Welcome to the 38th Annual Washington, DC International Film Festival
62 Films • 36 Countries • 11 Days • 1 Amazing Festival

We welcome you to this year’s Filmfest DC with immense joy and anticipation. Our journey through world cinema has always been about more than just the films; it’s about the magic that happens when people gather, share, and immerse themselves in the art of storytelling. This year, the festival returns with a fervor that reflects our collective love for films. The heart of the festival has always been driven by our attendees’ vibrant energy; each of you has a unique perspective and a shared passion for films. We celebrate that spirit of community and connection with this year’s edition. Each film has been selected for its artistic merit and its power to transport, enlighten, entertain, and remind us of the profound way artworks can impact our lives and the world.

We are deeply thankful to the incredible team whose generosity, dedication, and expertise make this festival possible. We invite you to dive into the myriad stories that await. Let us be transported by the power of film to distant lands, to the depths of the human spirit, and to the heights of imagination.

Tony Gittens
Founder and Director
Washington, DC International Film Festival

Ticket Information

General admission is $14 unless otherwise noted.

Advance Sales
Select the films you would like to see at filmfestdc.org to make your purchase. Note that ticket sales online will end at noon on the day of show.

Day-of-Sales
Same-day tickets can be purchased at the theater. The box office opens one hour before the venue’s first screening of the day.

Director’s Pass
A ten-ticket Director’s Pass for $100 ($140 value) is available through advance sales only and applies to $14 screenings only. (Opening & Closing events are excluded)

Under 25 Discount Ticket
$10 tickets for movie lovers ages 16 to 25 available for sale at the theater. Bring your ID. (Opening & Closing events are excluded)

Theater Locations

Landmark’s E Street Cinema
555 11th Street NW, Washington, DC 20004
Theater entrance: on E Street between 10th & 11th Streets
Parking Information: Three hours of reduced-rate parking available in the adjacent garage with validation Monday – Friday after 5 p.m. and anytime on weekends
Closest Metro station: Metro Center

Embassy of France
4101 Reservoir Rd NW, Washington, DC 20007
Parking Information: Street parking available

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
2700 F St NW, Washington, DC 20566
Parking Information: Paid parking available
Closest Metro station: Foggy Bottom-GWU

Penn Social
801 E St NW, Washington, DC 20004
Located on the corner of E & 8th Streets
Parking Information: Street parking and parking garages available nearby
Closest Metro station: Metro Center or Gallery Place-Chinatown

The Wharf
960 Wharf St SW, Washington, DC 20024
Parking Information: Limited paid parking is available
Closest Metro station: L’Enfant Plaza or Waterfront

Information

filmfestdc.org | 202-234-FILM

@filmfestDC on [Social Media Icons]
Opening Film

**East Coast Premiere**

**Widow Clicquot**

**Thomas Napper**  
France/UK, 2023, 90 minutes

Set in France during the Napoleonic Wars, *Widow Clicquot* tells the true story of Barbe-Nicole Ponsardin (1777–1866), the “Grande Dame of Champagne” who, at the age of 20, became Madame Clicquot after marrying the scion of a winemaking family. Although their marriage was arranged, a timeless love blossomed between Barbe-Nicole (Haley Bennett) and her poetic, unconventional, and erratic husband, François (Tom Sturridge). In the weeds after her spouse’s untimely death, and now a mother to daughter Clémentine, Barbe-Nicole is still enamored and enthralled with François’ avant-garde experiments. Dubbed “Veuve” (the French word for widow) at age 27, she resolves to protect her family’s legacy and boldly challenge the men—as well as the state—set on stripping her of her vineyards.

Determined to advance her husband’s theories, Barbe-Nicole wagers on the next harvest and her own blend of sparkling wine. Challenged by the capriciousness of the seasons, the aggressive competitor Monsieur Moët, and the Napoleonic Code of 1804 barring women from running businesses, the elegant and luminous widow must succeed or lose everything. Director Thomas Napper entwines a sparkling story of flourishing female entrepreneurship with an account of doomed lovers whose legacy reverberates in the bubbles. The film is a toast to the perseverance of unshakeable women and a toast to Veuve Clicquot.

—Toronto International Film Festival

**In English**

**Thursday, April 18, 7:00 PM, Embassy of France, $45**
Followed by a reception

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Closing Film

**The Trouble with Jessica**

**Matt Winn**  
UK, 2023, 90 minutes

In this uproarious, clever comedy, Sarah and Tom, a financially strained couple, face unexpected chaos when an uninvited guest, Jessica, mysteriously passes away during their dinner party. Faced with the daunting task of concealing Jessica’s untimely demise, Sarah and Tom, along with friends Richard and Beth, embark on a hilarious scheme to maintain the illusion of normalcy. Featuring a stellar ensemble cast including Shirley Henderson, Alan Tudyk, Rufus Sewell, Olivia Williams, and Indira Varma, the film delivers sharp wit and humor. Matt Winn’s direction keeps the pace brisk throughout the tight runtime, and the screenplay, co-written by Winn, is filled with plot twists and witty dialogue. *The Trouble with Jessica* explores the absurd lengths people will go to protect themselves and maintain appearances amidst financial turmoil. It’s an entertaining examination of desperation and moral compromise in contemporary society that will keep audiences laughing from start to finish.—Various sources

**Sunday, April 28, 4:00 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema**
Followed by a reception, cash bar, at Penn Social, $25
Highlights

The Lighter Side

International Comedies
- Bonjour Switzerland (Switzerland)
- A Difficult Year (France)
- The Nature of Love (Canada)
- The Queen of My Dreams (Canada)
- Streaker (Switzerland)
- Thelma (USA)
- The Trouble with Jessica (UK)

Arabian Sights

The newest films about the Arab world
- Bye Bye Tiberias (Palestine)
- Chanting of the Dunes (USA)
- Goodbye Julia (Sudan)
- Hajjan (Saudi Arabia)
- Inshallah a Boy (Jordan)
- The Teacher (Palestine)

Trust No One

Espionage, Crime, and Thrillers
- Diabolik (Italy)
- The Extortion (Argentina)
- Just the Two of Us (France)
- Like Sheep Among Wolves (Italy)
- A Normal Family (South Korea)
- The Undertaker (UK)

DC4Reel

Creative community of DC filmmakers
- Bring the Beat (USA)
- Freedom Hair (USA)
- The Humber-Danny Gatton (USA)
- The Novelist (USA)
- Hope of Escape (USA)
Circle Award

The Circle Award is a juried competition of selected films that deserve increased recognition. The Circle Award is named in honor of Ted and Jim Pedas, founders of Washington’s Circle Theatres, which set the standard for innovative quality film programming in Washington, DC.

