



Topaz

Film Festival

October 20-30, 2022

PRESENTED BY
WOMEN IN FILM DALLAS
VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON

Virtual Schedule

Thursday, October 20, 2022

All films available online "On-Demand"
Virtual Red Carpet & Opening Ceremony

Friday, October 21, 2022

6 PM - "Ticketyboo" Documentary Feature

Saturday, October 22, 2022

11 AM - Student Short Film Block

1:15 PM - Graduate Student Short Film Block

4 PM - Body Autonomy Short Film Block

7 PM - Comedy Short Film Block

Sunday, October 23, 2022

11 AM - International Short Film Block

1:30 PM - Animation Short Film Block

4 PM - Scifi Short Film Block

7 PM - Documentary Short Film Block

Monday, October 24, 2022

6 PM - "Women In The Front Seat" Documentary Feature

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

6 PM - Texas Short Film Block

8:15 PM - Experimental Short Film Block

Wednesday, October 26, 2022

6 PM - Narrative Short Film Block

Thursday, October 27, 2022

6 PM - Tribute to Mom Short Film Block

All scheduled film screenings are live virtual watch parties followed by live moderated Q&A's with the filmmakers from each screening.

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FILMOCRACY

In-Person Schedule

Friday, October 28, 2022

6:30PM - Ticket Pickup & Doors Open
7 PM - Red Carpet, Hors d'oeuvre & Cocktails
8 PM - Topaz Awards Ceremony

Saturday, October 29, 2022

11 AM - Film Screening*
1 PM- Texas Production Panel
2 PM- Film Screening*
4 PM - NFT Workshop
5 PM - Film Festival Doctor Workshop
6 PM - Film Screening*
8 PM - Film Screening*

*All in-person film screenings will be followed by a Q&A with the filmmakers in attendance.

Sunday, October 30, 2022

10:30 AM - Doors Open & Brunch Served
11 AM - Filmmaker Awards Ceremony

LOCATION

Plaza Arts Center
1115 Fourth Ave
Carrollton, TX 75006



A Note From the Topaz Festival Directors

WIFD Members, Supporters, Filmmakers and Friends:

Thank you for joining us! It has been an absolute honor to lead the Topaz Film Festival for our fourth and final year. We are proud of the strides the festival has made in such a short amount of time. Together we have conquered a branding change, a global pandemic and a difficult political climate. But we have persevered and grown in our determination to provide this platform for up and coming film visionaries. We have trained a fantastic group of women to take on this tremendous task next year and are excited to see the greatness they will accomplish while focusing on our mission to elevate women filmmakers.

2022 marks the 21st year that Women in Film Dallas has presented a film festival and we hope this is the most memorable yet. Although the festival has changed names and venues over the years, our mission has remained the same. We aim to provide a platform for independent women filmmakers to promote their work, share their voices and support one another. Throughout the past 21 years, women have gained more parity and opportunity, but there is still room for improvement in our industry. Topaz has expanded our submission criteria this year with the goal of increasing gender parity across all aspects of film making.

In 2020 we introduced a virtual component to our festival which opened the door for more people to see what we are doing here in the great state of Texas. We have decided to continue with a hybrid festival model, which allows our filmmakers and audience to interact and enjoy the festival however is most convenient for them. We are excited to offer the virtual portion of our festival this year on the Filmocracy platform. At the beginning of 2022, we were accepted into the first ever Filmocracy fellowship where we met other women focused film festivals from around the world and learned how to grow our festival.

Each year we and the Topaz Festival Committee volunteer our time and passion to helping this festival flourish. While there is conflict locally and around the world, we all turn to Topaz as a refuge, to focus on a way to feed into other women and help them grow. This event would not be possible without each of our programmers, jurors, volunteers and WIFD Board members. From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you for your continued service and support. May your generosity be paid back to you ten-fold.

Enjoy the show!
Alicia Pascual & Connie Lo Ferrara



About Topaz

For 20 years, Women in Film Dallas has provided a platform for independent female filmmakers to promote their work through its annual film festival. Originally named Chick Flicks and subsequently known as Flicks by Chicks, we changed the name in 2019 to Topaz Film Festival to better reflect the spirit of our film competition and the history of our organization. The name Topaz comes from the official gemstone of Texas, which was thought in ancient times to enhance visions. In 1987, WIFD established the Topaz Award to honor distinguished Texas women who, through their own visions, have made outstanding contributions to film and television history. With the Topaz Film Festival, we strive to honor past Topaz Award recipients and the vision of new independent female film makers.

The Topaz Film Festival is an extension of the Women in Film Dallas Scholastic Grant Fund, a 501c3 that provides financial support through grants and scholarships to women in the pursuit of media arts degrees and those in the productions of film, television and screen-based media. Proceeds from the festival will serve to fund the scholastic grant.

