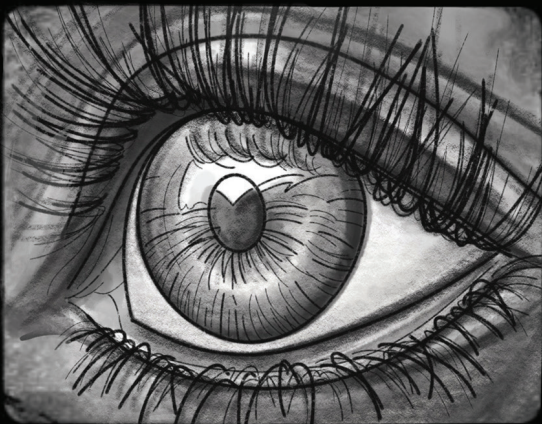


21ST

FEMALE EYE
FILM FESTIVAL

Always Honest, Not Always Pretty.



JULY 26 - JULY 30
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*The Female Eye voted world's "Top 50 Festivals Worth the Entry Fee"
for 11 consecutive years (2013 - 2023)
by Movie Maker Magazine.*

2023 DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT



Welcome to the 21st edition of the Female Eye Film Festival! The past few years have been tumultuous. Our beloved tagline - Always Honest, Not Always Pretty - has never seemed more fitting given all challenges we've faced. FeFF returned live in 2022 while remnants of virtual panels, and the Directors Round Table Discussion remained on-line so we could engage more foreign delegates who were unable to attend in-person.

We are thrilled to have an in-person festival with so many out-of-town filmmakers, talent, and crew members attending this year along with all the amazing screenwriters who will partake in the Script Development program. Due to cutbacks, and the industry lock-down, we are delivering a somewhat of a paired down version of FeFF which we could not have produced without the tremendous support of IATSE 873, and AFBS who generously increased their contributions, and the Ontario Arts Council for providing an annual Operating Grant in 2022. We are most grateful to Rolling Pictures who handled our print traffic, and Telefilm Canada for their continued support of our Canadian film programs.

I want to thank Nadia Kwiatkowski for her dedication, management, and enthusiasm in her first year with FeFF. This edition of FeFF would not be possible without her, and our volunteers which includes many of our longstanding team members who've dedicated valuable time, and energy to help make FeFF 2023 a success.

We welcome you to celebrate films and screenplays with our audiences, and local industry guests who have graciously donated their time and expertise to this edition.

Upward and onward!
Yours sincerely,

Leslie Ann Coles,
Founder, Executive/Artistic Director, The Female Eye

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



Welcome, everyone, to the Female Eye Film Festival's 21st anniversary! I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all our festival delegates, sponsors, industry guests, and community partners. This year FeFF is very excited to present films from across North America, Germany, Iran, Spain, France, Colombia, China, Ireland, the UK, South Africa, Malaysia, Mexico, Turkey, Japan, Italy, Belgium, Latvia, and more, along with a lineup of award-winning screenwriters whose work will be read live at the Script Reading series.

I am pleased to announce that, due to the growth in submissions, the festival has been extended to five days and will be further expanding in 2023/2024.

I would like to thank our fearless leader, Leslie-Ann Coles, founder and executive director, for her vision, foresight, and perseverance, and for shining a light on women and female-identifying directors around the globe and creating a space that, although dedicated to women filmmakers, does not exclude men from our Script Development program and other industry initiatives.

Thank you to our board members, funders, the FeFF team, our community partners, and our selfless volunteers, without whom we could not produce this event.

We hope you enjoy the 21st edition of the Female Eye Film Festival.

Yours,

Angela Argento,
Chair, The Female Eye

LETTER FROM **AFBS**

AFBS is proud to continue our long-term support to help ensure films made by talented Canadian women directors are showcased. Since 2001, this festival has been at the forefront of advocating for gender equity, inclusion and diversity in the industry. Providing a platform for films directed by women around the world has proven to be an invaluable community initiative with great impact on Canadian cinema.

As a community partner of the Canadian creative industry, AFBS is a fraternal organization that is not driven by profit and provides insurance benefits and retirement savings to performers and screenwriters to support them across all stages of life. We also support our community in many other ways including affordable insurance options for self-employed Canadian artists, contributions to industry-related charitable organizations and sponsorship of Canadian artistic initiatives like FeFF.

In an industry where female filmmakers have been underrepresented, FeFF continues to bring a female perspective and diversity to the art of screen-based storytelling. The vast efforts that go into producing this festival, and the immeasurable results, are something AFBS is proud to stand behind.

On behalf of AFBS, I applaud FeFF for its continued community impact and it is our honour to be a sponsor again this year.

Enjoy the festival, everyone!

Sincerely,



Ron Zammit
President & CEO
AFBS





ENRICHING CREATIVE LIVES

Congratulations to all the nominees and winners of the 21st Female Eye Film Festival.

AFBS is a proud Event Sponsor.



afbs.ca

CANADIAN FILMS HAVE IT ALL.

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BIG HITS
BIG TALENTS

BIG TALENTS
BIG TALENTS
BIG TALENTS



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LETTER FROM **TELEFILM CANADA**



Showcasing and celebrating the works of Canadian creators is at the heart of what we do at Telefilm. That is why we are proud to partner with the Female Eye Film Festival, to further boost our support for Canadian creatives at home and around the world.

In this ever-evolving cultural landscape, festivals continue to play an important role in the screen-based industry, growing the talent pool, as well as allowing audiences to celebrate and connect with distinctive Canadian films and the talent behind them.

We encourage you to keep supporting Canadian talent in theatres and on digital platforms

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Roy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "R".

Julie Roy
Executive Director and CEO, Telefilm Canada



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**Female Eye
Film Festival**



IATSE 873

WWW.IATSE873.COM

LETTER FROM **IATSE 873**



IATSE 873 is pleased to once again be supporting the Female Eye Film Festival as it celebrates its 21st year.

Members of the IATSE Local 873 have made remarkable contributions towards the Canadian film and television industry. As the Union Behind Entertainment, we strive to create safe work environments, while encouraging and supporting our talented artisans, and implementing strategies to evoke and sustain change from within.

Through their screenings, networking opportunities and programming, the Female Eye Film Festival provides further opportunities to female film makers which we are proud to support.

Congratulations to everyone involved in this year's festival and we wish you all another hugely successful event.

Sincerely,

Angela Mastronardi
President, IATSE 873





WEDNESDAY, JULY 26TH

GOOD-TO-GO SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Toronto Baha'i Centre.

288 Bloor St W Toronto ON M5S 1V8, 2nd Floor Hall

Wednesday, July 26th • 2-4:30PM

Made possible with the support of Actra Fraternal Benefit Society

Program director and facilitator, Lia Cavasotto.

Closed-door session; by invitation only.



Good-to-Go is a vital part of FeFF's Script Development program. It gives writers an opportunity to discuss their projects in intimate one-on-one sessions with a roster of stellar industry guests whose areas of expertise include distribution, casting, financing, production, and literary management, among others. It's like speed dating, only you're pitching your passion project!

Scripts/Screenwriters

ALBA FIERA, by Nahyr Galaz Ruiz (United States). A novelist's idyllic life is turned upside down when she catches her husband cheating. After a visit from beyond the grave by her great-grandmother, she sets out to discover the truths hidden in her family's long history in order to save herself from the mistakes of her ancestors.



NAHYR GALAZ RUIZ is born in Querétaro, Mexico and raised in Sunny Southern California. She is a multi-hyphenate artist whose bi-cultural identity gives her a unique perspective in her storytelling. Raised on a healthy dose of telenovelas and Jane Austen novels, and raised by rich and complex Latine matriarchs, Nahyr is drawn to stories of impossible love with strong female leads. As an actress, writer and director, she is compelled to bring stories to the screen that reflect her upbringing and bi-cultural identity. For Nahyr, what is ultimately of the most vital importance is writing and creating from a place of authenticity and elevating Latinx voices and stories.



WEDNESDAY, JULY 26TH

GOOD-TO-GO SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CONT.

Wednesday, July 26th • 2-4:30PM

INVISIBLE, by Shira Levin (United States). Three dynamic "older" women, fed up with being unappreciated and ignored, join forces and discover a way to fight ageism and exact revenge on one of their offenders.



SHIRA LEVIN, a native New Yorker, began as a theatre actor before segueing into screenwriting. Two of her screenplay adaptations were optioned and put into development. In 2012, Shira became a writer/director. Her short films, Last Day, Old Junk and Upside Down (winner Audience Choice Award), screened across the USA and in India and Scotland. Her feature film, Starfish, (winner Audience Choice Award), opened the Mystic Film Festival and screened at other American festivals. It's currently on Amazon Prime. Shira's second feature, a documentary, Forty Years In A Box, just premiered at the Big Apple Film Festival in New York City. Prior to becoming a filmmaker, Shira worked at Universal Pictures' story department and was Director of Development for Martin Scorsese for six years. She was script consultant and associate producer on Deuces Wild and Brides (aka Nyfes). Shira also taught screenwriting at New York Film Academy for 11 years. Her most recent screenplay Invisible, will hopefully be her third feature film. Member NYWIFT. Emeritus member WGAE.

FEMININE: A REDEMPTION TALE, by Roxana Chapela (Canada). The journey of a successful woman, a new mother, and a contemporary dancer are interwoven into three tales of deep transformation, self-empowerment, and love.



