a feminist coming-of-age drama that weighs the costs of courage on two fronts: the neighboring war and a young womanâ??s refusal to lead a life she never wanted. DIR Marie-Elsa Sgualdo. SCR Marie-Elsa Sgualdo, Nadine Lamari. CAST Lila Gueneau, Sasha Gravat Harsch, Cyril Metzger. Switzerland, Belgium, France

Mascha Schilinski's stunning sophomore feature is a hypnotic, time-traversing portrait of four generations of women living in the same isolated German farmhouse over the course of a century. **DIR** Mascha Schilinski. **SCR** Louise Peter, Mascha Schilinski. **CAST** Hanna Heckt, Lena Urzendowsky, Laeni Geiseler, Lea Drinda, Susanne Wuest. **Germany**

Queer love shines with contradicting exuberance in Diego C  spedes     audacious Cannes prize-winning debut about a commune of crossdressers set in a reimagined desert town in Chile during the dawn of the AIDS epidemic. DIR Diego C  spedes. SCR Diego C  spedes. CAST Tamara Cort  s, Mat  as Catal  n, Paula Dinamarca, Claudia Cabezas, Luis Dub    . Chile, France, Germany, Spain, Belgium

AFI Conservatory Alum Charlie Polinger (AFI Class of 2017) makes his striking feature debut with this toxic story of pre-teen posturing at an all-boys's water polo camp. Equal parts hilarious and disturbing (puberty in a nutshell), Polinger melds body horror with a razor-sharp insight into the subconscious psyche of adolescence. DIR Charlie Polinger. SCR Charlie Polinger. CAST Joel Edgerton, Everett Blunck, Kayo Martin, Kenny Rasmussen, Lucas Adler. USA, Romania

Set in 1990s Iraq under Saddam Hussein's authoritarian rule, Hasan Hadi's Cannes award-winning debut follows a young girl's perilous quest to bake a cake to mark her school's mandatory Presidential birthday celebrations. DIR Hasan Hadi. SCR Hasan Hadi. CAST Baneen Ahmed Nayyef, Sajad Mohamad Qasem, Waheeda Thabet Khreibat, Rahim AlHaj. Iraq, USA, Qatar

Family secrets unravel over the course of a crucial day as a mother fights for her children in a tense custody battle in this astutely layered, gripping debut feature. DIR Charlotte Devillers, Arnaud Dufeys. SCR Charlotte Devillers, Arnaud Dufeys. CAST Myriem Akheddiou, Laurent Capelluto, Natali Broods, Ulysse Goffin, Adèle Pinckaers. Belgium

## World Cinema

The best in global cinema comes to the movie capital of the world, celebrating the diversity of world culture through the shared language of cinema.

Actresses in an audition for Scheherazade in "A Thousand and One Nights" endure increasingly confrontational and innuendo-laden questioning from their male director in Iranian American filmmaker Mehrnoush Alia's provocative debut feature. DIR Mehrnoush Alia. SCR Mehrnoush Alia. CAST Mohammad Aghebati, Mahin Sadri, Leili Rashidi, Mahsa Rezaei, Behafarid Ghaffarian. Iran, USA

In the Occupied West Bank of the 1980s, a Palestinian teenager is swept into a protest that changes the course of his family's life. Reeling from its aftermath, his mother, Hanan, shares the story that led them to that fateful moment. Spanning seven decades, this epic drama traces the hopes and heartaches of one uprooted family, revealing not only the scars of displacement, but the unbreakable



spirit of survival. DIR Cherien Dabis. SCR Cherien Dabis. CAST Saleh Bakri, Cherien Dabis, Adam Bakri, Maria Zreik, Mohammad Bakri. Germany, Cyprus, Palestine, Jordan, Greece, Qatar, Saudi Arabia

#### CASE 137 (DOSSIER 137)

A tenacious internal affairs investigator in Paris confronts police brutality, political pressure and personal doubt when she takes on a controversial case involving a protester gravely injured by riot police. DIR Dominik Moll. SCR Dominik Moll, Gilles Marchand. CAST L  a Drucker, Yoann Blanc, Guslagie Malanda. France

#### DIVINE COMEDY (KOMEDIE ELAHI)

Notable Iranian filmmaker Ali Asgari (TERRESTRIAL VERSES) blurs the lines between fiction and reality in his latest feature, which follows filmmaker Bahram Ark and producer Sadaf Asgari (as thinly veiled versions of themselves) on a mission to screen their banned film for a local audience in Iran. DIR Ali Asgari. SCR Alireza Khatami, Bahram Ark, Ali Asgari. CAST Hossein Soleimani, Mohammad Soori, Amirreza Ranjbaran, Faezeh Rad. Iran, Italy, France, Germany, Turkey

#### EAGLES OF THE REPUBLIC

Tarik Saleh  s latest political thriller stars Fares Fares as the most famous actor in Egypt, who is offered a role he can  t refuse: portraying current president Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi as a heroic soldier. DIR Tarik Saleh. SCR Tarik Saleh. CAST Fares Fares, Lyna Khoudri, Zineb Triki, Amr Waked, Cherien Dabis. Sweden, France, Denmark

#### KOKUHO

Sang-il Lee  s sumptuous epic tells a decades-spanning tale of devotion and sacrifice for the revered craft of Kabuki. Beginning in 1964 Nagasaki and unfolding over the next 50 years, young Kikuo (Soya Kurokawa) is taken under the wing of renowned Kabuki maestro Hanjiro Hanai (Ken Watanabe) after his yakuza father was slain. DIR Sang-il Lee. SCR Satoko Okudera. CAST Ryo Yoshizawa, Ryusei Yokohama, Mitsuki Takahata, Shinobu Terajima, Nana Mori. Japan

#### LEFT-HANDED GIRL

Shih-Ching Tsou  s solo debut, co-written and produced by longtime collaborator Sean Baker, is a vibrant iPhone-shot portrait of Taipei as seen through the eyes of three generations of women navigating family, tradition and independence. DIR Shih-Ching Tsou. SCR Shih-Ching Tsou, Sean Baker. CAST Shih-Yuan Ma, Janel Tsai, Nina Ye, Teng-Hui Huang. Taiwan, France, USA, UK

