



NOV 2 - 12, 2023

VANCOUVER  
ASIAN FILM  
FESTIVAL



*Grace Park*

**CREATING  
OPPORTUNITIES**

IN PERSON AND VIRTUAL

@VAFFVANCOUVER  
#VAFF  
#VAFFVIRTUAL  
#VAFF27  
VAFF.ORG

**MOVIE MAGIC ISN'T  
SPECIAL EFFECTS.  
IT'S FEELING SOMETHING WITH  
40 STRANGERS.**



**TELEFILM** PARTNER  
CANADA OF  
CHOICE

FEEL AGAIN AT A  
THEATRE NEAR YOU.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## IN-PERSON

FESTIVAL & TICKETING INFORMATION .....	4 - 5
WELCOME LETTERS .....	6
SPECIAL GREETINGS.....	7 - 8

OPENING FILM/INTERNATIONAL NARRATIVE.....	10
<i>Rain Town</i>	

E8 SPOTLIGHT FILM/CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY.....	11
<i>Thrown into Canada</i>	

INTERNATIONAL NARRATIVE FEATURE .....	11
<i>MAALI</i>	

CANADIAN SHORTS .....	12
<i>Xie Xie, Ollie; Where I'm From, The Stranger (Canada); Overtime; Fish Boy; Tonight, You Will Shine!</i>	

US DOCUMENTARY FEATURE .....	13
<i>Finding Her Beat</i>	

WESTCOAST SHORTS/FAMILY .....	14
<i>Sun, Moon and Four Peaks; Doh Jeh Mama (多謝媽媽)/Thank You Grandma; 100 Days; Water Roots; Miss China; Okuribi</i>	

US NARRATIVE SHORTS .....	15
<i>Don't be Sorry; Passenger Seat; Sunflower Girl; Astonishing Little Feet; Instant Noodle</i>	

CENTERPIECE SPOTLIGHT NARRATIVE FEATURE .....	16
<i>A Great Divide</i>	

ANIMATION SHORTS .....	17
<i>Boat People; Two Apples; Bride's Dream; Galactic Canine Space Force; A Feast At The Palace</i>	

ANIMATION SHORTS .....	18
<i>The 7th Night: MaoMao Revisits; Peace Offering; Bon Odori; Departure; The Old Young Crow; Swallow Flying to the South</i>	

CANADIAN NARRATIVE .....	19
<i>Good Boy; Mother's Tongue; Tantrum; You Ask Too Much; Her Name is Like a Sigh</i>	

WESTCOAST NARRATIVE FEATURE .....	20
<i>Seagrass</i>	

WESTCOAST SHORTS .....	21
<i>Everlasting; The Gold Teeth; Bound to No One; Lifers; You Are the Blue</i>	

WEB SERIES SPOTLIGHT .....	22
<i>Odd/Even; Tokens-Season 2; Rock the Cradle; Yun; Wallpaper; Revelations; Green Heart;</i>	

HORROR SHORTS FROM KOREA .....	23
<i>The Stranger (Korea); The New Tale of Rat Wife; English Tutor; Sweet dreams are made of this ...; Syndrome</i>	

INTERNATIONAL SPOTLIGHT NARRATIVE FEATURE .....	24
<i>Dolphin</i>	

US DOCUMENTARY SHORTS .....	25
<i>Tiffany Day; The Gratitude Documentary; She Marches in Chinatown; Every Day After; Mia's Mission</i>	

CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY FEATURE .....	26 - 27
<i>Beyond Extinction : Sinixt Resurgence; Finding Freedom</i>	

MAMM SHORTS.....	28
<i>Whispers Unravelling; I Do 願憶; Peking Duck; Cash Cows; 阿BOY呀!!! (Ah Boy Yah!!!); Hijack; Waves (For Ryan); Karak</i>	

WESTCOAST DOCUMENTARY SHORTS .....	29
<i>She Sings for the World; House Special; Unwavering; Finding Fred Lee 1.0</i>	

WESTCOAST SHORTS/ ALL ABOUT LIFE .....	30
<i>Almost; The Sorrow; Stay; ZIP; Untitled Us; Devoured</i>	

CLOSING SPOTLIGHT FILM ANIMATION FEATURE .....	31
<i>Gonta: The Story of the Two-Named Dog in the Fukushima Disaster</i>	

LIVE FESTIVAL SCHEDULE.....	32
-----------------------------	----

VIRTUAL FESTIVAL SCHEDULE .....	33
---------------------------------	----

VAFF IN-PERSON SCHEDULE .....	33
-------------------------------	----

INTERNATIONAL NARRATIVE FEATURE (VIRTUAL).....	35
<i>The Rest of Our Lives</i>	

## VIRTUAL

CANADIAN SHORT .....	36 - 40
----------------------	---------

CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY SHORTS .....	36
<i>Bumalik (To go back); HA NII TOKXW: Our Food Table; I Hurt Myself</i>	

CANADIAN NARRATIVE SHORTS .....	37
<i>mÁyÁ; The Teacup; Maria; Up All Night; Knots</i>	

CANADIAN NARRATIVE SHORTS .....	38
<i>Aftershock; Dati</i>	

CANADIAN NARRATIVE SHORTS .....	39
<i>Goo; Faces; Sold; CopyKat</i>	

WESTCOAST SHORT TALES .....	40
<i>Asking for Anne; Staff Meeting; Dragon Fruit; LOHRI; Meeting Amy</i>	

INTERNATIONAL SHORT DOCUMENTARY .....	41 - 45
---------------------------------------	---------

INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY SHORTS .....	41
<i>On The Trails of Aandi, The Runaway God; Double Role; Present</i>	

MIXED BAG .....	41 - 42
<i>Fresh; BOARDING INSTITUTE; A Capsule for Robin; A Roadside Banquet; Other Life</i>	

LIFE CAN BE CRUEL .....	42
<i>Woori's Tomorrow; Your Child; Renaissance; Remember our sister/ 언니를 기억해</i>	

A SENSE OF HUMOUR .....	43
<i>Tequila Sunset; BAD ASIAN; The Great Clarke; Elephant in the Dark; The 44<sup>th</sup> Chamber of Shaolin</i>	

MENTAL HEALTH .....	44
<i>Young People, Old People &amp; Nothing in Between; The 25<sup>th</sup> Filial Exemplar; Happy Ending; Sweet; BLINKY</i>	

JAPANESE NARRATIVE SHORTS.....	45
<i>Blue and White; Eatversity; Tataru</i>	

FILMS FROM WARMER CLIMATES .....	45
<i>Love At Fifty; You're Happy, It's Okay; April's Interlude</i>	

INDUSTRY .....	47
----------------	----

FUTURE OF RACIALIZED FILM FESTIVALS PANEL AND WORKSHOP .....	48
--	----

AWARD .....	49 - 50
-------------	---------

MAMM .....	51
------------	----

ELIMIN8HATE .....	52
-------------------	----

RESO .....	53
------------	----

VAFF TEAM .....	54 - 55
-----------------	---------

INDEX .....	56 - 57
-------------	---------

FESTIVAL SPONSORS .....	58 - 59
-------------------------	---------



## ABOUT VAFF

VAFF is the longest running Asian film festival in Canada. It was founded in 1995 and debuted in September 1997. Since then, tens of thousands of film lovers have experienced a diverse selection of North American-Asian and international films.

Each year VAFF attracts close to 5,000 audience members over its four-day festival and year round events. It also reaches many more through word of mouth, pre-festival events, and traditional and social media throughout the year.

In 2020 almost every regional, national and international film festival pivoted to offer programs online and VAFF was no exception. From these learnings, VAFF has adapted and expanded to become a hybrid film festival with both in person and virtual screenings.

VAFF is mostly organized and produced by a group of dedicated volunteers, and is made possible by generous financial support from corporate sponsors, public funders and private donors.

## VISION

VAFF envisions a world where North American Asian actors and filmmakers have the resources and opportunities to shape mainstream culture in a powerful and positive way.

## MISSION

VAFF is dedicated to promoting and celebrating the diversity and depth of Asian culture and identity in film and media, and to help North American Asian actors and filmmakers more authentically and more powerfully define and express themselves on screen.

Through its annual film festival and many other programs and events hosted in Vancouver, VAFF's mission is to engage in, support and amplify Asian presence in film and television.

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are grateful to live and work on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. We thank the First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities that have cared for Turtle Island since time immemorial. With this acknowledgment, we remind ourselves of discriminatory, racist and colonial practices that have and continue to create barriers for Indigenous peoples and communities across this land.

## CREDITS

**COVER VISUAL CONCEPT:** created by Kristy Zhou

**RETOUCHING GRAPHIC DESIGNER:** Tina Chin

**PROGRAM GUIDE GRAPHIC DESIGN:** Vika Zheng

**MARKETING:** Irene Chan, Rachel Lee, Lana Yip

**SUPPORT:** Regina Leung, Susan Hanson, Barb Lee

**COPYWRITERS:** Brian Evancic, Nada Elsaka, Jared Yu

## IMAGE CREDITS

**VAFF27 FESTIVAL AMBASSADORS:** Grace Park

**PHOTO CREDIT:** Phillip Chin

**HAIR AND MAKEUP:** Sukis

**STYLE & WARDROBE:** Jolie Chan

# FESTIVAL & TICKETING INFO

VAFF celebrates its 27<sup>th</sup> edition this year from November 2 to 12, 2023. VAFF is going to be a hybrid affair taking place over 11 days and counting. The extended festival kicks off with 4 days of in-person events (November 2-5), followed by 7 days of online programs (November 6-12), before one final live program and the festival's closing awards ceremony on November 12. The eleven-day celebration will highlight an array of unique and outstanding talent, with both emerging and established Asian Canadian and Asian American writers, producers, and directors showcasing their latest work. Stay tuned for full details of the entire program, to be announced during the week of October 1, 2023.









**Creating Opportunities** reflect VAFF's **commitment to supporting emerging and established filmmakers** from Asian-Canadian and Asian diaspora communities by providing them with **access to resources, mentorship, funding, and networking opportunities**.

Through Creating Opportunities, VAFF aims to showcase a diverse range of films that celebrate the unique voices and perspectives of Asian-Canadian and Asian diaspora filmmakers, while also **promoting diversity, inclusion, and cross-cultural understanding in the wider community**. This theme will also provide audiences with the opportunity to make their mark and explore a wide range of topics, from cultural identity and social justice to family dynamics and love stories. We encourage the community to take ownership of their stories and create space for themselves by being actively involved in sharing their experiences.

We are delighted to have Grace Park, a very talented Asian-Canadian talent, as the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Vancouver Asian Film Festival Brand Ambassador.

## VAFF 2022 PROGRAM SERIES

VAFF's screening programs are organized into various series in order to better highlight the content of our festival:

 Spotlight Features	 West Coast Shorts	 Animated
 Features	 US Short	 Web
 Canadian Shorts	 International Shorts	

## FESTIVAL CONTACT INFO



EMAIL: [info@vaff.org](mailto:info@vaff.org)

Share it @VAFFVANCOUVER

#VAFF | #VAFF27 | #VAFFVIRTUAL

| #CREATINGOPPORTUNITIES |

#VAFFINDUSTRY | #DIVERSITYINFILM

## PRICING & TICKETING

**VAFF PREMIER FESTIVAL PASS** .....\$350  
(including all of the VAFF In Theatre screenings, VAFF Virtual screenings, VAFF Industry Insight Series and all of the special events)

### VAFF IN THEATRE SCREENINGS (include VAFF membership)

**ALL IN PERSON SCREENING ACCESS PASS** (per pass).....\$200  
(includes all of the In Theatre Screening Nov.2 - 5 and 11, 2023.)

**6-PACKS IN PERSON SCREENING** .....\$75

**SPOTLIGHT PROGRAM SCREENING** (per film/program).....\$17

**GENERAL PROGRAM SCREENING** (per film/program) .....\$15

**STUDENT RATE / SENIOR RATE** (applicable individual screenings tickets).....\$12

**OPENING NIGHT GALA, VIP ACCESS**.....\$100

**OPENING NIGHT GALA, GENERAL TICKET**.....\$50

Time: Thursday, November 2, 2023, from 9:00 pm to midnight  
Venue: **D6 at Parq** Vancouver, 39 Smithe St, Vancouver B.C.  
Limited tickets for sale | Complimentary hors-d'oeuvres + special cocktail and Cash bar.  
Kick off the 2023 Vancouver Asian Film Festival with our opening gala.  
Meet filmmakers and local film industry guests.  
Dress code: Classic & Playful Cocktail Attiree.  
Cash bar: MUST BE 19 TO ATTEND - ID MAY BE REQUESTED.

**OVASIAN AWARDS CEREMONY & AFTER PARTY** .....\$60

Time: Sunday, November 12, 2023, from 7:30 pm until midnight  
Venue: **Olympic Village**, Vancouver, BC  
Complimentary hors d'oeuvres and Beverage by Donation. Wrap up this year's VAFF and unwind with filmmakers, industry and VAFF volunteers.  
Dress code: Black & White Cocktail Attire.  
MUST BE 19 TO ATTEND - ID MAY BE REQUESTED.

**SPOTLIGHT AFTER PARTY TICKET** .....\$20

**CENTREPIECE AFTER PARTY TICKETS** .....\$35

**A NIGHT TO MINGLE TICKETS** .....\$20

**CELEBRATION OF CANASIAN PARTY TICKET** .....\$20

**VAFF INDUSTRY INSIGHT SERIES PASS**.....\$60

**LIVE IN PERSON:** November 4, 5, 11, 2023

Venue: **Vancouver Film School, ScotiaBank Theatre**

**LIVE VIRTUAL:** November 6 - 17, 2023

### VAFF VIRTUAL SCREENINGS

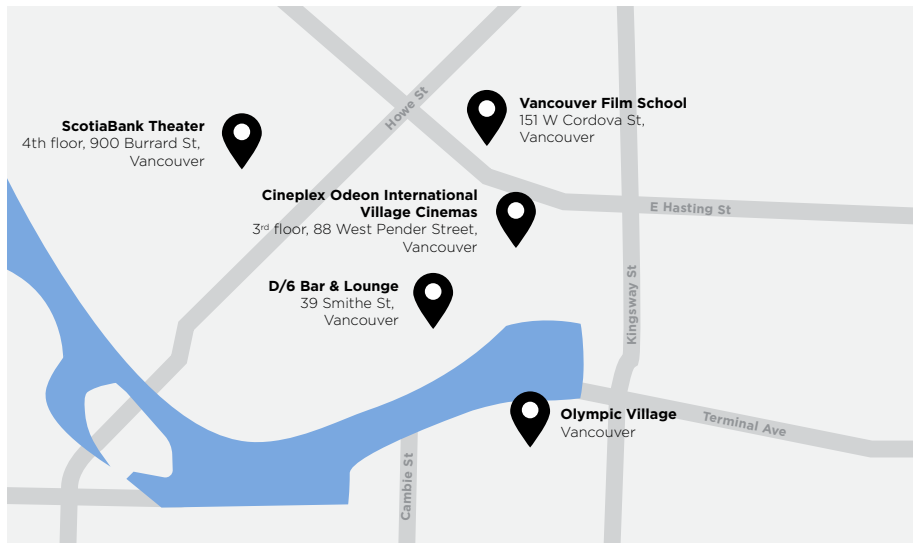
**ALL VIRTUAL ACCESS E-PASS** (per pass).....\$80  
(includes all of the Virtual Screening Nov. 6 - 19, 2023)

**INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM** (per program) .....\$10

**FILMMAKERS TALK SPECIAL EVENTS**.....FREE

## LOCATION

1. Cineplex Odeon International Village Cinemas, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, 88 West Pender Street, Vancouver, B.C.
2. ScotiaBank Theater Vancouver - 4<sup>th</sup> floor, 900 Burrard St, Vancouver, B.C.
3. Vancouver Film School, School of Animation, 151 West Cordova Street, Vancouver, B.C.
4. D6 at Parq Vancouver, 39 Smithe St, Vancouver B.C.
5. Olympic Village, Vancouver, B.C.



