

RAGTAG FILM SOCIETY



TRUE/FALSE FILM FEST 2020 FEATURE FILMS

45365 | Dir. Bill & Turner Ross; 2009; 94 min (United States)

Prod. Bil & Turner Ross

It's 69 degrees and sunny at the Shelby County Fair. Long-haul trucks whiz by, a solo trumpeter takes the stage, and downtown Sidney's tree-lined main street disappears into the rearview mirror in a stunning opening sequence. Dazzling and earnest, this debut film by Bill and Turner Ross uses the sounds of public radio, marching bands, and police scanners to cleverly collapse time and space, taking us from the weekend weather to a live interview with the 4-H queen first runner-up. Here, in the heart of the Ohio valley, spotted horses prance in their stables, teenage boys race in junk derbies and local politicians canvass door-to-door for their reelections. Filmed over the course of nine months, the camera moves deftly between flirting, freak shows, and football, reminding us that the everyday is extraordinary and "it's always fun to watch little kids run around with their hogs." (JA)

Aswang | Dir. Alyx Ayn Arumpac; 2019; 85 min (Philippines)

Prod. Armi Rae Cacanindin

Blood stains the sidewalks as President Duterte undertakes what he calls the "neutralization of illegal drug personalities," but what citizens of Manila have come to know as nothing less than a killing spree. In her feature-length debut, Director Alyx Arumpac sensitively approaches the trauma that has befallen her subjects: a journalist who fights the government's lawlessness; a restrained coroner; a brave missionary's brother who tries to comfort the bereaved families of the dead; and Jomari, who lives on the streets after his parents were jailed. Together, they make up *Aswang*—an umbrella term given to spirits, goblins and ghosts, here entangled in a deadly and seemingly never-ending reign of violence. (AG)

Bloody Nose, Empty Pockets | Dir. Bill & Turner Ross; 2020; 98 min (United States)

Prod. Michael Gottwald, Chere Theriot, Matt Sargeant

The Las Vegas skyline is littered with unfinished high-rises, ostentatious displays of wealth from unknown developers. In the shadows of the cranes, a beloved neighborhood dive bar is closing its doors. Shot on the final day of operation, coincidentally (or not) right after the 2016 election, *Bloody Nose, Empty Pockets* watches with equal parts love, recognition, and amusement as a small but devoted clientele stop by for the final night of drinking. The festivities are lovely and low-key at first, but emotions heighten as the liquor keeps pouring, and soon the camera is dancing with the barflies, listening in on their intense conversations, and tagging along for delightful shenanigans. A tour de force of construction, this magical, atmospheric film operates simultaneously as a moving portrait of a bar family, a bittersweet state of the nation, and an ecstatic simulation of inebriation. (CB)

Boys State | Dir. Amanda McBaine & Jesse Moss; 2020; 109 min (United States)

Prod. Amanda McBaine & Jesse Moss

What will the United States look like in 30 years? Over a single summer week, an ambitious and accomplished crop of teenage boys from across the state of Texas assembles at the state capital. Some

plaster their bedrooms with portraits of Reagan; others look to Bernie as they imagine revolution. Strangers to one another, each is randomly assigned to one of two fictional political parties. Together, they must reach consensus on a platform and nominee to run head-to-head with the other party's choice for the title of 2018 Texas Boys State governor. *Boys State* is a miracle of documentary production, with a perceptive camera crew that happens to be everywhere at just the right time. We're there as stars are born and campaigns come crashing down (monitor your Instagram accounts!). This delightful, insightful, and rousing film watches as its charismatic subjects figure out if it's possible to unite a divided house. (CB) **Presented by Veterans United Home Loans**

Catskin | Dir. Ina Luchspurger; 2019; 58 min (Germany)

Prod. Marie Logie

Shot in the German countryside, *Catskin* is a mysterious and alluring portrait of Ludwig, a teenage boy who lives a simple life with his father, grandmother, and their cats. As director Ina Luchspurger begins to film, bewildering details accumulate: first a Confederate flag appears on the family's garage, then the grandmother claims their cat Puppi is a distant relative of Anne Frank's tomcat. In her slippery, mesmerizing debut, Luchspurger refrains from characterizing the family, even as they present ever more disturbing images and express increasingly hostile opinions. While we are left searching for the origins of this behavior, it feels as though the family only wants to see how far they can take it. (CB)

City So Real | Dir. Steve James; 2020; 240 min (United States)

Prod. Zak Piper, Steve James

Over four episodes, Steve James takes an unflinching look at the tumultuous political workings of Chicago. *City So Real* traverses a broad array of neighborhoods, parades, eateries, and living rooms. James positions the viewer in the midst of the trial of Jason Van Dyke, a Chicago police officer convicted for the murder of Laquan McDonald. He then takes us to the infamous halls of local government during a mayoral race and subsequent runoff election that leads to the victory of Lori Lightfoot, the city's first openly gay and first African American woman mayor. *City So Real* is a true testament to the hard-working blue-collar attitude of the beloved Windy City. (AG)

City So Real is an episodic piece and will be presented in multiple ways. The A screening is the complete work: episodes 1-4. The B and C screenings are the first half of the series: episodes 1 & 2. The D screening is the second half of the series: episodes 3 & 4. Q&As will follow screenings A and D only.