#### LIVING THE LAND (SHENG XI ZHI DI)

Young director Huo Meng (Best Director, 2025 Berlin Film Festival) confirms his talent with this epic tale of a farm family navigating life-changing events in     90s rural China, recalling the work of both early Zhang Yimou and Meng  s mentor, Jia Zhangke. DIR Huo Meng. SCR Huo Meng. CAST Wang Shang, Zhang Chuwen, Zhang Yanrong, Zhang Caixia, Cao Lingzhi. China

#### OLMO

In this heartfelt coming-of-age story set in 1979 New Mexico, a teen navigates family duty and first love on his quest to beg, borrow and steal his way to a neighborhood party. DIR Fernando Eimbcke. SCR Fernando Eimbcke, Vanesa Garnica. CAST Aivan Uttapa, Gustavo S  nchez Parra, Andrea Su  rez Paz, Rosa Armendariz, Melanie Frometa. USA, Mexico

**ORPHAN (Ő•RVA)**

LŐjşzlŐ³ Nemes, an OscarŐ® winner for 2015Ő's SON OF SAUL, returns with another trenchant exploration of HungaryŐ's 20th century history ő this time set in 1957, just one year after the USSR brutally suppressed the Hungarian Uprising. Andor (BojtorjŐn Barabas) longs for the return of his father, missing since the war, but his mother suggests his father may actually be another man. DIR LŐjşzlŐ³ Nemes. SCR LŐjşzlŐ³ Nemes, Clara Royer. CAST BojtorjŐn Barabas, Andrea Waskovics, GrŐgory Gadebois, ElŐz SzabŐ³, Soma SŐjndor, Hermina FŐtyol. Hungary, UK, France, Germany

**PALESTINE 36**

Annemarie JacirŐ's sweeping, timely and deeply affecting historical epic brings to life a pivotal period in Palestinian history in the months leading up to the Arab Revolt of 1936. DIR Annemarie Jacir. SCR Annemarie Jacir. CAST Hiam Abbass, Kamel Al Basha, Yasmine Al Massri, Jalal Altawil, Liam Cunningham, Jeremy Irons. France, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UK

**PHANTOMS OF JULY (SEHNSUCHT IN SANGERHAUSEN)**

An ethereal, intoxicating comedy, Julian RadlmaierŐ's fifth feature is as light as a summer breeze, but its simple pleasures hide profound truths about the ghosts of the past and the mysteries of the present in the sleepy East German village of Sangerhausen. DIR Julian Radlmaier. SCR Julian Radlmaier. CAST Clara Schwinning, Maral Keshavarz, Henriette Confurius, Paula Schindler, Ghazal Shojaei, Kyung-Taek Lie. Germany

**PIN DE FARTIE**

Adapting Samuel BeckettŐ's iconic 1957 play őEndgameő• with gleeful, reckless abandon, maverick Argentine filmmaker Alejo Moguillansky discovers moments of magic in the registers and resonances of BeckettŐ's text as repetitions, refractions, music and dance crescendo into a glittering, literary and formal masterwork. DIR Alejo Moguillansky. SCR Luciana AcuŐa, Alejo Moguillansky, Mariano LlinŐs. CAST Santiago Gubernori, Cleo Moguillansky, Laura Paredes, Marcos Ferrante, Luciana AcuŐa, Maxi Prietto. Argentina

**PROMISED SKY (PROMIS LE CIEL)**

In this gorgeously crafted and heartfelt drama from Erige Sehiri, three Ivorian womenŐ's close-knit bonds are tested when the Tunisian government ramps up an immigration crackdown that could target each of them. DIR Erige Sehiri. SCR Erige Sehiri, Malika CŐcile Louati, Anna Ciennik. CAST AŐssa Maiga, Debora Lobe Naney, Laetitia Ky, Estelle Kenza Dogbo, Foued Zaazaa. Tunisia, France, Qatar

**ROMERŐA**

Orphaned at a young age, Marina arrives in the glittering Galician port city of Vigo ready to meet her fatherŐ's family for the first time. Acclaimed Spanish auteur Carla SimŐnŐ's return to the fervent ground of her childhood is a deeply personal meditation on memory, identity and familial myth making. DIR Carla SimŐn. SCR Carla SimŐn. CAST LIŐcia Garcia, Mitch, TristŐn Ulloa, Alberto Gracia, Miryam Gallego. Spain, Germany

**THE CURRENTS (LAS CORRIENTES)**

After jumping into a frigid Swiss lake on a work trip, fashion designer Lina returns to Buenos Aires a changed woman. Now deathly afraid of water, she sleepwalks through life unable to explain her malaise. With surreal flourishes and bursts of absurdity, filmmaker Milagros Mumenthaler casts a beguiling, dreamlike spell that delicately examines motherhood, class and identity. DIR Milagros Mumenthaler. SCR Milagros Mumenthaler. CAST Isabel AimŐ GonzŐlez Sola, Esteban Bigliardi,

Claudia Sánchez, Ernestina Gatti, Jazmín Carballo. Switzerland, Argentina

#### THE GREAT ARCH (L'INCONNU DE LA GRANDE ARCHE)

Stéphane Demoustier's THE GREAT ARCH dramatizes the true story of Danish architect Johan Otto von Spreckelsen (played brilliantly by Claes Bang), whose improbable 1980s design for Paris's La Défense arch sets off battles over artistic vision and obsession versus French bureaucracy. DIR Stéphane Demoustier. SCR Stéphane Demoustier. CAST Claes Bang, Sidse Babett Knudsen, Xavier Dolan, Swann Arlaud, Michel Fou. France

#### THE LOVE THAT REMAINS (STINN SEM EFTIR ER)

Set against the majestic grandeur of Iceland's rugged landscape, filmmaker Hlynur Pálmason (GODLAND, AFI FEST 2022) pens a surprisingly sensitive and poignant exploration of a crumbling marriage on the brink of ending. DIR Hlynur Pálmason. SCR Hlynur Pálmason. CAST Saga Breda, Garðarsdóttir, Sverrir Guðnason, Áda Mekkín Hlynisdóttir, Grámur Hlynsson, Þórgils Hlynsson. Iceland, Denmark, Sweden, France

