

Festival Guide

qathet film society
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GIFF

qathet international
film festival

March 1–9 2024

23rd annual qathet international film festival



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SCHEDULE

Friday, March 1

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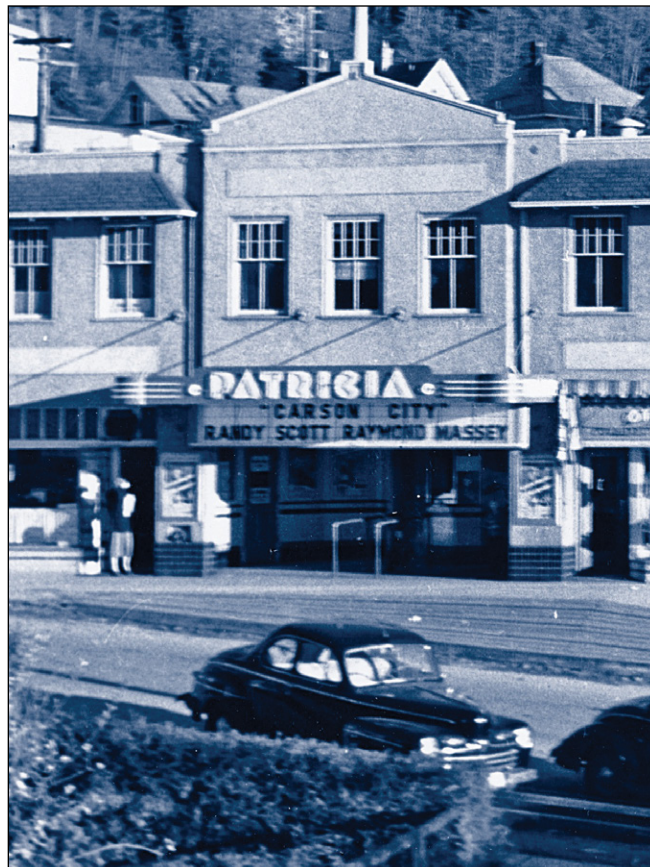
6:00 pm Closing Party

7 pm *Solo* pg 30

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The Revelation of Cinema

by Gary Shilling

“Cinema is about revelation – aesthetic, emotional and spiritual revelation. It is about characters – the complexity of people and their contradictory and sometimes paradoxical natures, the way they can hurt one another and love one another and suddenly come face to face with themselves.”

– Martin Scorsese

Filmmaker Martin Scorsese made headlines for expressing trepidation around what “the glut of franchise and comic book entertainment” is doing to cinema. “The danger there is what it’s doing to our culture,” Scorsese said in an interview with GQ, ahead of the Oct. 20 release of his latest movie *Killers of the Flower Moon*. “Because there are going to be generations now that think movies are only those — that’s what movies are.”

On a global scale, filmmaking is big business, with huge distribution networks and gargantuan budgets. Despite this, independent, small-town cinemas like the Patricia Theatre face increasing challenges to remain viable in this age of streaming and fragmentation of its customer base. Increased film rental costs also contribute to the challenges, with big distributors like Disney taking more than 64% of ticket revenue.

Whatever the scale, movies are arguably the best story telling medium there is. In programming the festival, we endeavor to connect local stories with stories from near and far through film. Cinema is unique in that it is a highly accessible social art form, participation in which generally cuts across economic lines. At the same time, at-

tending the cinema allows for the exercising of personal preferences and human need for distinction. In a nutshell, cinema attendance can be both a personally expressive experience, good fun, and therapeutic at the same time.

In his book, *The Power of Movies*, the author Colin McGinn suggests that movies are powerful because they are dream-like. His premise is based on the idea that cinema, as we experience it in the theatre, has power, that movies are powerful because they are living stories, and they do a good job of telling stories, just like the old days of myths being shared around the

Watching a film can be compared to entering a dream-state. What goes on in our minds when we become absorbed in a movie?

campfire. Looking into an open fire captivates us in a manner like the flickering lights of a film projection.

McGinn expands on how looking “into” the movie screen allows us to imagine the characters portrayed and know their thoughts and feelings; how what we see on the screen can seem to recapitulate the workings of consciousness itself; how the screen image is ideally suited to capturing both physical and emotional movements, depicting human feeling in all its variations; how heightened reality characterizes both film narrative and dreams; and how our connection to and perception of movies enables us to better understand aspects of our own nature.

We live in a world undergoing profound transformation, where individuals, communities, and businesses are dealing with the challenges brought about by a multitude of shocks. From geopolitical shifts to the pressing concerns of climate change and the rise of artificial intelligence, deep structural changes are unmistakably underway. While navigating this complex terrain, optimism may seem elusive. But even amidst a world fraught with problems and challenges, there are still reasons to find hope and things worth being optimistic about.

Watching a film can be compared to entering a dream-state. What goes on in our minds when we become absorbed in a movie? How does looking “into” a movie screen allow us to experience the thoughts and feelings of a movie’s characters? In a study titled “The Benefits of Getting Lost”, our current condition was summarized as a state of permanent distraction where work and personal lives are blended, while being bombarded with information. Going to the movie theatre provides a unique opportunity to unplug from reality and plug into the cinematic experience.

Rendered into art, the technical devices of film capture our attention and transport us. The element of cognitive clarity afforded by movies may well account for the widespread intensity of engagement that movies elicit. Entering the movie theatre and attending the curated cinematic journey that is the qathet international film festival might just be the right medicine for dreaming big, leaving your comfort zone, and surrendering to stories that transport us.

The Old Oak



The Old Oak is Ken Loach's fierce call for compassion and solidarity. At 87 years old, in what he says is his last film, the famous director wants his audience to think the unthinkable and rediscover a shared core of humanity.

It's the story of a village in the Northeast of England, where the mine closed, and people feel deserted by the system. Many young ones have left and what was once a thriving, proud community struggles to keep old values alive. But there is growing anger, resentment, and a lack of hope. The year is 2016 and the locals of this unnamed northeastern town are taken aback when a bus full of Syrian refugees arrives.

Every morning, pub landlord Tommy Joe Ballantyne (Dave Turner), the hero of the film, tries to fix the comically wonky sign outside his premises and opens the doors of The Old Oak. TJ, as the regulars call him, is divorced, estranged from his adult son, and of two minds about hanging around the former mining town where he tends bar. Few directors navigate

grey zones as well as Loach for whom conflicting emotions, competing motives and the agony and necessity of personal compromise have long been the mainstay of his formidable filmography.

Loach has sought out the painful and unfashionable subjects, marching to where the gunfire has been loudest. With *I, Daniel Blake* it was the vivisectional experiment of austerity; with *Sorry We Missed You* it was the serfdom of the gig economy. Now, in *The Old Oak*, it is the refugees housed in hostels all over the UK who are being abused and attacked by local people radicalised by social media.

