

40TH ANNUAL

WASHINGTON, DC INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL



APRIL 16-26

FILMFESTDC.ORG

Filmfest DC

April 16 – 26, 2026

Welcome to the 40th Annual Washington, DC International Film Festival
40 years • 3,620 films • 144 countries • 1 amazing festival



Photo: Chad Evans Wyatt

Tony Gittens, Festival Director, and Shirin Ghareeb, Deputy Director

Welcome to the 40th Anniversary of the Washington, DC International Film Festival! It has been our privilege to bring the best of world cinema to audiences across the District of Columbia. This 40th milestone celebrates decades of diverse and dynamic voices, meaningful community conversations, and captivating international storytelling.

Filmfest DC has long served as a platform for filmmakers to express their vision, demonstrate their courage, and showcase their talent. While the film industry continues to evolve, Filmfest DC remains a vital conduit for world and independent cinema.

Most importantly, we thank you—our audience. Over the years, tens of thousands of moviegoers have joined us at Filmfest DC screenings. The stories we share ignite emotions and inspire thought. Through these shared experiences, we believe that Filmfest DC has helped make the world a more connected and meaningful place.

Tony Gittens

Founder and Director
Washington, DC International Film Festival

Ticket Information

General admission is \$15 unless otherwise noted.

Advance Sales

Visit filmfestdc.org to select the films you would like to see and make your purchase. Please note that ticket sales online will end at noon on the day of the 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 \$110.00 (\$150.00 value) is available through advance sales only and applies to \$15 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 Night and Closing Night events are excluded*)

Theater Locations

Main Location

Regal Gallery Place

701 7th St. NW, Washington, DC 20001

Parking information: Three hours of complimentary parking in Gallery Place Garage with validation.

Closest Metro station: Gallery Place-Chinatown or Metro Center

Other Locations

Embassy of France

4101 Reservoir Rd. NW, Washington, DC 20007

Parking Information: Street parking available

Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library Auditorium

901 G St. NW, Washington, DC 20001

Closest Metro station: Gallery Place or Metro Center

National Gallery of Art East Building Auditorium

4th & Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20565

Closest Metro station: National Archives/Navy Memorial

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    



SCAN ME

Opening Film

Colours of Time

Cédric Klapisch

France/Belgium, 2025, 126 minutes

Nearly 30 years after his *Chacun Cherche Son Chat* screened at the festival, award-winning director Cédric Klapisch returns to Filmfest DC with this delightful time-tripping romantic dramedy that masterfully captures the lavish wonder of la Belle Époque and the invigorating energy pulsing through a society stepping into a new cultural era. In 1895, Adèle leaves her Normandy farmhouse and heads to Paris in search of her long-lost mother, diving headlong into a city being transformed by artists such as Victor Hugo, Sarah Bernhardt, and Impressionist painters Monet and Renoir in the process. In 2024, four of her previously-unknown-to-each-other descendants—neurotic executive Céline, genial beekeeper Guy, content creator Seb, and French teacher Abdel—begin to excavate their ancestor’s life story through old letters, paintings, and photos as they assess the contents of that long-abandoned farmhouse on behalf of the rest of the family. Anchored in Adèle’s endearing journey of self-discovery juxtaposed with the surprising discoveries of the modern-day foursome, the film is a gorgeously kaleidoscopic crowd-pleaser that skillfully blends the themes of the past and present in thoughtful, and thought-provoking, strokes.—*Various sources*

In French with English subtitles

Thursday, April 16, 6:30 PM, Embassy of France, \$45

Followed by a reception



Sponsored by:

Villa
Albertine

AMBASSADE DE FRANCE
AUX ÉTATS-UNIS
Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité

For security reasons, film tickets must be purchased in advance.

A government-issued ID that matches the name on the reservation will be required to enter the Embassy.



Sponsored by:



Closing Film

Gloria!

