



A project of the Thomas A. Edison Media Arts Consortium
Celebrating our 40th Anniversary and “fueling the independent spirit since 1981”
c/o Hoboken Historical Museum, 1301 Hudson Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030
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The 40th Annual Thomas Edison Film Festival Collection - 2021

Jury's Stellar Awards

The Ephemeral Orphanage – Animation

15 min. by Lisa Barcy, Chicago, IL, US

A group of tattered paper dolls daydream alternate realities and surreptitiously explore the hidden lives of their strict and secretive caregivers. Hijinks ensue and discoveries are made as the characters live out their childhood fantasies. Created with found paper dolls cut from a 1920's newspaper and found in an attic, the film explores the adults attempt to dictate what girls learn, and the children's talent for discovering forbidden knowledge.

The Toxic Pigs of Fukushima – Documentary

35 min. by Otto Bell, NY, NY, US

The Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011 triggered a tsunami, nuclear meltdown and mass evacuations in Fukushima Prefecture. Today, as part of a Government push to encourage resettlement, local hunters have been enlisted to dispose of radiated wild boars that now roam the abandoned streets and buildings. The film follows a lone hunter into an isolated and changed landscape. Along the way, other citizens who still live near the reactor share their perspectives on the aftermath. “The Toxic Pigs of Fukushima” was inspired by the photographs of co-producers Toru Hanai and Yuki Iwanami. The original score was written and performed by renowned ambient artist Midori Takada.

De-Eschatology – Experimental

5 min. by Charly Santagado and Eriel Santagado, Metuchen, NJ, US

“De-Eschatology” is a physical manifestation of the claustrophobic conditions created by the Covid-19 crisis and the yearning to break free from them. The piece seeks to draw attention to a heightened sense of touch, which directly results from the lack of physical contact many in quarantine face. The film's trajectory explores the gradual de-escalation of shelter-in-place orders, and its psychological effects.

A Trip with Mom – Narrative

25 min. by Sophie Shui, New Taipei, Taiwan

In order to take care of his aged and disabled mother with dementia, Xia Changming is unable to work and lives at home with his mother, wife and son. Under multiple pressures of complaints from his wife, and economic, physical, and mental stress, Changming is always depressed and feels hopeless and helpless to change his family's situation. Finally, after the police bring his mother back after she has wandered away, Changming decides to take her on a trip.

Global Insights Stellar Award

Liberation Heroes: The Last Eyewitnesses – Documentary

40 min. by Vanessa Roth, NY, NY, June Beallor and Andy Friendly, Los Angeles, CA, US

Heroic World War II veterans vividly share their liberation journeys, drawing parallels between the past and present. These powerful eyewitness accounts from Steven Spielberg's USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive®, share a cautionary tale and compelling reminder of what can happen when insidious hatred remains unchecked. With antisemitism, racism and xenophobia on the rise worldwide, this film serves as a call to action to stand against hatred in all its forms. As Alan Moskin, a featured Liberator in the film, says to a group of young cadets, "The hate is still out there... It's up to your generation to change that."

Global Insights Jury's Citation Award

Who Won the War – Documentary

12 min. by Francesca Di Marco, Albany, CA, US

In 1956, orphaned and partially blind, Hiroshima survivor Takashi was invited by the American Government to the United States to “regain his health.” A second grader when the atomic bomb dropped, with six members of his family dead of radiation poisoning, Takashi embarked for the U.S. at 18. As soon as he landed

in California, Takashi realized that he had been identified as an eligible subject for experimentation undertaken by the ABCC (Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission) to understand the effects of intense radioactive energy on the human body. Takashi's story is the journey of an angry young man whose misfortunes begin after the Hiroshima bombing. It is a story of revenge, acceptance of the past, and forgiveness.

Jury's Choice Awards

1-1 - Narrative

7 min. by Nauress Sager, Malmö, Sweden

Ayman's sex date with Jonas gets crashed by his friends Amira and Samir. This comedy short takes a hilarious and positive turn as it breaks stereotypes and celebrates diversity.

A.I. Mama - Experimental

5 min. by Asuka Lin, LA, CA, US

A.I. Mama is a post-cyberpunk Super 8 film that features Kei, a young non-binary programmer who attempts to reconnect with their lost mother by building an AI that can import and process Kei's memories through ingesting their diary entries. The film incorporates themes of young queer gender identity, under a repressed cultural upbringing that is specific to Asian mothers and their children post Western immigration.

A Family That Steals Dogs – Animation

7 min. by John C. Kelly, Knoxville, TN, US

Strange experiences and realizations lead a grieving artist to reconsider his identity and beliefs in this meditation on grief, family and mental illness.