- Adiós Buenos Aires (Argentina)
- Let Me Go (Switzerland)
- A Normal Family (South Korea)
- The Queen of My Dreams (Canada/Pakistan)
- The Teacher (Palestine)
- The Teacher Who Promised the Sea (Spain)

THE AWARD JURY CONSISTS OF:

Felix Angel—Former Curator, Inter-American Development Bank
Susann Barocas—Competition Coordinator, Writer/Producer
Manjula Kumar—President/Executive Director, Global Performing Arts
Gregory McGruder—National Geographic Society
Peggy Parsons—Film curator emerita

Justice Matters

A competitive section that celebrates activism and creative efforts to make the world a better place, the Justice Matters section features stories of people coming together to defend democracy, empower communities, and stand up and fight for their rights and the rights of others. We thank the CrossCurrents Foundation for their support for this series.

- Bad Faith: Christian Nationalism’s Unholy War on Democracy (USA)
- Igualada (Colombia)
- In the Rearview (Poland/Ukraine)
- Mountains (USA)
- Rainbow Warrior (France/UK)

THE AWARD JURY CONSISTS OF:

Conrad Martin—Executive Director, Stewart R. Mott Foundation and Executive Director of the Fund for Constitutional Government
Judy Hallet—Award-winning Filmmaker and Producer
Karen Thomas—Producer/Director, Film Odyssey

Impact Project

As a part of Filmfest DC’s commitment to encourage civic dialogue, the Impact Project facilitates connections between festival films, filmmakers, and the broader DC community, especially those constituents who may not be the usual audience for a film festival. We collaborate with producers of relevant festival films, providing access to community organizations and groups and partnering with Teaching for Change to take films and filmmakers to DC school classes. The project is directed by Linda Blackaby, Filmfest DC Senior Programmer, and is supported by a grant from the Wyncote Foundation.

Filmfest DC Audience Award

Filmfest DC will present an audience award to the feature film voted the most popular by our audience. Ballots will be available at the theater. All award winners will be announced on Closing Night.

Filmfest DC Trailers

This year’s Filmfest DC trailers were created by three very talented film students at George Mason University: Khubab Hassan, Paul Lee, and Aidan Xavier Moriarty. Our trailers will be shown prior to festival screenings. Please enjoy!

Catalog cover and banner designed by Alexis Thornlow
FEATURE FILMS

Adiós Buenos Aires
German Kral
Argentina/Germany, 2023, 93 minutes
Filled with marvelous tango music and dance, Adiós Buenos Aires takes place in November 2001 against the backdrop of Argentina’s economic crisis. In the midst of these troubled times, the Vecinos de Pompeya—a five-piece tango band—try to keep their heads above water. They usually perform in a small, poorly attended pub and are often paid with empanadas instead of pesos. Julio Färber, a captivating bandoneon player in the band, grapples with his dwindling earnings from the gigs. Determined to leave the city behind and emigrate to Buenos Aires, Julio takes care of his last affairs in Buenos Aires. His plans are disrupted when he crosses paths with Mariela, a spirited cab driver who collides with his car. German Kral (known for the award-winning documentary Our Last Tango) delves into themes of resilience, love, and the profound impact of political and economic instability on ordinary lives.
—Various sources
In Spanish with English subtitles
Sunday, April 21, 3:00 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Friday, April 26, 6:05 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

Bad Faith: Christian Nationalism’s Unholy War on Democracy
Director/Producer: Stephen Ujlaki; Co-Director/Co-Producer: Christopher J. Jones
USA, 2024, 89 minutes
This compelling and urgent documentary, narrated by Peter Coyote, presents Christian nationalism as the greatest threat to democracy today, and it brings the well-researched historical receipts. Christian nationalism—the belief that the United States was founded as a Christian nation and therefore should privilege Christianity over all other faiths and theology over the Constitution—has always been ideology masquerading as religion. These days the masks are coming off with the gloves: “We’re talking about Christianizing America; spreading the Gospel in a political context,” you might hear from any of the pastors who grow rich off such theatrics as they make Christian soldiers out of their flock. Not for nothing were there posters of Christ everywhere on January 6, 2021. But Donald Trump wears the halo of modern-day saint for a movement that predated and will outlive him.
—Judy Bloch
In French with English subtitles
Thursday, April 25, 8:25 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Friday, April 26, 6:10 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

Amal
Jawad Rhalib
Belgium, 2023, 111 minutes
The corner of Brussels where Amal (Lubna Azabal) teaches high school might as well be a small village—everyone is in everyone’s business. Are you a secular or Muslim Belgian? Are you Muslim enough? In the classroom, the natural teenage pursuits of gossip and bullying can take on a dangerous quality as the youths expel the pressures of home life. After learning that one of her students, Monia, is being tormented by her peers for being a lesbian, Amal introduces the class to the eighth-century poet Abū Nuwās, who lived and wrote as a bisexual. Threats ensue, and parents, students, and teachers take sides. The young actors seem riveted around an impassioned performance by Azabal as they confront extremism’s malign effects on their generation.—Judy Bloch
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—Judy Bloch
In French with English subtitles
Thursday, April 25, 8:25 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Friday, April 26, 6:10 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Bye Bye Tiberias
Lina Soualem
France/Palestine, 2023, 83 minutes

Years after leaving her Palestinian village to follow her dreams of acting in France, Emmy-nominated Hiam Abbass returns home in this intimate documentary about four generations of women and their shared legacy of separation. At the age of 23, Abbass (known for her roles in Red Satin [FFDC 2003], Rock the Casbah [FFDC 2014], and Gaza Mon Amour [FFDC 2021] as well as the hit television series “Succession” and “Ramy”) made the difficult decision to leave her grandmother, mother, and seven sisters in the Palestinian village of Deir Hanna, Galilee. Years later, in collaboration with her daughter, the film’s director Lina Soualem, Abbass returned to her rapidly changing childhood home. Bye Bye Tiberias, Palestine’s Academy Awards® entry, is an important film that beautifully portrays the complexity of Arab women’s lives.—Various sources

In French and Arabic with English subtitles

Sunday, April 21, 3:15 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Wednesday, April 24, 6:10 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

Chanting of the Dunes
Mokhless Al-Hariri
USA, 2024, 80 minutes

Chanting of the Dunes is a narrative film about Wahbi al-Hariri-Rifai, who was an accomplished international artist, architect, archeologist, and author. Beautifully illustrated with meticulously restored archival photographs and original footage, the storyline takes viewers on a journey through multiple countries and momentous world changes that extend from the Levant in the 1920s to the United States and China in the 1990s. The film recounts al-Hariri’s life through the intimate and lyrical perspective of his wife, Widad Marachi. The narrative is accompanied by a superb soundtrack. Chanting of the Dunes showcases al-Hariri’s extensive work, including portraits, still lifes, and masterful on-site renderings of architectural monuments, from the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem to significant sites in China, Dubai, Saudi Arabia, and Washington, D.C. In 1984, al-Hariri became the first living artist to be honored with a solo exhibition at the Smithsonian Institution.—Various sources

Friday, April 26, 8:15 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Saturday, April 27, 6:20 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

