Welcome to the 35th Annual Washington, DC International Film Festival
June 4 – 13, 2021
60 films • 35 countries • 10 days • 1 amazing film festival

Filmm Fest DC is the largest and longest running film festival in Washington, DC. All selections will be presented virtually, allowing you to enjoy these remarkable films from the comfort of your own home.

Festival Guide
Films will be available for viewing over a five-day period:
June 4 – 8 or June 9 – 13. Please note the dates for your specific film selections indicated in blue below each film description.

Tickets
General admission is $9.00 per film. A ten-ticket Director’s Pass is available for $70.00 ($90.00 value). Visit filmfestdc.org to select the films you would like to see and make your purchase. There are a limited number of tickets available for each film.

For complete details, ticket information, and updates on Filmfest DC, please visit filmfestdc.org

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LOVE AFFAIR(S)
Emmanuel Mouret • France, 2020, 122 minutes
Women, beware the male novelist who wants to write about “feelings”—that is, if you want to remain faithful to your current partner. That’s the dilemma for Daphne, whose male alter ego has her to show aspiring writer Maxime around Provence. They pass the time analyzing current and past relationships, played out in flashback stories-within-stories. The twists and turns of multiple entwined couples—how they met, how it played out, how it didn’t—keep us guessing. —Judy Bloch
In French with English subtitles
Available June 4 – 8

ONE CAREFUL OWNER
Bernabé Rico • Spain, 2020, 94 minutes
A comedy set in Seville pits two selfish women against each other. As she nears the end of her life, Lola Cruz negotiates the sale of her apartment to a buyer willing to wait to take possession until Lola passes. For life insurance executive Sara Palacios, the arrangement works, for now. But Lola defies the actuarial; she just won’t die, putting Sara’s planned renovations—to her palacio, to her life—on hold. The film won the Audience Award at the Malaga Film Festival.—Judy Bloch
In Spanish with English subtitles
Available June 4 – 8

200 METERS
Amrion Hayfuel • Palestine, 2020, 96 minutes
For one family, the Israeli-Palestinian divide is metaphor and reality. From the West Bank home where he sleeps, Mustafa can see across the 200 meters to the apartment in Israel where his wife lives with their children. By day, Mustafa leaves Israeli society, with its changeable rejections. When he resorts to the services of a people smuggler, the way is a kind of Palestinian ship of fools, of which Mustafa is anchor. The film won Best Actor, the Cinema for Humanity Prize, and the FIPRESCI Int’l Critics Prize at the El Giusa Film Festival.—Judy Bloch
In Arabic and Hebrew with English subtitles
Available June 4 – 8

ARISTOCRATS
Yukiko Sode • Japan, 2020, 124 minutes
This layered examination of Japan’s class system focuses on two women from different backgrounds who must deal with society’s expectations. Harako is the daughter of a self-titled doctor; her fiancé broke up with her and, at 27, this is problematic. Country girl Miki worked hard to get into an exclusive college, but family problems forced her to leave. The women’s stories unite around a single man, Aoki, scion of a powerful political dynasty.—Dave Atchinson
In Japanese with English subtitles
Available June 4 – 8

BEANS
Tracey Deer • Canada/USA, 2020, 92 minutes
Telukentehiahkow is known as Beans within the Mhaakw reain in Okis, Quebec, where she is a teen in the summer of 1990, even rough season for her people. Mhaakw director Tracey Deer was that little girl, having lived through the Okis Crisis in which a proposed golf course would level a Mhaakw burial ground due process. Leading to violent encounters with their white neighbors and eventually, the Canadian army. The film won Best Canadian Feature Film at the Vancouver International Film Festival and Best Supporting Actress at the Vancouver Film Critics Circle.—Judy Bloch
Available June 9 – 13

THE BEST YEARS
Gabrielle Muccino • Italy, 2020, 134 minutes
Internationally acclaimed director Gabrielle Muccino’s filmmaking prowess is confirmed in this inspired portrait of a generation. The film traces the cycle of life and relationships spanning more than 40 years against the backdrop of contemporary Italian and world history seen through the eyes of three childhood friends and the girl they all fall in love with at one point in their lives—various corners.
In Italian with English subtitles
Available June 4 – 8

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CHARLATAN
Agnieszka Holland • Czech Republic, 2021, 118 minutes

Agnieszka Holland manifests the life and work of Czech herbalist and faith healer Jan Mikolášek, who used his power with natural remedies, never turning away a patient—including the occupying Nazi forces and the president of the country. This led to Mikolášek’s prosecution by the subsequent Communist government. In an incisive tale, Holland shines a light on the human susceptibility to political machinations. The film won Best European Director, Best Feature Film, and Best Leading Actor at the Czech Lion Awards.—Chicago International Film Festival