"This is a humane, ultimately hopeful tale of empathy and solidarity and a refreshingly honest look at the many corners of our communities that Hollywood avoids by default."

— Ana Yorke
PopMatters

Directed by: **Ken Loach**
Country: **UK**
Language: **English**
Genre: **Drama**
Running Time: **1 hr 53 min**

Screening info:

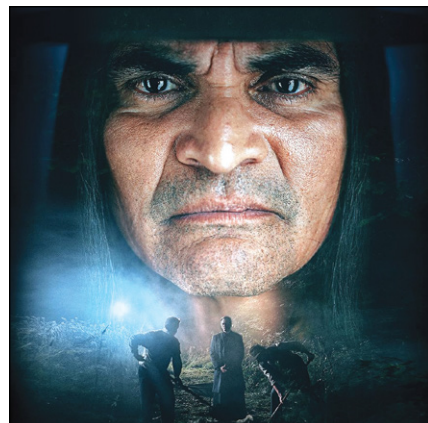
Friday March 1

6 pm Opening Party
7 pm Feature Film & Short
With Guests & Performance

Sponsor:



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Preceded by:
Cloud Striker
by A.W. Hopkins
17 min
English/Canada, 2023

Set in Western Canada in the 1930s, the Chief of an Indian Band rides for days to a Residential School to reclaim his son from church authorities.

The Delinquents



The Delinquents is a deliciously bizarre existential heist movie that wants you to steal back your life.

Like its characters, Moreno's banally surreal, big-little movie eschews the safe old daily grind in favor of the perilous unknown, and so, in a uniquely pleasurable way, reminds us that we too have options: Choose work, or choose the whole wide, weird world instead.

This ticklish saga follows the loose-limbed, gently surreal journeys of two colleagues who collude in robbing the bank where they work.

Buenos Aires bank employee Morán dreams up a scheme to liberate himself from corporate monotony: he'll steal enough money to support a modest retirement, then confess and serve prison time while his co-worker holds on to the cash.

The film shows us that bank employees, like all the other human beings we meet briefly and incuriously, have vivid and intense inner lives, just like everyone else, and a capacity for poetically rewriting their own identities. Breaking through the genre wall, *The Delin-*

quents is an astute existential heist movie that will reward patient viewers with a humorous fable about freedom. Over the course of its droll, indefinably strange three hours, it may well persuade you that the crazy thing is not to break from your normal routine.

"Effortlessly charming and more than a little generous with its asides, *The Delinquents* is a film that lays out surprises and delights like a lavish feast – although it's no surprise for those who've been paying attention."

— Josh Kupecki
Austin Chronicle

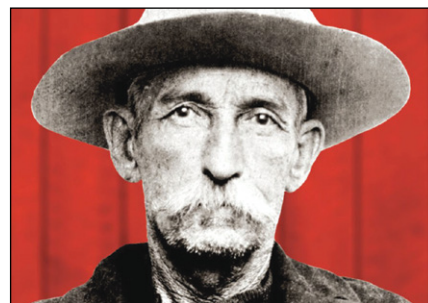
Directed by: **Rodrigo Moreno**
Country: **Argentina**
Language: **Spanish with English Subtitles**
Genre: **Comedy/Drama**
Running Time: **3 hr 9 min**

Screening info:

Saturday March 2

1:30 pm Feature Film & Short

Sponsor:



Preceded by:

Canada Vignettes: Bill Miner
by Peter Jones
1 min
English/Canada, 1978

Bill Miner was a train robber in British Columbia at the turn of the century. This NFB animated film depicts a disastrous episode in his career.

Patricia Theatre Conservation Plan



The Patricia Theatre, built in 1928, is both one of Canada's oldest operating theatres and one of its few surviving atmospheric theatres in the country. Architect H.H. Simmonds designed the theatre in the Powell River Townsite area. Built in Spanish Periodic Revival style, it is a wood-frame and stucco clad building located on its own property and grounds facing Ash Avenue. Existing landscaping and shrubbery have been maintained and historical interpretive data of the building's significance is displayed prominently around its perimeter.

Much of the original two-storey building facade facing Ash Avenue has endured over time. The storefronts flanking the recessed foyer and ticket booth area still retain the large display windows and horizontal transoms along with their recessed vestibules from the sidewalk level. However, the original marquee / canopy that projected from the center of the building over the sidewalk level has been removed.

The Patricia Theatre is a much beloved community landmark and possesses exceptional heritage

values, including its Period Revival architecture, its intact interior and exterior design features, and its continuous operation as a movie house and gathering space since 1928. It is a unique survivor from the time that local theatres were also used for vaudeville performances, as seen in the Patricia's proscenium arch and stage, raked and dished floor, sight lines and acoustic design.

A collaboration between prominent Vancouver theatre architect H.H. Simmonds and the talented Girvan Studios, the interior is resplendent with murals inspired by the atmospheric movie palaces of John Eberson. The Patricia has adapted over time to continue to serve the needs of the community, including the switch over to digital film projection. Further conservation work is now proposed to ensure that the heritage values of the Patricia are maintained and that functional requirements are updated.

The major proposed interventions of the overall project are to:

- restore the historic front facade of the Patricia Theatre based on archival documentation;

- restore the missing marquee / canopy;
- preserve surviving original interior character-defining elements, and repair in-kind as required;
- restore missing and/or heavily deteriorated interior elements, as necessary; and
- rehabilitate the interior space to accommodate servicing upgrades.

This Conservation Plan is based on Parks Canada's Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada. It outlines the preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation that will occur as part of the proposed upgrades.

Excerpt from Patricia Theatre Conservation Plan, prepared by Donald Luxton & Associates.



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Perfect Days



Perfect Days lingers on life's fleeting moments of splendour and is a poem of extraordinary subtlety and beauty.

It's a sublime validation of the ordinary, a film replete with grace, harmony, and hope that overwhelms and engulfs you in its humane world. Director Wim Wenders is in bracing, uncomplicated form: It hasn't the ecstatic spiritualist philosophy of *Wings of Desire* or the penetrating poetry of human and cultural desolation that marked *Paris, Texas*. But the new film's humane, hopeful embrace of everyday blessings is enough to make it Wenders' freshest, most rewarding and arthouse-friendly fiction feature in close to 30 years.

Distinguished screen veteran Koji Yakusho plays a middle-aged Tokyo man who has pared down his life to a routine of service and small pleasures in this delicate character study. The film follows this ritualistic existence, one day at a time — Hirayama watering his plants, buying a vending machine coffee outside of his apartment and getting in his van, grabbing a bite at the same spots — the routine keeping him grounded

and content. While at first each day appears the same, variations stand out from the constants.

