

NOVEMBER 12 – 19, 2020

TORONTO REEL ASIAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

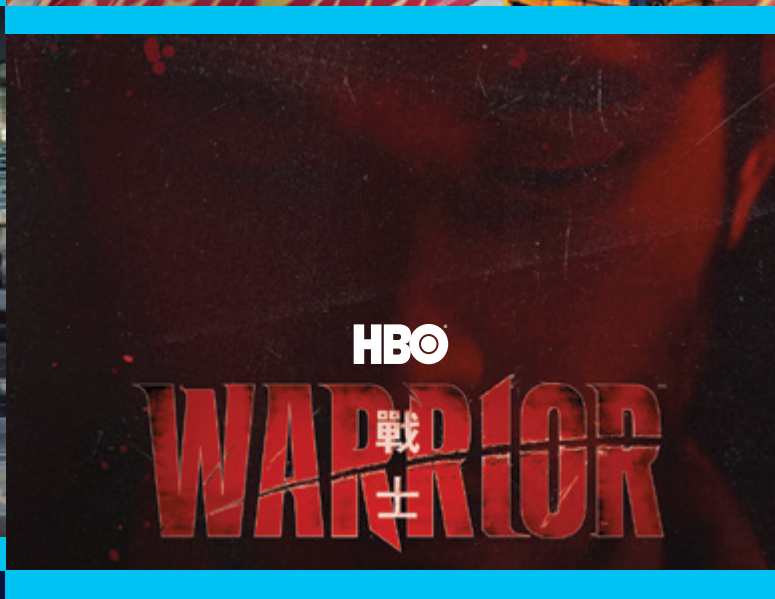


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reel asian
INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

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TORONTO REEL ASIAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL



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Front cover
artwork “Nest”
by 2020 Festival
Creative Artist
Kristan Lai



Kristan Lai is an emerging illustrator and visual storyteller working between Toronto and Pennsylvania. Inspired from growing up in the Poconos, her work focuses on reimagining environments, memories, and dreamscapes to connect rural and urban landscapes. On a different stylistic end, she also enjoys creating oil portrait paintings in between illustrations. Lai has completed a Bachelor of Design from OCAD U's Illustration program.

My work is often inspired by the environments I've lived in, imagined, and have travelled to. Furthermore, memories are a huge part of my practice. In the illustration for the 2020 Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival, I am recalling a memory of when my mother used to brush my hair when I was small. My hair would tangle really easily, break combs, and create huge knots—knots so huge to where my mother would say I have bird nests in my hair. She would joke and make chirping sounds by my head.

Then I thought about all the bird nests I see around my home; how they not only contained twigs, but animal fur, plastic, string, whatever they could find. Even my hair could also be material for a nest. All of these thoughts led to the illustration having multiple perspectives and moments captured in ink; snapshots of the same story.

Land Acknowledgement

Reel Asian's offices are located on the treaty territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat nations. This territory is covered by the Dish With One Spoon covenant, a treaty of collective responsibility for the protection and sharing of land and resources.

As we move to a digitally hosted festival that will screen Canada-wide, we encourage audiences to learn the specific histories and stories of the lands they are settled on—the 11 treaty lands, many treaty agreements, and traditional, unceded territories that continue to demand justice—and to support the ongoing work of Indigenous leaders and communities.

We acknowledge the abundance of positionalities, histories, communities and relationships we support as a festival that platforms and elevates voices from Asian and Asian diasporic film and media arts. Regardless of our diverse pathways, we all benefit from a history of broken treaties by the Canadian government, and we reckon openly with our responsibility as settler-immigrants to this land and its original stewards, naming the ways we are complicit in structures of white supremacy, while striving to be better allies with the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island.

Reel Asian also recognizes the way “development” has historically been used to steal land and displace people, and how technology continues to be wielded to suppress, surveil and inflict violence on Indigenous communities. In light of this, our online festival this year intentionally centres critical conversations that question, interrogate and hold accountable our use of digital tools and creation of digital spaces.

Finally, in a year of urgent reckoning, we recognize the historical and ongoing events that have created and nurtured the conditions and tragedies of this specific year. We honour the longstanding work of organizers, creatives, and communities that continue to give us hope, language, and possibility. We stand with Indigenous peoples all over Turtle Island who are exercising their sovereignty and working toward justice and freedoms, whose histories, presence and imagined futures inspire us over and over to envision what our future worlds must look like.

REELASIAN.COM
#REELASIAN24

Toronto Reel Asian
International Film Festival

401 Richmond Street West,
Suite 448
Toronto, ON M5V 3A8
info@reelasian.com

Charitable registration number
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LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“Stories by and about our community need to be told, not only to celebrate the nuances of our individuality but also to take a look at our collective history as an Asian community so that we can learn from the past and the actions of others to create a better now, made in solidarity and allyship”

Artists whose films explore the intersectionality of identity and community have always found a place in Reel Asian’s lineup, and this year is no different. It’s our privilege to welcome audiences from across Canada to a digital space that not only showcases a slate of thought-provoking films by Asian artists from around the world, but carries over the same community-building atmosphere we’ve had in person for 23 years. Thank you to our audience members—new and returning—for bringing us and these stories into your home or wherever you may be watching.

There is an urgency in the conversations taking place right now, and we thank our honoured guests—thought-leaders and changemakers on the frontlines—who are taking part in panels to discuss issues present in our world and in this year’s official selection. Audience members return to our festival year after year to participate in these exchanges and to reconnect with one another, and this will not be lost in an online presentation. Carry on the conversation with fellow audience members in the forums and other open channels that a digital festival

has allowed us to occupy simultaneously as we watch together and apart.

We’re grateful to our funders, sponsors, donors and members for their unwavering support. But the festival would not be possible without the dedication and hard work of our staff and board. I’d like to express my deepest gratitude to our departing board members—we sincerely thank them for their vast and numerous contributions to the organization. Thanks also to the artists whose work we exist to amplify. Now more than ever, stories by and about our community need to be told, not only to celebrate the nuances of our individuality but also to take a look at our collective history as an Asian community so that we can learn from the past and the actions of others to create a better now, made in solidarity and allyship. In these increasingly overwhelming times, when we must come together against the mounting pressures of current events and longtime injustices, may we also share joy—even if it only spans the time of a short about dance or dogs...or both. Enjoy the festival!



Deanna Wong | Executive Director

LETTER FROM PROGRAMMING

We've been waiting impatiently in lockdown for things to "return to normal." But as our North American naïveté wore off and the gravity of this pandemic hit, we wondered who would want to watch pre-COVID films—would we have an appetite for the world as we remembered it?

We saw the pandemic lay bare structural issues that put the most vulnerable in even more danger. On top of COVID were the continued and escalating horrific acts of violence against Black, Brown, and Indigenous people in North America, and courageous actions calling for and bringing real, generational, existential change. "Return to normal" is not an option.

Then what are we doing as a festival? Are film and art frivolous? Do they matter anymore? This is a cynical but crucial question when so many are asking, "How do we get through this?"

Our selection of films this year is modest in quantity, but not in storytelling. While they may have been made before COVID, they are a reckoning. These films witness the fissures of our communities, address the struggles we face under historical, political, racist, gendered, systemic structures, and contemplate the experiences of despair, anger, hope, grief, and joy with craft and intention.

What should we imagine next? How can we get there together?

We don't expect perfection or even solutions in doing this work of nurturing and platforming art, but we endeavour for a better world through nuance, complexity, and the messy and frustrating (mis-)understandings that a festival can hold.



Kelly Lui, Jasmine Gui, and Aram Siu Wai Collier
Programming Team

"Who would want to watch pre-COVID films—would we have an appetite for the world as we remembered it?"

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We are grateful to our
departing board members
for their years of service
to Reel Asian: Dave
Wong, Richard Cheung,
Simran Prihar, Immanuel
Lanzaderas, and our
chair, Karthiga
Ratnasabapathy, and
treasurer, Geoffrey Peers.

*Stepped down from the board
at the AGM

**Stepped down prior to the AGM

*** Haaris Qadri and Samiya
Karim's positions were made
possible by a grant from the
Government of Canada's Canada
Summer Jobs programme.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, STARTING AT THE TOP: Mimi, Jennifer, Josephine, Haaris, Atif,
Seungwoo, Nadia, Chris, Jasmine, June, Samiya, Nicolas, Kelly, Christine,
Sanjay, Mariam, Aram, Deanna

ARTWORK: Kristan Lai

THANK YOU!

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User Details

Nick: furamaforever

#: 468201924

Status: 

furamaforever<3 [1:25PM]

hey! did you know that Reel Asian is going digital and Canada-wide this year?

edisonchenfan [1:27PM]

whoa no way!! 🤔

furamaforever<3 [1:25PM]

tickets and full programme info are available on reelasian.com.

edisonchenfan [1:28PM]

amazing i'll check it out right now! But how do we watch?

furamaforever<3 [1:28PM]

once you buy a ticket you'll get a confirmation email with all the info

edisonchenfan [1:29PM]

are there going to be Q&As and live online events?

furamaforever<3 [1:30PM]

YES!! reelasian.com will have updates on dates, times, and which guests will be participating this year. Don't forget about industry talks at Reel Ideas!

edisonchenfan [1:22PM]

what movies are you going to watch?

furamaforever<3 [1:24PM]

you should join Discord! It's an online chat forum that Reel Asian is using. I've been talking about what's on my watch list there with other folks. Reel Asian's forum is set up for us to discuss the films once they start screening on November 12th! Here's the QR code to join...



Send

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Osler Best Feature Film Award

All feature works are eligible for this prize. \$1,500 cash prize.



Cinesend Best First Feature Award

All first feature films are eligible for this prize. \$1,000 cash prize.



National Film Board of Canada Best Canadian Short Film Award

All short works made by emerging Canadian artists (fewer than 4 films) are eligible for this prize of post-production services, \$5,000 value.



Air Canada Short Film or Video Award

All Canadian short films and videos are eligible for this prize. Opportunity to broadcast on Air Canada's in-flight entertainment screens on international flights.

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Animasian

All animated works are eligible for this prize. \$600 cash prize.



The Truth to Power Award

All documentary films are eligible for this \$1,250 cash prize, donated by Karla Bobadilla, Diang-Yee lu, Immanuel Lanzaderas, Sonia Sakamoto-Jog and Victoria Shen.



WIFT-T Film Award

All films made by female-identified Ontario-based artists are eligible for this prize. \$500 in programming gift certificates and one-year membership to WIFT-T.



Change Connect

All Canadian filmmakers under the age of 30 are eligible for this prize. \$500 cash prize.

JURY

FEATURES

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Carrianne Leung is a fiction writer and educator. Her debut novel, *The Wondrous Woo*, was shortlisted for the 2014 Toronto Book Awards. Her collection of stories, *That Time I Loved You*, was named one of CBC's Best Books of 2018. She is currently working on a new novel titled *The After*.



Melissa Bisagni is the media initiatives program manager at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. She was previously the director of programming for the DC Asian Pacific American Film Festival, where she remains a senior adviser.