#### THE VOICE OF HIND RAJAB

The latest film from filmmaker Kaouther Ben Hania, and Tunisia's Oscar® entry for Best International Feature, is a bold and inspired drama that blurs the lines between fiction and documentary to recount the heartbreaking story of five-year-old Hind Rajab, a Palestinian girl murdered during Israel's invasion of the Gaza Strip. DIR Kaouther Ben Hania. SCR Kaouther Ben Hania. CAST Saja Kilani, Motaz Malhees, Clara Khoury, Amer Hlehel. Tunisia, France

#### YES

Financially struggling musician Y has been tasked with composing a new anthem for a nation he morally opposes. Israeli filmmaker Nadav Lapid's latest tour de force is an absurdist, boldly surprising condemnation of his homeland. DIR Nadav Lapid. SCR Nadav Lapid. CAST Ariel Bronz, Efrat Dor, Naama Preis, Alexey Serebryakov. France, Israel, Cyprus, Germany

### Documentary

**Powerful real-life stories bravely told: the subjects and themes explored in documentary filmmaking are profound, and these insightful works are sure to enlighten, educate and entertain.**

#### ANDY KAUFMAN IS ME

Equal parts icon and enigma, comedian Andy Kaufman defied convention and this illuminating documentary dives deep into the life and art of one of the most ingenious entertainers of our time. DIR Clay Tweel. SCR Clay Tweel, Luis Lopez, Shannon E. Riggs. CAST Michael Kaufman, Carol Kaufman, David Letterman, Carol Kane, Tim Heidecker, Eric Andre, Kristin Schaal. USA

#### BELOW THE CLOUDS (SOTTO LE NUVOLE)

Winner of the Special Jury Prize at the Venice Film Festival, documentary master Gianfranco Rosi (SACRO GRA, FIRE AT SEA) explores the city and surroundings of Naples, Italy, a place where every day, thousands of years of history echo and resonate for its people. DIR Gianfranco Rosi. SCR Gianfranco Rosi, Marie-Pierre Muller, Carmelo Marabello. Italy

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**COVER-UP**

Oscar® winner Laura Poitras and veteran documentarian Mark Obenhaus explore Pulitzer-winning journalist Seymour Hersh's fearless exposés of U.S. power abuses from My Lai to Abu Ghraib blending biography, political thriller and urgent reflection on truth and press freedom. DIR Laura Poitras, Mark Obenhaus. CAST Seymour Hersh. USA

**FIUME O MORTE!**

Winner of both the Tiger Award and the FIPRESCI prize at this year's Rotterdam Film Festival, Croatian director Igor Bezinović's inventive hybrid documentary re-enacts scenes from Gabriele D'Annunzio's siege and occupation of the Adriatic seaport of Fiume (now Croatia's Rijeka) in the aftermath of World War I. DIR Igor Bezinović. SCR Igor Bezinović. CAST Izet Medojević, Željko Bebić, Albano Vučić, Tihomir Buterin, Andrea Marsanich. Croatia, Italy, Slovenia

**HOLDING LIAT**

Brandon Kramer's profile of an Israeli family seeking the return of their kidnapped loved ones who were abducted during the October 7 Hamas attack won the award for Best Documentary at the Berlin Film Festival. Executive produced by AFI Alum Darren Aronofsky. DIR Brandon Kramer. CAST Yehuda Bein, Liat Bein, Atzili Bein, Chaya Bein, Tal Bein. USA

**I WAS BORN THIS WAY**

The cultural impact of singer Carl Bean extends far beyond his 1977 gay anthem 'I Was Born This Way.' Award-winning filmmaker duo Sam Pollard and Daniel Junge dive into the untold legacy of this uniquely inspirational artist whose outspoken voice and lyrics influenced a generation. DIR Daniel Junge, Sam Pollard. CAST Archbishop Carl Bean, Billy Porter, Questlove, Lady Gaga, Dionne Warwick, Rep. Maxine Waters. USA

**LOVE+WAR**

This gripping portrait of New York Times war photographer Lynsey Addario explores her fearless work from the frontlines of Ukraine to the Middle East and beyond and the tension between motherhood and a life spent documenting conflict. DIR Chai Vasarhelyi, Jimmy Chin. CAST Lynsey Addario. USA

**MY ARMENIAN PHANTOMS (MES FANTÔMES ARMÉNIENS)**

Personal memoirs and collective cinematic nostalgia converge in Tamara Stepanyan's tender love letter to her late father and a faded past of Soviet Armenia. DIR Tamara Stepanyan. SCR Tamara Stepanyan, Jean-Christophe Ferrari. France, Armenia

**SEEDS**

Winner of the U.S. Grand Jury Prize for Documentary at this year's Sundance Film Festival, this black-and-white, engrossing and profoundly feature debut from Brittany Shyne explores the lives of a multi-generational family of Black farmers whose agrarian way of life is threatened by historic injustices. DIR Brittany Shyne. USA

**SELENA Y LOS DINOS**

The life and legacy of Selena, the 'Queen of Tejano Music,' is recounted in this affectionate documentary utilizing never-before-seen archival footage from the family's extensive personal collection. DIR Isabel Castro. USA



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### THE EYES OF GHANA

Two-time Oscar®-winning director Ben Proudfoot reteams with the Obamas?? Higher Grounds Productions for this documentary spotlighting the remarkable yet under-recognized Ghanaian filmmaker Chris Hesse, who captured essential footage ?? previously thought to be lost ?? of the African independence movements as a personal cameraman to revolutionary leader Kwame Nkrumah. DIR Ben Proudfoot. CAST Chris Hesse, Anita Afonu, Edmund Addo. USA

### THE HANGING OF STUART CORNFELD

Stuart Cornfeld (AFI Class of 1975) looks back on his colorful career as a creative producer, collaborating with Anne Bancroft, Mel Brooks, David Lynch, Steven Soderbergh, David Cronenberg, Guillermo Del Toro and Ben Stiller, among others. Featuring a wealth of interviews, Joan Bonfill??s intimate and insightful documentary portrait delves into the mysterious chemistry of creative collaboration. DIR Joan Bofill AmargÃ³s. SCR Joan Bofill AmargÃ³s, Joan MarimÃ³n. CAST Stuart Cornfeld, Jack Black, Mel Brooks, David Cronenberg, Guillermo del Toro, David Lynch, Steven Soderbergh, Ben Stiller. USA, Spain