ROXANA CHAPELA is a Mexican/Canadian filmmaker. She is an Architect with a certificate in Fine Arts and a Permaculture Design diploma. She has walked the last 2 decades of her professional career in film and theater, by designing sets for different kinds of Universes. Leading her to win the award of Best Production Design for "Los Trashumantes". She has also Directed multiple-award-winning short documentaries, like: "Upcyclers: Fashion's Climate Frontliners" and "The Peaceful Revolution". Currently, she is developing her first feature film as Writer and Director: "Feminine: a redemption tale"



WEDNESDAY, JULY 26TH

GOOD-TO-GO SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CONT.

Wednesday, July 26th • 2-4:30PM

THE TEST, by Alyssah Richards (Canada). In a dystopian future where a mandatory test determines your eligibility to have children, Nova and her partner, Ziah, uncover a government conspiracy, forcing them to evade the law, join an underground community, and ultimately relearn the meaning of family.



ALYSSAH RICHARDS is an emerging filmmaker who recently graduated from The Film and Television Production Program at Humber College. During their time at Humber, Alyssah specialized in writing and directing; honing their skills and developing their creative voice. Alyssah has continued to work in the film industry in various roles. They enjoy collaborating with other like-minded creatives who have a passion for storytelling and the desire to have their voices heard. Alyssah intends to continue as a lifelong learner, gaining new experiences and sharing their stories along the way.

ANIMALISTIC, by KJ Carter. An eclectic, attractive, and eccentric group of 13 converge for a therapeutic animal role-playing weekend retreat in the woods, but the deep primal urges that lurk within themselves and each other may leave them altered forever.



KJ CARTER has worked in film and television for more than two decades as a writer, director, and producer of documentary and narrative films. Her work has been screened internationally at film festivals and on television. Notably, her short dramatic films have been shown at Montreal's Festival du Nouveau Cinéma, the BFI London (UK) Film Festival, the Edinburgh Women's Film Festival, and other festivals from Sydney to Sarasota. She's a professionally trained actor and director, with a post-graduate screenwriting certification from the London College of Communication at the University of the Arts London, where she was taught by the seminal feminist film theoretician Laura Mulvey, and a post-graduate certificate in screenwriting from George Brown College in Toronto, studying under award-winning scriptwriter Nika Rylski and Paul Bellini, of Kids in the Hall fame. KJ has written seven feature film screenplays, all with a focus on content that deals with climate change and the environment, all comedic and genre-bending, provocative, thought-provoking, and entertaining.



WEDNESDAY, JULY 26TH

GOOD-TO-GO SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CONT.

Wednesday, July 26th • 2-4:30PM

LIL, by Virginia Abramovich and Katherine Andrews (Canada). After an ecological collapse, a feral orphan who is looking for a way out and the answers to her past takes a reclusive scientist hostage and slowly unravels his plans to convert her into a techno-human.



VIRGINIA ABRAMOVICH is an award-winning director and writer, passionate to tell compelling, character rich stories. An alumna of the Meryl Streep's The Writers Lab NYC; the Canadian Film Centre; and the Women in the Director' Chair program, her work has screened in festivals worldwide and on such networks as Apple TV, Amazon Prime, Lifetime, Crave, CBC and TUBI. Virginia enjoys working as a director for hire as she continues to write and direct her own passion projects. Her own work always reflects strong female perspectives and underrepresented voices. Virginia's most recent feature screenplay, LIL, co-written with Katherine Andrews, is an eco-feminist, sci-fi story which has won the Bronze Prize at PAGE International Screenwriting Awards (2022) and ranked in the top 10 Finalist in Final Draft's Big Break Screenwriting Completion (2022). Virginia also has several TV show concepts that she's currently writing and developing. When she's not directing or writing, Virginia's go to activity is pitching a tent in the forest and hiking for hours.



KATHERINE ANDREWS was selected for the 2021 The Writer's Lab, sponsored by Meryl Streep and Nicole Kidman, for feature script LIL, which she co-wrote with Virginia Abramovich. Katherine wrote the MOW thriller screenplay MISSING AND ALONE for Lifetime Network, produced by Neshama Entertainment. Her dramatic sci-fi feature film BETWEEN WAVES (2020), also co-written with Virginia had worldwide festival and broadcast success. Katherine was a writer and story editor on season two of the Canadian Comedy Award-winning web series JUST PASSING THROUGH and wrote on two children's programs: ROBOTIK and BOB! THE SLOB. In addition to graduating from writing programs at UCLA and The Second City, Katherine has a Master of Arts degree in Journalism. She wrote, produced, hosted and directed news and current affairs programs on CBC Radio & Television in four provinces over the course of seven years.



WEDNESDAY, JULY 26TH

GOOD-TO-GO SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CONT.

Wednesday, July 26th • 2-4:30PM

PEDIGREE, by Maya Adam and Etan Muskat (Canada). When a talented orphan mutt poses as a purebred, her dream of dancing in New Bark City's elite ballet company suddenly seems pawisible, but could her double life end up changing things fur-ever?



MAYA ADAM is a medical doctor and writer who spent 10 years as a professional ballet dancer in Germany before changing careers. She lives in New York City. Pedigree is her first feature script.



ETAN MUSKAT is an alumni of the Second City Mainstage. Etan has taught classes in improv, sketch comedy, acting, and screenwriting, and currently serves as Artistic Director of the Second City Training Centre in Toronto, where he oversees faculty and curriculum. In 2021 Etan won the Screen-craft Screenwriting Fellowship with his original comedy pilot Consume.

AFGHAN SMOKE, by Brishkay Ahmed. What begins as a journey to fulfill a mother's dying wish catapults Sonya, an Afghan-Canadian investigator for NATO, into a maze of deceitful games that ultimately turns the dutiful daughter into an unwitting traitor to her father.



BRISHKAY AHMED, an Afghan - Canadian filmmaker, began her career writing and directing episodic dramas for Tolo TV and RTA in Afghanistan. She used the opportunity to insert story elements to entertain and educate Afghan women about their legal rights. Her feature film - In The Rumbling Belly of Motherland, was awarded Outstanding Feature Film at the 2021 Reel-world film festival. Her short - Fatima In Kabul - was nominated for the 2021 Canadian Screen Awards and won three 2022 Leo Awards. Ahmed is the writer of the speculative fiction feature Aisha and the suspenseful drama series Afghan Smoke. Ahmed is a 2022 alumna of the CFC Writers' Lab (Norman Jewison Film Program) and part of the 2023 E20 Reelworld Series Lab. Ahmed is a member of DGC, WGC, and the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television.



WEDNESDAY, JULY 26TH

GOOD-TO-GO SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CONT.

Wednesday, July 26th • 2-4:30PM

THE LIFE OF COCKROACHES, by Gillian Scott (Canada). A Jewish survivor of Nazi atrocities seeks healing and her sister's forgiveness in South Africa, where she bonds with an independent-minded Xhosa woman who's fighting a different oppressive regime.



*GILLIAN CROFT: I had a dream to write and won a university fine arts scholarship, which I used to study screenwriting. After I developed blood clots from a rare inflammatory disorder, I convinced myself I "didn't have enough life experience" to be a good writer and switched to psychology. Ironically, I was told I was "a great writer" and was accepted into a master's degree before I had finished my first degree. At the same time, I worked as a government research writer. My life changed dramatically when my baby daughter suffered blood clots during heart surgery, resulting in severe disabilities, deafblindness, 42 medical conditions, and immune deficiency syndrome. To keep her away from infection, I've stayed in almost constant isolation with her for the past 25 years. Becoming a writer had to take second place to home-schooling my deafblind daughter, and I refused to put her into care even when my university professor and subsequent professionals in the film industry told me I was "wasting my talent." She needed her best chance, was given only nine years to live, and she is now 26, so I feel I have been a success in life. Nevertheless, I started to write again when my youngest daughter, Amelia, became an actress and encouraged me to join in her endeavours. I wrote "Emma's Song," and my writing partner and I won the Golden Palm Award at the Beverly Hills Film Festival. I have since worked as an actress and coached young people in acting and screenwriting, and two of my young students gained production deals for their short films. Following the death of my sister to clots and a blood clot in my lung, I wrote *The Life of Cockroaches* on my own. I was inspired by the thought that no matter what happens in life, there is always hope.*



WEDNESDAY, JULY 26TH

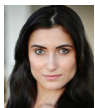
GOOD-TO-GO SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CONT.

INDUSTRY DELEGATES

Wednesday, July 26th • 2-4:30PM



BYRON A. MARTIN is an award-winning producer who develops independent film, television, and documentary projects. To date he has produced more than 100 hours of television, filming projects in over 30 countries. He has produced projects for Disney, Sony, Universal, Lifetime, Turner, Bell Media, DHX, Great American Country, and Crown Media. From The Chronicles of Riddick, Land of the Dead, and Resident Evil: Afterlife to America Pie Presents: The Naked Mile, Byron has a tremendous scale and scope of production experience. He has managed productions for some of Hollywood's leading producers, including Jerry Bruckheimer, Sam Raimi, Raffaella De Laurentiis, Laurence Mark, John Singleton, Mark Canton, Lauren Shuler Donner, Dick Wolf, Ralph Winter, and Don Carmody. In 2021, he was honoured as the Best Canadian Film and TV Production Company by Corporate Vision at its annual Media Innovator Awards. Most recently, his feature project Something Like Truth was the Canadian winner at the 2022 JETS initiative during Berlinale.