Like the art it holds so dear, *Perfect Days* captures the awe, contentment, curiosity, delight and melancholy of existing that stretch out over a lifetime, but that can be evoked instantly when distilled into a song or image. Art and a life pursuing it, in big or small ways, is the driver of *Perfect Days*, which acts as a love letter to dreamers who chase the unknown and then wake up to do it all over again.

Throughout the film, Hirayama tries to capture the ephemeral among the daily minutiae, refining his own art, while being a great appreciator of the works of others.

"A sweet and sad slice-of-life about the comfort and sorrow of solitary repetition, buoyed by a Yakusho performance that rightly earned him the Best Actor prize at this year's Cannes Film Festival."

— Nick Schager
The Daily Beast

Directed by: **Wim Wenders**
Country: **Japan / Germany**
Language: **Japanese with English Subtitles**
Genre: **Drama**
Running Time: **2 hr 3 min**

Screening info:

Saturday March 2
7 pm Feature Film

Sponsor:

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PERFECT DAYS



The Taste of Things



The Taste of Things is the year's most sensuous love story, where food and passion collide in a luminous film about affection.

The languid 19th-century French romance stars Juliette Binoche as an ailing cook and Benoît Magimel as her devoted lover. Luxuriantly produced and beautifully observed by writer-director Trần Anh Hùng, the film layers subtle social-status humour alongside the sensory onslaught. The film is about the "how," not the "what". You get to know people best by understanding what obsesses them, the activities that interest them.

An unassuming culinary drama on the surface, Trần Anh Hùng's *The Taste of Things* is a rhapsodic romance and one of the year's most scintillating films. Set in the French countryside in the late 19th century, it follows famous gastronome Dodin Bouffant (Benoît Magimel) and his live-in cook, Eugénie (Juliette Binoche), who cooks both for him and with him, depending on the occasion. The actors, who were once married in real life, put on a clinic of passionate performance, deepening each scene and interaction far beyond your ordinary romantic drama.

Since it premiered and won a directing prize at the Cannes Film Festival last May, the film has been described as a gastronome's delight, a worthy heir to the food-porn throne occupied by classics like *Babette's Feast* and *Eat Drink Man Woman*. Despite its generally frictionless flow from meal to meal, its showstopping delicacies and subtly comical asides, *The Taste of Things* is haunted, from the start, by an awareness of the passage of time. Eugénie's own ailing health, her insistence on carrying on in the kitchen despite mysterious fainting spells, is a recurring reminder that nothing lasts forever, not yesterday's meals or even tomorrow's discoveries. Eloquently speaking the language of love through the art of cooking, one can't help but be swept away by the warmth of its storytelling.

"Easily the most sensuous film of the year, tantalizing your sense of taste and smell delectably. Plenty to savor here and the vivid culinary scenes are quite hypnotic."

— Ruth Maramis
FlixChatter Film Blog

Directed by: **Trần Anh Hùng**
Country: **France**
Language: **French with English Subtitles**
Genre: **Romance**
Running Time: **2 hr 14 min**

Screening info:

Sunday March 3
1:30 pm Feature Film

Sponsor:



Songs of Earth



Margreth Olin's *Songs of Earth* is a transcendent cinematic journey that beautifully and intimately weaves her personal connection to her aging parents into the breathtaking landscapes of Western Norway. Olin invites audiences to figuratively walk in her father's shoes in this visually awesome doc that shares his love for nature hikes. *Songs of Earth* deftly considers the preciousness of seemingly inconsequential elements that form the rhythms of daily life. Olin crafts a richly cinematic study of the power of nature, its awe-inspiring magnitude, and its merciless power.

The heart of the film lies in the tender portrayal of the filmmaker's aging parents, especially her 84-year-old father, Jørgen, a lifelong explorer of Norway's wilderness. As we accompany him on his daily hikes through the awe-inspiring valley of Oldedalen, a genuine and palpable connection between the characters and the natural world unfolds. *Songs of Earth*, executive produced by Liv Ullmann and Wim Wenders, is a unique tapestry of sound and image as Olin traverses the Norwegian landscape with her father. Nature is equally beautiful and

threatening in the picturesque views and the stories that Jørgen shares along the way.

It's a documentary that should be seen on the biggest screen at your disposal — whatever showcases its epic cinematography to its best advantage. The cinematography by Lars Erlend Tubaas Øymo offers a grand sense of scale, too, that beautifully captures the call of the wild that draws Jørgen back to the woods. *Songs of Earth* is a grand essay film: a beautiful work of art that evocatively reminds audiences of the natural wonders to preserve for generations to come. And a profound and metaphorical exploration of our place in the world. It's a testament to the enduring power of nature, a tribute to family, and an extraordinary cinematic experience that defies categorization.

"A remarkable, poetic meditation, *Songs of Earth* weaves the smallness of human lifespan into the grandness of the earth's history, and does it all with unspeakable beauty."

— Alicia Wilkinson
Vox

Directed by: **Margreth Olin**
Country: **Norway**
Language: **Norwegian with English Subtitles**
Genre: **Documentary**
Running Time: **1 hr 30 min**

Screening info:

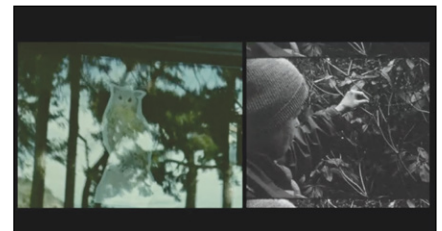
Sunday March 3

7 pm Feature Film & Short

Sponsor:

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Preceded by:

Jeanne's Hands
by Ryan Mathieson
3 min
English/Canada, 2023

A collection of moments in the presence of qathet-based artist Jeanne Mitchell. A story of images, Super 8 film and rhododendrons.

Patricia Theatre Restoration/Upgrades Progress



Since purchasing the theatre in 2021, the qathet film society has been actively engaged in protecting, restoring, and updating the facility. To date, we've replaced the roof; painted the exterior; and puttied and replaced all broken windows. The installation of new exit stairs from the balcony is imminent, and the design of a replica of the original canopy is nearly complete. This has developed into a more compli-

cated undertaking than expected, but thanks to the expertise of volunteers on our building committee, the fabrication is now underway.

Behind the scenes, we've updated the server that powers our projection system and now receive most of our films through direct digital downloads. Also on the horizon is the restoration and updating of the auditorium. This will entail painting the ceiling, repairing the damaged murals, and installing new seating. Yes! Thanks to a generous estate endowment by beloved volunteer, Diana Yenssen, the number one request on everyone's list will finally be fulfilled.

The seating is described by the manufacturer, Ferco Seating, as follows: "Cinemasgoers deserve the highest quality and comfort to complement their movie experience. The Paragon range is a sleek and modern collection, ergonomically designed. Not only are they extensively tested for durability at our in-house facility, but they are tried and tested in movie theatres around the world". The exact date of the auditorium updates are still to be determined, and expected in the later part of this year.

Congratulations to those selected for the 23rd Annual qathet International Film Festival!