Alina – Narrative

25 min. by Rami Kodeih, LA, CA, US

“*Alina*” is about a group of women in Poland’s Warsaw Ghetto during World War II, who try to smuggle a three-month-old baby to safety before the Nazis send her to a concentration camp. The film is a story of women taking action in the face of persecution and fascism and is based on true events.

A Portrait – Documentary

3 min. by Carlotta Beck Peccoz, London, UK

Following a journey to Dungeness and Prospect Cottage, acclaimed cinematographer Christopher Hughes reminisces about his life, his career and

his life-long friendship with director Derek Jarman. The film was shot on a cartridge of Super8 film and edited in-camera and is a loving tribute to Hughes - the filmmaker's friend and mentor.

Beyond Noh – Animation

3 min. by Patrick Smith, NY, NY, US and Kaori Ishida, Osaka, Japan

"Beyond Noh" rhythmically animates 3,475 individual masks from all over the world, beginning with the distinctive masks of the Japanese Noh theater and continuing on a cultural journey through ritual, performance, utility, and politics.

Black Thoughts – Narrative

30 min. by Dwayne Logan, Nashville, TN, US

Aiming to bridge the divide that exists between embattled Americans, "Black Thoughts" places viewers within the history ravaged mind of a broken-hearted Black man, as he contemplates how confusion has kept citizens engaged in an endless cycle of conflict.

BoxBallet – Animation

15 min. by Anton Dyakov, Saint-Petersburg, Russia

One day, a delicate ballerina named Olya meets the rough, surly boxer Evgeny. The contrast between their worlds and their philosophies is so sharp that even the possibility of these two characters crossing paths seems incredible. Are they ready to embrace those shy feelings that have sprung up between them? Can they overcome all external influences and allow their fragile loving souls to step out into the open?

Carolee, Barbara & Gunvor - Documentary

8 min. by Lynne Sachs, Brooklyn, NY, US

From 2015 to 2017, Lynne Sachs visited with Carolee Schneemann, Barbara Hammer and Gunvor Nelson, three multi-faceted artists who have embraced the moving image throughout their lives. From Carolee's 18th Century house in the woods of Upstate New York to Barbara's West Village studio to Gunvor's childhood village in Sweden, Lynne shoots film with each woman in the place where she finds grounding and spark.

Close as Brothers - Documentary

5 min. by Jennifer Hardacker, Forest Grove, OR, US

Two teenage boys, one neurotypical and one not, discuss what it's like to be brothers, and why we shouldn't treat anyone like normal human beings.

Digits of Pi - Experimental

3.14 min. by Tom Bessoir, NY, NY and Joshua Pines, San Francisco, CA, US

Inspired by Marcel Duchamp's "Anemic Cinema," filmmaker Tom Bessoir set out to create a film composed within a circular frame. This circular composition led directly to using the number pi for the underlying structure. Having the digits of pi sung on the soundtrack is an homage to "Einstein on the Beach" by Philip Glass and Robert Wilson.

Ekstase - Experimental

11 min. by Marion Kellmann, Cologne, Germany

"Ekstase" is a montage of scenes from various European silent films. Based on similar settings and gestures it explores the stereotype of women on the verge of insanity. Reaching its peak in an eruption of hysteria the film displays the women as captives in a continuous cycle of symptoms, diagnosis and treatment.

Lines of Exile - Animation

7 min. by Eric Patrick, Evanston, IL, US

Hamid Naficy is a scholar of cultural studies of diaspora, exile, and postcolonial cinemas and media, and of Iranian and Middle Eastern cinemas. His fifty years of drawings of prominent scholars, philosophers, and theorists form a unique index of the evolution of cultural theory over the last decades. In this portrait, Naficy intimately recounts this evolution through his drawings.

Metro6 – Animation

8 min. by Geoff Hecht, San Francisco, CA, US

Today is an important day for Zak, but everything is going horribly wrong. During his adventurous bus ride, Zak goes through a deeply personal metamorphosis. Below the comedic surface lies a warning for all of us to not lose the importance of human connections. As Zak becomes more socially aware and appreciative of his diverse community, so do we.

My Body Given for You – Experimental

12 min. by Anna-Clair Ostasenko Bogdanoff, Paris, France

Beautifully shot in lush black and white "My Body Given for You" invokes themes of religion, desolation, and emotional hunger. Enigmatic and stunning.

No Place – Narrative

23 min. by Gabriel Amaral, São Paulo, Brazil

When Nego discovers that the cacao farm he lives and works on is going to be sold, he must face not only the loss of his home and job, but also the daily

contact he has with the land he cherishes so much. This moving film deals with the hierarchical and co-dependent relationship between employer and employee, specifically within the context of a developing country where the power one holds over the other is often unconscionable.