### IN THEATRE HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOL

vaff.org

ALL DETAILS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE. PLEASE CHECK OUR WEBSITE AT VAFF.ORG FOR THE LATEST DETAILS.

### TICKET & PASS POLICIES

NO REFUNDS & EXCHANGES AND RUSH TICKETS WILL BE RELEASED 10 MINUTES PRIOR TO THE SCREENING IF IT IS AVAILABLE.

**Fees:** The surcharge fee charged by ticketing system.

BUY TICKETS AND PASSES AT VAFF.ORG



**Barbara Lee**  
Founder and President

Welcome to the 27<sup>th</sup> edition of the Vancouver Asian Film Festival, Canada's oldest Asian film festival and Western Canada's largest racialized film festival. As we wrapped last year's festival, we witnessed the ground swell of support and momentum that "Everything Everywhere All at Once" was building towards awards season that culminated in the film being the most awarded film in history starring Michelle Yeoh and Ke Huy Quan and written and directed by the "Daniels" (Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert).

As VAFF matures and continually reinvents itself to stay relevant and fresh, racialized diaspora content continues to grow its audiences and VAFF's mandate to incubate, elevate and showcase stories from Asian Canadian communities bodes well for the future.

VAFF's leadership in the community and across Canada is a testament to the hard work, passion and dedication of VAFF's Board, Executives and volunteers – THANK YOU! With this, I am sad for VAFF, but happy for Susan Hanson, as her term ends and she steps away to pursue other opportunities in the industry. When Susan first started with VAFF, one of her main goals was to raise VAFF's profile, which she achieved by launching the incredibly successful OVAAsian Awards Gala. THANK YOU, you will be greatly missed, but as I always say, no one ever really leaves the VAFF family. Also, a big shoutout to the entire Senior Executive team who each experienced watershed moments with their own programs - Regina Leung, aka, Director of Everything headed the "VAFF Takeover of East by Northwest (EXNW)", Lynne Lee, has elevated MAMM to beyond what Peter and I imagined for this program and under Audrey Wong's guidance, Eliminate8Hate has garnered the most Global PR awards in 2023 for any advocacy campaign resulting in Microsoft adopting E8's dictionary of Asian names. Also, Welcome to Jolie Chan for joining as VAFF ED and making everything more beautiful.

If the work that VAFF resonates with you, please reach out to our team to see how you can get involved. VAFF is actively looking for additional Board members.

Please show your support by "Liking", "Following", "Sharing" Asian Canadian content and by attending VAFF screenings and other similar community events.

See you at the Festival!

Welcome to the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Vancouver Asian Film Festival! We are excited to continue our quest for representation and inclusivity with this year's theme of "Creating Opportunities". For the first time in VAFF's history, we were able to expand our platform to include West Asian Canadian films and we are thrilled about the prospect of having more West Asian Canadian representation in the coming years as VAFF continues to provide the platform and the opportunities for the Asian diaspora filmmakers and talents to showcase their work to the public.

As we continue our successful hybrid festival model for VAFF27, we expand the in-person portion of the festival with an additional full day, and a half day overlap, to bring our audience more films to the big screen! As always, we have an amazing lineup of films of various different genres as well as, the opportunities to meet filmmakers through Q&A sessions in addition to Industry Professionals, both locally and internationally.

I am always in awe of the talent and dedication that my team of volunteers have brought together to make this festival a growing success. As I end my term as the Festival Director, I want to express my most sincere gratitude to everyone on the Exec team and Committee, old and new, and to the Board for their support and trust in me. I step down knowing that VAFF is in very capable and talented hands and I continue my excitement for the future of VAFF!

Enjoy the festival and see you all in-person and online!



**Susan Hanson**  
Festival Director



**Jolie Chan**  
Executive Director

In a remarkable convergence of artistic vision and event expertise, Jolie Chan-Yick, a renowned fashion designer and accomplished event planner, is set to take the reins as the new Executive Director of the Vancouver Asian Film Festival (VAFF). With her unique blend of creative flair, organizational prowess, and a deep appreciation for cultural diversity, Jolie promises to lead VAFF into an exciting new era.



### A MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA JUSTIN TRUDEAU

I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to everyone attending the 27<sup>th</sup> annual Vancouver Asian Film Festival (VAFF).

This event offers Asian Canadian and Asian American writers, producers and directors a wonderful opportunity to showcase their talents. I am certain that audiences will be entertained and inspired by the diverse selection of films being screened this year.

I would like to thank the organizers for their hard work in putting together this festival. You can take pride in your commitment to promoting cultural exchange through the medium of film.

Please accept my best wishes for a memorable and rewarding experience.

Sincerely,



The Rt. Hon. Justin P.J. Trudeau, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada



### A MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE DAVID EBY

As Premier of British Columbia, I'm pleased to extend my warmest greetings to everyone attending the 27<sup>th</sup> annual Vancouver Asian Film Festival (VAFF).

For over a quarter-century, VAFF has been host to a remarkable selection of films from emerging and established artists within the Asian Canadian and Asian American filmmaking communities. Cinema is a powerful force, providing viewers a chance to immerse themselves in rich narratives from a broad range of perspectives. As Canada's most diverse province, we are fortunate to have events like VAFF to provide a bridge between cultures, fostering empathy, understanding and dialogue.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work of the many dedicated organizers, volunteers, partners and sponsors for putting together this incredible festival.

By using a hybrid model, this year's programming will be made accessible to audiences throughout the Lower Mainland and beyond, and I have no doubt that the diverse selection of films showcased over these twelve days will impress and inspire audiences near and far.

Please accept my best wishes for another captivating and unforgettable experience at the Vancouver Asian Film Festival. Enjoy the shows!



Hon. David Eby, KC  
Premier of British Columbia



### A MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE LANA POPHAM

On behalf of Premier David Eby and the Government of British Columbia, it's my pleasure to welcome you to the 27<sup>th</sup> Vancouver Asian Film Festival.

I am so pleased and proud to recognize the incredible dedication VAFF has shown for over 26 years. This festival's vision unites audiences to embrace the variety and diversity of films celebrating Asian identities. This same passion and commitment create a cultural connection between the Asian and non-Asian communities in Metro Vancouver, setting a brilliant example of inclusivity for all in British Columbia.

We are privileged to have a wealth of talent in British Columbia that contributes to the vibrancy of our communities. Festivals, like the Vancouver Asian Film Festival, spotlight the key role cultural diversity plays in our province's strength and economic success. Congratulations to all the artists, filmmakers and creators participating this year. The Province is proud to support this festival through Creative BC.

I encourage all British Columbians to participate in the VAFF, either by attending one of the feature films in person or online. This is a chance for us to support the hardworking filmmakers in B.C. and across North America, and enjoy their compelling storytelling. I commend everyone involved in this year's festival, thank you for sharing your talents with us.



Hon. Lana Popham  
Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport



### A MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE YONAH MARTIN

I am delighted to extend my warmest wishes to all those in attendance at the 27<sup>th</sup> annual Vancouver Asian Film Festival (VAFF).

This year marks another year of cinematic excellence, of storytelling, and imagination.

I would like to commend the Vancouver Asian Film Festival Society for their dedication to providing a cultural bridge for Asian communities across Canada through the art of film. I would also like to acknowledge the leadership of Festival Director Susan Hanson and all the members of VAFF for their tireless efforts.

A special thank you as well to the volunteers, sponsors, and organizers without whom this festival would not be possible. Finally to all of the filmmakers, directors, writers, actors and crew, your vision and dedication have brought to life culture, history and imagination through the inspiring movies that are being featured at this year's VAFF.

On behalf of the Senate of Canada, best wishes for a wonderful festival and many more years of success!

Sincerely,



Hon. Yonah Martin  
Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate

## A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR ELECT KEN SIM



On behalf of the City of Vancouver and my colleagues on City Council, I want to extend my warmest greetings to everyone attending the 27<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Vancouver Asian Film Festival (VAFF).

The Vancouver Asian Film Festival is a not-for-profit organization that endeavours to provide a cultural bridge between the Asian and non-Asian communities and the Asian communities themselves. The Festival will highlight the unique and creative film talents of emerging and established Asian Canadian and Asian American writers, producers, and directors by providing a venue to showcase their works.

As a city with deep roots in the film and TV industry, VAFF is an important event that brings together international and local industry professionals, strengthening Vancouver as a destination for film and TV production in North America.

Thank you and congratulations to the filmmakers, artists, organizers, and volunteers for another successful year of VAFF!

Sincerely,



Mayor Ken Sim

## A MESSAGE FROM TELEFILM CANADA INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CEO



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 2023 Vancouver Asian Film Festival, to further boost our support for Canadian creatives at home and around the world.

At Telefilm, we are uniquely positioned to finance and support every stage of a film's career, from development and production, all the way to film festivals. In this ever-evolving audiovisual landscape, we are thankful to partner with engaging festivals such as the Vancouver Asian Film Festival to bring audiences compelling stories made and told by Canadians. The diversity of our storytelling is one that puts Canada in the forefront of a global stage and is what sets us apart.

Festivals continue to play an important role in the screen-based industry, growing the talent pool as well as promoting a communal experience for audiences to celebrate and connect with distinctive Canadian films and the talent behind them.

We encourage you to keep supporting Canadian films wherever they are available and tell others to do the same!



Julie Roy  
Executive Director and CEO, Telefilm Canada

## A MESSAGE FROM CREATIVE BC CEO PREM GILL



Congratulations to VAFF for 27 years from Creative BC!

Creative BC works to elevate a diverse and dynamic creative sector through leadership, collaboration, and investment, and we are tremendously proud to support VAFF each year, Canada's longest running Asian film festival and a champion of Asian communities and creatives.

Importantly, VAFF's strategic vision offers greater prominence to the local community's storytellers. It serves to increase opportunities and visibility from Asian talent, both in front of and behind the camera. We recognize VAFF's ongoing commitment to antiracism work within the sector. Ensuring representation and inclusion within the creative industries is core to our values, and it is also important for the sector's success and sustainability.

Our sincerest congratulations to the team and volunteers at VAFF for highlighting, advocating and creating access for Asian creatives. We are excited to participate in the festival again this year, and to celebrate the diversity and depth of Asian culture and identity in film and media.

Sincerely,



Prem Gill  
CEO, Creative BC

## A MESSAGE FROM BURNABY-DEER LAKE MLA ANNE KANG




To the Vancouver Asian Film Festival,

I want to extend my congratulations to the Vancouver Asian Film Festival for reaching its 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This impressive milestone is an important celebration of the diversity and culture of the Asian film community. As the MLA of Burnaby-Deer Lake, and an Asian immigrant myself, I am grateful for the remarkable work the Vancouver Asian Film Festival has accomplished.

The Vancouver Asian Film Festival is one of the oldest Asian film festivals in Canada. It is an exciting opportunity for independent Asian filmmakers to promote their unique films, bringing the cultural exchange between Asian and non-Asian communities in Metro Vancouver. This festival is one of the many reasons why British Columbia is a diverse, multicultural mosaic.

Thank you to the Vancouver Asian Film Festival for hosting an event that continues to showcase the beauty and cultural diversity that Asian communities bring to our province. I wish everyone attending or participating in the event a wonderful time!

Sincerely,



Anne Kang  
MLA Burnaby - Deer Lake

LITTLE BIRD

TOKENS

# YOUR STORY. YOUR TRUTH. OUR SUPPORT.



STREAMS FLOW  
FROM A RIVER



PUSH

The Canada Media Fund is here to support bold, courageous voices across the audiovisual industry—from television and web series to documentaries, video games, IDM and immersive projects. Wherever there's a vision and a desire to shine a light, we're there to light the spark.



CANADA  
MEDIA FUND

FONDS DES MÉDIAS  
DU CANADA

[cmf-fmc.ca](http://cmf-fmc.ca)



# RAIN TOWN

DIRECTED BY TUNKU MONA RIZA BINTI TUNKU KHALID

## SYNOPSIS

Choo, the head of the household, unrelentingly wields control over his three grown children: Isaac, Alex and Ruby, disregarding their dreams and happiness. When Aileen, Choo's wife, is struck by a tragedy, the family drifts further apart embroiling them in a heartbreaking conflict.

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

115 MINS • 2023 • MALAYSIA • DRAMA



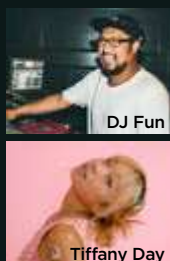
## DIRECTOR

**TUNKU MONA RIZA'S** works are based on detailed research and true stories. **REDHA** (2016) her debut feature film, holds a record for the most awarded Malay-language film in Malaysia, winning 16 international and local awards. **REDHA** is Malaysia's contender at the 89<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards and the 74<sup>th</sup> Golden Awards.

IN ATTENDANCE VIRTUALLY



Thursday, Nov 2, 6:30pm



## VAFF27 OPENING NIGHT GALA

OPENING NIGHT GALA, VIP access .....\$100  
OPENING NIGHT GALA general ticket .....\$50

**Time:** Thursday, November 2, 2023, from 9:00 pm to Midnight

**Venue:** D6 at Parq Vancouver, 39 Smithe St, Vancouver B.C.

Limited tickets for sale | Complimentary hors-d'oeuvres + special cocktail and Cash bar  
Kick off the 2023 Vancouver Asian Film Festival with our opening gala.  
Meet filmmakers and local film industry guests.

**Dress code:** Classic & Playful Cocktail Attire

**Cash bar:** MUST BE 19 TO ATTEND - ID MAY BE REQUESTED.

VISIT [VAFF.ORG](http://VAFF.ORG) for information and pricing.



## E8 SPOTLIGHT FILM - CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY FEATURE



# THROWN INTO CANADA

DIRECTED BY ALEEM KARMALI



## DIRECTOR

**ALEEM KARMALI** has been a documentary filmmaker since 2001, working at the intersections of history, diversity, religion, and culture. In particular, his work focuses on addressing misperceptions about Islam and telling stories from Muslim history and civilizations. His work also includes being an educator and public speaker.

## SYNOPSIS

After Idi Amin's expulsion of South Asians from Uganda in 1972, Canada opened its doors to its first major non-European refugee movement. Their story of struggle and hope became part of Canada's conversations about refugees and diversity.



Friday, Nov 3, 4:30pm



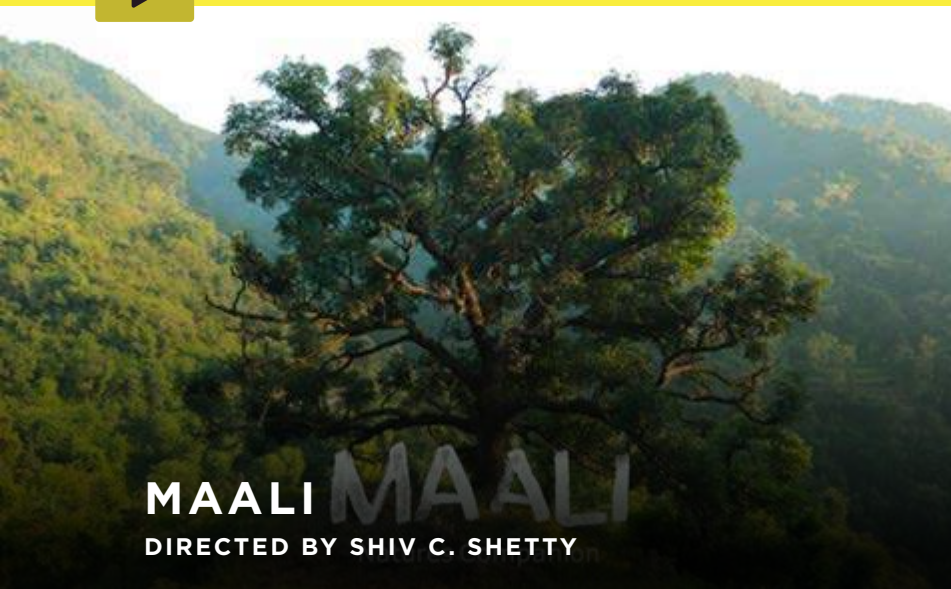
## \*FILMMAKER TALK TO FOLLOW

B.C. PREMIERE

78 MINS • 2022 • CANADA • DOCUMENTARY



## INTERNATIONAL NARRATIVE FEATURE



# MAALI MAALI

DIRECTED BY SHIV C. SHETTY



## DIRECTOR

**SHIV C. SHETTY** is a self-taught filmmaker who won best director for his debut feature film MAALI at the Queens World Film Festival. He worked on creating India's first transgender band "6 Pack Band" which won Glass Lions Grand Prix at Cannes Lions 2016. Shiv is now a director with Heart-Art Productions.