Collective | Dir. Alexander Nanau; 2019; 109 min (Romania)

Prod. Alexander Nanau, Bianca Oana

Fire spreads quickly through a Bucharest nightclub. Dozens die before they can escape as the result of insufficient safety regulations, but inexplicably, many more perish in the days that follow. In *Collective*, director Alexander Nanau doggedly tags along with a tenacious cadre of reporters as they carefully uncover the reasons why. As the revelations pile up, their reporting captures the attention of an increasingly livid public, who direct their anger at a hopelessly corrupt government. Nanau's cool-headed, rigorous approach to observational filmmaking complements his journalist subjects, who resolutely strive for a collective understanding of reality in a society that has lost touch with truth. Eventually and unexpectedly, Nanau's access trumps that of the reporters, and this involving procedural transforms into a jaw-dropping, up-close look at systemic rot. (CB) **Presented by the Kinder Institute for Constitutional Democracy**

Crestone | Dir. Marnie Ellen Hertzler; 2020; 73 min (United States)

Prod. Riel Roch-Decter, Sebastian Pardo

As the world hurtles towards the end times, young SoundCloud rappers descend on Crestone, Colorado, a tiny desert town that is central to a surprising number of spiritualities. Guided by a man who goes by the name of Sloppy (sloppy919 if you're on SoundCloud), they form a modern commune within which they grow weed, play video games, and create music for the ether. These affable young men are high school friends of director Marnie Ellen Hertzler, who creates a dazzling group portrait that manages to be both utterly contemporary and also post-apocalyptic. In this debut feature, Hertzler invents a playful new cinematic language at the intersection of Documentary and Vine – and delivers a key text for those interested in the Millennial generation and its warped relationship with reality. Has the internet destroyed us, and if so, is there any hope for redemption? (CB)

Crip Camp | Dir. Jim LeBrecht & Nicole Newnham; 2019; 102 min (United States)

Prod. Sara Bolder, Jim Lebrecht, Nicole Newnham

Summer camp is where hijinks, freedom, sexual awakening, and self-discovery flourish. Director Jim LeBrecht uses hilarious and tender archival footage to bring us back to the summer of '69, in the leafy green Catskills where he first attended Camp Jened. More than just a traditional sleep-away camp, Camp Jened was a radical refuge for teens living with physical and developmental disabilities that became the springboard for an intersectional, intergenerational movement for civil rights. Set to the revolutionary soundtrack of Woodstock, *Crip Camp* offers incredible access to the first protests, co-ops, and sit-ins that changed our nation. Together with co-director Nicole Newnham and a whole cast of campers, counselors, and activists, LeBrecht's *Crip Camp* is a powerful story of a revolution of the mind, of attitudes, and of the heart. (JA) **Presented by Rusk Rehabilitation Hospital**

Dick Johnson is Dead | Dir. Kirsten Johnson; 2020; 89 min (United States)

Prod. Katy Chevigny, Marilyn Ness

Everyday we get older. We can't stop time and beat death, but we can change the way we react. In the face of losing her father, Dick, to dementia, Kirsten Johnson takes her dad's death into her own hands. Through a series of hilarious, heart-wrenching fake fatal accidents, action stunts, and macabre special effects, Johnson and her father collaborate in a grand exercise of cinematic shock therapy in order to confront the end together. Blending fiction (Dick is dead) and nonfiction (death itself), this colorful, wildly inventive follow-up to *Cameraperson* (T/F 2016) plumbs the depths of disbelief and the heartache of grief by insisting on the now. A beautiful, deeply self-reflective film full of questions, anger, vulnerability, and laughter, *Dick Johnson is Dead* will change the way you think about mortality, and bring you closer to the people you love. (JA)

Dope is Death | Dir. Mia Donovan; 2020; 78 min (United States)

Prod. Bob Moore

In 1973, the government turns to methadone and mass incarceration to combat soaring drug addiction in New York City. In 1973, Dr. Mutulu Shakur, along with fellow Black Panthers and the Young Lords, combined community health with radical politics to create the first acupuncture detoxification program in America. This form of radical harm reduction was a revolutionary act toward the government programs that transfixed the lives of black and brown communities throughout the South Bronx. *Dope is Death* utilizes an abundant archive while giving us insight into how the acupuncture clinic rose to prominence and, despite funding challenges, still functions to this day. Some of those who benefited from the program became acupuncturists themselves. Dr. Mutulu's legacy is cemented within this profound story of community healing and activism. (AG)