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Seagrass



Meredith Hama-Brown's brilliant debut feature film spotlights the growing pains of a family in flux.

Both culturally and spiritually poignant as it dexterously juggles the perspectives of its protagonists, *Seagrass* effectively depicts the flourishing talents of Hama-Brown. Shot on 35mm film by Norm Li, the visual language of the film reflects the somber atmosphere of its protagonist's states of mind with purpose, emphasizing the cloudy skies above and the murky, darkening waters of the Pacific Ocean surrounding them. The film recently won the International Film Critic's Award at the Toronto International Film Festival.

Shot mainly on Gabriola Island and in Tofino, writer/director Meredith Hama-Brown turns reflections on her own racial identity into a raw and emotional drama about marriage, childhood, parenting, and this thorny thing we call family. Vaguely set in the 1990s, the film opens with two sisters, 11-year-old Stephanie (Nyha Breitzkreuz) and six-year-old Emmy (Remy Marthaller), playing on the deck of a ferry, the wind blowing wildly through their hair. It's summertime, and the girls are

enthralled, if slightly terrified, by the glistening, rushing waters below them.

As the adults work through addressing their complex issues in group therapy, the girls are left to their own devices, exploring seaside caverns and making new friends. Yet, this is no golden summer retreat for them either. Not only do they experience passive racism from the other kids, but they also come to that first bitter realization that your sibling might not always be your best friend and your parents might not always be there for you when you need them. The power lies in what's left unspoken in this devastating relationship drama by writer/director Hama-Brown, who exhibits a profound understanding and sensitive hand for exploring a woman's perspective of what it means to be a wife, sister, and mother.

"The film explores womanhood, sisterhood, grief, and racial identity in this remarkable debut feature."

— Vidhya Elango
Toronto Reel Asian Film Festival

Directed by: **Meredith Hama-Brown**
Country: **Canada**
Language: **English**
Genre: **Drama**
Running Time: **1 hr 55 min**

Screening info:

Monday March 4

7 pm Feature Film & Short

Sponsor:



Preceded by:

Stationery

by **Monica Rho**

5 min

English/Canada, 2005

This witty NFB animation explores the complexities and paradoxes of modern life, the isolation within today's crowded cities, and inner, emotional insecurities.

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Common Ground



Common Ground is a compelling documentary that sheds light on biodiversity, and the growing Regenerative Agriculture movement.

A follow-up to the acclaimed *Kiss the Ground*, the film is a star-studded and visually appealing film that also packs in an abundance of information making sure we understand how the combination of genetically modified crops, toxic pesticides, and a turn away from more natural farming methods have all worked together to destroy the vital carbon content of soil.

By fusing journalistic exposé with deeply personal stories from those on the front lines of the food movement, *Common Ground* unveils a dark web of money, power, and politics behind our broken food system. The film reveals how unjust practices forged our current farm system in which farmers of all colors are literally dying to feed us.

The film profiles a hopeful and uplifting movement of white, black, and indigenous farmers who are using alternative “regenerative” models of agriculture that could balance the climate, save our health, and stabilize America’s economy — before it’s too late.

This film’s central theme is “If the soil dies, we die.” That’s a little dramatic, but this detailed documentary by Directors Rebecca Harrell Tickell and Josh Tickell shows why. It’s all about regenerative farming, and why it should be the standard, not only to produce safer, healthier food, but how it could even help slow climate change. It is the goal of Regenerative farmers to help improve soil health across the continent and beyond, to grow and foster this ever-growing regenerative movement.

It is certainly food for thought, and it will move viewers on an emotional level and will spark meaningful conversations afterward on how we can make a difference for the betterment of our planet for the children and our future generations.

"That rare documentary that actually proposes solutions... practical solutions. I fear that the solutions will disappear into the void if we don't say anything."

— Alan Ng
Film Threat

Directed by: Josh Tickell & Rebecca Harrell Tickell

Country: USA

Language: English

Genre: Documentary

Running Time: 1 hr 45 min

Screening info:

Tuesday March 5

1:30 pm Feature Film & Short

Sponsor:



Preceded by:

Trees

by Robert Doucet

1 min

English/Canada, 1978

Life in Canada is reflected by people’s comments on trees as a tree is shown undergoing seasonal changes.

Monster



Hirokazu Kore-eda brings emotional nuance to *Monster*, a moral tale about school bullying, scored by the late Ryuichi Sakamoto.

The director offers up a deliberately dense but ultimately hopeful examination of how to negotiate family dysfunction with intelligence and humanity. The film challenges us with intricacy and complexity in this family drama about bullying, homophobia, family dysfunction, uncritical respect for flawed authority, and social media rumour-mongering; all working together to create a monster of wrongness.

In film after film, from *Nobody Knows* to *Shoplifters*, Japanese master Hirokazu Kore-eda has proven himself to be among the medium's most humanistic directors, inclined to see the best in people, especially children.

It's a story set against the background of a provincial elementary school, one whose intricate plotting and tricky time structure – designed both to make us work to understand who did what to who, and to play with our shifting sympathies – delivers rich dividends.

There is an emotional delicacy

here that keeps sentiment at bay, at least most of the time.

This film is quietly thrilling in how it manages to shake up its narrative, create emotional throughlines that resonate, and make one consider ideas regarding humanity as seen through the eyes of children. He challenges audiences to go beyond distinguishing between right from wrong and explore the intentions of our judgment and those we vilify.

Within the movie's three-part structure, Kore-eda seamlessly enters and exits genres while always maintaining the heart of the story. *Monster* leaves us hopeful under devastating circumstances. Nothing short of a masterpiece, it's a deeply moving damnation of the effects of shame.

"This exquisitely rendered work from Kore-eda is a delicate web of compassion and embattlement: three separate views of one stretch of momentous time, spun and re-spun with care and craft."

— Robert Abele
Los Angeles Times

Directed by: **Hirokazu Kore-eda**

Country: **Japan**

Language: **Japanese with English Subtitles**

Genre: **Drama**

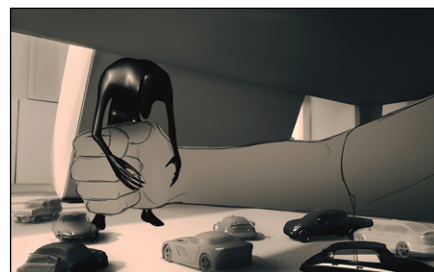
Running Time: **2 hr 5 min**

Screening info:

Tuesday March 5

7 pm Feature Film & Short

Sponsor:



Preceded by:

The Visitor

by David Barlow-Krelina,

1 min

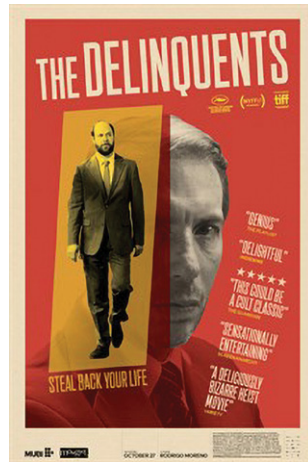
English/Canada, 2012

In this NFB animation, when a small boy is left alone to play in a large and empty house, a monster appears. The chase will not end until the boy discovers the source of his fears.