On the Domestication of Sheep – Animation

8 min. by Jill Godmilow, NY, NY, US

This animated film illustrates the process whereby wild animals are domesticated and turned into machines—in the case of sheep, wool, milk and meat machines gives precise instruction and gives precise instruction on how that is accomplished. It proposes that, historically, the domestication of wild animals was a model for human slavery and for the sexual subjugation of women... at first female captives, then wives and daughters. The film also contextualizes an "educational" film which teaches us how to appreciate, naively, the "gifts" that animals "give" us.

Pond – Narrative

14 min. by Tyler Macri, San Francisco, CA, US

Elizabeth, ten years old, lives with her reclusive mother in a dilapidated apartment where fish infest the piping, surfacing by way of a drain in the bathtub. Dark visuals and dream-like pacing converge to create a first-person portrait of distressed childhood.

Raw – Narrative

10 min. by Drake Shannon, LA, CA, US

During a military patrol, past and present are blurred by a horrifying transgression. “Raw” is based on a composition of true stories, interviews, and discussions with women of war.

The Chimney Swift - Animation

5 min. by Frédéric Schuld, Hamburg, Germany

Until the end of the 19th century children between four and eight were used as chimney sweepers. In this allegorical film, a child climbs up a chimney while a bird sails down into it to build a nest. An encounter with no way back. We hear a British chimney sweeper describing his everyday routine - forcing young children to become workers. While we observe a child cleaning a chimney, the master's statement gets more personal with every sentence, until we understand that he is speaking about his own past.

Wuqiao Circus – Documentary

14 min. by Lukas Berger, Lisbon, Portugal

In Wuqiao, a small Chinese town, the inhabitants are dedicated to the circus. For decades, different generations have been presenting themselves as clowns, magicians, acrobats and tamers. During the holidays of Chinese New Year, the Wuqiao Acrobatic World turns into a big playground for spectators. Surrounded by Buddhist temples and Taoist sculptures, artists create their own space of circus tradition, imagination, illusion and reality. Backstage life is melancholic. "Wuqiao Circus," is a film about circus life fragments, performative existence and the love for playfulness.

Jury's Citation Awards

Exposed Man with Gun in Hand - Narrative

4 min. by Francisco Saco, San José, Costa Rica

An armed man tries to rid himself of the burden that is his aggression. The weapon he wields acts as a symbol of the patterns of behavior produced by an overly violent society.

Green Grass – Animation

8 min. by Michael Greco, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Poignant, powerful, and told without dialogue, "Green Grass" is a thought-provoking allegory that follows two hopeful migrants who make the arduous journey to what they believe must be a better life only to discover their destination may no longer be the place they thought it was.

Heartbreaker – Narrative

7 min. by Aidan Cheeatow, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

"Heartbreaker" is based on observations by the filmmaker while he worked as a visiting hours security guard at the Catholic Children's Aid Society in Scarborough, Toronto. In this poignant film, a young mother struggles to cope with losing custody of her baby girl.

How Can I Forget? - Narrative

8 min. by Natalia Andreadis, London, UK

Joe and Connie's awkward blind date takes an interesting turn when they discover that they share the same magical ability. "How Can I Forget" is a fantastical romance about acceptance - accepting one's self, accepting adventure and accepting the inevitable.

***I want to make a film about women* – Documentary**

12 min. by Karen Pearlman, Sydney, Australia

“I want to make a film about women” is a queer, speculative, documentary love letter to Russian constructivist women. It asks what the revolutionary women artists of the 1920s said, what they did, and what they might have created had it not been for Stalin's suppression.

***Jane* – Animation**

5 min. by Ilene E, Princeton, NJ, US

Based on true events, “Jane” is an animated film about being proud to be Chinese American.

***Last Stop for Lost Property* - Documentary**

13 min. by Vicente Cueto, Brooklyn, NY, US

Deep underground, as millions rush through the New York City subway system, countless items get left behind. The MTA’s gargantuan *Lost Property Unit* is near impossible to navigate alone. Luckily, Sonny Drayton can point us in the right direction. Through his humor and intimate personal knowledge of the subway, Sonny invites us to consider what it means to lose and be lost underground, often the last stop for those who’ve fallen through the social safety net and have nowhere else to go. “Last Stop for Lost Property” questions how we value the artifacts of our lives: big and small, cherished and dismissed, tangible and existential.