Down a Dark Stairwell | Dir. Ursula Liang; 2020; 83 min (United States)

Prod. Ursula Liang, Rajal Pitroda

Returning home after getting his hair braided for Thanksgiving, Akai Gurley, an innocent and unarmed black man, was shot and killed walking up a dark stairwell in the NYCHA Pink Houses of East New York. Fourteen steps above, police officer Peter Liang and his partner, Shaun Landau, were patrolling the building's staircases when they heard a "quick sound." Peter's accidental discharge put into motion an emotionally charged legal battle, as two communities of color find themselves navigating fraught perceptions of injustice, inequality, and discrimination in the eyes of the law. Though a reported 1,059 people in the United States were shot and killed by the police in 2014 alone, Peter was the first on-duty NYPD officer to be charged and convicted of manslaughter since 2005. Ursula Liang (no relation) swiftly cuts through the noise and media frenzy to find what's missing from the story. Using WeChat and Facebook, thousands of Chinese American protestors mobilize, staging marches along the Brooklyn Bridge and waving American flags in hopes of garnering support for Peter from the police force. Meanwhile, a multiracial coalition of activists support the Gurley family and search for someone to be held accountable for Akai's tragic death. (JA)

The Faculties | Dir. Eloísa Solaas; 2019; 77 min (Argentina)

Prod. Eloísa Solaas

A cinema professor nonchalantly lobs oral examination questions while the blood drains out of a student's face and she stares quizzically past the camera. As each exam unfolds, students are tested in architecture, botany, physics, philosophy, and music, each system offering its own language, laws, and tidy logic to organize ephemera and existence. As she observes a new generation of thinkers and civil servants, Eloísa Solaas crafts a compelling argument about the role of public universities in society and how access to information can either replicate or destabilize institutional power. This film deeply interrogates the concept of mastering a subject or skill as students glide through concertos or call on their rote memory in order to survive this last formality. (JA)

Faith | Dir. Valentina Pedicini; 2019; 93 min (Italy)

Prod. Donatella Palermo

At a rural Italian monastery, the Warriors of Light adhere to a curious blend of kung fu, Shaolin doctrine, and Catholicism. At the behest of their Master, the warriors engage in highly strenuous daily athletics. These routines put the disciples under intense psychological pressures – all with the impending threat of being banished from the community. After 11 years of dedicated documentation, shooting entirely in black and white, director Pedicini molds her film as an entrancing religious thriller. The aesthetic choices provide a stark visual reckoning for the followers who question their values of faith, freedom, and society, while fully immersing the viewer in a world that's both serene and unsettling. (AG)

Feels Good Man | Dir. Arthur Jones; 2020; 95 min (United States)

Prod. Aaron Wickenden, Caryn Capotosto, Giorgio Angelini

In 2005, artist Matt Furie posted a cartoon strip to Myspace starring four stoner friends—Andy, Brett, Landwolf, and Pepe. Inspired by impish humor and boyhood mischief, Furie's story about a little frog who likes to pee-pee with his pants down became wildly popular on new social media platforms such as 4chan, Reddit, and Twitter. As users adapted Matt's image to fit their own playful or polemical ends, the meme began to mutate and Pepe the Frog was co-opted by an army of anonymous trolls. A rollicking horror flick about the zombie afterlife of images online and off, this film is a must-see for Walter Benjamin acolytes and anyone who lives on the internet—or wants to understand those that do. (JA)

The Giverny Document | Dir. Ja'Tovia Gary; 2019; 42 min (United States)

Prod. Paige Wood, Artesia Balthrop, Ja'Tovia Gary

A stimulating experimental wanderlust from the gardens of Giverny, France, to the streets of Harlem, New York City. Ja'Tovia Gary frames herself as nature in motion, draped in a floral dress amidst the botanical territory of impressionist painter Claude Monet. The bodily safety and autonomy of black women is embedded within this multitextured interrogation of black femme performance. Gary employs a rhythmic pattern through a myriad of styles, splicing, scratching, and animating on 16mm film. The director's on-camera persona shapeshifts from garden dweller to investigative reporter, inquiring about black women's safety while standing on a bustling Harlem corner. Punctuated by a hypnotic and legendary performance by Nina Simone, *The Giverny Document* transcends pain and trauma by juxtaposing power and vulnerability. (AG)

IWOW | Walk on Water | Dir. Khalik Allah; 2020; 197 min (United States)

Prod. Khalik Allah, Vikki Tobak

Since 2011, filmmaker and photographer Khalik Allah (*Black Mother*, T/F 2018) has attracted global attention for his radiant portraits of the denizens of 125th and Lexington in East Harlem. In *IWOW: I Walk On Water*, Allah returns to the intersection and centers his attention on longtime muse Frenchie, who navigates society as a 60-something schizophrenic, homeless Haitian man. Over the summer of 2019, Allah and Frenchie flout societal boundaries as their material lives became increasingly intertwined. A radically transparent record of that time, *IWOW* also documents a romantic relationship that coincides with the shoot and finds Allah gathering advice from a number of confidants, including Fab 5 Freddy, members of the Wu-Tang Clan, and his mother. Sometimes painful in its vulnerability, often funny in its candor, and always beautiful to behold, Allah's stunning epic is a contemporary rethinking of the diary film. (CB)

