

Festival Guide

qathet film society
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qathet international
film festival

March 7-16 2025

24th annual qathet international film festival



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SCHEDULE

Friday, March 7

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Gastropod Media

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Randene Neill, MLA
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Drop by, email or give us a call—we're excited to connect with you and support our community.

Top Ten Reasons to Come to the Film Festival

1. Good Films

Individually, the feature films presented at qiff are each a testimony of artistic vision delivered by a collaboration of dedicated professionals. The cinematic journey is supplemented by a curated selection of shorts that add context and perspective to each feature. An emerging theme for this year's festival is 'community' and how it sustains us in dark times.

2. Great Parties

The festival has an opening and closing party, with food, music, and a cash bar. The opening film, *Can I Get a Witness?* was filmed here last year, and many locals were involved in its creation. The director Ann Marie Fleming and crew will be in attendance, and the mood will be celebratory! The closing party will have a DJ set with Minerva – focusing on Indigenous language music, and preceding *Kneecap*, a film about Irish rappers and preserving Gaeilge.

3. Lively Discussion

An important aspect of engagement is discussion. Assembling in a movie theatre and immersing in cinema is a catalyst for this. qiff helps facilitate discussion through discussions after films, special guest Q&As, and Morning-After Film Salons. Join us at the Salons at 12pm upstairs in The Screening Room, treats from 32 Lakes provided.

4. Historic Patricia Theatre

There's no place like it! It's as old as Townsite, and an important part of our history here. The theatre has been around since the days of Vaudeville and silent film. Now owned by the qathet film society – our new seats, updated concession,



and renovated washrooms elevate the creature comforts of the experience.

5. Special Guests

Drawing on cultural contributors in our community, and the added attraction of guests from out of town, provides a depth of insight and delivers value that extends beyond the price of admission and the cinematic experience. Check out the Special Guests section in this guide for current details. We're updating our website as visitors confirm their attendance.

6. Accessibility

The theatre has wheelchair accessible seating at the rear and front of the theatre. Our loge box seating is held for those with mobility issues, with seats that are wider than our row seating. There is an accessible parking space in front of the theatre. Passenger drop-off is available at the curb. Our washrooms are also wheelchair accessible.

7. Popcorn

The popcorn at the Patricia is second-to-none, and our on-site popcorn connoisseurs are working to make it even better. Eating popcorn is one of the healthiest snack habits you can have. It's filled with fibre, has more antioxidants than some fruits and vegetables, and may even help fight cancer (take this with a grain of salt and some nutritional yeast).

8. Community

Sitting home alone on the couch to watch a film just isn't the same as being in the theatre. There is no substitute for the emotional connection that results from a group response to a critical moment in a film. Our community includes not only the folks who come to the theatre, but the

businesses that sponsor our films, and the local funders who appreciate and support our vision.

9. Thoughtful Reflection

With all the media we consume in an average day, much of it is forgotten. The films selected for qiff do the heavy lifting required to deliver messages that have resonance. They may require a little extra effort to fully experience and appreciate their art, but the rewards resonate over time, with images and sounds replaying in one's mind, and conversations about filmic moments continuing after the festival ends.

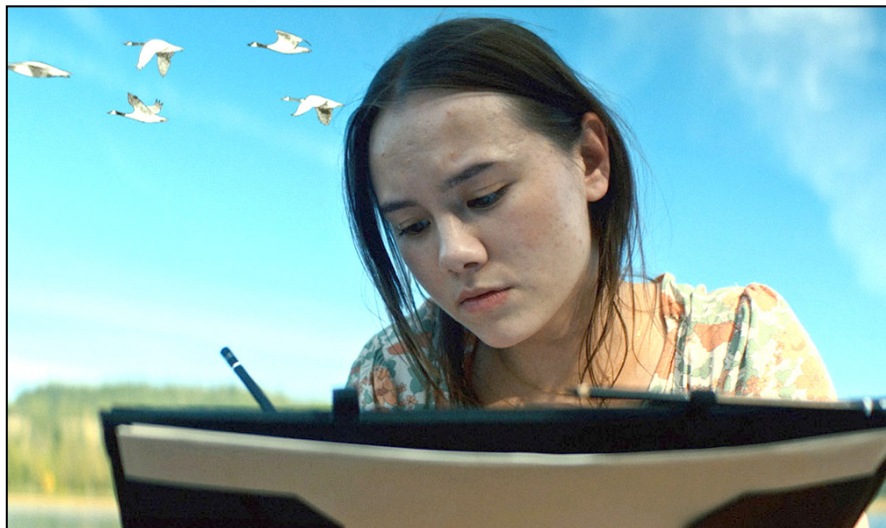
10. Light and Sound

The historic Patricia Theatre has an awesome state-of-the-art digital projection system that's coupled with professionally tuned superior sound. Depending on where you sit in the theatre, it's an all-enveloping experience. This year's reserved seating option let passholders pick their favourite seat and based on reservations to date, the middle is the preferred spot.

I hope you will join us on the cinematic journey that is qiff. Film is an axis for cultural augmentation, critical dialogue, and a place for community and understanding – Engaging cinema. Engaging minds.

Gary Shilling
Film Fanatic

Can I Get a Witness?



Set in the not-too-distant future (and shot in Powell River and the qathet Regional District), *Can I Get a Witness?* presents a world without war, poverty, or hunger.

How did humanity arrive at this utopia? By mandating that everyone commit ritualistic suicide once they hit the age of 50. In this near-future world, climate change is mitigated, global poverty is eradicated, and all species on the planet can live in relative peace and equality. The world has walked back on consumption and technology, and recalibrated to sustainable societies with smaller carbon footprints. People live happy, modest lives.

Sandra Oh and Keira Jang play Ellie and Kiah, a mother and daughter both dealing with new challenges. Kiah is a teenager starting a new job as a “documenter,” an artist who’s assigned to witness and memorialize the final days and moments of those in her community about to turn 50. She is teamed up with a partner named Daniel (Joel Oulette), who handles the more technical aspects of the

“end of life” ceremony that everyone takes part in once they hit the not-so-magic number. Speaking of which, Ellie is closing in on 50, and, while Kiah is busy learning the ropes of her new job, her mother is busy trying to make the most of her final days, most prominently by making sure she passes down all she can to her loving daughter.

The film is a masterclass in thought provocation. It isn’t judgy or preachy. It just poses a question; one that will stay with audiences for a long time after the credits roll. Oh gives a career defining performance, bold and emotional in how her intimate collaboration with Fleming approaches the subject matter. The film is dressed up in marvelous mise-en-scene, every set providing decades of backstory with a single shot.

Directed by: **Ann Marie Fleming**
Country: **Canada**
Language: **English**
Genre: **SciFi / Drama**
Running Time: **1 hr 50 min**

Screening info:

Friday March 7

6 pm Opening Party – Director and crew in attendance
7 pm Feature Film & Short

Sunday March 16

1:30 pm Feature Film & Short

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Preceded by:

Big Trees

by **Ann Marie Fleming**
12 min – Animation/Musical
2013

A brilliant blend of stop-motion, projections and models, drawings and altered live-action transports us into a meditation on the tension between urban life and the natural environment.