Executive Directors - Alicia Pascual & Connie Lo Ferrara
Programming Director - Andrea Newham
Festival Programming & Awards Coordinator - Lisha Brock
Media & Promotions - Vivian Fullerlove
Leadership Team - Carol Cooke, Kena Sosa, Whitney Davis

Programmers:

Gail Cronauer, Genia Christine, Lynne Reynolds, Lueretha Booker, Mahalia Jackson-Butler, Sharie Vance

*2022 Topaz t-shirt designed by
Susan Bin*



Meet our Film Jurors

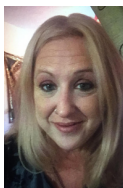


Amanda Melby

Actor, Filmmaker
AmandaMelby.com

Iris Lopez

Prep Tech/ Camera Assistant
Check out her work on IMDB



Stephanie De Palma

Filmmaker/Producer/Writer/Film Lecturer
Check out her work on IMDB

Suzanne Jackowski

Writer
suzannejackowski.com/screenwriter



Vanessa Jimenez

Filmmaker
ofthepine.com

Patty Newton

Assistant Professor,
Practice in the Cinematic Arts,
University of Texas at Arlington
vimeo.com/pattynewton



Nikki Dixon

Actor, Writer
Check out her work on IMDB

Laurie McNair

Editor/Motion Graphic Artist
www.linkedin.com/in/laurie-mcnair-73146b48/



Sam Chew

Editor
www.linkedin.com/in/sam-chew

Rick McKiddy

Executive Producer
Check out his work on IMDB

*A Note From
WIFD President
Tiffany Vollmer*



WIFD MEMBERS, FILMMAKERS, SUPPORTERS, FAMILY, AND FRIENDS,
WELCOME TO THE 21st ANNUAL TOPAZ FILM FESTIVAL!

Women In Film Dallas has been empowering women for over three decades. We continuously strive to show the world through “her eyes.” The Topaz Film Festival celebrates these women as we strive to get our voices heard and points of view seen. Our stories must be told, especially in today’s social climate with the ongoing challenges women face. We come together over the next week and a half to show the joy, laughter, accomplishments, adversity, true love, and sometimes heartbreak that women endure and the films inspired by these events.

I would like to take a moment to recognize and congratulate the two powerhouse women behind this fantastic event!

Alicia Pascual and Connie Lo Ferrara have been working in tandem for the past four years to make Topaz the festival that it is today. As the Executive Festival Directors, they have volunteered their blood, sweat, and tears to creatively handle the endless hours of preparation while working full-time jobs and taking care of personal and family responsibilities. Each year they have been at the helm of this incredible journey and have elevated the bar for what our audience and filmmakers can expect.

I congratulate their team, especially Andrea Newham and Lisha Brock, for their unwavering support and work as leaders.

Over the past four years, their team has brought in over \$18,000 for the Women In Film Scholarship and Grants fund. The Suzanne Dooley Scholarship is awarded annually to a well-deserving undergrad or graduate student to help pay for tuition. In addition, due to the amount of money the Film Festival has increasingly procured, we are now offering mini-grants to students in two-year colleges and finishing grants for independent filmmakers. And for that, I say, “Brava,” ladies!!

And now, onto the Main Event! So, on behalf of myself and the 2022 Board of Directors, grab some popcorn and enjoy the show!

Warmest Regards,
Tiffany Vollmer

About WIFD



In 1984, a team of production professionals formed an organization that would evolve to become Women In Film Dallas, a non-profit organization committed to empowering, promoting, and mentoring women in the entertainment, communication, and media industries. With members involved at every level in feature films, documentaries, commercials, and corporate productions, WIFD quickly grew to become one of the region's most active, exciting, and influential industry organizations.

WIFD offers tuition scholarships and filmmaking grants, and presents educational programs, networking events and workshops for our members and the North Texas filmmaking community. Members also serve the community by combining their talents to produce Public Service Announcements for other Dallas area non-profit organizations. Our Topaz Award honors distinguished professionals who have made outstanding contributions to our industry.

Our members include producers, directors, writers, performers, crews, agents, managers, distributors, exhibitors, editors, lawyers, administrators, digital effects specialists, executives, publicists, interactive designers and more.

We have 5 membership levels: Corporate, Professional, Associate, Friend and Student. Eligibility requirements and member benefits are listed on our Join Us! page.

Please visit our website: www.wifdallas.org

Board Members & Leaders

President - Tiffany Vollmer
Vice President - Gail Cronauer
Treasurer - Sharon Garrison
Secretary - Erin Nicole Parisi
Membership Chair - Abbey Killin
Grants & Scholarships Chair - Tiehna Hare

Social WIF Committee - Zalika Thomas
Social Media - Lauren Steward





Joy Nash
Rising Star Award

Joy Nash is an actor and audiobook narrator based in Los Angeles.

She starred as Alicia “Plum” Kettle opposite Julianna Margulies in AMC’s feminist revenge fantasy: *Dietland* (Now streaming on Hulu & Amazon) and played Señorita Dido in *Twin Peaks: The Return*. Other guest stars include: *Grey's Anatomy*, *Chicago Med* and the *Mindy Project*.

She's voiced commercials for McDonalds and Walmart and several hundred stories for Kevin Costner's *Autio* app.

Joy has narrated over a hundred books for Audible, Penguin Random House and Hachette Audio, among others. Favorite titles include Julie Murphy's *Faith: Taking Flight* and the *Winston Brothers* series by Penny Reid.