### THE KING OF COLOR

A compelling tribute to Larry Herbert, the visionary mind behind the Pantone Matching System, which not only standardized color across industries, but rippled out to change commerce, culture and perception itself. DIR Patrick Creadon. CAST Larry Herbert. USA

### THE OZU DIARIES

Drawing from a treasure trove of archival materials ?? journals, photographs, interviews and unseen home movies ?? Academy Award®-nominated filmmaker Daniel Raim offers both an intimate biography and revelatory portrait of prolific Japanese master Yasujiro Ozu, one of cinema??s most original and enduring auteurs. DIR Daniel Raim. SCR Daniel Raim. CAST Yasujiro Ozu, Kiyoshi Kurosawa, Wim Wenders, Luc Dardenne, Tsai Ming-liang, Kyoko Kagawa. USA

### THE TALE OF SILYAN

In a Macedonian village, Nikola, a fledgling middle-aged farmer, is left behind after his family immigrates to Germany, and soon forms a poignant bond with an injured stork. Tamara Kotevska (HONEYLAND) weaves folklore, striking images and intimate observation into a poetic documentary about loss, resilience, and the delicate thread binding humans to nature. DIR Tamara Kotevska. CAST Nikola Conev, Jana Coneva, Aleksandra Coneva, Aleksandar Conev, Ilina Coneva. North Macedonia

### After Dark

**Take a walk on the wild side and tune in to the late-night vibes of these adventurous selections, celebrating the pleasures of genre cinema and uncategorizable originality.**

### BY DESIGN

In Amanda Kramer??s fantastical, avant-garde curiosity BY DESIGN, Camille (Juliette Lewis) ?? motivated by deep-seated envy ?? makes a fateful wish to be just as desirable as an exquisitely expensive wooden chair. DIR Amanda Kramer. SCR Amanda Kramer. CAST Juliette Lewis, Mamoudou Athie, Samantha Mathis, Robin Tunney, Clifton Collins Jr. USA

### ENDLESS COOKIE

Written and directed by half-brothers Seth and Peter Scriver, one a resident of Toronto, the other a

resident of Shamattawa First Nation in the far north of Manitoba, **ENDLESS COOKIE** is a kooky, ramshackle rumination on collective remembering and family bonds. Fans of Adult Swim will delight in its surreal animation and subversive humor. DIR Seth Scriver, Peter Scriver. SCR Seth Scriver, Peter Scriver. CAST Seth Scriver, Peter Scriver, Kristin â??Cookieâ?• Scriver, Dezray â??Dezâ?• Scriver, Ada Scriver. Canada

### FUCKTOYS

Sex worker A.P. (played by breakout writer/director/producer/star Annapurna Sriram) needs a thousand dollars and a baby lamb to break a curse, setting her on a quest for a few quick paydays and a whole lot of misadventure in Trastown, USA. DIR Annapurna Sriram. SCR Annapurna Sriram. CAST Annapurna Sriram, Sadie Scott, Francois Arnaud, Big Freedia, Brandon Flynn. USA

### MÄ?RAMA

Taratoa Stappardâ??s haunting and visceral debut feature â?? a gothic revenge horror filtered through a MÄ?ori lens â?? melds the chills of a haunted house thriller with a stark exploration of Britainâ??s dark colonial legacy. DIR Taratoa Stappard. SCR Taratoa Stappard. CAST AriÄ?na Osborne, Toby Stephens, Umi Myers, Evelyn Towersey, Erroll Shand. New Zealand

### MORTE CUCINA

Deliciously tense with sumptuous cinematography by Christopher Doyle, Thai New Wave writer/director Pen-Ek Ratanaruangâ??s (LAST LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE) latest feature is an innovative, culinary take on the rape-revenge thriller. DIR Pen-Ek Ratanaruang. SCR Pen-ek Ratanaruang. CAST Bella Boonsang, Kris Srepoomseth, Punika Ranschaya, Nopachai Chaiyanam, Wisit Junloon. Thailand

### STRAIGHT CIRCLE

Winner of the top prize at Venice Criticsâ?? Week, Oscar Hudsonâ??s debut feature is a surrealist anti-war satire about two soldiers stationed at a fictional desert border who lose their grip on reality. DIR Oscar Hudson. SCR Oscar Hudson. CAST Elliott Tittensor, Luke Tittensor, Neil Maskell. UK

### Guest Artistic Director

**In a special Spotlight section, AFI FEST honors Oscar®-winning filmmaker Guillermo del Toro â?? who most recently wrote and directed his spectacular re-imagining of Mary Shelleyâ??s gothic horror story FRANKENSTEIN â?? and who has selected four of his favorite films to present to AFI FEST audiences: BARRY LYNDON, FELLINIâ??S CASANOVA, THE DUELLISTS and ARCANÉ SORCERER. Films will screen throughout the festival, with introductions by del Toro.**

### BARRY LYNDON

Stanley Kubrickâ??s visually stunning, Academy Award®-winning 18th-century epic â?? which marks its 50th anniversary this year â?? follows the rise of a reluctant conscript (Ryan Oâ??Neal) through war, romance and intrigue across Europe. DIR Stanley Kubrick. SCR Stanley Kubrick. CAST Ryan Oâ??Neal, Marisa Berenson, Patrick Magee, Hardy Kruger, Diana Koerner, Gay Hamilton. USA

### FELLINIâ??S CASANOVA

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Federico Fellini's infamous 1976 take on Giacomo Casanova's tale is a visual and sonic spectacle – a lavish, hallucinatory reimagining of the legendary Venetian seducer's life, starring Donald Sutherland and set to an unforgettable score by Nino Rota. DIR Federico Fellini, SCR Federico Fellini, Bernardino Zapponi. CAST Donald Sutherland, Tina Aumont. Italy

