

DOXA

MAY 1-11 2025

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DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL



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CONTENTS

The Documentary Media Society.....	4	Closing Gala Film	21	paraDOXA.....	38
Welcome from DOXA.....	5	DOXA Industry	22	Justice Forum	44
Greetings from Our Funders.....	7	RETROSPECTIVE		SPOTLIGHT	
Thank You to Our Partners	8	Simone Bitton	24	(Re)formations	48
Thank You to Our Donors	11	CURATED PROGRAM		SPOTLIGHT	
Tickets and Festival Info.....	12	<i>Legacies that Empower: The Enduring Spirit</i>		Demonic Grounds	50
Awards and Juries	14	<i>Of A Forgotten Festival</i> by zaina bseiso.....	28	Shorts Programs	52
Opening Gala Film	17	Rated Y for Youth	32	Nationwide.....	61
Mid Week Film	19	Screening Schedule.....	35	International.....	66
		Venues	38		

SCREENINGS

#skoden.....	32	Goat Fish Snake Sparrow.....	57	Saints and Warriors.....	21, 64
a flower not a flower.....	53	Have You Heard Judi Singh?.....	63	Sanctuary Station	43
A Journey of the Leaves.....	52	Higher than Acidic Clouds.....	49, 71	Semi-precious	53
A Stone's Throw على مرمى حجر.....	59	HUAQUERO.....	41	Silent Observers	73
Aisha's Story.....	17, 61	in retrospect.....	58	Six Knots.....	59
Al Basateen	58	King Arthur's Night	33	Songs of Slow Burning Earth.....	74
Among Mountains and Streams	48, 61	Leap, The.....	57	Spare My Bones, Coyote!.....	50, 64
Archeology of Light	40	Messengers.....	53	Sudan, Remember Us.....	45
Bedrock.....	50, 63	Mistress Dispeller	71	Talking Walls.....	55
Bogancloch.....	66	Mr. Nobody Against Putin.....	19, 72	This Dissonance.....	59
Brink of Dreams, The	66	My Memory-Walls	55	Thousand and One Days of Hajj Edmond, The	12, 25
Burcu's Angels.....	55	Nechako—It Will Be a Big River Again.....	44	To Use a Mountain	43, 74
Cats of Gokogu Shrine, The.....	67	No Past to Long For	58	Tree of Authenticity, The	51
Citizen-Inmate.....	58	Paris to Pyongyang	57	UNEARTH	47
Coexistence, My Ass!.....	44	Paul	63	Valentina and the MUOsters	51
Correct Me If I'm Wrong 如你所愿	52	perfectly a strangeness.....	53	Wall	27
Direct Action.....	67	Pickers, The	47	Who Loves the Sun.....	59
Eastern Anthems.....	42	Pidikwe (Rumble).....	57	You May Laugh At Me A Little	52
Eight Postcards from Utopia.....	48	Pitoteyihtam / They Are Sacred.....	33	Your Harvest May Be Delayed	52
Entretierra	58	Predators	72	Ziyara.....	27
Entropic Memory	52	qats'ay.....	57		
Free Party.....	49, 69	Rachel.....	25		
GEN.....	69	Revolving Rounds	40		

THE DOCUMENTARY MEDIA SOCIETY

OUR MISSION:

To support a better understanding of the complexity of our times through engaging the public in documentary media as an art form.

WE'RE COMMITTED TO:

- Cultivating curiosity and critical thought
- Promoting the intersection of actuality and artistic expression
- Fostering a local and international community interested in non-fiction media

OUR MANDATE:

DOXA (pronounced *dox'-ah*) is a Greek word meaning common belief or popular opinion.

DOXA is presented annually by The Documentary Media Society, a Vancouver based non-profit charitable society (incorporated in 1998), devoted to presenting independent and innovative documentaries to Vancouver audiences. The Documentary Media Society is a founding member tenant of the 110 Arts Co-op, which manages The Post at 750, a collection of office and studio facilities.

The Documentary Media Society is located on stolen land, the ancestral territories of the *xʷməθkʷəy̓əm* (Musqueam), *Skwxwú7mesh* (Squamish) and *səlilwətaɣ* (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples. We are grateful for the opportunity to present challenging and affirming nonfiction media on these lands, which have been cared for by *xʷməθkʷəy̓əm*, *Skwxwú7mesh* and *səlilwətaɣ* peoples in perpetuity. To work and live on stolen land requires consistent interrogation of given histories, systems and identities. We believe that documentaries can be an important tool in this process.

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WELCOME FROM DOXA

WELCOME FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

On behalf of the Documentary Media Society Board of Directors, I'm pleased to welcome you to the 24th Annual DOXA Documentary Film Festival.

Having been a DOXA Board member for several years and as the current Board Chair, I'm honoured to have a strong connection with this festival. It's always with pleasure and awe that I witness the tireless efforts of dedicated staff and volunteers to bring documentary cinema, in its various formats, to Vancouver audiences. As we navigate our way through these current times and the roller coaster of events both abroad and close to home, it's important to remember the power of nonfiction storytelling as an important medium. Documentaries can provide a larger understanding of the world through a diversity of experiences and voices. In this, DOXA always embraces its mission: To support a better understanding of the complexity of our times through engaging audiences in documentary media as an art form.

We extend a warm welcome to the local, national, and international filmmakers whose films will screen at this year's festival. Through festival forums where filmmakers and audiences can engage in vibrant dialogue, we strive to cultivate curiosity and foster critical thinking. Engaging with each other through communal viewing and discussion is at the heart of connection, understanding, compassion and empathy.

Organizing the festival is an immense task involving many talented people. It would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of our staff, volunteers, and Board members. Thank you all. I would also like to thank former Board Chair, Debra Pentecost, for the passion, care and devotion that she extended to DOXA for more than a decade as a Board member. Debra brought knowledge, experience, intelligence and her deep love for documentary film with her, and these are missed by us all.

I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our funders, sponsors, and donors whose support we could not do without. Finally, we are deeply grateful to the filmmakers and our audiences—your presence and engagement fosters discourse through documentary to provoke a deeper understanding of the world and ourselves. To all, we hope that you enjoy this year's festival!

Jamala MacRae
BOARD CHAIR

WELCOME FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

The course of current events could distract us from documentary—why confront new realities when we're already confronting so much daily? However, documentary is a bridge between art and reality; it wakes us up to the complexity, harshness, but also the hopes that surround us.

At DOXA, film lives within society, not alongside it. This is why I am thrilled to announce the return of the **Kris Anderson Connexions Program**, our mentorship initiative that supports emerging filmmakers. Beyond the theatre, DOXA's mission is to foster creativity and amplify diverse perspectives on our shared reality.

I want to extend a special thank you to all our volunteers, Board members, partners, donors and audience members. The festival would be impossible without you! While DOXA also experiences the upheavals of our world, we also remain resilient and focused on our mission. It is with great pleasure that in my first year as Managing Director of DOXA, I welcome you to the festival!

Arnaud Menindes
MANAGING DIRECTOR

WELCOME FROM THE PROGRAMMING OPERATIONS + INDUSTRY MANAGER

While working on the programming for DOXA this year, we found ourselves returning to a fundamental question: What can a film do? Beyond representation, beyond capturing reality, how does cinema intervene and spark new ways of thinking? This year, we have chosen films that exemplify resistance; beyond embracing resistance as a theme, these films are forces of resistance that disrupt what appears fixed and bring into view that which has been purposely hidden. The **Justice Forum** presents films that confront power structures and spark dialogue and social change. **Rated Y for Youth** connects young audiences with documentary cinema, fostering media literacy and meaningful engagement with Canadian documentaries. And, in its debut year, **paraDOXA** highlights experimental films that push the boundaries of documentary and reimagine its form.

On behalf of the DOXA team, welcome to a festival that challenges, disrupts, and reimagines. See you at the theatre!

Marianne Thodas
PROGRAMMING OPERATIONS + INDUSTRY MANAGER

Proudly partnering with Doxa,
Telefilm Canada is excited to present
independent and innovative documentaries
that captivate and inspire.

Join us in celebrating the magic of film
and honoring the stories that define us.

Let's come together to explore the world
through a new lens.

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GREETINGS FROM OUR FUNDERS

On behalf of Premier David Eby, and the Government of British Columbia, I would like to welcome you to the 2025 DOXA Documentary Film Festival.

For 24 years, DOXA has played a key role in Vancouver's arts scene. It's not just a festival—it's an important platform to showcase stories that inspire, challenge, and spark change. The documentaries you will see here have the power to open minds, push boundaries, and bring people together.

B.C. is full of amazing talent, and we truly value the creativity and passion that local filmmakers bring to life. Events like DOXA show us how art inspires, empowers, and drives meaningful conversations. We are proud to support DOXA through Creative BC and the BC Arts Council. Thank you to the filmmakers for your commitment to sharing your diverse perspectives and stories.

Best wishes for a fantastic festival!



Sincerely,
**Honourable
Spencer Chandra Herbert**
MINISTER OF TOURISM, ARTS,
CULTURE AND SPORT



Julie Roy
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CEO
TELEFILM CANADA

Congratulations to DOXA Documentary Film Festival from all of us at Creative BC!

We're proud to support DOXA, a vital platform for documentary storytelling and a champion of independent voices in British Columbia and beyond. For over two decades, DOXA has sparked essential conversations, showcased bold filmmaking, and strengthened our province's documentary community.

Creative BC is grateful to the organizers, volunteers, filmmakers, and audiences who make this festival possible. Together, you continue to create space for truth, creativity, and connection. Congratulations on another outstanding season. Here's to the stories that challenge, inspire, and reflect the world around us—and to DOXA's ongoing impact on B.C.'s creative sector.



Prem Gill
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
CREATIVE BC

The arts help us tell our stories, recognize our shared humanity and build a vision for the future together. The world needs more of what the arts provide—more beauty, more conversation and more connection—and that's why there has never been a more urgent need to show support.

Arts organizations and artists are essential to their communities, ensuring that people across Canada have the opportunity to experience innovation. The Canada Council for the Arts is proud to support the DOXA Documentary Film Festival and its creativity in bringing cinema to life for audiences from coast to coast.



Michelle Chawla
DIRECTOR AND
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
CANADA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS

Welcome to DOXA! BC Arts Council is proud to support this outstanding festival that allows audiences to learn and think critically about the world around them through the richness of documentary film. DOXA has provided a platform for this essential filmmaking practice, and a venue for the discovery of innovative documentaries since 2000. This year, with many events and films to take in over the festival, there is sure to be something for everyone to spark interest or grow the mind. Congratulations to the team from The Documentary Media Society for putting on this inspiring festival!



Sincerely,
Dr. Sae-Hoon Stan Chung
CHAIR
BC ARTS COUNCIL

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

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Western Front
303 E 8th Ave
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westernfront.ca

Exhibition
May 3 — Jul 26, 2025
Holly Marie Parnell

Cirrus



Holly Marie Parnell, *Cirrus* (2025), video still. Courtesy of the artist.



We sincerely appreciate the generous support of our individual donors. Your contributions help us continue presenting the best in documentary media, and we are truly grateful for your commitment to our work. Thank you for being a vital part of our community, we couldn't do it without you!

DONATE TO THE HOLDSTOCK FUND

Help DOXA raise \$5,000 for the Holdstock Fund, connecting filmmakers and audiences each year. With the generous support of Roger Holdstock, former DOXA Board member, this fund helps DOXA bring filmmakers and special guests from across Canada and around the globe to the festival. To donate, scan the QR code or visit: doxafestival.ca/donate



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...and all of our anonymous donors

TICKETS AND FESTIVAL INFO

MEMBERSHIP

DOXA presents films that have not been classified by Consumer Protection BC. Under BC law, anyone wishing to see unclassified films in theatres must be a member of the Documentary Media Society and at least 18 years of age, unless otherwise stated. Your Society membership is included in the cost of your ticket, pass, or ticket pack. Your ticket is your proof of membership while at any DOXA 2025 screening. This entitles you to attend all DOXA screenings.

To browse our classified films rated for youth under 18-years of age, or to learn more about our Rated Y for Youth program, please see pages 32-33 or visit: doxafestival.ca/ratedyfor youth

TICKETS

GALAS: \$19

- Opening & Closing Gala screenings.

GENEROUS: \$19

GENERAL ADMISSION: \$17

SENIORS (65+): \$15

STUDENTS (with valid ID): \$15

ACCESSIBLE: \$12

- Free admission for companions.

DOXA INDUSTRY: Sliding scale, starting at \$13*

- * All industry events require a valid ticket or pass for entry.

Admission to DOXA screenings and events is free for all **self-identifying Indigenous peoples**. You can book your complimentary tickets by getting in touch with our Box Office team at boxoffice@doxafestival.ca, or by inquiring with Box Office staff at festival venues during opening hours.

If you have any concerns about accessing any DOXA 2025 screenings or events, either for financial reasons or because of other barriers you may experience, please contact the Box Office and we'll work with you to make arrangements.

FESTIVAL TICKET PACKS

Ticket packs are available for sale online only. Your Society membership is included with the purchase of a ticket pack. **Please note:** Ticket packs are NOT valid for Gala screenings.

\$75 (5 tickets)

- Each ticket is valid for one screening.

\$130 (10 tickets)

- Each ticket is valid for one screening.