JESSICA MARTINS is the founder of Hero Artists and partner at Hero Entertainment Partners and has been an entrepreneur and executive for 15 years. She's the executive producer of eOne's Forsaken (Donald Sutherland, Kiefer Sutherland, Demi Moore), the Netflix original Kiss and Cry, and Roadside Attractions/Lionsgate's The Last Full Measure (starring eight Academy Award-winning actors, including Christopher Plummer and Samuel L. Jackson), and she's the lead producer on the musical biopic Spinning Gold, which was released theatrically in 2023. Her current slate includes Trader and Room (both in post-production) and Verona (principal photography). Next up is North Star, directed by Oscar nominee Jim Sheridan (pre-production). Martins sits on the advisory board of Tiltify, a live-streaming charity-fundraising platform in partnership with Twitch and TikTok. She is a member of the Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television, Women in Film & Television (Toronto and New York chapters), the EIC, and the Women's Executive Network (WXN).



WEDNESDAY, JULY 26TH

GOOD-TO-GO SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CONT.

INDUSTRY DELEGATES

Wednesday, July 26th • 2-4:30PM



MARTIN HARBURY has spent most of his career in the film and television industry, creating productions that have won awards from LA to Monte Carlo, Toronto to Milan, including two Geminis, a Genie, and a US CableACE Award. He has extensive credits as writer, director, executive producer, and producer. He also served as executive in charge of dramatic series and broadcast executive at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. He was a founder of the television branch of the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television and served on the Academy's board of directors, the executive board, and various academy committees. He served as a director of the Actors' Fund of Canada and taught screenwriting at Ryerson University (now Toronto Metropolitan University). His many productions have been seen on CBC, CTV, Global Television, TVO, Discovery, Fox, NBC, PBS, HBO, TVNZ, and London Weekend Television. He is the author of a book on film and television production and spent 10 years as a consultant at the Ontario Media Development Corporation (Ontario Creates), where he developed and administered programs for film and television, including the Film Fund, supporting the development and production of feature films. He also created and ran the Export Fund..

More delegates TBA.



THURSDAY, JULY 27TH

SCRIPT READING SERIES. SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Toronto Baha'i Centre.

288 Bloor St W Toronto ON M5S 1V8, 2nd Floor Hall

Thursday, July 27th • 9:30AM-4:15PM



Made possible with the support of Actra Fraternal Benefit Society

Program director and facilitator, Lia Cavasotto. Free event.

The Script Reading series at FeFF is a creative incubator for writers with completed features and pilots that are ready to be kicked up to the next level. It's an intensely creative, collaborative, and career-enhancing experience. This program centres on public readings where screenwriters receive feedback from industry experts and their peers, fellow writers.

9:30-10:30AM

ALBA FIERA, written by Nahyr Galaz Ruiz (United States)

Logline: A novelist's idyllic life is turned upside down when she catches her husband cheating. After a visit from beyond the grave by her great-grandmother, she sets out to discover the truths hidden in her family's long history in order to save herself from the mistakes of her ancestors.

Synopsis: DANI ALBAVERA-VOSS has it all: a successful career as a novelist, a Harlequin romance-like marriage to a handsome, successful attorney, great friends, and that coveted LA life, until one day she finds out her husband cheated on her. Or did he? Without a second thought, Dani activates her escape plan, drains her separate account, and runs away to her mom, who has been waiting for this to happen.

While at her mom's, Dani is visited by the spirit of her great-grandmother, CAMELINA, who urges her to dig deeper and not commit the same mistakes as the women in her family. Dani is convinced she's dreaming until she stumbles upon the mysterious chest and shawl that Camelina's spirit referenced along with a photo of a woman as an Adelita (female soldier). Ever the writer and eager to evade her emotions, Dani begins to research the contents in the chest as well as the mysterious Adelita.



THURSDAY, JULY 27TH

SCRIPT READING SERIES. SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CONT.

Thursday, July 27th • 9:30AM-4:15PM

9:30-10:30AM CONT.

ALBA FIERA, written by Nahyr Galaz Ruiz (United States)

As she digs, she flashes back to her childhood and the family mantra, "You cannot trust men - they're pigs that are only ever after sex." The more she uncovers, the more is revealed of previous generations of Albavera women as the story begins to jump back and forth through time, revealing a clearer picture of why Dani inherited such a deeply dysfunctional roadmap for love. Ultimately, it's up to Dani to uncover the truth, break the cycle, and save herself from making the same mistakes as the Albavera women before her.

10:45-11:45AM

INVISIBLE, written by Shira Levin (United States)

Logline: Three kick-ass 'senior' women, fed up with being unappreciated and ignored, join forces to fight ageism and exact revenge on one of their offenders, becoming modern day Robin Hoods along the way.

Synopsis: GERTRUDE, an award winning actor, on the cusp of 70, enters uncharted territory when she finds herself at a commercial audition for adult diapers. CLEO, late 60s, a powerhouse personal assistant to DR. POWERS, a plastic surgeon, discovers he has no intention of keeping his promise to promote her and has instead hired a much younger woman. ISABEL (IZ), early 60s, an irreverent freelance journalist, has to fight for the stories she believes in and prove she's still relevant. The three women meet and bond over their shared experiences of being treated as if they're invisible. While filming a movie, Gertrude's role is in jeopardy due to the fragile ego of her male co-star. Isabel suspects there's corruption behind Defy, a new anti-aging product developed by Dr. Powers, but is met with resistance as she tries to investigate.



THURSDAY, JULY 27TH

SCRIPT READING SERIES. SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CONT.

Thursday, July 27th • 9:30AM-4:15PM

10:45-11:45AM **CONT.**

INVISIBLE, written by Shira Levin (United States)

In an act of rebellion, after Cleo learns that Dr. Powers is considering firing her, she invites her new friends to spend the weekend at his country house without his knowledge. During their stay, their friendship deepens and things take an unexpected turn when Cleo finds the combination of the doctor's safe and opens it. They don't touch the money but instead photograph documents related to Defy, to help Isabel's investigation.

Further ageist challenges ensue, which take a toll on the women. When Cleo realizes she's definitely going to lose her job, she asks her friends to consider a plan that would previously have been unthinkable to each of them. As events snowball, the three women re-discover their resiliency, regain self-esteem and take full charge of their lives.

LUNCH BREAK

1:15-2:15PM

FEMININE: A REDEMPTION TALE, written by Roxana Chapela (Canada)

Logline: The journey of a successful woman, a new mother, and a contemporary dancer are interwoven into three tales of deep transformation, self-empowerment, and love.

Synopsis: In current-day Vancouver, Canada, DIANA (38) is a stunning filmmaker who deprecates herself in silence, AMANDA (36) is a new mother dealing with postpartum depression, and LILI (33) is a professional contemporary dancer who is about to reclaim her sexual sovereignty. When baby LUNA arrives, a door opens to their inner world to reveal the unseen darkness that has been hidden for the three of them, as an unwanted initiation to become the women they are meant to be.



THURSDAY, JULY 27TH

SCRIPT READING SERIES. SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CONT.

Thursday, July 27th • 9:30AM-4:15PM

2:30-3:30PM

THE TEST, written by Alyssah Richards (Canada)

Logline: In a dystopian future where a mandatory test determines your eligibility to have children, Nova and her partner, Ziah, uncover a government conspiracy, forcing them to evade the law, join an underground community, and ultimately relearn the meaning of family.

Synopsis: In a dystopian future where a mandatory test determines your eligibility to have children, NOVA and her partner, ZIAH, take The Test with high hopes. Simultaneously, a rookie Minors' Officer (MO) climbs the corporate ladder as the government institutes new laws that affect Test applicants. After failing The Test, Nova and Ziah make a decision that will change their lives forever. This decision intertwines their lives with the rookie MO and forces Nova and Ziah to go on the run in search of a safe haven. Along the way, they find new friends and uncover a government conspiracy that threatens the lives of billions of people. Nova and Ziah must race against time while evading the law in order to expose the truth and stop their oppressors before it's too late.



FRIDAY, JULY 28TH

SCRIPT READING SERIES. SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CONT.

The Toronto Baha'i Centre.

288 Bloor St W Toronto ON M5S 1V8, 2nd Floor Hall

Friday, July 28th • 9AM-4:15PM

9-10AM

ANIMALISTIC, written by KJ Carter (Canada)

Logline: When an eclectic, attractive, and eccentric group of 13 converge for a therapeutic animal-role-playing weekend retreat in the woods, little do they realize that the deep primal urges that lurk within themselves and each other might leave them altered forever.

Synopsis: Animalistic is a 90-minute comic eco-fantasy: A Midsummer Night's Dream meets Lord of the Flies with a campy edge. Inspired by fairy tales, "folk horror," Celtic mythology, Angela Carter's writing, and Lars von Trier's provocative film The Idiots. Set in a forest, in an unspecified time period (anywhere from the 1960s to the present or future). Somewhere in North America or Europe. We explore themes of humanity's separation from nature, Western society's fear of feminine "otherness," the deep "animal drives" within us all, and the feeling of fear and wonder at the beauty of connecting with nature and finding our place within it. The joy of collective experience and crossing perceived boundaries of sexual orientation, gender, race, class difference, and species. Thrilling, emotional, poetic, and absurd, and rooted in character, Animalistic is a love letter to feminine-centred spiritual traditions, nature, and our fellow creatures who inhabit the planet – a marriage of human comedy, drama, mysticism, and murder.