Danis Goulet is a writer and director. Her films have screened at Berlin, Sundance and the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). She is a former programmer for TIFF and a former director of the imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival. Her debut feature, *Night Raiders*, is currently in post-production.

SHORTS



Mandeq Hassan has spent years working extensively in the film industry. Hassan has been a key member of the Toronto-based distribution company Sisterhood Media, and her credits include popular works *Gay Mean Girls* and *The Regent Park Project*. She received the 2019 Directors Guild of Canada New Visions Award.



Ammar Keshodia is a filmmaker and curator. He has worked on the programming teams for festivals such as TIFF, SXSW, and Overlook. In 2019, he served as the lead programmer at Reelworld Film Festival. He has written for publications such as *Bright Wall/Dark Room*, *NANG Magazine*, and *Peephole Journal*.



Fransiska Prihadi is an architect, co-founder of art-house cinema MASH Denpasar and has been the program director of Minikino Film Week at the Bali International Short Film Festival since 2015. She is now working on her research thesis about international short film festivals for her Master of Tourism Studies at Udayana University.

FEATU





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OPENING NIGHT

SPECIAL PRESENTATION: ONLY AVAILABLE IN ONTARIO

DOWN A DARK STAIRWELL

Down a Dark Stairwell takes a nuanced and careful look at the events following the 2014 case where Akai Gurley was shot and killed in the stairwell of his own apartment building by Chinese-American NYPD officer Peter Liang.

Director **Ursula Liang** (no relation to Peter) and her crew follow the Black Lives Matter protests rallying around Gurley's family to support a conviction, while also following various predominantly Asian American communities' protest responses to what they deem an unfair trial.

In our current context of urgent calls for accountability around excessive police violence, *Down A Dark Stairwell's* raw and honest witness to the ways racial politics fissure and divide us feels timely and necessary. In documenting multiple communities' response to every new development from the event, the film contends with how fraught and limited notions of justice can be, and the devastating violence that the policing system inflicts on Black communities. — JASMINE GUI

DIRECTOR NOTE

This case captured the attention of national media and highlighted what we in our respective communities have known for a long time: we are not united. In fact, in low whispers with problematic language, we often talk about one another. But what we are not talking about is the many reasons why this space between us exists: bubbles created by social media filters and propaganda, white supremacy, structural oppression, social inequality and isolation.

I want to start these conversations now. To look at how the complexities of this case reflect the complexities of our fight for humanity, agency and respect. To talk about whether the battles we fight bring us power or dissipate it. And to examine who really benefits when marginalized groups are divided.



PANELISTS



Syrus Marcus Ware Activist and Artist

Syrus Marcus Ware is a Vanier scholar, visual artist, activist, curator and educator. Ware uses painting, installation and performance to explore social justice frameworks and Black activist culture. He is part of the Performance Disability Art Collective and a core-team member of Black Lives Matter — Toronto.



J.M. Harper
Editor and Co-Writer

J.M. Harper is a documentarian. *Down A Dark Stairwell* is his third documentary feature as editor. He's currently editing a feature documentary about Kanye West. His work has been featured on *AdWeek*, *Vimeo Staff Picks*, *The FADER* and the Guggenheim.



Ursula Liang
Director, *Down a Dark Stairwell*

Ursula Liang is a journalist-turned-filmmaker. After working in print (*ESPN The Magazine*, *T: The New York Times Style Magazine*), she directed two critically-acclaimed feature documentaries, *9-Man* and *Down a Dark Stairwell*. Liang lives in the Bronx, N.Y.



Michelle Chang
Editor

Michelle Chang is a Brooklyn-based editor of documentary features as well as short-form projects. Feature credits include *When Claude Got Shot*, *Harbor From the Holocaust*, *9-MAN*, *Like Any Other Kid*, *(A)Sexual*, *American Promise* (Additional Editor for POV Broadcast, Emmy nomination). Before becoming an editor, Chang was an associate producer for ABC News *20/20* and *Primetime*.

THURSDAY
NOV 12
8:45 PM

LIVE EVENT

Join us for a live discussion with director Ursula Liang and special guests

2020
USA
83 min
English, Cantonese,
Mandarin with English
subtitles
14A

CONTENT WARNING

Events surrounding
killing by police

DIRECTOR
Ursula Liang

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True/False Film Festival,
2020

Visions du Réel, 2020

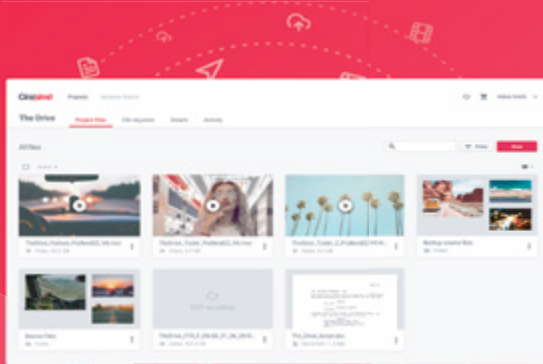
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LE MEILLEUR PAYS DU MONDE

A right-wing government controls Quebec, closing its borders and pushing immigrants to leave. Widower Hiên lives a meager life running a dépanneur. Enticed by his daughter Phuong's move to Vietnam, Hiên makes arrangements to leave everything behind. But when a neighbourhood boy is left under the temporary care of Phuong's aimless Québécois boyfriend, Hiên is driven to solve the mystery of the boy's missing mother.

Veteran Quebec actor Nguyễn Thành Tri gives an intense performance as Hiên, a stoic ex-soldier with a deep history in conflict and post-war trauma whose eyes have seen things many of us would never understand. Inspired by watching his refugee parents during the 1995 Quebec referendum, writer/director **Ky Nam Le Duc**'s film is framed by the Vietnamese refugee experience, where this not-so-alternate universe reveals desperate people in no-win situations whose only choice is to try to make the best of their newfound chaos.

— ARAM SIU WAI COLLIER

Ky Nam Le Duc studied film at UQAM and has directed a number of short films. His film *Oscillations* (2017) premiered at Festival du Nouveau Cinéma. He is a member of Les Films de l'Autre. *The Greatest Country in the World* (2019) is his latest feature film.

2019
Canada
112 min
French, Vietnamese
with English subtitles
PG

DIRECTOR
Ky Nam Le Duc

CAST
Nguyễn Thành Tri
Mickaël Gouin
Junior Jean-Baptiste
Alice Tran

OFFICIAL SELECTION
Festival du Nouveau Cinéma,
2019
Gimli Film Festival, 2020

2019
South Korea
105 min
Korean with English subtitles
PG
Ontario Premiere

DIRECTOR
Yoon Dan-bi 윤단비

CAST
Choi Jung-un
Yang Heung-joo
Park Seung-joon

OFFICIAL SELECTION
Busan International Film
Festival, 2019
International Film Festival
Rotterdam, 2020
Vancouver International
Film Festival, 2020

AWARDS
Busan
International
Film Festival
NETPAC Award,
2019

Directors Guild
of Korea, 2019

Bright Future
Award, IFFR,
2020

MOVING ON

남매의 여름밤

Broke and evicted from their basement apartment in Seoul, teenager Okju, her little brother Dongju, and their divorced father must move in with their ailing grandfather at the city's outskirts. Soon joined by an aunt reeling from her own failed marriage, they spend the summer getting reacquainted with each other as an ad hoc multigenerational family unit, which was the norm just a generation ago.

Told through beautifully sun-soaked summertime moments, *Moving On* is a wistful, nostalgic, and sometimes painful look at growing up and growing old through the adolescent eyes of Okju. These nuanced observations about family will call to mind the films of Ozu or Yang (and is the utmost compliment). However, first-time feature director **Yoon Dan-bi** assuredly tells a semi-autobiographical story with a sincere flair that will resonate with the trials of life that every family must face.

— ARAM SIU WAI COLLIER



WITH SUPPORT FROM



Yoon Dan-bi's short film *Fireworks* hit domestic festivals such as Daegu Independent Short Film Festival and Seoul Youth Film Festival in 2015. After entering Dankook University's Graduate School of Cinematic Contents in 2017, she directed her feature-film debut, *Moving On*.



DUST AND ASHES

축복의 집

Unfolding over a tumultuous three days, *Dust and Ashes* is a quiet thriller following a grieving Hae-su, forced to learn and navigate the system in order to collect insurance after the death of her mother. Overworked, underpaid, and facing eviction, Hae-su takes desperate measures in order to escape impoverishment.

In his enigmatic directorial debut, **Park Hee-kwon** confronts the aftermath of death just as he does the act of living: with method and process. He steeps the bureaucracy of dying in intensity, slowly burning away the mystery surrounding Hae-su and the social injustices faced by the underclass in contemporary South Korea. Actress Ahn So-yo (seen in Albert Shin's 2014 *In Her Place*) carries the grief as if it is her own—delivering a performance of few words but nonetheless affecting and steadfast in its resolve.

— ROXANNE FERNANDES

Park Hee-kwon has been a screenwriter for various comedy and disaster genre works such as *Manners In Battle* and *The Flu*. In 2011, his short film *Neighbors* criticized the high suicide rate in South Korea. *Dust and Ashes* is his feature-film debut.

2019
South Korea
78 min
Korean with English subtitles
14A
North American Premiere

CONTENT WARNING

Death or Dying
Suicide

DIRECTOR

Park Hee-kwon

CAST

Ahn So-yo
Lee Kang-ji
Kim Na-young
Kim Jae-rok

OFFICIAL SELECTION

Tallinn Black Nights Film
Festival, 2019

Jeonju International Film
Festival, 2020

Hong Kong International
Film Festival, 2020

WITH SUPPORT FROM



2020

India, Romania, Italy, Qatar

89 min

Gondiya, Madiya, Hindi
with English subtitles

14A

North American Premiere

DIRECTORS

Cristina Hanes

Arya Rothe

Isabella Rinaldi

OFFICIAL SELECTION

International Film Festival
of Rotterdam, 2020

Visions du Réel, 2020

Thessaloniki Documentary
Festival, 2020

AWARDS

Special Jury

Mention,

International
Film Festival
of Rotterdam,
2020

A RIFLE AND A BAG

Somi and her husband met and fell in love while fighting alongside fellow Naxalites, a communist rebel group fighting for the rights of tribal communities in India for the past 50 years. Although the group represents a quarter of the population and lives in extreme poverty, Naxalites are seen as the biggest threat to national security for the State of India.

After a decade of armed struggle, Somi and her husband choose to surrender under the government's Surrender Policy and begin the draining bureaucratic process of integrating into a hostile and unwelcoming Indian society. Through thoughtfully executed vignettes and with intimate access to Somi and her family, directors **Arya Rothe, Cristina Hanes, and Isabella Rinaldi** of the NoCut Film Collective construct a moving verité portrait of an ex-Naxalite family seeking a future for their children while being held hostage to the whims of a rigid and unforgiving contemporary Indian State.