23rd annual qathet into



The Old Oak
6 pm Opening Party
Fri March 1 – 7 pm
1hr 32min | Drama
UK | English



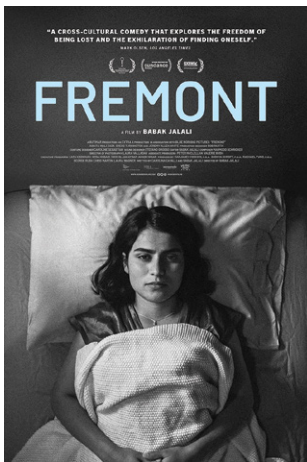
The Delinquents
Sat March 2 – 1:30 pm
3hr 9min | Drama
Argentina | Spanish



Perfect Days
Sat March 2 – 7 pm
2hr 3min | Drama
Japan/Germany | Japanese



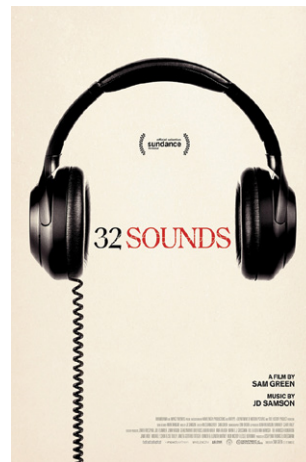
The Taste of Things
Sun March 3 – 1:30 pm
2hr 14min | Romance
France | French



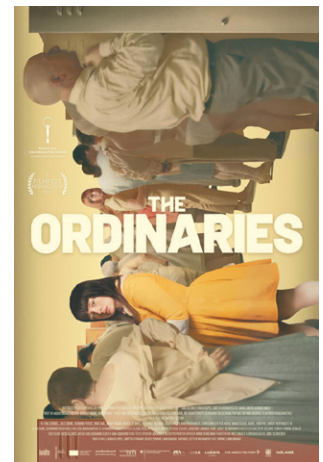
Fremont
Wed March 6 – 1:30 pm
1hr 31min | Drama
USA | English



Deep Rising
Wed March 6 – 7 pm
1hr 33min | Documentary
USA | English/Spanish



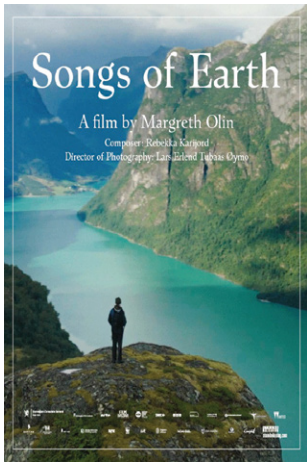
32 Sounds
Thur March 7 – 1:30 pm
1hr 30min | Documentary
USA | English



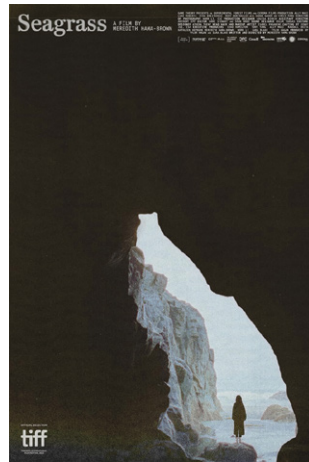
The Ordinaries
Thur March 7 – 7 pm
2hrs 4min | Sci Fi/Trigicomed
Germany | German

Festival Passes & Individual Tickets available online at qathetfilm.ca, at the Patricia Theatre

ernational film festival



Songs of the Earth
Sun March 3 – 7 pm
1hr 30min | Documentary
Norway | Norwegian



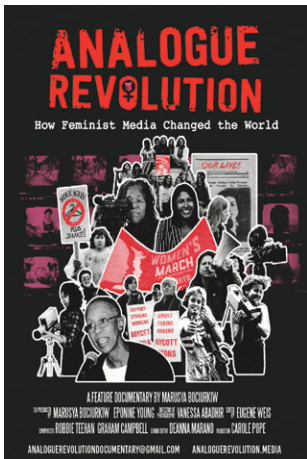
Seagrass
Mon March 4 – 7 pm
1hr 55min | Drama
Canada | English



Common Ground
Tue March 5 – 1:30 pm
1hr 45min | Documentary
USA | English



Monster
Tue March 5 – 7 pm
2hr 5min | Drama
Japan | Japanese



**Analogue Revolution:
How Feminist Media
Changed the World**
Fri March 8 – 1:30 pm
1hr 33min | Documentary
Canada | English/French



WaaPaKe
Fri March 8 – 7 pm
1hr 20min | Documentary
Canada | English/Cree



Fallen Leaves
Sat March 9 – 1:30 pm
1hr 21min | Comedy/Drama
Finland/Germany | Finnish



Solo
6 pm Closing Party
Sat March 9 – 7 pm
1hr 41min | Romance
Canada | French

box office during box office hours before the Festival, and at the door during the Festival

Fremont



Fremont takes its title from the Bay Area city of the same name. Often called Little Kabul, it's home to one of the largest enclaves of Afghans in the United States, with many immigrants gravitating toward it for a sense of community. That's what Donya (Anaita Wali Zada) is searching for: Community. Connection. Love.

It's a dry, sweet, Jarmusch-inspired tale about an Afghan translator finding her voice. The black-and-white indie drama strikes a beautiful tone with a deadpan sense of humor, aided by Anaita Wali Zada's quietly poignant performance.

A former translator for American troops in Kabul — a role that eventually allowed her to leave her birth country but left her with unresolved feelings of guilt and shame — 20 something Donya now lives by herself in a Fremont, California, apartment complex full of other Afghan immigrants. Working in a Chinese fortune cookie factory, she decides to send out a special message in one of the cookies. "The fortune you're looking for is in another cookie," reads one of the many custom fortune cookie messages she crafts.

The biggest achievement of Jalali here is the precise tone that he strikes with his mild-mannered movie: always several feet deeper in its themes and deliberations around human isolation than meets the eye. In its final moments, the potency of *Fremont* sneaks up on you.

The film settles into the sort of semi-enchanted deadpan that flattens its world into a gentle monotone, making its strangeness feel ordinary, and its ordinariness feel strange... a sensation not unlike the vertigo of escaping to the far side of the planet only to find yourself surrounded by people from home.

You go in reluctant and even skeptical and come out wondering how and why you're moved to tears.