10:15-11:15AM

LIL, written by Virginia Abramovich and Katherine Andrews (Canada)

Logline: After an ecological collapse, a feral orphan who is looking for a way out and the answers to her past takes a reclusive scientist hostage and slowly unravels his plans to convert her into a techno-human.



FRIDAY, JULY 28TH

SCRIPT READING SERIES. SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CONT.

Friday, July 28th • 9AM-4:15PM

10:15-11:15AM CONT.

LIL, written by Virginia Abramovich and Katherine Andrews (Canada)

Synopsis: A feral girl, LIL, takes reclusive scientist SAMUEL hostage to loot his bunker. Thinking she's in control, Lil is unaware of Samuel's secret lab and his robotic partner/assistant RENE, who is his first attempt to marry human and machine. Lil also has no clue that Samuel already knows her. She is a product of his experiments, which he intends to complete. What Samuel doesn't know is that Lil's friends, a band of wild kids, are on stand-by for Lil's signal to swarm his bunker. But as Lil is enticed by Samuel's promises, will she be able and willing to get the signal to her friends?

Triangulating this family dynamic is Rene, Samuel's former mentor and love interest, whom he could not let go when her body began to fail. Samuel preserved Rene's brain in an automaton and reformats her memory to keep her from being depressed. But Lil's arrival triggers Rene to remember the truth about their past. Together, Rene and Lil recognize their entrapment and secretly unite against Samuel. As Samuel cannibalizes Rene's body parts, transplanting them onto Lil, Rene finds her humanity and Lil begins to question hers. The lines separating fantasy and reality, biology and technology, father, mother, and daughter, blur. As the metaphor for nature versus machine plays out on Lil's body, the final choice is hers.

11:30AM-12:30PM

PEDIGREE, written by Maya Adam and Etan Muskat (Canada)

Logline: When a talented orphan mutt poses as a purebred, her dream of dancing in New Bark City's elite ballet company suddenly seems paw-sible, but could her double life end up changing things fur-ever?



FRIDAY, JULY 28TH

SCRIPT READING SERIES. SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CONT.

Friday, July 28th • 9AM-4:15PM

11:30AM-12:30PM CONT.

PEDIGREE, written by Maya Adam and Etan Muskat (Canada)

Synopsis: Set in a bustling, canine metropolis, Pedigree follows the adventures of MISTY, a talented orphan mutt who dreams of dancing in the elite New Bark City ballet. Her job as a cleaner at the theatre barely pays the bills, but it allows her to pursue her secret passion. In the shadows of the theatre, unseen by the purebred starlets, Misty has been honing her dance skills. When she overhears WHITAKER, the theatre director, announcing the first open auditions, she thinks her chance has finally come, but the theatre's ugly legacy of breedism robs her of a fair chance to show off her talent, so she makes a desperate decision. Disguising herself as purebred, she blows everyone away and rises to stardom, living her dream but also struggling to maintain a double life built on deception. Like a dancing dog version of Mrs. Doubtfire, Misty is precariously (and sometimes hilariously) caught in a cycle of lies and costume changes that threatens to rob her of her true identity and the only family she's ever known, her Houndship "sisters" Sky and Luna. Misty's nemesis in the company is as evil as she is gorgeous. MADISON is infuriated by Misty's rapid rise to stardom and, to make matters worse, her attempts to sabotage Misty always seem to backfire. Meanwhile, OTIS, the theatre security watchdog, is falling for Misty, head over tail. Because he's a German shepherd – and son of the police chief – he's been sentenced to a life he doesn't want, but behind his father's back, Otis has joined the We're All Dogs movement, a resistance movement working to eliminate the breedism that casts a shadow over the glittering New Bark City. Misty's lies start to entangle her as Madison looks deeper into her past. To further complicate matters, Otis wants her to join the We're All Dogs movement, but Sky and Luna have already signed up, so giving in to Otis would certainly blow her cover.



FRIDAY, JULY 28TH

SCRIPT READING SERIES. SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CONT.

Friday, July 28th • 9AM-4:15PM

LUNCH BREAK

2-3PM

AFGHAN SMOKE, written by Brishkay Ahmed (Canada)

Logline: What begins as a journey to fulfill a mother's dying wish catapults Sonya, an Afghan-Canadian investigator for NATO, into a maze of deceitful games that ultimately turns the dutiful daughter into an unwitting traitor to her father.

Synopsis: Afghan Smoke is a tense family drama rooted in the theme of family and obligation; it raises questions about allegiance and identity – something the Sidiqi family think they know – and betrayal – something they do very well. Father, brother, and sister stand on opposite sides of the Afghan invasion story. As iron-willed SONYA attempts to deliver her dying mother to the motherland, her father's opposition propels her to challenge him just as their Canadian Muslim community responds to an alleged Islamophobic attack. Soon, conflicting geopolitical allegiances – which bleed through community veins – entangle her father and the mosque in a CSIS investigation. Staying committed to the goal of getting her mother back home, sleuth Sonya digs into her father and brother's disapproval, only to feel the sting of a backhand slap. Soon, she suspects her father's involvement in disrupting NATO's rebuilding efforts and her brother's opportune gain from the war. Unable to digest that her father might be one of them, she decides to spy on him – hoping to prove herself wrong. As Sonya uncovers information about her family and mosque activities, a CSIS agent uses the fragile death doula, caring for her mother, as an informant. The game of cat and mouse unravels a chase that leads to her father's arrest on terrorism charges. Is it justified? Sonya does not know. In the last hours, Sonya fulfills her mother's dying wish but struggles with her new identity as a traitor to her father and community. Afghan Smoke is a mind fuck.



FRIDAY, JULY 28TH

SCRIPT READING SERIES. SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CONT.

Friday, July 28th • 9AM - 4:15PM

3:15-4:15PM

THE LIFE OF COCKAROACHES, written by Gillian Croft (Canada)

Logline: A Jewish survivor of Nazi atrocities seeks healing and her sister's forgiveness in South Africa, where she bonds with an independent-minded Xhosa woman who's fighting a different oppressive regime.

Synopsis: French-Jew Héléne Levine spent 10 years searching for her daughter after her thoughtless actions led to the arrest and subsequent death of her family in Auschwitz. Mad with guilt and grief, she decides to kill herself. Instead, she steals a family heirloom, an antique silver teapot, and embarks on a quest for forgiveness from her sister in South Africa.

In the meantime, Siphwiwe, an independent-minded Xhosa woman, risks arrest by working illegally without a "pass," a government document restricting the rights of black women. Desperate to raise school tuition for her gifted son, Khwezi, so that he doesn't die in the mines like his father, she is increasingly targeted by racist Karl, a sadistic police officer who works "above the law."

Héléne's life becomes entwined with that of Siphwiwe when she saves her from being killed by an angry Zulu mob led by Funani, who threatens revenge. The two women battle their pasts and each other as Siphwiwe is increasingly targeted by Karl, Helene crumbles under the imminent decision to confront her sister with the past, and Helene's teapot is temporarily stolen. After a horrific event shakes them and their world to the core, both women choose to become involved in the politics of the time, and Héléne learns to forgive herself. Letting go of her past, she changes the life of Siphwiwe and her son forever, chooses to finally meet with her sister, Irène, and discovers that her daughter, Emilie, is alive. Overwhelmed with joy, Helene is able to gift her daughter with her grandmother's silver teapot.



FRIDAY, JULY 28TH

SCRIPT READING SERIES. SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CONT. INDUSTRY DELEGATES

Friday, July 28th • 9AM - 4:15PM



MAUREEN DOREY is a story editor and instructor who helps writers find their voices and shape their stories.



ALLEGRA FULTON is a multi award-winning actor, in film, television, on stage, and in voice over.. Her directing and dramaturgy/script editing work continues to propel her into new arenas as does her coaching work, helping everyone become the best artist and human, they can be. More on IMDB and www.allegrafulton.com.



DANIELA SAIONI (WGC, IATSE, ACTRA) is a screenwriter, story editor, punch-up artist, veteran script supervisor and educator. Between her students and clients, she has shepherded the creation of over 100 original screenplays from concept to completion. Apart from her own online programs, she has taught at Pacific Screenwriting Program and ScriptFest PEI, and guest story edited at ReelWorld E20 and FEFF. A Top 1% Coverfly writer with numerous honours including Grand Prize - WE Screenplay Diverse Voices 2021 and both Best Screenplay and Best Fresh Voice at Female Eye Film Festival 2019, she is also proud of the growing list of her alumni achievements. A former stand-up comedian and character actress, her talents are varied, but her mission is singular: change the world, one laugh at a time.