All We Imagine As Light



All We Imagine As Light is the quiet, surprise masterpiece of 2024. Filmmaker Payal Kapadia's drama about three generations of women dealing with love, lust and loss in modern-day Mumbai is like a sneak attack on your soul. "The city takes time away from you," an unseen voice says, near the beginning of the film: "You'd better get used to impermanence."

The city in question is Mumbai, which an opening montage presents as a monsoon-season metropolis filled with clashing dialects, crushes of crowds and a tropical level of heat. The film's story is a heartwarming ode to the strength of its characters, each of whom lives outside societal norms in some way and struggles to come to terms with their current situations. The drama boasts stellar performances from its cast and allows us to sit in their feelings as they navigate changes affecting their lives while supporting each other.

Loneliness is the real subject, and emotional/geographical dislocation, all of the characters having

come from elsewhere: Mumbai is a crowded polyglot city of transplants. The film opens before sunrise with a lengthy panning shot of people setting up small sidewalk markets, unloading produce and other goods off of trucks, the city already wide awake. Everything is movement: cars, crowds, trains. People speak in voiceover, establishing Mumbai – its Edward-Hopper-esque urban loneliness, as the movie's real subject. "There's always the feeling I'll have to leave."

We get the sense that these characters are passing through, on the way to whatever might be more permanent and stable. In other ways, it's simultaneously a love letter and an indictment of Mumbai, a city with fissures and a glossy mask to hide behind but that is no less bustling and wondrous.

The film's evocative title describes the experience of watching it, how the nocturnal insomniac mood is sparked with distant coloured lights, and how moving into the light requires "imagining." Perhaps the light isn't light, but it's good enough if we imagine it so.

Directed by: **Payal Kapadia**
Country: **France, India, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Italy**
Language: **Malayalam, Hindi, Marathi**
Genre: **Drama / Romance**
Running Time: **1 hr 58 min**

Screening info:

Saturday March 8

1:30 pm Feature Film

Sponsor:



Patricia Theatre Forever



Restorations to the Historic Patricia Theatre are nearing completion

Background: The Friends of the Historic Patricia Theatre and the Friends of Film Society of Powell River amalgamated in 2017 to support purchasing the Patricia Theatre for the good of the community. After almost 20 years of running the theatre Ann Nelson was ready to pass the torch. The society became the Powell River Film Society, later renamed the qathet film society. Fundraising was done during the COVID lockdown of the theatre with the community contributing about \$250,000. A private individual provided bridge financing, and ownership was transferred in October of 2021. An application was made to BC Gaming for matched funding to eliminate the mortgage, and approval was given at the end of 2021. The film society now owns the theatre outright.

With ownership in place, the film society was successful in securing a series of grants to facilitate the

restoration and renovation of the theatre.

The federal government's CERIP fund administered by Heritage BC provided us with the money necessary to redo the roof and commission a conservation plan. Heritage BC, through their 150 Time Immemorial Grant Program, funded exterior stucco patching and painting, along with window repair & replacement. Revered Vancouver heritage consultant Donald Luxton was contracted to produce a report that provided a colour palette, restoration guidelines, and architectural oversight. The Powell River Community Forest came onboard to provide funding for the balcony exit stairs and recreation of the original canopy.

In June 2024, the theatre closed for about six weeks. During that time, much needed interior work was done. Diana Yenssen's estate funded new seating, restoring interior murals, sprinkler replacement,

electrical updates, air conditioning, and new carpeting.

Funding from Telefilm Canada supported the work required to update concession, clean up the bathrooms, and take care of numerous structural, electrical, and plumbing surprises. Local contractors, labourers, and volunteers did most of the work.

With over one million dollars of support, the community's initial contribution has been leveraged and effectively quadrupled.

The Patricia Theatre continues its role as a communal gathering place, and a place for learning; for sharing a laugh, a tear, or a fright. As Luxton noted in his report: "The Patricia Theatre is a much beloved community landmark and possesses exceptional heritage values, including its period revival architecture, its intact interior and exterior design features, and its continuous operation as a movie house and gathering space since 1928. It is a unique survivor from the time that local theatres were also used for vaudeville performances, as seen in the Patricia's proscenium arch and stage, raked and dished floor, sight lines and acoustic design."

As the building approaches its 100th anniversary, the film society is planning to celebrate this grand old jewel of Townsite, and what it represents to the community – today and for generations to come.



Bird



Andrea Arnold, the filmmaker behind *Fish Tank* and *American Honey*, has returned with a sensitive, fairytale-like coming-of-age story. 12-year-old Bailey lives with her single dad Bug, played by Barry Keoghan, who's both charismatic and incredibly sad, in a squat in North Kent.

Bug doesn't have much time for his kids, and Bailey, who is approaching puberty, seeks attention and adventure elsewhere. *Bird* is for every lost child who wishes someone would have stood up and defended them. It's a fragile but beautiful vision and marks the strongest blend yet of Andrea Arnold's primary directives as a filmmaker. Her films have always had a bit of the magical in them, and *Bird* fluidly drops in and out of reality and something more magical.

The film is very much about the desire to see and to be seen, to not constantly live with your back exposed. What can feel like an outstretched hand in a moment of need? The character, Bird (a lovable Franz Rogowski), tumbles into Bailey's life out of nowhere, pixieish in spirit, gentle and inscrutable. A spirit-like, compassionate outsider,

he wants to find his family. He doesn't have a phone. She has no idea where he sleeps at night. Bird simply appears when he's needed. Is it pure eccentricity or something more? Arnold has never before made this explicit a fairytale. But she doesn't let the question of reality versus fantasy overwhelm her narrative. Ultimately, this isn't about who Bird is but what he represents to Bailey. .

But, if ever a film puts its arm round a kid and says: 'Don't worry, I've got you', that's Bird and Bailey.

It's a wondrous portrait of the transition from childhood to adolescence that remains grounded in the filmmaker's typically empathetic social realism, though one that's streaked with colourful moments of magical realism; an unclassifiable film with a day-glo aesthetic and an ambiguous, porous narrative that invites you to fill it with your own meaning. She strikes a coming-of-age chord through Nykiya Adams' moving performance, marrying fantasy and reality to the dizzying end.

Directed by: **Andrea Arnold**
Country: **United Kingdom, France**
Language: **English**
Genre: **Drama**
Running Time: **1 hr 59 min**

Screening info:

Saturday March 8

7 pm Feature Film & Short

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Preceded by:

Saturday

by **Jessica Hall (In Attendance)**

13 min – **Documentary**

2024

Every Saturday since moving into her own apartment, Katherine and her mother spend the day together. This personal documentary is about filmmaker Jessica Hall's sister Katherine, and her journey navigating life with cerebral palsy.

Flow



Flow, Latvia's entry for Best International Feature Film at the Oscars, shimmers with the essence of life and the spirit of selfless cooperation. Its narrative clarity makes its fable seem timeless, while innovating and expanding the visual immersion of its medium.

Starring an expressive black cat, who presumably had an adoring human owner, as its protagonist, *Flow* introduces us to a land devoid of people. Evidence that they once inhabited this forest area exists, but we are likely observing a post-humanity timeline as the Earth heals itself from our transgressions.

A wondrous journey, through realms natural and mystical, *Flow* follows a courageous cat after his home is devastated by a great flood. Teaming up with a capybara, a lemur, a bird, and a dog to navigate a boat in search of dry land, they must rely on trust, courage, and wits to survive the perils of a newly aquatic planet.