— MARIAM ZAIDI



WITH SUPPORT
FROM



NoCut Film Collective was co-founded in 2016 by independent filmmakers **Cristina Hanes** (Romania), **Arya Rothe** (India), and **Isabella Rinaldi** (Italy) after studying together at DocNomads' Master Course in Documentary Directing. NoCut Film's first production is the creative documentary, *A Rifle And A Bag* (2020), directed and produced by the three co-founders.



GOODBYE MOTHER

THƯA MẸ CON ĐI

Son of a prominent family in Vietnam, Van returns from America for the first time in nine years with his partner, Ian. Coming back to a community with expectations of patriarchy and legacy, Van tries to find the right moment to tell his mother, Mrs. Hanh, about his love for Ian. With the heir unable to bear children, the family fights over their inheritance, leading to a violent reveal of truths. Everybody has a secret. With intricately assembled ensemble, *Goodbye Mother* is a queer story and more.

Director **Trinh Dinh Le Minh** portrays characters with dignity in this uplifting story, providing positive resolution to otherwise challenging conversations within the Asian family dynamic. Paired with colour palettes that lends itself to the beautiful scenery of Vietnam, the portrayal of queer lovers making plans for the future provides an enriched leading story that normalizes queer Asian narratives in cinema.

— BERTHA LEE

Trinh Dinh Le Minh is an emerging director from Vietnam. His narrative short *The Scent of Fish Sauce* has travelled to film festivals including Palm Springs International Film Festival, the BFI London Film Festival and the Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival. He is also an alumnus of Berlinale Talents and Talents Tokyo.

2019

Vietnam

105 min

Vietnamese with English subtitles

14A

Canadian Premiere

CONTENT WARNING

Mild violence against queer person
Gay slur

DIRECTOR

Trinh Dinh Le Minh

CAST

Hong Dao

Lanh Thanh

Vo Dien Gia Huy

OFFICIAL SELECTION

Busan International Film
Festival, 2019

Hawai'i International Film
Festival, 2019

&PROUD Yangon LGBT Film
Festival, 2020



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I DO MY WORK MAN KAAR-E KHOD RA MIKONAM

Students at the Afghanistan National Institute of Music gather for the start of the school day. They laugh, practice, and take tests while preparing for a concert celebrating 100 years of Afghanistan's independence. Ranging from five-year-olds to young adults, some are middle-class kids and others are orphans, and they come from Afghanistan's many ethnic groups. Glimpses of the dangerous realities of their world outside school are a reminder that children are often on the front lines of crises. But *I Do My Work* is also a reminder that children's spirits are at the forefront of change.

As with his first feature *Mina Walking* (Reel Asian 2015 Official Selection), **Yosef Baraki** documents contemporary Kabul life through the eyes of young people. Ardent observational and shot with only one camera and one mic (the maximum allowed), Baraki provides a vessel to experience the vital sounds and rhythms of the students' routines. — ARAM SIU WAI COLLIER

Yosef Baraki studied film and philosophy at Toronto's York University and Humber College. Serving as screenwriter, director, and cinematographer, Baraki filmed his first feature film, *Mina Walking*, in 19 days with non-professional actors and heavy improvisation in some of Kabul's most chaotic environments. *Mina Walking* won over 15 international awards.

2020
Canada, Afghanistan
40 min
Dari with English subtitles
G
Canadian Premiere

DIRECTOR
Yosef Baraki

CAST
Afghanistan National
Institute of Music

OFFICIAL SELECTION
Visions Du Réel, 2020

2019
Kazakhstan, Japan
84 min
Kazakh with English subtitles
14A
Canadian Premiere

CONTENT WARNING

Death
Gun violence

DIRECTOR

Yerlan Nurmukhambetov
Lisa Takeba

CAST

Samal Yeslyamova
Madi Minaidarov
Mirai Moriyama
Dulyga Akmolda

OFFICIAL SELECTION

Busan International Film
Festival, 2019

Tokyo International Film
Festival, 2019

Hong Kong International
Film Festival, 2020

THE HORSE THIEVES. ROADS OF TIME オルジヤスの白い馬

A cowardly horse robbery ends in murder, leaving a boy fatherless and his family in disarray. When the boy's mother is forced to move the family out of their village, a mysterious man arrives who might be able to help restore order. What may appear to us as a "Western," with its familiar framing of vast vistas and sublime steppes, is really a story about fractured families and survival in the wake of violence.

Inspired by true events, co-directors **Yerlan Nurmukhambetov** and **Lisa Takeba** join forces for a landmark Kazakhstan/Japan co-production, starring decorated actors Samal Yeslyamova and Mirai Moriyama. These disparate yet collaborative elements are able to make something familiar but fresh, an Asian "Western," an art film that builds to a satisfying genre conclusion and culminates with an epilogue of renowned Kazakh artist Gali Myrzashev paintings. *The Horse Thieves* is an atmospheric treat. Watch it full-screen, volume up.

— ARAM SIU WAI COLLIER



Lisa Takeba is a Japanese film director and screenwriter known for *Haruko's Paranormal Laboratory* (2015) and *The Pinkie* (2014). **Yerlan Nurmukhambetov** is a director and writer known for *Walnut Tree* (2015) and *The First Rains of Spring* (2011).



MOGUL MOWGLI

On the brink of his first international tour, Zed, a British Pakistani rapper, decides to fly home to the U.K. to reconnect with his family, only to find out his first big international break could be jeopardized by an unexpected and quickly debilitating autoimmune disease. As his condition worsens and his medical treatments intensify, Zed descends into a physical and emotional crisis. His days are marked by vivid hallucinations and long-buried childhood memories of his parents fleeing India during the Partition, forcing him to face resurfaced trauma.

A film co-written, produced by and starring Emmy Award-winning actor Riz Ahmed, *Mogul Mowgli* is a disquieting and electrifying exploration of identity, self-expression and intergenerational trauma. **Bassam Tariq**'s directorial lead and Ahmed's transfixing performance create a gutsy, beat-packed drama authored by bi-cultural artists powerfully expressing their right to thrive in all spaces, especially those that have been built to reject them.

— MARIAM ZAIDI

Bassam Tariq is a writer and director currently based between Texas and London. His previous film, *Ghosts of Sugar Land* (2019) won the Short Film Jury Award at Sundance Film Festival and was shortlisted for a Short Documentary Oscar.

2020
U.K.
90 min
English, Urdu
Toronto Premiere

CONTENT WARNING
Racial slurs

DIRECTOR
Bassam Tariq

CAST
Riz Ahmed
Alyy Khan
Sudha Bhuchar
Nabhaan Rizwan
Anjana Vasani
Aiysha Hart
Hussain Manawer
Kiran Sonia Sawar
Jeff Mirza

OFFICIAL SELECTION
Berlin International Film
Festival, 2020

AWARDS
Berlin International Film Festival
FIPRESCI Prize, 2020

WITH
SUPPORT
FROM



**NATIONAL
BANK**

2019
Poland, Germany
84 min
Polish, Vietnamese with English
subtitles
PG

CONTENT WARNING
Racial slurs

DIRECTOR
Mariko Bobrik

CAST
Thang Long Do
Lena Nguyen
Aleksandra Domańska

OFFICIAL SELECTION
San Sebastián Film Festival,
2019

Osaka Asian Film
Festival, 2020

FIN Atlantic
International Film
Festival, 2020

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media entertainment telecommunications & technology law



THE TASTE OF PHO

What does a hot bowl of lovingly prepared soup remind you of? The taste of home? The warm embrace of a loved one? For Long, a widower and cook at a Vietnamese restaurant in Warsaw, his famous pho is his pride, and his grade-school daughter Mia is his joy. But their world changes when the restaurant is sold, forcing Long to learn to make sushi. Meanwhile, Mia is frustrated by her father's caring but old-fashioned ways, while fearing he is moving on from the memory of her late mother.

Japanese-born, Polish-educated director **Mariko Bobrik**'s first feature tells a tender and bittersweet look at an intergenerational immigrant family with a confidently light touch from (perhaps) an unexpected Eastern European source. While Poland is their home, Long and Mia must navigate what the idea of home means for them when dealing with change, while finding a better understanding of each other.

— ARAM SIU WAI COLLIER



Mariko Bobrik was born in Japan in 1983. She graduated from the directing course of the Lodz Film School. She participated in Cinéfondation: Résidence du Festival de Cannes and Berlinale Talents. *The Taste of Pho* is her first feature. She currently lives in Warsaw.



IMAGE: *Labyrinth of Cinema* (2019)

2019
Japan
179 min
Japanese with English subtitles
18A

CONTENT WARNING

War
Sex
Physical violence
(beatings, executions)
Sexual violence (rape)
Attempted suicide

DIRECTOR

Nobuhiko Obayashi 大林 宣彦

CAST

Rei Yoshida
Yoshihiko Hosoda
Hirona Yamazaki
Riko Narumi

OFFICIAL SELECTION

Tokyo International Film
Festival, 2019

International Film Festival
Rotterdam, 2020

Fantasia International
Film Festival, 2020

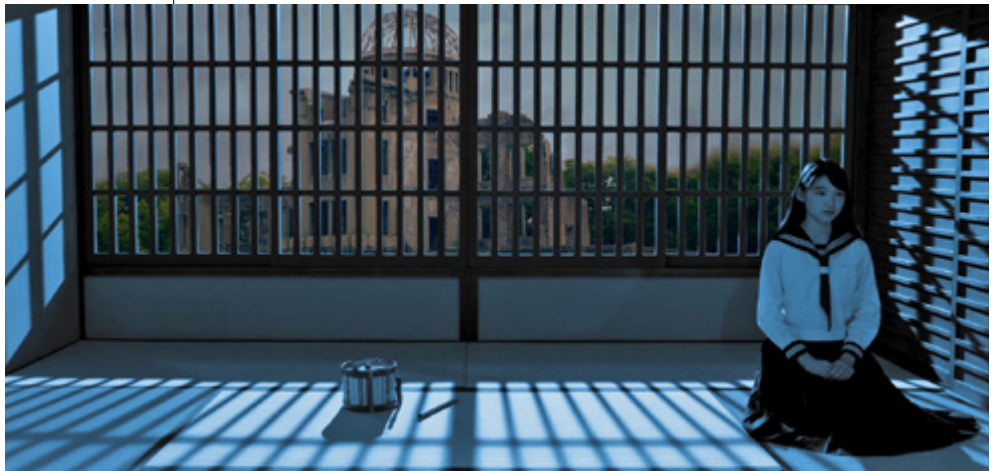
LABYRINTH OF CINEMA

海辺の映画館 キネマの玉手箱

In the port town of Onomichi, Japan, the only movie theatre is bidding goodbye to its local audiences. The owners organize a nightlong screening devoted to historical Japanese war films. Noriko, a teenager who regularly helps in the theatre, walks toward the stage and astonishes the audience as suddenly, she mystically projects herself into an old musical. Film buff Mario, film-history nerd Hosuke, and aspiring Yakuza Shigeru are also warped into the cinema screen in sequences that represent the second Sino-Japanese War, Boshin War and Hiroshima bombing. The four embark on an immersive, surreal and vicious cycle of damnation and salvation in the face of war's savagery.