WEDNESDAY, JULY 26TH

TRADITIONAL OPENING CEREMONY AND CANADIAN INDIGENOUS DOCUMENTARY

Wednesday, July 26th • 5PM



SHORT

O, LUNA, directed by Virginia L. Montgomery. A surreal, live-action dreamscape of ocular symbols, echoing sounds, and uncanny interspecies intimacy created by the neurodivergent video and sound artist Virginia L. Montgomery. The film investigates ecofeminist-philosophical themes of materiality, metamorphosis, and "atomic consciousness" through gesture, texture, and co-creation. *(CP, Animation, 5:35, 2021, USA)*



FEATURE

THE NATURE OF HEALING, directed by Faith Leone Howe. The spoken truth of seven courageous Elders, all survivors of the Mohawk Institute in Brantford, Ontario, Canada's first and longest-running Indian residential school. From victims to survivors to activists, their story is one of resistance, resilience, and a healing path. *(TP, Documentary, 1:18:48, 2022, Canada)*

From 1831 to 1996, Canada's 139 residential schools ran in partnership between the federal government and Catholic and Protestant churches. This was sanctioned, systematic dehumanization through neglect, brutality, and child abuse in all its forms. The desired outcome, according to Duncan Campbell Scott, who, as head of the Department of Indian Affairs from 1913 to 1932, oversaw the schools: "I want to get rid of the Indian problem ... our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question and no Indian department. That's the whole object of this project."

...if you are fortunate enough to have some of the people from the film attend and have a Q and A, drop everything and attend...At the Arizona International Film Festival... This film is not to be missed! The Arizona Film Festival. Winner, Special Jury Award for Bridging Cultures THE NATURE OF HEALING, Canada



WEDNESDAY, JULY 26TH

TRADITIONAL OPENING CEREMONY AND CANADIAN INDIGENOUS DOCUMENTARY CONT.

Wednesday, July 26th • 5PM

Proceeds from this screening will be donated to the Mohawk Village Memorial Park, located on five acres adjacent to the Mohawk Institute, in commemoration of all the children taken and institutionalized over the course of more than 160 years.

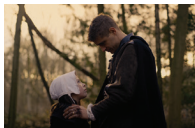
JAMLAB PRODUCTIONS
The power of story



Total run time: 85 minutes. Followed by audience Q & A.

GALA FEATURE

Wednesday, July 26th • 8-11:30PM



SHORT

HOME, directed by Virginia Gilbert. After a two-year absence working in London, a jobbing actor and aspiring playwright returns home and is confronted by his young daughter.. *(CP, Period Drama, 11:43, 2022, UK)*

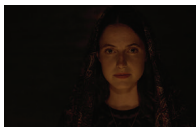
VIRGINIA GILBERT is an award-winning, BAFTA-nominated writer and director. Her screen-writing work has been placed on the Brit List and she was named a "star of tomorrow" by Screen International. She is currently in pre-production on her second feature, Reawakening.



WEDNESDAY, JULY 26TH

GALA FEATURE CONT.

Wednesday, July 26th • 8-11:30PM



FEATURE

STELLA, directed by Jessica Fox. It is 1937, Scotland. Stella, a 20-year-old German Jewish student, finds work on a large country estate owned by the fascist Earl of Rig. With war looming and desperate to find her missing parents, Stella is quickly accepted as one of the family and must hide her true identity to survive. While there she falls in love, with life-changing consequences. Based on the folktale of Cinderella, championing the struggle for identity, home, and love, Stella is the tale of a refugee. **(CP, Period Drama, 1:59:00, 2022, UK)**

JESSICA FOX, writer, director, and producer, is the co-founder of Innerwell Media and the film-sector specialist for XpoNorth Digital in Scotland. She has more than 15 years of directing experience in film, theatre, and TV. She directed her first feature documentary, The First Last Tour, for The Dresden Dolls. Her memoir, Three Things You Need to Know about Rockets, is in development with Endeavor Content. Stella won Best Drama at the Melech Tel Aviv International Film Festival (2023) and Best First-Time Filmmaker at the Montreal Independent Film Festival (2022). Fox was the resident storyteller at NASA and co-hosts Fourth Wall, a podcast with NASA's former chief knowledge officer.

Total run time: 132 minutes. Followed by audience Q & A.

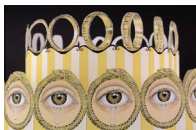
VIP reception to follow.



THURSDAY, JULY 27TH

REDEMPTION: NORTH AMERICAN SHORTS & FEATURE

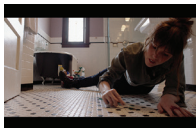
Thursday, July 27th • 5:30-7:30PM



SHORT

OUROBOROS, directed by Jennifer Linton.

Ouroboros spins a loose narrative of joy, grief, death, and rebirth, all told through looping images printed on physical animation devices known as phonotropes. Like the ouroboros, a symbolic snake that devours its own tail, everything in life is a loop. *(NAP, Animation, 6:18, 2023, Canada)*



SHORT

AMERICAN DREAM, directed by Angela Garcia Combs.

A recovering addict suffers the dangers and indignities of gig work in the luxury homes of the privileged few. *(CP, Drama, 20:57, 2021, USA)*



FEATURE

EVERY DAY, directed by Tara Alexandra Brown and Vin Chandra.

When Maddie takes a job as a tutor to a wealthy family, she meets Laurel, the family's nanny. The two become instant friends, much to the consternation of her long-time friends and roommates, Paige and James. When Maddie's trauma is triggered, she's forced to decide who she really trusts. *(CP, Drama, 1:35:00, 2022, USA)*

Total running time: 122 minutes. Followed by audience Q & A.



THURSDAY, JULY 27TH

INDIVIDUATION: CANADIAN SHORT & FEATURE

Thursday, July 27th • 9-11:30PM



SHORT

TIGER MOM, directed by Munara Muhetaer. A Chinese-Canadian teenager trapped under the suffocating direction of his severe and demanding mother rebels for the first time. (*WP, Drama, 20:00, 2022, Canada*)



FEATURE

MONTREAL GIRLS, directed by Patricia Chica. A Middle-Eastern medical school student, new to Montreal, puts his relationship with his father at risk when he forfeits his education after being forever changed by two young women who help him see his destiny. *Montréal Girls* follows a young man's journey and his quest for love, enlightenment, and his true calling. (*TP, Drama, 01:35:00, 2023, Canada*)

Total running time: 115 minutes. Followed by audience Q & A.



FRIDAY, JULY 28TH

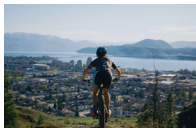
RIGHTS, WOMEN, AND SPORTS FOREIGN SHORT & CANADIAN DOCUMENTARIES

Friday, July 28th • 10AM-12PM



SHORT

BACKPACK, directed by Afsaneh Azizmohammadi. A young woman is troubled by the society she lives in, but eventually she comes up with her own creative way to face it. *(CP, Animation, 5:48, 2022, Iran)*



SHORT

BENCHED, directed by Bronwyn Davies. Sonya Looney is a professional mountain biker and new mother. In today's world, it would seem that women athletes wouldn't have to hide their pregnancy journeys – but fear of sponsorship loss, failure to maintain results and standings, and social pressure are all at play. Suppose companies and people think that women can't recover from pregnancy and be just as good, if not better? How can the athletes believe that themselves? Are female athletes indeed forced to choose between sponsorship and motherhood? These are all questions explored in *Benched*. *(OP, Documentary, 8:47, 2022, Canada)*



FRIDAY, JULY 28TH

RIGHTS, WOMEN, AND SPORTS FOREIGN SHORT & CANADIAN DOCUMENTARIES CONT.

Friday, July 28th • 10AM-12PM



SPECIAL PRESENTATION

CATEGORY: WOMAN, directed by Phyllis Ellis.

When 18-year-old South African runner Caster Semenya burst onto the world stage in 2009, her championship was not celebrated – it was marred by doubt, her medical records leaked to the international media and her body publicly scrutinized. The International Amateur Athletic Federation (now World Athletics) ruled that certain female athletes must medically alter their healthy bodies to compete, their naturally high androgen levels deemed a performance advantage. Category: Woman focuses on four athletes forced out of competition by these regulations, the devastation to their bodies and lives, and their conviction to stand up for their human rights. Phyllis Ellis (director of the award-winning *Toxic Beauty*) exposes an industry controlled by men putting women's lives at risk while this policing of women's bodies in sport remains, in a more nefarious way, under the guise of fair play. (*Documentary, 01:16:00, 2022, Canada*)

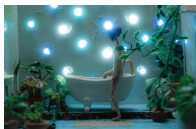
Total running time: 91 minutes. Followed by audience Q & A.



FRIDAY, JULY 28TH

INTERGENERATIONAL FAMILIAL RESPONSE INTERNATIONAL SHORTS

Friday, July 28th • 1-3:30PM



7:00, 2022, Mexico)

LAS PLANTAS TAMBIÉN MUEREN (PLANTS DIE TOO), directed by Andrea León Gutiérrez.

In a room full of plants, a woman finds refuge from the outside world. Immersed in delirium, Alba experiences her withering. *(NAP, Animation,*



MYCELIUM, directed by Maria-Elena Doyle. An interdisciplinary film about the natural cycle of death and rebirth, submerging us into our past and connecting us with our future. *(WP, Drama, 15:39, 2023, Ireland)*



SAND, directed by Rossana Montoya. After the death of her father, seven-year-old Ilana must, suddenly, understand the meaning of loss, which she faces with a sometimes sinister naivety. During the road trip that she must undertake to water the ashes of the deceased, she has to rebuild and recognize herself with her older sister, who faces the absence in a very different way. *(CP, Drama, 13:30, 2022, Colombia)*



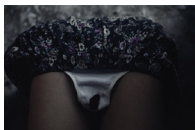
FRIDAY, JULY 28TH

INTERGENERATIONAL FAMILIAL RESPONSE INTERNATIONAL SHORTS CONT.