She lives in Los Angeles with her 3 legged cat.




Beth Sepko-Lindsey Gratitude Award

Beth Sepko-Lindsey has over 20 years of casting expertise specializing in television and feature film. She has been fortunate to work with a number of acclaimed directors such as John Ridley, Mimi Leder, Rachel Morrison, Robert Rodriguez, Quentin Tarantino, Kimberly Pierce, Richard Linklater, John Lee Hancock, Mike Judge, David Nutter, Max Winkler and Taylor Sheridan among many others.

In addition to CSA, Beth is on the advisory board of SxSW and is a former board member of Austin Film Society and Reel Women. Beth has 6 Emmy nominations and 1 win for Friday Night Lights as well as Artios awards for Boyhood and Straight Outta Compton.

After wrapping "1883", Beth went on to the local casting of "Tulsa King" and is starting yet another Paramount + series, "Bass Reeves".



*Cheryl Polote -
Williamson
Advocacy Award*

Dr. Cheryl Polote-Williamson is a highly sought after transformational speaker, nationally acclaimed multi best-selling author, award winning executive producer and filmmaker, global business leader, visionary, philanthropist, brand influencer, purpose connection coach, editor-in-chief of Cheryl Magazine and most importantly, a true servant leader. Cheryl has mastered the art of influence and she takes pride in teaching others how to do the same.

As a transformational speaker with unbelievable transparency and candor, Williamson's speeches captivate and motivate audiences to release self doubt, walk in power and thrive in purpose. Earlier this year, she was honored to serve as the Convocation Keynote Speaker at Shaw University's Founder's Day ceremony.

Cheryl's highly acclaimed literary works, with titles like, *The Success Factor: Stories from Successful Entrepreneurs Who Thrived After Facing Failure*, granted her the opportunity to be a featured author at the 108th NAACP National Convention. Upon achieving literary success, Cheryl was inspired to embark on a journey in executive producing a documentary. Her efforts resulted in winning the MVAFF Best of the Best Feature, Presented by HBO Max Award for Best Documentary and the Audience Choice Leon Award for Best Documentary for *Twenty Pearls: The Story of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated* at the 30th Annual St. Louis International Film Festival.

Polote-Williamson is the embodiment of what it means to have a servant's heart. In 2018, she founded Soul Reborn, a 501 (c)(3) non-profit charitable organization that educates individuals and communities on the positive impact of business creation.

Since its inception, Soul Reborn has supported more than 4,500 disenfranchised, underserved and previously incarcerated women. Most recently, her philanthropic efforts garnered the attention of the White House, adding the President's Lifetime Service award to her growing list of awards and accomplishments. Cheryl's philanthropic efforts have also been recognized by the state of Ohio, where she received a Proclamation for philanthropy. Also, Rosemary's Babies, an Ohio home for teen moms, named a gallery in Cheryl's honor. Additionally, Cheryl serves her community through affiliations including Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated (Alpha Xi Omega Chapter), The Links Incorporated (Mid Cities Chapter) and Black Women in Media.

Through her dedication and commitment to excellence in global business leadership, Cheryl graduated from the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program, which helps entrepreneurs create jobs and economic opportunities by providing access to education, capital and support services. Additionally, she holds Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) and Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) certifications. Cheryl's influence in business has placed her in the position to impact change in the lives of thousands. Through that influence, Cheryl has launched thriving online communities that have inspired an upwards of 500 authors, volunteers, entrepreneurs and fellow philanthropists.

Cheryl is honored to have received multiple international media features, including: Black Enterprise, Forbes, Sheen, Ebony, Heart & Soul and Rolling Out Magazines. She has also been featured on multiple media outlets including: Good Day LA, Fox, Fox Soul, MSNBC, Christian Women in Media, ABC News, CBS, CEO Money Show and Sister Circle Live. Additional awards received this year include: the Maura Women Serving Women Award from Texas Women's Foundation, Self-Published Author of the Year Award from the African American Literary Association, Trailblazer Award from Black Women in Media, Servant Award from Ordinary People Magazine and the Women in Business Leadership Award from Pull Corp.

Through her speeches, literary works, online communities, philanthropic efforts, business and servant leadership, Dr. Cheryl Polote-Williamson has successfully cultivated a purpose centric global movement that is founded on helping others connect to and live their purpose authentically and unapologetically. She has sparked a contagious ripple effect that has inspired and empowered others to find what they are passionate about and pursue it relentlessly.



Dorothy Malone Legacy Award

Dorothy Malone, born as Dorothy Eloise Maloney, was an American actress best known for her Academy Award winning role in the film 'Written on the Wind.' Raised in Dallas, she was one of five children born to an accountant father and housewife mother. Attending Ursuline Convent and Highland Park High School, she was quite popular (as "School Favorite"). She was also a noted female athlete while there and won several awards for swimming and horseback riding. Following graduation, she studied at Southern Methodist University with the intent of becoming a nurse, but a role in the college play "Starbound" happened to catch the eye of an RKO talent scout and she was offered a Hollywood contract.