Nobuhiko Obayashi's swan song *Labyrinth of Cinema* dives into the senselessness of wars, wrapped in cinematic oddities. His abstracted reconstruction of Japan's darkest events points out that movies, though a fabrication of reality, epitomize suffering as universal truth.

— ROLANDO BASMAYOR



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ASIAN INSTITUTE
Dr. David Chu Program
in Asia-Pacific Studies



Nobuhiko Obayashi (9 January 1938–10 April 2020) was a Japanese director, screenwriter, and editor of films and television advertisements. He began his filmmaking career as a pioneer of Japanese experimental films before transitioning to directing more mainstream media. His resulting resulting filmography as a director spanned almost 60 years.



ARCHIVE PRESENTATION:

A.K.A. DON BONUS

Cambodian-born Sokly “Don Bonus” Ny takes a Hi8 camcorder into his final year of high school in the San Francisco Bay Area, documenting intersecting events happening at school, at home, and amongst friends and family. Filmed and released in 1995, the film can be seen as a forerunner of the now-popular diary or vlog documentary format, featuring raw footage and voiceover from Don Bonus.

Although made in the 1990s, the beats of the film are familiar and still relevant, moving through issues of low-income housing, gang violence, academic struggle, and family fractures, while also featuring communal celebration, youthful camaraderie and intimate family life. These scenes are simultaneously casual and intentional, recontextualized and given resonance through Don Bonus’s frank, teenage monologic reflections.

A.K.A Don Bonus highlights how the stories that came before us, although constructed from their time and space, can continue to speak powerfully into our present.

Spencer Nakasako has over three decades of experience as an independent filmmaker and is the founder of the groundbreaking Media Lab at the Vietnamese Youth Development Center in San Francisco’s Tenderloin District. Nakasako is a member of the Writers Guild of America, and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

1995
USA
65 min
English
14A

DIRECTOR
Spencer Nakasako

CAST
Sokly Ny

OFFICIAL SELECTION
Berlin International Film Festival,
1996

San Francisco Film Festival,
1995

AWARDS
National Emmy Award, 1996
Golden Gate Award, San
Francisco Film Festival, 1995

A.K.A. Don Bonus MASTERCLASS
6:30 - 8:00 PM, Tuesday, Nov 17
See *Reel Ideas* section for more info

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SHORT

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SHORTS

UNSUNG VOICES 9

Four fearless emerging filmmakers embarked on a summer-long filmmaking journey online. We're proud to present their world premiere here. Thanks to Jeff Yang, Paul Sun-Hyung Lee, the casts of *Kim's Convenience* and *Fresh Off the Boat*, and donors to the Kim's Off The Boat fundraiser for supporting Unsung Voices this year.

English, French, Korean with English subtitles | PG

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일요일 SUNDAY

kim hayung | Canada | 2020 | 4 min |
English, Korean with English subtitles

Sunday is a semi-autobiographical animation based on the filmmaker's childhood memories of growing up within her father's church.

Born in Suncheon, South Korea, **kim hayung** is an interdisciplinary artist currently residing in Toronto.

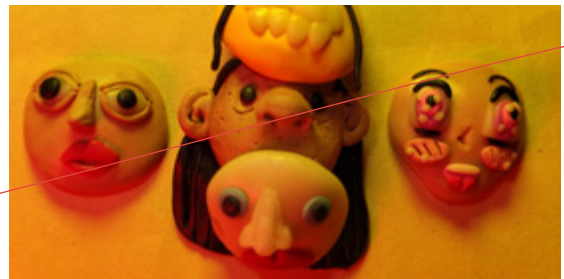


HOW YOU SEE ME

Maryanna Chan | Canada | 2020 | 4 min 40 |
English

Navigating her thoughts on white beauty standards, a girl seeks to understand her relationship to them, and express the damaging effects and harm that fetishizing Asian women causes.

Maryanna Chan is an illustrator from Saskatoon. She is currently studying scénographie in Montreal and is passionate about truthful storytelling.



APPRENDS-MOI À DISPARAÎTRE TEACH ME HOW TO DISAPPEAR

Angelina Guo | Canada | 2020 | 8 min |
French with English subtitles

Torn between her mental illness and her desire for long-standing love, a young woman named Maria tries to tame her self-destructive tendencies in an attempt to preserve her partner's affection.

Born in Montreal, **Angelina Guo** has earned a few prizes and a scholarship for her literary works. She is currently studying French literature at McGill University.



HOMEWATER

Aidan Chan | Canada | 2020 | 6 min 30 |
English

On a journey to a small island town, two city boys explore their shared love for fishing. Travelling alongside an ocean run of salmon, they find there is much more to discover about themselves.

Born and raised in Vancouver, **Aidan Chan** aims to bring people closer to their surrounding nature through film, music, and other forms of art.



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MAIN | FILM
Support to Independent filmmakers

A full-page photograph of actor Chase Tang. He is standing on a dark metal staircase with a brick wall in the background. He is wearing a black long-sleeved turtleneck and blue plaid trousers. He is holding a dark blue plaid jacket over his left shoulder and has his right hand on the staircase railing. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

Chase Tang 唐嘉壕

ACTOR AND MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATE

Asian-Canadian actor Chase Tang, who was born and raised in Taiwan & immigrated to Bedford, Nova Scotia, with his family at the age of six. A once hockey child prodigy and corporate executive, Chase is helping and inspiring those currently living with mental illness by sharing personal experiences in his battle with depression and his unusual career path that led him to Hollywood.

SEE WHERE THE *UNSUNG VOICES* ACTOR IS NOW
WWW.CHASETANG.COM

GENERASIAN NOW

DONATE NOW
at reelasian.com/donate



Empowering diverse storytelling

RESURGENCE

Abundant with hope, desire, and resiliency, all six of these films make a statement to queer histories, presents, and futures—in front of and behind the screen.

English and various languages with English subtitles | 14A

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REVIVING THE ROOST

Vivek Shraya | Canada | 2019 | 6 min | English

With pulsating neon-light animation, *Reviving the Roost* is about community complexity and longing—an elegy to a lost space as much as it is director Vivek Shraya's ode to a closed popular Edmonton gay bar.

Vivek Shraya is an artist whose body of work crosses the boundaries of music, literature, visual art, theatre, and film. She is also the founder of the publishing imprint VS. Books.

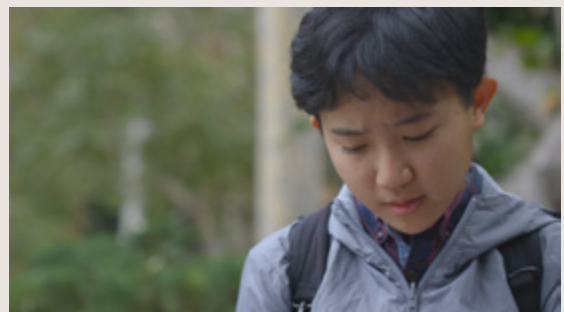


BIND

Emory Chao Johnson | USA | 2019 | 3 min | English and Chinese with English subtitles | International Premiere

Though brief and contained, *Bind* provides an extensive glimpse into the trans Asian diaspora when Jules is confronted by a surprise visit from their mother with their chest binder.

Emory Chao Johnson (they/them) is an MFA film student at the University of California. They were a Trans Filmmaking Fellow on director Sam Feder's *Disclosure: Trans Lives on Screen* in 2018 and an intern on director Lisa Leeman's *Trans*Formed* in 2019.



GAY AS IN HAPPY: A QUEER ANTI-TRAGEDY

Jordana Valerie Allen-Shim | Canada | 2020 |
3 min | English

An unapologetic statement about queer joy, resistance, and resilience in the face of abuse, trauma, and transphobia.

"Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again is my favourite movie. Fight me." **Jordana Valerie Allen-Shim** is a Toronto-born, US-raised filmmaker, dog mom, and aspiring graphic novelist passionate about empowering marginalized communities through art.

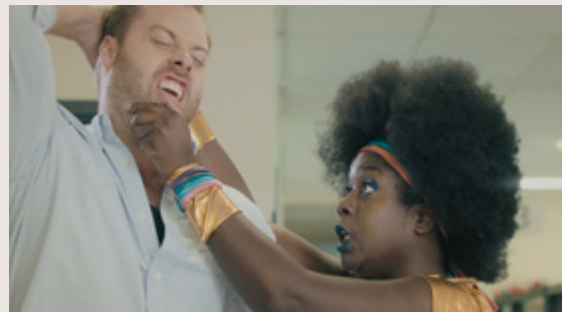


SUPER ZEE

Nathalie Younglai | Canada | 2018 | 3 min |
English

This action-comedy short features Sedina Fiati as Super Zee, a kickbutt queer Black superhero who swoops in to save her crush from the microaggressions at the office.

TV writer and director, Trini Chinese provocateur, and founder of BIPOC TV & Film, **Nathalie Younglai** hauled her parents to the Daytime Emmys after being nominated for her writing on *Dino Dana*. She supports Black Lives Matter.



SAFE AMONGST STARS

安全在星中

Jess X. Snow | USA | 2019 | 9 min |
English and Mandarin with English subtitles |
International Premiere

Filled with evocative imagery, this queer futuristic short follows Jia, who develops the ability to teleport when she dissociates and must learn how to control her powers.

Jess X. Snow is a director, artist, poet and community arts educator creating queer Asian immigrant stories that transcend borders, binaries, and time. They are currently a guest on the unceded traditional land of the Lenape people (Lenapehoking/Brooklyn, NY).



GOD'S DAUGHTER DANCES

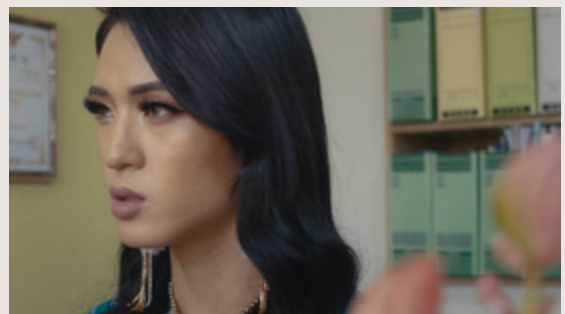
Sungbin Byun 변성빈 | South Korea | 2020 |
25 min | English and Korean with English subtitles |
North American Premiere

CONTENT WARNING

Transphobic comments

Shin-mi, a female dancer, bravely faces forward with grace and style as she takes the physical examination at the Military Manpower Administration.

Born in 1991, **Sungbin Byun** studied film, TV & multimedia and eastern philosophy at Sungkyunkwan University. His films *Horn* (2014), *The Chicken of Wuzuh* (2015), and *Hands and Wings* (2018) have screened at festivals internationally.



COLLECTIVE MEMORY

Each of these extraordinary films call upon the act of remembrance as important and timely work for community care, knowledge, and abundance.