In Czech and German with English subtitles
Available June 4 – 8

THE COLLINI CASE
Marco Kreuzpaintner • Germany, 2019, 123 minutes

In Berlin, neophyte public defender Leinen catches what becomes the case of the decade, the assassination-style killing of a prominent businessman. The defendant, Fabrizio Collini, neither admits nor denies the crime. He won’t speak. Moreover, the victim, Hans Meyer, is someone Leinen has known all his life—a father figure. The case takes Leinen to a Tuscan village and a day that changed Collini from a small boy into a lifelong “case.” The film won the Audience Award at the Norwegian International Film Festival.—Judy Bloch

In German with English subtitles
Available June 4 – 8

DAWN OF WAR
Margus Paju • Estonia, 2021, 99 minutes

This clockwork thriller captures the tensions across Europe just before World War II. In 1939, Estonia’s counter-Soviet intelligence unit is bound dead, former spy Felix is called back to find the mole and prevent a Russian takeover. Suspicion spreads everywhere when Felix learns that the Soviets’ secret code book may be up for grabs.—Dave Nuttycombe

In Estonian with English subtitles
Available June 9 – 13

EXECUTIVE ORDER
Lázaro Ramos • Brazil, 2020, 94 minutes

This work of speculative fiction is set in a dystopian near future in Rio de Janeiro. When a young lawyer, Antônio, sues for reparations for descendants of African slaves in Brazil, the authoritarian government responds with an executive order that seizes all black citizens to Africa. Antônio, his wife, and their son join a defiant underground movement fighting the madness.—various sources

In Portuguese with English subtitles
Available June 4 – 8

THE FIRST 54 YEARS:
AN ABBREVIATED MANUAL FOR MILITARY OCCUPATION
Anton Mograbi • USA, 2021, 110 minutes

This step-by-step guide features the Israeli Occupation of Palestine in the years since the 1967 War. The famously challenging director Anton Mograbi made his latest film in collaboration with the Breaking the Silence project, which offers former Israeli soldiers the opportunity to talk about what they did and saw in Gaza and the West Bank. Mograbi’s commentary weaves their stories into a kind of historical logic that we won’t quite expect.—Judy Bloch

In English and Hebrew with English subtitles
Available June 4 – 8

GAZA MON AMOUR
Tarzan Nasser and Arab Rassner • Palestine/France, 2020, 87 minutes

Visiting their home one night, Issa brings in an unexpected head—an anatomically correct statue of Apollo in an excited state. This sparks a series of comic events that force Issa out of his shell while casting light on his love and on the Kafkaesque bureaucracy of life under the Occupation. At its core, Gaza Mon Amour is a romance story archived in the chemistry between powerhouse actors Salim Daw and Hami Abbassi.—Toronto International Film Festival

In Arabic with English subtitles
Available June 9 – 13

HELENE
Amiti Ajmal • Finland, 2020, 121 minutes

Helen Scherreck was one of Finland’s most renowned painters, whose work ranged from detailed realistic portrayals to emotionally charged modernist landscapes. Portayed with grace by Laura Virm, Helen confronts her place in a changing world and in the heart of a young amateur painter, Elmar. The story is set against both WWI and Finland’s civil war, when Finland was in the throes of independence from Russia and, like Helen, trying to decide which way to go.—Dave Nuttycombe

In Finnish with English subtitles
Available June 9 – 13

HUMAN FACTORS
Ronny Trocker • Germany, 2021, 102 minutes

To escape tensions at the advertising agency they co-own, French-German couple Nina and Jan whisk their kids away to their seaside vacation home. When burglars tear through the house, the account of what took place begins to unravel alongside the couple’s faith in each other. Peeling back layers of truth and perception, and featuring phenomenal performances, Human Factors reminds us that even the closest family members may be only intimate strangers.—Sundance Film Festival

In French, German, and English with English subtitles
Available June 9 – 13

IN BALANCHEINE’S CLASSROOM
Connie Hochman • USA, 2021, 89 minutes

Featuring never-before-seen archival footage of Balanchine at work, this is a film for anyone who loves theater and art and the creative process. In Balanchine’s Classroom, we take a trip back to the glory years of Balanchine’s New York City Ballet through the recollections of his former dancers and their quest to fulfill the vision of a genius. They reveal new facets of the groundbreaking choreographer: taskmaster, mad scientist, and spiritual teacher.—various sources