Starting her career in 1943, she played minor roles in her early years, particularly in B-movies. She initially got signed by RKO and made appearances in the movies 'Higher and Higher', 'Seven Days Ashore', 'Show Business', 'Step Lively' and 'Youth Runs Wild'. She changed her surname from Maloney to Malone after getting signed by Warner Bros. She then went on to act in the films 'The Big Sleep', 'Janie Gets Married', 'Night and Day' and 'To the Victor'. The actress' film career reached greater heights by the early 1960s, and she even managed to achieve fame as a TV actress with her role as Constance MacKenzie in the series 'Peyton Place'. The American beauty was also known for making guest appearances in several TV programs. She guest-starred in a number of television shows, such as 'The Bold Ones: The New Doctors', 'Ironside', 'Ellery Queen', 'Four Star Playhouse', 'Fireside Theater', 'The Loretta Young Show', 'The Untouchables', 'Cimarron City', 'Dr. Kildare' and 'The Dick Powell Show', to name a few. Malone did numerous television movies in her acting career as well, the popular ones being 'Katie: Portrait of a Centrefold', 'Murder in Peyton Place', 'Peyton Place: The Next Generation' and 'The Pigeon'.

Dorothy's last film was a cameo in the popular thriller Basic Instinct (1992) as a friend to Sharon Stone. She retired to Texas and died in Dallas shortly before her 94th birthday on January 19, 2018. She is survived by her daughters Mimi and Diane.

Panel & Workshops



Texas Production Panel

Local North Texas productions *The Chosen* & *Vindication* recently wrapped production on their 3rd seasons. Join us as we talk to them candidly about what it's like to produce a series TV show in Texas on vastly different budgets. Also, learn about the newly built sound stages for *The Chosen*!

NFT Workshop

Learn how easy it is to make money as a filmmaker through NFTs. CEO of Experia View, Benjamin Peralta, will walk you through how you can place your film into an NFT marketplace to create income and greater distribution opportunities.



Film Festival Doctor Workshop

Rebekah Louisa Smith is the Film Festival Doctor and specializes in helping films optimize their festival strategy. Learn tips and best practices during this workshop that you can apply to your festival strategy today. Her expertise works! Check out her success with the films we have screened at Topaz.

2022: *Finding Wilson*, *Wool*, *Triskelion*, *Farmers*, *Cold Call*

2021: *Aimee Victoria*, *Spell it out in Neon* and *Myrtle*



CONGRATULATIONS
 JADED TEAM

THANK YOU
 WIFD TOPAZ FILM FESTIVAL

- 33 OFFICIAL SELECTIONS
- 10 AWARDS
- 1 OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT
- 3 HONORABLE MENTIONS
- 3 FINALIST
- 8 SEMI-FINALIST
- 1 QUARTER FINALIST

IN LOVING MEMORY
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A Fractured Mind

Director Brianna Ripley / USA / 12:24

Two friends design a nature retreat meant to help army veteran Kat confront her dark past, but what's meant to be a cathartic get away quickly devolves into a desperate escape from the grasp of an unhinged stranger.



Cutter

Directors Dan Repp, Lindsay Young / USA / 15:37

A teenage cutter in recovery and her overbearing mother are haunted by a ghost who seeks to keep them at odds.





Finding Keanu

Directors Verity Butler, Rebecca Holopter / USA / 8:19

A mockumentary short film about two best friends searching for their guru - Keanu Reeves.



JADED

Director Marcia Carroll / USA / 29:58

"And we wept that one so lovely should have a life so brief,"

a week in the life of a family wrought by tragedy.



Not Nothing

Director Suzanne Schmidt / USA / 23:01

At 40 a woman flees from abuse, as her sisterhood faces the challenge of unconditional love.



Push

Director Jasmine Quiñones / USA / 6:15

"Push," is a story of self discovery, found in the simple joys of skateboarding. Written and directed by Jasmine Quinones, the film explores ideas of identity and quickly becomes an anthem for the inner-strength that can be found in finding a community.



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Graduate Student Shorts

An Island Drifts

Director Vivian Ip / Singapore / 18:32

Set in Singapore, a young teacher presses for the truth from a maladjusted student, the act leads to devastating results and they suffer the ignominy of losing everything that matters to them. The story holds a mirror up to society, where a mistake can derail a life in an overly pressurized world.



Chocolate Tronchetto

Director Nicole Favarelli / United Kingdom / 10:40

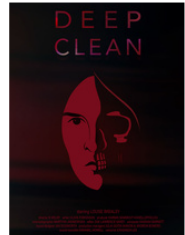
When a lonely grandma faces the ignorance of her estranged granddaughter, she has to re-invent the wheel to uphold a long family tradition - making Chocolate Tronchetto together on Christmas Eve.



Deep Clean

Director B Welby / United Kingdom / 14:59

Maddie is tasked with cleaning the house of a hoarder, an old woman who recently died. As she starts to become increasingly paranoid that she is not alone, Maddie has to face the horrifying reality of what her life might become.



Dog Lover

Director Anne-Sophie Bine / USA / 13:48

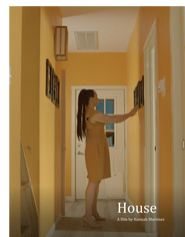
A woman prefers her dog to her husband. What will he do?