Friday, July 28th • 1-3:30PM



MA LINA, directed by Ydalie Turk. Ma Lina centres Kai and Lerato as they embark on a road trip together, at the behest of their recently deceased "mother," to scatter Ma Lina's ashes at her favourite spot in South Africa's Western Cape. They have not seen each other since they were young girls, and their relationship is strained and fraught with racial and economic dynamics typical of contemporary South Africa. (*NAP, Drama, 14:07, South Africa, 2022*)



CYCLE, directed by Naz Çaybaşı. One day, a girl living in a village sees blood on her panties. She's menstruating, but she doesn't know what it is. She hesitates to ask anyone and tries to discover what is happening her own. She finally finds an answer, but that answer is only part of the cycle she's in. (*NAP, Drama, 10:39, 2023, Turkey*)



ROCK THE CRADLE, directed by Asis Sethi. Rock the Cradle follows the journey of a troubled new mother as she finds herself trapped in a dark space with her new baby. She struggles to find her own voice among the voices of many others as she grapples with postpartum depression. (*WP, Drama, 11:12, 2022, Canada*)



FRIDAY, JULY 28TH

INTERGENERATIONAL FAMILIAL RESPONSE INTERNATIONAL SHORTS CONT.

Friday, July 28th • 1-3:30PM



SEVENTEEN, directed by Geqi Li. In a small town in California, a 17-year-old Chinese girl named Jasmine gets pregnant. She wants to have this baby, but her 35-year-old mother, an OnlyFans pornstar, insists on making Jasmine have an abortion. They fight all the way to the hospital only to discover that even though they resent each other, they are still each other's most solid support. *(CP, Drama, 14:14, USA, 2023)*



ALL STRINGS ATTACHED, directed by Josiane Blanc. Young, career-minded, and ambitious, Roselyne and Adam have difficulty finding time for their relationship in their overloaded and always hectic schedule. When the two finally decide to spend time together, an unexpected visit complicates their plans. *(WP, Drama, 16:00, 2022, Canada)*



ESTRANGED, directed by Lisa Saban. A middle-aged single mother must reconcile her feelings of anger and resentment toward her estranged ex-husband. *(WP, Drama, 14:18, 2022, Canada)*



THE SUN IS UP FOREVER, directed by Charlene Jones. On a hot summer's day, a young girl seeks to soak up the sun but finds her thoughts are pre-occupied with her mother at home. *(WP, Drama, 11:17, 2023, UK)*

Total running time: 127 minutes. Followed by audience Q & A.



FRIDAY, JULY 28TH

MATTER **CANADIAN SHORTS & FOREIGN FEATURE**

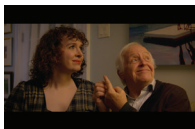
Friday, July 28th • 4:30-7PM



SHORT

SWALLOW, DEAR SWALLOW, directed by Eva Colmers. The images in *Swallow, Dear Swallow* – based on Oscar Wilde's short story "The Happy Prince" – are all handmade and are a love letter

to creative analog cinematography. Wistful accordion music and stunning shadow imagery swirl together in this visually and acoustically lush short about two dreamers who unite in a quest to help others. *(WP, Experimental, 9:27, 2023, Canada)*



SHORT

JUNIOR'S GIANT, directed by Paula Brancati. A close-knit grandfather and his trans granddaughter struggle when his dementia sparks an imaginary giant and gender confusion, causing pain for

them both. *(TP, Drama, 16:00, 2022, Canada)*



FEATURE

GREY MATTER, directed Arabella Burfitt-Dons. When a family's matriarch gets diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, she must move into the family home, and Chloe is forced to become a stay-at-

home teenager overnight. *(WP, Drama, 1:40:00, 2023, UK)*

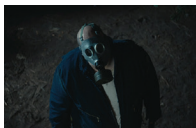
Total running time: 126 minutes. Followed by audience Q & A.



FRIDAY, JULY 28TH

LATE-NIGHT THRILLS & CHILLS SHORTS

Friday, July 28th • 8-11:30PM



15:00, 2023, USA)

MURDER CAMP, directed by Clara Aranovich. Two slasher serial killers make the shameful error of killing at the same summer camp on the same night, challenging the very fabric of their friendship – and identities. (*Horror/Comedy*,



their lives. But Simon is only human. (*Comedy/Thriller*, 15:00, 2023, France)

THE LAST DINNER, directed by Marie-Ange Casalta. On a happy getaway weekend with his best friends, Simon learns that there is going to be a nuclear attack in 20 minutes. He decides to not tell his friends so they can enjoy the last moments of



EXIT, directed by Oriana Ng. A couple's bond is tested in an elevator. (*CP, Suspense Thriller*, 4:59, 2022, USA)



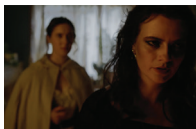
A BAD ROMANCE, directed by Bex Bradshaw. When Maggie, a love-starved hopeless romantic, meets Melvin, a double-dealing loser, in an online forum for the lovers of classic romantic cinema, she's hopeful he's her real-life Romeo. But after their promising date takes them back to his house, a surprise visit from Melvin's suspicious business associates derails her hopes of a happily-ever-after. (*CP, Dark Comedy*, 13:37, 2022, USA)



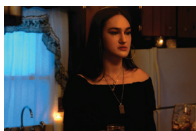
FRIDAY, JULY 28TH

LATE-NIGHT THRILLS & CHILLS SHORTS CONT.

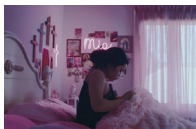
Friday, July 28th • 8-11:30PM



HAVE YOU SEEN THE WITCH?, directed by Julie Bruns. Captivated by the town's whispers of a witch, a young woman places herself in a precarious position seeking power over her fate. *(OP, Fantasy Horror, 4:40, 2022, Canada)*



THE MARK, directed by Deborah Kampmeier. Gracelyn has trained herself in witchcraft ever since being taunted by a group of girls in middle school and excluded from their "coven." Now in their 20s, one of those girls, Annie, brings her boyfriend by for a visit ... carelessly unaware of Gracelyn's new powers. *(CP, Suspense, 12:05, 2023, USA)*



FIRST BLOOD, directed by Olivia Loccisano. A teenage girl goes through a bizarre transformation after she gets her first period. *(Horror, 7:51, 2022, Canada)*



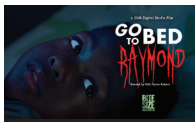
NIAN, directed by Michelle Krusiec. A Chinese American girl stands up to her racist bully armed with a Chinese demon mask and the Nian, a mythological creature that eats bad kids. *(CP, Horror Drama, 6:23, 2022, USA)*



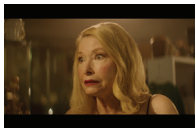
FRIDAY, JULY 28TH

LATE-NIGHT THRILLS & CHILLS SHORTS CONT.

Friday, July 28th • 8-11:30PM



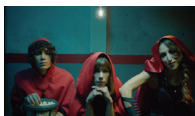
GO TO BED, RAYMOND, directed by Nikki Taylor Roberts. A father discovers the surprising truth about why his son won't go to bed. *(OP, Horror, 6:52, 2022, USA)*



ANTIQUES, directed by Stephanie Paris. When a jaded shopgirl discovers a vintage gold dress inside a mysterious case, a vengeful spirit is released. She quickly learns that some relics of the past should be respected. *(CP, Horror/Thriller/Dark Comedy, 12:34, 2022, USA)*



KICKSTART MY HEART, directed by Kelsey Bollig. After a brutal car accident, a young woman fights her mind's three levels of hell to wake up again. *(TP, Horror/Action, 14:14, 2022, USA)*



POPCORN, directed by Monica Dolado. A rapist is captured. Three women eat popcorn and watch him while deciding what to do with him. *(CP, Psychological Thriller/Suspense, 13:01, 2022, Spain)*



SMOKING KILLS, directed by Dulcinee DeGuere. A casual late-night Tinder date turns macabre when Trey asks Olivia to stop smoking. Fuelled by addiction, a desire to dominate, and the dissociative drug GHB, Olivia decides to prove that smoking does, indeed, kill. *(CP, Horror/Dark Comedy/Suspense, 12:42, 2022, USA)*

Total running time: 140 minutes. Followed by audience Q & A.



SATURDAY, JULY 29TH

WITH CAUSE

FOREIGN SHORT & NORTH AMERICAN DOCUMENTARIES

Saturday, July 29th • 10AM-12PM



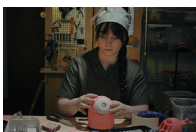
SHORT

WHAT THEY LEFT BEHIND, directed by Vicky Xingyu Gu. Several years after the death of her grandfathers, a young woman recollects her memories of them. *(OP, Animation, 6:49, 2022, China/USA)*



SHORT

SHKOZIN, directed by Bridget Dockstader, Cathie Jamieson, Nishina Esqiega, Presley Owl Meawasige, and tUkU. Five Indigenous and Black women are called together by Mother Earth to embark on a journey to reclaim their power, their stories, their voices and walk on the road to healing themselves and each other. Awakening happens for each woman as they collaborate, through exploration, spirituality, and ceremony – a redefining of the word “reconciliation.” Produced by Weengushk Film Institute in partnership with FeFF.. *(TP, Indigenous Documentary, 22:30, TP, Canada)*



FEATURE

THE BIG IDEA: INDIGENOUS ROBOTICS, directed by Sarah Klein and Tom Mason. After Ojibwe student Danielle Boyer joined the robotics team in high school, she realized how out of reach robotics are for low-income families. Since then, she's made it her mission to create free robot kits to connect other Indigenous youth to the tech skills that will shape their future. *(WP, Indigenous Documentary, 19:23, 2023, Canada/USA)*

Total running time: 67 minutes. Followed by audience Q & A.