From the boundless imagination of the award-winning Gints Zilbalodis (*Away*) comes a thrilling animated spectacle as well as a profound meditation on the fragility of the environment and the

spirit of friendship and community. Steeped in the soaring possibilities of visual storytelling, *Flow* is a feast for the senses and a treasure for the heart.

As we confront our imminent climate crisis and the many other cataclysms that plague our reality, we'll only have each other to make it through. *Flow* boasts a hopeful outlook; it suggests these storms won't be permanent and that the deer will freely run through the forest again. Life, in all its splendor and blameless tragedy, will, indeed, flow. That is the beauty of *Flow*. Its minimalist direction keeps it grounded and adventurous, appealing to both adults and children.

It's not just for pet lovers but for animation enthusiasts seeking something that challenges the boundaries of mainstream cinema. With its animal-centric narrative, *Flow* achieves something profoundly human. With stunning animation, no dialogue, and a simple but gripping story, *Flow* is not just the best animated film of the year but one of the best films of 2024. It's a must-see!

Directed by: **Gints Zilbalodis**

Country: **Latvia**

Language: **None**

Genre: **Animation, Adventure, Family, Fantasy**

Running Time: **1 hr 25 min**

Screening info:

Sunday March 9

1:30 pm Feature Film & Short

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Preceded by:

Maybe Elephants

by **Torill Kove**

17 min – Animation

2024

Three rebellious teenage daughters, a restless mother, a father struggling with potatoes, and maybe some elephants, find themselves in Nairobi. What could possibly go wrong?

So Surreal: Behind the Masks



Neil Diamond is a Cree filmmaker, who made a huge impact with *Reel Injun*, a documentary about the negative “Indian” stereotypes that so permeate Western society that even the filmmaker as a child wanted to be a cowboy, not himself, when playing with friends.

His new film *So Surreal: Behind the Masks*, co-directed by Joanne Robertson, explores the strange, intense relationship between Surrealism and the masks of Yup’ik’ and Kwakwaka’wakw nations and how that commingling came to pass. It’s about cultural appropriation, art and dream imagery.

The documentary traces the storied journey of Indigenous masks from the far reaches of Turtle Island into the hands of European Surrealists, influencing the work and worldview of artists and writers like Max Ernst, André Breton, Roberto Matta and Joan Miró – all while following the dramatic quest to return a mask that was brutally stolen from the Kwakwaka’wakw people on Canada’s northwest coast over a century ago.

Part caper, part road trip, part spiritual journey, the film follows Cree filmmaker Neil Diamond (*Reel Injun*) as he travels coast-to-

coast and across the Atlantic and back, gradually piecing together this global story of influence, reconnection and restitution.

Repatriation really is a complex beast! Barbara Duthuit, a socialite, trustee of the Baltimore Museum of Art and the widow of the son of the Surrealist critic Georges Duthuit, owns the raven transformation mask that was taken by the Canadian government, bought by her late father-in-law, and is earnestly sought back by Kwakwaka’wakw people trying to keep their heritage alive.

The efforts of Diamond, Ellis and the Kwakwaka’wakw to reach Duthuit and get a response give the film its most urgent through-line, and prompt viewers accustomed to the Western Museum style of canon-building and exhibition to consider what else stewardship might look like.

“There’s a spiritual connection to these objects that were taken away and put in museums, and it’s important for people to know what happened,” Diamond says. “It’s not just native history, it’s settler history, too, and people deserve to have these objects returned because they’re part of their being.”

Directed by: **Neil Diamond & Joanne Robertson**

Country: **Canada**

Language: **English**

Genre: **Documentary**

Running Time: **1 hr 28 min**

Screening info:

Sunday March 9

7 pm Feature Film & Short

Sponsor:



Preceded by:

təm kʷaθ nan Namesake teaser
by Eileen Francis and Dr. Evan Adams (in attendance with crew)

6 min – Documentary
English and Ayajuthum – 2024

The Tla’amin Nation’s request for a name change sparks the B.C. town of Powell River to explore the region’s rich Indigenous history, as reconciliation is put into action.



The auditorium saw major improvements made during our recent restorations and renovations. The ceiling was repaired and repainted, with new high-efficiency ceiling fans installed and a heat pump system for cooling and heating. The murals were lovingly repaired and restored. And the icing on the cake – new seats, relieving the pain of sitting through what seems to be increasingly long movies.

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Soundtrack to a Coup d'Etat



Directed by: **Johan Grimonprez**
Country: **Belgium, France & Netherlands**
Language: **French, English, Dutch & Russian**
Genre: **Documentary**
Running Time: **2 hr 30 min**

Screening info:

Monday March 10
7 pm Feature Film

Juxtaposing the story of the murder of Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba with a musical tour of jazzman Louis Armstrong and with the expansion of the United Nations after the independence of many African countries in the 1960s might be tall order.

Trickier still would be telling this complex story, full of many characters and plot swerves, in a nonlinear manner while filling the screen with written clues providing context like a bibliography of an academic thesis.

Writer and director Johan Grimonprez sets himself a difficult task with *Soundtrack to a Coup d'Etat*, yet accomplishes it with astonishing success. The film plays like both a dense historical text and a lively jazz concert while proving itself to be an invigorating piece of documentary filmmaking.

This film is like a most dramatic history lesson, full of theatrics, heightened emotions and vivid characters. This is politics presented as grand spectacle and ironic comedy: an original treatment

of how a young popular African leader was assassinated in a coup d'etat so that colonial powers can keep profiting from his country's mineral wealth.

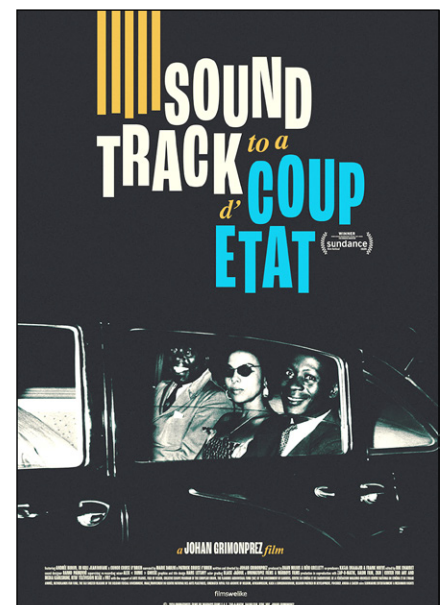
All of this plays to the rhythm of American jazz music of the time, to emphasize how the State Department used Armstrong and other Black musicians to deflect from Lumumba's murder by sending them on a tour of African nations as goodwill ambassadors.

Soundtrack to a Coup d'Etat might sound overwhelming or too academic, but that couldn't be further from the truth. It's an entertaining and instructive documentary that presents a huge canvas on which it masterfully explains a complicated historical moment. The film pushes its audience to absorb every note, clip, and quote that crams an entire study of information into an elegant, slick package. It succeeds as an intense piece of reclamation and rejuvenation, giving breath to Lumumba's spirit by sporting the same kind of defiance the political leader espoused.

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Evil Does Not Exist



In the rural alpine hamlet of Mizubiki, not far from Tokyo, Takumi and his daughter, Hana, lead a modest life gathering water, wood, and wild wasabi for the local udon restaurant.