English and various languages with English subtitles | PG

THE FOURFOLD

Alisi Telengut | Canada, Germany | 2020 |
7 min | Mongolian with English subtitles |
Toronto Premiere

Steadily narrated by the director's grandmother, *The Fourfold* imbues an indigenous worldview and wisdom based on the ancient shamanic rituals and animistic beliefs in Mongolia and Siberia.

Alisi Telengut is a Canadian artist of Mongolian descent. She creates animation frame by frame under the camera, with painting as the medium, to generate movement and explore hand-made and painterly visuals.

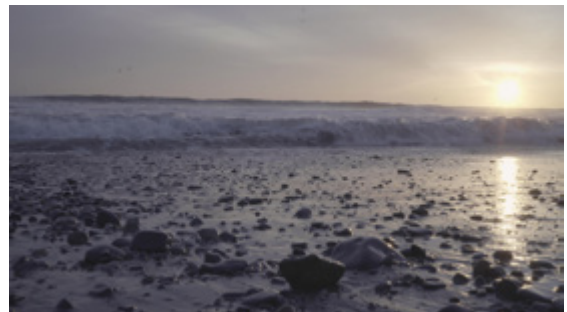


TRAILS

Chris Nguyen | USA | 2019 | 5 min |
English and Vietnamese with English subtitles |
International Premiere

"Where do you want to start?" The relationship between mother and son, uttered and silent, what's known and forgotten, archival footage and public spaces are strewn into this affecting elliptical portrait of Orange County's Little Saigon touching upon the history of war, displacement, and colonialism.

Chris Nguyen is a documentarian & community builder based in Los Angeles.



HARUWAL

GurJeevaan Singh BalRose | Singapore, India | 2019 | 9 min | English and Hindi with English subtitles | World Premiere

At 62, Samriti visits her late father's home in Amritsar, India—a place that only existed in retellings of the past—for the very first time.

GurJeevaan Singh BalRose enjoys storytelling because it's a powerful tool to bring people together and evoke emotions. He hopes to make more films about Sikh history and culture in Singapore and India.



I BOUGHT A TIME MACHINE

Yeon Park | USA, South Korea | 2020 | 15 min | English and Korean with English subtitles | Toronto Premiere

What does it take to open conversation and unpack your family's past? Playful and unabashed, director Yeon Park sets off to do so by purchasing a time machine off eBay.

Yeon Park is a filmmaker from Seoul, Korea, who continued her studies at Stanford. Her ultimate goal as a filmmaker is to make documentaries that encourage empathy through capturing people's emotions.



I DREAM OF VANCOUVER

Warren Chan | Canada | 2020 | 7 min | English with English subtitles

I Dream of Vancouver interrogates alienation from the lived experience of spaces as they are subsumed by algorithms and mediated images, linking corporate technologies and gentrification with the erasure of populations that don't fit Google's agenda.

Warren Chan is an MA student at York University, where he researches usage of A.I. generated images in experimental cinema. Outside of his studies, he also interrogates the role of new media technologies in film and video.



FARMING SLOWLY

Anthony Newen | USA | 2019 | 8 min |
English | International Premiere

Learning from and caring for the land she farms on, Catherine Nguyen owns two-thirds of an acre by herself, growing and selling annual vegetables while challenging the industrialization of food in Portland, Oregon.

Anthony Newen started making films when he got bored of doing magic tricks and needed a new hobby. He now makes films telling stories that deal with themes of love, loneliness, place, identity, and sometimes a bit of comedy to keep things lighthearted.



AMA: WOMEN OF THE SEA

Georgie Yukiko Donovan | Japan, UK | 2019 |
15 min | English | Canadian Premiere

A breathtaking and touching documentary alerting the urgency to care for our habitats and preserve the incredible knowledge of the Ama, a tradition of women divers spanning over thousands of years in Japan, weaving the director's personal connection to it all.

Georgie Yukiko Donovan is a Japanese-English documentary filmmaker with a multidisciplinary approach inspired by a diverse background in theatre, television and film.



FILM FRENZY

A retired hitman, telephone counsellor, Ronggeng dancer, and pug take the lead in these four cult-worthy shorts that are bound to make you question everything you thought you knew.

English and various languages with English subtitles | 18A

THE LAST FERRY FROM GRASS ISLAND 島嶼故事

Linhan Zhang 張林翰 | Hong Kong, USA | 2020 | 14 min | Cantonese, Mandarin with English subtitles | Toronto Premiere

CONTENT WARNING
Guns

Our focus shifts from the oversaturated cityscape of Hong Kong to the mundane, yet peaceful fisherman's life of a retired hitman. When his apprentice arrives unannounced, will the tranquility last?

Linhan Zhang is a film and television undergraduate at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, a 2017-2018 Sundance Ignite Fellow, and a recipient of the 2019 Adobe Creativity Scholarship.



RECEIVER

Cavan Campbell | Canada | 2020 | 15 min | English | World Premiere

CONTENT WARNING
Psychological horror, manipulation

Addressing the harm racialized women as professional and informal caregivers face and can internalize, Tahirih Vejdani delivers a resonating performance as Sriyani, an overtaxed social care worker.

Raised on Prince Edward Island by his Island father, a painter, and his Sri Lankan mother, a writer, **Cavan Campbell** has worked on *It*, *xXx: Return of Xander Cage*, and *Star Trek: Discovery*.



RONG

Indira Iman | Indonesia | 2019 | 13 min | Indonesian with English subtitles | Canadian Premiere

CONTENT WARNING

Sexual assault, violence, genital mutilation

Blending Indonesian tradition and culture with fantasy and mysticism, *RONG* is a terrifying yet satisfying take on a girl who walks home alone at night as the hunted becomes the hunter.

Indira Iman is a director and writer based in Jakarta, Indonesia, who believes film can inspire social change.



BOW-WOW

멍멍, 바우와우, 와프와프

Hyungnam Pak 박형남 | South Korea | 2019 | 22 min | Korean with English subtitles | International Premiere

If three dogs who dabble with dog-ception to save their fellow four-legged friend isn't enticing enough, it's also a musical with some animation and features Donggyu Lee, the Korean Benedict Cumberbatch.

Born in 1990, **Hyungnam Pak** is a film major at the Korea National University of Arts. His previous films include *Sailing A Paper Boat* and *When We Meet Us*.



SIDE BY SIDE

Starting from a place of silence, these five films poignantly position the ways intergenerational trauma is held and how healing can begin.

English and various languages with English subtitles | PG 13

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THE WAY WE ARE

Amanda Ann-Min Wong | Canada | 2020 | 15 min | English with English subtitles

Pairing personal home videos with audio-recorded stories from Katherine Chun, Wenda Li, Tamai Kobayashi, and Nancy Seto. Four queer Asian women recall, relive, and reflect upon their adolescent years.

Amanda Ann-Min Wong is a filmmaker, writer, and musician originally from Singapore who now lives in Toronto. In her free time, she loves jamming out with her queer alt-rock band, cutsleeve.



IN THE SHADOW OF THE PINES

Anne Koizumi | Canada | 2020 | 8 min | English

Tenderly crafted, director Anne Koizumi recounts a shameful childhood memory, spurring a conversation and self-realization around how sometimes that which feels out of reach, was really there all along.

Anne Koizumi's films have screened nationally and internationally. Additionally, Koizumi teaches stop-motion animation workshops across Canada and is currently a media arts educator at the NFB.



IKEBANA

Alejandro Yoshizawa | Canada | 2019 | 4 min |
English | Toronto Premiere

Drawing parallels between ikebana and finding belonging, Japanese Canadian elder, Kaz Takahashi, shares stories of her upbringing.

Alejandro Yoshizawa is a filmmaker from Vancouver, British Columbia and an adjunct professor at the University of British Columbia in the Department of Theatre and Film, as well as the Asian Canadian and Asian Migration Studies Program.



TIGER AND OX

호랑이와 소

Seunghee Kim | South Korea | 2019 | 8 min |
Korean with English subtitles | Canadian Premiere

Confronting patriarchy and societal gender norms aside, *Tiger and Ox* is a candid conversation between mother and daughter about the joys and challenges they've faced in their relationship.

Seunghee Kim has pursued a career as an animation filmmaker since 2014. Her previous films, *Mirror in Mind* and *SimSim (The Realm of Deepest Knowing)*, won awards and screened at numerous international film festivals.



SING ME A LULLABY

Tiffany Hsiung | Canada, Taiwan | 2020 |
29 min | English, Mandarin with English subtitles

A film that began over 15 years ago, *Sing Me a Lullaby* is a heartachingly touching story of a daughter's attempt to piece together the missing parts in her mother's history.

Tiffany Hsiung is an international award-winning filmmaker based in Toronto, Canada. Her approach to storytelling is driven by the relationship that is built with the people she meets both in front of and behind the lens.



ARTISTIC STATEMENT

These six dynamic films touch upon art not solely as a creative practice for self expression, but an integral force in making space, along with the responsibilities that come with it.

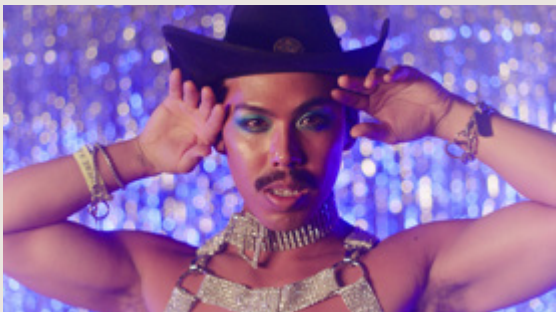
English and various languages with English subtitles | PG 13

DANCING ON MY OWN

Alexandra Cuervo | USA | 2020 | 13 min |
English | International Premiere

A love letter to the queer Asian community, director Allie Cuervo finds the strength to come out and rebuild a relationship with her mom, with a little help and inspiration from New York's radical dance party Bubble_T.

Alexandra "Allie" Cuervo is an award-winning Filipino-American director, writer, and producer recently named one of the 100 Most Influential Filipina Women In the World by the Filipina Women's Network.



ATOMIC CAFÉ: THE NOISIEST CORNER IN J-TOWN

Tadashi Nakamura and Akira Boch | USA | 2020 |
10 min | English | International Premiere

Hardcore and punk to the max, this electric documentary shares the story of Atomic Nancy and the infamous Atomic Café in L.A..

Tadashi Nakamura was named one of CNN's Young People Who Rock for being the youngest filmmaker at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival, and is listed as one of the Top Rising Asian American Directors on IMDb.

Akira Boch is an Emmy-winning filmmaker and Director of the Frank H. Watase Media Arts Center at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles.



FATHER FIGURE

Tanya Hoshi | Canada | 2019 | 5 min |
English | World Premiere

Pakistani-Canadian artist Wahab Jaffer endearingly retells his journey from collector to artist and imparts the lessons he's learned along the way.