House

Director Hannah Martinez / USA / 10:05

The story follows Liza, a woman dealing with severe compulsions and a strained family relationship as she tries to leave her house. She realizes she can't when the house starts falling apart. Liza tries to put the pieces back together as her house and mental state crumble. Both end up completely falling apart in the end, only to reveal the twist.





House of Fortune

Director Adel Mashoori / Iran / 15:00

Rahil mohajer was buried alive by her husband and her father on her wedding night because they thought she wasn't a virgin.



Speechless

Director Tatyana Keller / USA / 15:03

A young man overcomes his struggles in communicating through the power of music.

Body Autonomy Shorts



Afloat

Director Jan Pool / Netherlands / 19:50

"I am what I choose to become"
Afloat, a short film about sexual violence and a young woman's resilience.



Dear Ward

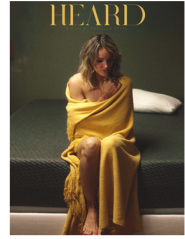
Director Marwa Ali Esharkawi / Egypt / 11:16

A painful memory of her circumcision remains in the memory of an Egyptian young woman, so she recalls it on her wedding night to turn that day upside down.

Heard

Director Danielle Savre / USA / 8:30

Samantha couldn't find the words to speak up and now is left to carry the shame and guilt of a traumatic situation that got out of her control. She spins at the thought of how to move on. What will change and what will remain the same. Would speaking up have made a difference, or was her voice never meant to be HEARD.



Medea

Director Feifei Zhong / China / 13:29

It is a story about a woman struggling between her career and family after finding her unexpected pregnancy. Hejiahui is a stage performer who plays the main role in the play Medea. The director is leading them for a national tour for the next half year. Yet she finds herself pregnant. Meanwhile, Medea, the Ancient Greek woman who killed her own sons enters Jiahui's mind...



No Heartbeat

Director Jana Devino / USA / 10:00

In a near-future Roe Vs. Wade has been overturned nationwide, banning abortion under any circumstance. 15 year old Nola discovers she's pregnant and must try to find a way to safely choose what she knows is best for her future, despite her family's strong conservative beliefs.



Undecided

Directors Betty Allen, Andy Woodward / USA / 10:02

Three women's different perspectives on motherhood collide in a workplace bathroom while one waits to discover whether she is pregnant.



Unspoken Agreements

Director Marianna Phung / Canada / 12:57

After Erin's boyfriend encourages her to pose provocatively for a photo, she decides to share it online not knowing her boyfriend assumed it was private.



Comedy Shorts

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A Trophy Wife's Code

Director Malcolm Ellis / Cayman Islands / 7:33

You're not really broke if no one finds out.



Boner Blues

Director Fanny Dussart / France / 14:59

Gaétan (age 70) pees in dots and dashes.

Max (age 50) can no longer get hard.

Félix (age 20) shoots too soon.

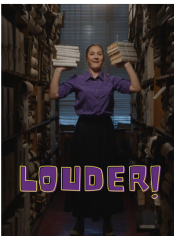
3 men, 3 generations, 1 thing in common: manhood malfunctions...



Glory & Injustice

Director Jamieson Tabb / USA / 7:20

When a custody petition arrives, 13-year-old girl "Glory" must break her dad "Lord Injustice" out of a depression or they will lose each other forever.



Louder!

Director Ludmila Rozina / Latvia / 15:54

Astra works as librarian and daydreams about romance and love. Her life's routine is full of daily worries and small misfortunes. But one day a few clicks in Tinder bring her new experiences and challenge to discover her true self. Will she find what she is looking for?



Maid of Honor

Director Jessica McGaugh / USA / 6:00

When chosen as the maid of honor for her best friend's wedding, a steady tomboy is forced to try on traditional dresses that don't fit her identity, causing her to confront her womanhood.

Maureen

Director Shiona McCubbin / United Kingdom / 12:30

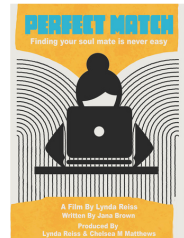
Niamh reaches out to her Auntie Liz when she notices her not long deceased mother's ashes are missing. Can they overcome their differences and take comfort from each other, or will Maureen continue to drive them apart?



Perfect Match

Director Lynda Reiss / USA / 7:13

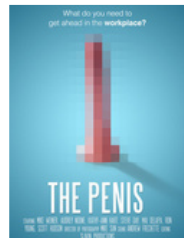
A woman wants to search the internet for her soul mate, and invites a friend over to help her choose.



The Penis

Director Audrey Noone / USA / 2:36

What do you need to succeed in the workplace? The penis!



Welcome, Megan

Director Lily Richards / USA / 14:29

A desperate young woman sets out to join a secretive and elite spin class by any means necessary.



Wool

Director Dympna Jardine / United Kingdom / 9:02

Bound by his rules, she begins to unravel. In a house stood still in time, a woman knits, unaware her husband keeps her where he wants her. Stuck at home, she has no say, all must go his way. But when he sets her one knitting project too many she is gripped by an urge to take matters into her own hands.