#### THE ARCANE SORCERER

A personal favorite of Guillermo del Toro, this richly atmospheric, spiritual horror film follows a disgraced seminary student as he takes refuge with an excommunicated monsignor with a penchant for the occult. Forced to participate in increasingly macabre rituals and tests, Giacomo is consumed by the sinister – as apparitions, ghosts and deadly rumors start to accumulate. DIR Pupi Avati, SCR Pupi Avati, CAST Carlo Cecchi, Stefano Dionisi, Arnaldo Ninchi, Andrea Scorzoni, Consuelo Ferrara. Italy

#### THE DUELLISTS

Ridley Scott's striking Cannes prize-winning debut feature is a visually arresting tale of honor, obsession and pride chronicling the 16-year feud between two French officers (Keith Carradine and Harvey Keitel) against the backdrop of the Napoleonic wars. DIR Ridley Scott, SCR Gerald Vaughan-Hughes, CAST Harvey Keitel, Keith Carradine, Albert Finney, Edward Fox, Cristina Raines. USA

#### Short Film Competition

**The short film program highlights unique voices from around the world, from both emerging and established filmmakers. These short films push the form of storytelling in inventive, challenging and unexpected ways – all in 40 minutes or less.**

#### After Dark Shorts

##### MY WONDERFUL LIFE

Grace Lee, an overworked mom in Singapore, collapses at work. She gets admitted into the hospital where she finds newfound freedom as a patient. DIR Calleen Koh. Singapore

##### LAST CALL

Claudia, a fast-riding motorcycle rebel, indulges in her worst vices to avoid confrontation with a mysterious serpent woman who taps into her most grotesque fantasies. DIR Winnie Cheung. USA

##### THE FISHERMAN

A devout fisherman has his faith tested as a series of supernatural phenomena plague him and his family. DIR Calvin Brown. USA

##### WATER SPORTS

Jelson and Ipe, students deeply in love, undergo trials of the mind and body as they prepare to survive a world devastated by climate change. DIR Whammy Alcazaren. Philippines

##### MR. OGRE'S CASTLE

A group of teenagers enjoys an illicit stay at a luxurious villa while the mysterious owner is away. Their party gets spoiled when a CCTV camera operator calls to inform the police. DIR Maxime Chudeau. USA

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## DEMONS TO DIAMONDS

In the cold business district of La Défense, where steel towers pierce a restless sky and CCTV watches every shadow, a wave of suicides exposes the fractures of a crumbling society. DIR Valentin Noujaim. France

## Animation Shorts 1

### OSTRICH

A sparrow sees images of ostriches everywhere. In awe of the ostriches with their long necks, dazzling eyes and muscular legs, the little bird wants to be just like them. DIR Marie Kenov. Switzerland

### CARCASSONNE-ACAPULCO

As flight 7836 reaches cruising speed above the Atlantic Ocean, the pilot, co-pilot and flight attendant are startled by an unexpected knock at the door ??? causing chaos and confusion to ensue. DIR Marjorie Caup, Olivier Héraud. France

### APPLE GATHERERS

APPLE GATHERERS shows the loneliness and dissatisfaction in a labour-intensive world and the brief reprieve we have in moments of real human connection. The moment is fleeting, yet powerful. DIR Danielle Rhoda Addae-Boateng. UK

### SNOW BEAR

Set in a rapidly changing world, SNOW BEAR tells the story of a polar bear in an unforgiving environment on his quest to find a friend. DIR Aaron Blaise. USA

### PETRA AND THE SUN (PETRA Y EL SOL)

During a heavy snowmelt in the Andes, Petra discovers the perfectly preserved corpse of a lost mountaineer ??? bringing him to her wooden chalet and sparking an unexpected romantic story. DIR Malu Furche, Stefania Malacchini. Chile

### S THE WOLF

A middle-aged man reflects on his tumultuous adolescence through intricate and deeply personal musings all tied to his hair growing or receding. Over time, we accumulate meaning into the larger journey of his life. DIR Sameh Alaa. France

### DOLLHOUSE ELEPHANT

In a world that demands community participation, individual desires inevitably collide. A group of neighbors, each focused on their own goals, must learn to communicate and consider one another. DIR Jenny Jokela. Finland

### 9 MILLION COLORS (9 MILIONÅ® BAREV)

The ocean is paradise for Fran the shrimp. For blind fish Milva, itâ??s a fight to survive. Fran sees Milva as beautiful and wants her to see the ocean in the same way. DIR Břřra Anna. Czech Republic, Germany, Norway

## Animation Shorts 2

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**DORMILÃ?N**

In a quest to become the performer of his dreams, DormilÃ³n, a starry-eyed and middle-aged janitor living in an abandoned theater, must confront his nightmares face-to-face. DIR Olivia Marie Valdez. USA

**DOG ALONE (CÃ?O SOZINHO)**

After the death of its owner and its companions, a dog is left alone. Howls day and night disturbing all the neighborhood. In the house next door, a widowed man's granddaughter returns from London. DIR Marta Reis Andrade. Portugal | France

**FOREVERGREEN**

A joyful adventure featuring an orphaned bear cub and a fatherly tree turns serious when the cub is tempted by the allure of easy food. DIR Nathan Engelhardt, Jeremy Spears. USA

**MINE!**

In the early 20th century Midwest USA, deep underground, a group of coal miners make an incredible discovery. DIR Lou Morton. USA

**DESI OON**

Through the story of Balu Mama and his revered flock of Deccani sheep, Desi Oon contrasts a rich heritage with the modern neglect of India's native sheep and wool industry. DIR Suresh Eriyat. India

**AMARELO BANANA**

After yet another night of insomnia, a man comes across a strange community living in his building and discovers an elaborate illusion they have created. DIR Alexandre Sousa. Portugal, Hungary

**ONCE IN A BODY**

While dealing with a strange being that lives inside of her, a woman seeks reconciliation with her sister over an incident from their adolescence. DIR MarÃa Cristina PÃrez GonzÃlez. Colombia

**MURMURATION (ZWERMEN)**

An elderly man realizes that he's suddenly turning into a bird. DIR Janneke Swinkels, Tim Frijsinger. Netherlands