Margherita Vicario

Italy/Switzerland, 2024, 106 minutes

The year is 1800; the place, Sant Ignazio College, a decrepit musical institute for girls somewhere near Venice. Here lives a silent, solitary maid tasked with humble chores. No one knows that her name is Teresa; no one suspects that she possesses an extraordinary talent that enables her to sense the harmony of the universe. While the old chapel master is struggling to put together a composition for the new pope, Teresa discovers a beautiful instrument (a pianoforte) in a storeroom. Teresa’s revolutionary “music machine” gathers an amazing quartet of young women: the most dynamic musicians of Sant Ignazio. They create new music that takes the pope and the entire world by storm. Winner of Best First Feature at the Italian Golden Globes, *Gloria!* is about the imaginative talent of the many female composers who, like pressed flowers, are hidden away in the pages of history.—*Berlin International Film Festival*

In Italian with English subtitles

Sunday, April 26, 4:00 PM

Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library Auditorium, \$30

Followed by a reception

Highlights



THE LIGHTER SIDE

International comedies

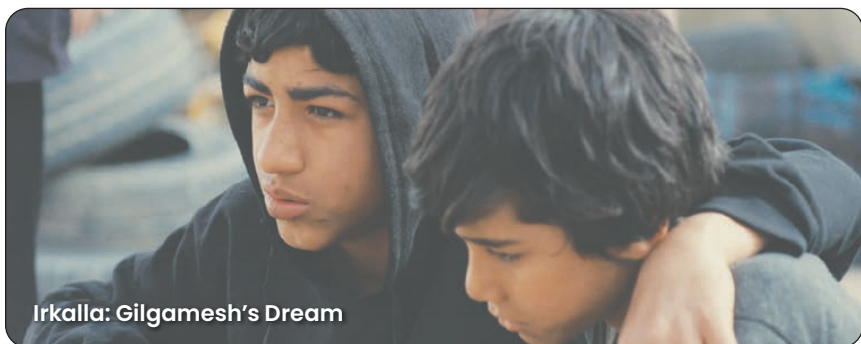
- Comandante Fritz (Germany)
- Divine Remedy (Iceland)
- Damned If You Do, Damned If You Don't (Italy)
- Lost in Territories (Israel)
- Spices and Lies (France)



GLOBAL RHYTHMS

Films about international music

- El Sett (Egypt)
- Nous, l'orchestre de Paris (France)
- The Essence of Eva (Ireland)
- Primavera (Italy)
- Gloria! (Italy)



ARABIAN SIGHTS

The newest films from the Arab World

- El Sett (Egypt)
- Happy Birthday (Egypt)
- Irkalla: Gilgamesh's Dream (Iraq)
- Once Upon a Time in Gaza (Palestine)
- A Sad and Beautiful World (Lebanon)



TRUST NO ONE

Espionage, crime, and thrillers

- Case 137 (France)
- Diya (Chad)
- Maigret & the Dead Lover (France)
- The Negotiator (Italy)
- The Residence (France)
- Winter of the Crow (Poland)



CINEMA BELLISSIMO!

The newest films from Italy

- Almost Grazia
- Damned If You Do, Damned If You Don't
- Gloria!
- The Negotiator
- Primavera



DC4REEL

Films from the creative community of filmmakers in DC

- Bust! (USA)
- Making Their Pointe (USA)



Everybody to Kenmure Street

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 to stand up and fight for their rights and the rights of others. We thank the CrossCurrents Foundation for their support for this series.

- Baristas vs Billionaires (USA)
- Everybody to Kenmure Street (UK)
- People vs. Politics (USA)
- Reading the World (Brazil)
- TCB - The Toni Cade Bambara School of Organizing (USA)

THE AWARD JURY CONSISTS OF:

Nan Aron — Founding president of Alliance for Justice

Judy Hallet — Award-winning Filmmaker and Producer

Conrad Martin — Executive Director, Stewart R. Mott Foundation and Executive Director of the Fund for Constitutional Government



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. Impact Project is directed by Linda Blackaby, Filmfest DC senior programmer, and is supported by a grant from the Wyncote Foundation.



Wyncote Foundation

Be A Part of The Movie Buzz



The Washington
DC Film Society

Go to dcfilmsociety.org for more information

Ted Pedas Award

The Ted Pedas Award is a juried competition of selected films that deserve increased recognition. This 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.