"This is the kind of movie whose amiable directionlessness and romantic gentleness generate a lot of warmth; it's the kind of independent film which we haven't seen a lot of lately, endowed with intimacy and a kind of dreamy charm."

— Peter Bradshaw
The Guardian

Directed by: **Babak Jalali**

Country: **USA**

Language: **English**

Genre: **Drama**

Running Time: **1 hr 31 min**

Screening info:

Wednesday March 6

1:30 pm Feature Film & Short

Sponsor:



Preceded by:

Esther and Sai

by Anaïsa Visser and Rosie Pidcock

13 min

English/Canada, 2021

Based on a true story, this independent film captures the struggle of immigrating to a new country through the beginning of a lifelong friendship.

Morning-After Film Salons



This year's Film Festival welcomes the return of our popular Morning-After Film Salons. They will take place upstairs in our new Media Lounge, and will be led by Jason Schreurs. These Salons are open to anyone attending films at the festival and are a welcoming place for discussion of the previous day's screenings.

The Salons take place at 12pm on every day that has an afternoon matinee scheduled. They

run for approximately an hour, depending on the depth of discussion, and participants can go directly to the 1:30 matinee after the discussion.

Coffee and treats will be supplied. Special thanks to 32 Lakes Café and Bakery for their support. This is a great opportunity to deepen your understanding of the films at the Festival and to share your thoughts with other film lovers.



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Deep Rising



Matthieu Rytz's documentary, *Deep Rising*, about the bounty at the bottom of the sea, examines the fight over whether to reap these riches or preserve them.

Five years after *Anote's Ark*, he returns with this up-to-the-minute tale of geopolitical, scientific, and corporate intrigue that exposes the machinations of a secretive organization empowered to greenlight massive extraction of metals from the deep seafloor that are deemed essential to the electric battery revolution. Narrated by Jason Momoa, *Deep Rising* illuminates the vital relationship between the deep ocean and sustaining life on Earth.

The film mixes spectacular views of deep ocean life with a look at opposing sides in a largely under-the-radar international fight over whether to mine minerals from those hitherto unspoiled, barely-explored depths.

Essential for anyone who has bought into the new green revolution, *Deep Rising* is a warning that there are no quick fixes, and we should always be wary of miracle solutions, as none really exist. Developing any technology

too quickly can lead to its environmental consequences being overlooked. That's particularly risky when it comes to the deep ocean, because we still know very little about how its ecosystems operate.

The footage of iridescent creatures with billowing tentacles or translucent bodies mesmerizes but it also creates contemplative pauses amid the documentary's facts, interviews, and the damning history of the mining industry. The optimism here resides in the filmmaker's trusting his audience to grapple with the entwined fates of the seafloor, its inhabitants and humankind. Rytz associates the hunt for wealth on the ocean floor to the scramble for land and resources during the colonial era.

He ends on a note of hope, looking at under-used surface resources. Can we get to grips with this problem and start focusing on the right solutions, rather than the easy but incredibly risky ones, before it is too late?

"Visually this is a winner."

— Amber Wilkinson
Screen International

Directed by: **Matthieu Rytz**

Country: **USA**

Language: **English & Spanish**

Genre: **Documentary**

Running Time: **1 hr 33 min**

Screening info:

Wednesday March 6

7 pm Feature Film & Short

Sponsor:



Preceded by:

ARK

by **Kent Tate**

4 min

English/Canada, 2023

This experimental film describes a time when we had a front row seat where it seemed that we could see everything yet it felt as if we were seeing nothing at all.



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32 Sounds



32 Sounds is the greatest documentary you've ever heard. Sam Green's free-form look at how sound shapes our perceptions of the world and triggers sense memories will completely change the way you listen — to art, the movies and life.

Why only 32? The filmmaker was inspired by the 1993 hybrid film *Thirty-Two Short Films About Glenn Gould*, directed by François Girard, which had in turn been inspired by Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, a signature piece for pianist Gould which itself consists of 32 pieces of music when played in its entirety. Green's movie is all about audio—how we hear it, why it moves us, the different ways in which it can be heard.

Full to bursting with humour, emotion and curiosity, it's a uniquely mind-expanding plunge into a dimension of the human experience so many of us take for granted, a rare and rewarding sonic journey with the potential to enrich our lives.

Occasionally, Green will ask you to close your eyes, the better to hear something; he'll let whatever audio he's picked play over a blank

screen as a back-up plan. You don't have to shut off your other senses. He just wants you to give priority to your ears for 90-plus minutes.

32 Sounds is Green's attempt to chart what sound means to us — how it shapes our perceptions, what it stimulates in our memories, the way it can bridge the gap between the past and the present. But more than anything, Green and his collaborator, Le Tigre's multi-instrumentalist JD Samson, want to give you something immersive, that forces you to rethink something many of us take for granted on a daily basis.

"The sounds are finite, yet the benefits of tuning in to the film's wavelengths are endless. It's the greatest documentary you've ever heard."

— David Fear
Rolling Stone

"A remarkable documentary and something you'll never forget."

— Mike Lasalle
San Francisco Chronicle

Directed by: **Sam Green**

Country: **USA**

Language: **English**

Genre: **Documentary**

Running Time: **1 hr 37 min**

Screening info:

Thursday March 7

1:30 pm Feature Film & Short
With Performance

Co-Presenter:

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Preceded by:

Listen

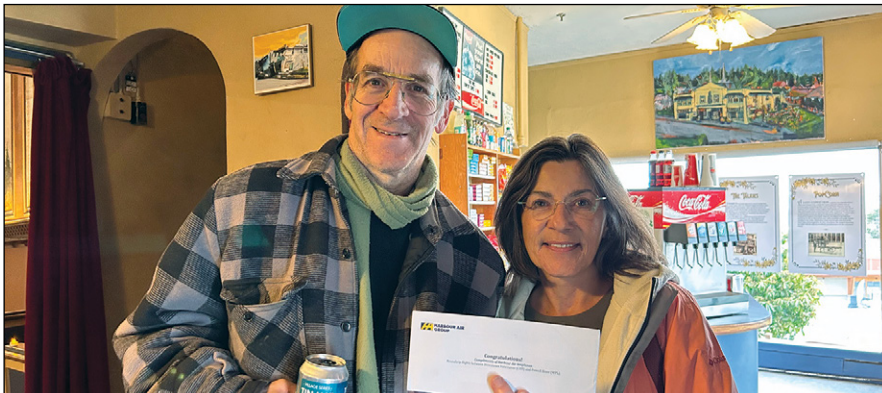
by David New

6 min

English/Canada, 2009

Renowned composer R. Murray Schafer gives us a lesson on soundscapes and listening in this NFB film for the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards.