The Convert
Lee Tamahori
New Zealand/Australia, 2023, 119 minutes

As with his acclaimed film Once Were Warriors, director Lee Tamahori returns to the subject of the Maori people but sets this story in 1830 as English colonists are arriving in New Zealand. Thomas Munro (Guy Pearce) is a pastor seeking redemption from his previous life as a soldier. As soon as he gets off the boat, both his skills are tested by the brutal conflicts among rival Maori tribes—who believe that “only blood redeems blood”—as well as the inherent cruelties of the white settlers. All sides threaten what might seem like a paradise. “Paradise is a popular word,” says a ship captain. “Always a misleading one.” As The Convert shows, the coming of the British set the stage for the plight of the characters in Once Were Warriors 165 years later.—Dave Nuttycombe

In English and Te Reo Maori

Saturday, April 20, 6:30 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Sunday, April 21, 7:20 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

Diabolik
Antonio Manetti and Marco Manetti
Italy, 2021, 134 minutes

The first of the Manetti brothers’ stylized adventure series featuring the gentleman thief Diabolik begins with a late-’60s bongo-infused score and a chase scene through the beautiful northern Italy countryside. Master of disguises Diabolik always seems at least three steps ahead of the police. Played with steaming macho by “Grey’s Anatomy” star Giacomo Gianniotti, Diabolik is both cunning and charming. When the equally mysterious Lady Eva Kant (Miriam Leone) appears, he may have met his match—or has he found a partner in crime? When Diabolik is finally caught, tried, and sentenced to (can it be?) death, there seems to be no way out, but this film is a reminder to everyone to brush up on your Morse code.—Dave Nuttycombe

In Italian with English subtitles

Friday, April 19, 6:05 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Saturday, April 27, 5:50 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
**FEATURE FILMS**

**A Difficult Year**  
 **Eric Toledano and Olivier Nakache**  
**France, 2023, 120 minutes**  
The latest from Olivier Nakache and Eric Toledano (C’est la vie!, FFDC 2019 and The Intouchables, FFDC 2012) is a puckish comedy about finding a reason for being—even when the world seems to be falling apart. Albert and Bruno are debt-ridden friends who are always looking for ways to cadge free stuff. Their lives take a turn when they stumble on a meeting of activists fighting overconsumption. Initially only interested in free beer, they reluctantly join the cause after being charmed by the group’s attractive leader. Bruno sees an opportunity for romance amidst the group’s elaborate demonstrations, despite the looming threat of arrest. Featuring winning performances from Pio Marmaï, Jonathan Cohen, Noémie Merlant, and Mathieu Amalric, A Difficult Year is driven by a belief in people’s fundamental ability to change and the ability to find beauty in even the bleakest moments.  
—Various sources  
*In French with English subtitles*

**Saturday, April 20, 6:20 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema**  
**Sunday, April 21, 4:30 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema**

**The Extortion**  
 **Martino Zaidelis**  
**Argentina/USA, 2023, 106 minutes**  
Actor Guillermo Francella excels at looking like a man caught in a trap, which his character in The Extortion most definitely is. Alejandro (Francella), a celebrated pilot nearing retirement, is approached by agents from the Intelligence Service who make him a seemingly innocent offer: carry a special suitcase on flights to Madrid. When he tries to refuse, they confront him with compromising information that would certainly end his apparently happy marriage, to say nothing of his career. Soon the once confident professional is plagued by doubts and fears. As twist upon twist reveals deeper and darker conspiracies, the question for Alejandro becomes, How do you get yourself out of a hole that you helped dig?—Dave Nuttycombe  
*In Spanish with English subtitles*

**Saturday, April 20, 8:45 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema**  
**Saturday, April 27, 1:45 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema**

**Evil Does Not Exist**  
 **Ryusuke Hamaguchi**  
**Japan, 2023, 106 minutes**  
The director of the Oscar®-winning Drive My Car, in a very different mood, looks at contemporary life in a village setting, where modernity and rusticity coexist peacefully, then precariously. At the center is Takumi (Hitoshi Omika), a thoughtful if distracted single father and odd-job man. When a Tokyo talent agency announces plans for a nearby “glamping” site, two talentless scouts pitching the project can’t convince the canny locals, who know it’s not just water that flows downhill. The two scouts earnestly turn to Takumi, for them, a font of rural wisdom. But their presence has disturbed an equilibrium. Evil may not exist, per the mysterious title, but nature does, and human nature must adapt.—Judy Bloch  
*In Japanese with English subtitles*

**Friday, April 19, 6:15 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema**  
**Saturday, April 27, 1:45 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema**

**Goodbye Julia**  
 **Mohamed Kordofani**  
**Sudan/Egypt, 2023, 121 minutes**  
Set against the backdrop of Sudan’s tumultuous final days as a unified country, Goodbye Julia follows the journey of a former singer haunted by guilt who seeks redemption by hiring the widow of a southern man as her maid while concealing her true identity. Directed by Mohamed Kordofani in his award-winning directorial debut, this poignant and intimate drama delves into themes of loss and forgiveness, subtly exploring the divisions between the people of North and South Sudan that led to the country’s division in 2011. Premiering at the 2023 Cannes International Film Festival, Goodbye Julia made history as Sudan’s first film to be selected, earning the Freedom Prize and a thunderous 10-minute standing ovation, cementing Kordofani’s status as a compelling voice in African cinema.—Various sources  
*In Arabic with English subtitles*

**Friday, April 19, 6:00 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema**  
**Thursday, April 25, 6:10 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema**

**The Lighter Side**  
 **A Difficult Year**  
 **Eric Toledano and Olivier Nakache**  
**France, 2023, 120 minutes**  
The latest from Olivier Nakache and Eric Toledano (C’est la vie!, FFDC 2019 and The Intouchables, FFDC 2012) is a puckish comedy about finding a reason for being—even when the world seems to be falling apart. Albert and Bruno are debt-ridden friends who are always looking for ways to cadge free stuff. Their lives take a turn when they stumble on a meeting of activists fighting overconsumption. Initially only interested in free beer, they reluctantly join the cause after being charmed by the group’s attractive leader. Bruno sees an opportunity for romance amidst the group’s elaborate demonstrations, despite the looming threat of arrest. Featuring winning performances from Pio Marmaï, Jonathan Cohen, Noémie Merlant, and Mathieu Amalric, A Difficult Year is driven by a belief in people’s fundamental ability to change and the ability to find beauty in even the bleakest moments.  
—Various sources  
*In French with English subtitles*

**Saturday, April 20, 6:20 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema**  
**Sunday, April 21, 4:30 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema**
Guardians of the Formula
Dragan Bjelogrlić
Serbia/Slovenia/Montenegro/North Macedonia, 2023, 120 minutes