FESTIVAL PASSES

FESTIVAL PASS: \$195

- Includes Society membership
- Valid for all film **AND** Gala screenings

INDUSTRY PASS: \$70

- Includes Society membership
- Includes access to all Industry events
- Not valid for any film or Gala screenings

FESTIVAL + INDUSTRY PASS: \$245

- Includes Society membership
- Valid for all film **AND** Gala screenings
- Includes access to all Industry events

THEATRE PROCEDURES FOR FESTIVAL PASSHOLDERS

Tickets must be booked in advance using the pass attached to your Eventive account. Passes do not guarantee seating. All passholders are asked to arrive 15 minutes prior to showtime. If a screening is not sold out, tickets will be available at the venue box office up until showtime. All passes are strictly non-transferable and passholders are required to show ID. If you require any assistance with booking advance tickets, please reach out to boxoffice@doxafestival.ca.

HOW TO BUY

ONLINE

Purchase tickets and passes online at: doxafestival.ca

COMMUNITY BOX OFFICE

DOXA Office
#110 - 750 Hamilton St (Buzzer 110)
April 26-29 (11am - 4pm)

VENUE BOX OFFICES

The Playhouse (May 1)

- Tickets available for Opening Gala.
- **Box office opens 30 minutes prior to the first screening of the day at the venue.**

The Cinematheque (May 2-11)

- Tickets available for all festival screenings.
- **Box office opens 30 minutes prior to the first screening of the day at the venue.**

VIFF Centre (May 2-4 & May 6-8)

- Tickets available for all festival screenings.
- **Box office opens 30 minutes prior to the first screening of the day at the venue.**

SFU's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts (May 4-5 & May 7-10)

- Tickets available for all festival screenings.
- **Box office opens 30 minutes prior to the first screening of the day at the venue.**

See a map with venue addresses and on page 38.

REFUND POLICY

All sales are final. No exchanges. DOXA only offers refunds in cases of technical failure or the cancellation of a screening.

STANDBY

If a screening has sold out of advance tickets, there may be some tickets that become available at the door just before the screening starts (returned tickets, unused complimentary tickets, unclaimed passholder seats, etc.). These tickets will be made available to the standby line for purchase on a first-come, first-served basis.

FEEES

Third-party processing fees are applied to all orders.

ACCESSIBILITY



All theatres are **wheelchair accessible**. Patrons requiring wheelchair accessible seating are encouraged to call the DOXA Box Office at (604) 646-3200 to reserve their seat. Companions accompanying people with disabilities will be admitted at no cost.



All venues offer **hearing assistance**. Upon arrival, please check in with venue staff to receive a headset.



ASL interpretation will be available at all in-person Industry events, unless otherwise specified.



To learn whether Closed Captions are available for a particular film, please check screening information online at doxafestival.ca.

Films in languages other than English will have subtitles, unless deliberately left untranslated by the filmmaker.

DOXA OFFICE

#110
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Canada V6B 2R5 | 604.646.3200

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DOXAFESTIVAL.CA

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AWARDS AND JURIES

The DOXA award winners are selected on the basis of three major criteria:

- Success and innovation in the realization of the project's concept.
- Originality and relevance of subject matter and approach.
- Overall artistic and technical proficiency.

DOXA is very happy to welcome an outstanding group of filmmakers, film critics and industry professionals to the Award Juries this year. Jury members meet during the course of the festival to choose the winning films, as well as award honourable mentions to selected films. See doxafestival.ca for more information on this year's juries.

DOXA FEATURE DOCUMENTARY AWARD

IN COMPETITION

To Use a Mountain (p.43)
DIRECTED BY CASEY CARTER

The Tree of Authenticity (p.51)
DIRECTED BY SAMMY BALOJI

UNEARTH (p.47)
DIRECTED BY JOHN HUNTER NOLAN

Mistress Dispeller (p.71)
DIRECTED BY ELIZABETH LO

Sudan, Remember Us (p.45)
DIRECTED BY HIND MEDDEB

The Cats of Gokogu Shrine (p.67)
DIRECTED BY KAZUHIRO SODA

Direct Action (p.67)
DIRECTED BY GUILLAUME CAILLEAU & BEN RUSSELL

HUAQUERO (p.41)
DIRECTED BY JUAN CARLOS DONOSO GÓMEZ

Bogancloch (p.66)
DIRECTED BY BEN RIVERS

Sanctuary Station (p.43)
DIRECTED BY BRIGID MCCAFFREY

Songs of Slow Burning Earth (p.74)
DIRECTED BY OLHA ZHURBA

The Pickers (p.45)
DIRECTED BY ELKE SASSE

Coexistence, My Ass! (p.44)
DIRECTED BY AMBER FARES

The Thousand and One Days of Hajj Edmond (p.25)
DIRECTED BY SIMONE BITTON

Mr. Nobody Against Putin (p.19)
DIRECTED BY DAVID BORENSTEIN

GEN_ (p.69)
DIRECTED BY GIANLUCA MATARRESE

Free Party (p.49)
DIRECTED BY FABIANNY DESCHAMPS

COLIN LOW AWARD FOR BEST CANADIAN DIRECTOR

PRESENTED BY



IN COMPETITION

Elizabeth Vibert and Chen Wang
Aisha's Story (p.17)

Baljit Sangra
Have You Heard Judi Singh? (p.63)

Lyanna Patrick
Nechako – It Will Be a Big River Again (p.44)

Jean-François Lesage
Among Mountains and Streams (p.48)

Sylvain L'Espérance
Archeology of Light (p.40)

Denis Côté
Paul (p.64)

Matthew Wolkow & Jean-Jacques Martinod
Eastern Anthems (p.41)

Patrick Shannon
Saints and Warriors (p.21)

Kinga Michalska
Bedrock (p.50)

Jonah Malak
Spare My Bones, Coyote! (p.50)

VANCOUVER FILM STUDIOS AWARD FOR BEST BC DIRECTOR

PRESENTED BY



IN COMPETITION

Elizabeth Vibert and Chen Wang
Aisha's Story (p.17)

John Bolton
King Arthur's Night (p.33)

Baljit Sangra
Have You Heard Judi Singh? (p.63)

Lyanna Patrick
Nechako – It Will Be a Big River Again (p.44)

Damien Eagle Bear
#skoden (p.32)

Patrick Shannon
Saints & Warriors (p.21)

DOXA SHORT DOCUMENTARY AWARD IN COMPETITION

in retrospect (p.58)
DIRECTED BY MILA ZHLUKTENKO & DANIEL ASADI FAEZI

Correct Me If I'm Wrong
如你所愿 (p.52)
DIRECTED BY HAO ZHOU

Citizen-Inmate (p.58)
DIRECTED BY HESAM ESLAMI

This Dissonance (p.59)
DIRECTED BY CHRISTOPHE KATRIB

Pidikwe (Rumble) (p.57)
DIRECTED BY CAROLINE MONNET

Paris to Pyongyang (p.57)
DIRECTED BY HELEN LEE

Messengers (p.53)
DIRECTED BY JEFFREY ZABLOTNY

Semi-precious (p.53)
DIRECTED BY KARA DITTE HANSEN

Entretierra (p.58)
DIRECTED BY EMANUEL LICHA

No Past To Long For (p.58)
DIRECTED BY MONICA CHEEMA

Burcu's Angels (p.55)
DIRECTED BY ÖZGÜN GÜNDÜZ

a flower not a flower (p.53)
DIRECTED BY TANAKIT KITSANAYUNYONG

Goat Fish Snake Sparrow (p.57)
DIRECTED BY ABHRADEEP GANGULI

Al Basateen (p.58)
DIRECTED BY ANTOINE CHAPON

You May Laugh at Me a Little (p.52)
DIRECTED BY YUULA BENIVOLSKI

qats'ay (p.57)
DIRECTED BY JEREMY WILLIAMS & TREVOR MACK

Talking Walls (p.55)
DIRECTED BY MARCELLUS A.



NIGEL MOORE AWARD FOR YOUTH PROGRAMMING

DOXA is extremely proud to present the Nigel Moore Award for Youth Programming, first launched in 2013. Named in memory of Nigel Moore, a young man whose passion for knowledge, exploration and advocacy found a home in his love for documentary film.

For younger audiences, documentaries have particular relevance; the world in which they are growing up is an increasingly complex place. Documentary not only captures this complexity, but also has the capacity to act as a catalyst for social change, and fundamentally alter people's perceptions and behaviour. The award will be adjudicated by a youth jury, who will choose the film that best exemplifies the qualities of compassion, social engagement, and the spirit of Nigel Moore.

IN COMPETITION

#skoden (p.32)
DIRECTED BY DAMIEN EAGLE BEAR

Pitoteyihtam / They are sacred (p.33)
DIRECTED BY KIM O'BOMSAWIN

King Arthur's Knight (p.33)
DIRECTED BY JOHN BOLTON

NIGEL MOORE AWARD JURORS



ANNA HETHERINGTON • DARIUS DARABI • EMILY ASH CUTAJAR • OLIVIA MOORE

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OPENING GALA FILM



LOCAL
PREMIERE

Aisha's Story

Elizabeth Vilbert & Chen Wang, Canada, 2025, 63 mins

THURSDAY MAY 1, 7:00 PM • VANCOUVER PLAYHOUSE
WEDNESDAY MAY 8, 4:00 PM • SFU CINEMA

Aisha's Story traces the history of Palestinian displacement using food as an expression of cultural heritage and resistance. The film follows Aisha, a matriarch running her family's grain mill in Jordan, who preserves Palestinian history by passing down traditional cuisine to generations that have been displaced from their homeland. Through interviews and archival footage, Vilbert and Wang's film tells the complex story of Palestine and the colonial incursions that have ignited tensions between Palestinian and Israeli peoples.

Filmed over two years amidst ongoing violence against Palestinians by Israeli forces, the film maintains hope: The preservation of food sovereignty contributes to generational healing. Palestinian food is presented as a symbol of longing, resistance, and joy, carefully sustained by Aisha.

In Arabic with English subtitles



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MID-WEEK FILM



BC PREMIERE

Mr. Nobody Against Putin

David Borenstein, Denmark/Czech Republic, 2025, 90 mins

WEDNESDAY MAY 7, 8:00 PM • SFU CINEMA

When Russia's invasion of Ukraine begins, smalltown teacher Pasha faces an ethical crisis as his school is transformed into a recruitment center for the war. Known for his nonconformist ways, Pasha initially provides a safe haven for students, but as the war intensifies, his role shifts dramatically. Faced with new patriotic policies, Pasha decides to document the transformation of his school, secretly capturing footage of the militarization of children and the indoctrination of young minds.

Winner of the World Cinema Documentary Special Jury Award at the 2025 Sundance Film Festival, *Mr. Nobody Against Putin* offers an eye-opening exploration of the human cost of resistance in a country under the grip of an authoritarian regime.

In English and Russian with English subtitles

stir

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CLOSING GALA FILM



BC
PREMIERE

Saints and Warriors

Patrick Shannon, *Xaayda Gwaay.yaay*, 2024, 98 mins

SATURDAY MAY 10, 6:30 PM • SFU CINEMA
SUNDAY MAY 11, 3:00 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

For the people of *Xaayda Gwaay.yaay* (Haida Gwaii), basketball is more than a game—it's an arena for leadership, resistance, and cultural preservation. *Saints and Warriors* tells the powerful story of how the game became a lifeline for carrying Haida traditions through generations. Under colonial rule, Indigenous peoples were banned from gathering—except for church or sports. The Haida chose the court, turning basketball into a battleground for community, identity, and survival.

Set during the 2023-24 season, the film follows the legendary Skidegate Saints as they fight to defend their dynasty at the All Native Basketball Tournament. But their battle extends beyond the scoreboard, as players navigate tensions, shifting allegiances, and the long-standing struggle for Indigenous land rights.

In English

INDUSTRY

MAY 4
SUNDAY

SFU WORLD ART CENTRE
149 WEST HASTINGS ST.

12:00 PM

In Conversation with Baljit Sangra

Award-winning filmmaker Baljit Sangra (*Have You Heard Judi Singh?, Because We Are Girls*) explores the power of documentary to reclaim overlooked histories and amplify underrepresented voices. As a filmmaker deeply engaged in telling stories from the Indo-Canadian community, Sangra will discuss the challenges of bringing a lesser-known artist's story to light, the role of resilience in narratives, and the ethics of honouring a subject's legacy. Baljit's latest documentary, *Have You Heard Judi Singh?*, is having its world premiere as part of this year's festival.



IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH



2:00 PM

In Conversation with Simone Bitton

Join us for a conversation with Simone Bitton as we explore themes of resistance, displacement, and colonialism in her documentary work. Bitton will discuss how she blends historical inquiry with lyrical filmmaking to examine Jewish and Palestinian identities, the politics of memory, and the human costs of borders and occupation. This panel offers audiences an opportunity to delve into her process, revealing how she uses cinema to confront the past and the hidden truths that shape our world.



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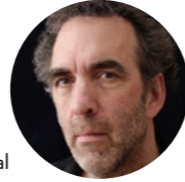


INDUSTRY PROGRAM PARTNERS



4:00 PM

Spotlight on Editing: Sylvain L'Espérance



Filmmaker Sylvain L'Espérance (*Archaeology of Light, Animal Macula*) discusses his unique approach to editing and cinematic time. By blending direct cinema with experimental techniques, he uses editing to explore the interplay of duration, light, movement, and sound, uncovering hidden energies within landscapes. In this conversation, L'Espérance will share his process, from shaping footage to constructing the film's rhythm and spatial dynamics, offering valuable insights into the artistry behind his thought-provoking films.

IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH



MAY 4
SUNDAY

STEAMWORKS
375 WATER ST.