## SYNOPSIS

Tulsi lives amidst nature in the mountains with her grandfather Basant, treating nature as their companion. When Tulsi befriends Sakshi who suffers from mental health issues and has a strained relationship with her husband, she accompanies her into the city where Tulsi faces challenges that are alien to her life.



Friday, Nov 3, 6:45pm

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

93 MINS • 2022 • INDIA • DRAMA



### XIE XIE, OLLIE

Feeling split between his Chinese heritage and Canadian upbringing, Ollie attempts to learn Mandarin as a means of connecting with his family history. But, as an adult, he discovers that his path to understanding his biracial identity is unexpectedly complicated.

#### VANCOUVER PREMIERE

9 mins • 2023 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

James Michael Chiang



### WHERE I'M FROM

A struggling artist and a musician's dreams collide and become synchronized as they attempt to break through their artist block. After realizing that they cannot outrun their own Shadow, they are left to question if they are able to self-actualize and reach their full potential.

#### WORLD PREMIERE

29 mins • 2022 • Canada • Art



#### DIRECTOR

Sina Nazarian



### THE STRANGER (CANADA)

THE STRANGER begins with Jacky, who wakes up unable to recognize her boyfriend, Ray, who she always relied on for a sense of safety. She tries to overcome his new appearance but when more changes are introduced, will she still be able to love and accept him for who he is?

#### CANADIAN PREMIERE

17 mins • 2023 • Canada • Romance



#### DIRECTOR

Tin Pak Lau

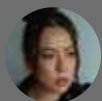


### OVERTIME

Kelley Lee cherishes hockey as her lifelong passion. The Canada 55 plus games in Kamloops mark a national milestone for her. Facing gender and racial barriers as a Chinese-Canadian woman in a male-dominated sport, Kelley reflects on her journey in this documentary celebrating her unwavering pursuit of her dreams as she faces the inevitable limits of age.

#### B.C. PREMIERE

40 mins • 2023 • Canada • Documentary



#### DIRECTOR

Jenny Lee-Gilmore



### FISH BOY

FISH BOY is a lyrical meditation on faith, love, and polyamory through the eyes of an Asian American teenager. When Patrick (played by Ian Chen, Fresh Off the Boat) questions his love for God, his self-discovery manifests in his skin.

#### B.C. PREMIERE

11 mins • 2023 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Christopher Yip



### TONIGHT, YOU WILL SHINE!

Cecilia Ramos dreams of her son, Benji, becoming a huge star. She is ecstatic to hear he has joined his high school's musical, and sneaks into their rehearsal to ensure that he is on the right path towards achieving fame.

#### WESTERN CANADA PREMIERE

11 mins • 2023 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Kristoffer Bradley Cruz

 Friday, Nov 3, 9:15pm



# FINDING HER BEAT

DIRECTED BY DAWN MIKKELSON & KERI PICKETT

## SYNOPSIS

In Minnesota, a Japanese drumming master and Korean adoptee unite an all-female Taiko troupe. Battling COVID's early threat, they defy tradition to prepare for a historic St. Paul performance. Buoyed by dynamic drum performances and do-or-die spirit, FINDING HER BEAT is an energizing and uplifting story of music, cultural expression and sisterhood.

89 MINS • 2022 • USA • DOCUMENTARY



## DIRECTORS

**DAWN MIKKELSON** is an Emmy Award winning filmmaker and McKnight Filmmaking Fellow, whose work has been broadcast, streamed and screened internationally. **KERI PICKETT** is an award-winning artist, producer, director, cinematographer. Pickett's documentary films have won multiple awards and have been screened at festivals around the world, as well as, on Netflix.



Saturday, Nov 4, 12pm



### SUN, MOON AND FOUR PEAKS

10 years following an ugly divorce, the Lee family reunites in Canada with vignettes of their differences in culture and philosophies.

15 mins • 2023 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Kevin Jin Kwan Kim



### DOH JEH MAMA (多謝嫲嫲) / THANK YOU GRANDMA

THANK YOU GRANDMA is a tender portrayal of a lifelong relationship between a grandson and his grandmother. Made in honour of Asian Heritage Month, this film is a celebration of love in all its many forms and a story of coming home to ourselves.

#### WORLD PREMIERE

3 mins • 2022 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Jon Chiang



### 100 DAYS

Following a tradition in Asian culture, family and friends celebrate a newborn baby turning 100 days old over a banquet-style dinner, welcoming the baby into the world. An unexpected guest arrives and a bowl of red bean dessert soup causes tensions to boil over in this modern day family dramedy.

#### WESTERN CANADA PREMIERE

13 mins • 2023 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Derek Kwan



### WATER ROOTS

Second-generation Chinese immigrant Sherry faces personal and career challenges. She struggles to reconcile with her grief-stricken father over a two-night visit to their seaside childhood cottage. This marks a hard goodbye to her past, a testament of faith, and a reconnection of their shared grief.

#### WORLD PREMIERE

15 mins • 2023 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Meng Li



### MISS CHINA

Elena, after being crowned Miss China International, gets an offer to become an actress in China. Excited, she tells her parents, but is faced with her traditional parents' disapproval. She hopes this move will connect her to her Asian heritage and practices her Mandarin. On her way to the airport, doubts creep in, questioning her decision.

#### VANCOUVER PREMIERE

9 mins • 2022 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Yasmine Ross



### OKURIBI

Mei lives with her single father, Tatsuya. They just found out that their long-awaited trip to Japan was cancelled, which creates conflict between them. However, a traditional Japanese custom, Okuribi, gives Mei an opportunity to reflect on her actions and reconcile with her father.

#### CANADIAN PREMIERE

7 mins • 2023 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Hiromu Yamawaki



Saturday, Nov 4, 2:30pm

**\*FILMMAKER TALK TO FOLLOW**



#VAFF



@VAFFVANCOUVER



### DON'T BE SORRY

After her husband is assaulted in an Anti-Asian hate crime, a timid but resilient Asian-American senior becomes empowered to fight back when she discovers viral face-slapping competition videos.

#### CANADIAN PREMIERE

10 mins • 2023 • USA • Dramedy



#### DIRECTOR

David Au



### PASSENGER SEAT

After a family friend's suicide, Neela and her NYC taxi-driver father, Adeel, are shaken. When Adeel picks Neela up after a soccer practice, she lies about her father driving the taxi. Neela starts to navigate a different world amongst her middle-class private school peers, while Adeel tries to hide his business troubles from her.

#### CANADIAN PREMIERE

18 mins • 2022 • USA • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Neha Gautam



### SUNFLOWER GIRL

Rosie, a 13-year-old Chinese-American girl, embarks on a skateboarding escapade through the streets of New York with her crush and best friend—at the cost of abandoning her little sister and delivering a forgotten lunchbox.

14 mins • 2023 • USA • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Holly M. Kaplan



### ASTONISHING LITTLE FEET

Afong Moy, the first documented Chinese woman to come to the United States, realizes the men who separated her from her family only have interest in profiting off the peculiarities of her bound feet.

#### CANADIAN PREMIERE

9 mins • 2023 • USA • Historic Fiction



#### DIRECTOR

Maegan Houang



### INSTANT NOODLE

Marianna, goes on a grocery run to buy instant noodles, a dish her recently deceased Indonesian Mom often prepared for birthdays, and unexpectedly encounters a series of unfortunate events which forces her to embrace her Asian heritage and grieve her mother's death.

#### VANCOUVER PREMIERE

14 mins • 2023 • USA • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Michelle Sastraatmadja



Saturday, Nov 4, 4:30pm



# A GREAT DIVIDE

DIRECTED BY JEAN SHIM

## SYNOPSIS

Seen through the eyes of a Korean-American family that leaves the Bay Area for small-town Wyoming after experiencing devastating loss, *A GREAT DIVIDE* addresses the emotional and psychological impact of racism and xenophobia on Asian Americans, the loneliness and sacrifice of immigrant sojourners and the generational burden of expectations that weigh on their children. But it's also a story about a family repairing itself after tragedy, about a young man breaking out of his shell and finding love, about reconciliation and redemption.

CANADIAN PREMIERE

100 MINS • 2023 • USA • DRAMA



## DIRECTOR

Emmy Award-winning director **JEAN SHIM** started her career directing television promos, feature trailers, and commercials. As head Creative Director, Shim's credits include directing image campaigns for the Sci-Fi Channel, launching a network for Samsung Korea (casting John Cho), and creating main titles for Rysher Entertainment and Buena Vista Television. In 2005, Jean transitioned to independent film making. She was accepted to the Tribeca Film Festival All Access as a new director. She directed *STARLIGHT INN*, a short film starring Tamlyn Tomita (*Joy Luck Club*, *Karate Kid*) and Erin Daniels (*The L Word*). *STARLIGHT INN* was notable for featuring a woman director, producer, director of photography, editor, costume designer and assistant director. She took a break from the industry to raise a family and returned in 2019 to focus on stories with compelling Asian narratives. In 2021, she produced the feature narrative *SHAKY SHIVERS* (directorial debut of Sung Kang of *The Fast and the Furious*).

IN ATTENDANCE



Saturday, Nov 4, 6:30pm



## BOAT PEOPLE

As a child in Vietnam, Thao's mother often rescued ants from bowls of sugar water. Years later they would return the favour. BOAT PEOPLE is an animated documentary that uses a striking metaphor to trace one family's flight across the turbulent waters of history.

### VANCOUVER PREMIERE

10 mins • 2023 • Canada • Animation



### DIRECTORS

Thao Lam, Kjell Boersma



## TWO APPLES

When a young woman leaves her homeland, she takes a single memento from her past: a ripe apple studded with fragrant cloves infused with love, longing and the tender perfume of hope.

9 mins • 2023 • Canada • Animation



### DIRECTOR

Bahram Javahery



## BRIDE'S DREAM

This is a story about a bride who is separated from her soldier husband by life and death.

### B.C. PREMIERE

7 mins • 2023 • Canada • Animation



### DIRECTOR

Joe Chang



## GALACTIC CANINE SPACE FORCE

One night, a rocket falls onto a playground in the suburbs. Ruben investigates and discovers his best friend who was chosen to be a magical girl. Through his jealousy, he learns that he doesn't need to worry about how others see him, especially if they love him as he is.

5 mins • 2023 • Canada • Animation



### DIRECTOR

Anya Amarillo



## A FEAST AT THE PALACE

A simple story of endless toil between a servant, a sultan, and the feast on the table between them. This short was shot in stop-motion layers and then digitally composited onto backgrounds.

### VANCOUVER PREMIERE

6 mins • 2023 • Canada • Animation



### DIRECTOR

Gavin Cameron



Saturday, Nov 4, 9:15pm



## THE 7TH NIGHT: MAOMAO REVISITS

According to Chinese custom, every soul will revisit their beloved family on the 7th night after they passed away. This is a story about a little boy waiting for the return of his lost beloved cat MaoMao. Will MaoMao come back for her farewell? Or has she forgotten her owner?

### B.C. PREMIERE

4 mins • 2023 • Malaysia • Animation



### DIRECTOR

ahLoong



## PEACE OFFERING

After a dinner incident between a mother and her daughter, Dawn gets thrown back into her past to confront her own family dysfunction in order to make peace with her daughter.

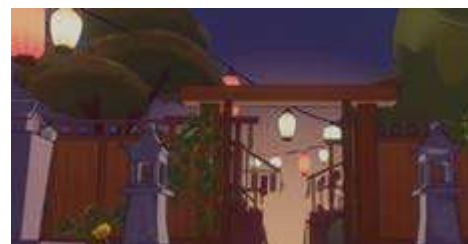
### VANCOUVER PREMIERE

4 mins • 2023 • USA • Drama



### DIRECTOR

Helen Lesmana



## BON ODORI

Bon Odori is a 3D/2D animated short film that delves into the heart of Obon, a Japanese Buddhist festival that celebrates the memories of ancestors and loved ones who have passed away. The story follows Kai, a young Japanese American boy struggling with the loss of his grandmother, and trying to navigate his first Obon without her.

### CANADIAN PREMIERE

5 mins • 2023 • USA • Animation



### DIRECTORS

Trent Osaki, Sally Thai



## DEPARTURE

In a world devoid of God but steeped in religion, a struggling robot embarks on a slow journey within a church. Using a mirror to redirect sunlight, she powers a storage terminal, enhancing her vision. However, as it attempts to upgrade her movement control program, the dwindling sunlight halts the process, leaving the robot incomplete.

5 mins • 2023 • Japan • Sci-fi



### DIRECTOR

Takayuki Yoshikawa



## THE OLD YOUNG CROW

Mehrdad, now an old man, recalls his encounter with an elderly Japanese woman named Chiyo at a graveyard in Tokyo, near his elementary school. Through his childhood sketchbook, he reflects on the mystery of her disappearance.

### VANCOUVER PREMIERE

12 mins • 2023 • USA/Japan • Animation



### DIRECTOR

Liam LoPinto



## SWALLOW FLYING TO THE SOUTH

In spring 1976, 5-year-old Swallow is abandoned at a public boarding preschool in central Beijing. When the persimmons are ripe, Swallow masters how to cry, but does not forget how to fly.

### WESTERN CANADA PREMIERE

18 mins • 2022 • USA/Canada/China • Animation



### DIRECTOR

Mochi Lin



Saturday, Nov 4, 9:15pm



### GOOD BOY

Ben is suspended from school for punching another kid. The first thing his mom asks is: "Are you going to cry?" The right answer, always, is no. When Grandma Su moves in during his suspension, a kinship forms between them through a week of hauling recyclables to the bottle depot.

#### WORLD PREMIERE

22 mins • 2023 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Yvette Sin,  
Nikita Zhang



### MOTHER'S TONGUE

Gurleen is learning how to cook from her mother. When the lesson shifts towards being a good cook to service her future husband, Gurleen pushes back. The lesson ends abruptly with an argument. However, after witnessing a loving interaction between a young daughter and her mother, Gurleen reconciles with hers.

13 mins • 2023 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Vanesa Millado



### TANTRUM

When her mother forgets about her upcoming choir competition, 7-year-old Moa resorts to desperate measures to gain her attention and secure her attendance.

#### CANADIAN PREMIERE

15 mins • 2023 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Soomin Choi



### YOU ASK TOO MUCH

In "You Ask Too Much," a near-deaf 94-year-old Sikh woman seeking comfort in her final days is unexpectedly moved from her son's home to her daughter's, causing her to confront the distance her care creates within the family. Only after she falls one night does the family come back together.

#### CANADIAN PREMIERE

10 mins • 2023 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

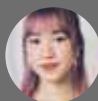
Ajay Rakhraj



### HER NAME IS LIKE A SIGH

Former Vietnamese refugees, Ha and her husband Binh run a successful nail salon business in Canada, but as Ha grows older, she must come to terms with how years of salon work are now taking a toll on her.

17 mins • 2023 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Solara Thanh-Binh Dang

 Sunday, Nov 5, 11:30am



# SEAGRASS

DIRECTED BY MEREDITH HAMA-BROWN

## SYNOPSIS

Desperate to find a deeper connection in her marriage after the death of her mother, Japanese-Canadian woman Judith brings her family to a self-development retreat on a remote island. When they befriend another interracial couple who seem to have the perfect marriage, Judith realizes how fractured her relationship is.

115 MINS • 2023 • CANADA • DRAMA



## DIRECTOR

**MEREDITH HAMA-BROWN'S** work has screened at film festivals worldwide and has garnered several awards such as the Sea to Sky Award at VIFF, a D&Ad Graphite Pencil and she has been nominated for a UKMVA. She was selected for the TIFF Filmmaker Lab for her feature film 'SEAGRASS'.