***Lost Lula* – Animation**

3 min. by Steven Vander Meer, Arcata, CA, US

“Having practiced life drawing (the study of the live human figure in art) for many years, I felt the need to animate my figures, but not in the typical way that a human being moves.” Steven Vander Meer’s figures flow in and out of existence, much like their ephemeral poses during drawing sessions. The rhythm and tempo of the music, results in a kind of two-dimensional dance of lines on a surface.

***Lullaby for a Pandemic* - Experimental**

1 min. by Gwendolyn Audrey Foster, Lincoln, NE, US

“Lullaby for a Pandemic” is a cineaste’s “pandemic” lullaby for nodding off to dreamland. A Surrealist dream, filmed and edited under quarantine, made during the pandemic of Spring 2020.

Maya at 24 - Experimental

4 min. by Lynne Sachs, Brooklyn, NY

Lynne Sachs films her daughter Maya in 16mm black and white film, at ages 6, 16 and 24. At each iteration, Maya runs around her mother, in a circle – clockwise - as if propelling herself in the same direction as time, forward. Conscious of the strange simultaneous temporal landscape that only film can convey, we watch Maya in motion at each distinct age.

One of Their Own - Narrative

4 min. by Allen Colombo, LA, CA, US

A digital boy gets into trouble trying to fit in with the human kids.

Orville + Bob - Documentary

30 min. by Alan Griswold, LA, CA, US

“Orville + Bob” is the story of two individuals from incredibly different backgrounds who came together after a serendipitous encounter in Manhattan in 1971. More than the story of their meeting, this is the story of how these men have stayed together for over 49 years despite the many cultural and societal mores that would otherwise divide them. The film offers proof of the age-old adage that “love truly is love.”

Perfect Fifths - Experimental

8 min. by Courtney Stephens, LA, CA, US

“Perfect Fifths” is a portrait of artist and piano tuner Jerome Ellis, and a meditation on intervals in music, nature, and language. In dialogue with the materiality and history of celluloid film, the film moves between the act of tuning, which brings the world into harmony, at least temporarily, and the expanse of time, which brings suffering and instability.

Pipo and Blind Love - Narrative

13 min. by Hugo Le Gourrierec, Paris, France

In a de-humanized world where emotions are rationed and measured by a gauge, Pipo, a factory worker, falls in love with a woman sitting on a bench. He will try anything to attract her attention and seduce her with his own “language.”

Time Perspective - Experimental

3 min. by Line Klungseth Johansen, Trondheim, Norway

“Time” explores time perspective theory - the idea that our perception of time influences our emotions, perceptions and actions.

Waste Away – Animation

5 min. by Elly Stern, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

In a trash-filled city, a homeless woman's encounter with a fish takes an unexpected turn. The responsibility of motherhood gives her the strength to fight for survival, while the forces of nature threaten to overtake her.

Director's Choice Awards

Alder – Experimental

9 min. by Vanda Ladeira, London, UK

“Alder” is a magical realist short drama set in an imaginary and eerie forest. The guardian spirit of the forest faces a dilemma between following its heart or its mind. The film looks at the power struggle we all face when duty and love, pulls us in opposite directions. “Alder” has an ecological message conveyed through visual metaphors and inspired by folk and fairy tales.

A Poem in Bamboo – Animation

5 min. by Chun-Yao Chang and XuFei Wu, Jersey City, NJ, US

When bad things happen in life, some people are lucky enough to move on, but not the lady A-Yuan. A-Yuan is trapped in the past after the death of her lover. Her big house contains many memories. This film is a glimpse of a traditional and silent woman who doesn't speak but has many secrets locked in her mind.

Broken Relationship – Experimental

4 min. by Wrik Mead, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

“Broken Relationship” moves through a kaleidoscope of colour and pixels to fragments of embracing bodies. Using glitched video footage from classic porn, the broken and distorted imagery speaks to the difficulty that LBGTQ youth often encounter when trying to navigate through their sexuality and relationships.

Concerning the Way of Describing Places – Documentary

14 min. by Sean Hanley, Brooklyn, NY, US

In 1817, a surveyor's line was inscribed through Bergen County, New Jersey and became one of the foundational measurements in the mapping of the United States. The film retraces the line 200 years later and along the way considers the consequences of precision, place names, and viewing from a distance.

Covid-19: A Portrait of NYC – Documentary

7 min. by Duda Penteado, Jersey City, NJ

A documentary short that explores NYC through the lens of seasoned photographer and Daily News editor, Luiz C. Ribeiro. In the midst of an unfolding global pandemic, the images captured are often rare and unexpected. Isolation, frustration, and tension spill over into the streets as images move from iconic empty spaces to the Black Lives Matter protest scenes and police confrontations.