Available June 4 – 8

KARNAWAL
Juan Pablo Félix • Argentina, 2020, 97 minutes

With a talent for the dazzling steps of malambo, talented Cabra wants to be a professional dancer. However, when his father is released from jail, a complex triangle of family conflicts morphs the narrative into a powerfully realized exploration of blood ties. Capturing the rich regional texture of the northern border of Argentina, the film is a display of vibrant culture, a bold and dynamic coming-of-age dance drama. The film won the Beno-Amerika Award at the Guadalajara International Film Festival.—Cleveland International Film Festival

In Spanish with English subtitles
Available June 4 – 8

MANZANAR
Ann Kaneko • USA, 2021, 84 minutes

Manzanar, in California’s Owens Valley, is best known as the site where Japanese Americans were incarcerated during World War II. But Manzanar was and continues to be home to indigenous communities who have serious concerns about the water on their land. In this poetic documentary, we meet an intergenerational community of Native Americans, Japanese Americans, and environmentalists as they fight for their land and their rights.—CAAMFest

Available June 9 – 13

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LEEE ESMAEILZADEH
THE MARRIAGE ESCAPE
Johan Nikiforov • The Netherlands, 2020, 103 minutes

When is love too much? The Marriage Escape is an enthralling blend of comedy and drama about an oppressed husband who comes up with an ingenious way to escape his stifling marriage. In an attempt to claim some space, Jan concocts a plan to feign the onset of dementia and get himself checked into a Senegalese psychiatric ward. Clawing the fragments of a marriage, The Marriage Escape cleverly reveals the human struggle against a love that goes too far.—Various sources
In Dutch with English subtitles
Available June 9 – 13

PERSONA NON GRATA
Lisa Jaspersen • Denmark, 2021, 97 minutes

Persona Non Grata is a humorous drama about Laura, who distanced herself from her rural family and moved to Copenhagen, where she gained notoriety from her book chronicling her miserable youth in the countryside. Returning to her childhood home to participate in her brother’s wedding, Laura learns to her dismay that her worst childhood enemy has taken over her place in the family, and now she feels a strong need for revenge.—Various sources
In Danish with English subtitles
Available June 9 – 13

RED SOIL
Farid Bentoumi • France, 2020, 90 minutes

In this environmental thriller, a nurse named Nour takes charge of the infirmary at the chemical factory where her father works. As she starts scheduling routine check-ups, Nour is struck by odd gaps in the records, and her suspicions build when a reporter raises concerns about undisclosed toxic waste dumping. Red Soil pulls apart a conspiracy at the dangerously intersection of pollution and global exploitation.—Film At Lincoln Center’s Rendez-Vous with French Cinema
In French with English subtitles
Available June 9 – 13

ROSA’S WEDDING
Icíar Bollaín • Spain, 2020, 97 minutes

In this warm comedy, Rosa, a busy backstage costume seamstress, is also the thread that holds the fragility of her family together. Rosa believes her dreams—including reopening her mother’s long-shuttered dressmaking shop—will only be realized if she makes a commitment to her father. To that end, she invites her siblings and aging father to an intimate beachside wedding ceremony. Unbeknownst to the family, Rosa is going to marry herself. To that end, she invites her siblings and aging father to an intimate beachside wedding ceremony. Nevertheless, to the family, Rosa is going to marry herself.—JudyBloch
In Spanish and Valencian with English subtitles
Available June 9 – 13

SKIES OF LEBANON
Chloé Mazlo • France, 2020, 90 minutes

In Italy’s mountainous northeastern region, a Jewish surgeon is called upon to save the life of a neo-Nazi. His decision will enmesh him with the man’s family, their inherited beliefs, and their financial problems as well as with his own psychological inheritance from his sensitive, abusive, and absent father. Mazlo’s impressive debut feature is a complex exploration of place, politics, and the human struggle against a love that goes too far.—Various sources
In Italian with English subtitles
Available June 9 – 13

WOMEN IS LOSERS
Lissette Feliciano • USA, 2020, 85 minutes

In San Francisco’s Mission District in the late 1960s, a bright Catholic school student, Celina, longs to find a culture telling her, in Janis Joplin’s words, “women is losers.” Even Celina’s smarts work long odds in a culture telling her, in Janis Joplin’s words, “women is losers.” Even Celina’s smarts work
In French, Arabic, and Spanish with English subtitles
Available June 4 – 8