Lovemobil | Dir. Elke Margarete Lehrenkrauss; 2019; 106 min (Germany)

Prod. Elke Margarete Lehrenkrauss

Women from Eastern Europe and Africa find themselves sitting inside camper vans parked along a German country road. With moonlight illuminating them, men stop to solicit sexual favors in exchange for money. In the morning, Uschi, a hardened woman in her 60s, arrives and, in tense exchanges, negotiates her share of the income. Once a sex worker herself, Uschi now rents the camper to the foreign women and enjoys a fraught symbiotic relationship with them. But tensions, already high, have escalated following the murder of another sex worker nearby. Lehrenkrauss and cinematographer Christoph Rohrscheidt spent two years drawing out the tragedies, fears, and grief ingrained in the lives of these women, and along the way captured intimate scenes that offer insights into their personalities and the proclivities of their clientele. (AG)

A Machine to Live In | Dir. Yoni Goldstein & Meredith Zielke; 2020; 87 min (United States)

Prod. Sebastian Alvarez

In this wildly inventive hybrid documentary, the feature debut from experimental film and installation artists Yoni Goldstein and Meredith Zielke, viewers are transported to the space-age city of Brasília. A modernist architectural marvel, the city is a sparkling wasteland of machine dreams and aging monuments to a utopian future. Highlighting the sacred geometry of triangles and symmetry of lines, this sci-fi flick interrogates the semiotic structures that undergird the Martian outpost. With striking visuals and a thumping, electronic soundtrack, *A Machine to Live In* is a transcendent, transcendental voyage through Brazil's cosmic capital. (JA)

**małni—towards the ocean, towards the shore | Dir. Sky Hopinka; 2020; 81 min (United States)
Prod. Steve Holmgren**

A stunning poetic excursion through the landscape of the Pacific Northwest. Our protagonists and guides are Jordan Mercier and Sweetwater Sahme, who share their own personal rituals and relationship with the spirit world, traditions, and circularity around the origin of the death myth of the Chinookan people. The language of this slowly-paced film fluctuates from English to the indigenous language of Chinuk Wawa. As gorgeous as the photography is, *Małni* is also sonically adventurous, with enticing scenes that present both an epic wander of the great northern terrain and an inward dive that taps deep into the meanings of mortality. Sky Hopinka entwines personal paths and bodies of water as he constructs multi-layered metaphors of homeland, landscape, and myth in an indigenous world. (AG)

**Mayor | Dir. David Osit; 2020; 87 min (United States / Palestine)
Prod. David Osit**

Musa Hadid is the wry, level-headed mayor of Ramallah, a historically Christian city that has become the de facto capital of Palestine. Set during the Christmas season, *Mayor* observes Hadid, e-cig in hand, as he traverses Ramallah to meet with constituents and reflect on numerous predicaments facing the city, all the while working toward a day when his nation will be free. Director David Osit patiently and fastidiously sticks to only what his camera observes, allowing the less newsworthy aspects of oppression to be felt in indelible, organic ways throughout this lyrical character study. (CB)

**The Metamorphosis of Birds | 2020; 101 min (Portugal)
Prod. Pedro Fernandes Duarte, Joana Gusmão, Catarina Vasconcelos**

A family preserves its memories in this epistolary love story. While Henrique is away at sea, his lifelong love Beatriz is left at home learning about plants and taking care of their six children. The couple keeps in touch through letters and journal entries recited throughout the film. “Let me die, standing up like the trees,” is whispered from a past note in a red-lit corridor. Beatriz and Henrique’s oldest son, Jacinto, wants to be a bird. We observe the growth, love, and despair of Beatriz, Henrique, and their family via director Catarina Vasconcelos’s beautifully reimagined of this personal and intimate tale, sonically activated by the blossoming of flowers. (AG)

**The Mole Agent | Dir. Maite Alberdi; 2020; 90 min (Chile)
Prod. Marcela Santibañez**

A woman hires a private detective to investigate rumors of elder neglect in her mother’s nursing home. The detective, in turn, enlists Sergio, a kindhearted recent widower, to infiltrate the facility and gather evidence. He learns how to operate spy cameras and moves into the home, where he quickly discovers he is one of only three men in this community ... and by far the most appealing bachelor. Director Maite Alberdi (*Tea Time*, T/F 2015) is there as well—she has convinced the nursing home to let her follow the new resident as he acclimates to his surroundings—as Sergio forges friendships, navigates the emotions of his suitors, and attempts to gain the trust of the client’s mother. This documentary spy thriller blossoms into a warmhearted consideration of how we treat one another. (CB)