**Documentary Shorts 1****MY MEMORY-WALLS (MES MURS-MÃ?MOIRE)**

Rose G. LÃvesque, an almost nonagenarian painter and poet, painted the story of her life on her house's walls to transform it into a museum. DIR Axel Robin. Canada

**LOCAL ONE**

The Amazon Labor Union launches a nationwide strike during peak holiday shopping season. LOCAL ONE takes us into the first days of the strike at two Amazon warehouses in NYC. DIR Stephen Maing, Brett Story. USA

**MEMENTO MORI (ZINC)**

As rhythmic machines press zinc sheets into coffins, factory workers reflect on their own mortality. Does daily contact with death heighten their awareness of life's impermanence? DIR Ainara Vera. USA

**BENEATH WHICH RIVERS FLOW (Ø§Ø"Ø±Ø§Ù?Ù?Ù )**

Ibrahim is tethered to the river, reeds and buffalo he tends, but as the rivers dry and the landscape withers, he faces unrelenting forces threatening the only life heâ??s ever known. DIR Ali Yahya. Iraq

**BIG MONEY: A SPIRITUAL MANIFESTO**

Oscar® and Grammy®-winning musician Jon Batiste crafts an album with legendary producer No ID â?? blending joy, lineage, alchemy and protest into something deeply personal. DIR David Henry Gerson. USA

**WELCOME HOME FRECKLES**

After four years apart, a daughter returns home to confront the unresolved family conflicts and violence that plagued her childhood, discovering the generational cycle of abuse only she can break. DIR Huiju Park. UK, South Korea

**Documentary Shorts 2****PAVILHÃO**

Set in Rio de Janeiro, Aleksia wanders on a journey through time â?? unveiling the origins of samba and its emergence from resilience, joy, spirituality and resistance of her Afro-Brazilian community. DIR Victoria Fiore. Brazil

**CORRECT ME IF Iâ??M WRONG (å!?ä½ æ??æ?¿)**

In a struggle of love, legacy and belief, a southwest Chinese family tries to purge an unwanted entity from their queer heir. DIR Hao Zhou. Germany, USA

**LONG LIVE LIVIA**

An animator discusses a scene from the TV series, THE SOPRANOS, while meticulously crafting stop-motion recreations of his familyâ??s home movies. DIR Zach Dorn. USA

**LAB MAN**

LAB MAN is a docu-portrait about Arturo Arnold, a master of emulsion who processes all the 8mm and 16mm motion picture film for a busy film lab in North Hollywood. DIR Neil Butler. USA

**SHANTI RIDES SHOTGUN**

On Manhattanâ??s jam-packed streets, NYCâ??s most iconic driving instructor prepares students for the road ahead. DIR Charles Frank. USA

**AL BASATEEN (THE ORCHARDS)**

In 2015, the Basateen al-Razi district of Damascus was destroyed as punishment for the populationâ??s uprising against Bashar al-Assadâ??s regime. A decade later, memories are awakened, resisting deliberate erasure. DIR Antoine Chapon. France

**Live Action Shorts****POSTER BOY**

In the cutthroat world of 1990s boy bands, a desperate 16-year-old dancer betrays his best friend and bandmates in a misguided attempt to secure his spot in the limelight. DIR India Opzoomer. Canada

**NERVOUS ENERGY**

On the cusp of success/failure, two unhinged female filmmakers decide to break up with their

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boyfriends and for once, make a bold decision with their lives. DIR Eve Liu. USA

### STRANGER, BROTHER

When self-absorbed and lonely millennial Adam wakes to find his estranged half-brother on his doorstep one morning, he must face the family he's been running from. DIR Annelise Hickey. Australia

### COYOTES

A Palestinian surgeon drives home after a long night shift, but little does she know that a commute through a desolate West Bank road will change her forever. DIRECTOR Said Zaghera. France, Palestine, Jordan

### CASI SEPTIEMBRE

Alejandra struggles with the fear of abandonment. Living year-round with her family in a camping resort, a blossoming romance with a tourist brings her latent insecurities to the surface. DIR Lucía G. Romero. Spain

### Live Action Shorts 2

#### THE SINGERS

In this film adaptation of a 19th-century short story written by Ivan Turgenev, downtrodden patrons commiserating at a lowly pub connect unexpectedly through an impromptu sing-off. DIR Sam Davis. USA

#### THE MAN OF SHIT (L'HOMME DE MERDE)

Between college and her luxury hotel job, Fernanda wonders if she'll ever achieve something meaningful in life. The arrival of The Man of Shit will give her an unexpected opportunity. DIR Sorel Françoise. France

#### RED EGG & GINGER

Hannah, a half-white, half-Chinese teenager, meets her newborn, 100% Chinese half-sister at a traditional Chinese event, forcing Hannah to question her cultural identity and where she fits in her family. DIR Olivia Owyung. UK

#### MAJONEZÀ?

Elyria follows the strict rules imposed by her father, hiding her anger with obedience. A powerful desire for rebellion grows in her day by day that leads to a necessary act of revolution. DIR Giulia Grandinetti. Italy

#### MERMAIDS (GORGONES)

Summer holidays in Greece. Under the scorched sun, a flirt pushes two opposite friend groups on a journey of sexual discovery, lust, consent and complete transformation. DIR Dimitris Tsakaleas, Lida Vartzioti. Greece

### AFI Conservatory Showcase

**A collection of short narrative films from the most recent graduates of the world-renowned AFI Conservatory.**



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## CONSERVATORY SHOWCASE 1

### THE APPLE PICKER'S SON

Afaaq, a Kashmiri boy with supernatural powers, learns his father will be picking apples in a war-torn region of Kashmir. Afaaq must stop him from leaving before the apples ripen and the harvest begins. DIR Yang Zimik, SCR Yang Zimik, Dulguun Bayasgalan, PRODUCER Cathy Ni, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Liz Mealey, EDITOR Shiyi Xie and PRODUCTION DESIGNER Oscar O'Neill. USA

### JIA

Jia loves her bestie Nina more than anything, but when Nina tells Jia she wants to attend the school dance with a boy and not with Jia as planned, a choice is made that changes their friendship forever. DIR Samantha Mandich, SCR Samantha Mandich, PRODUCER Paloma Pinto, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Rebecca Richard, EDITOR Sydney Sullivan, and PRODUCTION DESIGNER Natalie Peracchio. USA