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International Shorts



A Stranger at the Funeral

Director Ana Maria Estrada / Peru / 27:00

The death of Roberto, took by surprise, to this emerging family. In the wake, an unknown man that no one knew, arrived and was very moved by Roberto's death. Who is this stranger who came to the funeral? What mystery does involves this man? What relationship did this man have with the deceased?



Coffee

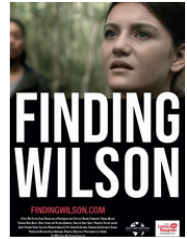
Directors Jade Lucille, Stephanie Arezzi / Australia / 7:07

In their search for love, two best friends discover how the rippling effect of the small moments you share together, live on forever.

Finding Wilson

Director Emily M. Smith / United Kingdom / 9:20

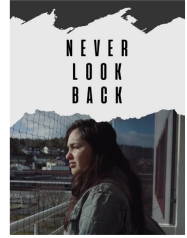
A young girl's life is changed forever when she meets a stranger in a quiet, woodland clearing.



Never Look Back

Director Linda Bournane Engelberth / Norway / 7:07

How much are you willing to share with your friends; will they be there for you or leave. A film about close friendships. Carina (14) and Jamila (14) grows up at Ammerud, Oslo in the early 90's. This short film explores the power of friendships, how everything can change if one person sees you and cares about you. The short film is based on real events from the director's upbringing in Groruddalen.



On/Off

Director Jurg Slabbert / South Africa / 17:54

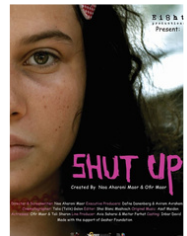
An Afrikaans-speaking man helps his elderly German neighbour in a time of need, despite a language barrier. In the process, he learns volumes about himself.



Shut Up

Director Noa Aharoni Maor / Israel / 16:16

Roni (12) is ashamed of her Tourette Syndrome. After acting violently towards a classmate who picks on her, she's suspended from school. She stays home alone and her suffering from the tics, leads her to take an extreme and dangerous act.



Split Ends

Director Alireza Kazemipour / Iran / 14:15

A bald girl and a boy with long hair whose car has been confiscated due to the lack of a proper hijab are trying to solve their problem with the Tehran's Morality Police without having to pay a fine.



Animated Shorts



Between Lines

Director Sarah Beth Morgan / USA / 2:51

Out of trauma, blooms a sense of healing and connection. "Between Lines" is a short film that speaks to the scarring experience of schoolgirl bullying - and the recovery that follows. The narrative follows a young woman's journey as she navigates isolation, exclusion and anxiety.



Do Unto Others

Director Angela Wu / USA / 1:14

Do as you would have done to you. Do as has been done to you.

What would you do?



Footprints in the Forest

Directors Juhaidah Joemin, Sandra Khoo / Malaysia / 18:00

A recently orphaned rhino tries to find a new home in the wilds of the Borneo rainforest.



I, Object

Director Shanée Gordon / USA / 6:38

A group must survive the onslaught of a distraught, do-it-yourself divorcee.



The First Love

Director Chan Ju Park / USA / 3:58

A curious little girl, May discovers that she can draw in the shadows cast by the furniture in her room - which leads to the development of her love for drawing.

The Hand and the Egg

Director Fatemeh Gharavi Manjili / Iran / 5:49

A cheerful little girl meets a tiny bird, right before her egg goes missing. She decides to help her find it. Going on a journey together, they find out a mysterious long hand is stealing all the eggs.



Triskelion

Director Jessica Raes / Belgium / 9:37

A Celtic fairy tale in stop-motion animation filled with adventure and magic. A story about tribal war and finding peace: An arrow from a rival tribe pierces the chieftain's heart. With his dying breath, he gives his daughter the quest to end this senseless feud.

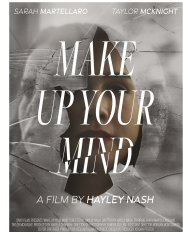


Scifi Shorts

Make Up Your Mind

Director Hayley Anne Nash / USA / 13:54

A young woman struggling with her mental health must decide whether or not to buy a new brain.



The Guardians

Director Lauro Chartrand Delvalle / Canada / 11:12

Michael is a investigator Journalist who tries to warn the world about the existence of an alien race that will destroy human existence. He has vision and see things that other people don't see.





The Phoenix

Director Regina Pigsley / USA / 15:00

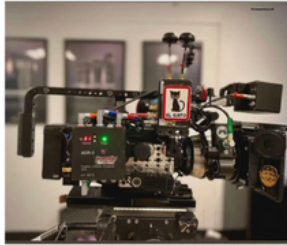
After successfully acquiring superpowers, a young girl attempts to fix her parents' marriage. In the end, she learns that superpowers can't fix everything.



Together Forever

Director Rebecca Charlotte Scott / USA / 17:33

Not all love stories have a happy ending ...