**Mucho Mucho Amor | Dir. Cristina Costantini & Kareem Tabsch; 2020; 96 min (United States)
Prod. Alex Fumero**

For 15 years, Univision’s news show *Primer Impacto* closed its report not with the weekend weather or local boy makes good but with Walter Mercado, a fabulous, gender-fluid Puerto Rican astrologer who read the stars and told the future to more than 120 million viewers across the Caribbean, United States, and Mexico every day. As he read each sign’s horoscope, he peered into their souls and gave them hope. A classically trained Flamenco dancer, medicinal healer, and devout religious syncretist, Walter’s sartorial

statements were inspired by opulent Spanish divas and the occult. A pioneering queer superhero in a cape, Walter brought joy, positivity, and magic to everything he did. So why did he mysteriously disappear? (JA)

Nofinofy | Dir. Michaël Andrianaly; 2020; 73 min (Madagascar)

Prod. Sylvie Plunian

Romeo finds great satisfaction in cutting hair. "To touch someone's head is delicate. It's an honor." In the opening moments of *Nofinofy*, city officials abruptly evict Romeo from his downtown location, forcing the Malagasy barber to relocate to a small shed in a different neighborhood. The film observes this young father in the aftermath, as he finds himself relying on a small but loyal clientele comprised of family and friends. Each intimately photographed appointment begets vulnerable conversation, as we learn about the frustrations facing the country and about Romeo himself. In this sublime and tactile portrait, director Michaël Andrianaly registers a collective weariness while also vividly documenting the things that, for better or worse, sustain us through the hopelessness: song, camaraderie, alcohol, and, most of all, human touch. (CB)

Pier Kids | Dir. Elegance Bratton; 2019; 84 min (United States)

Prod. Chester Algernal Gordon

Elegance Bratton's vérité-styled directorial debut is a gritty tale of resilience amplified by an ensemble of personalities who make up the underground community along the piers at the end of Christopher Street. At the Piers, these personalities have found their chosen family. Krystal LaBeija, a transgender woman, returns to her Missouri home seeking the acceptance of her mother, who doesn't fully embrace Krystal's identity. Casper and Desean go from being homeless to housed while carving out their place in the world. Bratton's own life as a pier kid means that the camera is never intrusive or objectifying as it records the passions of these youth. *Pier Kids* sheds light on the unjust harassment and police profiling of queer kids as they navigate the precarities of a complicated and vibrant lifestyle. (AG)

Ridge | Dir. John Skoog; 2019; 70 min (Sweden)

Prod. Erik Hemmendorff

This ravishingly beautiful, exquisitely strange film opens with the story of two cows who have run away from their owners and refuse to rejoin the pack. "They keep growing wilder." Director John Skoog's debut then drops us into his hometown, a rural Swedish community called Kvidinge. Working with local residents, Skoog stages a series of enchanting vignettes that draw from local lore, his camera drifting through the magical world they co-create. Mystery permeates the frame, the sense that we are experiencing a language that's only truly understood by the inhabitants of this place. This is a film to sink into, knowing there's a gasp around every bend. (CB)

Seven Years in May | Dir. Affonso Uchoa; 2019; 42 min (Brazil)

Prod. Camila Bahia, Jerónimo Quevedo, Victoria Marotta

This artful, performative construction of fiction and nonfiction provokes the viewer in mysterious, disorienting, and deeply powerful ways. We meet Rafael dos Santos Rocha as a shadow moving through the dimly lit streets of an unnamed Brazilian city. Recounting the startling events that changed his life seven years earlier, the film considers how we move past inflicted pain even when forced to relive it. Throughout, director Uchôa finds revelatory moments, such as Rafael confiding in a stranger next to a blazing campfire. As the film takes a performative shift in the closing minutes, Rafael finds his voice joining a collective chorus and a reckoning with the brutal police oppression that haunts him. (AG)

So Late So Soon | Dir. Daniel Hymanson; 2020; 70 min (United States)

Prod. Trace Henderson, Josh Penn, Kellen Quinn

Chicago artists Jackie and Don Seigel are a half-century into their marriage, time spent creating distinct yet congruous bodies of work. Jackie makes art of everything around her. Central to her practice is a recognition of the fragility of materials. That conceptual interest has turned into daily reality, as both her body and one of her most ambitious art projects, her canary-yellow Victorian house, start to fall apart. Don's work reveals a mind resigned to death. He has always been interested in the rules of nature, and now he finds himself facing inevitable health scares. *So Late So Soon* is a sensitively constructed, playful character study that honors Jackie and Don's art, and even becomes a part of it, while also locating in it glimmers of their essence. (CB)

Some Kind of Heaven | Dir. Lance Oppenheim; 2020; 81 min (United States)