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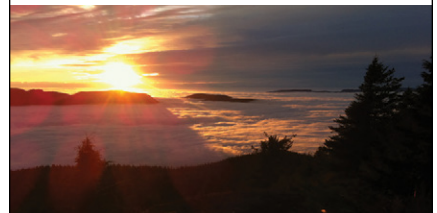
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The Ordinaries



Directed by: **Sophie Linnenbaum**

Country: **Germany**

Language: **German with English Subtitles**

Genre: **Sci Fi / Tragicomedy**

Running Time: **1 hr 31 min**

Screening info:

Thursday March 7

7 pm Feature Film & Short

Filmmaker Sophie Linnenbaum makes an inventive debut with *The Ordinaries*, a political satire set in a parallel cinematic world.

In a repressive three class-society, Paula, a simple Supporting Character, is about to face the most important test of her life: she must prove she deserves to be a Lead. The director says of her delightfully imaginative debut: "At the core of constructing *The Ordinaries* lies a pivotal inquiry: 'How do we narrate our stories, and about whom do we choose to narrate?'"

Like a higher God above, her characters are existing for the entertainment of an unknown viewer. Their lives are determined by a personal "musical score," "cuts" and "monologues." The inhabitants are divided into main characters, side characters and the lowest ranks, film mistakes, miscasts, and even worse, outtakes.

Unleashing a series of references, visual homages and nerdy film jokes unto the viewers, Linnenbaum has a lot of fun in creating a parallel universe, in which our fondest film memories and cliches serve a deeper, darker purpose of

retraining our gaze.

The Ordinaries is a splendid and clever film which gives those who cannot speak a voice to display their perspective and suggests that beyond any façade is a truth that is more powerful when it is confronted and accepted. There's something about Sophie Linnenbaum's debut film that takes your breath away. It's probably the way it takes this meta-cinema "film within a film" trope to higher concepts with ease and awe.

There are echoes of Terry Gilliam's Brazil and the magic realist social disobedience of *The Cassandra Cat*, as well as staples such as Peter Weir's *The Truman Show*, but Linnenbaum's work is unique despite a level of familiarity.

"An absurd, fascinating, and funny film that deserves more than one viewing."

— Ricardo Gallegos
La Estatuilla

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Preceded by:

AfterLifetime of Colm Feore

by Hannah Cheesman

5 min

English/Canada, 2019

After winning a lifetime achievement award, there's nowhere left to go but down... into the bowels of the Afterlifetime Achievement Agency, a placement service that helps Laureates find their next gig.

Special Guests at qiff 2024

We have an exciting line up of filmmakers, performers, and special guests at this year's film festival. On opening night, March 1, local actor and star **Kymo Van Oers** will introduce the short film *Cloud Striker*, along with director **A.W. Hopkins**. Kymo can tell us about fighting back in this historical film on Residential School abuse. **Old Enough to Know Better** will perform during the opening party. • On March 3, local filmmaker **Ryan Mathieson** will premiere his experimental film *Jeanne's Hands*, shot on Super 8 film in a garden in Lund. • Getting us in the mood to listen, **Cuore Piano Trio** will perform prior to *32 Sounds* on March 7. • International Women's Day, Friday, March 8, is an especially moving day with filmmakers at both screenings. **MP Rachel Blaney** will speak inspiring words in honour of IWD. In the afternoon, director **Marusya Bociurkiw**, and film subjects **Penny Goldsmith** and **Nancy Pollak** will introduce *Analogue Revolution: How Feminist Media Changed the World*. In the Q&A, moderated by **Peg Campbell**, they will give more background on the work of feminist media collectives in Canada from the 1970's to today. • Local Tla'amin filmmaker **Eileen Francis** will premiere her short film *tiskwət* in the evening, with director **Dr. Jules Koostachin** and NFB producer **Teri Snelgrove** introducing their feature *WaaPaKe* (Tomorrow). **Dr. Evan Adams** will hold a conversation with Jules after the screening. Join our guests for the Morning-After Film Salon on Saturday, March 9 at noon, upstairs in the Patricia's Media Lounge where **Teri Snelgrove** will give an overview of NFB documentary productions. Local author **Jason Schreurs** hosts these daily salons. • Closing out our festival, drag queen **Connie Smudge** will perform extravagantly.



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Analogue Revolution: How Feminist Media Changed the World



Analogue Revolution: How Feminist Media Changed the World covers a variety of media from print magazines to radio shows, creating a picture of the intertwined lines of communication.

The film highlights how decentralized information was in the 70s, showing the audience how feminist media worked towards filling this gap. Narrated by Canadian rock icon Carole Pope, the documentary features media activists such as Susan G. Cole (Broadside Feminist Review), Grace Channer (Our Lives Black Women's Newspaper) and Dykes on Mykes, the longest-running lesbian radio show in the world.

Directed by filmmaker Marusya Bociurkiw, the documentary catches up with the many feminist storytellers from Halifax to Vancouver of the 1970s to 1990s, who took hold of cutting-edge media technology to document everything from violence towards women to how to insert a diaphragm.

The mixed media in the film is an integral part of bringing the audience into the story, and the memories of the storytellers on screen.

Self-described as “a film about an archive without an archivist,” *Analogue Revolution* beautifully conveys parts of otherwise forgotten history of the media's place in the feminist revolution.

The documentary also addresses how even though feminist media was gaining traction, representation for women of colour was still sorely lacking. Power was only in the hands of white women—queer women and women of colour had to fight to have their voices heard and carve out spaces for storytelling that authentically represented their communities.

“Analogue feminist media in the 70's and 80's was an intricate, world-changing, sophisticated network that anticipated the internet,” says Bociurkiw, who is also a professor of Media Theory at Toronto Metropolitan University. “Cutbacks and moral panics in the 1990's changed all that. I'm glad to see that even Barbie is now identified with feminism – but young women also need to know what came before.”

Directed by: **Marusya Bociurkiw**
Country: **Canada**
Language: **English and French with English Subtitles**
Genre: **Documentary**
Running Time: **1 hr 33 min**

Screening info:

Friday March 8

1:30 pm Feature Film & Short
With Guests

Sponsor:



Preceded by:

Assembly
by **Jenn Strom**
4 min
English/Canada, 2012

This NFB experimental short animation is inspired by Kathleen Shannon and Studio D (1975-1994), the NFB production department aimed at creating filmmaking opportunities for women in Canada.

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WaaPaKe



WaaPaKe, directed by Dr. Jules Arita Koostachin, offers a compelling exploration of the intergenerational impact of residential schools on Indigenous families, shedding light on a dark chapter in Canadian history.

Koostachin, her mother, her son, friends, and community members bravely confront the past in *WaaPaKe*. It's a story about resilience, love and transformation. Examined through an Indigenous lens, the stories of residential school survivor-warriors and their families offer an understanding of both intergenerational trauma and healing.

Through compassionate, candid conversations, Koostachin shares interviews with five individuals, family and friends, that all directly or indirectly experienced intergenerational trauma.