Dancing is an Old Friend - Experimental

12 min. by Marta Renzi, Nyack, NY, US

Two old friends re-connect virtually. One still dances professionally, the other only for pleasure. Like their friendship, their dancing manages to transcend time and distance.

Holly – Animation

9 min. by Chris Carboni, Brooklyn, NY, US

“Holly” tells the story of a woman coping with a new reality after enduring a life-altering medical procedure that leaves her unable to speak. She must learn how to navigate the world anew and come to terms with how each facet of her life has changed.

JamieSonShine – Experimental

5 min. by Phoebe Jane Hart and Jamison Hart, LA, CA, US

“JamieSonShine” is an experimental documentary that explores the effect of mental illness on the younger sibling of a person with schizophrenia. A collaborative reimagining that uses animation and home videos, the film is a testament to the complex and powerful bond between a brother and sister and the line between fantasy and reality. A diagnosis is never the whole story.

Kapaemahu - Animation

8 min. by Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu, Dean Hamer, and Joe Wilson, Honolulu, HI, US

Long ago, four extraordinary individuals of both male and female spirit brought the healing arts from Tahiti to Hawaii. Beloved by the people for their gentle ways and miraculous cures, they imbued four giant boulders with their powers. The stones still stand on what is now Waikiki Beach, but the true story behind them has been hidden – until now. Narrated in an ancient Hawaiian dialect, “Kapaemahu” brings this powerful legend back to life in vivid animation, seen through the eyes of a curious child.

Lazarus – Experimental

8 min. by Tuixén Benet Cosculluela, Barcelona, Spain; and LA, CA, US

Through a dialogue between movement and landscape, “Lazarus” reflects on the objectification of the woman body in film. The famous quote by Edgar Allan Poe “the death of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world” triggers a succession of falls and recoveries that escape the poetic by trying too hard to find it.

Liberate - Experimental

5 min. by Karen Lavender, Beverly Hills, CA, US

Have you ever felt that the world only sees you as sliver of who you really are? In this performance art piece, Ingrid Rogers, a woman of color, expresses her desire to be fully seen and heard. “Liberate” is a call to action to step into your light and create unapologetically.

Listen to Us - Documentary

15 min. by Juliana Henao, Savannah, GA, US

“Listen to Us” is a documentary that highlights the many contributions of women in sound within the American film industry. It addresses women's underrepresentation in the industry and explores what the future holds for them. “Listen to Us” is a celebration of women in sound.

Metamorphosis – Animation

4 min. by Wang Xi, LA, CA, US

A butterfly is resurrected from a rare specimen collection and explores the ruins of an ancient civilization that leads to a mysterious underground frozen cave. In the cave, the butterfly meets the Butterfly Man, who is an amalgamation of many other butterflies. The film explores philosophical ideas about life forms decomposing and then transforming into new organisms, between dreams and reality, and between humans and non-human creatures.

Miracle on Central Park West - Animation

5 min. by Candy Kugel, NY, NY

Veteran filmmaker/ animator Candy Kugel continues to regale us with stories from her past. “Miracle on Central Park West” demonstrates that a random act of kindness leads to a real New York miracle!

Mutiny! – Narrative

17 min. by Matthew Gratzner, LA, CA, US

A swashbuckling, action-adventure comedy featuring a progressive Captain dealing with a crew that's set in their old ways— all while confronting

gender inequality and the lack of self-awareness of overt masculinity... but all seen through the eyes of 17th Century Pirates.

Phantasmagoria, 1945 – Experimental

11 min. by Karl Nussbaum, Brooklyn, NY, US

“Phantasmagoria, 1945” is the story told by Nazi Propaganda Minister, Joseph Goebbels, to his six young children while presenting an after-dinner slide show. It is a children’s ghost story about propaganda and the media; a meditation on the past as a warning to the present.

Radical Care: The Auntie Sewing Squad

8 min. by Valerie Soe, San Francisco, CA, US

This documentary short looks at the Auntie Sewing Squad, a group of mostly women of color volunteers who came together following the U.S. government’s botched response to the COVID-19 crisis. The Aunties sew masks for farmworkers, day laborers, unhoused people, refugee and immigrant groups, First Nations tribes, recently incarcerated people, Black Lives Matter demonstrators, and others in need in the U.S. Using images, voices and sounds primarily generated by the Aunties themselves, in tandem with Kronos Quartet’s performance of Susie Ibarra’s “Pulsation,” the film seeks to inspire others to work toward radical care in the time of Covid-19.