5:30 PM - 8:30 PM

DOXA Industry Mixer 2025 with DOC Northwest and DGC

Join DOC Northwest and Directors Guild of Canada - National Directors Division (DGC) at this year's DOXA Industry Mixer! Mingle with fellow filmmakers, colleagues, and new friends in a relaxed, welcoming atmosphere. We'll spotlight DOC members with films in the festival and celebrate the incredible work of our documentary community. This is a great opportunity to connect, exchange ideas, and unwind with industry peers. Whether you're looking to make new connections or catch up with old ones, we look forward to seeing you there!

IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH



MAY 5
MONDAY

SFU WORLD ART CENTRE
149 WEST HASTINGS ST.

12:00 PM

Focus on Knowledge

Meet the documentary commissioning and acquisitions team from Knowledge Network, BC's public educational broadcaster and streaming service, and learn about the different ways of working with them. POV documentaries have pride of place in Knowledge's programming schedule—including first-window Knowledge Originals commissioned from BC-based producers as well as second-windows and acquisitions licensed from producers across B.C. and throughout Canada.

IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH



2:00 PM

Producing *Nechako*: Crafting Co-Production Partnerships to Elevate Indigenous Voices

Join the producers of *Nechako - It Will Be a Big River Again* for a conversation on the behind-the-scenes work of bringing a powerful, socially impactful documentary to life. They'll discuss their collaboration with the National Film Board (NFB) and the complexities of telling both deeply personal and community-driven stories. Learn about the intricacies of production planning, maintaining cultural sensitivity, and the challenges of documenting a community's fight for justice.

IN COLLABORATION
WITH



4:00 PM

In Conversation with Denis Côté

Denis Côté occupies a distinctive place within contemporary Canadian documentary filmmaking, blurring the boundaries of genre and narrative. From the eerie minimalism of *Bestiaire* to the haunting *Ghost Town Anthology*, his work blends formal experimentation with a focus on society's marginalized figures. Join us for a conversation with Côté about *Paul*, his latest film making its BC premiere at DOXA. Known for his resistance to industry expectations, Côté will discuss his unconventional approach to documentary filmmaking, his focus on intimate storytelling, and the real-life figure at the heart of *Paul*.



MAY 6
TUESDAY

THE POST
#110-750 HAMILTON ST.

4:00 PM

Distribution Strategies and International Sales: Navigating the Global Landscape

Nathalie Bourdon, Director of Distribution and Market Development at the National Film Board of Canada, will share her expertise in global distribution practices. She will explore key topics, including building strong international sales relationships, opportunities for independent films in global markets, and strategies for securing distribution partnerships. This session offers valuable insights into the evolving distribution landscape, highlighting effective approaches for navigating international markets. Attendees will gain practical advice on how to expand their films' reach and effectively navigate the challenges of global distribution.

IN COLLABORATION
WITH



VPL WORKSHOPS



Let's Talk Planning a Video Project

THU MAY 1, 2:00 - 3:30 PM • CENTRAL LIBRARY

Do you want to make a video, but aren't sure where to start? Have you made videos before, but are looking for new ways to channel your creativity? In this session, we'll go over the key things you'll want to consider before you hit record.

Video Editing with Premiere Pro

WED MAY 7, 2:00 - 3:30 PM • CENTRAL LIBRARY

Learn the basics of video editing with Adobe Premiere Pro! In this hands-on class, we cover software layout and navigation, importing media, basic editing, adding effects, titles and transitions, working with green screen footage, and rendering a project into a final video file.

Storyboarding Basics

THU MAY 8, 2:00 - 3:30 PM • CENTRAL LIBRARY

What are storyboards, and how do you use them? Join the Inspiration Lab staff for a presentation on how to use storyboards when planning out your creative projects.

RETROSPECTIVE:
SIMONE BITTON

“ I THINK I BECAME A FILMMAKER BECAUSE, AS JEAN-LUC GODARD ONCE SAID, ‘CINEMA IS A COUNTRY APART, ANOTHER TERRITORY ON THE MAP OF THE WORLD.’ I DON’T LIKE WALLS NOR BORDERS. I CONSIDER MY FILMS AS BRIDGES BETWEEN PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY BETWEEN JEWS AND ARABS, BUT ALSO, MORE GENERALLY, BETWEEN ORIENT AND OCCIDENT.

” - SIMONE BITTON



We are proud to present the uncompromising work of award-winning filmmaker Simone Bitton, whose films engage with the complexities of history, identity, and political struggle. Her films have won numerous awards, including the César Award, the Marseille Festival of Documentary Film Award, and the Sundance Film Festival, Special Jury Prize.

As a Jewish French-Moroccan filmmaker and activist, Bitton has dared to criticize human rights abuses and represent Jewish pluralism. Through her thoughtful exploration of Middle Eastern and North African histories, Bitton offers vital, nuanced perspectives that confront questions of justice, memory, and identity. Her work embodies the bold, subversive documentary approach that we are committed to highlighting in our festival this year.



LOCAL PREMIERE

The Thousand and One Days of Hajj Edmond

Simone Bitton, Morocco/France, 2024, 90 mins

SUNDAY MAY 4, 6:20 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

Simone Bitton’s cinematic love letter to her late friend, Edmond Amran Elmaleh, explores the complex legacy of a former communist leader and activist for Moroccan independence. Through personal interviews, evocative recreations of Elmaleh’s photographs, and excerpts from his literary works, Bitton brings his memory to life. A Moroccan Jewish intellectual who rejected Zionism and stood in solidarity with Palestinians, Elmaleh’s life was shaped by the tragedies of Jewish departure from Morocco and Palestinian displacement. Bitton’s film captures the haunting parallels between these events, and sheds light on the intersecting personal and collective histories that defined Elmaleh’s identity and era.

In French and Darija with English subtitles



Rachel

Simone Bitton, France/Belgium, 2008, 100 mins

SATURDAY MAY 3, 2:00 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

Rachel examines the life and death of Rachel Corrie, the 23-year-old American peace activist killed by an Israeli bulldozer in Gaza while attempting to prevent the demolition of a Palestinian home. Simone Bitton’s film serves as both an investigation into her death and a eulogy for those who remember and mourn Rachel. Through testimonies from her family, fellow activists, and Israeli military spokespersons, Bitton paints a complex picture of youth, idealism, resistance, and the human cost of political struggle. In memorializing Corrie’s sacrifice, *Rachel* also reflects on how the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) inspired young people from Western countries to take part in non-violent resistance in Palestine. The film compels viewers to consider the price of activism and the ongoing fight for justice in Palestine.

In English, Arabic and Hebrew with English subtitles

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RETROSPECTIVE:
SIMONE BITTON



Wall

Simone Bitton, France/Israel, 2004, 96 mins

FRIDAY MAY 2, 8:00 PM • VIFF MAIN

In *Wall*, Simone Bitton examines the construction of the Israeli separation barrier and its profound consequences for Palestinian life. Featuring the voices of Palestinian residents, Israeli officials, as well as the workers erecting the structure—the film exposes how colonial architecture becomes a tool of subjugation. The wall doesn't just divide land; it reshapes perception and enforces surveillance, displacement, and control while embedding occupation into the landscape itself. Bitton's lens captures the brutal absurdity of a structure designed to erase, restrict, and contain, offering a stark meditation on how built environments normalize segregation and suffering.

In Arabic and Hebrew with English subtitles



Ziyara

Simone Bitton, France/Morocco/Belgium, 2020, 99 mins

SATURDAY MAY 3, 6:50 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

In Arabic, *Ziyara* (زيارة) means *visit to the saints*. Celebrated filmmaker Simone Bitton embarks on a personal road trip across Morocco, tracing the remnants of the country's once-thriving Jewish community. In the 1950s, Morocco was home to 300,000 Jews; today, only a small fraction remain, yet their saints' tombs endure—cared for by Muslim guardians who preserve their memory. Through close examination of synagogues, shrines, and village records, Bitton uncovers stories of coexistence, loss, and endurance. *Ziyara* is both a meditation on migration and a hopeful reflection on shared heritage, revealing a delicate thread between past and present, tradition and modernity. As the camera gathers stories, smiles, and blessings, it patiently repairs connections long thought severed.

In Arabic and French with English subtitles

LEGACIES THAT EMPOWER: THE ENDURING SPIRIT OF A FORGOTTEN FESTIVAL

By zaina bseiso

The Afro-Asian Film Festival (AAFF) took place in Tashkent (1958), Cairo (1960) and Jakarta (1964). Largely omitted from mainstream film history, the festival's impact echoes through the contemporary cinematic languages of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Its omission from the film canon has rendered us unaware of how much we owe to this gathering, and to those who kept its ideals evolving towards a cinema from and for the global majority. As contemporary film workers contending with the role of cinema and festival spaces as zones of political self-expression, I think we have much to learn from rediscovering how these predecessors organized to reconcile ideological vision with practical action.

The festival's inaugural edition took place three years after the 1955 Bandung Conference, where 29 Afro-Asian leaders from newly independent and decolonizing countries gathered to challenge the legacy of colonialism. As part of the emerging Third Worldist movement, cinema was recognized by Bandung conference leaders as a crucial tool for dismantling imperialism and racism while promoting "the national cultures of the people" (Communique, 167). The Afro-Asian Film Festival thus emerged as an alternative to the European film circuit, where delegates discussed co-productions, business agreements, and gained exposure to each other's national film industries.

Years later, in 1969, Argentine filmmakers Solanas and Getino conceptualized Third Cinema as one of liberation and opposition to both Hollywood's industrial model and capitalism's co-option of auteur cinema. While Third Cinema histories are often thought to begin with Solanas and Getino's manifesto, "the essential debates about revolutionary aesthetics and cinema's political role had already emerged in the AAFF" (Razlogova, 9).

Taking place during the Cold War, the AAFF aspired to maintain non-alignment and peaceful coexistence (Communique, 164). However, the practical difficulties of independence from Second or First World influence were revealed during the festival's organization. Holding the first edition in Tashkent—the capital city of Uz-

bekistan, a former Soviet country—was a direct response to Asian Film Week held in Beijing just one year earlier, revealing the impact of the Sino-Soviet rivalry and the USSR's desire to participate in Third World discourse. As a result, "The Soviet spectacle of the Bandung spirit took precedence over viewing and debating cinema" (Razlogova, 3).

The 1960 Cairo edition faced similar tensions. While Egyptian president Nasser preached socialist rhetoric publicly, the festival was capitalist in execution, featuring competitions, red carpets, and promoting Hollywood production practices that led to emerging Afro-Asian film industries to withdraw participation.

In 1964, Jakarta's festival adhered most closely to Bandung principles, presenting an uncompromising program promoting "tricontinental solidarity in anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggle" (Razlogova, 7). However, when audiences opted for Hollywood films that dominated the theatres over the militant liberation cinema of Asia, Africa and Latin America, organizers Bachtiar Siagian (filmmaker) and Utami Suryadarma (women's activist) formed PAPFIAS (Action Committee Against Imperialist American Films) with fellow filmworkers. They rallied "cinema owners, distributors, youth groups, unions, and journalists" (Pasaribu, AJ) to boycott Hollywood productions and uphold revolutionary films—a movement that rapidly spread throughout both urban and rural Indonesia, transforming their festival work into effective nationwide direct action.

Despite drawbacks, these gatherings offered essential ideological and physical spaces for Third World communing, leading to numerous co-productions between

“
THESE
GATHERINGS
OFFERED
ESSENTIAL
IDEOLOGICAL
AND PHYSICAL
SPACES FOR
THIRD WORLD
COMMUNING
”



previously disconnected national film industries. They laid groundwork for conversations about infrastructural, linguistic, and logistical needs while encouraging cross-border exchange. This discourse of "collective spirit not common method" among "discordant comrades" (Pasaribu, AJ) was unprecedented in its approach to achieving cinematic sovereignty for participating nations.

What became evident across the three editions was the critical role of filmmakers' voices in successfully implementing practical and structural transformations. The 1966 Tricontinental Conference in Havana—Latin America's official integration into the solidarity network—shifted leadership from governments to filmmakers, who expanded their roles to address aesthetic, structural, and distribution concerns. In 1969, Argentine filmmakers Solanas and Getino published "Towards a Third Cinema," building upon foundations laid by the AAFF circuit.

The films and filmmakers in DOXA's 2025 Curated Program embody the ideals of the Afro-Asian Cultural Network and the Third Cinema Movement. For Sara Gomez, Omar Amiralay, and Suliman AbdelNour, their work transcended filmmaking to establish cinematic models that were integral to the "decolonisation of culture" (Octavio and Solanas, 1969) and national development—even when they faced censorship, exile, and persecution.

"While experience is infinite, the vast majority of experience lies latent. Few images ever arise from it. In our age, those that do arise tend to be selected, or unfolded, by political and economic interests that deem them to be useful as information. Nevertheless, anyone can unfold any aspect of experience to become a public image. Artists (and others) do so in order to allow other aspects of experience to circulate, before they enfold back into the matrix of history." —LAURA MARKS, HANAN AL CINEMA

Direct calls to action in *Mi Aporte*, *Plate of Sardines*, and *Africa, the Jungle, Drums and Revolution*, rally viewers toward change and active participation. These works transform images into analytical tools: Within each film, meta-cinematic events unfold, revealing the potential of images to expose the spirit of liberatory struggles.

Commissioned by Cuba's Federación de Mujeres Cubanas, Sara Gomez's *Mi Aporte* records conversations between federation women, then screens this footage to female factory workers who transform the theatre into an assembly space. These workers' critique of the federation's unrealistic portrayal of gender equality resulted in the film's censorship.

In *Plate of Sardines*, Omar Amiralay follows filmmaker Mohamed Malas through the rubble of Quneitra after Israeli aggression. Reflecting on his earlier work *The Night*, filmed there seven years prior, Malas laments: "If I had known that Quneitra would be destroyed, I would have preferred to live and die in it rather than turn it into an image in a film."