The film is predominantly shot in a neutral and safe space against a green screen, allowing for the liberation of voices. We see key behind-the-scenes moments that speak as loudly as her subjects' stories.

Each interview begins with Koostachin asking her subjects to introduce themselves, including in their language and with traditional

introductions, if they feel comfortable. Several of her subjects admit, with some embarrassment and anger, that they don't know their language and will have to do so in English.

The testimony from Jules Koostachin herself ties the film together. She's so articulate about her anger, lost childhood, and the challenges of being raised by a traumatized woman who never had a childhood. She also understands the need to balance her trauma with compassion for her mother. Her frankness, she notes, may be controversial.

Ultimately, the film is about hope for the future, as the title *WaaPaKe*, which means "tomorrow" in Cree, suggests. The film ends with an image of the subjects gathering in a smokehouse outside the studio. They then walk outside into the sunlight with newfound hope and confidence. It's hard not to share the joy and catharsis of important stories finally being told.

Directed by: Jules Arita Koostachin

Country: Canada

Language: English and Cree with English Subtitles

Genre: Documentary

Running Time: 1 hr 20 min

Screening info:

Friday March 8

7 pm Feature Film & Short
With Guests

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Preceded by:

tiskwæt

by Eileen Francis

3 min

English and Ayajuthem with English subtitles
Canada, 2024

Joshua Degroot's poem is based on Tla'amin oral testimony and lovingly spoken by the Tla'amin Nation.

Fallen Leaves



Set in present-day Helsinki, *Fallen Leaves* is a melancholy romantic comedy about two lonely souls who sleepwalk through life in dead-end jobs.

A wonderful Alma Pöysti stars as the soulful Ansa, a 40-ish woman who earns minimum wage at a supermarket that treats its employees as if they were thieves.

Aki Kaurismäki is the Finnish director who is notable for being not simply one of the directors who is always welcome in the Cannes competition, but also is one of the rarer subset who actually makes funny films; that is, actually-funny and not just arthouse-funny. It's romantic and sweet-natured, in a deadpan style that in no way undermines or ironises the emotions involved and with some sharp things to say about contemporary politics.

Fallen Leaves is not a big movie, but then again, bigness is beside the point. While the film may be small, Kaurismäki understands that his characters' yearning for love is not. Kaurismäki has such deep affection for his characters—and chooses such subtly expressive actors to bring them to life—that he can never allow them to suffer

for long.

Ansa and Holappa have an ill-fated dinner date; Ansa tells him that she's lost family to alcoholism, and she cannot tolerate his drinking. He stomps off angrily, informing her that she can't tell him what to do. But as he does so, he knows how much he's losing.

Great dogs are a hallmark of Kaurismäki's movies. Ansa adopts a winsome dog that has been hanging around the factory where she works, brings him home, and bathes him.

Everything about the moment is beautiful, including the colour scheme. There's joy to be found in colour, in the companionship of animals, in love that's hard won. Kaurismäki reopens our eyes to all these things, things we sometimes forget we know. He's the patron saint of reminding; the miracle, he knows, is already right inside us.

Their story builds to a gorgeous ending with a great and revelatory final joke.

Directed by: **Aki Kaurismäki**
Country: **Finland / Germany**
Language: **Finnish with English Subtitles**

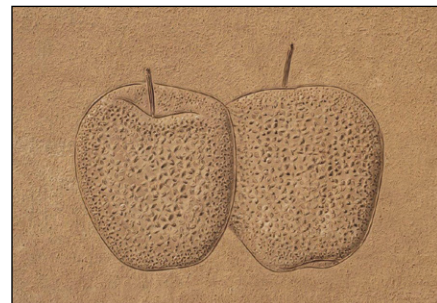
Genre: **Comedy / Drama**
Running Time: **1 hr 21 min**

Screening info:

Saturday March 9
1:30 pm Feature Film & Short

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Preceded by:
Two Apples
by **Bahram Javahery**
9 min
English/Canada, 2022

When a young woman leaves her homeland in search of a better future, she brings with her a single memento from her past: a ripe apple studded with fragrant cloves, in this NFB animated film.

Solo



Solo follows Simon, a rising star of Montreal drag queen scene who is simultaneously facing the disappointment of two impossible loves — one of a passionate but destructive crush with Oliver, and the other of a cold and distant relationship with his mother Claire, who has returned home after a 15-year absence.

Set in Montreal's drag scene, director Sophie Dupuis constructs an intimate portrait of love and the toxic relationships that are hard to break. Simon (Théodore Pellerin) is a talented makeup artist by day, but his creative side shines brightest when performing in drag on stage at a local bar show.

Solo celebrates love within the queer community, and it does so beautifully. But what's even lovelier about *Solo* is that it's a film about finding that love within yourself first. That's challenging for anyone but particularly amongst queer people — who are far too often told that we are unworthy of love and that something is inherently wrong with who we are. But finding that love within yourself has a

power as transformative as drag itself.

Winner of the Best Canadian Feature Film Award at this year's Toronto International Film Festival, *Solo* is a film that earns its emotional beats.

Dupuis avoids many of the familiar tropes audiences might expect from a film set within the world of drag. Instead of focusing on trauma and hate, she allows her characters to simply exist as regular people trying to make sense of the confusing nature of love.

A vibrant and emotionally rich tale, it's a reminder that one is never alone when you learn to love yourself.

"While *Solo* situates Simon's growth within a clearly defined chosen family, the film ultimately hinges on Pellerin's performance. It's a lively star-is-born turn in which one sees an actor fully come into his own."

— Pat Mullen
Xtra Magazine

Directed by: **Sophie Dupuis**
Country: **Canada**
Language: **French with English Subtitles**
Genre: **Romance**
Running Time: **1 hr 41 min**

Screening info:

Saturday March 9

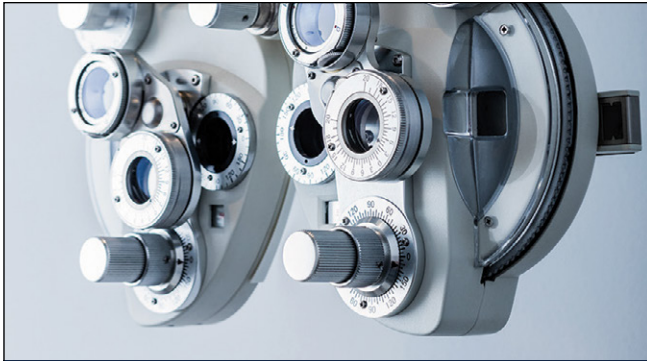
6 pm Closing Party
7 pm Feature Film & Short
With Performance

Sponsor:



Preceded by:
Reviving the Roost
by Vivek Shraya
6 min
English/Canada, 2019

With pulsating neon-light NFB animation, this ode to a popular Edmonton gay bar that closed in 2007 is a story about community complexity and longing, and an elegy to a lost space.



IRIS

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