## IN ATTENDANCE



Sunday, Nov 5, 1:45pm

**\*FILMMAKER TALK TO FOLLOW**



**WESTCOAST TALES PROGRAM** – Showcasing unique, independent local Asian Canadian voices

After 27 years of nurturing and showcasing local filmmakers, this year VAFF is pleased to present **Westcoast Tales**, a program within VAFF with its primary focus on showcasing works by local filmmakers and content creators as well as providing an opportunity for community members to interact with the filmmakers through filmmakers talks and panel discussions. The Westcoast Tales Programs will be followed by Filmmakers Q&As and talks.

**Westcoast Tales triple threat creators chat** is part of the VAFF Industry Insights Series aimed at spotlighting local filmmakers and content creators and offers access for community members to actively participate in discussions with filmmakers.

WestCoast Narrative Feature SEAGRASS, Nov 5 | Sunday | 1:45 pm

Westcoast Tales Shorts Program – Nov 6 - 12

Westcoast Tales Short Documentary Program – Nov 11 | Saturday | 4:00 pm

Westcoast Tales Feature Documentary Program – **Finding Freedom**, Nov 11 | Sunday | 12:00 pm

Westcoast Tales triple threat creators chat – Nov. 5, 2023 | Sunday | 3:00 pm

VAFF has encouraged community involvement by integrating volunteers into the festival planning, programming and delivery of the festival and for most of its history, VAFF has been run by a dedicated team of local community volunteers. **Visit the WESTCOAST CONVERSATIONS Lounge - Where the Public can meet Local Filmmakers to learn about the story behind the stories.**



### EVERLASTING

From 1889 to today, this documentary traces the journey and evolution of the Wing Sang Building and its inhabitants. It features descendants of the building's founder, merchant Yip Sang.

#### WORLD PREMIERE

13 mins • 2023 • Canada • Documentary



#### DIRECTORS

Larry Chin, Sarah Ling



### THE GOLD TEETH

Sahra, an Afghan refugee in Canada asks an Iranian ex-dentist, Hamd, to extract her father's gold teeth before they bury him in order use that money to smuggle her queer brother from Afghanistan.

#### VANCOUVER PREMIERE

15 mins • 2022 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Alireza Kazemipour



### BOUND TO NO ONE

A poet incapable of translating her dream vision into her artwork resorts to plagiarizing an epitaph to craft a poem that pays homage to sorrowful memories. Nevertheless, a ghost serves as her guide, leading her to reconnect with her inner conscience, encouraging her to be true to herself and her artistry.

#### CANADIAN PREMIERE

13 mins • 2023 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Hugh Liu



### LIFERS

Three lives/Three paths: A rise in drug overdoses leads to an overcrowded hospital where a rookie cop sits guard over a criminal. They share a room with Robert, an Indigenous man who is dying. The two quickly bond and Robert's fate forces the cop to confront his conscience. Based on true events.

#### B.C. PREMIERE

12 mins • 2022 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Ranjit Samra



### YOU ARE THE BLUE

A seemingly normal girl, Kay loves art, listening to music and spending time with her best friend, Aiden. Her greatest joy is dancing, but underneath it all, Kay has been harbouring a deep secret. A secret that has impacted every thought, movement & breath...

#### WESTERN CANADA PREMIERE

14 mins • 2023 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Beatrice King



Sunday, Nov 5, 4:45pm

**\*FILMMAKER TALK TO FOLLOW**



### ROCK THE CRADLE

When a new South Asian mother, gives birth, she realizes she may be stuck in a place of darkness, without knowing how to get out. Be it her struggles with breastfeeding or the crippling anxiety that something can happen to her newborn, Pari soon dissolves into her puddle of grief.

#### WESTERN CANADA PREMIERE

11 mins • 2022 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Asis Sethi



### ODD/EVEN

In the near future, people wake up in either odd-numbered years or even-numbered years and hibernate in "The Capsule" during their inactive period. An Odd Citizen, Renée Kang, arrives at the Waking Period Adjustment Bureau to change her active period in order to separate from her toxic lover, Andre Wright.

#### CANADIAN PREMIERE

15 mins • 2023 • USA/ Taiwan • Sci-fi



#### DIRECTOR

Ya-Ting "Itchy" Yang



### TOKENS - SEASON 2

AAA Studios had a change of heart and Sammie gets an opportunity to make The Phoenix an authentic story with some surprising help from her parents. Betty must downsize but is still a rock for her beloved Tokens.

#### WESTERN CANADA PREMIERE

10 mins • 2022 • Canada • Comedy



#### DIRECTOR

Winnifred Jong



### GREEN HEART

In a future not too far from our own, Avery, a young neglected teenager with a mysterious condition, spends her days in the confines of her remote family home. Along with Betty, an artificially intelligent caretaker, and her only companion, she longs for a normal teenage life, fascinated with the natural world outside her window, yet unable to leave.

#### WORLD PREMIERE

17 mins • 2022 • Canada • Sci-fi



#### DIRECTOR

Vann Ferderber



### YUN

YUN is a poignant short drama delving into concealed emotions, portraying a girl's inner struggles as tangible clouds. Through innovative visuals and a bystander's lens, it unveils the universal weight we all carry, ultimately reshaping our lives.

4 mins • 2022 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

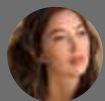
Yuezhong Qin



### WALLPAPER

A young woman, Dionne, lets her friend crash on her couch after a night of drinking. She later wakes to him looming over her in bed. Swept up in a jarring dance, Dionne's sense of security unravels. After he leaves, she tries to process this encounter that affects her future.

9 mins • 2021 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Tanya Jade



### REVELATIONS

Two strangers at a church drive-through confession forge an unlikely connection over a game of Truth or Dare, spiraling from awkward small talk to deep emotional territory threatening to unmask dark truths to each other.

#### CANADIAN PREMIERE

13 mins • 2023 • Canada • Dramedy



#### DIRECTOR

Chara Ho



Sunday, Nov 5, 7pm



#VAFF



@VAFFVANCOUVER



## THE STRANGER (KOREA)

A young foreign girl begins to be seen in Woo-jin's eyes, who was appointed as a field manager at the container logistics complex. At that time, mysterious things happen and tighten Woo-jin's breath.

### NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

28 mins • 2022 • South Korea • Horror



### DIRECTOR

Song Wonchan



## THE NEW TALE OF RAT WIFE

A wife who is pressured to have a baby, encounters a rat wife who happens to look just like herself.

### CANADIAN PREMIERE

19 mins • 2023 • South Korea • Horror



### DIRECTOR

Yoonsun Kim



## ENGLISH TUTOR

A Korean university student takes on an unusual tutoring job and encounters a young child who refuses to write in English. As the tutor attempts to get to the root of the child's reluctance, she uncovers a shocking revelation about the child and her mother.

### WESTERN CANADA PREMIERE

10 mins • 2023 • South Korea • Horror



### DIRECTOR

Jaho Koo



## SWEET DREAMS ARE MADE OF THIS...

After taking a mock test, four friends hear that there is a body in the basement of the cathedral that makes their wishes come true. They head there, but as the night grows deeper and deeper, they begin to go through unexpected things.

### WORLD PREMIERE

20 mins • 2023 • South Korea • Horror



### DIRECTOR

Minseok Song



## SYNDROME

Dong Jin, the owner of a mask manufacturing factory, brings his son to the emergency room because his son gets bitten by a dog with rabies. While he is at the hospital, the factory workers fight over the future of the struggling company.

### NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

21 mins • 2023 • South Korea • Horror



### DIRECTOR

Roh Jin



Sunday, Nov 5, 9:15pm



# DOLPHIN

DIRECTED BY BAE DU-RI

## SYNOPSIS

Living in a seaside village her entire life, Na-young loves taking care of her family and friends. When her mother tries to sell their cherished home and her brother insists on moving to Seoul, she struggles to accept the changes. Na-young then discovers bowling, and spends more and more time in the alley.

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

87 MINS • 2023 • SOUTH KOREA • DRAMA



## DIRECTOR

**BAE DU-RI** was born in 1987. Upon her graduation from the Korea University of Arts, she directed short films such as *PLAY* (2010) and *LAST NIGHT* (2012). *DOLPHIN* is director BAE Du-ri's first feature film.



Sunday, Nov 5, 4pm



### TIFFANY DAY: THE GRATITUDE DOCUMENTARY

With millions of streams under her belt, singer Tiffany Day embarks on her very first North American headline tour. Witness intimate behind-the-scenes moments of life on the road and the challenges Tiffany faced self-funding and producing her own tour, all while coming to terms with her identity as an Asian artist.

#### CANADIAN PREMIERE

38 mins • 2023 • USA • Documentary



#### DIRECTOR

Henry Thong



### SHE MARCHES IN CHINATOWN

This is an inspiring story about belonging, identity, sisterhood, leadership, and a flourishing community among a diverse group of women. It's about a group that thrives despite occupying a neighborhood targeted by hate and discrimination. As one superfan puts it, "Please don't go away - Seattle needs you!"

#### CANADIAN PREMIERE

33 mins • 2022 • USA • Documentary



#### DIRECTOR

Della Chen



### EVERY DAY AFTER

Jary, growing up in the Philippines, faces neglect and rejection due to his appearance. His sister Jessa protects and raises him with her own children, seeking medical care and support for his recovery. EVERY DAY AFTER offers a nuanced view of healing, spotlighting Jessa's love and efforts in enabling Jary's journey to a normal life.

#### CANADIAN PREMIERE

36 mins • 2023 • USA / Philippines • Documentary



#### DIRECTOR

Elisa Gambino



### MIA'S MISSION

Mia Yamamoto, born in a WWII incarceration camp, came out as transgender at the age of 60 after a 20-year legal career. Now at age 78, she champions racial issues and LGBTQ visibility. Rooted in L.A., she's relentless in her mission to unite communities of color against racism, embodying her deep ties to the city.

#### CANADIAN PREMIERE

12 mins • 2022 • USA • Documentary



#### DIRECTOR

Jireh Deng



Sunday, Nov 5, 6:15pm



# BEYOND EXTINCTION : SINIXT RESURGENCE

DIRECTED BY ALI KAZIMI

## SYNOPSIS

Spanning 27 years, *Beyond Extinction* traces Sinixt matriarchs who revive traditions and fight to save an ancient burial ground in BC's Slocan Valley. Declared "extinct" by Canada's colonial Indian Act in 1956, the film documents their intimate living histories and their decades long struggle for recognition.

102 MINS • 2022 • CANADA • DOCUMENTARY



## DIRECTOR

**ALI KAZIMI** has been making documentaries for more than three decades. His critically acclaimed films have been shown at festivals around the world, winning national and international honours and awards. In 2019 he received the Governor General's Award for Visual and Media Arts, as well as a Doctor of Letters, honoris causa from the University of British Columbia; this fall he was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.



Sunday, Nov 5, 9:15pm



# FINDING FREEDOM

DIRECTED BY ALAN GOLDMAN



## SYNOPSIS

The endless pursuit of an elusive dream, is a documentary film that reveals the grim challenges faced by refugees seeking asylum. With mobile phones provided by the filmmakers, the four main characters reveal truths about their lives now, all while in detention.

CANADIAN PREMIERE

59 MINS • 2022 • CANADA • DOCUMENTARY



## DIRECTOR

**ALAN GOLDMAN** is a writer/director and founder of Blue Plate Productions, which specializes in creating documentaries. He completed his MAA at Emily Carr University of Art & Design focusing on Stereoscopic 3D and its effect on documentary filmmaking. Currently he is an Industry Liaison, Research at Emily Carr University.

IN ATTENDANCE



Saturday, Nov 11, 12pm



**\*FILMMAKER TALK TO FOLLOW**



### WHISPERS UNRAVELLED

Olivia is lost in anxious thoughts at work. Snapping out of it, she opens a folder where she sees that someone has left her a surprise. She pops the nostalgic reminder into her mouth and is whisked into an alternate reality that reminds her of what she must do next.

1 min • 2023 • Canada  
• Drama



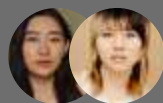
**DIRECTOR**  
Andrea Kuntjoro



### I DO 願憶

Jacob finally has the opportunity to marry the love of his life and experience liberation. However, his sister's arrival at the wedding stirs up a mixture of emotions. He is reminded of an important absence on his momentous day. As Jacob prepares to walk down the aisle, he wrestles with the bittersweet freedom and complicated grief of this absence.

11 mins • 2023 • Canada  
• Drama



**DIRECTOR**  
Cynthia Zhou,  
Kimberly Ho



### PEKING DUCK

After an unexpected night, Kevin is confronted with an awakening at the restaurant table with his Mom.

1 min • 2023 • Canada  
• Drama



**DIRECTOR**  
Alger Ji-Liang



### CASH COWS

After losing his job, Rohit finds himself lured into working as a security guard for a predatory employer. Things take a turn when a persistent vandal targets the car dealership where he works. Ultimately, Rohit is faced with a life-and-death situation that will redefine his identity and test his resilience.

11 mins • 2023 • Canada  
• Drama



**DIRECTOR**  
Shubham Chhabra



### 阿BOY呀!!! (AH BOY YAH!!!)

After returning from his studies abroad, Ah Boy finds himself in a sea of questions, with each additional question steamrolling into an absurd mob consisting of relatives, cashiers, news anchors, and the paparazzi. This builds up to a crescendo where everyone swarms into his home, eager to know if he is the successful boy that they want him to be.

2 mins • 2023 • Canada • Comedy



**DIRECTOR**  
Gerald Ng Shibang



### HIJACK

Fifteen year old Henry steps into his father's AI driven car only to find out that the AI has hijacked the car. In order to escape, he has to play the AI's game and learn to communicate with his father.

10 mins • 2023 • Canada  
• Comedy



**DIRECTOR**  
Yuvraj Kalsi



### WAVES (FOR RYAN)

Danny and his boys have always dreamt of leaving their small town together. It isn't until Tyler's suicide that they notice the real issue—always trying to party the pain away. While Danny thinks he knows them, it is through this tragedy that the boys start to actually see each other.

11 mins • 2023 • Canada  
• Drama



**DIRECTOR**  
Rachel Kwan



### KARAK

Based on the Malaysian urban legend, 'KARAK' follows Adrian and Beatrice, a couple reeling over the loss of their child through a miscarriage. In an attempt to move on, Adrian decides that they should relocate, creating a rift with Beatrice.

12 mins • 2023 • Canada  
• Drama



**DIRECTOR**  
Ian Tan



Saturday, Nov 11, 2pm



#VAFF



@VAFFVANCOUVER



### SHE SINGS FOR THE WORLD

In Vancouver's multicultural landscape, a Chinese-Canadian student sets off to unravel his mother's silence, who was the first Chinese Opera Singer to translate Pingju Opera to English in China, while surviving a mysterious poison plot. He uncovers a tale of resilience, passion, and intrigue, weaving a cinematic symphony of cultural heritage, love, and untold redemption.

#### CANADIAN PREMIERE

18 mins • 2023 • Canada • Hybrid Fiction



#### DIRECTOR

Beau Han Bridge



### HOUSE SPECIAL: FOOD IS LOVE

In Chinese culture, we say "I love you" through food. In answering the age-old question: how did food come to be synonymous with love in Asian culture, Jackie meets Cynthia and Jessie, two hard working moms who sacrifice for their kids, and the Temptasian restaurant owners who prioritize family over business.

#### WORLD PREMIERE

22 mins • 2022 • Canada • Documentary



#### DIRECTOR

Ryan Mah



### UNWAVERING

Unwavering is a story about familial love conquering all odds. It is a throwback to the life lessons a mother teaches her children, in order to, not just survive in Canada, but also thrive. MaiLing is a single mother to four children, overcoming seemingly insurmountable odds, in order to provide a brighter future for her children.

#### WORLD PREMIERE

18 mins • 2023 • Canada • Documentary



#### DIRECTOR

Jason Chau



### FINDING FRED LEE 1.0

He was the first Chinese-Canadian soldier to volunteer for his country that denied him the vote. He was selected for machine gun duty, and participated in two of Canada's most epic battles. Then he disappeared without a trace, grave marker, or obituary. He has been forgotten for 100 years.