AbdelNour's *Africa, the Jungle, Drums and Revolution* transforms drawings and descriptions by Russian children and adults into a vehicle for exposing the inherent racism in Soviet imaginaries of Africa. After returning from the USSR, he extended his analytical approach to cinematic expression and literacy throughout Sudan by founding the Sudanese Film Group—a collective created to secure artistic freedom outside government control while nurturing national cinema—until Omar El Bashir's military coup dismantled both the collective and Sudanese cinema entirely.

Building a relationality between the AAFF, Third Cinema and the films embodying their legacy reveals that the path to cinematic sovereignty and solidarity is cumulative. Failure is a necessary building block for future progress and cooperation. These "failures" possess a kineticism—motion occurs and momentum builds, regardless of how long outcomes take to materialize.

Much like the climates that gave rise to the AAFF and sparked the Third Cinema Movement, our current moment—where dominant festival spaces conflate political expression with polemic attacks—witnesses renewed and growing demands for a transformed mode of operation. If the enduring legacy of both cinema movements teaches us anything, it is that when filmmakers collectively and materially engage in structural actions, taking the reins to elevate standards and challenge the status quo, major cinematic shifts become possible.

To view acknowledgements and the bibliography for this essay, visit: www.doxafestival.ca

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CURATED SHORTS

“ THE FILMS AND FILMMAKERS IN DOXA’S 2025 CURATED PROGRAM EMBODY THE IDEALS OF THE AFRO-ASIAN CULTURAL NETWORK AND THE THIRD CINEMA MOVEMENT.

” - zaina bseiso

FRIDAY MAY 2, 6:00 PM • VIFF LOC



Africa, The Jungle, Drums and Revolution

Suliman Mohamed Ibrahim Elnour, Soviet Union, 1979, 12 mins

Sudanese director Suliman Mohamed Ibrahim Elnour’s striking film, *Africa, the Jungle, Drums and Revolution* blends archival footage, children’s drawings, and candid street interviews, to interrogate Soviet representations of Africa.

In Russian with English subtitles



A Plate of Sardines

Omar Amiralay, Syrian Arab Republic, 1998, 18 mins

In the company of fellow Syrian filmmaker Mohammad Malas, director Omar Amiralay revisits the ruins of the destroyed Golan village of Quneitra, occupied by Israel and then abandoned following the 1973 war.

In French with English subtitles



Mi Aporte

Sara Gómez, Cuba, 1969, 33 mins

In *Mi Aporte*, Sara Gómez examines the role of women in postrevolutionary Cuba, offering an unsparing critique of a society in which—despite utopian promises—gender inequality persists. Through a candid lens, she illustrates the difficulties women encounter when they seek to achieve economic integration and equality with men in a country at the height of revolution.

In Spanish and Afro-Cuban languages, and Lucumí with English subtitles

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RATED Y FOR YOUTH



WORLD
PREMIERE

#skoden

Damien Eagle Bear, Niitsitapi, 2025, 76 mins

THURSDAY MAY 8, 5:20 PM • SFU CINEMA
FRIDAY MAY 9, 10 AM • SFU CINEMA

#skoden examines the impact of an iconic yet controversial meme that has become both a rallying cry for Indigenous resilience and a symbol of harmful misrepresentation, rooted in racist stereotypes. At the center of the story is Pernel Bad Arm, a Blackfoot man from the Blood Tribe whose image was turned into a meme without his knowledge or consent. Through intimate storytelling and interviews with Pernel's friends, the film explores the power of online culture, the weight of misrepresentation, and the ongoing fight for Indigenous dignity and truth.

In English

Rated Y for Youth is back for its 16th edition! Curated with the intention of facilitating media literacy through thought-provoking documentaries, this program provides an opportunity for high school students and youth to foster an appreciation for cinema, while engaging in open dialogues on a broad range of social issues. Each Rated Y for Youth film includes a complimentary Study Guide to support and enrich classroom conversations, as well as a live discussion with filmmakers and community members following each screening.



WORLD
PREMIERE

King Arthur's Night

John Bolton, Canada, 2024, 110 mins

WEDNESDAY MAY 7, 7:30 PM • VIFF MAIN
THURSDAY MAY 8, 10 AM • SFU CINEMA

A bold reimagining of the King Arthur legend, *King Arthur's Night* brings together artists with and without Down syndrome in a dazzling mix of theatre, documentary, and cinematic magic. Directed by John Bolton, the film moves fluidly between staged medieval musical reenactments and candid, behind-the-scenes moments of camaraderie and creative freedom. Blurring the lines between performance and reality, scripted drama and spontaneous play, Bolton's film is a spellbinding fusion of myth and modernity. Think *The Green Knight* meets *Crip Camp*—with songs.

In English with Integrated Described Video (IDV)



WORLD
PREMIERE

They Are Sacred

Kim O'Bomsawin, Abenaki Nation/nîpîshkopâhk, 2025, 75 mins

TUESDAY MAY 6, 5:45 PM • VIFF MAIN
WEDNESDAY MAY 7, 10 AM • SFU CINEMA

They Are Sacred reframes neurodiversity through an Indigenous lens, following young Anders (Sacred Buffalo Child) and his father Dr. Grant Bruno (Yellow Horse) of the Samson Cree nation. Dr. Bruno, an Assistant Professor in Pediatrics, challenges clinical definitions that see autism as a deficit, and embraces Cree traditions that honour neurodiversity as a sacred gift. As Anders experiences his first sweat lodge, receives his Cree name, and deepens his connection to the land by learning how to hunt, the film demonstrates the profound impact of cultural knowledge and spiritual support. The narrative further portrays the systemic barriers Indigenous families face in accessing autism resources that honour their traditions. A powerful story of reclamation, this film champions Indigenous knowledge in shaping neuro-affirmative care.

In English and Cree with English subtitles



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MAY 1 THURSDAY

AISHA'S STORY
7:00 PM
VANCOUVER PLAYHOUSE



MAY 2 FRIDAY

THE PICKERS
5:20 PM • VIFF MAIN

FREE PARTY
6:00 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

GUEST-CURATED SHORTS
6:00 PM • VIFF LOC

SHORTS PROGRAM: SUBTERRA
7:20 PM • VIFF LOC

WALL
8:00 PM • VIFF MAIN

TO USE A MOUNTAIN
8:10 PM • CINEMATHEQUE



MAY 3 SATURDAY

RACHEL
2:00 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

ARCHAEOLOGY OF LIGHT + REVOLVING ROUNDS
4:30 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

NECHAKO - IT WILL BE A BIG RIVER AGAIN
5:00 PM • VIFF MAIN

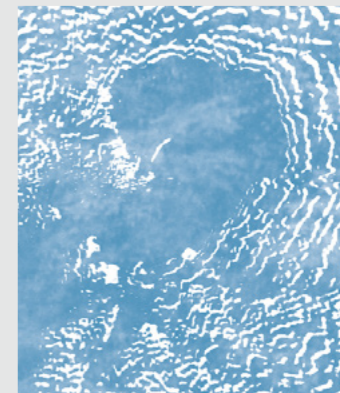
SHORTS PROGRAM: WHAT'S LEFT TO FORM
5:20 PM • VIFF LOC

ZIYARA
6:50 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

PREDATORS
7:45 PM • VIFF MAIN

SHORTS PROGRAM: THREADBARE
8:00 PM • VIFF LOC

SHORTS PROGRAM: SAFE KEEPING
9:30 PM • VIFF MAIN



MAY 4 SUNDAY

BALJIT SANGRA MASTER CLASS
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM
SFU WORLD ARTS

SIMONE BITTON MASTER CLASS
2:00 PM - 3:30 PM
SFU WORLD ARTS

EDITING PANEL
4:00 PM - 5:30 PM
SFU WORLD ARTS

SONGS OF THE SLOW BURNING EARTH
4:00 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

HAVE YOU HEARD JUDI SINGH?
5:00 PM • VIFF MAIN

SHORTS PROGRAM: SENTENCED TO LIGHT AND LOSS
5:30 PM • VIFF LOC

DOC NORTHWEST & DGC INDUSTRY MIXER
5:30 PM - 8:30 PM
STEAMWORKS BREWPUB
(375 WATER STREET)

THE THOUSAND AND ONE DAYS OF HAJJ EDMOND
6:20 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

COEXISTENCE, MY ASS!
7:30 PM • VIFF MAIN

SHORTS PROGRAM: DISTANCE BETWEEN STONES
8:00 PM • VIFF LOC

SILENT OBSERVERS
8:40 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

**MAY 5
MONDAY**

**KNOWLEDGE
NETWORK PANEL**
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM
SFU WORLD ARTS

PRODUCER PANEL
2:00 PM - 3:30 PM
SFU WORLD ARTS

**DENIS CÔTÉ
MASTERCLASS**
4:00 PM - 5:30 PM
SFU WORLD ARTS

BEDROCK
6:00 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

MISTRESS DISPELLER
8:10 PM • CINEMATHEQUE



**MAY 6
TUESDAY**

DISTRIBUTION PANEL
4:00 PM - 5:30 PM
THE POST

THEY ARE SACRED
5:45 PM • VIFF MAIN

HUAQUERO
6:00 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

PAUL
8:00 PM • VIFF MAIN

**THE BRINK OF
DREAMS**
8:15 PM • CINEMATHEQUE



**MAY 7
WEDNESDAY**

THEY ARE SACRED
10:00 AM • SFU CINEMA

AISHA'S STORY
4:00 PM • SFU CINEMA

**HIGHER THAN
ACIDIC CLOUDS**
5:30 PM • VIFF MAIN

GEN_
5:45 PM • SFU CINEMA

DIRECT ACTION
6:45 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

**KING ARTHUR'S
NIGHT**
7:30 PM • VIFF MAIN

**MR. NOBODY
AGAINST PUTIN**
8:00 PM • SFU CINEMA



**MAY 8
THURSDAY**

**KING ARTHUR'S
NIGHT**
10:00 AM • SFU CINEMA

TBA
3:00 PM • SFU CINEMA

**VALENTINA AND
THE MUOSTERS**
5:00 PM • VIFF MAIN

#SKODEN
5:20 PM • SFU CINEMA

**AMONG MOUNTAINS
AND STREAMS**
6:00 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

**SUDAN,
REMEMBER US**
7:00 PM • VIFF MAIN

**THE CATS OF
GOKOGU SHRINE**
7:30 PM • SFU CINEMA

**THE TREE OF
AUTHENTICITY**
8:30 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

**EIGHT POSTCARDS
FROM UTOPIA**
9:30 PM • VIFF MAIN



**MAY 9
FRIDAY**

#SKODEN
10:00 AM • SFU CINEMA

TBA
2:45 PM • SFU CINEMA

**SPARE MY BONES,
COYOTE!**
5:00 PM • SFU CINEMA

SANCTUARY STATION
6:00 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

UNEARTH
7:15 PM • SFU CINEMA

BOGANCLOCH
8:10 PM • CINEMATHEQUE



**MAY 10
SATURDAY**

TBA
2:00 PM • SFU CINEMA

TBA
4:00 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

TBA
7:00 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

**SAINTS AND
WARRIORS**
6:30 PM • SFU CINEMA



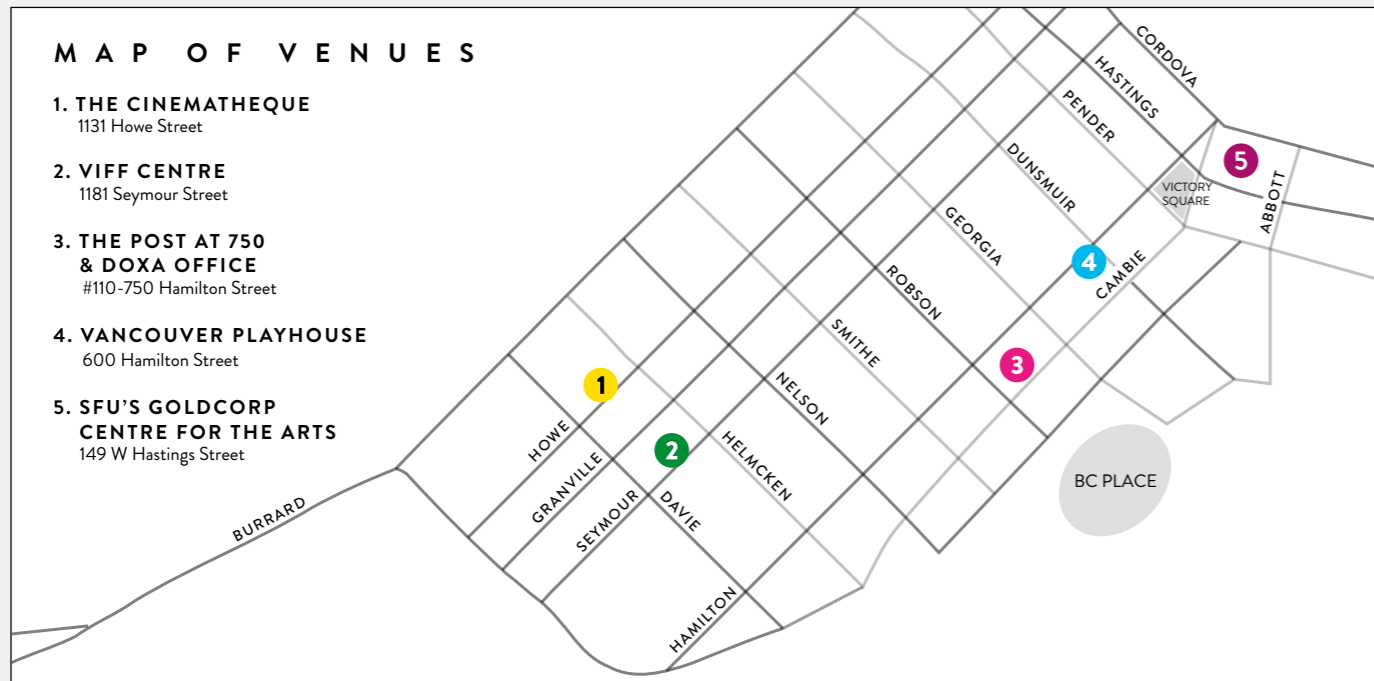
**MAY 11
SUNDAY**

**SAINTS AND
WARRIORS**
3:00 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

TBA
5:30 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

EASTERN ANTHEMS
8:30 PM • CINEMATHEQUE





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Introducing paraDOXA, our new experimental program highlighting films that push the boundaries of documentary form. With a focus on community, each screening is followed by an in-depth discussion with the director—led by a local film collective or arts organization—offering audiences a deeper understanding into the creative and political dimensions of each respective work. This year's selection interrogates the fissures between history and mythology, materiality and memory, exposing how power is inscribed into landscapes, and how communities navigate these contested spaces.