In October 1958, during the height of the Cold War, Yugoslavian physicists at the Vinca Scientific Institute near Belgrade embark on a secret project. Accidentally exposed to a lethal dose of radiation while working on nuclear fission, they are clandestinely transported by the Yugoslav police to the Institut Curie in Paris for treatment. There, French doctors, suspecting their involvement in nuclear weapon development, propose an unprecedented medical procedure. This captivating period thriller weaves together Cold War politics and medical history, delving into the moral dilemmas of scientific experimentation. Recognized at the Locarno International Film Festival and cherished by audiences at the Palm Springs International Film Festival, the film brings a gripping true story to life.
—Various sources

In French and Serbian with English subtitles
Friday, April 19, 8:30 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Wednesday, April 24, 8:00 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

Hajjan
Abu Bakr Shawky
Saudi Arabia/Egypt/Jordan, 2023, 117 minutes

In the high-energy world of small-circuit camel racing, Ghanim is preparing for the Great Safwa Race—where heroes are made. Younger brother and Bedouin tailor Matar grew up hearing Ghanim recite poetry about their legendary grandfather known as “Hajjan,” the Arabic word for jockey. While following in his grandfather’s footsteps and building a name for himself in a regional qualifying race, foul play cuts Ghanim’s dreams short. Although Matar doesn’t share Ghanim’s passion for the track, he does share a rider’s love for his camel, Hofira. The devoted pair, unaware of the sprawling battle ahead of them, set out together to avenge Ghanim’s fate and instead commit to an outsized fight against a regional champion. Hajjan is a rousing feature backed by an evocative score and the awe-inspiring atmosphere of the Arabian desert.
—Toronto International Film Festival
In Arabic with English subtitles
Saturday, April 20, 6:30 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Thursday, April 25, 8:30 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

The Humbler – Danny Gatton
Virginia Quesada
USA, 2023, 92 minutes

This vibrant and revealing documentary delves into the life and legacy of the D.C. metro-based artist Danny Gatton, known as “The World’s Greatest Unknown Guitarist.” Gatton, who hailed from D.C.’s Anacostia area, mastered blues, jazz, rock, country, bluegrass, and rockabilly. The Humbler offers a captivating glimpse into Gatton’s journey, blending candid interviews and unseen footage to illuminate his unparalleled talent and eclectic musical style. From his upbringing in the vibrant musical landscape of Washington, D.C., to his struggles and triumphs within the music industry, Gatton’s story serves as a testament to the enduring power of artistic genius. His tragic end underscores the complexities of fame and the profound impact of his timeless melodies, leaving behind a legacy that continues to inspire music enthusiasts worldwide. The film is the first in-depth exploration of the life, music, and legacy of Danny Gatton.—Various sources

Saturday, April 20, 8:45 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

Igualada
Director/Producer: Juan Mejía Botero; Producers: Juan Yepes, Sonia Serna, Daniela Alatorre
Colombia/Mexico/USA, 2024, 81 minutes

At the age of 40, Francia Márquez was elected Colombia’s first Black Vice President. In addition to presenting her amazing trajectory from single mother from an impoverished rural area, former domestic worker, and relentless defender of land rights and the environment, the filmmakers had privileged access to her unconventional electoral campaign. The film deftly captured the tension such an audacious endeavor could produce. Proud of her African ancestry, Márquez genuinely identifies with the country’s marginalized populations—and they embraced her and the campaign slogan Soy Porque Somos (“I Am Because We Are”). Other sectors and news stories dismissed her as igualada (“uppity nobody”). Márquez was subjected to racist taunts on social media and required constant security due to death threats. As the United States approaches important elections this year, this moving portrait of a fearless grassroots activist turned principled politician will inspire hope about what is possible.—Cornelius Moore
In Spanish with English subtitles
Wednesday, April 24, 6:05 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Friday, April 26, 6:00 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Filmfest DC 2024 Schedule

All screenings at Landmark’s E Street Cinema unless otherwise noted

THURSDAY, APRIL 18
Opening Night

Widow Clicquot
Embassy of France
Film at 7 PM
Followed by a reception

FRIDAY, APRIL 19
6:00 PM  Goodbye Julia
6:00 PM  In the Rearview
6:05 PM  Diabolik
6:15 PM  Evil Does Not Exist
8:20 PM  The Nature of Love
8:25 PM  Les Indésirables
8:30 PM  Guardians of the Formula
8:45 PM  The Movie Teller

SATURDAY, APRIL 20
2:00 PM  The Novelist
2:00 PM  Rainbow Warrior
3:20 PM  The Teacher
4:00 PM  Kabuliwala
4:10 PM  Taking Venice
4:30 PM  Bonjour Switzerland
6:15 PM  Bad Faith: Christian Nationalism’s Unholy War on Democracy
6:20 PM  A Difficult Year
6:30 PM  The Convert
6:30 PM  Hajjan
7:30 PM  Thelma (The Wharf)
8:45 PM  The Extortion
8:45 PM  The Humber - Danny Gatton
8:50 PM  Like Sheep Among Wolves
8:50 PM  The Old Oak

SUNDAY, APRIL 21
1:00 PM  Short Stories 1
2:00 PM  In the Rearview
3:00 PM  Adiós Buenos Aires
3:00 PM  Bring the Beat (Kennedy Center)
3:15 PM  Bye Bye Tiberias
3:15 PM  Taking Venice
4:30 PM  A Difficult Year
5:00 PM  The Old Oak
5:00 PM  The Teacher Who Promised the Sea
5:35 PM  The Queen of My Dreams
7:00 PM  The Teacher
7:15 PM  Kabuliwala
7:20 PM  The Convert
7:35 PM  Let Me Go
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24
6:00 PM  Bad Faith: Christian Nationalism’s Unholy War on Democracy
6:05 PM  Igualada
6:10 PM  Bye Bye Tiberias
6:20 PM  Thelma
8:00 PM  Guardians of the Formula
8:25 PM  The Nature of Love
8:25 PM  Short Stories 2
8:30 PM  Bonjour Switzerland

THURSDAY, APRIL 25
6:00 PM  Mountains
6:05 PM  The Queen of My Dreams
6:10 PM  Goodbye Julia
6:15 PM  Rainbow Warrior
8:15 PM  Just the Two of Us
8:25 PM  Amal
8:30 PM  Hajjan
8:35 PM  Let Me Go

FRIDAY, APRIL 26
6:00 PM  Igualada
6:05 PM  Adiós Buenos Aires
6:10 PM  Amal
6:10 PM  Inshallah a Boy
8:00 PM  A Normal Family
8:15 PM  Chanting of the Dunes
8:25 PM  Les Indésirables
8:30 PM  The Undertaker

SATURDAY, APRIL 27
1:00 PM  MetroShorts
1:40 PM  Hope of Escape
1:45 PM  Evil Does Not Exist
2:00 PM  Freedom Hair
3:40 PM  The Teacher Who Promised the Sea
3:55 PM  Mountains
4:00 PM  A Normal Family
4:30 PM  Just the Two of Us
5:50 PM  Diabolik
6:15 PM  The Undertaker
6:20 PM  Chanting of the Dunes
6:35 PM  The Extortion
7:30 PM  Streaker (The Wharf)
8:30 PM  Inshallah a Boy
8:30 PM  Like Sheep Among Wolves
8:40 PM  The Movie Teller
8:45 PM  Bring the Beat