#### VANCOUVER PREMIERE

27 mins • 2023 • Canada • Documentary



#### DIRECTOR

Jack M Gin



Saturday, Nov 11, 4pm

**\*FILMMAKER TALK TO FOLLOW**



### ALMOST

Upon his return from being away, Romeo re-visits his memory of asking out his long time friend, Cece. We unravel the contrast of their relationship then, and now.

5 mins • 2022 • Canada • Comedy



#### DIRECTOR

Carlo Fortin



### THE SORROW

A retired army general and his live-in nurse find they are not alone in a house filled with dark secrets.

#### WORLD PREMIERE

13 mins • 2023 • Canada • Horror



#### DIRECTOR

Thomas Affolter



### STAY

Starring Canada's Drag Race legend Kendall Gender, STAY is a tender exploration of relationships. Kaleb (Ivy Diamonds) meets Vancouver artist Ryan on his final night in town. In their brief encounter, Kaleb gains unexpected clarity before returning to his tumultuous relationship.

22 mins • 2022 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

King Louis Palomo



### ZIP

Meet Melody; at fifteen, she is outspoken, intelligent, creative, and dreams of performing in her school talent show. The problem? Her strict father, a traditionalist who shakes Melody's world after sewing a zipper onto her mouth on her sixteenth birthday. ZIP was inspired by the events currently happening in Iran.

#### B.C. PREMIERE

15 mins • 2023 • Canada • Horror



#### DIRECTOR

Ava Maria Safai



### UNTITLED US

During a snowy Chinese Spring Festival, a chance encounter between a postman Aiden and Jerome, a PHD student with a traditional Chinese background, leads to a heartfelt conversation that results in a newfound understanding between the two.

#### WESTERN CANADA PREMIERE

15 mins • 2023 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Thomas Mai



### DEVoured

Caught between a dream and a nightmare, Greyson is being preyed on by a creature that took the form of Naomi, the woman he loves.

9 mins • 2022 • Canada • Horror



#### DIRECTOR

Thomas Chretien



Saturday, Nov 11, 6:30pm

\*FILMMAKER TALK TO FOLLOW



#VAFF



@VAFFVANCOUVER



# GONTA: THE STORY OF THE TWO-NAMED DOG IN THE FUKUSHIMA DISASTER

DIRECTED BY AKIO NISHIZAWA

## SYNOPSIS

On March 11, 2011, a major earthquake hit. Hoping they could return soon the family evacuated, leaving their pet, Gonta, behind. However, a nuclear plant accident prevented their return. Volunteers saved Gonta, but his remaining time was limited.

114 MIN • 2022 • JAPAN • DRAMA



## DIRECTOR

**AKIO NISHIZAWA** was born in Tokyo and is 81 years old. At the age of 60, he ventured into anime production, transitioning from the field of education. He aims to create works that are closer to live-action rather than manga-like anime characterized by exaggerations and omissions.



Saturday, Nov 11, 8:50pm



# VAFF IN-PERSON

NOV 2 - NOV 6

THU  
•  
NOV  
2

**6:30PM** 115 MINS OPENING FILM SPOTLIGHT  
RAIN TOWN  
TBD

**9PM** OPENING NIGHT GALA  
D6 LOUNGE

FRI  
•  
NOV  
3

**4PM** FILM MAKER'S SOCIAL  
(INVITE ONLY)

**4:30PM** 78 MINS E8H SPOTLIGHT  
THROWN INTO CANADA

**6:45PM** 93 MINS INTERNATIONAL FEATURE  
NARRATIVE  
MAALI

**9:15PM** 109 MINS CANADIAN SHORTS  
- XIE XIE, OLLIE  
- WHERE I'M FROM  
- THE STRANGER (CANADA)  
- OVERTIME  
- FISH BOY  
- TONIGHT, YOU WILL SHINE!

SAT  
•  
NOV  
4

**12PM** 89 MINS US FEATURE - DOCUMENTARY  
FINDING HER BEAT

**2:30PM** 63 MINS WESTCOAST SHORTS - FAMILY  
- SUN, MOON AND FOUR PEAKS  
- DOH JEH MAMA (多謝嫲嫲) /  
THANK YOU GRANDMA  
- 100 DAYS  
- WATER ROOTS  
- MISS CHINA  
- OKURIBI

**4:30PM** 65 MINS US NARRATIVE SHORTS  
- DON'T BE SORRY  
- PASSENGER SEAT  
- SUNFLOWER GIRL  
- ASTONISHING LITTLE FEET  
- INSTANT NOODLE

**6:30PM** 100 MINS CENTERPIECE SPOTLIGHT  
FEATURE NARRATIVE  
A GREAT DIVIDE - US

**9:15PM** 84 MINS ANIMATION SHORTS  
- BOAT PEOPLE  
- TWO APPLES  
- BRIDE'S DREAM  
- GALACTIC CANINE SPACE FORCE  
- A FEAST AT THE PALACE  
- THE 7TH NIGHT: MAOMAO REVISITS  
- PEACE OFFERING  
- BON ODORI  
- DEPARTURE

SAT  
•  
NOV  
4

**9:15PM** 84 MINS ANIMATION SHORTS  
- THE OLD YOUNG CROW  
- SWALLOW FLYING TO THE SOUTH

**9:30PM** CENTERPEICE AFTER PARTY  
TBD

SUN  
•  
NOV  
5

**11:30AM** 74 MINS FILMFUND + CANADIAN  
NARRATIVE - THE ROLE OF A  
WOMAN IS NEVER EASY  
- GOOD BOY  
- MOTHER'S TONGUE  
- TANTRUM  
- YOU ASK TOO MUCH  
- HER NAME IS LIKE A SIGH

**1:45PM** 115 MINS WESTCOAST FEATURE  
NARRATIVE - LOCAL  
SEAGRASS

**4:45PM** 69 MINS WESTCOAST SHORTS -  
LIFE'S STRUGGLES  
- EVERLASTING  
- THE GOLD TEETH  
- BOUND TO NO ONE  
- LIFERS  
- YOU ARE THE BLUE

**7PM** 77 MINS WEBSITE SERIES SPOTLIGHT  
- BARZAKH (PILOT) - INDIA  
- ODD/EVEN - US  
- TOKENS SEASON 2 - CANADA

**9:15PM** 98 MINS INTERNATIONAL SPOTLIGHT  
- THE STRANGER (KOREA)  
- THE NEW TALE OF RAT WIFE  
- ENGLISH TUTOR  
- SWEET DREAMS ARE MADE OF  
THIS . . .  
- SYNDROME

**9:30PM** A NIGHT TO MINGLE  
TBD

**4PM** 90 MINS INTERNATIONAL SPOTLIGHT  
FEATURE NARRATIVE  
DOLPHIN

**6:15PM** 117 MINS US DOCUMENTARY SHORTS  
- TIFFANY DAY: THE GRATITUDE  
DOCUMENTARY  
- SHE MARCHES IN CHINATOWN  
- EVERY DAY AFTER  
- MIA'S MISSION

**9:15PM** 102 MINS CANADIAN FEATURE  
DOCUMENTARY  
BEYOND EXTINCTION

SAT  
•  
NOV  
11

**12PM** 59 MIN CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY  
FEATURE  
FINDING FREEDOM

**2PM** 53 MIN MAMM  
-WHISPERS UNRAVELLED

SAT  
•  
NOV  
11

- 2PM** 53 MIN **MAMM**  
 - I DO 願憶  
 - PEKING DUCK  
 - CASH COWS  
 - 阿BOY呀!!! AH BOY YAH!!!  
 - HIJACK  
 - WAVES (FOR RYAN)  
 - KARAK
- 4PM** 86 MIN **WESTCOAST DOCUMENTARY SHORTS**  
 - SHE SINGS FOR THE WORLD  
 - HOUSE SPECIAL  
 - UNWAVERING  
 - FINDING FRED LEE 1.0
- 6:30PM** 79 MIN **WESTCOAST SHORTS**  
 - ALMOST  
 - THE SORROW  
 - STAY  
 - ZIP  
 - UNTITLED US  
 - DEVoured
- 8:50PM** 59 MIN **CLOSING FILM - ANIMATION FEATURE**  
 GONTA: THE STORY OF THE TWO-NAMED DOG IN THE FUKUSHIMA DISASTER
- 9:30PM** **CELEBRATION OF CANASAIN PARTY**  
 SCOTIABANK THEATRE

SUN  
•  
NOV  
12

- 6PM** **OVASIAN AWARDS CEREMONY**  
 BMO THEATRE - OLYMPIC VILLAGE

VAFF VIRTUAL  
NOV 6 - NOV 12

- 71 MIN **CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY SHORTS**  
 - BUMALIK (TO GO BACK)  
 - HA NII TOKXW: OUR FOOD TABLE  
 - I HURT MYSELF
- 79 MIN **CANADIAN SHORTS NARRATIVE - A MIXED REEL**  
 - MÄYÄ  
 - THE TEACUP  
 - MARIA  
 - UP ALL NIGHT  
 - KNOTS
- 61 MIN **CANADIAN SHORTS NARRATIVE**  
 - MENTAL HEALTH  
 - ROCK THE CRADLE  
 - YUN  
 - WALLPAPER  
 - REVELATIONS

- AFTERSHOCK  
 - DATI
- 61 MIN **CANADIAN SHORTS NARRATIVE - HORROR/SCI-FI/SUSPENSE/COMEDY**  
 - GREEN HEART  
 - GOO  
 - FACES  
 - SOLD  
 - COPYKAT

- 74 MIN **WESTCOAST SHORT TALES**  
 - ASKING FOR ANNE  
 - STAFF MEETING  
 - DRAGON FRUIT  
 - LOHRI  
 - MEETING AMY

- 98 MIN **INTERNATIONAL NARRATIVE FEATURE**  
 THE REST OF OUR LIVES

- 108 MIN **INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY SHORTS**  
 - ON THE TRAILS OF AANDI, THE RUNAWAY GOD  
 - DOUBLE ROLE  
 - PRESENT

- 97 MIN **INTERNATIONAL NARRATIVE SHORTS - MIXED BAG**  
 - FRESH  
 - BOARDING INSTITUTE  
 - A CAPSULE FOR ROBIN  
 - A ROADSIDE BANQUET  
 - OTHER LIFE

- 105 MIN **INTERNATIONAL NARRATIVE - LIFE CAN BE CRUEL**  
 - WOORI'S TOMORROW  
 - YOUR CHILD  
 - RENAISSANCE  
 - REMEMBER OUR SISTER / 언니를 기억해

- 93 MIN **INTERNATIONAL COMEDY - A SENSE OF HUMOUR**  
 - TEQUILA SUNSET  
 - BAD ASIAN  
 - THE GREAT CLARKE  
 - ELEPHANT IN THE DARK  
 - THE 44TH CHAMBER OF SHAOLIN

- 99 MIN **INTERNATIONAL NARRATIVE SHORTS - MENTAL HEALTH**  
 - YOUNG PEOPLE, OLD PEOPLE & NOTHING IN BETWEEN  
 - THE 25TH FILIAL EXEMPLAR  
 - HAPPY ENDING  
 - SWEET  
 - BLINKY

- 90 MIN **JAPANESE NARRATIVE SHORTS**  
 - BLUE AND WHITE  
 - EATVERSITY  
 - TATARA

- 80 MIN **INTERNATIONAL NARRATIVE SHORTS - FILMS FROM WARMER CLIMATES**  
 - LOVE AT FIFTY  
 - YOU'RE HAPPY, IT'S OKAY  
 - APRIL'S INTERLUDE

Sponsored by



BRITISH  
COLUMBIA

# British Columbia's Creative Industry Catalyst

[creativebc.com](http://creativebc.com)

[@creativebcs](https://twitter.com/creativebcs)



The following 13 programs are VAFF VIRTUAL screening and they are available to watch for the entire duration of the festival (Nov 6 – Nov 12, 2023) after purchase.

However, once you press play to start watching a film, you have **24 hours** to finish watching. Only accessible to viewers anywhere in CANADA.

Tickets available at [VAFF.ORG](https://VAFF.ORG)



## INTERNATIONAL NARRATIVE FEATURE - VIRTUAL

# THE REST OF OUR LIVES

DIRECTED BY SHINJI KUMA

## SYNOPSIS

Kenji lives alone since his wife's death. One day, he fears he may have dementia. By chance, he joins swimming lessons and meets the instructor, Kaori. They are haunted by their past life's peaks. Through swimming lessons, they gradually regain the strength to live and take a new step forward...

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

98 MIN • 2023 • JAPAN • DRAMA



## DIRECTOR

**SHINJI KUMA** was born in Japan and graduated from the Department of Film and New Media (Osaka University of Arts). He started working as an assistant director. Kuma's directorial debut was "Ichido wa shitai Aniki no yomesan". He received attention at The Japan International Contents Festival with his work "Fa no Tofu".

IN ATTENDANCE

▶ Nov 6 - 12

**BUMALIK (TO GO BACK)**

This debut film from Winnipeg-based emerging director and producer MC de Natividad, follows de Natividad, who immigrated to Winnipeg from the Philippines at four-years-old, on her journey to reclaim her lost language and identity.

**B.C. PREMIERE**

32 mins • 2023 • Canada • Documentary

**DIRECTOR**

MC de Natividad

**HA NII TOKXW: OUR FOOD TABLE**

The story of the Indigenous Gitanyow people and their struggle to protect their traditional lands and "food table" in the face of climate change, industrialization and colonization in Northern British Columbia.

**VANCOUVER PREMIERE**

40 mins • 2022 • Canada • Documentary

**DIRECTOR**

Farhan Umedaly

**I HURT MYSELF**

Young photographer Carmen Acuna, tells the story behind her scars and how she got over her addiction to self harm through her art.

4 mins • 2023 • Canada • Documentary

**DIRECTOR**

Quan Luong

▶ Nov 6 - 12

The Directors Guild of Canada, British Columbia is a proud supporter of the 2023 Vancouver Asian Film Festival

Congratulations to the talented Filmmakers showcased in this year's festival!

**DGC**  
DIRECTORS GUILD OF CANADA  
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Representing key creative and logistical personnel in the film and television industries of British Columbia and the Yukon.

[www.dgcbc.com](http://www.dgcbc.com)

**MÄYÄ**

A South Asian woman in her 60s prepares to celebrate her wedding anniversary, where she confronts her long-held identity as a "wife". A phone call between mother and daughter unravels the present, revealing her entrapment in an illusion more inviting than the truth of her reality.

**B.C. PREMIERE**

7 mins • 2022 • Canada • Drama

**DIRECTOR**

Samyuktha Movva

**THE TEACUP**

A teacup triggers an immigrant's memory of the love-hate relationship with her abusive father. How she deals with this past affects her perspective about her childhood, her family, and her future.

**WORLD PREMIERE**

22 mins • 2023 • Canada • Drama

**DIRECTOR**

ZhiMin Hiu

**MARIA**

An overseas Filipino worker struggles to provide for her son by catering to the whims of an abusive immigrant family.

**WORLD PREMIERE**

22 mins • 2022 • Canada • Drama

**DIRECTOR**

Arthur Rodger 'Harley' Maranan

**UP ALL NIGHT**

When Jay fails to audition in a K-pop group, his uncertain future is only prolonged in the comfortable city of Montreal. While the people around him have different undercurrent thoughts about him, his only pillar of confidence lies in his whimsical personality.

**B.C. PREMIERE**

15 mins • 2023 • Canada • Drama

**DIRECTOR**

Andrew The-Anh Luk

**KNOTS**

Gracie, a lonely daycare worker, meets the younger version of herself and the two share a common thread.

**VANCOUVER PREMIERE**

13 mins • 2021 • Canada • Drama

**DIRECTOR**

Stephanie Sy



### AFTERSHOCK

June, homebound due to the pandemic, is a recluse who has learned to thrive off the little pleasures of her home and lonely daily routines. But when an old friend reappears, June must choose whether to break free from the safety of her controlled sanctuary, or retreat further within herself.