BC
PREMIERE

Archeology of Light

Sylvain L'Espérance, Canada, 2024, 71 mins

SATURDAY MAY 3, 4:30 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

Archeology of Light immerses us in Quebec's Minganie region, where light, wind, and water cast subtle, transitory patterns onto the landscape. The film moves at the pace of these natural forces, where light and shadow interact to evoke the presence of unseen energies. Using long intimate shots and dynamic sound design free from narration, L'Espérance immerses the audience in an entrancing world of subaquatic tones and ambient frequencies. Highlighting both the subject and the act of seeing, the film is not merely an observation of nature but a reverent surrender to its quiet rhythms.

No dialogue



BC
PREMIERE

SCREENING WITH

Revolving Rounds

Johann Lurf & Christina Jauernik, Austria, 2024, 11 mins

Revolving Rounds uses a 20th-century cyclostéréoscope to immerse us in 3D space, animating a pea plant in motion. Daylight shifts to twilight as the plant's motion is projected, collapsing the boundary between the natural world and the mechanical device.

No dialogue



BC
PREMIERE

Eastern Anthems

Matthew Wolkow & Jean-Jacques Martinod, Canada/USA/Ecuador, 2024, 78 mins

SUNDAY MAY 11, 8:30 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

For years, Canadian filmmaker Matthew Wolkow has been determined to capture the rare emergence of Brood X cicadas—a phenomenon that only occurs once every 17 years in the eastern United States. However, when the COVID-19 pandemic forces Wolkow to hand over his project to friend Jean-Jacques Martinod, the film's journey transforms into a deeper exploration of a creative collaboration under duress. Featuring intimate recordings of the cicadas' song, the film delves into themes of friendship, the creative process, and the passage of time. Expanding the boundaries of a typical nature documentary, *Eastern Anthems* offers a poetic portrait of America on the brink of change.

In English, French and Spanish with English subtitles



NORTH
AMERICAN
PREMIERE

HUAQUERO

Juan Carlos Donoso Gómez, Ecuador/Peru/Romania, 2024, 81 mins

TUESDAY MAY 6, 6:00 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

In the 80s and 90s, the illegal trade of precolonial artifacts surged along the coasts of Ecuador and Peru. *HUAQUERO* explores this underworld through the experiences of former huaqueros (artifact hunters) and re-enactments. The film's muted color palette recalls early colonial travel cinema, subtly underscoring the enduring effects of colonialism on Indigenous communities. As the huaqueros reflect on their involvement in uncovering and trading Pre-Hispanic artifacts—some authentic, others modified or outright forged—the film examines the tangled relationship between memory, myth, and survival. By focusing on the human aspect of this illicit trade, *HUAQUERO* gives voice to those who lived it, revealing their intimate relationship with the land and its buried past.

In Spanish with English subtitles

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PARADOXA



BC
PREMIERE

Sanctuary Station

Brigid McCaffrey, USA, 2024, 69 mins

FRIDAY MAY 9, 6:00 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

Sanctuary Station traces a series of encounters with women and youth who have forged deep bonds with the towering redwoods and remote landscapes of northern California. Shot on luminous black-and-white 16mm, the film unfolds like an album of personal stories, mourning rituals, and acts of resistance. Anchoring these moments are the words of poet-activist Mary Norbert Körte (1934–2022), her poetry touching on inner reflection and the larger cycles of life. Scenes of forest defense movements and the simple beauty of daily routines capture the delicate balance between individual memory and collective action, in a landscape shaped by history and the fight for its future.

In English



NORTH
AMERICAN
PREMIERE

To Use a Mountain

Casey Carter, USA, 2025, 99 mins

FRIDAY MAY 2, 8:10 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

In *To Use a Mountain*, the fight against a nuclear waste dump becomes a battle for survival and identity in six rural American communities. When the U.S. government quietly proposes burying almost 70,000 tonnes of radioactive waste beneath their land, it sparks decades of environmental devastation, and the ensuing resistance and grassroots activism. Through a blend of real and imagined spaces, personal stories, data visualization, and archival materials, the film explores the clash between government power and environmental justice. The film's intricate structure pulls us into a struggle that continues to shape these communities long after the crisis has faded from the headlines.

In English

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JUSTICE FORUM



BC
PREMIERE

Coexistence, My Ass!

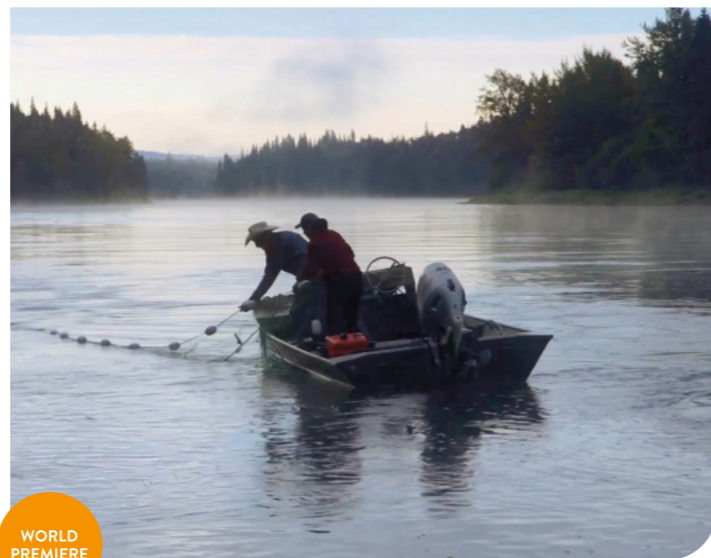
Amber Fares, USA/France, 2025, 94 mins

SUNDAY MAY 4, 7:30 PM • VIFF MAIN

Noam Shuster Eliassi has spent her life fighting for coexistence—first as a UN diplomat, now as a fearless stand-up comic. Raised in Wahat al-Salam/Neve Sha-lom, a rare Palestinian-Israeli cooperative village, she once believed peace was possible. But as the politics grew darker, she traded diplomacy for razor-sharp satire, calling out injustice with fearless wit. Earning admiration and outrage across the Middle East, her act turns her into an unexpected political force.

Winner of the World Cinema Documentary Special Jury Award for Freedom of Expression at Sundance, *Coexistence, My Ass!* follows Noam over five turbulent years, as she uses humor to confront brutal realities, even when it makes her a target. Noam isn't afraid to name what she calls "the elephant in the room"—genocide. Her voice is provocative, unflinching, and deeply necessary.

In English, Arabic, Farsi, and Hebrew with English subtitles



WORLD
PREMIERE

Nechako – It Will Be a Big River Again

Lyana Patrick, Stellat'en, 2025, 91 mins

SATURDAY MAY 3, 5:00 PM • VIFF MAIN

Lyana Patrick returns to her home territory, Stellat'en First Nation, to document a decades-long fight for justice. Alongside the Saik'uz First Nation, her community has battled Rio Tinto Alcan to restore the Nechako River and uphold their fishing rights. Since the 1951 construction of the Kemano Dam, the river's flow has dropped by 70%—devastating ecosystems and livelihoods. Flooded lands, industrial roads, and unchecked resource extraction have only deepened the damage. Despite the challenges, this multi-generational fight for eco-protection endures. As one river keeper says, "The way of the salmon is the only way forward."

In English and Dakelh

For 15 years, Justice Forum has been one of DOXA's cornerstone programs, showcasing films that facilitate critical dialogue around a broad range of social issues and sow the seeds for social change. Each Justice Forum film is paired with a live or pre-recorded conversation between speakers relevant to its issue, including filmmakers, experts in the field, academics and/or community activists. We're excited to offer a selection of films that present essential perspectives on resistance, environmental justice, and human rights, highlighting the resilience of communities fighting for a more just and sustainable future.



BC
PREMIERE

Sudan, Remember Us

Hind Meddeb, France/Tunisia/Qatar, 2024, 74 mins

THURSDAY MAY 8, 7:00 PM • VIFF MAIN

"Sorry for the delay, we're uprooting a regime."

In 2019, young Sudanese poets and activists sparked a revolution, flooding the streets of Khartoum in defiance of a long-standing dictatorship. However, their victory was met with brutal military repression, igniting a battle not just for political change, but cultural survival.

Sudan, Remember Us follows the aftermath of this uprising, capturing the resilience of artists and revolutionaries who refuse to be silenced. Through poetry, music, and storytelling, they fight for a future despite continued violence, loss, and displacement. Director Hind Meddeb's documentary captures the enduring spirit of revolution, remembrance as resistance, and the unbreakable link between art and political struggle.

In Arabic with English subtitles



BC
PREMIERE

The Pickers

Elke Sasse, Germany/Portugal/Greece, 2024, 80 mins

FRIDAY MAY 2, 5:20 PM • VIFF MAIN

From Italy to Spain, Greece to Portugal, *The Pickers* follows the migrant workers who keep Europe's farms running—without contracts, fair wages, or basic rights. Many live in makeshift camps without water or electricity, trapped in a cycle of debt and exploitation. Seydou from Mali picks oranges in Italy, Naveed from Pakistan has spent eight years harvesting olives in Greece without papers, and Bahija from Morocco works in Spain under a contract that still denies her a fair wage. Through candid testimonies and stark contrasts between idyllic supermarket produce and the hidden suffering behind it, the film exposes the systematic exploitation at the root of Europe's agricultural supply chain.

In English, Greek, Italian, Spanish, Bambara, Darija, Urdu, and Nepali with English subtitles

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JUSTICE FORUM



BC
PREMIERE

UNEARTH

John Hunter Nolan, USA, 2024, 96 minutes
FRIDAY MAY 9, 7:15 PM • SFU CINEMA

In the pristine waters of Bristol Bay, Alaska—home to one of the world’s last great salmon runs—Native Alaskan activists, commercial fishermen, and the Strickland brothers fight against a Vancouver-based mining company’s plan for North America’s largest open-pit copper mine. As corporate greed clashes with environmental and cultural survival, *UNEARTH* exposes the reckless tactics of the mining industry and the devastating cost of materials essential to modern technology. Blending investigative grit with moments of spy-thriller intrigue, the film unravels the deep ties between power, politics, and resource extraction. Amidst systemic exploitation, *UNEARTH* is a story of resilience—a testament to those who fight to protect the land, their way of life, and the future of Bristol Bay.

In English

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SPOTLIGHT: (RE)FORMATIONS



BC
PREMIERE

Among Mountains and Streams

Jean-François Lesage, Canada, 2024, 99 mins

THURSDAY MAY 8, 6:00 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

In the stillness of a remote forest, painter Meng Huang and writer Ma Jian move through a landscape resonant with the quiet hum of birdsong and the rush of a river. Exiled from China, their journey through the forest explores the tension between survival and resistance, and the power of art. As they engage in quiet rituals—building a fire, sharing a meal, painting among the trees—their conversations, shaped by memories of the Tiananmen Square massacre, reveal that creation is not just an act of expression; they see art as a fragile yet defiant response to oppression. Jean-François Lesage's *Among Mountains and Streams* immerses us in a world where nature and art become the ultimate defiance.

In Mandarin with English subtitles



BC
PREMIERE

Eight Postcards from Utopia

Radu Jude & Christian Ferencz-Flatz, Romania, 2024, 71 mins

THURSDAY MAY 8, 9:30 PM • VIFF MAIN

Acclaimed filmmaker Radu Jude crafts an ambitious found-footage documentary tracing Romania's post-communist evolution through its most voluminous cultural archive: Television commercials. Divided into eight thematic sections and an epilogue, the film captures the shifting aspirations, contradictions, and creative endeavours of a country in economic and cultural transition. The frenetic pace is spurred along by the uniqueness of the commercials and public service announcements, which vary in production value and quality. *Eight Postcards from Utopia* is as much about utopia as it is a collective rejection of dystopia.

In Romanian with English subtitles

In her recent work on exodus, documentarian Simone Bitton says “My camera always searches for the past, but always films in the present.” In this Spotlight, films respond to pivotal experiences of (re)formation, oscillating between the past and present, individual and collective inquiry. In Romania, an archival romp through television ads is as much an exploration of the nation's current psyche as it is of its socialist past. Artists from China and Iran reconsider themselves and their creative practices in the aftermath of exile and censorship. And in northern India, shunned women flee to an old city to walk their new lives as widows—with riots of colour.