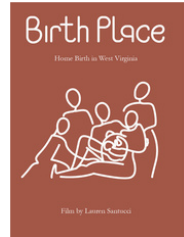
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Birth Place: Home Birth in West Virginia

Director Lauren Santucci / USA / 14:20

Cassandra Garcia's first son was born in the hospital and her second son was born at home. Now pregnant with her third child, Cassandra has chosen to give birth at home again. Birth Place documents Cassandra's third pregnancy to understand her decision to plan another home birth. Her births were so rewarding that she became a childbirth educator, helping other women to have satisfying births. While Cassandra's state of West Virginia has a long history of home birth, it is now rare in the state. Still, a growing number of women in the United States are now choosing home birth.



FARMERS - KENYA - EPISODE 1

Director Nyokabi Kahura / Germany / 12:36

In a community that favors tradition, Caroline is an avid coffee farmer who speaks-up openly about her struggles, even if they are considered taboo. Living in the village of Setek, in Kenya, one her deepest desires is to become a mother, and yet, she and her husband have been unable to have a child. Besides personal despair, this situation has also meant being ostracized by many around her.



Generation Impact: The Scientist

Director Stephanie Wang-Breal / USA / 7:25

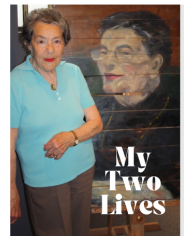
Emily Tianshi is a young woman striving to raise awareness and create solutions for the global water crisis. At age 13, Emily transformed her garage into a science lab to research San Diego's unique Torrey Pine tree and uncover how the tree is able to produce its own source of moisture from the atmosphere, enabling its survival through years of severe drought in California.



My Two Lives, Creative Response to the Holocaust

Director Sarita Gold / Australia / 14:55

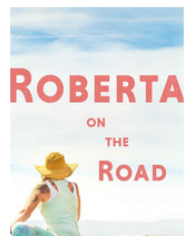
Lotte Weiss was a Holocaust survivor. She never forgot the horrors of her three years of internment at Auschwitz and Birkenau. Yet it is her immense life force that propelled her through the torture and devastation that enveloped her. Her inherent integrity and morality remained steadfast. It was her capacity for goodness, kindness, forgiveness and love which never faltered throughout the misery and beatings she endured, to give her the strength and the will for survival. This is her story interpreted by artist Thea.



Roberta on the Road

Director Livi Nichols / USA / 10:38

Roberta on the Road provides a glimpse into the life of a modern day nomad in the American West. Roberta left her comfortable life in California after a tragedy that changed her outlook forever. She describes herself as a traveler living out of her truck "Blue" which has provided her with a newfound sense of independence and happiness.



Experimental Shorts



After Closing

Director Carley Byers / USA / 8:23

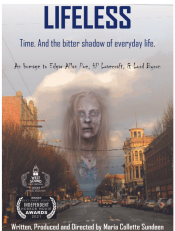
A waitress is stuck with a house full of eccentric customers after the diner's scheduled closing time. As she tries to get them to leave, she's whisked into disco chaos.



Champagne for One

Director Seth Iliff / USA / 2:30

"Champagne for One" celebrates a woman who owns her solitude and isn't afraid to dine alone. The idea for the film is derived from my first book (of the same title) that launched in February 2022; and the film doubled as a book trailer. It was named "trailer of the month" by Shelf Awareness.



Lifeless

Director Maria Collette Sundeen / USA / 8:53

Told only through visuals, sound effects, music and narration, Lifeless captures the doom and death of a lost soul. A parable for these dark times.



Through the Ages

Director Merete Muentner / USA / 4:02

"Through The Ages" is a dance video performed as a duet by a male and female dancer. It is a real heartfelt love story, spanning eighty years of life between this couple. Our video was filmed in various locations in and around Central Park in New York City.



Tragedy Strikes

Director Morgan Gullett / USA / 4:00

Filmed primarily underwater, this music video creates a dramatic impact on the audience when it brings up the question we all ask when tragedy strikes... "why?".

Unattached

Director Fanny Texier / France / 3:00

A young French woman on the precipice of youth and adulthood releases her long hair as a symbol of her femininity.



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Narrative Shorts

Cold Call

Director Katherine Cronyn / USA / 8:33

Christian, a brilliant businessman, deal-maker, and self-proclaimed master-of-the-universe, receives a phone call and an offer for which he can negotiate no terms.



de closin night

Director Shicong Zhu / USA / 19:35

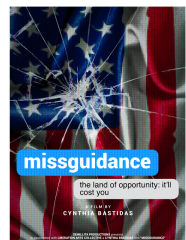
Siyi, a Chinese student in an American theater school, has been putting in more effort than her American peers to practice for the first role she gets in college. Yet her professor is rescinding the offer because of her accent. To win back the opportunity for the closing night, Siyi determines to rid her accent by speaking English only from now on, even when she video chats with her mom. As she grows obsessed with the accent practices, Siyi's attempt to better her craft has shifted into the faltering of her identity.



misguidance

Director Cynthia Bastidas / USA / 14:14

Sandra, a woman in Honduras, and Rosario, a Mexican woman living in the U.S., develop a strong friendship over a series of direct messages. They share common experiences of violence in their respective home countries. When the danger intensifies for Sandra and her 15-year old son, Carlitos, Rosario offers financial assistance to help them get out of harm's way and begin a journey to the U.S., but the path to safety comes at a higher cost.



