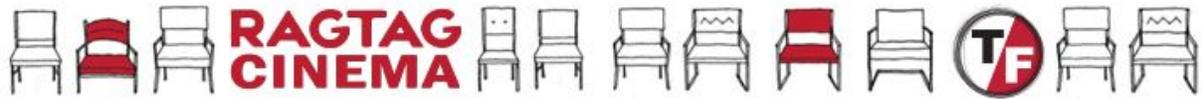


# RAGTAG FILM SOCIETY



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **TRUE/FALSE FILM FEST ANNOUNCES 2019 TRUE LIFE FUND RECIPIENTS, TRUE VISION HONOREE, AND NEITHER/NOR FOCUS**

Columbia, Missouri — The True/False Film Fest is announcing its first round of film programming for its 16th edition, taking place Feb. 28-March 3, 2019.

The Fazili family, featured in the new film *Midnight Traveler*, has been selected as 2019's True Life Fund recipient. Nuria Ibáñez Castañeda, director of *A Wild Stream*, will receive this year's True Vision Award. And for its annual repertory program, Neither/Nor, the festival will be working with writer-programmer Pamela Cohn to spotlight Pirjo Honkasalo's Trilogy of the Sacred and the Satanic.

### **TRUE LIFE FUND**

The True Life Fund is a philanthropic effort that raises money and awareness for the subjects of a new nonfiction film each year. The True Life Fund offers tangible assistance to real-life subjects of a film and acknowledges that documentary filmmakers and festivals thrive because of the stories given to us by people who are often of limited means.

The 2019 True Life Fund selection, *Midnight Traveler*, is an improbable and moving account of a family searching for home. Filmmaker Hassan Fazili; his wife, Fatima; and their daughters, Nargis and Zahra, flee Afghanistan after the Taliban places a bounty on Hassan's head. Frustrated at every turn by inhospitable and heartbreaking instances of a bordered world, Fazili's filming is an assertion of his humanity and artistry amidst aching uncertainty. It is a first-person film of joy, frustration, and courage.

The True Life Fund is presented by The Crossing—2019 marks the 12th year of The Crossing's TLF sponsorship. For more about the True Life Fund, visit [truelifefund.org](http://truelifefund.org).

## TRUE VISION AWARD

True/False is also proud to announce that Nuria Ibáñez Castañeda will receive this year's True Vision Award in honor of her achievement in and contribution to the field of nonfiction filmmaking. Her latest film, *A Wild Stream*, will screen at the festival alongside a retrospective of her work.

Born in Spain and based in Mexico, Ibáñez Castañeda has directed three features. Her debut, *The Tightrope* (T/F 2010), studies a young circus performer as she considers leaving the family business. Set inside a pediatric hospital, her sophomore feature, *The Naked Room* (2013), listens to young children as they discuss their wounds with a therapist. And in her latest film, *A Wild Stream*, Ibáñez Castañeda brings us to a tranquil beach, where two middle-aged fishermen bare their souls to one another and the camera. In each of these exquisite films, Ibáñez Castañeda builds a place for her camera inside delicate relationships. This unusual and sometimes mysterious intimacy yields human emotions that are frequently inaccessible to an observational camera.

True Vision is the only award given at True/False. Past honorees include Laura Poitras (2010), Victor Kossakovsky (2012), Mehrdad Oskouei (2016), Claire Simon (2017), and Dieudo Hamadi (2018). Ibáñez Castañeda is the first recipient of the award to have participated in the festival's mentorship program for first-time filmmakers.

The True Vision Award is sponsored by Dr. Timothy McGarity of Restoration Eye Care. For more about the True Vision Award, visit [truefalse.org/true-vision-award](http://truefalse.org/true-vision-award).

## NEITHER/NOR SERIES

Now in its sixth year, True/False's Neither/Nor program returns with a spotlight on Finnish filmmaker Pirjo Honkasalo and her Trilogy of the Sacred and the Satanic. This year, the series is overseen by writer-programmer Pamela Cohn. To accompany the retrospective, the Fest will publish a monograph, written by Cohn, who will host conversations with Honkasalo during the Fest.

The Trilogy of the Sacred and the Satanic consists of *Mysterion* (1991), *Tanjuska and the 7 Devils* (1993), and *Atman* (1996). At the time of their creation, Honkasalo was an established name. She was the first woman cinematographer in Finland to shoot a feature, and, at age 29, she directed what was then the country's most expensive film, *Flame Top* (1980). *Mysterion* was her first documentary feature. Throughout all three films, Honkasalo raises provocative questions about a documentary camera's abilities. Is this device, which we often associate with

an empirical truth, capable of capturing sacred relationships, or is the act of trying to do so a sin?

The first film in the trilogy, *Mysterion*, takes place in Estonia, where Honkasalo observes life in a Russian Orthodox convent. The series takes a disturbing turn with *Tanjuska and the 7 Devils*, which unfolds at a nearby church overseen by an intimidating priest. Honkasalo's unflinching camera watches a family struggle to find a cure for its 10-year-old daughter, who has stopped speaking. Set in India, the final film, *Atman*, follows a man as he embarks on a 3,000-mile pilgrimage up the Ganges River in honor of his recently deceased mother.

Over the past few years, Honkasalo has worked with the Finnish company Cinepro to digitally restore the three films in this trilogy. True/False represents the first time the restored trilogy has been presented together.

Pamela Cohn is an American film curator and writer based in Europe and the UK. She programs for DokuFest, The International Documentary and Short Film Festival in Prizren, Kosovo, and has worked for True/False, the International Documentary Festival Amsterdam, and DocPoint in Helsinki, Finland, among other festivals. She is a contributing writer and interviewer for Filmmaker Magazine, The Calvert Journal and BOMB Magazine. She is the author of a forthcoming collection of long-form conversations with moving image artists and filmmakers called *Lucid Dreaming: Making Personal Nonfiction Cinema in the Twenty-First Century*, to be published this autumn with O/R Books, New York.

Neither/Nor is presented with the generous support of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. All Neither/Nor screenings are free. To read past Neither/Nor monographs, visit [truefalse.org/neither-nor](http://truefalse.org/neither-nor).

*Ragtag Film Society is a 501(c)3 that strives to champion independent film and media art and to serve film communities both locally and globally.*

*True/False Film Fest, a project of Ragtag Film Society, will take place Feb. 28-March 3, 2019, in downtown Columbia, Missouri. For more information, please visit [truefalse.org](http://truefalse.org).*