Like generations before them, they live a modest life according to the cycles and order of nature. Increasingly, the townsfolk become aware of a talent agency's plan to build an opulent glamping site nearby, offering city residents a comfortable "escape" to the snowy wilderness. Ryûsuke Hamaguchi's follow up to his Academy Award-winning *Drive My Car* is a foreboding fable on humanity's mysterious, mystical relationship with nature. As sinister gunshots echo from the forest, both the locals and representatives confront their life choices and the haunting consequences they have.

Composer Eiko Ishibashi's lushly beautiful score seems to grow like the trees surrounding the rural hamlet outside Tokyo where the story takes place; it's a character in the film, revealing beauty to us, warning us of danger, immersing us in its world. Hamaguchi originally began this project as footage to accompany one of Ishibashi's live

performances. It became a narrative feature film, one born of music rather than the other way around, and you sense that while watching it — the score seems to drive the plot, in an ever-surprising ride.

Evil Does Not Exist is about how water flows downhill, relentlessly and forever, creating its own song. It's about how the indigo darkness of a forest at night becomes a blanket, and about how the arrival of strangers can change a place (or change the strangers), and about the idea of something precious being forever lost. And it's about that glorious music, soaring and twisting and sometimes suddenly dropping away, cruelly and abruptly; you miss it when it's gone. We're all visitors, we're all forces that disrupt and destroy even when we mean well. When nature revolts against that, it's not from malice or evil. It's simply what it is.

With Yoshio Kitagawa's exquisite cinematography and Eiko Ishibashi's rapturous score, *Evil Does Not Exist* is yet another delicate, gentle picture from Hamaguchi that contains tidal waves of emotion underneath the surface waiting to crack through and overpower you.

Directed by: **Ryûsuke Hamaguchi**

Country: **Japan**

Language: **Japanese**

Genre: **Drama**

Running Time: **1 hr 46 min**

Screening info:

Tuesday March 11

7 pm Feature Film & Short

Sponsor:



Preceded by:

Inkwo: For When the Starving Return

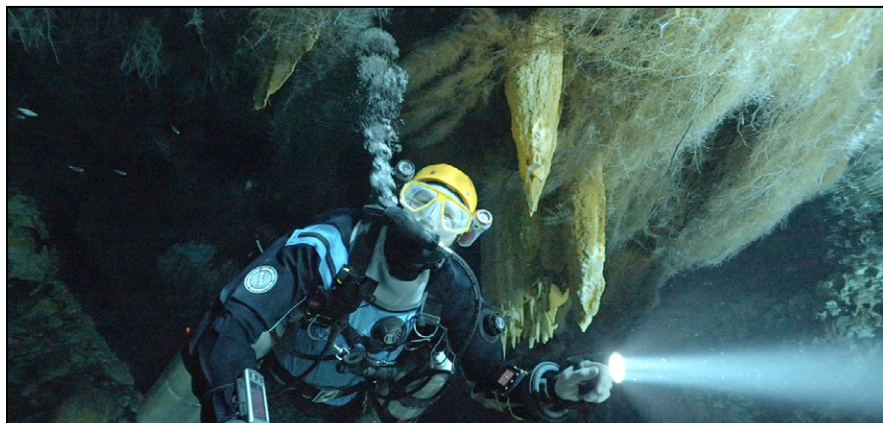
by **Amanda Strong**

14 min – Animation

English & Dene – 2024

Dove, a gender-shifting warrior, uses their Indigenous medicine (Inkwo) to protect their community from an unburied swarm of terrifying creatures. It is a call to action to fight and protect against the forces of greed around us.

Diving Into the Darkness



Diving Into the Darkness is one of the most thrilling biographical documentaries you will see this year.

Filmed in locations you're unlikely to see in any other film — or anywhere on Earth — it is a jaw-dropping yet intimate portrait of cave diving icon Jill Heinerth, and the nail-biting challenges and risks she's faced to go where no man or woman has gone before. The film includes stunning footage that Australian director Nays Baghai and his team recorded by following Heinerth on her expeditions around the globe.

Jill has been involved in the most legendary and demanding cave diving expeditions of all time, from surveying the world's longest caves in Mexico to discovering giant iceberg caves in Antarctica.

Juxtaposed with these hair-raising dives are intimate, candid interviews and animated flashbacks to her younger years that reveal a complex array of motivations for taking on these challenges.

Despite losing more than 100 of her friends to these depths, for Jill, each adventure in this dive odyssey is one step closer to becoming

the woman she aspired to be as a child.

Two decades later, in the present day, Jill's ultimate mission morphs into using her expeditions and photographs to educate and inspire children and adults around the world.

The film ends with Jill visiting one of her idol Cousteau's favourite locations – the Poor Knights Islands in New Zealand. Donning her rebreather and penetrating the alien caverns of the islands, Jill muses how she feels like an earthbound astronaut. Her ultimate message is for people to think about fear, "embrace the darkness, and do something new for yourself and for humanity".

The film is part nature documentary, part biography, part suspense film and always beautiful. You probably won't come away wanting to dive into the darkness yourself but you will leave with a profound respect for Jill Heinerth and those brave enough to explore the subterranean frontiers.

Directed by: **Nays Baghai**

Country: **Australia**

Language: **English**

Genre: **Documentary / Adventure**

Running Time: **1 hr 36 min**

Screening info:

Wednesday March 12

1:30 pm Feature Film & Short

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Preceded by:

The Beginning

by **Cristóbal Ruiz** (In attendance)

Documentary/Extreme sport

19 min – 2024

Alenka Mali grew up in Slovenia, the child of acclaimed climbers. A few years ago, her partner Spencer introduced her to the world of BASE jumping and the goal of becoming the first woman to successfully jump and document it. The film is a testament to the courage to pursue the impossible.

24th annual qathet into



Can I Get a Witness?
6 pm Opening Party
Fri March 7 – 7 pm
1hr 50min | SciFi/Drama
Canada | English



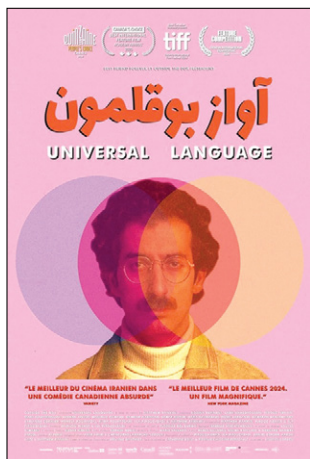
All We Imagine As Light
Sat March 8 – 1:30 pm
1hr 58min | Drama/Romance
France/India/Netherlands/
Luxembourg/Italy | Malay-
alam/Hindi/Marathi



Bird
Sat March 8 – 7 pm
1hr 59min | Drama
United Kingdom/France |
English



Flow
Sun March 9 – 1:30 pm
1hr 25min | Animation/Adven-
ture/Family/Fantasy
Latvia | No Language



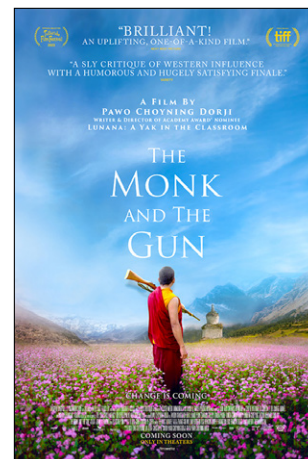
Universal Language
Wed March 12 – 7 pm
1hr 29min | Comedy/Drama
Canada | Persian/French