Tanya Hoshi is a Pakistani-Canadian film and web-series producer and director based in Toronto. When she's not working, Hoshi is mentoring emerging filmmakers by helping them find their footing in the industry.



NOVENA

Shirley Camia | Canada | 2020 | 2 min |
English with English titles | International Premiere

Created by a community of local Filipinx creatives, Novena is an affectingly crafted poetry animation touching upon grief, mourning, and healing.

Born in Winnipeg, **Shirley Camia** is a Filipina-Canadian poet who has lived across Canada, the Philippines, Japan, and Kenya. *Novena*, based on her poem of the same name, is her debut poetry film.



MARGO

Steffi Tupe | Canada | 2019 | 14 min | English

CONTENT WARNING

Sexual harassment

A newcomer to the film industry, Margo's careful and cautious actions make clear the insidious traces of misogyny that permeate through.

Steffi Tupe is a first-generation Filipino-Canadian writer, director, and producer with three dramatic short films under her belt: *Two Ladies*, *Sister*, and *Margo*.



HANDSCAPE 夏青

Yiru Chen 陈伊如 | China | 2020 | 19 min | Chinese Sign Language and Mandarin with English subtitles | Canadian Premiere

CONTENT WARNING

Homophobic comments

Beautifully poetic, *Handscape* tells the story of Xia Qing and his desire to dance despite his mother's outright disapproval.

Yiru Chen is a film director, artist, and poet. Her goal is to promote education and art of sign languages—an essential key to Deaf culture—along with members of both communities.



IN RELATION

In a world that feels ever so divisive, these three documentaries take a closer look at what it means to create new pathways for community mobilizing, recognize the shortcomings of identity markers, and acknowledge the solidarity work that remains undone.

English | PG 13

ACCIDENTAL ACTIVIST

Jinung Chung | Canada | 2020 | 22 min | English

Friend, immigration attorney, father, brother, and ultimately a humanist, this inspiring documentary sheds light on the ways El-Farouk Khaki has dedicated himself to creating a world of wellness and oneness.

Jinung Chung is the producer at JbyJ, a team of award-winning documentary artists based in Toronto doing their part to make our world a more inclusive place. Chung makes his directorial debut with *Accidental Activist*.



TURF NATION

Jun Bae | USA | 2019 | 13 min | English | Toronto Premiere

Paving their own paths toward freedom and independence, *Turf Nation* follows the street dancers who perform on BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) trains in Oakland as they navigate their interpersonal relationships, the system, and their burgeoning dance influence.

Jun Bae is a Tokyo-born Korean director. His work often centres on dancers, exploring themes of underground culture and freedom of movement. He holds an MFA degree in documentary film from Stanford University.



BUT YOU'RE NOT BLACK

Danielle Ayow | Canada, Trinidad & Tobago, USA |
2019 | 19 min | English

Caught between two seemingly isolated worlds, director Danielle Ayow interrogates her own cultural identity as Trini and Chinese with much heart and humour. Sometimes asking is not enough as Ayow's process makes clear the harm of essentializing identity and ultimately, the limitations of language.

Danielle Ayow is a Toronto-based writer, actor, and comedian. In 2017, Ayow developed an eight-minute proof-of-concept version of *But You're Not Black* with the help of Reel Asian to secure funding for this 20-minute edition. This is her first time directing and writing a documentary.



DISCOMFORT ZONE

From the mundane to the spectacular, our characters in these five films pave their own paths as some take matters into their own hands, while others come across new points of understanding and acceptance.

English and various languages with English subtitles | PG 13

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AWAY, TOGETHER

Sana A. Malik | USA | 2020 | 15 min |
English, Pashto with English subtitles |
International Premiere

Beautifully shot against visceral landscapes of New Mexico, Ayah is a 10-year-old refugee on her first camping trip who ends up finding connection to ancestral memory even in the most unfamiliar of places.

Sana A. Malik is a Pakistani-Canadian filmmaker and journalist who has reported on immigration, detention, and gender since 2011. In 2017, she founded *This is Worldtown*, a platform that supports women of colour visual storytellers.

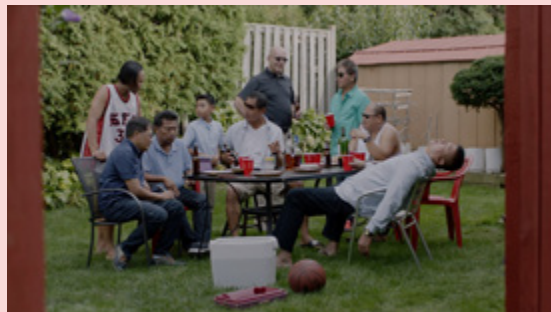


A LONELY AFTERNOON

Kyle Credo | Canada | 2020 | 15 min |
English, Tagalog with English subtitles |
World Premiere

Meticulously detailed and choreographed, director Kyle Credo delivers an authentic snapshot of Justin, a timid Filipino boy, and his afternoon.

Kyle Credo is a Filipino-Canadian director born and raised in Ontario. He has been practising his craft since 2012 when he made his first short film, *Scum* at Centennial College.



COUPLE PORTRAIT

情侶照

Hao Cheng 程顥 | Canada, China | 2020 |
3 min | English, Cantonese, Mandarin with
English subtitles

In this light, yet deeply moving short, Dva Liu returns home to Shaoguan with the wish of taking “couple portraits” with her aging grandfather.

Hao Cheng 程顥 is a commercial and documentary director who lives in Toronto. Influenced by his family background, Cheng developed a passion for photography and eventually honed his directing skills.



LOLA'S WAKE

Tricia Hagariles | Canada | 2019 | 10 min |
English, Tagalog with English subtitles |
World Premiere

Joelle is determined to uphold a Filipino tradition even if it means spending the night in a funeral home. Loosely based on the director's own experiences.

Tricia Hagariles is an award-winning, Toronto-based filmmaker. Hagariles was a resident of the 2019 Director's Lab at the Canadian Film Centre and recipient of Inside Out + OUTtv Outspoken Documentary Fund for her upcoming work, *The Archivist*.



NO MORE PARTIES

Natalie Murao | Canada | 2019 | 15 min |
English, Cantonese, Mandarin with English subtitles |
Toronto Premiere

Accurately awkward, Rose attends a karaoke party and hears a voice louder than her own in this subtly nuanced take on navigating adulthood and finding independence.

Natalie Murao is an award-winning filmmaker from Vancouver, Canada. Murao's films draw from her Japanese-Canadian heritage and childhood experiences, which include themes of memory and the mundane.



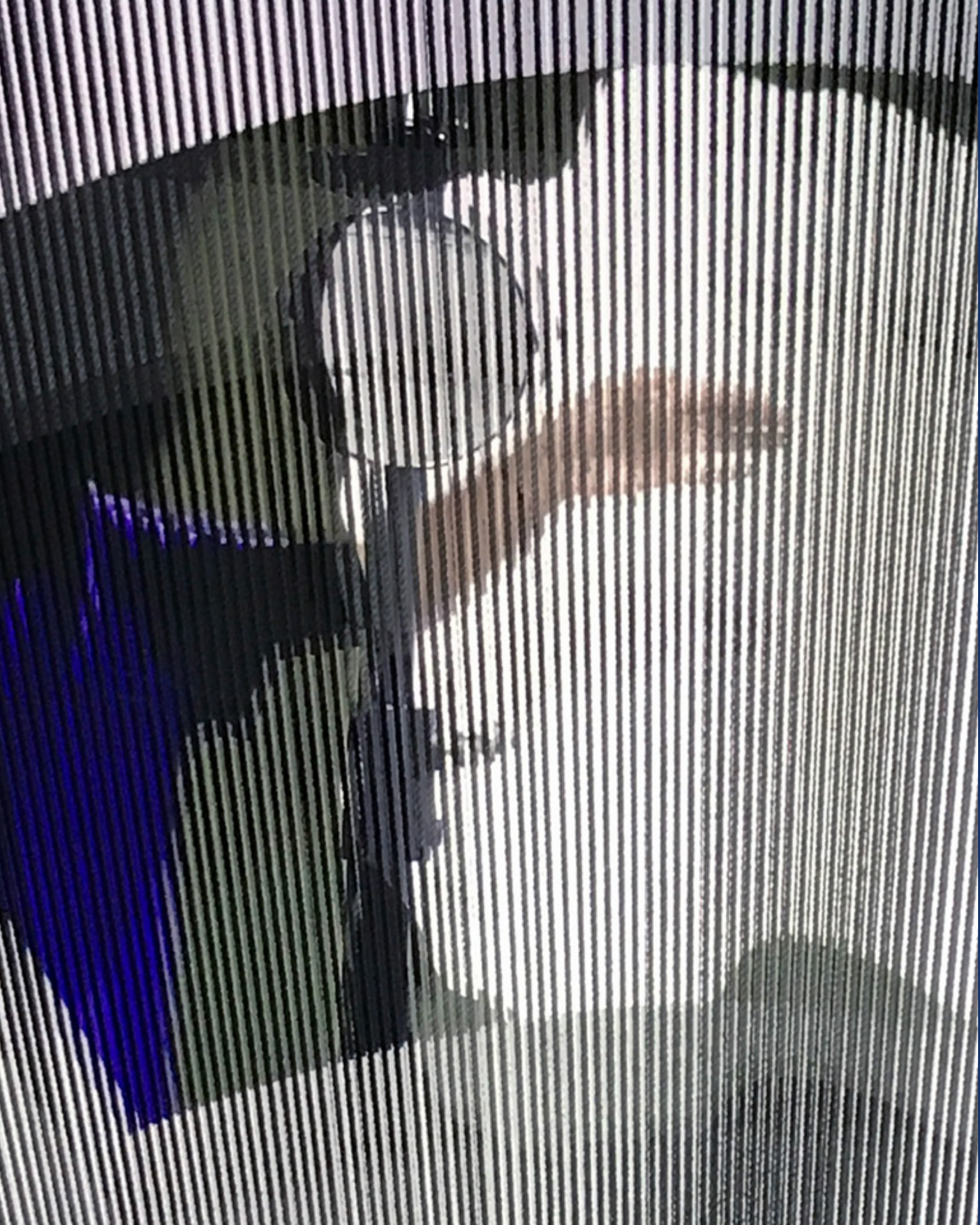
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CANADIAN SPOTLIGHT

CANADIAN SPOTLIGHT

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Every year, Reel Asian chooses to spotlight a Canadian filmmaker to showcase local talent and activate their work as part of festival programming, with screenings of the artist's choice and deep-dive artist talks. This year, with the festival's move to a digital platform, we are taking the opportunity to introduce innovative, non-traditional, experiential programming made with digital presentation and engagement in mind. Through the Canadian Spotlight, we hope to amplify artistic voices, support sustained engagement with interdisciplinary creative practices, and introduce new audiences to dynamic, contemporary media work.