Roberto Lugo: Without Wax - Documentary

11 min. by Cyrus Duff and Edward Columbia, Brooklyn, NY, US

After escaping the hard knocks of Kensington, Philadelphia, to become a world-renowned ceramics artist, Roberto Lugo returns to the ‘hood’ to pay his inspiration forward and make art that confronts systemic injustice, starting close to home.

Russ Johnson: The Fork King - Documentary

5 min. by Eugene Lehnert and Elizabeth Niles, Brooklyn, NY, US

NYC-based artist, Russ Johnson, brings forks to life in his graffiti. He uses forks to be critical of our consumer-society, to promote tolerance, to comment on other social issues and to simply be amusing.

Salvage – Documentary

10 min. by Christopher Boulton, Tampa, FL, US

Salvage questions the allure of old objects by reimagining obsolete tools as reliquaries haunted by the souls of disgruntled workers who resent their new

jobs. This hybrid intersectional documentary uses magic realism to critique the inequities of gender, ethnicity, and class that underpin consumer capitalism.

Sonnie - Documentary

11 min. by Samuel Mirpoorian, Indianapolis, IN, US

For Deon “Sonnie” Casey, life has not gone according to plan. Raised by his grandmother after the death of his parents, Deon is now a single parent himself, working over 60 hours a week. Despite setbacks, Deon is determined to provide a better life for his son. Finding strength and solace in competitive weightlifting and his work at the YMCA, Deon pushes onward in hope that things will get better. SONNIE is an intimate, verité documentary short that illuminates determination, redemption, and fatherhood.

The Descent – Narrative

9 min. by Brandon Mercer, Brooklyn, NY, US

“The Descent” is a complex and fantastical tale that traverses the precarious aftermath of trauma, how these events shape us and our realities. Follow a sister as she dives headfirst into the distorted mind of her lost brother and the world he has created.

The Moviegoer – Narrative

17 min. by Leif Larson, Brooklyn, NY, US

With cinemas closed throughout the city, a moviegoer creates a film experience at home.

The Winter – Animation

5 min. by Xin Li, Melbourne, Australia

Walking in a snowy forest, a peasant sees an unusual deer and goes to follow it. The deer is alluring, and the peasant wants to catch it.

Three – Animation

2 min. by Soyeon Kim, Lake Balboa, CA, US

“Three” is an experimental film that visualizes the relationships with one another. The film's concept was originated from a phase in 'Walden' by Henry David Thoreau: "I had three chairs in my house; one for solitude, two for friendship, three for society." Using the chairs as metaphors, the abstract imagery symbolizes how our relationship evolves among us and allow us to re-evaluate ourselves in current days. The film was created using an object stop-motion and traditional & digital drawing techniques.

Tides – Experimental

8 min. by Andre Silva, Wilmington, NC, US

Filmed at Masonboro Island, an undeveloped barrier island in southeastern North Carolina, “Tides” contemplates the liminal space between the modern technological world and that more ecological dimension we label as “nature” or “the environment.”

Tumbling Towards Home – Documentary

14 min. by Imelda O'Reilly, NY, NY and Kildare, Ireland

“Tumbling Towards Home” is a coming-of-age story about Malcolm Adams, an Irish immigrant who moves to New York in 1989 to study acting under Alan Langdon. He works through the grief from the loss of his mother and his friend Philip Seymour Hoffman. This leads to his decision of where to put his hat down and call it home.

Twinkle Twinkle Little Star - Narrative

12 min. by Shiyue Xu, Tianjin, China; Glendale, CA, US

“Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” is the story of a boy’s pursuit to achieve his dream of becoming a pianist but having to give up his dream when reality sets in. The song of the same name was used and adapted into various compositions to mirror the stages and challenges of his life from boy to man.

We, the Slow – Animation

5 min. by Jeanne Waltz, Lisbon, Portugal

An animated essay film about time and the different representations we have of it, following two main metaphors - the movements of water and competitive running.

Whirlwind – Animation

2 min. by Adolfo Ruiz, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

“Whirlwind” is a hand-drawn animation, consisting of over 700 ink drawings, rendered during the early stages (from March to July) of the 2020 global pandemic. The film’s visuals were elicited by unfolding events during these months. The process of drawing this film, frame by frame, coincided with a unique sense of time and space that emerged during the pandemic. Influenced by early twentieth century animation, this film attempts to visualize new rhythms of life emerging during a time of rapid sociocultural change—shifting away from carefully controlled perspectives and vanishing points, while depicting a constant sense of movement and transformation.

Wild Eyes – Animation

6 min. by Nina Prange, Ludwigsburg, Germany

With a classic look and experimental perspectives, "Wild Eyes" takes us into the dark world of the blind girl Kitana. Through her eyes, we can see again and understand how big the sacrifice was. A 2D animated short about friendship and guilt.