Queens (Reinas)
Thur March 13 – 1:30 pm
1hr 45min | Drama
Switzerland/Peru/Spain |
Spanish/Quechua



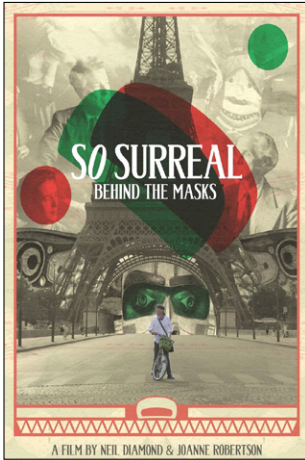
The Room Next Door
Thur March 13 – 7 pm
1hr 47min | Drama
Spain | English



The Monk and the Gun
Fri March 14 – 1:30 pm
1hrs 47min | Comedy/Drama
Bhutan/France/Taiwan/USA |
Dzongkha/English

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

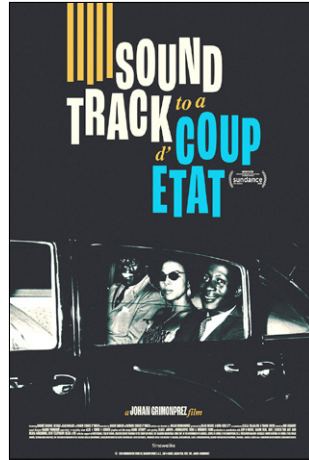
ernational film festival



So Surreal: Behind the Masks

Sun March 9 – 7 pm

1hr 28min | Documentary
Canada | English



Soundtrack to a Coup d'Etat

Mon March 10 – 7 pm

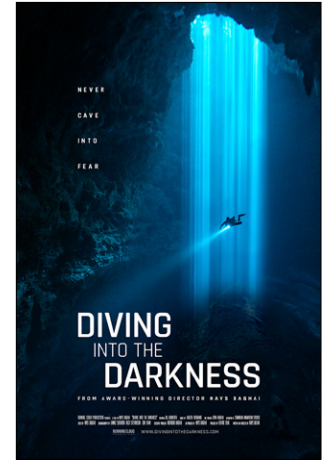
2hr 30min | Documentary
Belguim/France/Netherlands |
French/English/Dutch/Russian



Evil Does Not Exist

Tue March 11 – 7 pm

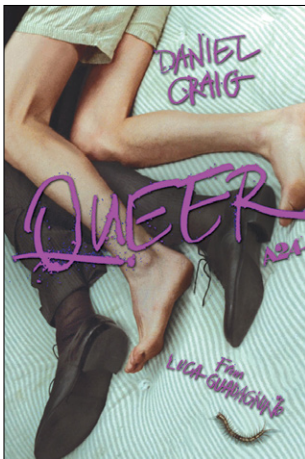
1hr 46min | Drama
Japan | Japanese



Diving Into the Darkness

Wed March 12 – 1:30 pm

1hr 36min | Documentary/
Drama
Australia | English



Queer

Fri March 14 – 7 pm

2hr 17min | Bio/Drama
USA/Italy | English/Spanish



Fairy Creek

Sat March 15 – 1:30 pm

1hr 25min | Documentary
Canada | English



Kneecap

6 pm Closing Party

Sat March 15 – 7 pm

1hr 47min | Comedy/Drama/
Music/Biography
Ireland | Irish/English



Can I Get a Witness?

Repeat Screening

Sun March 16 – 1:30 pm

1hr 50min | SciFi/Drama
Canada | English

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

Universal Language



Winner of the inaugural Directors' Fortnight audience award at Cannes this year, Matthew Rankin's follow-up to his eccentric, surreal *The Twentieth Century* is a gentle sort of comedy, settling us down in a reimagined Canada where Persian and French are the two official languages... and loneliness is the common currency.

In Winnipeg, children set themselves on eccentric quests — or dress like Groucho Marx — to flummox the adults around them, occasionally disrupting a tour group led by the flustered Masoud (Pirouz Nemati) as he does his best to explain the city's curious landmarks.

Meanwhile, in Montreal, government wonk Matthew (played by Rankin himself) quits a job he hates and catches the first bus home to Manitoba to see his mother, only to find his family is not what he thought it was.

Festival audiences will recognize the influence of the Swedish absurdist Roy Andersson and the 'Peg's own Guy Maddin, all filtered through Rankin's deadpan comic sensibility. He's traded the gleeful

depravity of *The Twentieth Century* for something kinder and softer, an affectionate look at a diasporic nation trying to fit itself into a box that can't contain it. Don't worry, people still congregate at Tim Hortons (Always Fresh!), it's just that their idea of a double-double is a little different.

Told through interweaving tales that evoke Iranian art films, Wes Anderson's puzzle-box-like creations, and some of the trademark ennui from the likes of Soviet directors like Tarkovsky, there's a lot stylistically to unpack from this wild and crazy film.

Along with Rankin playing a version of himself, he's joined by an extraordinary ensemble of child and adult actors alike, including Rojina Esmaeili, Saba Vahedyousef, Sobhan Javadi, Pirouz Nemati, Mani Soleymanlou, and Danielle Fichaud.

A deft blend of humor and pathos, *Universal Language* is an episodic odyssey into the human condition, crafted as a deeply moving tragicomedy about culture and identity, and how it can shift over time.

Directed by: **Matthew Rankin**

Country: **Canada**

Language: **Persian/French**

Genre: **Comedy/Drama**

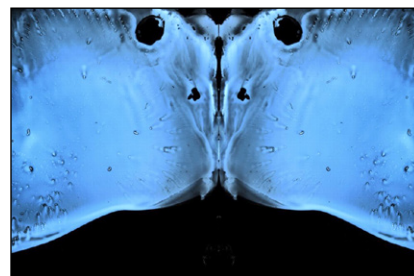
Running Time: **1 hr 29 min**

Screening info:

Wednesday March 12

7 pm Feature Film & Short

Sponsor:



Preceded by:

Samaa

by Ehsan Gharib

2 min – Animation

2024

This film invites us into imagined captivity using striking, hand-painted animation and visceral drumming. The bird's dramatic plight begs the question: Is freedom a state of being, or is it a state of mind?

Morning-After Film Salons



The Screening Room is a place where you and your friends can come and watch a movie, play video games, have a meeting, or just hang out. Included in the room is cinema seating for 16 people, an 80" plasma TV, streaming services, Blu-ray/DVD player, and Nintendo Switch. You can also bring your own devices and plug them into the system. The room is located upstairs and accessed through the side door to the left of the box office. It can be booked on an hourly basis and includes access to our kitchen and upstairs washroom. **For more details, please contact Laura:** laura@patriciatheatre.com.

This year's Film Festival welcomes the return of our popular Morning-After Film Salons. They take place upstairs in our new **Screening Room** and will be led by a variety of local film lovers. These Salons are open to anyone attending films at the festival and are a welcoming place for discussion of the previous day's screenings. Visiting filmmakers will also attend. The Salons take place at 12pm on every day that has an afternoon matinee scheduled. They

run for approximately an hour, depending on the depth of discussion, and participants can go directly to the 1:30 matinee after the discussion. Coffee and treats will be supplied. Special thanks to 32 Lakes Café and Bakery for their support. This is a great opportunity to deepen your understanding of the films at the Festival and to share your thoughts with other film lovers.