SUNDAY, APRIL 28
Closing Night
24-0039-01.indd   11
0x0 4/4/24   2:09 PM

The Trouble with Jessica
Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Film at 4 PM
Followed by a reception at Penn Social

Bring the Beat
Kabuliwala
Suman Ghosh
India, 2023, 106 minutes
Award-winning Indian director Suman Ghosh’s film is a poignant adaptation of Rabindranath Tagore’s timeless tale set in 1965 Kolkata, India. The film beautifully captures the vibrant city’s atmosphere, portraying the heartwarming bond between Rahmat (Mithun Chakraborty) and Mini (Anumegha Kahali), a connection that transcends cultural boundaries. Exploring themes of love and friendship, the film highlights the universal human experience and the profound significance of affection. Kabuliwala received critical acclaim, winning the Best Feature Film award at the Indian Film Festival of Houston and the Telangana Bengali Film Festival. Through evocative storytelling and compelling performances, Kabuliwala stands as a timeless cinematic gem, celebrating enduring bonds and the universal language of love.—Various sources
In Bengali with English subtitles
Friday, April 26, 6:10 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Saturday, April 27, 8:30 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

In The Rearview
Director/Producer: Maciek Hamela; Producer: Piotr Grawender
Poland/France/Ukraine, 2023, 84 minutes
When Putin’s war on Ukraine broke out in 2022, displacing millions, Polish director Maciek Hamela put his polyglot skills, his love of the Ukrainian people, and his van to work, ferrying countless families across Ukraine to safety in Poland. In this documentary, as both driver/savior and director, Hamela makes his passengers at home as he dodges landmines. Thus, the everydayness that was interrupted by Russian bombs is on display in the backseat (a 7-year-old explains, “’Worried’ means when your grandma is afraid”). Filming from the front seat to the back was a necessity that doubles as a stroke of visual poetry, capturing faces stunned by a new reality and harrowing stories that have become the stuff of chatter. We can only hope that when this terrible war is finally in the rearview, Maciek’s film (and his work) will be a testament to the humanity that survived.—Judy Bloch
In Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, French, and English with English subtitles
Friday, April 19, 6:00 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Sunday, April 21, 2:00 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

Just the Two of Us
Valérie Donzelli
France, 2023, 105 minutes
French teacher Blanche Renard (Virginie Efira) is charmed by suave banker Grégoire Lamoureux (Melvil Poupaud) the moment they meet at a party. Their connection is as passionate as it is romantic and leads to a whirlwind courtship and marriage. It’s not until Grégoire is transferred from their native Normandy to a bank in the less-quaint town of Metz that a sinister dimension to his personality quickly emerges and a marriage that seemed to offer a bright new beginning soon takes on the appearance of something more like a trap. Just the Two of Us is a tense, edge-of-your-seat erotic thriller that doubles as an acute psychological study of a profoundly disturbing relationship. This César-nominated film for Best Adapted Screenplay by Valérie Donzelli and Audrey Diwan (Happening, FFDC 2022) from Éric Reinhardt’s novel L’Amour et les Forêts earned critical acclaim, including its participation in the Cannes Film Festival.—Various sources
In French with English subtitles
Thursday, April 25, 8:15 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Saturday, April 27, 4:30 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

Inshallah a Boy
Amjad Al-Rasheed
Jordan, 2023, 113 minutes
Inshallah a Boy is the first Jordanian film to compete at the Cannes Film Festival and is Jordan’s submission to the Academy Awards®. This story of a widow who pretends she is pregnant with a boy to keep a roof over her head is a suspenseful and engrossing portrait of resistance and strength. The film follows Nawal, a mother and housewife whose husband suddenly dies unexpectedly. In the absence of legal documents, her brother-in-law swoops in under the auspices of inheritance laws to exercise his claim on not just the couple’s apartment but also on guardianship of Nawal’s young daughter, Nora. Nawal is forced into a series of rash situations to hold onto her family and claim what should rightfully be hers.—Various sources
In Arabic with English subtitles
Friday, April 26, 6:10 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Saturday, April 27, 8:30 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

Justice Matters
Trust No One

Arabian Sights
Inshallah a Boy

FEATURE FILMS
Continued from page 9
Les Indésirables
Ladj Ly
France, 2023, 105 minutes
The follow-up to his previous Oscar®-nominated film, Les Misérables, finds director Ladj Ly returning to similar themes from a fresh angle. Set in a deteriorating immigrant neighborhood on the outskirts of Paris, Les Indésirables pits naïve yet reactionary young mayor Pierre (Alexis Manenti) against the earnest but frustrated activist Haby (Anta Diaw) in a battle for both the lives of the town’s inhabitants and its future. The mayor was put in place by the political machine with the instruction “Don’t make waves.” But as conditions for the residents of a rapidly deteriorating apartment building worsen and Haby begins petitioning for help and understanding, the storm of problems escalates. The ultimate confrontation is both shocking and relevant for policymakers and citizens everywhere.—Dave Nuttycombe
In French with English subtitles
Friday, April 19, 8:25 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Friday, April 26, 8:25 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

Let Me Go
Maxime Rappaz
Switzerland/France/Belgium, 2023, 92 minutes
This film, which opened the ACID program at Cannes in 2023, explores themes of sacrifice, desire, and the longing for change. Claudine, a woman in her fifties devoted to caring for her special-needs son, finds solace in brief encounters with passing men at a hotel every Tuesday. Her routine is interrupted when she meets Michael, who extends his stay for her. As Claudine navigates this unexpected connection, she begins to yearn for a different life. Set against the backdrop of a Swiss mountain village, Let Me Go is a poignant drama with unexpected moments of lightness and caring. Jeanne Balibar delivers an exceptional performance, bringing depth and complexity to Claudine without reducing her to mere indecisiveness.—Various sources
In French with English subtitles
Sunday, April 21, 7:35 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Thursday, April 25, 8:35 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

Like Sheep Among Wolves
Lyda Patitucci
Italy, 2023, 100 minutes
A gutsy undercover police agent, Vera has infiltrated a dangerous Serbian crime syndicate in Rome’s criminal underworld. To survive in such an unforgiving world, Vera is forced to present a tough, insensitive facade. All seems to be going as planned for a big upcoming heist, until she learns that her younger brother, Bruno, whom she hasn’t seen in years, is also mixed up with the syndicate. Caught on opposite sides of the barricade, old wounds resurface as the siblings must make choices that seriously jeopardize their goals. Combining a hard-boiled crime thriller with a family drama, Lyda Patitucci’s fierce, gripping feature debut is a story of revenge and redemption against the backdrop of a moody, dangerous city.—Seattle International Film Festival
In Italian with English subtitles
Saturday, April 20, 8:50 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Saturday, April 27, 8:30 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