#### WORLD PREMIERE

15 mins • 2022 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Cyrus Lo



### DATI

After the sudden passing of his grandmother, Josh is tasked with keeping his grandfather, Rodolfo, in the dark until the rest of the family comes home. However, Rodolfo's escalating dementia makes it a more challenging task than Josh anticipates.

#### WESTERN CANADA PREMIERE

9 mins • 2023 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Isabelle Leonardo-Cruz

▶ Nov 6 - 12



# GROWING YOUR BUSINESS, TOGETHER.

TSB specializes in web development, business automation, content creation and digital marketing, helping you take your business to the next level.

Proud web developers for VAFF27

WEB DEVELOPMENT  
HOSTING SERVICES  
CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT  
CONTENT CREATION  
AUTOMATION  
DIGITAL MARKETING

**LET'S TALK**

[www.tsbcommunications.com](http://www.tsbcommunications.com)  
[info@tsbcommunications.com](mailto:info@tsbcommunications.com)

**GOO**

After signing with an "agency", a young singer moves into her new company apartment. During her first live-stream, she is hypnotized by a generous fan. The morning after, she wakes up from a fetishistic nightmare with black goo in her mouth. Soon, she develops insomnia and everything becomes a blur...

**NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE**

20 mins • 2022 • Canada • Thriller

**DIRECTOR**

Jack Li

**FACES**

Adorned with magazines, posters, and cosmetic products, Maggie's room is a manifestation of the influence of media on her understanding of her own beauty. Unable to meet its ideal, she spirals into self-destruction. She then realizes she must reclaim her sense of beauty to inspire self-love. Embracing a culture she once rejected, empowers Maggie with newfound confidence and self-identity.

**WORLD PREMIERE**

5 mins • 2023 • Canada • Drama

**DIRECTOR**

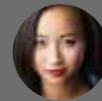
Paul Persic

**SOLD**

A lone girl suddenly realizes she's been trapped—surrounded in all directions, she fights and runs. There's no time to think as she navigates this unfamiliar farm trying to find a way out. Then she hears a familiar voice...

**B.C. PREMIERE**

15 mins • 2023 • Canada • Drama

**DIRECTOR**

Jennifer Li

**COPYKAT**

COPYKAT follows Mika, a graphic designer who accuses her colleague Kat, a creative director, of plagiarizing her work to win an award. The accusation leads to office tensions and a broader moral battle, raising questions about originality and credibility in the digital advertising agency.

**WESTERN CANADA PREMIERE**

5 mins • 2023 • Canada • Comedy

**DIRECTOR**

Gino delos Reyes

▶ Nov 6 - 12



### ASKING FOR ANNE

Jo is a lonely soul not by choice, but by chance. She is struggling to accept her life and the problems that it brings. Through her inner monologue, Jo tries to cope and eventually overcome the longing feeling of living a different life.

#### CANADIAN PREMIERE

9 mins • 2023 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Ayana Madi



### STAFF MEETING

In this dark comedy, a university faculty dinner goes awry when the chairman of the art department winds up dead. In an unlikely alliance, university professor, Carla, and research assistant, Amelia, try and recall the events over dinner and discover secrets the chairman was hiding all along.

#### B.C. PREMIERE

9 mins • 2022 • Canada • Comedy



#### DIRECTOR

Brooke Fusick



### DRAGON FRUIT

In a terrifying, dystopian future, fraught with violence and deception at every turn, a single mother desperately tries to grow a tiny dragon fruit sprout in the hope she can one day sell it for enough money to take a small vacation.

#### VANCOUVER PREMIERE

27 mins • 2023 • Canada • Sci-Fi



#### DIRECTOR

J. Brown



### LOHRI

A Punjabi husband and wife try to celebrate their daughter's birth while dealing with his alcoholism, toxic masculinity, and the culture's negative attitude towards women.

#### B.C. PREMIERE

16 mins • 2022 • Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Virinderpaul Singh



### MEETING AMY

Ray and Amy, both children from two separate failed marriages, share the same enigmatic father who's been absent in both their lives. When Ray reveals a shocking development in their dad's life, Amy finally weighs in on her experiences with their father. They begin to realize that they're not that different.

15 mins • 2022 • USA/Canada • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Richard Chen

## INTERNATIONAL SHORT DOCUMENTARY



### ON THE TRAILS OF AANDI, THE RUNAWAY GOD

Thaipooosam is an eve of Tamil ethnic importance and a 400-year-old heritage. Pilgrims walk hundreds of Kilometres over weeks to pay homage to their Lord Murugan, the runaway god of Palani in Tamil Nadu. 'Muruganai Kaana' aka 'On the trails of Aandi' is a tale of hardship, celebration and miraculous encounters.

#### WORLD PREMIERE

39 mins • 2023 • India • Documentary



#### DIRECTORS

Saravana Siddharth,  
Gowtham Raj



### DOUBLE ROLE

Deaf curler Sayuri Matsuhashi has a hearing daughter. As she wins a regional tournament, she becomes the first deaf person to qualify for the national competition. The film depicts a true story of Sayuri Matsuhashi, as a deaf curler and mother.

#### WORLD PREMIERE

39 mins • 2022 • Japan • Documentary



#### DIRECTOR

Kaoru Kawanishi



### PRESENT

A man who lost his kidney receives a transplant from his wife and leads a new life.

#### WORLD PREMIERE

30 mins • 2022 • Korea • Documentary



#### DIRECTOR

Jeon Chan Woo

## INTERNATIONAL NARRATIVE SHORTS - MIXED BAG



### FRESH

A hungry homeless man living in a abandoned model house finds a refrigerator with bizarre power. Realizing the power of refrigerators, the homeless man begins to turn crazy rotten food into fresh food.

#### NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

14 mins • 2023 • South Korea • Fiction



#### DIRECTOR

Lee Euntaek



### BOARDING INSTITUTE

Minyeong is teaching at an illegal boarding institute when one of her students passes out. Minyeong begins to suspect that the student passed out not because of fatigue but because she has been using drugs, and finds herself conflicted.

#### NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

29 mins • 2022 • South Korea • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Park Yongjae



### A CAPSULE FOR ROBIN

In the face of humanity's extinction, Rina gathers her remaining friends to celebrate becoming a genetic donor for a child to be born in the future. When her husband objects to bringing a child into an uncertain world, Rina's resolve wavers... 'till her terminally ill friend chooses hope over fear.

#### VANCOUVER PREMIERE

13 mins • 2023 • USA • Sci-fi Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Lalithra Fernando

▶ Nov 6 - 12



## A ROADSIDE BANQUET

One day in mid-2010s China after the abolishment of the One Child Policy, 11-year-old Mai attends her baby brother's very first birthday party and learns a crushing truth: her parents never really wanted a girl.

What's worse -- soon after learning the news, Mai starts turning into a feather duster.

### WESTERN CANADA PREMIERE

16 mins • 2023 • USA/China • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Peiqi Peng



## OTHER LIFE

Kyu-ho, an ordinary office worker, receives an interview request from a famous writer and agrees to talk to her. During the interview, Kyu-ho learns that his closest friend hates him the most.

### NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

24 mins • 2022 • South Korea • Mystery



#### DIRECTOR

Roh Do-hyeon

## INTERNATIONAL NARRATIVE SHORTS - LIFE CAN BE CRUEL



## WOORI'S TOMORROW

It's been 15 years since the youngest, Mirae, went missing. Woori's family lives without losing hope that they can find Mirae even in difficult circumstances. One day, Woori's family received a tip about Mirae. On her way there, Woori learns of Mirae's death insurance.

### CANADIAN PREMIERE

25 mins • 2023 • South Korea • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Hansoo Kwon



## YOUR CHILD

A grieving father attends his late son's classes to find out what led him to take his own life. He realizes that the adults in his son's life, including himself and his teacher, turned a blind eye to his suffering. Through a process of uncovering the past, the adults are forced to face their guilt.

### CANADIAN PREMIERE

27 mins • 2022 • South Korea • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Sunyoung Hong



## RENAISSANCE

A mother who has just lost her child seeks to reincarnate her child. Taking place at night, the space is limited to the house where they live. When the mother realized that the child cannot come back, life has to go on. Though, is it the deceased child or herself who should be reborn?

### WORLD PREMIERE

24 mins • 2022 • China • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Yu Liao



## REMEMBER OUR SISTER / 언니를 기억해

Set in 1980s South Korea, Hong, along with her sister, work in a base village, built only for the entertainment of the U.S. soldiers. Hong and her sister enjoy carefree days until Hong comes to think that it is strange, little by little. It is based on a true story.

### CANADIAN PREMIERE

28 mins • 2022 • South Korea • Musical



#### DIRECTOR

Jo Hayoung



### TEQUILA SUNSET

Some tequila, a little OJ, and a splash of grenadine. Is that too much to ask for? Jia doesn't think so. At 70 years old, she deserves a break! But when looking after her dementia-ridden husband gets too heavy, she starts imagining other creative solutions so she can finally relax.

#### WESTERN CANADA PREMIERE

22 mins • 2022 • USA • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Jinsui Song



### BAD ASIAN

Tipsy strangers, Melody and Chris, can't keep their hands off each other, until Melody's racist comments push Chris away. Confronting her insecurities, they embark on a journey through her decades of internalized racism. When Melody and Chris realize what's keeping them apart, there's only one very obvious way to clap back.

#### WESTERN CANADA PREMIERE

6 mins • 2023 • USA • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Kim Marcelino



### THE GREAT CLARKE

It is quite common to fight between best friends. Except, here they are the leaders of two conflict nations. The fight between Lee Chong Jo, dictator of Peninsula Union and Clarke, president of Federal State, is only getting bigger. World peace is up to them.

#### NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

29 mins • 2022 • South Korea • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Kiyeon Jeong



### ELEPHANT IN THE DARK

Someone broke the camera during a film shoot. Woohyeon, who is visually impaired, sets out with her hearing-impaired friend Ha-yan to find the culprit. This short film was produced in the "Barrier-Free" format to help disabled viewers access visual content and raise awareness of their human rights.

#### NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

21 mins • 2022 • South Korea • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Kim Nam-seok



### THE 44TH CHAMBER OF SHAOLIN

THE 44TH CHAMBER OF SHAOLIN is a screwball martial arts comedy inspired by the Hong Kong martial arts genre, the films of Stephen Chow, shounen anime, and MTV's Jackass.

#### CANADIAN PREMIERE

15 mins • 2023 • USA • Comedy



#### DIRECTOR

Jon Truei



### YOUNG PEOPLE, OLD PEOPLE & NOTHING IN BETWEEN

7-year-old Juice has one mission this year: to help Grandma Lovely retain as many memories as possible in order to halt the onset of her early dementia.

20 mins • 2022 • USA/Thailand • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Parida Tantiwasadakran



### THE 25TH FILIAL EXEMPLAR

Forced by his mother to dress and perform as his deceased sister, a young Chinese man grapples with how to express his true self, help his mother deal with grief, and prove that he's the most filial son.

#### CANADIAN PREMIERE

15 mins • 2022 • USA • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Leon Cheo



### HAPPY ENDING

Like thousands of Asian women seeking a better life for their family, Chenda leaves Cambodia to work in a massage parlor in America. Isolated and without resources, she learns the hard way that her paycheck implies more than a simple massage.

#### CANADIAN PREMIERE

17 mins • 2023 • USA/Cambodia • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Elodie Yung



### SWEET

Miwa, a second grader, tries to be a "decent child" by obeying various rules as her mother, Mizuho, tells her to.

On the other hand, her piano teacher, Yuko, encourages her to express herself freely.

Miwa's heart wavers between the two.

#### WORLD PREMIERE

24 mins • 2023 • Japan • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Shoji Yasui



### BLINKY

An octogenarian with mild dementia meets an old-fashioned robot vacuum cleaner.

#### NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

24 mins • 2022 • South Korea • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Lim Da-seul

▶ Nov 6 - 12

## JAPAN'S NARRATIVE SHORTS



### BLUE AND WHITE

Ryusuke, a craftsman who lost his wife, continued to make salt even on the day of her memorial service. His granddaughter, Midori, asked him about his true intentions. He believed that his mission was to continue to produce salt that can only be made there and to preserve its history.

#### WESTERN CANADA PREMIERE

28 mins • 2022 • Japan • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Hiroyuki Nishiyama



### EATVERSITY

Hana is a young man with a preference to dress as a cat. One day, he is taken by the woman he loves to a fusion restaurant, where he begins to realize the absurdity of this world through the food that is brought to him.

#### CANADIAN PREMIERE

22 mins • 2023 • Japan • Comedy



#### DIRECTOR

Keisuke Sakuma



### TATARA

After a falling out with his father, Will leaves to Japan to work at Tatara, the traditional Japanese furnace. 10 years later, David visits his son. As he starts to understand Will's ideas on life, their relationship shifts toward something good.

#### CANADIAN PREMIERE

40 mins • 2023 • Japan • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Junio Nozawa

## INTERNATIONAL NARRATIVE SHORTS



### LOVE AT FIFTY

Kee, a divorced mother of two in her 50s, weighs the prospect of an unlikely romance against its challenges when she meets a jovial—and romantically inexperienced—delivery person at her coffeshop job.

30 mins • 2022 • Singapore • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Tan Wei Ting



### YOU'RE HAPPY, IT'S OKAY

Emily is hopeless at online dating. While she contemplates her singledom, she cares for her wheelchair-bound aunt, Ah Lan, who is also single. Somehow, Emily shares her dating predicament with her aunt. While it might be strange coming from one single lady to another, Ah Lan offers her dating advice. Unexpectedly, Ah Lan also reveals a secret to Emily.

#### CANADIAN PREMIERE

19 mins • 2023 • Malaysia • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Laura Low



### APRIL'S INTERLUDE

Shan is a cosmetician who runs a beauty salon with her partner. When beauty salons must be closed due to the pandemic, Shan is forced to stay at home with nothing to do and must confront a sudden onset of loneliness. Her ordinary life changes when she makes certain connections.

#### CANADIAN PREMIERE

30 mins • 2022 • Hong Kong • Drama



#### DIRECTOR

Erica Kwok Chung Yee

▶ Nov 6 - 12

# Shaping the Industry One Story at a Time

We proudly support VAFF in their mission to promote and celebrate the diversity and depth of Asian culture. Congratulations to all those selected for this year's edition.



# VAFF INDUSTRY INSIGHT (VI<sup>2</sup>) SERIES

**NOVEMBER 4, 2023**

Venue: Vancouver Film School, School of Animation, 151 West Cordova Street, Vancouver, BC

**1**

**HOW TO PREPARE FOR A PITCH / ADVICE ON AUDIENCE PROFILING (WITH NICOLE MENDES, VP SCRIPTED DEVELOPMENT, LARK PRODUCTIONS) (1:00 PM)**

**2**

**OPEN MIC - PITCH PRACTICE (WITH FILM EXECUTIVES, FUNDERS AND BROADCASTERS) (3:00 PM)**  
**SIGN UP IN ADVANCE**

**NOVEMBER 5, 2023**

Venue: Vancouver Film School, School of Animation, 151 West Cordova Street, Vancouver, BC

**3**

**WEB / TV SERIES PRODUCTION JOURNEY (CASE STUDY / PANEL DISCUSSION) - CMF (1:00 PM)**

CHRISTOPHER  
YIP  
*Stream River*

WINNIFRED  
JONG  
*Tokens Season 2 - Canada*

ROSIE CHOO  
PIDCOCK  
*Esther & Sai*

MODERATOR  
CMF

**4**

**WESTCOAST TRIPLE THREAT (CREATORS' CHAT) - DGC BC (3:00 PM)**

JENNY LEE-  
GILMORE  
*Director, Writer, Actor*

PANTA MOSLEH  
*Director, Writer, Producer, Actor*



**NOVEMBER 7 - 10, 2023 (VIRTUAL WEEK)**

**5**

**5A: VIRTUAL LUNCH & LEARN WITH FUNDERS, STREAMERS AND BROADCASTERS SIGN UP IN ADVANCE**

**5B: VIRTUAL FILMMAKERS TALK SERIES**

**NOVEMBER 11, 2023 - VAFF INDUSTRY DAY**

Venue: Scotiabank Theatre - 4th Floor, 900 Burrard Street, Vancouver, BC

**6**

**ENTERTAINMENT LAW FOR FILMMAKERS (WORKSHOP WITH JEFF YOUNG, DAVID HEINRICH AND NOAH ABRAHAMS OF ALTMAN & COMPANY)**

Roundtable on various topics (Clearance, Licensing, Distribution, Contracts, etc.)