WRITING WITH FIRE
Rintu Thomas and Sushmit Ghosh • India, 2021, 93 minutes

India is a dangerous place for journalists. For marginalized women journalists, the threat is greater still. Nevertheless, Khabar Lahariya (Waves of News) persists. Operating out of Uttar Pradesh and run by Dalit women, with only mobile phones for recording, the newspaper—India’s YouTube of news—has garnered more than 150 million followers. To watch bureau chief Meera and her reporters at work is to see what democracy might look like when women hold a mirror to it. The film won the Audience Award and the Impact and Change Award at the Sundance Film Festival.—JudyBloch
In Hindi with English subtitles
Available June 9 – 13

YOU WILL REMEMBER ME
Eric Tissier • Canada, 2020, 94 minutes

Refined history teacher Édouard is starting to lose his memory. Accustomed to speaking out and taking a stand on all topics, he must become more discreet. He is placed in the care of Bérénice, who is a little red-haired and lost. Their meeting leads Édouard to recall a chapter from his personal history that he had chosen to forget. This engaging film is brought to life through the characters’ great energy and insight. The film won Best Performance by Lead Actor in a Canadian Film at the Winter Film Festival.—Various sources
In French with English subtitles
Available June 4 – 8

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SHORT STORIES 1
Total running time: 93 minutes

THE LITTLE BEACH
Sonia Bertotti • Argentina, 2019, 13 minutes, narrative

DOUBLESPEAK
Hazel McKibbin • USA, 2020, 10 minutes, narrative

THE AFFECTED
Rikke Gregersen • Norway, 2020, 13 minutes, narrative

SKY SUN, TILE SUN
Ziba Arzhang • Islamic Republic of Iran, 2020, 6 minutes, animation

THE LONGEST DREAM I REMEMBER
Carlos Lenin • Mexico, 2021, 20 minutes, narrative

Available June 4 – 8

SHORT STORIES 2
Total running time: 79 minutes

KKUM
Kang-min Kim • South Korea/USA, 2020, 9 minutes, animation

LAST SUMMER ON BAINBRIDGE STREET
Jessica Q. Moore • USA, 2020, 12 minutes, narrative

FORMER SINNERS OF THE FUTURE
Drew Durepos • USA, 2019, 8 minutes, documentary

UNLIVEABLE
Matheus Farias and Enoch Carvalho • Brazil, 2020, 20 minutes, narrative

Available June 9 – 13

DC4Reel

GO–GO CITY: DISPLACEMENT & PROTEST IN WASHINGTON, DC
Samuel George • USA, 2020, 50 minutes

Samuel George dives into Washington's black culture and community as he documents the intersection of go–go music, the hypnotizing sound of D.C., and the protests over racial justice that proliferated across the city for most of 2020. Winner of the Gold Award at the Spotlight Documentary Film Awards.—Various sources

Available June 4 – 13 FREE

LIAM WHITE
Harold Jackson III • USA, 2021, 86 minutes

In this insightful character piece, novelist Liam White's career has peaked. He begins a journey of contemplation and introspection as he comes to grips with the people who shaped him, for better and worse.—Various sources

Available June 4 – 13 FREE

A TALE OF THREE CHINATOWNS
Lisa Mao and Producer Penny Lee • USA, 2021, 90 minutes

In 2015, The Washington Post reported that the population of Chinese Americans in Washington, D.C.'s Chinatown had shrunk from a high of 3,000 to about 300. This illuminating debut by D.C.–based filmmaker Lisa Mao profiles Chinatowns in Washington, Chicago, and Boston.—Various sources

In English, Mandarin Chinese, and Yue Chinese (Cantonese) with English subtitles

Available June 4 – 13 FREE

MetrosHorts
Total running time: 99 minutes

The fourth edition of our popular program of films from the vibrant, creative community of filmmakers in DC and the immediate Metro area. Complete information is available at filmfestdc.org

Available June 4 – 13 FREE

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• OVERSIGHT

SUNSET CINEMA AT The Wharf
Enjoy a special Filmfest DC outdoor film on the big screen at The Wharf!

LOVE TYPE D
Sasha Collington • UK, 2020, 95 minutes

Ever felt that your love life was doomed? Frankie Browne tests positive for the Type D gene, a genetic defect that condemns her to a life of romantic failure. This crushing diagnosis sets in motion an unexpected, comic journey as Frankie struggles to understand the human heart and whether your genes are truly your destiny. The film's eccentric production design creates an atmosphere that is quintessentially British yet distinctively dream–like and outlandish.—Various sources

Available online June 9 – 13 and June 12 at 7:30 pm, $10 • 960 Wharf St., SW

Visit filmfestdc.org for tickets and directions to The Wharf

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