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Queens (Reinas)



Directed by: **Klaudia Reynicke**
Country: **Switzerland, Peru & Spain**
Language: **Spanish, Quechua**
Genre: **Drama**
Running Time: **1 hr 45 min**

Screening info:

Thursday March 13
1:30 pm Feature Film

Queens (Reinas), Klaudia Reynicke's understated, moving family drama is set in 1990s Lima, Peru as the country is in the grip of inflation and citizens are subjected to rolling blackouts, distant explosions and a threatening military presence that imposes a strict curfew.

Not surprising that many residents who can afford to do so are fleeing the country. One is Elena (Jimena Lindo), who's secured a job in Minnesota and plans to exit with her two daughters, teenager Aurora (Luana Vega) and younger Lucia (Abril Gjurinovic), who emerges as the heart of the film.

Elena runs around Lima securing visas and, in one tense moment, obtains a wad of American dollars with money exchanger on the bustling street, depicted with a gritty realism that shows the daily indignities of living under a corrupt regime.

Meanwhile, Elena needs ex-husband Carlos (Gonzalo Molina) to sign the requisite papers so his daughters, whom Carlos affectionately calls his "queens," can travel abroad. But Carlos is an unreliable cab driver given to tall tales. He

can be charming but he's clearly trouble when his sudden presence in the girls' lives threatens to derail Elena's plans. Aurora realizes she can manipulate him; the inquisitive but innocent Lucia believes his lies.

The film resists teasing out more pat narrative threads... and instead concerns itself with the small, personal moments that define relationships; the stories we tell, the time we spend, and the ways we try, and too often fail, to show love.

Her focus on the family is even more impressive considering the film is set in Lima in 1992, a dangerous period of hyperinflation, civil unrest, and terrorism-fueled political violence.

But such real-world considerations are kept mostly hovering like a shadow in the background as Elena tries to navigate Carlos' reentry into her daughters' lives while hoping he won't scuttle their bright American future.

Reinas, which is Reynicke's third feature, is a deftly told drama of great sensitivity that's attentive to the needs of its well-drawn characters.

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Preceded by:

Hairy Legs
by **Andrea Dorfman**
17 min – Animation
2024

Hairy Legs captures the universality of girls exploring gender, curiosity and freedom as they evolve from spending exuberant, carefree days on their bicycles to facing and defying stereotypes.



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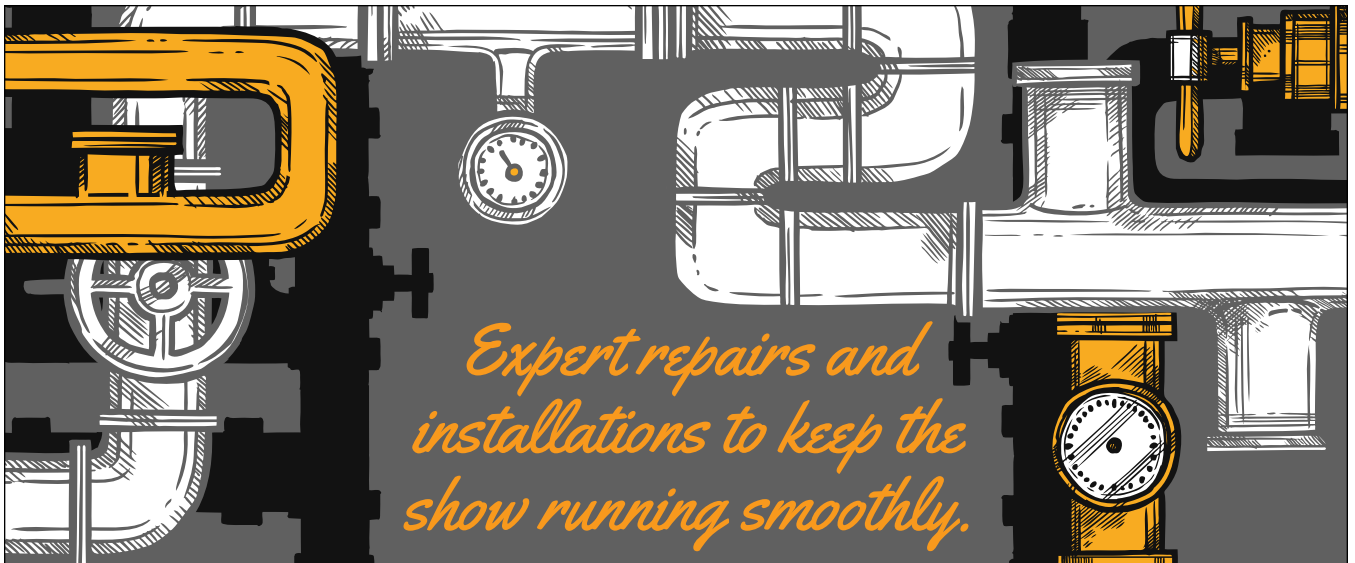
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The Room Next Door



Anchored by a pair of terrific performances swathed in vivid colours, Spanish auteur Pedro Almodóvar's English-language feature debut attests to his universal fluency in provocative filmmaking.

After four and a half decades of making rapturously acclaimed Spanish-language films, Pedro Almodóvar has written and directed his first ever feature-length film in English. And he could hardly have chosen two better actors to be in it. Adapted from a novel by Sigrid Nunez, *The Room Next Door* stars Julianne Moore and Tilda Swinton, both of whom are dazzling, even by their own brilliant standards.

Almodóvar continues to surprise and delight through his masterful use of colour and composition. Since his earliest 16mm punk DIY roots, Almodóvar has shown a prodigious attention to colour that few other directors can rival. In *The Room Next Door* contrasting hues of green and red battle to draw our eyes to each respective star. Ingrid's cool blue apartment assembled out of found objects is a world away from Martha's slick,

green-tinged apartment with a balcony garden. Almodóvar seems to take Moore's bright red lipstick and striking hair colour as a challenge to match her with the set design and outfits, but there's not a bad choice on screen at any moment. After all these years, it's still dazzling to watch what Almodóvar does with his canvas.

The Room Next Door, as driven by the scalding humanity of Swinton's performance, lifts you up and delivers a catharsis. The movie is all about death, yet in the unblinking honesty with which it confronts that subject, it's powerfully on the side of life.

Almodóvar, now aged 74, has clearly been thinking a lot about mortality. *The Room Next Door* isn't a weighty philosophical work – as mature as it is, it still has glimmers of cheeky humour and campy melodrama. But it develops into a sweetly heartfelt reflection on ageing, dying, and whether or not it's healthy to find joy in the most desperate of circumstances. There aren't too many films like that in any language.

Directed by: **Pedro Almodóvar**

Country: **Spain**

Language: **English**

Genre: **Drama**

Running Time: **1 hr 47 min**

Screening info:

Thursday March 13

7 pm Feature Film & Short

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Preceded by:

Loca

by **Véronique Paquette**

5 min – Animation

2024

A woman finds the path to freedom through the energy of tango.