### PATAKHA

Radha, an 11-year-old girl in rural India, loses her backpack on her first day of work at a factory. She journeys to retrieve the school bag and with it, her dreams for the future. DIR Rohit Relan, SCR Umüt Ipek, PRODUCER Tiffany Wu, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Brooke Mueller, EDITOR Siddharth Lal and PRODUCTION DESIGNER Reem Alshaini. USA

### BEWARE THE WOLVES

During an extended stay, Carlisle and his older sister endure strict treatment from their grandmother and ailing grandfather. When Carlisle witnesses a disturbing violation, he must forge a path for their escape. DIR Alex Bush, SCR Alex Bush, Annabel Newland, PRODUCER Ilias Kyriakidis, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Matthew Rove Roveto, EDITOR Vaishnavi Upadhyay and PRODUCTION DESIGNER Demie Cao. USA

## CONSERVATORY SHOWCASE 2

### DOG SEES GOD

When a meteor lands in his backyard, killing his beloved dog, suburban misfit Atticus channels his grief into his garage-punk band as he wrestles with teenage angst, fractured family dynamics and a growing government presence in his neighborhood. DIR Yana Gladkikh, SCR Alex Bush, Ilias Kyriakidis, PRODUCER Andrew Svistunov, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Junxiong Joshua Zhu, EDITOR Zheyu Ian Jiang and PRODUCTION DESIGNER Shengtao Anakin Li. USA

### AZUL

Struggling to cope with her sister's unexpected passing, 17-year-old Azul finds solace in an unexpected place: a lady Lowrider Car Club. DIR Santos Arruñado, SCR Santos Arruñado, PRODUCER Yoko Chen, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Alexandra Geneviève Agar, EDITOR Lu Li and PRODUCTION DESIGNER Jessica Burnam. USA

### BEHIND THE MASK

After a famous actor's death, his estranged daughter looks for closure at his house. She discovers a magical theater mask that whisks her back in time to a grand stage where she comes face-to-face with

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him as a young man. DIR Catherine Andre, SCR Catherine Andre, PRODUCER Becca E. Davis, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Simran Sawhney, EDITOR Matthew Gelzer and PRODUCTION DESIGNER Irena Weaver. USA

#### OLDMAN'S BLUES

Grappling with dementia, eighty-year-old Kang longs to return to China. When a yellow crane appears, memory and reality blur â?? guiding his spirit home in a final goodbye seen only by his granddaughter. DIR Ziyi Zeng, SCR Ziyi Zeng, PRODUCER Tianyu Yang, Ali Buckner, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Keren Paldi, EDITOR Ann Zhao and PRODUCTION DESIGNER Tang Hu. USA

#### TEEN MARY

Teen Mary gets pregnant by Nazareth's biggest player, Gabriel. Facing death, she and her gay BFF Joseph hatch a plan: convince everyone that God is the father, turning scandal into scripture to survive. DIR Ali Rosenthal, SCR Ali Rosenthal, PRODUCER Bridger Zadina, Hector Martinez, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Jodi Savitz, EDITOR Carter Huang and PRODUCTION DESIGNER Abbie Vance. USA

### CONSERVATORY SHOWCASE 3

#### MARASCHINO

When a former centerfold suffers a breakdown on her partner's birthday, she must outwit her smart home device on a blood-soaked path to having her own cake and eating it, too. DIR Alyssa Cody Garcia, SCR Alyssa Cody Garcia, Simona Galant, PRODUCER Simona Galant, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Mads Fridolin Vejlbj, EDITOR Qiqi Deng and PRODUCTION DESIGNER Maui McDonald. USA

#### POOLBOY

Kaspar is a medical tech diagnosed with terminal cancer and six months to live. Confronting mortality, he quits his job to pursue his childhood dream of becoming a Los Angeles pool boy. DIR Haoran Ma, SCR Ben Keeshin, PRODUCER Zhedan Deng, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Simon Gulergun, EDITOR Yu Sun and PRODUCTION DESIGNER Xuefei Rong. USA

#### FINDING YIYI

After losing her mother's cherished dumpling recipe, 65-year-old YiYi embarks on a journey to piece it back together, leading her to reconnect with a childhood friend and explore the relationship they never had. DIR Kim Caicedo, SCR Kim Caicedo, Bao Le Cheok, PRODUCER Michelle Levinger, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Bao Le Cheok, EDITOR Attila Tayefeh and PRODUCTION DESIGNER Zaina Tripp. USA

#### CLUB RATS

When young golfer Penny wins the club championship on a dubious hole-in-one, her status and reputation are called into question. Leading the charge is Penny's former lover and fiercest rival, causing her to doubt the truth. DIR Grace Francis Godvin, SCR Grace Francis Godvin, PRODUCER Chenning Yang, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Jasper Khadjenouri, EDITOR Daniel Elder and PRODUCTION DESIGNER Juliana Newman. USA

#### NIGHT FEEDS

An Arab American mother struggles with postpartum as a night nurse unsettles her, and war floods her

screens. This psychological horror where nightmare bleeds into reality paints a visceral portrait of motherhood in our time. DIR Rana Roy, SCR Rana Roy, PRODUCER Adia Ivey, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Julia Maixer, EDITOR Joan Mao and PRODUCTION DESIGNER Janhvi Gupta. USA

#### **CONSERVATORY SHOWCASE 4**

##### **SONG OF SILENCE**

In a war-torn 2071 America, Greta must protect a deadly secret in a hidden village of women, forcing her to choose between her only son's life and the safety of her community. DIR Vasilisa Kuzmina, SCR Vasilisa Kuzmina, Daisy Anderson, PRODUCER Qiuping Han, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Dominika Podczaska, EDITOR Yuntong Hazel Dai and PRODUCTION DESIGNER Elli Kypriadis. USA

##### **THE END IS AT HAND**

A reclusive phone repairman discovers a pulsing, slime-covered organism growing inside a mysterious device. When it disappears from his desk, he searches for it but the more he looks, the more he dreads what he'll find. DIR Japhet Velazquez, SCR Sam Gallen, PRODUCER Sam Gallen, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Diana Dahllund, EDITOR Junwu Tan and PRODUCTION DESIGNER Yuheng Kuang. USA