ALL FEATURED ARTISTS' WORK AND DATES AND TIMES FOR LIVE ARTIST TALKS FOR THE CANADIAN SPOTLIGHT CAN BE FOUND ON THE REEL ASIAN WEBSITE, [REELASIAN.COM](https://reelasian.com)

The 2020 Canadian Spotlight features not one but three Canadian media artists who work at the intersections of experiential, experimental moving image and narrative. We are excited to bring on Oliver Husain, Sahar Te, and Howie Tsui, whose works are vibrant intersections of histories, narrative forms and creative methods. Their creative visions delight and challenge us, confront and comfort us, and indulge in narratives, forms and tools in exciting ways.

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OLIVER HUSAIN

FILMMAKER

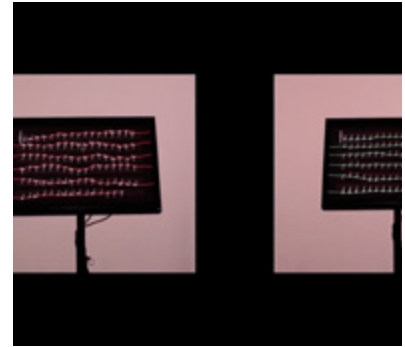
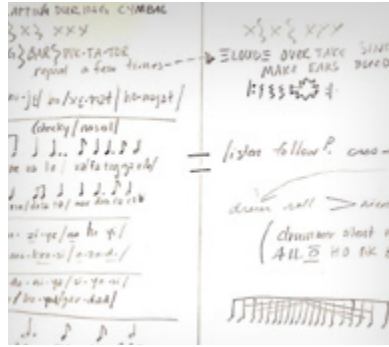
Artist and filmmaker Oliver Husain is based in Toronto. Husain's projects often begin with a fragment of history, a rumour, a personal encounter, or a distant memory. He uses a wide range of cinematic languages and visual pleasures—such as dance, puppetry, costume, and special effects—to animate his research and fold the viewers into complex narrative set-ups.

ARTIST STATEMENT + PROJECT SUMMARY

Lenticular Lencture

Lenticular cinema is an invention dating back to the 1930s. Simply put, a fence of thin vertical wires was mounted in front of the screen to create a glasses-free 3D effect. There are very few accounts of viewers who have witnessed this technological wonder in action, and its history is shrouded in myth and propaganda. But imagine, if we had this now, we could free our screens simply by erecting thin wire fences in front of them and, just like that, turn them into holograms. At the same time, we would free ourselves from being bound to the rectangles we're looking at. We could move along with the holograms, even dance with them, like in the novel *The Invention of Morel*. That would be so nice.





SAHAR TE ARTIST

Sahar Te is a Toronto-based artist whose practice exists at the intersection of research, text, installation, and performance. Te obtained her BFA from Alberta University of Arts, and her MFA from the University of Toronto. Te's work has been exhibited both nationally and internationally at spaces including the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, the University of Toronto Art Museum, SBC Gallery in Montreal, Illingworth Kerr Gallery in Alberta, Lona Galeria in São Paulo, and Darbast Platform in Tehran.

ARTIST STATEMENT + PROJECT SUMMARY

KHAAREJ No.3

My practice mobilizes methods that open up alternative realities and confront convention, attempting to challenge common approaches to "original" content and looking into how parallel contrasting realities often exist simultaneously. My interactions with multiple cultures and geographies bring me to question the notion of absolute truth and lead me to explore the role of past narrativization as it shapes the future. These interventions range from linguistics and semiotics, social dynamics and ethics, to media studies and oral histories. Through each project, I engage in sociological and techno-political discourses to understand hegemony within different power structures. Additionally, my personal encounters with sociopolitical situations and interdisciplinary interest in literature, translation, sound, oral history, and theatre bring me to an audio-visual practice.

HOWIE TSUI

VISUAL ARTIST

Vancouver visual artist Howie Tsui (Tsui Ho Yan / 徐浩恩) was born in Hong Kong and raised in Lagos and Thunder Bay. Working in a variety of media, Tsui constructs tense, fictive environments that subvert venerated art forms and narrative genres, often related to the Chinese literati class. Tsui synthesizes diverging socio-cultural anxieties around superstition, trauma, acculturation, and otherness through a distinctly outsider lens to advocate for liminal and diasporic experiences.

ARTIST STATEMENT + PROJECT SUMMARY

GIF Roulette

I compile an array of GIFs from film and TV that have held significant impact and inform my recent media work. My interest in visual sampling, loops, fragmentation, and memory comes together in this program through an oscillating mosaic of moving images.



REEL IDEAS SYMPOSIUM ON WORLD- BUILDING

The Reel Ideas Symposium: On World-Building responds to a growing momentum of digitization initiatives and strategies through dialogue with artists, community organizers, and industry professionals. These sessions gather visions of radical world-building that mobilize, engage, and strengthen creative communities to usher in better futures.

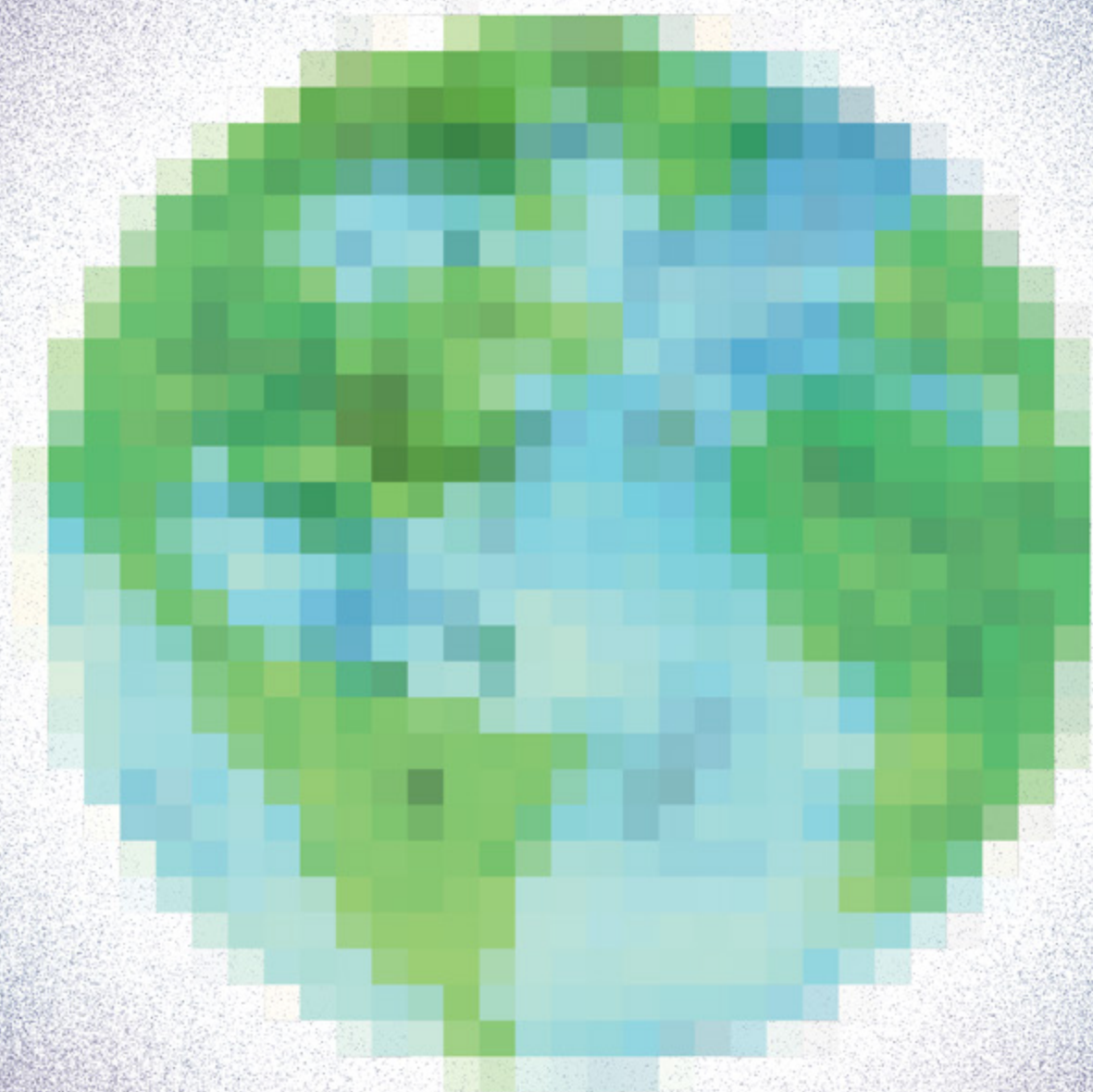




IMAGE: "Water Lullabies: Revisiting
Rootsthrough Family Photography."
Private Collection. 1988.

REEL IDEAS

SATURDAY
NOV 14
1:00 - 2:30 PM

STORIES AT WORK: UNSUNG VOICES

Why are we so compelled or moved by some stories? What do they do to/for/in us that gives them such staying power in our lives? How do we become better storytellers in our journeys as artists? This fireside chat gathers filmmaker mentors from Reel Asian's 2020 Unsung Voices incubator to discuss the building blocks of a good narrative.

MODERATOR
Marsya Maharani & Petrina Ng, *Gendai*

PANELISTS
Eui Yong Zong, *Editor*
Lesley Loksi Chan, *Filmmaker*
Anne Koizumi, *Filmmaker*
Joyce Wong, *Filmmaker*

SUNDAY
NOV 15
1:00 - 2:30 PM

ARCHIVE MEANS AND MEDIUMS

Why do we need community archives, and what are the stakes of digitized archiving within the contexts of intentional erasure or a lack of historical records? This panel reflects on the necessity and challenges of archives and archival work, inviting members of community-archive initiatives to discuss their work and process.

MODERATOR
Beau Gomez, *Gallery and Programs Coordinator, Critical Distance Centre for Curators*

PANELISTS
Katrina Cohen-Palacios, *Archivist, Home Made Visible*
Vasuki Shanmuganathan, *Tamil Archive Project*
Vince Ha, *Filmmaker and Curator, Invisible Footprints*

behind the scenes of *Apprends-moi À Disparaître*,
Teach Me How to Disappear by Angelina Guo



MONDAY
NOV 16
4:00 - 5:30 PM

CBC DIGITAL SPACES

Join the CBC as they discuss new opportunities and methods for pitching digital content. The panel will cover the newly launched Creator Network and CBC Gem’s YA Digital Originals stream. It will include information on what executives are looking for, creative production considerations, submission details, and how to navigate working with the CBC.

MODERATOR
Anita Li, Media strategist, Consultant and Instructor, The Other Wave

PANELISTS
Rignam Wangkhang, Producer, CBC Creator Network
Zach Feldberg, Programmer, CBC Digital Originals
Uytae Lee, Filmmaker, About Here

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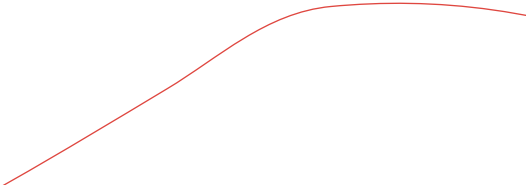
TUESDAY
NOV 17
4:00 - 5:30 PM

DIGITAL STRATEGIES IN EVOLVING TIMES

This panel considers how digital tools have been mobilized through varying methods to adapt, respond, and address changing sociocultural contexts and engage with communities, especially with regards to the events of 2020.