Mountains
Director/Writer: Monica Sorelle; Producer/Writer: Robert Colom
USA, 2023, 95 minutes
Xavier is a thoughtful and steadfast husband, father, and wage earner in an immigrant working-class family in Miami’s Little Haiti who wants to buy a bigger house for his family. Ironically, Xavier works for a company (and a racist boss) that demolishes homes, and he is ultimately troubled that the developments could displace residents like himself. Esperance, his good-natured wife, works as a crossing guard, sews clothes to earn extra money for the family, and seems okay with their present house. They don’t understand but still love their son, the U.S.-bred Junior, who aspires to be a stand-up comic—an inexplicable career to his parents. This warm and delightful multi-award winner explores generational divides in immigrant families and the sounds of “back home” conflicts between different communities in Miami and gentrification. It’s full of color, and the characters feel and sound like real people. It’s a gem.—Cornelius Moore
In English, Haitian Creole, and Spanish with English subtitles
Thursday, April 25, 6:00 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Saturday, April 27, 3:55 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
FEATURE FILMS

The Old Oak
Ken Loach
UK, 2023, 113 minutes

The great humanist Ken Loach, in his last film (so he says), is going out on a strong note. In a former mining town in northeast England, the first generation to come of age since the pits closed can barely support their own kids. When a busload of Syrian refugees arrives, the generous among them welcome a new cause while the miserable find a new scapegoat for the town’s ills. T.J. Ballantyne’s rundown Old Oak Pub holds memories of long-lost solidarity and communality that the newcomers unlock. The director’s trademark nonprofessional actors give the characters a knowing dignity, while Loach regular Dave Turner wears the role of T.J. like an old sweater; he’s that comfortable in it and in Loach’s worldview. Strong newcomer Ebla Mari co-stars as the young Syrian photographer Yara, tasked with translating not only a language but the experience of exile.—Judy Bloch

In English and Arabic with English subtitles
Saturday, April 20, 8:50 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Sunday, April 21, 5:00 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

Trust No One

In the nitrate salt flats of Chile’s Atacama Desert, mine workers have created a community amidst a precarious life in the driest place on Earth. Maria Margarita, whose mother left her family to pursue the arts, is a gifted performer who transforms herself on stage when she recounts to her family (who can only afford one ticket among them) the pictures she has seen in the town’s cinema. Soon she becomes the community’s most prominent star. As the “movie teller,” she transports her audience to the new worlds she discovers onscreen, enabling them to escape their daily lives. When changing times threaten to erode the community, Maria continues to breathe life into the people of this unforgiving land, immortalizing their struggles in her stories. The Movie Teller is a celebration of our capacity to defy even the harshest circumstances to find love, inspiration, and hope.—Toronto International Film Festival

In Spanish with English subtitles
Friday, April 19, 8:45 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Saturday, April 27, 8:40 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

The Nature of Love
Monia Chokri
Canada/France, 2023, 110 minutes

The Nature of Love is an entertaining and biting romantic comedy that tackles class differences and infidelity. Sophia is a posh fortieth-year French-Canadian professor involved in a long-term, intellectually-stimulating but sexually tepid relationship with her partner, Xavier. She crosses paths with Sylvain, the strapping, plaid-adorned contractor tasked with fixing up the couple’s country home, and libidinous sparks fly. Despite her well-prepared lectures on love and desire according to Plato, Schopenhauer, Spinoza, and Bell Hooks, Sophia is now well out of her depth and plunges into uncharted emotional waters. With its deft dashes of conflict, The Nature of Love is part social commentary, part love story culminating in an irresistible sentimental comedy. The third feature from Quebecois actor, writer, and director Monia Chokri, premiered at last year’s Cannes Film Festival’s Un Certain Regard section.—Various sources

In French with English subtitles
Friday, April 19, 8:20 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Wednesday, April 24, 8:25 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

A Normal Family
Hur Jin-ho
South Korea, 2023, 116 minutes

Director Hur Jin-ho’s emotional thriller begins with a shockingly well-realized road rage incident that kills a man and sends his young girl to the hospital. This seemingly random event brings together two brothers, one a lawyer (Sul Kyung-gu) who will try anything to get the guilty driver off, and the other an overworked doctor (Jang Dong-gun), conscientiously trying to save the girl’s life. But most of the action shifts to the strained family dynamics at home, particularly the stress of raising modern teenagers. The lawyer’s willful daughter (Hong Yi-ji) seems destined for success; the doctor’s son is struggling and is tutored by his cousin. When the children get in trouble, the film asks difficult questions about personal, parental, and societal responsibility: What is justice, and how far do you go for your beliefs?
—Dave Nuttycombe

In Korean with English subtitles
Friday, April 26, 8:00 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Saturday, April 27, 4:00 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
The Queen of My Dreams
Fawzia Mirza
Canada/Pakistan, 2023, 97 minutes

This stylish comedy elegantly blends the retro charm of Bollywood cinema with a contemporary coming-of-age narrative, centering on Azra, a young Canadian-Pakistani woman embracing her queerness amidst familial and cultural expectations. Recognized on the Toronto International Film Festival’s annual Canada’s Top Ten list for 2023, Fawzia Mirza’s feature debut makes a lasting impact, highlighting her prowess as a director to watch. Seamlessly weaving between past and present, the film dives into Azra’s journey while humanizing her conservative mother through a vivid depiction of 1960s Karachi, Pakistan. Exploring themes of gender, tradition, and familial bonds, The Queen of My Dreams resonates as Azra confronts her identity against the backdrop of her family’s ancestral home. Mirza’s adept use of nostalgia as a healing mechanism adds depth to the story, crafting a compelling portrayal of generational struggles and triumphs in the face of tradition and societal norms.
—Various sources

In Urdu and English with English subtitles

Sunday, April 21, 5:35 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Thursday, April 25, 6:05 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

Taking Venice
Amei Wallach
USA, 2023, 98 minutes

At the height of the Cold War, the U.S. government is determined to fight communism with culture. The Venice Biennale, the world’s most influential art exhibition, becomes a proving ground in 1964. Alice Denney, Washington insider and friend of the Kennedys, recommends Alan Solomon, an ambitious curator making waves with trailblazing art, to organize the U.S. entry. Together with Leo Castelli, a powerful New York art dealer, they embark on a daring plan to make Robert Rauschenberg the winner of the Grand Prize. The artist is yet to be taken seriously with his combinations of junk off the street and images from pop culture, but he has the potential to dazzle. Deftly pulling off maneuvers reminiscent of those in a Hollywood thriller, the American team leaves the international press crying foul and Rauschenberg questioning the politics of nationalism that sent him there.
—Various sources

Saturday, April 20, 2:00 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Thursday, April 25, 6:15 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