WORLD
PREMIERE

Free Party

Fabianny Deschamps, France, 2024, 91 mins

FRIDAY MAY 2, 6:00 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

In a hidden city of widows in northern India, women abandoned by society walk the pilgrimage path, chanting Krishna's name as they await reincarnation. Stripped of their identities and forced into exile, they survive on faith and charity. But even here, joy is not forgotten. *Free Party* captures a rare moment of defiance—where music, colour, and celebration erupt against centuries of oppression. With striking cinematography and rich sound design, Fabianny Deschamps brings us into their world, where resilience turns suffering into solidarity, and tradition is rewritten in bursts of life and rebellion.

In Bengali with English subtitles



BC
PREMIERE

Higher Than Acidic Clouds

Ali Asgari, Iran, 2024, 71 mins

WEDNESDAY MAY 7, 5:30 PM • VIFF MAIN

When Iranian authorities place him under a travel ban after the Cannes premiere of *Terrestrial Verses*, director Ali Asgari turns defiantly to cinema in response, poignantly capturing his imaginations and memories of a Tehran he no longer recognizes. In shades of grey, the city unfurls as both a dreamscape and a site of erasure; childhood alleys have been replaced by towering facades and his life's work—his films, computer, hard drives, passport, and phone—have all been confiscated by the state. Filmed in black and white and shot largely in Asgari's home, *Higher than Acidic Clouds* is an autobiographical inquiry into the (un)making of an artist—and a city—under the bleak, corrosive restraints of censorship.

In Farsi with English subtitles

SPOTLIGHT: DEMONIC GROUNDS



NORTH
AMERICAN
PREMIERE

Bedrock

Kinga Michalska, Canada, 2025, 97 mins

MONDAY MAY 5, 6:00 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

Bedrock explores Poland's complex relationship with the Holocaust through the lives of those living on Holocaust sites today. Shot on 10 of these locations, the film immerses viewers in a series of intimate moments—from a Polish Jewish activist protecting Jewish graves and recovering remains from damaged sites, to families confronting complicity in wartime pogroms, to a girl visiting a psychiatric hospital that once served as a concentration camp. These moments reveal how history continues to haunt the present, forcing us to face uncomfortable truths about memory, guilt, and survival. *Bedrock* confronts the continuing legacies of past atrocities, showcasing how violence repeats in both the spaces we inhabit and the lives we lead.

In English and Polish with English subtitles



BC
PREMIERE

Spare My Bones, Coyote!

Jonah Malak, Canada, 2024, 84 mins

FRIDAY MAY 9, 5:00 PM • SFU CINEMA

For over a decade, Marisela and Ely Ortíz of Aguilas del Desierto have ventured into the unforgiving Sonoran desert to recover the bodies of migrants who died trying to cross the U.S.-Mexico border. Guided by hotline tips about remains abandoned by Coyotes—human traffickers who profit from smuggling migrants—they face the toll of this relentless, heartbreaking work. *Spare My Bones, Coyote!* chronicles their search and dedication, shedding light on the human cost of migration and the dignity of those lost in the desert. The film is a poignant depiction of the compassion of those who refuse to look away from the harsh realities of displacement.

In English and Spanish with English subtitles

When violence inhabits a place, what becomes its legacy? In Poland, former Holocaust camps now operate as hospitals and housing blocks. Deep in the Congo rainforest, the remains of a Belgian colonial research centre reveal much more than climatological data. Along the U.S.-Mexico border, the vast Sonoran Desert doubles as a migrant grave. While in Sicily, military antennas disfigure both land and life. The films in this Spotlight wrestle with the social and material complexities that exist in these four sites, cinematically mapping what McKittrick calls cartographies of struggle—or, demonic grounds.



BC
PREMIERE

The Tree of Authenticity

Sammy Baloji, Belgium/The Democratic Republic of Congo, 2025, 89 mins

THURSDAY MAY 8, 8:30 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

In *The Tree of Authenticity*, Sammy Baloji examines the legacies of Belgian colonialism in the Congo, blending archival material, historical accounts, and present-day footage. Through the words of Paul Panda Farnana, the first Congolese agricultural specialist to be hired by the Belgian government, the film explores Farnana's fight against racism and injustice. As Farnana's narrative unfolds over imagery of the lush Congo rainforest, its sounds and textures heighten the connection between the land and its people. Weaving colonial-era voices into modern-day realities, Baloji captures the ongoing impact of exploitation on both the environment and its inhabitants. In the film's final act, the perspective of an ancient tree speaks to the lasting consequences of colonial destruction.

In Dutch and French with English subtitles



BC
PREMIERE

Valentina and the MUOSters

Francesca Scalisi, Switzerland/Italy, 2024, 81 mins

THURSDAY MAY 8, 5:00 PM • VIFF MAIN

In the Sicilian town of Niscemi, massive U.S. military antennae known as MUOS loom over the land, disrupting both the environment and daily life. Nearly 30, Valentina still lives with her parents, weighed down by her father's judgment and the stagnation of small-town life. When his health declines—possibly worsened by the electromagnetic waves of MUOS—she is forced to confront her future. Set against a backdrop of intensive farming, wildfires, and systemic control, *Valentina and the MUOSters* is a tender portrait of duty, self-determination, and emancipation, showing how political forces shape private lives.

In Italian with English subtitles

SHORTS PROGRAM 1
WHAT'S LEFT TO FORM

These films trace personal histories as acts of defiance. Survival and heritage intertwine in the ongoing struggle between past and present. When forces work to erase history, what remains to hold onto? How can memory and identity persist as a refusal to fade away?

SATURDAY, MAY 3, 5:20 PM • VIFF LOC



Correct Me If I'm Wrong 如你所愿
Hao Zhou, Germany/USA, 2025, 23 mins

A southwest Chinese family seeks to purge an unwanted "Demon Girl" from its queer heir. In this intimate self-portrait, filmmaker Hao Zhou documents their journey through enduring rituals and public humiliation to appease their mother and grandmother, presenting an emotional look at the confluence of superstition, familial love, cultural pressure, and belief in one's own truth.

In Sichuanese with English subtitles



A Journey of the Leaves
Yash Zhang, UK/China, 2024, 11 mins

Haunted by his father's violence, queer filmmaker Yash Zhang drifts through an Estonian town, guided by encounters with strangers—each carrying echoes of his own past. *A Journey of the Leaves* is an exploration of (be)longing, trauma, and the kinship that guides us toward self discovery.

In English and Mandarin with English subtitles



Semi-precious
Kara Ditte Hansen, Canada, 2024, 15 mins

A hypnotic exploration of memory, healing, and material resonance, *Semi-precious* unfolds like a visual sound bath. Shot on 16mm, Hansen layers images of handwritten labels, geological relics, and ritualistic gestures to trace the life and practice of her mother, a retired holistic practitioner.

In English

SHORTS PROGRAM 2
SUBTERRA

Dreams slip through time, as these films sink below the Earth's surface. Light fractures through trees, particles drift in subterranean depths, and stars communicate from distant skies. Here, the unseen forces that shape our world rise to the surface, waiting to be understood.

FRIDAY, MAY 2, 7:20 PM • VIFF LOC



a flower not a flower
Tanakit Kitsanayunyong, Thailand, 2024, 18 mins

Intimate and surprising, *a flower not a flower* guides us through a space where dreams and memories coexist. Distorted light dances through trees, and a cat sleeps to a peaceful soundscape, creating a meditative exploration of how memory shapes meaning when the past begins to fade.

In Thai with English subtitles



Entropic Memory
Nicolas Brault, Canada, 2024, 7 mins

Entropic Memory uses decayed photo albums to reflect on the impermanence of memory. Through evocative animation and time lapse imagery, it explores how recollections fade, distort, and linger, offering a poignant meditation on the fragility of personal history.

No dialogue



You May Laugh at Me a Little
Yuula Benivolski, Canada, 2024, 15 mins

In Hebron, glassblower Abu Waheed works 50 meters from Al-Ibrahimi mosque, where 29 Palestinian men were massacred in 1994. This short film captures his artistry amidst Israeli-imposed apartheid walls, reflecting his community's survival and cultural preservation in a divided city.

In Arabic with English subtitles



Your Harvest May Be Delayed
Ahmad Al-Zu'bi, Jordan, 2024, 15 minutes

Ahmad Al-Zu'bi discovers an archive his mother secretly kept of his childhood, leading him on a personal journey that explores memory, loss, and diaspora. Through poetry, Ahmad reflects on the complexities of identity.

In Arabic with English subtitles



perfectly a strangeness
Alison McAlpine, Canada, 2024, 16 mins

In the Chilean mountains, an abandoned observatory and a drove of donkeys stand witness to the divine. As night falls, with ears tuned to the heavens, what secrets might the stars reveal—and what messages might we be sending back?

No dialogue



Messengers
Jeffrey Zablotty, Canada, 2024, 45 mins

Deep beneath the Earth, the search for ghostly subatomic particles uncovers a new way to perceive the universe from within. Following the journey of a neutrino from a black hole, *Messengers* ventures into the depths of Canada, Japan, and Antarctica to ask questions about the universe.

In English

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SHORTS PROGRAM 3
SAFE KEEPING

Through acts of endurance, communities carve out spaces for belonging. Against forces of erasure, identities persist, finding refuge between shared trauma and history—a space where connection and defiance take root. In the face of ongoing displacement, the process of reclamation safeguards what's at risk of being forgotten.

SATURDAY, MAY 3, 9:30 PM • VIFF MAIN



Burcu's Angels

Özgün Gündüz, Canada, 2025, 20 mins

Burcu's Angels is more than a thrift shop—it's been a sanctuary for Vancouver's 2SLGBTQIA+ community for nearly 30 years. As matriarch Burcu Özdemir says goodbye to the store's latest location, archival footage and Turkish music celebrate a space for finding not just clothes, but also belonging.

In English and Turkish with English subtitles



Talking Walls

Marcellus Armstrong, USA, 2024, 28 mins

Talking Walls moves through Detroit's Black queer spaces, tracing the architecture of resistance. Through local queer elder Alfred Johnson's voice and archival fragments, the film honours the remnants of homes and hidden places where touch, language, and memory hold defiant histories of survival and belonging.

In English

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My Memory Walls

Axel Robin, Canada, 2024, 13 mins

My Memory-Walls explores the life of painter and poet Rose G. Lévesque, celebrating her artistic resilience and the power of community memory. Transforming her home into a living museum, Rose's self-archived story unfolds in layers of paint—a touching tribute to aging, creativity, and the lasting impact of personal expression.

In French with English subtitles

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SHORTS PROGRAM 4 DISTANCE BETWEEN STONES

From moments of Indigenous joy to mysterious rituals in rural Cuba—memory, identity, and cultural resurgence come to light in this short film program. Turning inherited stories into acts of transformation, these films balance the need to honour the past with the urgency to shape what comes next. At their core, they speak to the resilience of culture and history.

SUNDAY, MAY 4, 8:00 PM • VIFF LOC



Pidikwe (Rumble)

Caroline Monnet, Anishinaabe, 2025, 11 mins

The 1920s and 2020s meet in a choreographed celebration of Indigenous joy, empowerment, and glamour set to a fervent score. Exquisitely filmed on 16mm, the film transforms traditional and contemporary dance into a powerful act of reclamation, blurring time and tradition in a striking, cinematic expression.

No dialogue



The Leap

Roberto Tarazona, Cuba, 2025, 15 min

In rural Cuba, two boys wander into a world born of whispered fears. Led by a stranger, their playful journey descends into fire and darkness, where innocence gives way to an unsettling ritual that blurs the line between the living and the dead.

In Spanish with English subtitles

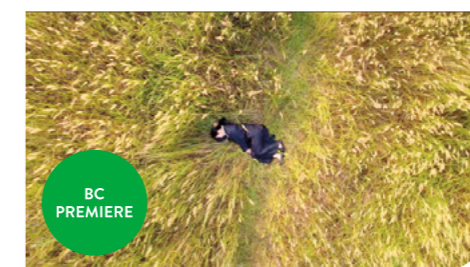


Goat Fish Snake Sparrow

Abhradeep Ganguli, India, 2024, 24 mins

Narrated in Koda—an endangered language with no written form—*Goat Fish Snake Sparrow* captures the fading history of the Kora tribe through Monica Konra's stories, folklore, and rituals. This personal ethnographic film preserves a world that risks vanishing with each passing generation as migration and assimilation accelerate its decline.

In Koda with English subtitles



Paris to Pyongyang

Helen Lee, Canada/South Korea, 2024, 32 mins

Blending home video, archival footage, and scenes from *Moranbong*—the first film collaboration between France and North Korea—Helen Lee weaves her mother's story of family separation during the Korean War into a meditation on diasporic memory, histories fractured by borders, and a longing for family that spans generations.

In English, Korean, and French with English subtitles

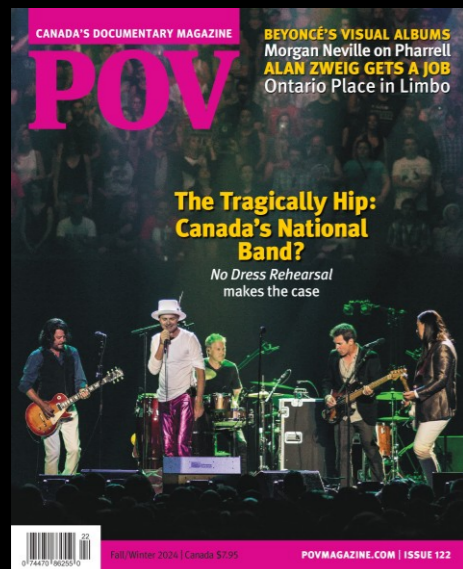


qats'ay

Jeremy Williams & Trevor Mack, Tsilhqot'in, 2024, 14 mins

qats'ay follows the long-awaited return of coiled root baskets to the Tsilhqot'in people after nearly a century spent in museums. The film challenges colonial institutions to reconsider their role in reclamation, emphasizing the baskets' deep connection to the land and the people to which they rightfully belong.