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The Monk and the Gun



Directed by: **Pawo Choyning Dorji**
Country: **Bhutan, France, Taiwan, USA**
Language: **Dzongkha, English**
Genre: **Comedy / Drama**
Running Time: **1 hr 47 min**

Screening info:

Friday March 14
1:30 pm Feature Film

Following up his Oscar-nominated debut film *Lunana: A Yak in the Classroom*, Bhutanese filmmaker Pawo Choyning Dorji's *The Monk and the Gun* is a political satire set in the year 2006 as the Kingdom of Bhutan transitions towards becoming the world's youngest democracy.

Lusciously lensed by cinematographer Jigme Tenzing, the ensemble comedy examines how the country's upcoming mock elections affect the titular monk, a rural family, an election official, and a desperate liaison from the city, all of whose lives collide in minor and major ways.

The remote Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan was the last nation to connect to the internet and television. And if that weren't enough change, the King announced shortly afterwards that he would cede his power to the people via their vote and a new form of government: Democracy.

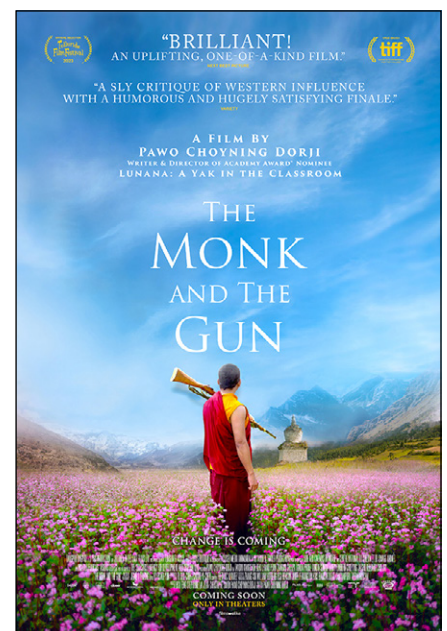
Fictional parties are set up: Blue representing freedom and equality, red representing industrial development, and yellow representing preservation.

Although the villagers are told to vote for the party they think will "bring them the most happiness"—democracy, Tshering insists, is paramount for the country's Gross National Happiness—they are also instructed how to hold a rally. Villagers are arbitrarily split up and told to yell at each other, a lesson that presses an elderly villager to ask Tshering why they are being taught to be rude. "This isn't who we are," the old woman admonishes. Indeed, much of the film criticizes the ways in which political parties can polarize families.

The film is a masterful presentation of purity, morality and principles. So poignant and profound, not only in exposing the effects of modern democracy on ancient traditions, but also on how misunderstanding and abusing it can bring about conflict and division instead of peace and prosperity. The icing on the cake comes at the end when the phallic symbol of death is exchanged, hilariously and graciously, with the phallic symbol of life. *The Monk and the Gun* is a true crowd-pleaser, a poignant message wrapped up in a humorous and vibrant tale.

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Special Guests at qiff 2024

qiff 2025 kicks off at the PR Public Library on Tuesday, March 4, 7pm with **Claire Sanford** and **Josephine Anderson** talking about their VR *Texada*, which is on view during our festival at the qathet Art Gallery March 23–April 4. On opening night of the festival, March 7 at 7pm, special guests Director **Ann Marie Fleming**, Producer **Raymond Massey**, and crew from Vancouver, with local actor **Kymo Van Oers** and associate producer **Tony Papa**, talk about the locally filmed *Can I Get A Witness?*. • For International Women’s Day on March 8, the afternoon screening will feature **Claire Sanford** and **Josephine Anderson**, who will tell us about creating their Virtual Reality production, *Texada* and describe their VR workshop to be held on Monday, March 10 at 1:30pm. In the evening, our MP **Rachel Blaney** will speak about the enduring importance of IWD, along with Yukon filmmaker **Jessica Hall**, who will go into the challenges of making a film inside the doll houses her sister lovingly constructed for *Saturday*. • On Sunday March 9 at 7pm, **Eileen Francis**, **Peg Campbell**, **Angela Kendall**, **Davis McKenzie**, **Claudia Medina**, and **Emily White**, will introduce the teaser for their documentary *təm kʷaθ nan Namesake* that will be released later this year. • Director **Cristóbal Ruiz** plus crew will talk with **Paul Demers** about filming base jumping in the mountains under dire conditions for the short film *The Beginning*, at 1:30 on March 12th. • At 1:30 on March 14th, local filmmaker **Jeremy Williams** will introduce his short film, *Paddling Tu DesDes* and **Jen Muranetz**, who recently moved here, and Producer **Sepehr Samimi** from Vancouver, will be available for a Q&A about the making of *Fairy Creek*. • Local DJ **Minerva (Claudia Medina)** will be at our closing party, spinning Indigenous tunes to get us in the mood for the Gaeilge punk of *Kneecap*. • Our guests will be at the Morning-After Film Salons to talk more about their films and their insights into the other films we’ve screened. Hope you can join us for these stimulating discussions!



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Queer



Directed by: **Luca Guadagnino**

Country: **USA, Italy**

Language: **English, Spanish**

Genre: **Bio / Drama**

Running Time: **2 hr 17 min**

Screening info:

Friday March 14

7 pm Feature Film

The seductive, damaged charm of Daniel Craig kills off his Bond to inhabit a dissolute American expat in Luca Guadagnino's handsome adaptation of the William S. Burroughs novella *Queer*.

Craig is touchingly vulnerable as the frustrated and exhausted barfly who knows that he isn't the man he once was, but who still has glints of his old panache. Played with sensitivity and predatory heat by Daniel Craig, Lee has a feverish mind, eyes like searchlights and a mouth that's quick to sneer. There are moments when he seems possessed, though it's not often clear what's taken hold of his soul.

Stripping away all the confidence that armoured James Bond and Benoit Blanc, Craig reminds us of what an exceptional actor he is. His portrayal just won him a Golden Globe nomination as best actor in a drama.

Burroughs remains best known as one of the coolest cats in the Beats; it was Jack Kerouac who suggested the title for *Queer*. Burroughs came from money, had a difficult past, sartorial flair, a hypnotically droning voice and a sinister aura.

"He's up there with the pope," Patti Smith said. "Without Burroughs," Lou Reed said, "modern lit would be a drama without a page, a sonnet without a song and a bone without gristle." Burroughs, who died in 1997, and Kurt Cobain collaborated on a project, and Nirvana is featured on the sound track, suggesting Burroughs's reach. He was a classic American figure: the nonconformist as cult.

Queer offers something raw and relatable through its in-depth portrait of longing, complicated by sex and drugs. Virtuoso director Luca Guadagnino found the heat and heart in *Call Me By Your Name*, and now, working with his simpatico *Challengers* screenwriter Justin Kuritzkes, he does it again. And Craig doesn't just know how Lee moves, speaks and listens, he knows how he breathes. He casts a spell you won't want to break. The same goes for this fascinating movie.

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Fairy Creek



The Fairy Creek (Ada'itsx) valley sprawls across Pacheedaht First Nation territory on southwestern Vancouver Island and its old growth forest ecosystem thrives with lush foliage, ancient tree trunks, and a variety of wildlife.