The Teacher
Farah Nabulsi
UK/Palestine/Qatar, 2023, 115 minutes

The Teacher is set and was evocatively filmed in the Occupied West Bank. High school English teacher (and clandestine resistance activist) Basem is still wounded from a past family tragedy brought on by the occupation. He mentors one of his students, Adam, who endured his own loss due to settler violence, counseling him in order to avoid prison or death by the Israelis. Scenes of the characters experiencing their homes being raided and demolished, in courtrooms or at the checkpoints, are dramatically effective. A concurrent story follows an American couple’s quest for the release of their Israeli soldier son, who is being held by the resistance in exchange for the freeing of imprisoned Palestinians. Although this superbly acted and well-written mixture of compassionate personal drama and gripping political thriller is set in 2014, the stark similarities make it impossible to not draw parallels to the current situation.—Cornelius Moore

In Arabic and English with English subtitles

Saturday, April 20, 3:20 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Sunday, April 21, 7:00 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

Rainbow Warrior
Director: Edward McGurn; Producer: Docsville Studios
UK/France, 2023, 94 minutes

Greenpeace: We all know what the “green” stands for, but remember, this essential organization’s founding mission was to stop nuclear weapons testing. The band of hippie peacekings using themselves as human shields had already succeeded in halting U.S. testing in the North Pacific and had evacuated the entire population of Rongelap Island when, in 1985, while resting in Auckland Harbor, their intrepid freighter the Rainbow Warrior was rocked by explosions that killed one of their members. What vandal—no, what country?—was responsible? You can’t make this stuff up, and talented documentarist Edward McGurn has stitched together a vivid narrative complete with James Bond–like intrigue and the lively memories of survivors and investigative journalists. Like the Greenpeace warriors themselves, the film is outwardly freewheeling but deadly serious about planting “mind bombs.”
—Judy Bloch

In English and French with English subtitles

Saturday, April 20, 2:00 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Thursday, April 25, 6:15 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

Justice Matters
Rainbow Warrior

The Teacher
FEATURE FILMS

The Teacher Who Promised the Sea
Patricia Font
Spain, 2023, 105 minutes

In 1935, Antoni Benaiges is hired as a teacher in a small, isolated village in Burgos, Spain. There, he establishes an intense relationship with his students, a group of young boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 12, to whom he makes a promise: to take them to see the sea for the first time in their lives. Seventy-five years later, Ariadna, the granddaughter of one of those students, finds a mysterious notebook and decides to look for the person who was her grandfather’s teacher, discovering an exciting story marked by courage and reprisal. A five-time Goya Award nominee, including Best Adapted Screenplay and Best Actor, The Teacher Who Promised the Sea is a remarkable true story about memory and the incredible power of education.—Various sources

In Spanish with English subtitles

Sunday, April 21, 5:00 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Saturday, April 27, 3:40 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

The Undertaker
Michael Wright
UK, 2023, 89 minutes

In the smoky, stylish setting of 1960s British crime, Arthur Morel, a reserved undertaker, finds himself drawn into a dangerous game when he agrees to dispose of bodies for a local gangster. What starts as a tempting offer quickly spirals out of control as Arthur becomes entangled in a web of danger and deceit. With retirement on the horizon and his life in jeopardy, Arthur must navigate the murky waters of the underworld, transforming into an unexpected vigilante in a desperate bid to survive and bring justice to those who have fallen victim to the darkness lurking in the shadows. Fueled by suspense and moral ambiguity, this gripping tale unfolds with twists and turns that will keep the audience on the edge of their seats until the very end.—Various sources

North American Premiere
Trust No One

Friday, April 26, 8:30 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Saturday, April 27, 6:15 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

Thelma
Josh Margolin
USA, 2023, 97 minutes

When 93-year-old Thelma Post gets duped by a phone scammer pretending to be her grandson, she sets out on a treacherous quest across the city to reclaim what was taken from her. Inspired by the real-life experience of writer-director Josh Margolin’s own centenarian grandmother, Thelma puts a clever spin on movies like Mission: Impossible, aiming the spotlight on an elderly grandmother as an unlikely action hero. With affectionate humor, Margolin employs the familiar tropes of the action genre in hilarious, age-appropriate ways to tackle themes of aging, mortality, and human frailty. In the first leading film role of her more than 70-year career, Oscar®-nominated veteran character actor June Squibb portrays Thelma with grit and determination, demonstrating that she is more than capable of taking care of business—despite what her daughter (Parker Posey), son-in-law (Clark Gregg), or loving grandson (Fred Hechinger) might believe.—Sundance Film Festival

Saturday, April 20, 7:30 PM, The Wharf, $10
Wednesday, April 24, 6:20 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

Bring the Beat
Chris McDonald
USA, 2023, 60 minutes

Bring the Beat is a captivating documentary that celebrates the global reach of D.C.’s homegrown go-go. Witness electrifying performances by go-go icon Gregory “Sugar Bear” Elliott, Wiley Brown, Elijah Jamal Balbed’s The JoGo Project, Malik Dope, Sweet Cherie, Deborah Bond, and the Philippe Lemm Group, a Dutch ensemble playing their own go-go inspired music. Learn about go-go’s rich cultural roots through interviews with Charles C. Stephenson, Jr., former chair of the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities, and Natalie Hopkinson, Associate Professor of Media, Democracy, and Society at American University. Bring the Beat is produced by the Forum for Cultural Engagement as part of the Transatlantic Music Project, an initiative of the United States Embassy in The Hague.—Various sources

Sunday, April 21, 3:00 PM, The Kennedy Center’s Justice Forum at the Reach, FREE
Saturday, April 27, 8:45 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema,
FREE

Co-presented with:
Go-Go at The Kennedy Center

Sunday, April 21, 5:00 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
Saturday, April 27, 3:40 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema
FilmfestDC.org

Sunset at The Wharf

THE
WHARF
Enjoy a special Filmfest DC outdoor film on the big screen at The Wharf

Streaker
Peter Luisi
Switzerland, 2017, 98 minutes

A new type of sports hero is born in this fast-paced comedy from the writer-director of The Sandman (FFDC 2012), Unlikely Heroes (FFDC 2015), and Bonjour Switzerland (FFDC 2024). After losing his employer’s money on what should have been a sure bet, sad-sack high school teacher Balz Näf needs to replace the funds pronto. Taking inspiration from the streaker who distracted his heavily favored soccer team, he starts recruiting exhibitionists for a new type of illegal sports betting: How long can a naked runner stay on the soccer field? Näf’s enterprising hairdresser lays out odds for fans to wager and shares the proceeds with Näf. Although streaking becomes a trendy new sport in Switzerland, the soccer club owners are furious and police commissioner Sandra Strebel takes on the case. This witty and humorous romp offers excellent scripting and direction and, um, revealing performances from a seasoned cast.—Various sources

In Swiss German with English subtitles

Saturday, April 27, 7:30 PM, The Wharf, $10

Hope of Escape
Amy Gerber
USA, 2023, 91 minutes

Hope of Escape brings to light the story of enslaved mother and daughter Diana and Cornelia, who must escape to evade separation. Seeking aid from Northern relatives and abolitionists, they navigate the “above-ground railroad” in a bid for freedom.