Prod. Darren Aronofsky, Kathleen Lingo, Melissa Oppenheim-Lano

A Floridian garden of earthly delights and its discontents, *Some Kind of Heaven* follows retirees newly arrived at the fountain of youth. At The Villages, a married couple, a widow, and a bachelor find Eden and a second bite at the apple. An area handyman looks for work while a woman toys with love after loss. From synchronized swimming to pickleball, the good life is waiting, as well as a discounted funeral package now at a new, lower price. In a transcendent debut film that puts a twist on the "long-term" relationship, Oppenheim digs below the perfect facade to explore each person's oscillation between integrity and despair, reinvention and recklessness, freedom and familiarity. A film that reminds us that we all leave this Earth the way we came. (JA) **Presented by Fresh Ideas**

Sunless Shadows | Dir. Mehrdad Oskouei; 2019; 74 min (Iran)

Prod. Mehrdad Oskouei, Carston Aaononsen

Mehrdad Oskouei, director of *Starless Dreams* (T/F 2016) and former True Vision honoree, continues his exploration of imprisoned young people, centering on a group of women in a detention center in Iran. The crime these women have committed is murder, the result of being victims of abuse by their fathers, husbands, and brothers. Oskouei captures the incarcerated women exerting feelings of liberation within confinement. Collectively, the detained women learn English, play games, share meals, and look after an infant. In controlled video testimonies, they address their crimes and guilt to their accomplices and victims. For a moment, the immured young women are reconnected with their mothers also in captivity – one scene among many that immerse us in their oceans of grief. (AG)

A Supa Special Wakaliwood Event for All True/False Commandos |

Dir. IGG Nabwana; 2020; 61 min (Uganda) Prod. IGG Nabwana, Alan Hofmanis

Working out of his Wakaliga, Kampala home, IGG Nabwana directs ingenious action films that affectionately riff on the genre's conventions. His films showcase narration from VJ Emmie, who offers wry running commentary — hyping the director, cheering on the heroes, mocking the villains, and, most exhilarating of all, speaking directly to the viewer, making us feel as if we're accessories to the production. IGG Nabwana, VJ Emmie, and the Wakaliwood family have created a special presentation for the True/False audience. You won't want to miss this one-time-only experience. (CB)

Talking about Trees | Dir. Suhaib Gasmelbari; 2019; 93 min (Sudan)

Prod. Marie Balducci

In Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, movie theaters have been long-abandoned without usable seating. The Sudanese Film Group, consisting of Ibrahim Shaddad, Suliman Ibrahim, Eltayeb Mahdi, and Manar Al-Hilo, want to encourage filmmaking and resurrect cinema going. The four retired, award-winning filmmakers take a prominent stance against the decade old censorship on cinema in this humorous and

admirable film. While attempting to bring the Revolution Cinema back to life, the group faces the adversity of bureaucracy. Director Suhaib Gasmelbari structures this documentary full of magical moments, one in particular where the elderly directing troupe recreates a classic movie scene ala' Gloria Swanson during a blackout. *Talking About Trees* is a film that permeates with generosity of spirit and the urgency of cinephilia. (AG)

Tchoupitoulas | Dir. Bill & Turner Ross; 2012; 82 min (United States)

Prod. Bill & Turner Ross

If True Vision recipients Bill and Turner Ross' latest film, *Bloody Nose, Empty Pockets*, is a bleary-eyed celebration of late night revelry, then it's worth considering their sophomore feature *Tchoupitoulas* as its companion: a glimpse at the same intoxicating world of jukebox jams, colorful characters, and heated conversation, but this time seen through the wide-eyed wonderment of childhood. Accompanied by their dog Buttercup, three young brothers escape from home, cross the ferry, and head out on a strange and ecstatic journey through the New Orleans night. They sneak into spaces they technically don't belong, meet eccentric street characters, and try to make it back before the final ferry departs for the evening. With nine months of footage collapsed so as to represent one night, *Tchoupitoulas* is early evidence of the Ross Brothers' magic tricks. (CB)

That Cloud Never Left | Dir. Yashaswini Raghunandan; 2019; 66 min (India)

Prod. Namita Waikar, P. Sainath

In Daspara, a village 200 km outside of Calcutta, hundreds of toys are produced every day: rattles, whistles, windmills, all made by hand. The raw materials used are old strips of film, detritus from the archives of Bollywood. What matters isn't so much the pictures that are used by the workers, but rather the material and the clicking sound that the strips of film make. As the villagers follow this routine with uninterrupted monotony, a few narratives leak out from the shredded analogues of film and infuse the place with phantasmagoria. Director Yashaswini Raghunandan repurposes these colored reels to create dreamlike sequences. (AG)

Those That, At a Distance, Resemble Another |

Dir. Jessica Sarah Rinland; 2019; 65 min (Argentina)