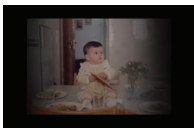
SATURDAY, JULY 29TH

THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL INTERNATIONAL SHORTS

Saturday, July 29th • 1-2:30PM



BEHIND THE LOOM, directed by Heejoo Kim. An experimental animated short about the impact of war on women, underscoring rape as a war crime. Told from the perspective of one family during the siege of Berlin in 1945. Heejoo's films and installations have been presented at festivals and galleries internationally, including at FeFF. *(TP, Animation/Documentary/Experimental, 11:00, 2021, USA)*



I WAS BORN IN 1988, directed by Yasaman Baghban. This experimental documentary is a personal essay based on the executions of Iranian political prisoners that began in the summer of 1988, following the end of the eight-year war between Iran and Iraq. The relatives of these prisoners, called the Mothers of Khavaran, are a symbol of resistance and freedom. *(CP, Experimental, 8:43, 2022, Iran)*



TOUCH, directed by Ragda Alazizi. During the Arab Spring, Ragda Alazizi was active in the protests against Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria. She collected stories about other women engaged in the fight and incorporated these into her first short film, Touch, the story of a young woman imprisoned in the notorious Saydnaya Prison. The young woman's memory of her lover emerges when an image of what has happened begins to take shape. In 2013, Alazizi fled Syria for Berlin. *(NAP, Experimental Drama, 20:20, 2023, Germany/Syria)*



SATURDAY, JULY 29TH

THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL INTERNATIONAL SHORTS CONT.

Saturday, July 29th • 1-2:30PM



THE GHOST UNDER MY BED, directed by Sara Caldwell. On the brink of the US Civil War, a lonely young girl moves to a southern plantation. She befriends a ghost under her bed, only to discover there are much greater human horrors in store.

(TP, Stop Motion Animation, 13:28, 2022, USA)



MEDEA, directed by Riffy Ahmed. Euripides's tragedy is reinterpreted through a BIPOC lens. After escaping from her homeland and now abandoned by the man she loves, Medea must find strength from within to fight against growing injustice. How far is she willing to go?

(NAP, Experimental/Dance on Film, 13:00, 2022, UK)



LAS IRREVERENTES FEMINISTAS (THE IRREVERENT FEMINISTS), directed by María del Carmen De Lara Rangel and Tabatta Salinas Caballero. Day by day, women live with the risk of violence that plagues Mexico. The overwhelming daily report of

the disappearances of women, and the violence, is shown in the mass media: the brutal reality that women face travelling on public transport, the daily intimidation, the vulnerability of walking through the streets to reach work spaces, where they are constantly at risk. *(NAP, Experimental Documentary, 12:40, 2022, Mexico)*

Total running time: 79 minutes. Followed by audience Q & A.



SATURDAY, JULY 29TH

EXCAVATING TRUTHS

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN-INTERNATIONAL SHORTS

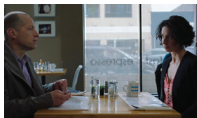
Saturday, July 29th • 3:30-5:30PM



GEFILTE FISH, directed by Yuliya Lanina. A family meal in the Bronx serves up past trauma, silenced truths, and a fish stuffed with secrets. *(CP, Animation/Experimental, 6:36, 2021, Austria/USA)*



CUDDLE, directed by Margot Reumont. At her father's request, Coline returns to her childhood bedroom to sort through her belongings. Objects from her childhood plunge her into the memories that have marked her to this day. *(Animation 2D, 15:00, 2022, Belgium)*



FIRST KISS, directed by Marika Engelhardt. Sometimes a kiss is not just a kiss. *(WP, Drama, 4:44, 2022, USA)*



ESMERALDA, directed by Jennifer Greco. When a young woman, Esmeralda, returns to her native land to confront her mother about a traumatic childhood memory, she discovers an unbreakable bond through a shared experience. *(CP, Drama, 18:27, 2023, Colombia/USA)*



SATURDAY, JULY 29TH

EXCAVATING TRUTHS

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN-INTERNATIONAL SHORTS CONT.

Saturday, July 29th • 3:30-5:30PM



TELL ME YOU LOVE ME, directed by Paulette Randall. Based on a true story. At a rooftop party for two, a brother and sister celebrate their love. She has escaped from a violent husband but her scars run deep. She makes the ultimate choice. *(CP, Drama, 11:24, 2023, UK)*



THE SILENT CANARY, directed by Vera Grazia-dei. Joy (12), a talented cellist and adoptee from China with selective mutism, forms an unlikely bond with rebellious Kat (15). Joy's concerned white British mother is delighted to see her daughter happy. However, when Joy discovers that her new friend's secret "boyfriend" is in fact Kat's stepfather, Stuart, her own trauma resurfaces. Joy finally finds the strength to speak out, at her music school's recital, exposing Stuart, who had previously molested her. *(CP, Drama, 18:35, 2022, UK)*

Total running time: 86 minutes. Followed by audience Q & A.



SATURDAY, JULY 29TH

LOST
NORTH AMERICAN SHORTS & FEATURE
Saturday, July 29th • 6:30-8:45PM



SHORT

LITTLE T, directed by Masha Ellsworth. Follow Alexis, a recent college graduate, on the most stressful day of her life – her dream job interview. She's armed with a resumé, design portfolio, and two trusted companions: her "inner critic" and "inner child." Alexis journeys through the origins of comfort food as she uncovers new depths within herself and finds the courage to be her own advocate. *(OP, Animation, 5:44, 2023, USA)*



SHORT

SMOKEBREAK, directed by Lisa Robertson. Starring Elizabeth Saunders and Pegah Ghafoori (both in MGM+'s hit show *From*), *SmokeBreak* tells the story of a mother's uncomfortable reunion with her daughter, exposing how their deep bond broke and why it may remain forever in pieces. *(TP, Drama, 9:55, 2023, Canada)*



FEATURE

MY HOME UNKNOWN, directed by and starring Yaz Canli (USA). After Mina (Yaz Canli), a gifted artist experiencing homelessness, loses the last thing she loves – her dog, Burrito – she is forced to battle through the downward spiralling journey of a mental health crisis to find "home." Lost between fragments of her Muslim past and the harsh realities of her present – from substance abuse and the loss of faith to abusive voices in her head – Mina must find a way to reconcile with deep grief and accept the kindness of others so she can start life anew. A raw and unflinching story of mental illness, life on the streets, and the courage it takes to find a way home. *(CP, Drama/Mental Health, 01:28:00, 2022, USA)*

Total running time: 104 minutes. Followed by audience Q & A.

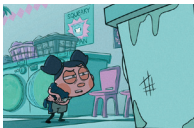
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SATURDAY, JULY 29TH

LATE-NIGHT THRILLS & CHILLS FEATURE

Saturday, July 29th • 9:45-11:30PMPM



SHORT

LAUNDROMONSTER, directed by Mikayla Trainor. On her first visit to the laundromat to wash her teddy, Little Daisy learns that everything filthy needs to get washed. (*CP, Animated Comedy/Suspense, 5:05, 2022, Canada*)



FEATURE

SPOONFUL OF SUGAR, directed by Mercedes Bryce Morgan. A disturbed babysitter experiences a sexual awakening while using LSD to alternatively treat a seemingly "sick" child from a family with dark secrets of their own. (*TP, Erotic Horror/Drama, 1:33:53, 2022, USA*)

MERCEDES BRYCE MORGAN is an award-winning queer Latina director and screenwriter. Her feature debut (*Fixation*) premiered at TIFF. Morgan has directed a variety of episodic series for different studios. Her script *B1* made *Tracking Board/Launch Pad's* 2017 Hit List and was runner-up at the 2018 Script Pipeline competition and *BET's Project Create*. Her script *ESC* was a 2022 Script Pipeline finalist and a Nichols finalist.

Her narrative music video "Happier" (*Bastille and Marshmello*) was nominated in 2019 for a Video Music Award and was #1 trending on YouTube globally the day of its release. Her work collectively has more than 1.5 billion views.

Total running time: 99 minutes. Followed by audience Q & A.