**7**

**ANIMATION AND STORYTELLING (FIRESIDE CHAT) (2:00 PM - 3:00 PM)**

WILLIAM LAU JUSTIN LEE JULIE NGUYEN MODERATOR  
Siddhartha Murjani

**8**

**AI IMPACT OF DIRECTING, WRITING AND PRODUCING (PANEL) (4:00 PM - 5:00 PM)**

**9**

**VAFF INDUSTRY SOCIAL - 5:30 PM - 7:30PM**

- VR and AR storytelling experiences  
- Networking and Mingling

## INDUSTRY SPONSORS



**LEARN  
MORE**



# SHAPING THE FUTURE OF RACIALIZED FILM FESTIVALS

**Date:** November 12, 2023

**Time:** 12pm to 3pm

**Venue:** Vancouver Film School, School of Animation, 151 West Cordova Street, Vancouver, BC

All 3 programs **FREE** to EVERYONE, first come, first serve, limited capacity.

## 1. Is Racialized Storytelling Going Mainstream? (12pm - 12:45pm)

VAFF has gathered this distinguished panel of film festival and entertainment industry professionals from the North American Asian communities to discuss the most urgent challenges for racialized people working or aspiring to work in the screen industry in BC and across North America post COVID. Panelists will provide insights from an organizational and industry perspective to discuss the future of Asian film festivals given the shift towards more mainstream acceptance. Stats Canada is predicting a rapid change towards a greater racialized population over the next twenty years, making this a critical time to engage more racialized cast and crew through Panels and Workshops like this to include their voices are included with shaping the future of this industry ensuring multiculturalism, diversity, and inclusivity are key component while combating racism and racist barriers.

## 2. IATSE Lunch Meet and Greet (12:45pm - 1:30pm)

Come enjoy a light lunch and networking with some established IATSE 891 members and staff to learn more about organizing and what the union offers for its members and ways to enter the industry. Ideal for the zoom participants wanting to meet in real life.

## 3. Increasing BIPOC Creatives In Front and Behind the Camera Workshop (1:45pm - 3:00pm)

Historically racialized people faced significant barriers to entry creating a lack of representation in the screen industry at large. This pronounced under representation and below average years of experience in the industry have created greater hardships for BIPOC creatives during the recent writers and ongoing actor strikes. As well, there are many supports focusing on becoming a director or an actor, but much less for the wide range of other positions and opportunities in the screen industry that may not be receiving the same level of advocacy or opportunity. This community engagement will lay the foundation for developing a deep understanding of these challenges and opportunities for all racialized creatives striving to enter all aspects of the screen industry.



**Hanna Cho** is Interim ED of RESO, and an inveterate convenor, cultural strategist, and community advocate. She is passionate about bringing people, ideas, and cultures together. A multidisciplinary cultural strategist and producer, she brings nearly two decades of experience from interactive media production, museums, and community engagement to her current role at RESO. From her policy roots as a digital humanities researcher, to her cultural leadership experience, or her community-based work as a cofounder of a community wireless network (Wireless Toronto) Hanna strives to enliven and empower conversations around equity through creativity, care, and action.



**Michelle K. Sugihara** is the Executive Director of CAPE (Coalition of Asian Pacifics in Entertainment). She is also an entertainment attorney, film producer, and adjunct professor for the Claremont Colleges' Intercollegiate Department of Asian American Studies. She is also an associate member of Cold Tofu, the nation's premier Asian American comedy improv and sketch group. An avid public speaker, Michelle speaks and teaches across the country on various topics including Representation in Media; Women in Entertainment; Diversity and Inclusion; Leadership; and Improv for Non-Actors.



**Alan Wong** is an award-winning, multi-disciplinary artist and creative professional. A seasoned performer of stage and screen, Alan has also worked in film and television in various technical and administrative roles behind the camera, as well as corporately for Buffalo Gal Pictures, a successful production company based in Winnipeg. He is the founder and President of FascinAsian, a film festival dedicated to celebrating the stories of the Asian diaspora in the prairies, with events in Winnipeg and Calgary.



**Avi Grewal** is an accomplished leader in the intersection of business, arts, and film, currently working within the Media and Entertainment realm at the Royal Bank of Canada. As an executive with Canada's largest bank, she navigates the intricate landscape of film and television production financing, collaborating with studios, animation houses, and publishing firms. Notably, Avi champions emerging producers through RBC's BIPOC Emerging Producer Program, facilitating access to bank funding. Director, Films & Programming at IFFSA Toronto, the largest South Asian Film Festival in North America which just wrapped up its 12<sup>th</sup> edition this year.



**Barbara Lee** has spent over twenty-five years as a community advocate and organizer of events to increase opportunities for Canadian Asian artists in mainstream music, film, tv and media. She is the Founder of the Vancouver Asian Film Festival (VAFF). Canada's oldest Asian film festival, Racial Equity Screen Office (RESO) and EliminateHate.org. Barbara has built an ecosystem of programs and organizations to address systemic barriers in the screen industry.

# VAFF 2023 AWARD NOMINEES



## VAFF 2023 Jury for Canadian Short Awards:



Alfonso Chin



Abubakar Khan



Julie Kim



Tiffany Hsiung



Trixie Pacis



Tony Ma



Stirling Bancroft

## VAFF 2023 Jury for Canadian Feature Awards:



Alex Sangha



Jason Karman



Shan Tam

## VAFF 2023 Jury for Sher Vancouver Award for Best 2SLGBTQ+ Short Film award:



Sidartha Murjani



Rami Kahlon



Annie Ohana

Four (4) selected finalists for **Best Cinematography for Canadian Feature Award, 2023 Best Editing for Canadian Feature Award, 2023 Best Director for Canadian Feature Award and 2023 Best Canadian Feature Award** are (alphabetically, by film title):



BEYOND EXTINCTION: SINIXT RESURGENCE



FINDING FREEDOM



SEAGRASS



THROWN INTO CANADA: THE SETTLEMENT OF ASIAN REFUGEES FROM UGANDA

Eight (8) selected finalists for **Sher Vancouver Award for Best 2SLGBTQ+ Short Film award** are (alphabetically, by film title):



FISH BOY



I DO



MIA'S MISSION



PEKING DUCK



STAY



TONIGHT, YOU WILL SHINE!



UNTITLED US



WAVES (FOR RYAN)

Five (5) selected finalists for **2023 Best Canadian Animation Short** are (alphabetically, by film title):



A FEAST AT THE PALACE



BOAT PEOPLE



BRIDE'S DREAM



GALACTIC CANINE SPACE FORCE



TWO APPLES

Seven (7) selected finalists for **2023 CINEMATOGRAPHY FOR CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY SHORT AWARD, 2023 BEST DIRECTOR FOR CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY SHORT AWARD, 2023 BEST CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY SHORT AWARD** are (alphabetically, by film title):



BUMALIK (TO GO BACK)



FINDING FRED LEE 1.0



HOUSE SPECIAL



I HURT MYSELF



OVERTIME



SHE SINGS FOR THE WORLD



UNWAVERING

Twelve (12) selected finalists for **2023 BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY FOR CANADIAN SHORT AWARD, 2023 BEST DIRECTOR FOR CANADIAN SHORT AWARD and 2023 BEST CANADIAN SHORT AWARD** are (alphabetically, by film title):



DOH JEH MAMA / THANK YOU GRANDMA



MĂYĂ



ROCK THE CRADLE



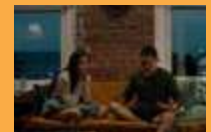
STAY



SUN, MOON AND FOUR PEAKS



THE GOLD TEETH



THE STRANGER (CANADA)



YOU ASK TOO MUCH



YUN



WHERE I'M FROM



Xie Xie, Ollie



ZIP

---

## WHAT IS THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARDS?

The People's Choice Awards will be presented during the Festival. You will be the judge to select the Overall Feature, Overall Short, Overall for Performance Feature and for Short. The voting will be open from **November 2, 2023 (9:00 pm) PST – November 11, 2023 (11:59 pm) PST** during the festival. You can vote online at [www.vaff.org/vote](http://www.vaff.org/vote)

---

## OVASIAN AWARDS CEREMONY AND AFTER PARTY



We will announce all of the awards recipients at the OVASIAN Awards Ceremony and After Party on **November 12, 2023** at **BMO Theatre**. Door opens at 6 pm.

Celebrate with the award-winning filmmakers, wrap up this year's VAFF and unwind with filmmakers, industry and VAFF volunteers.

**Limited tickets for sale | Complimentary hors d'oeuvre and cash bar.**

**\$60** – Get your tickets now at [VAFF.ORG](http://VAFF.ORG)

---

## LEARN ABOUT OUR PAST RECIPIENTS:

Each year an outstanding artist is selected by a committee at VAFF to acknowledge an individual's achievement in contributing to the fight for making underrepresented voices heard and pushing forward the culture of diversity through their actions or work.

### "OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION" DIVERSITY IN FILM AWARD:

2016 Recipient – **Tzi Ma**

2017 Recipient – **Jeff Chiba-Stearns**

2019 Recipient – **Mina Shum**

2021 Recipient – **Quentin Lee and Justin Lin**

2022 Recipient – **Lisa Lu**

### MOST IMPACTFUL AWARD

2021 Most Impactful Film with Asian Lead – **Simu Liu**, SHANG-CHI AND THE LEGEND OF THE TEN RINGS

2021 Most Impactful TV Series – **Hwang Dong-hyuk**, SQUID GAME

2021 Most Impactful Performer – **Daniel Dae Kim**

2022 Most Impactful Community Changemaker – **Gold House**

2022 Most Impactful TV Series – **Kung Fu**

---

## SPECIALS THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS



The 18<sup>th</sup> Mighty Asian Moviemaking Marathon (MAMM18) was another successful, record breaking year that concluded with a sold-out Screening Gala and Awards Presentation at the Vancouver Playhouse on August 26, 2023. We had a fantastic lineup with an impressive range of genres including comedy, fantasy, action, horror, drama and first ever stop motion film. We featured the most gender-diverse stories and filmmakers. Submissions continued to grow, including ones from the East Coast. We also had our youngest ever Director to compete at the age of 15 this year! And, our gala tickets were sold out in less than a week.

Being VAFF's annual short film-making competition, MAMM aims to foster and showcase emerging Asian and mixed Asian filmmakers. Eight 10 min Shorts and Eight 1 min. Ultra Shorts are selected through pitching. A masterclass-level MAMMentorship program is provided leading up to a 10-day moviemaking marathon, culminating in the premiere screening and awards announcement.



## Winners for the 1 Minute Ultra Short category are:

BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY: Emily Zhang - Whispers Unravelling

BEST SCREENPLAY: Alger Ji-Liang - Peking Duck

BEST PERFORMANCE: Liam Ma - Peking Duck

BEST FIRST TIME DIRECTOR: Andrea Kuntjoro - Whispers Unravelling

BEST DIRECTOR: Gerald Ng Shibang - 阿BOY呀!!! (Ah Boy Yah!!!)

BEST FILM: 阿BOY呀!!! (Ah Boy Yah!!!) - Team Siu Mai

## Winners for the 10 Minute Short category are:

BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY: Valeriya Khan - I Do 願憶

BEST SCREENPLAY: Shubham Chhabra - Cash Cows

BEST PERFORMANCE: Marc Joseph - Hijack

BEST FIRST TIME DIRECTOR: Yuvraj Singh Kalsi - Hijack

BEST DIRECTOR: Rachel Kwan - Waves (For Ryan)

BEST FILM: Waves (For Ryan) - Team Soy Boys

## Winners for the "People's Choice Awards" voted for by viewers are:

BEST OVERALL PERFORMANCE FOR ULTRA SHORT: Huy Ta - 阿BOY呀!!! (Ah Boy Yah!!!)

BEST OVERALL PERFORMANCE FOR SHORT: Berlin Lu, Lynn Liong - Karak

BEST OVERALL ULTRA SHORT: 阿BOY呀!!! (Ah Boy Yah!!!) - Team Siu Mai

BEST OVERALL SHORT: Karak - Team The Tannery



## Winning films are being screened during the 27<sup>th</sup> Vancouver Asian Film Festival.

VAFF is very proud that many of the MAMM films have gone on to be screened at festivals around the world and have won many awards. MAMM will be back in 2024 with its 19<sup>th</sup> edition.

## MAMM Producing Team:



LYNNE LEE  
MAMM Director / Producer



REGINA LEUNG  
MAMM Producer



JOSHUA LAM  
MAMM Lead Creative Producer



MOHEB JINDRAN  
MAMM Creative Co-Producer



PANTA MOSLEH  
MAMM Creative Producer

## ELIMIN8HATE OVERVIEW



As one of the pre-eminent racial advocacy groups in Canada, our social change arm, Elimin8Hate continues leading the way in promoting quality representation and dismantling structural inequities that impact the Asian diaspora in Canada.

2023 has been marked by significant achievements including:

**Expanding Partnerships:** Broadening our partnership with the Vancouver Canucks beyond in-game celebrations to create educational curriculum fostering inclusive workplaces that empower and amplify the voices of Asian Canadians;

**Building Bridges:** Forging connections beyond borders and communities including Chinatowns across North America, racial equity groups representing a diverse spectrum of Canadians, and Asian American advocacy groups, among others;

**Ground-breaking Initiatives:** Achieving a massive step forward with Microsoft reaching out to adopt our "Reclaim Your Name: Your Name is Not a Typo" dictionary into their ongoing Microsoft 365 updates. This ground-breaking collaboration eliminates the inequitable red-lining of Asian names in their Office suite. This impact of this initiative has been nothing short of remarkable, garnering global recognition including receiving the prestigious Webby award (the global internet awards), 2 Sabre awards (among the most prominent accolades in the North American PR industry), and was the standout initiative at Strategy's 101st Marketing Awards for Canadian creatives, winning 10 Golds awards and 2 Best In Show awards in the Multicultural and Public Service categories. Furthermore, our initiative was recognized on 2023 Fast Company's World Changing Ideas list.



This has been another momentous year and we are excited to cap off this record-breaking year by supporting the Vancouver Asian Film Festival to showcase films that celebrate and highlight the Asian Canadian diaspora.

Special thanks and appreciation goes towards our amazing partners and supporters including:



Canadian  
Race Relations  
Foundation

Fondation  
canadienne des  
relations raciales



And finally to you, our contributors and donors whose support strengthens our ability to continue making our voice heard. We look forward to another impactful upcoming year.

## VAFF @ EAST BY NORTHWEST (EXNW) GLOBAL SUMMIT



This past July, the Racial Equity Screen Office (RESO) presented its inaugural marquee event East by Northwest (EXNW) Global Summit at the JW Marriott Parq Hotel with its partner Gold House, the leading the Asian American Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander cultural ecosystem that unites, invests in, and champions AANHPI content and companies.

VAFF Takeover of EXNW included sending the largest delegation to attend EXNW and Regina Leung, VAFF's Director of Industry worked closely with RESO's team to organize the Industry pitch sessions at 4 Michelin star and recommended restaurants (Vij's, Phnom Penh, iDen & Quanjude Beijing Duck House and Ahn and Chi) – Thank you to these restaurants for being so welcoming. The executive decision makers included Janice Chua from Imagine Entertainment, Brian Hamilton and Nicolle Rufino from Omnifilm Entertainment, Art Birzneck from Birch Tree Entertainment and Patrice Ramsay from Knowledge Network. Virtual pitches included Takashi Cheng from ChimeTV and Georgia Shearman from Bell Media. Many of VAFF delegates were able take advantage of these exclusive networking opportunities and we can't wait to see the deals that come out of these pitches and relationships. EXNW also made space for the EliminateHate team to amplify the work they have been doing throughout the year.