Prod. Jessica Sarah Rinland, Beli Martínez

Ripe fruit gleams on the forest floor while howler monkeys are gently reintroduced to the wild and a boy dreams of growing up into a tree. An exquisite meditation on materiality and excavation, Jessica Sarah Rinland's directorial debut follows the movements of zoologists, museum conservators, and scientists as they collaboratively restore an ancient elephant tusk. Beauty, process, and technical craftsmanship are on full display as clay and plaster are transformed into a replica fossil. Is the restored artifact preserved or born again? *Those That, at a Distance, Resemble Another* offers striking compositions of plants, animals, and Lilliputian patterns that will delight film nerds and nature lovers alike. (JA)

Time | Dir. Garrett Bradley; 2020; 85 min (United States)

Prod. Lauren Domino, Kellen Quinn, Garrett Bradley

A single moment in time can propel your life into new, unexpected directions. A single decision, a single chance, or a single mistake. We talk about time like we talk about movement, tumbling forwards, pregnant with possibility. In prison, the world races on without you, with your family and loved ones straddling parallel dimensions of space and time. Sibil "Fox" Rich's family is split in two as her husband Rob serves the mandatory minimum sentence for a first-time offense committed in his 20s, and their sons grow into men. Garrett Bradley's *Time* is a gorgeous decades-long portrait of Fox Rich -- a tireless advocate,

entrepreneur, and prison abolitionist -- and a testament to the monumental strength of all women who love and support someone behind bars. Eighteen years of home miniDV tapes capture each year's birthdays and milestones as Fox records video love letters to melt the iron bars of Louisiana's Angola prison and keep her family together. (JA)

Unskinned | Dir. Inês Gil; 2019; 76 min (Portugal)

Prod. Joana Ferreira, Isabel Machado

In the wake of recession, *Unskinned* enters a storied Portuguese factory and documents its employees as they deftly operate the many machines involved in leather tanning. At first, Inês Gil's film resembles a process documentary, capturing the various steps in transfixing detail. But this sensorial splendor is deceptive. As the employees reflect on their experiences in the tannery, the superficial beauty of their labor fades, and the physical and mental hazards of the job come into focus. Throughout their conversations, the subjects continually mention a former coworker named Patrícia, whose mysterious absence from the plant continues to vex veteran employees. She is one of only three women workers, and the implications of her departure loom large, especially for Carla and Lúcia, who Gil centers as her film moves out of the plant and into the home. (CB)

The Viewing Booth | Dir. Ra'anan Alexandrowicz; 2019; 70 min (United States / Israel)

Prod. Ra'anan Alexandrowicz, Liran Atzmor

A student's face is bathed in blue light as she sits alone, scanning YouTube. She is instructed by a researcher to watch a series of carefully curated videos designed to evoke a political or emotional response about international human rights issues, but the images take on new meaning under the scrutiny of a different perspective. As the researcher attempts to test belief, fact, and fiction, this film reminds us that anything is true from the right angle. A psychological thriller directed by Ra'anan Alexandrowicz, whose previous films *The Law in These Parts* (2011) and *The Inner Tour* (2001) each concern the Israeli occupation of Palestine, *The Viewing Booth* explores the production, consumption, and proliferation of media in polarized times. (JA)

Welcome to Chechnya | Dir. David France; 2020; 107 min (United States / Russia)

Prod. Alice Henty, Askold Kurov, Joy A. Tomchin

There are no gay men in Chechnya, if we are to trust the words of the man who leads the volatile Russian republic. "To purify our blood, if there are any here, take them." Over the past three years, Ramzan Kadyrov's government has rounded up, tortured, and killed the republic's LGBT+ residents. In response to this terrifying development, a group of Chechen citizens band together to form an underground network that ushers LGBT+ community members out of the region and to safety. In *Welcome to Chechnya*, director David France (*How to Survive a Plague*, T/F 2011) embeds with these brave activists to document their harrowing rescues and elaborate handoffs, high risk efforts in which a simple mistake—contact with the wrong government official, the misplacement of a SIM card—could end in disaster. France's vital, present-tense film is essential, not only for showing that this contested genocide is very much real but also for tenderly capturing the love that, despite the terror, still flourishes among Chechnya's LGBT+ residents. (CB)

TRUE/FALSE FILM FEST 2020 SHORT FILMS

Aurora | Dir. Everlane Moraes; 2018; 16 min.

Three Cuban women deliver electric monologues in total silence. (*Plays in Shorts: Blanc*)

Civil War Surveillance Poems (Part 1) | Dir. Mitch McCabe; 2019; 15 min.

Set in the future during the impending civil war, this anxiety-ridden cross-country road trip is soundtracked by talk radio banter. (*Plays in Shorts: Rye*)

Dadli | Dir. Shabier Kirchner; 2018; 15 min.

Before the island was claimed Antigua, it was Wadadli—"our own." (*Plays in Shorts: Blanc*)

Distancing | Dir. Miko Revereza; 2020; 10 min.