##### **BEST EYES**

While commuting between her inner city neighborhood and elite private school, a biracial teen forms a friendship that challenges the version of herself her mother believes will keep her safe leading her toward self-acceptance. DIR Kira Powell, SCR Kira Powell, Lauren Thomas, PRODUCER Tara Austin, Bonnie von Duyke, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Udit Nijhawan, EDITOR Sharon Shen and PRODUCTION DESIGNER Disha Shah. USA

##### **YOU & ME, CHAZ & RODNEY**

Best friends Elisa and Valerie set out on an adventure to Rodney's house with plans to hook up for the first time. But as the night progresses, the curious 13-year-olds are confronted by their own shifting friendship. DIR Lillian Lion, SCR Lillian Lion, Cecilia Cereijido-Bloche, PRODUCER Yang Qian, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Jessica Hayes, EDITOR Elise Beers and PRODUCTION DESIGNER Nicole Baroudi. USA

##### **IRON LAKE**

On a scouting trip in the 1990s, a volatile teenager expresses secret feelings for another boy. When he's rejected, he'll go to dark lengths to keep his secret hidden. DIR Grant Swanson, SCR Grant Swanson, PRODUCER Annine Fan Zhang, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Ioana Vasile, EDITOR Yuchen Bobby Fang and PRODUCTION DESIGNER Emily Henninger. USA

#### **CONSERVATORY SHOWCASE 5**

##### **JOE HUNT**

After his father's mysterious death, thirteen-year-old William turns to his imaginary hero, Joe Hunt, for guidance. As they search for answers, the line between protector and menace blurs, forcing William to question who he can truly trust. DIR Matthew Genecov, SCR Matthew Genecov, PRODUCER Muqing Evelyn Tang, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Yoshihisa Toda, EDITOR Yiming Wang and PRODUCTION DESIGNER Zixi Roey Zhang. USA

**TÄ? ä»?**

In a bleak, dystopian modern city, an agent of the underworld intersects with the lives of those lost in despair â?? guiding them on a surreal, transformative journey into death and beyond. DIR Jiyuan Ler, SCR Jiyuan Ler, Jack Ruefli, PRODUCER Jack Ruefli, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Arman Meinecke, EDITOR Anushri Srinivasan and PRODUCTION DESIGNER Jing Chen. USA

**PAPER BOY**

An artist escapes into a fragile paper world. As his imagination grows into vast cities and impossible creatures, fantasy blurs with reality. As it collapses, he must face the truths heâ??s hidden and the weight they carry. DIR Saulius Baradinskas, SCR Saulius Baradinskas, Juan-Arturo Maldonado, PRODUCER Ella Danna, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Nyssa GIÃ¼ck, EDITOR Wenzhe Brandon Li and PRODUCTION DESIGNER Bing Yi Liao. USA

**DANDELION**

In 1970s Los Angeles, rebellious queer teen Margaret gets thrown out of yet another foster placement and finds herself in the company of a social worker tasked with finding her a new home. DIR Fiona Obertinca, SCR Corey Pinchoff, PRODUCER Tori Ichikowitz, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Bruce Wang, EDITOR Jing Ace Wang and PRODUCTION DESIGNER Ana Visuetti.

**About the American Film Institute (AFI)**

The American Film Institute (AFI) is a nonprofit organization with a mandate to champion the moving image as an art form. Established in 1967, AFI launched the first comprehensive history of American film and sparked the movement for film preservation in the United States. In 1969, AFI opened the doors of the AFI Conservatory, a graduate-level program to train narrative filmmakers. The Conservatory, which counts Deniese Davis, Affonso GonÃ§alves, Susannah Grant, Matthew Libatique, David Lynch, Melina Matsoukas and Rachel Morrison as Alumni, is ranked as one of the top film schools in America. AFIâ??s enduring traditions include the AFI Life Achievement Award, which honors the masters for work that has stood the test of time; AFI AWARDS, which celebrates the creative ensembles of the most outstanding screen stories of the year; and scholarly efforts such as the AFI Catalog of Feature Films and the AFI Archive that preserve film history for future generations. AFI exhibition programs include AFI FEST Presented by Canva and year-round exhibition at the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center in Maryland. AFI Movie Club is a destination for movie lovers from around the world to celebrate and engage with the art form every day. Other pioneering programs include workshops aimed at elevating emerging storytellers and technology, including AFI DWW+ and the AFI Cinematography Intensive Workshop. Read about all of these programs and more at [AFI.com](http://AFI.com) and follow us on social media at [Facebook.com/AmericanFilmInstitute](https://Facebook.com/AmericanFilmInstitute), [YouTube.com/AFI](https://YouTube.com/AFI), [X.com/AmericanFilm](https://X.com/AmericanFilm), [TikTok.com/@americanfilminstitute](https://TikTok.com/@americanfilminstitute) and [Instagram.com/AmericanFilmInstitute](https://Instagram.com/AmericanFilmInstitute).

**About AFI FEST**

Now in its 39th year, AFI FEST is a world-class event, showcasing the best films from across the globe. This yearâ??s edition takes place in Los Angeles from October 22-26, 2025. With an innovative slate of programming, the five-day festival presents screenings, panels and conversations, featuring both master filmmakers and new cinematic voices. AFI FEST includes high-profile films with Q&As featuring the filmsâ?? cast and crew and a robust lineup of fiction and nonfiction features and shorts, providing a one-of-a-kind experience for movie fans. Additional information is available at

[FEST.AFI.com](https://FEST.AFI.com). Connect with AFI's film festival at [Facebook.com/AFIFEST](https://Facebook.com/AFIFEST), [Twitter.com/AFIFEST](https://Twitter.com/AFIFEST), [Instagram/AmericanFilmInstitute](https://Instagram/AmericanFilmInstitute), [TikTok/@AmericanFilmInstitute](https://TikTok/@AmericanFilmInstitute) and [YouTube.com/AFI](https://YouTube.com/AFI).

### **About Canva**

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