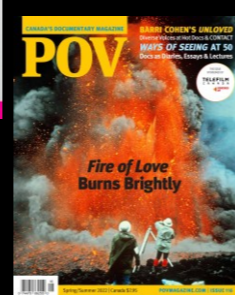
In English



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SHORTS PROGRAM 5
SENTENCED TO LIGHT AND LOSS

Borders dissolve, but surveillance persists. These films explore spaces of disappearance, displacement, and resistance: Tehran's invisible prison walls, a vanished Damascus district, a lost multi-ethnic mill town, and Munich's haunted architecture. Memory lingers in ghostly echoes, resisting the forces that seek to erase them.

SUNDAY, MAY 4, 5:30 PM • VIFF LOC



BC
PREMIERE

Citizen-Inmate

Hesam Eslami, Iran, 2025, 15 mins

In Tehran, electronic ankle bracelets replace prison walls with the illusion of freedom under constant surveillance. A watchful guard tracks every move. Black-and-white footage and a tense soundtrack evoke an atmosphere of paranoia, exposing the suffocating reality of control and the quiet acts of defiance against it.

In Persian with English subtitles



BC
PREMIERE

Entretierra

Emanuel Licha, Canada, 2024, 23 mins

Entretierra is a space between life and death, where the missing can still speak and the living refuse to stop searching. As families search for Mexico's 112,000 missing, they dig through landscapes and silences. Stripping away sensationalism, the film lingers on absence—a train moves forward; voices echo; it is dark.

In Spanish with English subtitles



BC
PREMIERE

Al Basateen

Antoine Chapon, France, 2025, 25 mins

In 2015, the Basateen al-Razi district of Damascus was destroyed in retaliation to its uprising against the Assad regime. Now, luxury towers rise where homes and orchards once stood. Through testimony and repurposed regime-made 3D animations, *Al Basateen* exposes state-imposed erasure and the fight to remember what was lost.

In Arabic with English subtitles



BC
PREMIERE

in retrospect

Mila Zhluktenko & Daniel Asadi Faezi, Germany, 2025, 15 min

Immigrant labour built Munich's Olympia shopping center for the 1972 Olympics. Decades later, the same site became the stage for a racist mass shooting. Layering archival footage, silence, and excerpts from the work of Iranian filmmaker Sohrab Shahid Saless, *in retrospect* confronts the repeating cycles of xenophobia and violence in history.

In German with English subtitles



WORLD
PREMIERE

No Past To Long For

Monica Cheema, Canada, 2025, 10 mins

Ghostly and poetic, *No Past To Long For* peers through windows—of historic buildings, of photographs, of memory itself—to trace the lingering echoes and final remaining archive of Paldi, a once-thriving mill town. Myth and history blur in this examination of land, labour, and what remains after industry fades.

In Persian with English subtitles

SHORTS PROGRAM 6
THREADBARE

In these films, landscapes scarred by colonialism and exploitation reveal stories of survival and the unresolved impact of our presence. From whale's navigating through human interference to Syria's makeshift oil refineries, these narratives expose the tangled forces of land, power, and those who refuse to surrender.

SATURDAY, MAY 3, 8:00 PM • VIFF LOC



BC
PREMIERE

Six Knots

Ali Vanderkruyk, Canada, 2024, 30 mins

To reduce ambient noise when approaching a whale, a vessel should not exceed six knots—this modus operandi exemplifies the distance between human and animal, where the whale serves as both an object of fascination and exploitation. *Six Knots* follows cetacean specialists on the West Coast, exploring the entanglement of science, colonialism, and spirituality.

In English



BC
PREMIERE

Who Loves the Sun

Arshia Shakiba, Canada, 2024, 20 mins

Amid war and economic collapse, locals in northern Syria risk their lives working in makeshift oil refineries. *Who Loves the Sun* follows Mohammad, a key figure in this dangerous trade, as he navigates hazardous conditions and the stark realities of survival in this apocalyptic landscape.

In Arabic with English subtitles



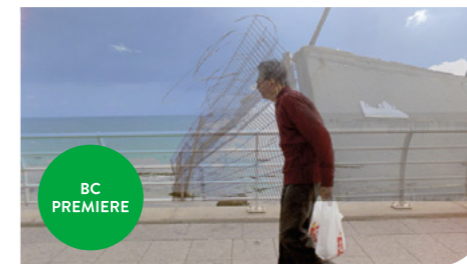
BC
PREMIERE

This Dissonance

Christophe Katrib, USA/Lebanon, 2024, 6 mins

Filmmaker Christophe Katrib grapples with exile, violence, and resistance in this visceral short. Layering Palestinian and Lebanese voices over vast American landscapes, the film confronts the dissonance of witnessing U.S.-backed genocide from afar. Poetry and pain echo across stolen lands near and far, past and present.

In Arabic with English subtitles



BC
PREMIERE

A Stone's Throw على مرمى حجر

Razan AlSalah, Canada, 2024, 40 mins

A Stone's Throw follows Amine, a Palestinian elder twice exiled—from Haifa to Beirut, then to an offshore oil platform in the Arab Gulf. Through fragmented images of Palestine on Google Earth, the film connects labour struggles and Palestinian resistance to Zionist colonization, drawing a line from the 1936 sabotage of a BP pipeline to the ongoing fight for land and dignity.

In Arabic with English subtitles

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NATIONWIDE DOCUMENTARIES



LOCAL PREMIERE

Aisha's Story

Elizabeth Vilbert & Chen Wang, Canada, 2025, 63 mins

THURSDAY MAY 1, 7:00 PM • VANCOUVER PLAYHOUSE
WEDNESDAY MAY 8, 4:00 PM • SFU CINEMA

Aisha's Story traces the history of Palestinian displacement using food as an expression of cultural heritage and resistance. The film follows Aisha, a matriarch running her family's grain mill in Jordan, who preserves Palestinian history by passing down traditional cuisine to generations that have been displaced from their homeland. Through interviews and archival footage, Vilbert and Wang's film tells the complex story of Palestine and the colonial incursions that have ignited tensions between Palestinian and Israeli peoples. Filmed over two years amidst ongoing violence against Palestinians by Israeli forces, the film maintains hope: The preservation of food sovereignty contributes to generational healing. Palestinian food is presented as a symbol of longing, resistance, and joy, carefully sustained by Aisha.

In Arabic with English subtitles



BC PREMIERE

Among Mountains and Streams

Jean-François Lesage, Canada, 2024, 99 mins

THURSDAY MAY 8, 6:00 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

In the stillness of a remote forest, painter Meng Huang and writer Ma Jian move through a landscape resonant with the quiet hum of birdsong and the rush of a river. Exiled from China, their journey through the forest explores the tension between survival and resistance, and the power of art. As they engage in quiet rituals—building a fire, sharing a meal, painting among the trees—their conversations, shaped by memories of the Tiananmen Square massacre, reveal that creation is not just an act of expression; they see art as a fragile yet defiant response to oppression. Jean-François Lesage's *Among Mountains and Streams* immerses us in a world where nature and art become the ultimate defiance.

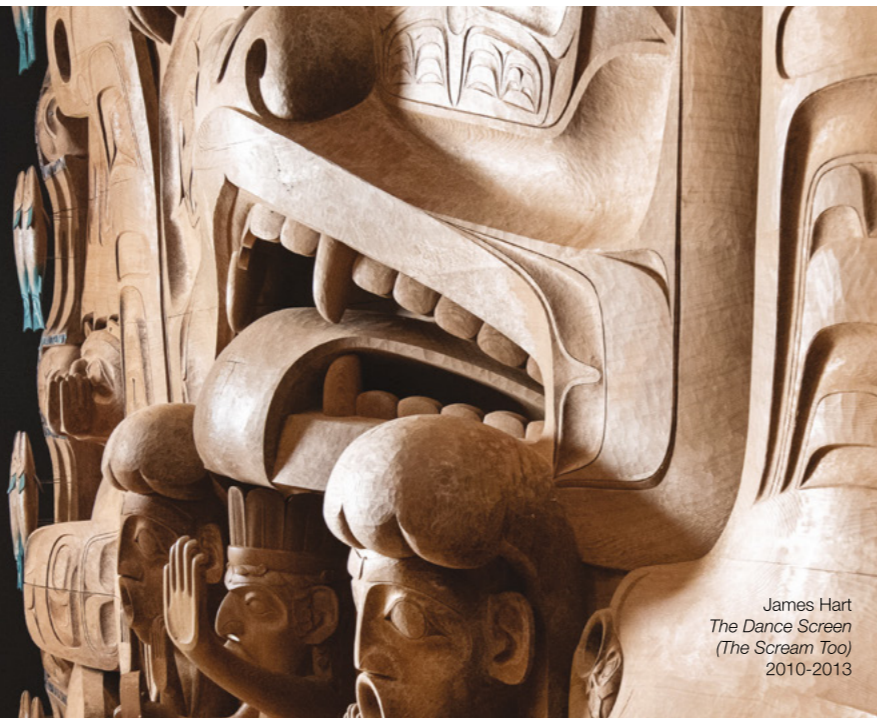
In Mandarin with English subtitles

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NATIONWIDE DOCUMENTARIES



Bedrock

Kinga Michalska, Canada, 2025, 97 mins

MONDAY MAY 5, 6:00 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

Bedrock explores Poland's complex relationship with the Holocaust through the lives of those living on Holocaust sites today. Shot on 10 of these locations, the film immerses viewers in a series of intimate moments—from a Polish Jewish activist protecting Jewish graves and recovering remains from damaged sites, to families confronting complicity in wartime pogroms, to a girl visiting a psychiatric hospital that once served as a concentration camp. These moments reveal how history continues to haunt the present, forcing us to face uncomfortable truths about memory, guilt, and survival. *Bedrock* confronts the continuing legacies of past atrocities, showcasing how violence repeats in both the spaces we inhabit and the lives we lead.

In English and Polish with English subtitles



Have You Heard Judi Singh?

Baljit Sangra, Canada, 2025, 79 mins

SUNDAY MAY 4, 5:00 PM • VIFF MAIN

Originally from Edmonton, gifted jazz singer Judi Singh defied expectations as a Punjabi-Black artist stepping onto the stage in the late 1950s. Though her ethereal voice captivated musicians and niche audiences, the music industry failed to give her the recognition she deserved—an all-too-familiar story for women and artists of colour. In this lively and deeply felt portrait, Singh's daughter Emily and director Baljit Sangra retrace Singh's life and music through archival recordings, intimate recollections, and the bohemian spaces she once inhabited. Weaving together moments of brilliance, struggle, and resilience, the film reintroduces a forgotten artist to the spotlight she always deserved.

In English

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NATIONWIDE DOCUMENTARIES



BC PREMIERE

Paul

Denis Côté, Canada, 2025, 87 mins

TUESDAY MAY 6, 8:00 PM • VIFF MAIN

“Cleaning Simp” Paul cleans the homes of dominant women from BDSM chat forums while maintaining a profile online as a house cleaner on a weight-loss journey. In this new film by Denis Côté, we are treated to a complex portrait of a young man coming out of depression and finding new identity through the controlled contradictions of online validation and in-person degradation. Côté’s tender, observational gaze allows us to gently slide down the rabbit hole into Paul’s unpredictable yet deceptively quotidian adventures.

In English and French with English subtitles



BC PREMIERE

Saints and Warriors

Patrick Shannon, X̱aayda Gwaay.yaay, 2024, 98 mins

SATURDAY MAY 10, 6:30 PM • SFU CINEMA

SUNDAY MAY 11, 3:00 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

For the people of X̱aayda Gwaay.yaay (Haida Gwaii), basketball is more than a game—it’s an arena for leadership, resistance, and cultural preservation. *Saints and Warriors* tells the powerful story of how the game became a lifeline for carrying Haida traditions through generations. Under colonial rule, Indigenous peoples were banned from gathering—except for church or sports. The Haida chose the court, turning basketball into a battleground for community, identity, and survival. Set during the 2023-24 season, the film follows the legendary Skidegate Saints as they fight to defend their dynasty at the All Native Basketball Tournament. But their battle extends beyond the scoreboard, as players navigate tensions, shifting allegiances, and the long-standing struggle for Indigenous land rights.

In English



BC PREMIERE

Spare My Bones, Coyote!

Jonah Malak, Canada, 2024, 84 mins

FRIDAY MAY 9, 5:00 PM • SFU CINEMA

For over a decade, Marisela and Ely Ortíz of Aguilas del Desierto have ventured into the unforgiving Sonoran desert to recover the bodies of migrants who died trying to cross the U.S.-Mexico border. Guided by hotline tips about remains abandoned by Coyotes—human traffickers who profit from smuggling migrants—they face the toll of this relentless, heartbreaking work. *Spare My Bones, Coyote!* chronicles their search and dedication, shedding light on the human cost of migration and the dignity of those lost in the desert. The film is a poignant depiction of the compassion of those who refuse to look away from the harsh realities of displacement.

In English and Spanish with English subtitles

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INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARIES



LOCAL PREMIERE

Bogancloch

Ben Rivers, UK/Iceland/Germany, 2024, 85 mins

FRIDAY MAY 9, 8:10 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

For over 40 years, Jake Williams has lived alone in Scotland's Clashindarroch Forest, his days shaped by the rhythms of nature. *Bogancloch* marks Ben Rivers' third film with Williams, revisiting their long-running collaboration after *Two Years at Sea* (2011) and an earlier short. Shot on Black and White 16mm, the film drifts between quiet observations, immersing us in a constant yet ever-evolving solitude. Though Williams' world feels removed from modern life, fleeting encounters—with hikers, children, and the changing landscape—hint at subtle shifts. With a patient and unobtrusive gaze, *Bogancloch* captures a life defined by resilience, routine, and gradual transformation.