MODERATOR
Justine Abigail Yu, Founder and Editor-in-Chief, Living Hyphen

PANELISTS
Hannah Sung, Journalist
Khanh Tudo, Programmer, Insomniac Film Festival
Neha Kohli, Comedian, Actor and Screenwriter



WEDNESDAY
NOV 18
4:00 - 5:30 PM

THE FUNCTION OF FESTIVAL IN CRISIS

In a year of working in the contexts of a global pandemic, ongoing civil protests and reckonings, this panel brings together programmers from festivals and ARCs to discuss the radical possibilities and limitations of arts programming, and its relationship and responsibility to sociopolitical events.

MODERATOR
Marsya Maharani & Petrina Ng, *Gendai*

PANELISTS
Niki Little, *Artistic Director, ImagineNative*
Julian Carrington, *Programmer, Hot Docs and Planet in Focus*
Indu Vashist, *Cultural Worker, SAVAC*

WEDNESDAY
NOV 18
4:00 - 5:30 PM

A.K.A. DON BONUS MASTERCLASS

Deep dive into this critical archival film with director Spencer Nakasako, Reel Asian, and the Asian Institute! This masterclass will explore the narrative construction of *A.K.A Don Bonus*, methods of production, the vlog-style documentary format, and contextualize the film not only in its era, but also in ongoing contemporary conversations.

PANELISTS
Spencer Nakasako, *Director*
Aram Siu Wai Collier, *Head of Programming, Reel Asian*
Miko Revereza, *Filmmaker*

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THURSDAY
NOV 19
4:00 - 5:30 PM

CO-PRESENTED WITH CODES OF CONTACT:

WORDS AND WORLDS: MAPPING DIGITAL LANGUAGE

What does digital justice mean to people who lack digital access? This conversation is centred around questions of exclusion in digital spaces, inviting emerging thinkers, artists and community cultural workers to consider digital futures for those without access to the city arts landscape, and by extension, digital futures and opportunities.

MODERATOR

Atif Khan, *Researcher and Curator*

PANELISTS

Madiha Tahir, *Journalist and Filmmaker*

Nasra Mohamed, *Youth Community Advocate*

Mashal Khan, *Multimedia Artist*

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CREATE ARTS CHANNEL

Get your creativity on with these pre-recorded short and sweet arts activities led by our line-up of local artists:

Create your own self or family portrait with animator and arts-educator **Anne Koizumi**.

Author of *My Day with Gong Gong* (Annick Press), **Sennah Yee** shares nonverbal activities she enjoys together with her grandparents.

Transform coffee filters into art with queer Asian-Canadian multidisciplinary artist and arts educator, **PUFF Paddy**.

Storyteller and origami artist **Sam Dizon** shows multiple ways one can play with and fold paper.

WATCH SHORT FILMS

A collection of shorts filled with wonder, love, and pure excitement that will surely resonate with audiences of all ages.

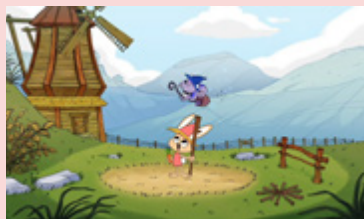
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TEST FLIGHT

Emma Momoko Frew | Canada | 2020 | 3 min | No Dialogue

No matter what she tries, a bunny witch can't seem to get her vegetable-themed broomstick to fly.

Emma Frew is a recent graduate of the Sheridan Animation program, she is currently working in the animation industry as a storyboard artist.

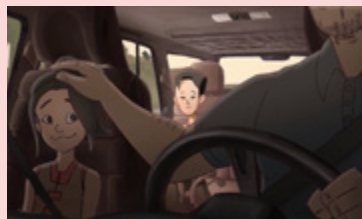


FIRST BORN

Justin Bruce Lee | USA | 2020 | 3 min | No Dialogue | Canadian Premiere

The pressure is on for Arthur to prove himself to his father at an upcoming martial arts competition.

Justin Bruce Lee graduated from San Jose State University majoring in animation/illustration with a focus on storyboarding. He is currently an associate storyboard artist for *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*.

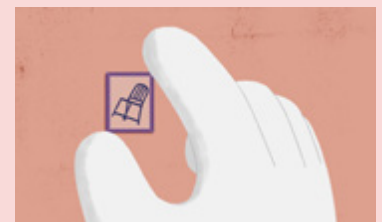


ISLE OF CHAIR

Ivy Chen | Taiwan, UK | 2020 | 6 min | No Dialogue

Gentle and mindfully aware, this contemplative animation wonders what happens when a chair falls on a secluded island.

Originally from Tainan, Taiwan, **Ivy Chen** is an animation director and illustrator, currently living in London where she graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Illustration Animation at Kingston University.



FELT LOVE

Angeline Vu, Arlene Bongco |
USA | 2020 | 6 min |
No Dialogue | Canadian Premiere

Combining 2D animation with stop-motion, *Felt Love* is a touching story about the love between a mother and son.

Angeline Vu draws inspiration from her mom, three cats, and her jungle of a backyard, and is interested in both fairy tales and family tales. Heartwarming narratives and handmade crafts inspire **Arlene Bongco**, who's interested in exploring different roles in animation.

YUWOL: THE BOY WHO MADE THE WORLD

Beff | South Korea | 2020 | 25 min | No Dialogue |
North American Premiere

Bursting with joy and fantastic dance sequences, you'll be sure to find yourself tapping along with Yuwol as he inspires (or infects) others to dance.

Born in Seoul, **Beff** (aka Byungyun Lee) grew up in the States making home movies with his 8mm camcorder, writing songs for piano, and drawing cartoons.

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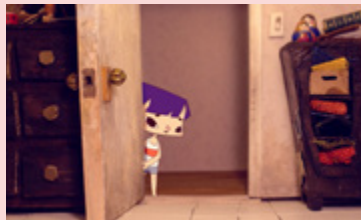
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BEYOND THE LINE

Jinuk Choi | South Korea, USA |
2020 | 3 min | English |
Canadian Premiere

At night the magic happens when a wheelchair races against other toys in the hospital hallway.

Jinuk Choi is a Korean filmmaker & artist based in New York City. Choi is interested in depicting the world from a child's point of view and hopes his animations could bring people joy and happiness.



HEY



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LIVE SCRIPT READ



Scarborough

CLOSING NIGHT

LIVE PRESENTATION:

SCARBOROUGH

LIVE SCRIPT READ + ARTIST TALK

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Reel Asian is proud to present as its Closing Night event a live script-read presentation of *Scarborough*, the anticipated forthcoming film by Reel Asian stalwart filmmaking duo, Shasha Nakhai and Rich Williamson. The film, an adaptation of Catherine Hernandez's award-winning novel of the same name, follows three kids in a low-income neighbourhood who find community, compassion, and resilience at a drop-in literacy centre over the course of a school year.

Having just wrapped shooting this summer and looking ahead to a 2021 premiere, the *Scarborough* team takes pause to provide audiences an opportunity to see a sneak preview of select scenes acted out live by members of the cast. The script-read will be followed by an intimate discussion about the themes and creative process of bringing this heralded book to life on screen by this trio of celebrated Toronto artists.

DIRECTORS

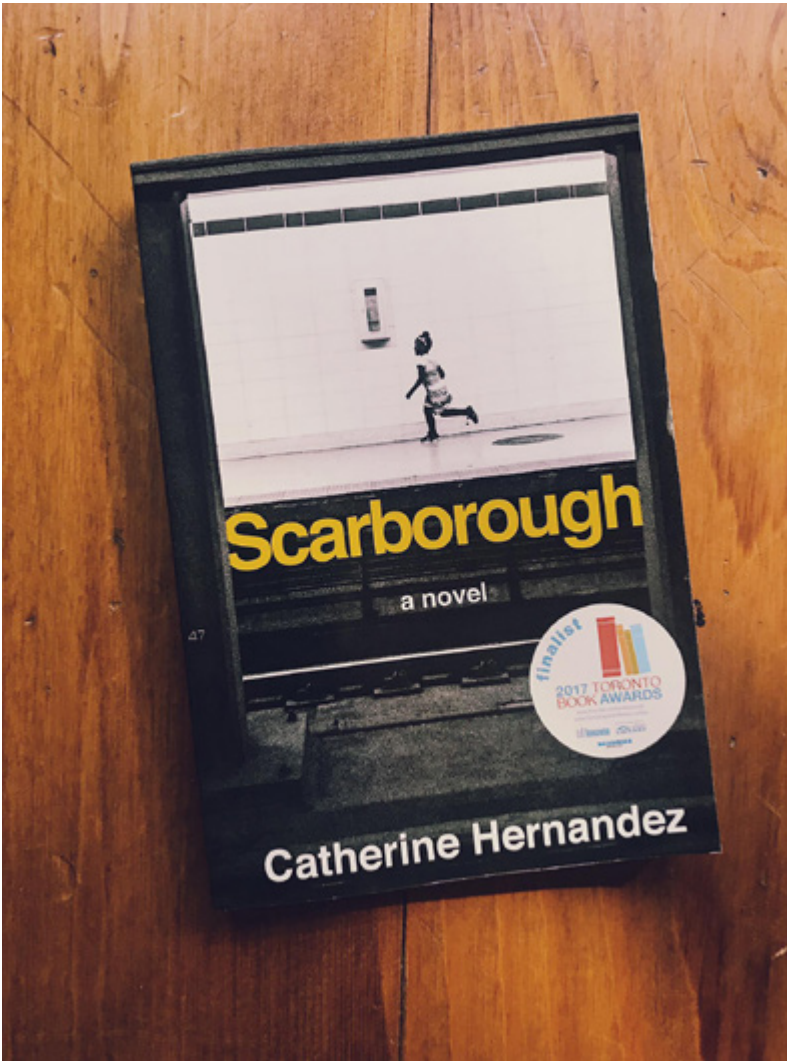
Shasha Nakhai (Director/Producer) and **Rich Williamson** (Director/DOP) have successfully collaborated on many award-winning projects over the last decade.

WRITER

Catherine Hernandez is the award-winning author of *Scarborough* and its screenplay adaptation, and the outgoing artistic director of b Current Performing Arts. Her second novel, *Crosshairs*, will be published in 2020.

MODERATOR

Using his cinema to deconstruct notions of race and identity, **Amar Wala** has directed series for CBC, Viceland, and Shopify Studios. He directed the feature documentary *The Secret Trial 5*, and is currently director and consulting producer of the CBC Arts series *In The Making*.



LIVE EVENT

Live Script Read and Artist Talk with Shasha Nakhai, Rich Williamson, and Catherine Hernandez, moderated by Amar Wala.



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