Willingboro: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow - Documentary

16 min. by Kelvin Z Phillips, NY, NY, US

A short documentary that exemplifies how America ignores its dying suburbs. These beloved hometowns are the canaries in the coal mine when measuring the true economic and racial health of communities, and of America.

Wolf Call – Documentary

9 min. by Ramey Newell, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

John Ramer has worked in animal sanctuaries most of his adult life, often without pay, and feels this is his life's calling. John's experiences working with captive wolves have left him deeply changed, driving him to share his knowledge and passion with others in the hope that wild wolves might one day return to Colorado's open lands. Filmed entirely at a remote wolf sanctuary in the Wet Mountains of southern Colorado, "Wolf Call" asks us to rethink our relationship to wild and captive animals, as well as the world we inhabit together.

Official Selections – Honorable Mention

Beneath - Animation

5 min. by Ian Martinez, Nevada City, CA, US

A caretaker spirit living at the bottom of the world makes an unsettling discovery about the world above.

Bru'dhars – Narrative

14 min. by Sriram Papolu, Northville, MI, US

Through his tumultuous relationship with his younger brother, a young man begins to understand the troubled past that is running his life and has a chance to end a generational cycle of abuse and pain. "Bru'dhars" is based on numerous true stories from the Indian American community as well as the filmmaker's personal experiences.

Caravan – Narrative

13 min. by William Michael Anderson, Alhambra, CA, US

What happens when an innocent man stands accused? “Caravan,” based on true stories from the West Country of England, centers on an outcast in a rural English community who draws the attention of a vengeful mother after a chance encounter with her two young boys.

Charlotte's Photographs – Documentary

9 min. by John Akre, Minneapolis, MN, US

The forgotten snapshots of a nurse in 1940's Minneapolis take us into the world of women's work in this animated musical documentary.

Dear Elsa: 10 Letters + 10 Experiments – Experimental

31 min. by Amanda Madden, Salt Lake City, UT, US

Through a series of channeling experiments and personal letters, filmmaker, Amanda Madden attempts to embody and communicate with the ghost of the radical poet, model, performance artist, sculptor, and time traveler, Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven (1874-1927) about sex, art, madness, and living and creating as a womxn artist.

Hyphen – Documentary

18 min. by Laura Kamugisha, La Prairie, Québec, Canada

Marie-Chantal's life is split in two. She has lived half her life in Rwanda and the other half in Canada. She is a political refugee. “Hyphen” explores the notions of identity, attachments and the concept of home.”

I've Been Afraid – Experimental

6 min. by Cecelia Condit, Shorewood, WI, US

“I've Been Afraid” is a musical about fear, how women get abused, stay in abusive relationships, and leave.

Lairs – Experimental

2 min. by Emma Penaz Eisner, San Francisco, CA, US

“Lairs” is an experimental stop motion animation that visually interprets a poem of the same name which first appeared in Eclectica Magazine, April/May 2019, by the filmmaker's mother. Lairs, layers, liars: In this poetry film, hatred insidiously supplants a couple's love.

“Love” – Narrative

4 min. by Andrea Ashton, Brooklyn, NY, US

A narrative film featuring a series of touching vignettes of two women falling in and out of love -- but told in reverse chronology and physically performed in reverse then flipped "forward" in the edit.

my favorite software is being here – Animation

18 min. by Alison Nguyen, Brooklyn, NY, US

"my favorite software is being here" is a part of Alison Nguyen's body of work centering on Andra8, a computer-generated woman based on the artist's physicality. A piece of speculative fiction, the video tells the story of a simulacrum subaltern who has been created by an algorithm and raised by the Internet in isolation in a virtual void. From the apartment where she's been placed, Andra8 survives through various forms of digital labor—working as a virtual assistant, a data cleanser, a content creator, and a life coach. Andra8 explores the implications of such an existence, and what arises when one attempts to subvert them.

Only the Earth and the Mountains – Documentary

30 min. by Elleni Sclavenitis, Denver, CO, US

"Only the Earth and the Mountains" interrogates the narrative of settler colonialism in the American West by white pioneers and its implications to society today by examining the repercussions of the Sand Creek Massacre, in which more than 200 Cheyenne and Arapaho people were murdered by U.S. Cavalry troops on November 29, 1864. In speaking to the survivors' descendants, it becomes clear that this event is a living, perpetual loss—one that should not be forgotten.

PreGame – Narrative

8 min. by Dana Silverman, Los Angeles, CA, US

A former athlete and his talented younger brother work to resolve their differences during a practice for a championship game.