In English and Old Scots



BC PREMIERE

The Brink of Dreams

Ayman El Amir & Nada Riyadh, Egypt/France, 2024, 102 mins

TUESDAY MAY 6, 8:15 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

In a conservative Coptic village in southern Egypt, a group of young women take the stage, turning street theatre into an act of resistance against the patriarchy. *The Brink of Dreams* follows Majda, Haidi, and Monika over four years, as they tackle issues like child marriage and sexual harassment through their experimental theatre. Their performances spark a mix of curiosity and hostility from their community. As they navigate societal pressures, Majda fights for a place at theatre school in Cairo, Haidi prepares for marriage, and Monika sacrifices her singing dreams to become a mother. Amid these struggles, the film captures the hope and perseverance of those determined to pursue their dreams.

In Egyptian Arabic with English subtitles



CANADIAN PREMIERE

The Cats of Gokogu Shrine

Kazuhiro Soda, Japan/USA, 2024, 120 mins

THURSDAY MAY 8, 7:30 PM • SFU CINEMA

At Gokogu Shrine, stray cats bask in the attention of visitors who come to feed and photograph them. But beneath the charm lies a delicate balance between care and control, devotion and disruption. Children play on the shrine's steps while older residents tend to the grounds. While some see the shrine as a haven for cats and community, others grapple with the disorder they bring. In his signature observational style, Kazuhiro Soda captures the rhythms of this shared space, where acts of generosity and responsibility intertwine, revealing the unseen labour of coexistence. Over the course of a year, Soda crafts an intimate portrait of a community in flux, where every small act ripples outward, carrying the weight of history and obligation.

In Japanese with English subtitles



BC PREMIERE

Direct Action

Guillaume Cailleau & Ben Russell, Germany/France, 2024, 213 mins

WEDNESDAY MAY 7, 6:45 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

Activists, farmers, and squatters turn resistance into a way of life in Notre-Dame-des-Landes, France. Occupying land to block an airport expansion project, they create the "Zone to Defend" (ZAD). *Direct Action* immerses us in this radical experiment, where community and confrontation exist side by side. Shot on 16mm, Ben Russell and Guillaume Cailleau capture the rhythms of life—baking bread, celebrating children's birthdays, plowing fields—alongside clashes with police and the threat of eviction.

Through the lives of its central figures, the film reveals how collective action can challenge systems of power. Winner of the Berlinale's 2024 Encounters Award, *Direct Action* is both a gripping documentation of protest and a meditation on the possibilities of communal life.

In French, English, and Arabic with English subtitles

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INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARIES



WORLD
PREMIERE

Free Party

Fabianny Deschamps, France, 2024, 91 mins

FRIDAY MAY 2, 6:00 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

In a hidden city of widows in northern India, women abandoned by society walk the pilgrimage path, chanting Krishna's name as they await reincarnation. Stripped of their identities and forced into exile, they survive on faith and charity. But even here, joy is not forgotten. *Free Party* captures a rare moment of defiance—where music, colour, and celebration erupt against centuries of oppression. With striking cinematography and rich sound design, Fabianny Deschamps brings us into their world, where resilience turns suffering into solidarity, and tradition is rewritten in bursts of life and rebellion.

In Bengali with English subtitles



BC
PREMIERE

GEN_

Gianluca Matarrese, France/Italy/Switzerland, 2025, 104 minutes

WEDNESDAY MAY 7, 5:45 PM • SFU CINEMA

At Niguarda public hospital in Milan, Dr. Maurizio Bini navigates Italy's conservative laws while providing IVF and gender-affirming care to patients. Amidst the constraints of public healthcare he pushes boundaries, offering Bach played by a violinist during IVF as well as hormone therapy for trans patients. As he mentors a successor and oversees renovations at the hospital, Bini grapples with the ethical and political limits of his practice, including restrictions on cryogenic egg transfers from Palestine. *GEN_* captures moments of profound vulnerability and trust between patients, doctor, and audience. With an intimate, observational style, the film explores medicine's capacity to heal bodies and affirm dignity in a system often dominated by profit and politics.

In Italian with English subtitles

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INTERNATIONAL
DOCUMENTARIES



BC
PREMIERE

Higher Than Acidic Clouds

Ali Asgari, Iran, 2024, 71 mins

WEDNESDAY MAY 7, 5:30 PM • VIFF MAIN

When Iranian authorities place him under a travel ban after the Cannes premiere of *Terrestrial Verses*, director Ali Asgari turns defiantly to cinema in response, poignantly capturing his imaginations and memories of a Tehran he no longer recognizes. In shades of grey, the city unfurls as both a dreamscape and a site of erasure; childhood alleys have been replaced by towering facades and his life's work—his films, computer, hard drives, passport, and phone—have all been confiscated by the state. Filmed in black and white and shot largely in Asgari's home, *Higher than Acidic Clouds* is an autobiographical inquiry into the (un)making of an artist—and a city—under the bleak, corrosive restraints of censorship.

In Farsi with English subtitles



BC
PREMIERE

Mistress Dispeller

Elizabeth Lo, United States, 2024, 95 mins

MONDAY MAY 5, 8:10 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

Desperate to save her marriage, a wife hires Teacher Wang, a “mistress dispeller,” to drive a wedge between her husband and his new lover. As part of China's growing industry dedicated to saving marriages through emotional manipulation, Wang's methods expose the deep complexities of infidelity. Elizabeth Lo's observational style provides unscripted access to candid conversations, revealing each person's motivations through Wang's subtle interventions. While the premise suggests scandal, Lo shifts focus to a compelling character study exploring marriage, loyalty, and the lengths people go for love and control.

In Mandarin with English subtitles

INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARIES



BC PREMIERE

Mr. Nobody Against Putin

David Borenstein, Denmark/Czech Republic, 2025, 90 mins

WEDNESDAY MAY 7, 8:00 PM • SFU CINEMA

When Russia's invasion of Ukraine begins, smalltown teacher Pasha faces an ethical crisis as his school is transformed into a recruitment center for the war. Known for his nonconformist ways, Pasha initially provides a safe haven for students, but as the war intensifies, his role shifts dramatically. Faced with new patriotic policies, Pasha decides to document the transformation of his school, secretly capturing footage of the militarization of children and the indoctrination of young minds. Winner of the World Cinema Documentary Special Jury Award at the 2025 Sundance Film Festival, *Mr. Nobody Against Putin* offers an eye-opening exploration of the human cost of resistance in a country under the grip of an authoritarian regime.

In English and Russian with English subtitles



BC PREMIERE

Predators

David Osit, USA, 2025, 96 mins

SATURDAY MAY 3, 7:45 PM • VIFF MAIN

In the early 2000s, the success of *To Catch a Predator* turned crime into entertainment, luring sex offenders to a film set where they were confronted and arrested on camera. The show's success spawned a global industry of imitators and vigilantes, and the public's insatiable thirst for retribution. Director David Osit revisits this cultural phenomenon, exploring how the show—and its imitators—transformed moral prosecution into media spectacle. *Predators* examines the consequences for all involved—the victims, perpetrators, law enforcement, and the audience. Osit probes why some crimes demand relentless public punishment while others are met with rehabilitation, offering a thoughtful, provocative look at the ethics of televised justice and its lasting impact.

In English



NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

Silent Observers

Eliza Petkova, Bulgaria/Germany, 2024, 96 min

SUNDAY MAY 4, 8:40 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

In a remote Bulgarian village superstition reigns, revealed through the lives of six animals: A cat feared to be vampire, a donkey believed to be bewitched, and a dog blamed for killing chickens. *Silent Observers* immerses us in the world of animals, blurring the line between documentary and folk horror. With minimal dialogue and a strong sensory presence, Eliza Petkova captures how ancient beliefs continue to shape the present. The animals' roles remain unhumanized, allowing their presence to expose the community's complex relationship with myth, survival, and unseen forces that linger in the shadows.

In Bulgarian with English subtitles

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INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARIES



CANADIAN PREMIERE

Songs of Slow Burning Earth

Olha Zhurba, Ukraine/Denmark/Sweden/France, 2024, 95 mins

SUNDAY MAY 4, 4:00 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

Olha Zhurba's *Songs of Slow Burning Earth* is an audiovisual diary documenting Ukraine's descent into total war. Over two years, Zhurba captures the invasion's chaos and grim normalization. From fleeing civilians to families identifying the dead, the film weaves together raw moments with a soundscape that moves from panic to resignation. Zhurba's patient, observant style reveals both the trauma and resilience of those enduring the devastation of war. Against these bleak and wasted landscapes, tight-knit communities persist, bound by shared grief and defiant hope, and a new generation of Ukrainians struggles to imagine a different future, defined by the possibility of freedom.

"When they ask me what war is, I'll answer without hesitation: It's names."

- DIRECTOR OLHA ZHURBA

In Ukrainian with English subtitles



NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

To Use a Mountain

Casey Carter, USA, 2025, 99 mins

FRIDAY MAY 2, 8:10 PM • CINEMATHEQUE

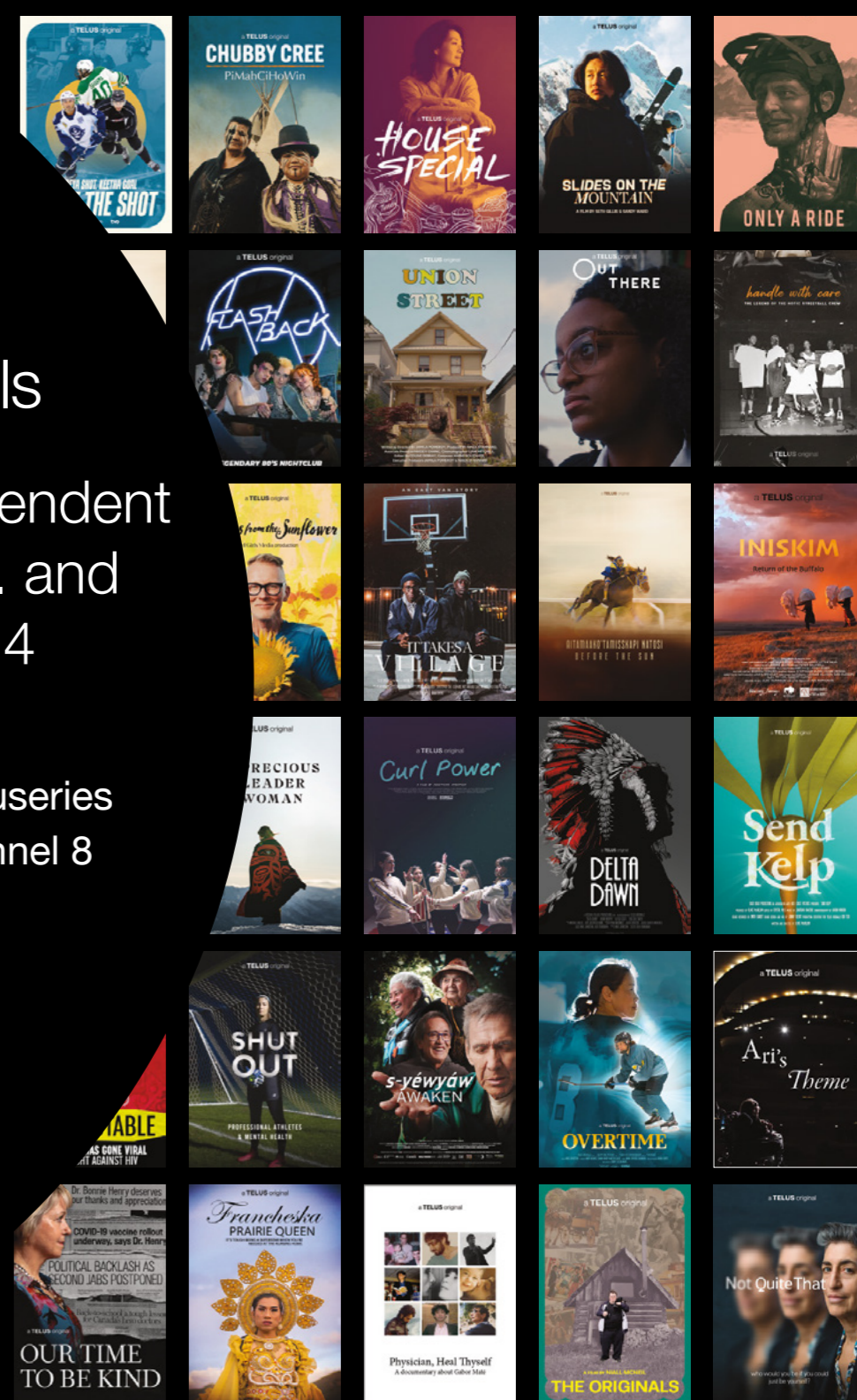
In *To Use a Mountain*, the fight against a nuclear waste dump becomes a battle for survival and identity in six rural American communities. When the U.S. government quietly proposes burying almost 70,000 tonnes of radioactive waste beneath their land, it sparks decades of environmental devastation, and the ensuing resistance and grassroots activism. Through a blend of real and imagined spaces, personal stories, data visualization, and archival materials, the film explores the clash between government power and environmental justice. The film's intricate structure pulls us into a struggle that continues to shape these communities long after the crisis has faded from the headlines.

In English

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