Raw

Director Drake Shannon / USA / 10:29

Past and present are blurred by a horrifying transgression as a female soldier faces the aftermath of a military patrol in the Middle East. RAW exposes military sexual trauma through the eyes of a soldier struggling to readjust to everyday life.





Silk

Director John Magaro / USA / 14:42

In this short narrative nod to the classic film Gaslight, gifted aerialist Cara falls hard for Sol, the lighting designer on her upcoming high-stakes solo show. When safety and communication issues plague rehearsals, Cara begins to doubt her perceptions and grows more and more dependent on Sol. With the outside perspective of good friends, Cara is forced to consider that her anxiety and growing insecurities have been planted in her mind by Sol in an effort to control her.



The Dinner Guest

Director Dale Griffiths Stamos / USA / 13:38

Margaret invites her husband's colleague to dinner, but this is anything but a normal party!



Tildypops

Directors Tiggy Bayley, Oscar Downing / United Kingdom / 20:00

A teenager from South London struggles to lay claim to her selfhood, amid the chaos of her home life with her autistic brother.



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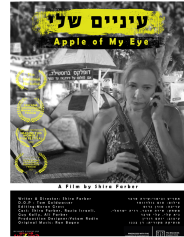
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Tribute to Mom Shorts

Apple of My Eye

Director Shira Farber / Israel / 19:59

The "Cottage Cheese" protest in Israel 2011 was named due to the rising prices of housing and basic products. Lee (45) puts up a tent together with all the young protesters. When her daughter gives her an ultimatum to come back or else she will move to live with her father, Lee must decide what to do.



Birds Fly Home

Director Mithra B. Alavi / USA / 15:00

When a young Arab-American woman returns to the United States after a year of attending college in Amman, Jordan, her American mother is shocked to learn that she has converted to Islam. As they navigate their evolving relationship, they rediscover the unbreakable love between mother and daughter.



Emergency

Director Maryam Esmikhani / Iran / 15:00

Nazanin is a seven years old girl, who is trying to reveal a secret that bothers her by getting close to the emergency agent who has come to their house to check on her mother.



Grandma, Meet Mary.

Director Kaire Russ / Estonia / 18:44

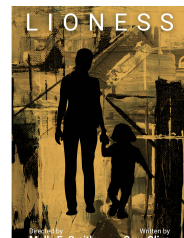
The middle-aged perfectionist Virve has done everything so that her mothers 80. birthday party would be traditionally perfect. But with no warning her niece brings a surprise guest - her same sex partner.



Lioness

Director Molly E. Smith / USA / 7:18

Barricaded in a motel room, a mothers determination and primal instincts kick in to protect her child's innocence.





Mary Meet Grace

Director Faryl Amadeus / USA / 13:34

When a stranger appears in Grace's life with disturbing news about her long-lost birth mother, she must fight to untangle herself from a dangerous and sinister plan.



Ruth & Safiya

Director Louisa Rose Mackleston / United Kingdom / 14:52

Ruth & Safiya is a story about friendships in unlikely places, challenging stereotypes, and the power of community. Ruth, an isolated pensioner, meets Safiya, a teenage Syrian refugee who is haunted by the life she fled from. Filmed on location in Skipton, the story is set in an allotment, showing the power of the earth and nature in creating a bond that transcends age, race and nationality.

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Documentary Feature Films

Ticketyboo

Director Renee Brack / Australia / 1:22:00

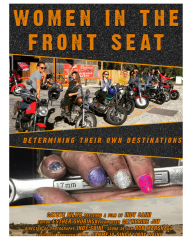
After losing her artist-father to Alzheimer's, journalist Renée Brack confronts her own fears by undergoing medical experiments as a human lab rat, risking her career & dignity to find out if she too has early signs of the disease. While on this precarious journey with devastating revelations, she discovers wonderful ways to stay connected to people we love living with dementia.



Women in the Front Seat

Director Indy Saini / USA / 1:14:13

Fierce, Bold, Fast, Brave! "Women in the Front Seat" paints a vibrant and diverse picture of women who not only drive their motorcycles but drive their lives. This feature documentary captures the growing movement of women hitting the throttle and riding into the wind, breaking social norms and shattering stereotypes about women and women riders.



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Congrats Alicia

I'M SO PROUD OF YOU AND ALL THE HARD WORK YOU'VE DEDICATED TO MAKING TOPAZ INTO WHAT IT IS TODAY. I KNOW WHATEVER YOU PUT YOUR MIND TO NEXT WILL BE EVEN GREATER.

Love Justin



Congrats Connie

It never ceases to amaze us how you're able to give 100% of yourself to so many things at once. Executive Director of the Topaz festival, Producer, Super-Mom - You are all of these things at once and so much more. Congratulations on another spectacular event!

*We love you!
Mike, Chloe & Mikaela*





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A scenic view of the Dallas skyline at dusk or dawn, featuring several skyscrapers and a large dome structure. In the foreground, a Ferris wheel with red and white gondolas is visible on the right side. The sky is filled with soft, golden light and scattered clouds.

DALLAS

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