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For Immediate Release

Filmfest DC Returns for 39th Year!

Washington DC's longest-running film festival is back with exciting features, timely documentaries, and poignant local films.

(April 1, 2025) - WASHINGTON, DC – From April 24 through May 4, Filmfest DC returns for its 39th year with a vast array of new and exciting films. Over 11 movie-packed days, the festival spans a variety of categories with 63 films from 36 countries, including **World View** (international cinema), **The Lighter Side** (comedies), **Trust No One** (thrillers), **Global Rhythms** (international music), **Justice Matters** (social issues), and **Shorts**.

With the recent closure of Landmark's E Street Cinema, this year's festival will primarily take place at Regal Gallery Place (701 7th Street, NW), maintaining its central downtown presence.

Opening Night kicks off on April 24 at the Embassy of France (4101 Reservoir Rd, NW) with **The Marching Band** (France), winner of the Audience Award at the San Sebastián Film Festival. A post-screening discussion with noted film critic Arch Campbell and a reception will follow.

Closing Night of the festival will take place on May 4 at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library in downtown DC (901 G St, NW) with **Grand Finale**, an Icelandic comedy about a chamber music orchestra trying to avoid bankruptcy. A post-screening reception on the library's balcony follows.

Other highlights of this year's festival include **Reading Lolita in Tehran**, a new film based on the popular *New York Times* best-selling book, with author Azar Nafisi in attendance, and the U.S. premiere of **Frieda's Case** (Switzerland). From the Cannes Film Festival, Filmfest DC will feature award-winners **Souleymane's Story** (France) and **Visiting Hours** (France). Venice Film Festival award winners included are **Stranger Eyes** (Indonesia/Taiwan), **Aicha** (Tunisia), and **Yalla Parkour** (Palestine).

Also featured is *Monsieur Aznavour*, a biopic starring Tahar Rahim as the legendary French singer Charles Aznavour, often referred to as the “French Frank Sinatra.” Mauritanian auteur Abderrahmane Sissako’s new drama *Black Tea* follows an Ivorian woman who flees her wedding and emigrates to China to start a new life working in a tea shop. Costa Gavras’ newest film *Last Breath* stars Kad Merad and the remarkable Charlotte Rampling.

The festival also showcases timely and political films, including the **documentary** *The Last Republican*, which explores former Congressman Adam Kinzinger’s decision to leave the Republican Party, and *BORDERLAND: The Line Within*, an exposé on the profitable business of immigration.

As always, Filmfest DC highlights local films and filmmakers. This year’s DC4Reel selections include documentaries such as *The Dalai Lama’s Gift*, which recounts how in 1981, His Holiness the Dalai Lama initiated over a thousand young Americans into the ancient Kalachakra Tantra, the Wheel of Time; *The Most Beautiful Deaths in the World*, which explores the lives of DC artists from the El Salvadoran diaspora living in Columbia Heights/Mt. Pleasant; and *Salad Days: A Decade of Punk in Washington, DC*.

Marking a milestone, Filmfest DC’s *Arabian Sights* celebrates its 30th anniversary with a compelling lineup of films from the Arab world. This year’s selection includes award-winning *Aicha* from Tunisia, *Disorder* from Lebanon, and *Fez Summer 55* from Morocco. Two films from Palestine take center stage: *Happy Holidays*, a family drama set in Haifa, directed by Oscar-nominated filmmaker Scandar Copti, and *Yalla Parkour*, a documentary by DC filmmaker Areeb Zuaiter, who explores her connection to her homeland while chronicling her friendship with a Palestinian parkour athlete in Gaza. Zuaiter will be present for one of her screenings.

Continuing its efforts to expand film opportunities throughout the city, Filmfest DC will also host several films and programs beyond traditional theater spaces. The annual *Movies Under the Stars* at The Wharf will feature the Argentine audience favorite *Lion’s Heart*. Meanwhile, Filmfest DC’s *Impact Project* will bring filmmakers into the city’s public schools. Additionally, PBS stations WETA and WHUT will host “Filmfest DC Select,” showcasing many local films from the festival.

Throughout the festival, many filmmakers, subjects, and performers will be present for post-film conversations and panels.

For more information and to view the growing list of films, please visit: www.filmfestdc.org.

Tickets go on sale beginning April 4. The full catalog of films is now available online and will be featured in a 20-page insert in *The Washington Post* on Friday, April 18.

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About Filmfest DC

Filmfest DC seeks to make our lives more connected and meaningful by keeping pace with global culture and social activities while placing a special focus on current issues to encourage clarity and civil discourse. Filmfest DC is made possible by the support of our Board of Directors, sponsors, staff, and hundreds of volunteers. We believe that good movies make the world a better place.

www.filmfestdc.org