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SUNDAY, JULY 30TH

SEXUAL RIGHTS AND LIBERTY FOREIGN SHORTS AND CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY

Sunday, July 30th • 12-2PM



SHORT

DANCING AMID FIRE, RISING ABOVE RUINS, directed by Essmat Sophie. Life and death are intertwined for Tara, a little girl from Iran's Kurdish ethnic group. Mothers visit the graves of loved ones,

victims of Iran's revolution in 1979 as Tara and her friends play hide and seek amidst the graves amidst the chaos, Tara receives a fantastic gift of red shoes on New Years, as the conflict intensifies. *(NAP, Animation, 6:00, Norway, 2023)*



SHORT

MAYBE WE ARE ALL THE SAME, directed by Amina Seoudi. Individual narratives of Egyptian women reveal a lack of sexual education within their culture. Shrouded by shame, and fear dictated by their

societies. The visual language investigates the representation of middle eastern women, through archive and original footage by the filmmaker. *(TP, Experimental Documentary, 10:46, Austria/Egypt/UK, 2021)*



SUNDAY, JULY 30TH

SEXUAL RIGHTS AND LIBERTY FOREIGN SHORTS AND CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY

Sunday, July 30th • 12-2PM



FEATURE

KOROMOUSSO: BIG SISTER, directed by Habibata Ouarme, Jim Donovan. With candor, humour and courage, a group of African-Canadian women challenge cultural taboos surrounding female sexuality and fight to take back ownership of their bodies.

By interweaving different personal accounts, **KOROMOUSSO: Big Sister** explores the phenomenon of FGM from the perspective of those who've experienced it. In their quest for individual and collective healing, the film's main characters support each other in a journey that helps them to overcome the trauma of female genital mutilation and rebuild their self-esteem. With great sensitivity, the film examines the shame felt by women who've been subjected to FGM and now live in Canada, a country largely unresponsive to their experience because while it has banned the practice, it does not offer the reconstructive surgery that could lead to better sexual health. (*WP, Indigenous Documentary, 19:23, 2023, Canada*)

Total running time: 92 minutes. Followed by audience Q & A.



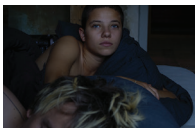
SUNDAY, JULY 30TH

LOVE, SEX & IDENTITY-INTERNATIONAL SHORT PROGRAM

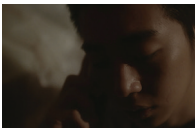
Sunday, July 30th • 3-4:30PM



SEWING LOVE, directed by Xu Yuan. The expression of emotional desire called love. Everyone is an individual whose spirit and soul cannot be bound. The emotion between people leads to good and bad results, happiness or misery. In the river of natural life, it is the stream injected halfway and the water vapor evaporated halfway. Two very strong individuals, whether they are right or not, whether they need to be morally criticized, whether they need to be examined by us, in the end, death, rebirth, corruption are all part of the river. *(NAP, Animation, 8:33, Japan, 2023)*



IN SOMNIE, directed by Caro Bruchmann. After M loses his first love W, night by night he finds himself trapped in an intermediate world like dream in which she haunts him. M must face her loss and his pain in order to let go and heal. *(NAP, Experimental/Drama, 6:06, Germany, 2023)*



LISTEN TO HER, directed by Yajing Wang. During the birthday of the gods in the temple in town, a scarred teenager fled from the correction center and hid in an old house. The house was empty, with only one bed and a faint and strange red light. His mother kept asking him to appear. And when he discovered the secret of the former tenant, his own story finally surfaced. *(NAP, Drama, 14:39, China, 2022)*



SUNDAY, JULY 30TH

LOVE, SEX & IDENTITY: INTERNATIONAL SHORTS CONT.

Sunday, July 30th • 3-4:30PM



HONEY & MILK, directed by Dash Donato. Grayson and Alice spend a final weekend together to dismantle their domestic life as Grayson embarks on a journey of gender expansion. (*CP, Short 14:16, USA, 2023*)



MY OLD GALS, directed by Natasza Parzymies. Two elderly women reunite after 50 years and fight for the feelings they once shared. (*NAP, Romantic Short, 24:28, Poland, 2023*)

Total running time: 69 minutes. Followed by audience Q & A.



SUNDAY, JULY 30TH

PERCEPTION FOREIGN SHORT & FEATURE

Sunday, July 30th • 5:30-7:30PM



SHORT

I c, directed by Helene Moltke-Leth. A con amore art film that questions the challenges we as humans face. Thought provoking, "I c" will take you on a special journey through rich imagery, soundscape and reflections. *(CP, Short 8:46, USA, 2023)*



FEATURE

BEYOND THE LIGHT BARRIER, directed by Uga Carlini. Based on the true story of South African born, legendary meteorologist, Elizabeth Klarer, who spent her days on earth convincing the world that her alien Starman and lover, Akon, from an advanced human race on Meton, existed, and held the only solutions to all our problems here on earth. Science or fiction? Definitely, one of the greatest science-fiction love stories of all time. *(NAP, Romantic Short, 1:27, South Africa, 2023)*

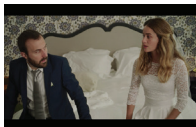
Total running time: 96 minutes. Followed by audience Q & A.



SUNDAY, JULY 30TH

CLOSING GALA

Sunday, July 30th • 8:30-11PM



SHORT

CELLE QUI N'AVAIT PAS VU FRIENDS / THE ONE WHO NEVER WATCHED FRIENDS, directed by Charlotte Gabris. Rachel's about to get married when her husband-to-be references a joke from the TV series "Friends" and a crisis erupts. *(TP, Comedy, 12:00, France, 2022)*



FEATURE

MY LOVE AFFAIR WITH MARRIAGE, directed by Signe Bauman. A bold and brilliant animated feminist feature. Hungry for love and acceptance, Zelma feels incomplete. Hounded by three singing Mythology Sirens, she sets out on a 23-year quest for the perfect love and a lasting marriage unaware that her own biology is the force to be reckoned with. *(OP, Animated Musical Comedy, 01:48:00, Latvia/USA)*

Total running time: 108 minutes. Followed by audience Q & A.

CLOSING GALA

Sunday, July 30th • 9AM-12

VIP Closing Brunch and Awards Ceremony.

THE FEFF TEAM

FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: **Leslie-Ann Coles**

SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT OFFICER: **Lia Cavasotto**

HEAD FILM PROGRAMMERS:

Kathleen Carter and Leslie-Ann Coles

PROJECT COORDINATOR: **Nadia Kwiatkowski**

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT: **Marisa Lloyd**

DIRECTOR OF VOLUNTEERS: **Ida Liao**

PUBLICITY & MANAGEMENT: **Sasha Stoltz**

SOCIAL MEDIA: **Natalia Morales**

ART WORK: **Wendle Beaton**

ART DIRECTOR: **JoJo Carito (JoJoShow)**

WEB DESIGN: **Aley Vo**

COPY EDITOR: **Lesley Fraser**

VIDEO EDITOR: **Kasha McEachern**

AWARD STATUES: **Dawson Calvert**

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SCRIPT EVALUATORS:

Lia Cavasotto, Jinder Chalmers, Kalli Paakspuu, Caitlin Loney, Sarah Johnson, Cecilia Zhang. Mary Mowarin, Yeonsu Shin, and Marisa Lloyd.

FEFF CORRESPONDENT/NEWSLETTER & JOURNALIST:

Nikita Helewa

THE FEFF TEAM

PROGRAM HOSTS:

Christine Argyris, Edie Steiner, Naomi McCormack, Tushar Unadkat, Byron A. Martin, Minling Chen, CK Love, Tracy Nuako, Lia Cavasotto, Nikita Helewa, Leslie-Ann Coles, Elizabeth and Kathleen Carter.

PROGRAM ASSISTANTS & INTERNS:

Tracy Nuako, Cecilia Zheng, Wing Lau, Alejandro Peña, Minling Chen, Lee Yujin, Mary Mowarin, Nadia Kwiatkowski, and Marisa Lloyd.

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Thank you to our sponsors, public and government funders, community and industry partners; and to all our fabulous industry guests, volunteers, interns, program hosts and awards jury.

Special thanks to

Christian Hamilton, Lisa Kockeritz, Dianne Eibner, and Helen Hong Sanchez.

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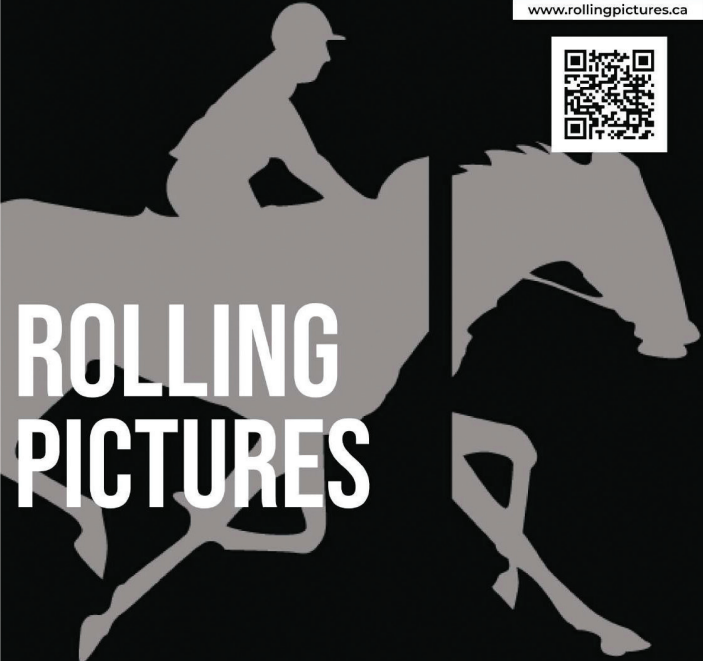
REGULAR DEADLINE: **January 31, 2024**

LATE DEADLINE: **March 31, 2024**

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