However, the decimating chain-saws and tractor machinery of the Teal Jones lumber corporation disrupt this equilibrium as they ravage an environmental haven into pavement for their road-building project.

Amidst the tumult, Jen Muranetz's *Fairy Creek* captures the vast collective protests against this destructive logging operation: a movement which has spawned both the largest demonstration of civil disobedience in Canadian history and the mass arrests of 1200 people.

The film assembles visceral front-line footage of activists faced with an RCMP-enforced injunction, protesting from ground to sky as blockaders form barriers with their bodies and tree-sitters' forest canopies are assailed by officers deployed from helicopters.

Weaving together an array of perspectives, *Fairy Creek* is an urgent and heartbreaking portrait

of collective resistance that simultaneously explores the contradictions in a mass movement of civil disobedience. Quickly, a conflict of intentions emerges, split between Indigenous land sovereignty and preservation of old growth forests. With nuance, Muranetz captures divisions between settler protesters and Indigenous activists.

Fairy Creek is a gripping front-line dive into the lives of activists urgently blocking logging roads on Vancouver Island, in a last-ditch attempt to stop old-growth logging in the untouched Fairy Creek valley. When police begin arresting people for standing in the way of forestry workers, thousands more protestors flock to the woods to participate in a dramatic and historic stand-off. Following a cast of blockaders, Indigenous land defenders, and loggers, the film takes an insider look at the rise and fall of the contentious Fairy Creek blockade.

Weaving together an array of perspectives, *Fairy Creek* is an urgent and heartbreaking portrait of collective resistance that simultaneously explores the contradictions in a mass movement of civil disobedience.

Directed by: **Jen Muranetz**

Country: **Canada**

Language: **English and Cree with English Subtitles**

Genre: **Documentary**

Running Time: **1 hr 25 min**

Screening info:

Saturday March 15

1:30 pm Feature Film & Short with
Directors in Attendance

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Preceded by:

Paddling Tu DesDes

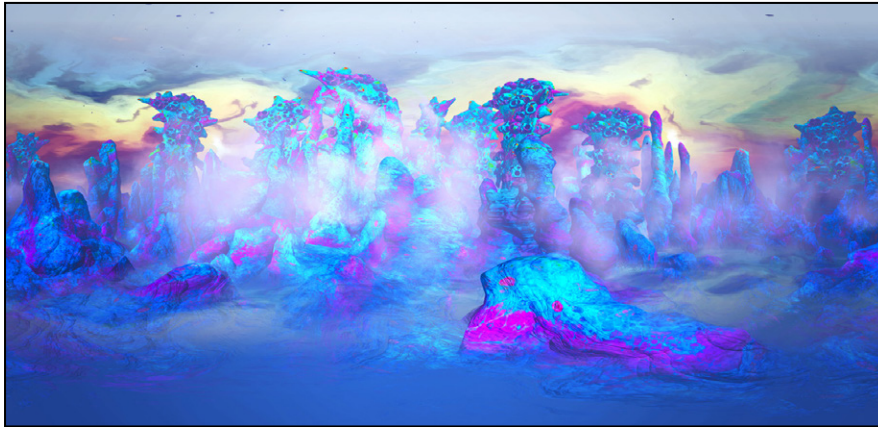
by **Jeremy Williams (In Attendance)**

19 min – **Documentary**

2024

Ross River Dena youth and land guardians paddle canoes 350km down the Pelly River, Yukon. The journey explores the themes of Indigenous Leadership in Conservation and the impacts of mining in the watershed.

Texada



How big is time? On the remote Canadian island of Texada, the everyday stuff of human existence—work, play and dreams—is juxtaposed against the tectonic shifts of the planet, rising and falling in cyclical patterns of creation, extinction and renewal. In this impressionistic VR (Virtual Reality) project, co-directors Claire Sanford

and Josephine Anderson merge 360-degree live-action footage, captured across the island, with 3D animation of geologic upheaval. Real and imagined landscapes document a journey from the Earth's formation to the current moment: twinned streams of existence mixing and mingling in an ever-changing flow. Yet amongst

Directed by: **Josephine Anderson and Claire Sanford**

Country: **Canada**

Language: **English**

Genre: **Virtual Reality Documentary**

Running Time: **17 min**

Screening info:

Showing before all films except the opening and closing parties.

3 VR headsets will be set up at the front of the auditorium. To book a personal viewing, register at the **Will Call Table** outside of the box office.

VR workshop March 10, 1:30 pm

the great heave of history, glimpses of temporal beauty, like discovering beautiful stones on a beach, help us understand our place in the universe.

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Kneecap



Kneecap is ballsy, brave and one of the best music biopics ever made. A swearsy, crude and brilliantly political Irish comedy, the headline-grabbing Belfast rap trio blend *8 Mile*, *Trainspotting* and *The Hunger* into a hedonistic but heartfelt film for the ages.

The film is a semi-dramatised biopic of the formation and rise of the controversial, headline-grabbing Irish language hip-hop trio, recalling how rappers Móglai Bap and Mo Chara would write lyrics to reflect their everyday Belfast lives as well as their nights spent scoring and selling drugs or running from the police.

One night, after being arrested and refusing to speak English to the police, local music teacher JJ O Dochartaigh is brought in to translate from Irish. Taking Chara's side after discovering his lyrical prowess, the humble teacher encourages him and Bap to pursue music and offers to lay down some beats – in bid to make Irish language music relevant to a new generation and “set the dodo free”.

We observe Belfast schoolchildren standing in their classroom, singing “Óró Sé do bheatha abhaile,” a traditional Irish song, in the Irish

language required in their school. They drone the lyrics, looking bored out of their minds.

Two boys in the back, sharing earbuds, are pretending to sing along but are actually listening to another kind of music, hip hop, by an exciting new local trio called Kneecap. Kneecap rap in the Irish language. It isn't something you hear every day.

The film's style is frenetic and propulsive, profane and provocative, peppered with jokey asides, stylistic flourishes (slow-mo, animation), and pulled along by a snarky voiceover (reminiscent of Ewan McGregor's voiceover in *Trainspotting*).

Having the Kneecap members play themselves was a bold choice, and it pays off. They're engaging and unself-conscious, and professional actors like Fassbender and Kirby bring out the best in everyone. *Kneecap* isn't an underdog rags-to-riches story. It's about the right of people to say what they want to say, to criticize the power structures ruling their lives, and to create a community of opposition. And, yes, to put “BRITS OUT” on their butt cheeks. That's free speech, too.

Directed by: **Rich Peppiatt**
Country: **Ireland, UK**
Language: **Irish, English**
Genre: **Comedy / Drama / Music / Biography**
Running Time: **1 hr 47 min**

Screening info:

Saturday March 15

6 pm Closing Party
with DJ Minerva

7 pm Feature Film

Sponsor:

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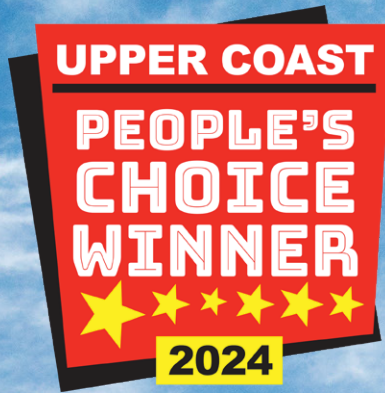
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