Saturday, April 27, 1:40 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema, FREE

The Humbler – Danny Gatton
Virginia Quesada
USA, 2023, 92 minutes

This documentary celebrates Danny Gatton, known as “The World’s Greatest Unknown Guitarist,” showcasing his musical versatility and enduring influence.

Saturday, April 20, 8:45 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema, $14

The Lighter Side

Thelma
Josh Margolin
USA, 2023, 97 minutes

Please see film note on page 16
Saturday, April 20, 7:30 PM, The Wharf, $10

DC4Reel

Bring the Beat
Chris McDonald
USA, 2023, 60 minutes

This dynamic documentary celebrates D.C.’s go-go music scene and explores the genre’s rich roots and global impact.

Sunday, April 21, 3:00 PM, The Kennedy Center’s Justice Forum at the Reach, FREE

Saturday, April 27, 8:45 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema, FREE

Freedom Hair
Dianne Houston
USA, 2023, 99 minutes

Freedom Hair portrays Melony Armstrong’s struggle against regulations to start her own natural hair braiding business in Mississippi, highlighting resilience and empowerment.

Saturday, April 27, 2:00 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema, FREE

The Novelist
Harold Jackson III
USA, 2023, 77 minutes

After fatally harming an author and stealing his manuscript, Alex has to face unexpected consequences. Directed by Harold Jackson III, The Novelist is a gripping dark comedy.

Saturday, April 20, 2:00 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema, FREE

Sunset at The Wharf

Enjoy a special Filmfest DC outdoor film on the big screen at The Wharf

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Saturday, April 20, 2:00 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema, FREE

An Advertising Supplement to The Washington Post
**Short Stories 1**

**Total running time: 83 minutes**

**Sunday, April 21, 1:00 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema**

**Earthling**
Keith Lane and Molly Graham/USA, 2023, 10 minutes, animation
Jack Weiner claims he was abducted by aliens in the summer of 1976. Archival recordings of hypnosis sessions provide the backdrop for this engrossing animation about a man who stands by his story.

**Blood Like Water**
Dima Hamdan/Palestine, 2023, 15 minutes, narrative, in Arabic with English subtitles
Facing blackmail, Shadi accidentally drags his proud Palestinian family into a trap where they only have two choices: either collaborate with the Israeli occupation or face shame and humiliation in their community. Based on a true story.

**Mercy**
Xinyue Wu/USA, 2024, 15 minutes, documentary, in English and Chinese with English subtitles
After losing her leg as a child in China, a young woman becomes a passionate advocate for disability rights and faces unexpected challenges in her fight for a more inclusive society.

**Ciranda Feliteceira**
Lula Gonzaga and Tiago Delácio/Brazil, 2023, 8 minutes, animation, no dialogue
Janaina shares with her mother the ritual of fishing in the sea off the island of Itamaracá, and the pain and beauty of the cycles of life.

**Flail**
Ben Gauthier/USA, 2023, 13 minutes, narrative
It’s her boss’s birthday, and Allie is trying as hard as she can.

**Hope**
Volkan Gürün/Turkey, 2023, 9 minutes, narrative, in Turkish with English subtitles
Three refugee women are connected across time through a single picture frame.

**Make a Wish, Benóný!**
Katla Sólnes/Iceland, 2023, 12 minutes, narrative, in Icelandic with English subtitles
Rolling stone and absentee father Benóný is in for a surprise when his path unexpectedly crosses that of his teenage daughter, who is blissfully unaware of him, while she’s on vacation in his isolated seaside village.

**Flail** [CC]

**Short Stories 2**

**Total running time: 83 minutes**

**Wednesday, April 24, 8:25 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema**

**Bogotá Story**
Esteban Pedraza/Columbia, 2023, 16 minutes, narrative, in Spanish with English subtitles
In 1992, as Colombia faces an era of drug violence, car bombs, and daily power outages, a young mother in Bogotá receives an internship opportunity in the United States and must choose between her dreams and her family.

**Hair Care** [CC]
Fatima Wardy/USA and Ivory Coast, 2023, 12 minutes, narrative and animation, in English and French with English subtitles
When her hair braider disappears on her, a young woman must traverse an animated ivory coast in order to track her down.

**Night Ride from LA**
Martin Gergich/Germany, 2023, 5 minutes, experimental, no dialogue
A trip from downtown Los Angeles to the desert near Palm Springs is condensed into a flickering swirl of time-stretched movements and night light graffiti in this love letter to the energy and vibe of the California way of life.

**Blue Hour**
J.D. Shields/USA, 2023, 16 minutes, narrative
Personal journeys intersect when a struggling young photographer is hired for a cheap last-minute portrait gig. The unfolding photo session leaves an indelible mark on two women.

**Flail** [CC]  * Open Captions [CC]

**MetroShorts**

The seventh edition of our popular program of works from the vibrant community of filmmakers in the Metro DC area.

**Total running time: 87 minutes**

**Saturday, April 22, 1:00 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema**

**On The Mountain**
World Premiere
Anya Raza/USA, 2024, 12 minutes, narrative, in English and Dari with English subtitles
An Afghan family is forced to make an agonizing choice as they resettle in the United States. Inspired by true events.

**Mailman**
Nicholas G. Pelecanos/USA, 2023, 18 minutes, narrative
A perceived racial slight and a simple action misjudged to be an act of racial aggression alter the lives of three men forever.

**Flail** [CC]

**The Test**
Claudia Myers and Laura Waters Hinson/USA, 2023, 16 minutes, documentary, in English with English subtitles
A Ghanaian maintenance worker at a Virginia retirement community dreams of becoming an American citizen and engages the help of two elderly residents to prepare for the biggest test of his life: the U.S. citizenship exam.

**Room to Breathe** [CC]
World Premiere
Dave Haft/USA, 2024, 27 minutes, documentary, in English and Spanish with English subtitles
Mary and Dave confront pandemic parenting and virtual school with two young kids in a state of growing emotional imbalance. In this moment of collective recovery from community disconnection, this intimate portrait of family life in isolation provides a tool for reflection and healing.

Members of filmmaking teams from all the films are expected in person.
Thank You

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Filmfest DC on TV
The festival is partnering with Washington’s popular Public Television stations. Tune in to WETA and WHUT for exciting films by some of our city’s talented local filmmakers.

WETA IS THE OFFICIAL TELEVISION STATION OF FILMFEST DC. It is the leading public broadcasting station in the nation’s capital. WETA Metro will screen the 2023 selection of MetroShorts films that will entertain as well as inform you.

WHUT is the public television station of Howard University. It provides quality programming that is relevant and informative. WHUT will screen two of the 2024 DC4Reel films: Freedom Hair and Hope of Escape.

WETA is a service of George Mason University, SBS 11, 1100 24th St. NW, Washington, DC 20037-4205 Tel (202) 939-3200

whut.org

This program airs on WETA Metro on April 13
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