Rockin' the Coffin – Documentary

9 min. by Cailleah Scott-Grimes, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

A father's coffin-building during COVID provokes playful but serious discussions about death with his daughter.

Shaking a Singapore Spear - Animation

17 min. by Hannes Rall, Singapore, Singapore

An animated documentary about the relevance of Shakespeare's classical works for digital natives in Singapore: with live action and animation combined. The film

was created in close collaboration with the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Space Vamps – Animation

6 min. by Cooper Troxell, NY, NY, US

Space Vamps is an allegory for the world of 2020: a high-flying, gilded age that disguises immense societal inequality below. When the Space Vamps discover a sun that allows them to walk in daylight, they rejoice. But like the myth of Icarus, they fly too close to the sun.

Tesseract – Experimental

8 min. by João Pedro Oliveira, Portugal and Santa Barbara, CA, USA

A tesseract, also defined as a hypercube is the four-dimensional equivalent of the cube. This video presents a possible journey throughout the six faces of a cube, and how they can be transformed and projected into a tesseract using different processes: translation, rotation, fragmentation, explosion and implosion.

The Ballad of Lucky Dave – Animation

5 min. by Courtney Pratt, Daly City, CA, US

In the Wild West, renowned bounty hunter Lucky Dave risks his street cat cred for the girl he loves but her dark secret may just tear them apart.

The Heart of Camden - The Story of Father Michael Doyle – Documentary

40 min. by Douglas Clayton, Lawrence Township, NJ, US

This heartfelt documentary explores Father Michael Doyle's journey from rural Ireland to the US and finally to Camden, NJ where he attempts to reverse the city's fall. From the start of his placement at Sacred Heart Church, the strong-willed priest applied himself with tireless effort. What shines through Heart of Camden is Father (now Monsignor) Doyle's devotion to God and his fellow man, and to the city of Camden, where he truly has given his heart.

The Most Beautiful Song I've Heard – Experimental

16 min. by Blake Braden, Kansas City, MO, US

A hybrid of documentary and narrative primarily composed of footage taken over the course of a near decade — without the knowledge that it would one day become this film. “The Most Beautiful Song I’ve Heard” is a fractured memory archive of people, places, fleeting moments — festivals, birthdays, funerals, weddings, parties, lonely quiet nights — hours, days, weeks, months, seasons, and years.

The WBGO Story...Bright Moments from Newark to the World - Documentary

55 min. by Chris Daniel, Tinton Falls, NJ, US

A group of urban leaders and community activists looking to make a positive change in Newark, NJ came together in the 1970's after the Newark riots, to create WBGO, New Jersey's first public radio station. The film tells how this small radio station owned by the Newark Board of Education was turned into a powerful cultural force heard throughout northern New Jersey and New York City and now reaches millions of Jazz listeners around the world. Featuring interviews and stories from people who helped launch the station, including its founder, Bob Ottenhoff and Mrs. Dorthaan Kirk (widow of the great multi-instrumentalist Rahsaan Roland Kirk), who was key in helping WBGO grow to where it is today.

Tiger and Ox – Animation

8 min. by Seunghee Kim, Seoul, Republic of Korea

What does divorce mean to women in Korean patriarchal society? Is a fatherless family a failure? In order to find the answer to these questions, a single mother and her daughter start a conversation.

Unguarded - Documentary

45 min. by Simonetta D'Italia Weiner, Brooklyn, NY, US

“Unguarded” is an unprecedented documentary that takes us inside the walls of APAC, the revolutionary Brazilian prison system. Focused on the recovery of the person rather than punishment, APAC shows us that, as one inmate put it, “no one escapes from love.”

Up We Soar - Animation

50 min. by Yan Ma, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

“Up We Soar” is an animated documentary that brings to life an intimate personal tragedy in the background of large-scale persecution. Through animation and live interviews, the film takes us into the lives of regular people who dare to speak the truth in the face of oppression. A young girl in Tianjin, China, Fuyao, leads a happy life with her parents until the Chinese regime starts a massive persecution against Falun Gong, a spiritual meditation practice. Her parents, who are both practitioners, are given long jail sentences and Fuyao is forced to move in with her extended family. There she struggles to cope with the challenges of growing up and missing her parents.

What Will Become of Us - Documentary

57 min. by Stephanie Ayanian and Joseph Myers, State College, PA, US

Can Armenian Americans create a new future – honoring their past, while unshackling themselves from its trauma? The Genocide casts a long shadow. Follow six Armenian Americans – famous and otherwise – as they try to step out of that shadow.

For further information regarding the films and/or programming, please contact:

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