The director of *No Data Plan* (True/False 2019) packs his .MOV files and says goodbye to the United States. (*Plays with malni—towards the ocean, towards the shore*)

Good Ended Happily | Dir. Basir Mahmood; 2019; 13 min.

A Lollywood production of the raid on Bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad. (*Plays in Shorts: Bock*)

Hampton | Dir. Kevin Jermone Everson & Claudrena Harold; 2019; 8 min.

Black Voices, a gospel choir from the University of Virginia, journey through song on the way home from a concert in Hampton Roads. (*Plays with Time*)

How to Disappear | Dir. Robin Klengel, Leonhard Müllner, Michael Stumpf; 2020; 21 min.

Is it possible to desert a war game? (*Plays with Catskin*)

JESA | Dir. Kyungwon Song; 2019; 6 min.

A sweet and salty take on family, food, and the patriarchy. (*Plays in Shorts: Blanc*)

Lost Three Make One Found | Dir. Atsushi Kuwayama; 2019; 27 min.

A young man sets off on a long, strange road trip across Portugal to find a cure for his broken heart. (*Plays in Shorts: Rouge*)

Love It/Leave It | Dir. Tom Palazzolo; 1973; 15 min.

A dazzling and overwhelming tour of Americana, set to the Vietnam War Era-chant "love it, or leave it."

Partial Differential Equation | Dir. Kevin Jerome Everson; 2020; 8 min.

A mathematician commands the screen in this entrancing, durational study of chalk and code. (*Plays with The Faculties*)

Reckless Eyeballing | Dir. Christopher Harris; 2004; 14 min.

Furtive and syncopated, a Jim Crow-era crime is reexamined under new light. (*Plays with Giverny Document (Single Channel)*)

San Vittore | Dir. Yuri Ancarani; 2019; 12 min.

A son picks up a crayon while waiting to see his incarcerated father. (*Plays in Shorts: Bock*)

The Sea, The Stars, A Landscape | Dir. Alison O'Daniel; 2019; 18 min.

Horns blare and sound softly through thick LA air. (*Plays in Shorts: Rouge*)

Secret Screening Short | 2019; 24 min.

An abandoned art deco building is restored to its former glory. (*Plays in Shorts: Rouge*)

See You Next Time | Dir. Crystal Kayiza; 2020; 6 min.

A Chinese nail artist and her African American client, a regular, share a moment of relaxation and beauty in a Brooklyn salon. *(Plays with Down A Dark Stairwell)*

Shortcuts | Dir. Daniela Delgado Viteri; 2019; 18 min.

Five political actors offer incinerary testimony as they dance and burn effigies. *(Plays in Shorts: Bock)*

Smoke Gets In Your Eyes | Dirs. Riccardo Giacconi, Paolo Pennuti, Mirko Fabbri; 2019; 12 min.

A band leader loses his senses. *(Plays in Shorts: Rouge)*

A Song About Love | Dir. Rikki Wright; 2019; 14 min.

Suffering, pain, and pleasure are richly layered as a chorus of black women's voices reaches divine heights. *(Plays with Giverny Document)*

Specialised Technique | Dir. Onyeka Igwe; 2019; 7 min.

An effort to recuperate black dance from studied spectacle to livingness. *(Plays with Those That, At a Distance, Resemble Another)*

The Spirit Keepers of Makuta'ay | Dir. Yen-Chao Lin; 2019; 11 min.

Atmospheric journey to the rocky coastal dreamscape of eastern Taiwan. *(Plays in Shorts: Blanc)*

Spit on the Broom | Dir. Madeleine Hunt-Ehrlich; 2019; 11 min.

The story of a clandestine organization founded by black women in 1840 is told through a surrealist lens. *(Plays in Shorts: Blanc)*

This is an Address | Dir. Sasha Wortzel; 2019; 17 min.

Stonewall veterans and queer activists claim residency along the Christopher Street piers while cranes raze vacant buildings for a new skyline. *(Plays with Pier Kids: The Life)*

To The North (Part 2) | Dir. Kelman Duran; 2016; 23 min.

A retelling of indigenous stories on a wintry foray into the mountains of South Dakota. *(Plays in Shorts: Rye)*

Up at Night | Dir. Nelson Makengo; 2019; 21 min.

Homemade battery packs and snaking power cables connect citizens of Kinshasa resisting darkness. *(Plays with Seven Years in May)*

what remains / geriye kalanlar | Dir. belit sağ; 2019; 7 min.

Constructed images are frequently manipulated but also link us to the people caught between life and death, past and present. *(Plays in Shorts: Bock)*

When two or three | Dir. Carmine Grimaldi; 2019; 20 min.

In a deserted Arizona town, a pastor and his devoted wife spend their days with God in this intense relationship portrait. *(Plays in Shorts: Rye)*