### Updates from the RESO and VAFF advocacy work for mandated racial equity targets

RESO and VAFF's advocacy resulted in Knowledge Network mandates of 50% funding for BPOC commissioning projects and KN recently announced the greenlighting of a new slate of compelling documentaries with racialized filmmakers leading 3 of the 4 documentaries.

<https://www.knowledge.ca/media-releases/2023/08/14/knowledge-green-lights-new-slate-compelling-documentaries>

RESO's 2022 equity report "National Film Board of Whose Canada?" <https://www.reso-ca.org/news> with VAFF support, resulted in the National Film Board of Canada's recent announcement of its commitment that "By March 31, 2025, the NFB commits that more than 30% of its current production and co-production projects will be made by filmmakers/artists who identify as Black and People of Colour (BPOC). This figure represents a minimum: the NFB is aiming for more but certainly not less than this objective." <https://production.nfbonf.ca/en/equity/>

RESO looks forward to continuing to work closely with VAFF and its many community partners to continue to advocate for mandated racial equity targets for funding.

[www.reso-ca.org](http://www.reso-ca.org)



## VAFF BOARD MEMBERS



**Barbara Lee**  
*Founder & President*



**Clement Lau**  
*Vice President*



**Edmond Ng**  
*Treasurer*



**Andry Tanusdjaja**  
*Member at large*



**Alex Gray**  
*Member at large*



**Alex Leung**  
*Member at large*



**Jacqueline Lee**  
*Member at large*



**Justin Park**  
*Member at large*

## BOARD ADVISORS

Ernest Yee, Leon Ng, Ken Takagi and Kevin Li

## VAFF EXECUTIVES



**SUSAN HANSON**  
*Festival Director*



**REGINA LEUNG**  
*VAFF Industry Director / Producer*



**LYNNE LEE**  
*MAMM Director / Producer*



**AUDREY WONG**  
*Elmin8Hate Executive Director*



**SIDARTHA MURJANI**  
*Programming Director (Feature)*



**WILLIAM LAU**  
*Programming Director (Short)*



**IRENE CHAN**  
*Co-Marketing Director*



**RACHEL LEE**  
*Co-Marketing Director*



**LANA YIP**  
*Web Site Director*



**VINCENT CHOU**  
*Media Director*



**AMY VENHUIZEN**  
*Co-Sponsorship Director*



**CRISTINA LOW**  
*Co-Sponsorship Director*



**AMY TSAI**  
*Director of Event Management*



**EMMA COFFIN**  
*Event Operations Director*



**VINCENT GAN**  
*Box Office Director*



**MARIA POLLOCK**  
*Volunteer & Recruitment Director*



**JOLIE CHAN**  
*Executive Director*



**KEI BARITUGO AT BOLDLOVE**  
*Public Relations*

## VAFF COMMITTEES

### PROGRAMMING TEAM



**ARISA NAGAYAMA**  
*Programmer*



**AL YOSHIZAWA**  
*Programming Advisor*



**ANTHONY LEE**  
*Programmer Coordinator*



**COLIN HONG**  
*Print Traffic Manager*



**DEBBIE LIN**  
*Programmer / Programming Advisor*



**HIROMU YAMAWAKI**  
*Programmer*



**HELEN LIU**  
*Programmer*



**JIMMY LO**  
*Programmer*



**KATHY (KA YEE) LAM**  
*Programmer*



**KEVIN FENG**  
*Programmer*



**MARISSA WHEELER**  
*Programmer*



**NATALIE MURAO**  
*Programmer Coordinator*



**RJAY STA. TERESA**  
*Programmer*



**SHAN YAM**  
*Programmer*



**SIJING YANG**  
*Programmer*



**TARUN KERAM**  
*Programmer*



**TREVOR LIM**  
*Programmer*



**VIKTORIIA TIAN**  
*Programmer*



**CLEMENT LAU**  
*Programming Advisor*



**DAVID AVELINO**  
*Programmer*



**ROSIE HSUEH**  
*Programmer*

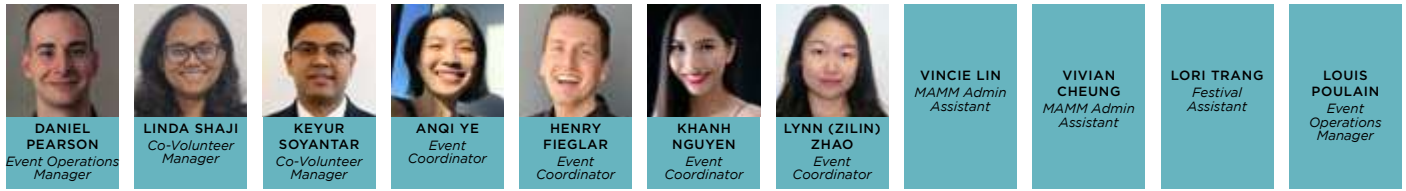


**KATHY LEUNG**  
*Programmer*

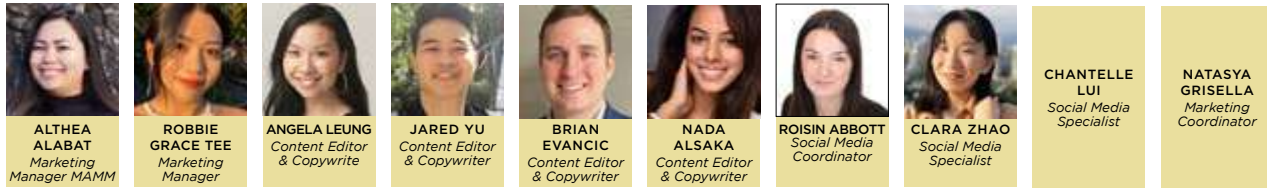
## VAFF COMMITTEES



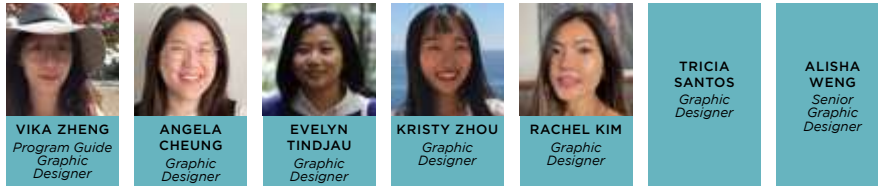
### OPERATIONS TEAM



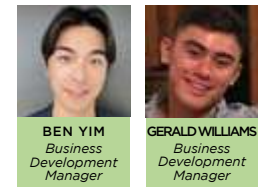
### MARKETING / COMMUNICATIONS TEAM



### GRAPHIC DESIGN TEAM



### SPONSORSHIP TEAM



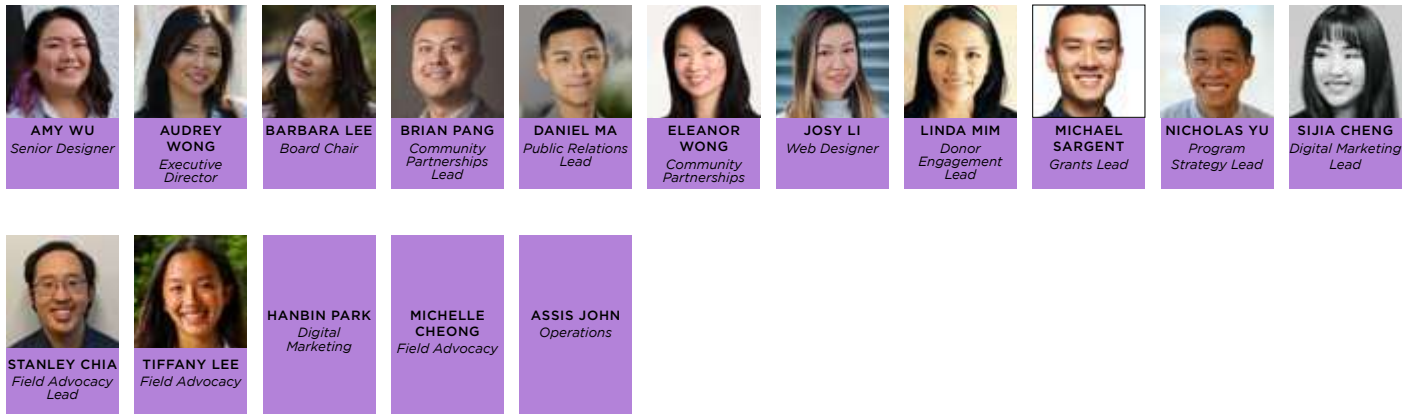
### DIGITAL TEAM



### AIM MUSIC TEAM



### ELIMIN8HATE TEAM



**100 Days**  
P14 | 13 min

## A

**A Capsule For Robin**  
P41 | 13 min

**阿BOY呀!!! (Ah Boy Yah!!!)**  
P28 | 1 min

**A Feast At The Palace**  
P17 | 6 min

**A Great Divide**  
P16 | 100 min

**A Roadside Banquet**  
P42 | 16 min

**Aftershock**  
P38 | 15 min

**Almost**  
P30 | 5 min

**April's Interlude**  
P45 | 30 min

**Asking for Anne**  
P40 | 9 min

**Astonishing Little Feet**  
P15 | 9 min

## B

**Bad Asian**  
P43 | 6 min

**Barzakh**  
P22 | 51 min

**Beyond Extinction: Sinixt Resurgence**  
P26 | 102 min

**Blinky**  
P44 | 24 min

**Blue and White**  
P45 | 28 min

**Boarding Institute**  
P41 | 29 min

**Boat People**  
P17 | 10 min

**Bon Odori**  
P18 | 5 min

**Bound to No One**  
P21 | 13 min

**Bride's Dream**  
P17 | 7 min

**Bumalik (To go back)**  
P36 | 32 min

## C

**Cash Cows**  
P28 | 10 min

**CopyKat**  
P39 | 5 min

## D

**Dati**  
P38 | 9 min

**Departure**  
P18 | 5 min

**Devoured**  
P30 | 9 min

**Doh Jeh Mama (多謝嫲嫲) / Thank You Grandma**  
P14 | 3 min

**Dolphin**  
P24 | 87 min

**Don't Be Sorry**  
P15 | 10 min

**Double Role**  
P41 | 39 min

**Dragon Fruit**  
P40 | 27 min

## E

**Eatversity**  
P45 | 22 min

**Elephant in the Dark**  
P43 | 21 min

**English Tutor**  
P23 | 10 min

**Everlasting**  
P21 | 14 min

**Every Day After**  
P25 | 36 min

## F

**FACES**  
P39 | 5 min

**Finding Fred Lee 1.0**  
P29 | 27 min

**Finding Freedom**  
P27 | 59 min

**Finding Her Beat**  
P13 | 89 min

**Fish Boy**  
P12 | 11 min

**Fresh**  
P41 | 14 min

## G

**Galactic Canine Space Force**  
P17 | 5 min

**GONTA: The Story of the Two-Named Dog in the Fukushima Disaster**  
P31 | 114 min

**Goo**  
P39 | 20 min

**Good boy**  
P19 | 20 min

**Green Heart**  
P22 | 17 min

**Galactic Canine Space Force**  
P17 | 5 min

## H

**HA NII TOKXW: Our Food Table**  
P36 | 40 min

**Happy Ending**  
P44 | 17 min

**Her Name is Like a Sigh**  
P19 | 17 min

**Hijack**  
P28 | 10 min

**House Special: Food is Love**  
P29 | 22 min

## I

**I Do**  
P28 | 10 min

**I Hurt Myself**  
P36 | 4 min

**Instant Noodle**  
P15 | 14 min

## K

**Karak**  
P28 | 10 min

**Knots**  
P37 | 13 min

## L

**LIFERS**  
P21 | 12 min

**Lohri**  
P40 | 16 min

**Love at Fifty**  
P45 | 30 min

## M

**MAALI**  
P11 | 93 min

**Maria**  
P37 | 22 min

**mÄyÄ**  
P37 | 7 min

**Meeting Amy**  
P40 | 15 min

**Mia's Mission**  
P25 | 12 min

**Miss China**  
P14 | 9 min

**Mother's Tongue**  
P19 | 13 min

## O

**Odd/Even**  
P22 | 15 min

**Okuribi**  
P14 | 7 min

**On The Trails of Aandi, The Runaway God**  
P41 | 39 min

**Other Life**  
P42 | 24 min

**Overtime**  
P12 | 40 min

## P

**Passenger Seat**  
P15 | 18 min

**Peace Offering**  
P18 | 4 min

**Peking Duck**  
P28 | 1 min

**Present**  
P41 | 30 min

## R

**Rain Town**  
P10 | 115 min

**Remember our sister**  
P42 | 28 min

**Renaissance**  
P42 | 24 min

**Revelations**  
P22 | 13 min

**Rock the Cradle**  
P22 | 11 min

## S

**Seagrass**  
P20 | 115 min

**She Marches in Chinatown**  
P25 | 33 min

**She Sings for the World**  
P29 | 18 min

**Sold**  
P39 | 15 min

**Staff Meeting**  
P40 | 9 min

**Stay**  
P30 | 22 min

**Sun, Moon and Four Peaks**  
P14 | 15 min

**Sunflower Girl**  
P15 | 14 min

**Swallow Flying to the South**  
P18 | 18 min

**Sweet**  
P44 | 24 min

**Sweet dreams are made of this...**  
P23 | 20 min

**Syndrome**  
P23 | 21 min

## T

**Tantrum**  
P19 | 15 min

**Tatara**  
P45 | 40 min

**Tequila Sunset**  
P43 | 22 min

**The 25<sup>th</sup> Filial Exemplar**  
P44 | 15 min

**The 44<sup>th</sup> Chamber Of Shaolin**  
P43 | 15 min

**The 7<sup>th</sup> Night: MaoMao Revisits**  
P18 | 4 min

**The Gold Teeth**  
P21 | 15 min

**The Great Clarke**  
P43 | 29 min

**The New Tale of Rat Wife**  
P23 | 19 min

**The Old Young Crow**  
P18 | 12 min

**The Rest of our Lives**  
P35 | 98 min

**The Sorrow**  
P30 | 13 min

**The Stranger (Canada)**  
P12 | 17 min

**The Stranger (Korea)**  
P23 | 28 min

**The Teacup**  
P37 | 22 min

**Thrown into Canada**  
P11 | 78 min

**Tiffany Day: The Gratitude Tour**  
P25 | 38 min

**Tokens - Season 2**  
P22 | 10 min

**Tonight, You Will Shine!**  
P12 | 11 min

**Two Apples**  
P17 | 9 min

## U

**Untitled Us**  
P30 | 15 min

**Unwavering**  
P29 | 18 min

**Up All Night**  
P37 | 15 min

## W

**Wallpaper**  
P22 | 9 min

**Water Roots**  
P14 | 15 min

**Waves (For Ryan)**  
P28 | 10 min

**Where I'm From**  
P12 | 29 min

**Whispers Unravelling**  
P28 | 1 min

**Woori's Tomorrow**  
P42 | 25 min

## X

**Xie Xie, Ollie**  
P12 | 9 min

## Y

**You Are the Blue**  
P21 | 14 min

**You Ask Too Much**  
P19 | 10 min

**You're Happy, It's Okay**  
P45 | 19 min

**Young People, Old People & Nothing In Between**  
P44 | 20 min

**Your Child**  
P42 | 27 min

**Yun**  
P22 | 4 min

## Z

**ZIP**  
P30 | 15 min



## FESTIVAL SPONSORS

*Thank you to the following VAFF 2023 Festival sponsors  
for making this festival possible.*

## PUBLIC FUNDERS

Funded by the  
Government  
of Canada

Financé par le  
gouvernement  
du Canada



## BENEFACTORS

**RICHARD K. WONG**

VAFF LIFETIME PATRON

## INDUSTRY SPONSORS



## FESTIVAL SPONSORS



## SPOTLIGHT SPONSORS



## MEDIA SPONSORS



## VENDOR SPONSORS



## VENUE SPONSORS



## COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS





VAFF.ORG