- Diya (Chad)
- The Essence of Eva (Ireland)
- Happy Birthday (Egypt)
- Ky Nam Inn (Vietnam)
- Primavera (Italy)
- Risa and the Wind Phone (Argentina)

THE AWARD JURY CONSISTS OF:

Felix Angel — Former Curator, Inter-American Development Bank

Peggy Parson — Film curator emerita

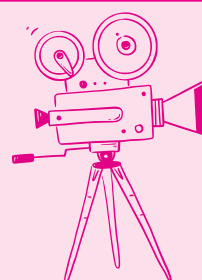
Karen Thomas — Producer/Director, Film Odyssey

Filmfest DC Audience Award

Filmfest DC will present two audience awards: one to the feature film and one to the documentary voted the most popular by our audience. Ballots will be available after each screening. All award winners will be announced on Closing Night.



Catalog cover designed by Mary Pettigrew | Catalog banner designed by Alexis Thornlow



Filmfest DC Trailers

This year's Filmfest DC trailers were created by three very talented film students at George Mason University: Marco Duran, Khubab Hassan, and Alyssa Kitts. Our trailers will be shown prior to all festival screenings.

Please enjoy!



Cinema Bellissimo!

Almost Grazia

Peter Marcias

Italy, 2025, 80 minutes

Three crucial moments mark the life of the famous Sardinian writer Grazia Deledda, the *only* Italian woman to have won a Nobel Prize, and the second ever woman to win: The unexpected arrival of her mother from Nuoro, the hours before winning the world's most prestigious award, and the moments when a doctor looks into her eyes, searching for words that will hurt the least. In a time when women were rarely granted access to higher education—or to any education at all—the story of this timeless author serves as a reminder of the power of determination, dedication, and defiance against the status quo. A look into her extraordinary and global career set against the backdrop of a quiet and private personal life, this film intimately offers a deeper reflection on the relationship between women and literature and echoes the contemporary struggle for female recognition. —*Various sources*

In Italian with English subtitles

Tuesday, April 21, 6:30 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Wednesday, April 22, 8:15 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Co-presented with:



The Altar Boys

Piotr Domalewski

Poland, 2025, 110 minutes

The confessional is, for many faithful, a sacred place to lay bare one's sins and seek forgiveness. For the quartet of devout and enterprising teens in director Piotr Domalewski's clever coming-of-age dramedy, it also becomes a lucrative vehicle for social justice. After discovering that their local archdiocese has been lining its pockets with monies donated for the poor, Filip (Tobiasz Wadja) and his three aspiring Christian-rapper young pals set out to right moral wrongs by pilfering collection-box cash to redistribute to those in need. To judge the worthiness of recipients (and get the inside scoop on their town's sinners and saints), the friends bug the parish confessional. What begins as a righteous Robin Hood-esque rebellion grows increasingly risky. Smart, insightful, and deftly treading the line between humor and heart, the film is an entertaining exploration of what happens at the crossroads of religion, redemption, and reality. —*Various sources*

In Polish with English subtitles

Saturday, April 18, 6:45 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Sunday, April 19, 8:00 PM, Regal Gallery Place



Justice Matters

Baristas vs Billionaires

Mark Mori

USA, 2025, 79 minutes

Buffalo, New York, is a union town first, a coffee town second. In 2021, when local Starbucks baristas had had enough of low wages, insufficient health insurance, and other workplace inequities, the call was “No contract, no coffee.” The fight for the right to unionize Starbucks has now spread nationally to some 600 stores, led not by union bosses but by brave working-class Millennials and Gen Zs risking (and sometimes losing) their only livelihoods. Through their voices, this compelling documentary by Oscar®-nominee and Emmy-winner Mark Mori, narrated by Susan Sarandon, vividly conveys the personal side of what has become a generational struggle. CEO Howard Schultz, long the corporate face of Starbucks, comes out with egg (or perhaps foam) on his face but billions to spare. The struggle continues, but knowing that these young organizers are the labor movement's future is something to smile about over your morning joe. —*Judy Bloch*

Saturday, April 18, 9:00 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Sunday, April 19, 3:00 PM, Regal Gallery Place



Trust No One

Case 137

Dominik Moll

France, 2025, 115 minutes

Stéphanie (two-time César winner Léa Drucker), an investigator with France's National Police Inspectorate, is assigned to Case 137, which involves Guillaume Girard, a young man left in critical condition after a tense Paris demonstration. Initially, there are no clear signs of police misconduct, but the investigation takes a personal turn when Stéphanie discovers the victim is from her hometown. As she delves deeper—reviewing surveillance footage, retracing events, and questioning officers—she comes up against the “blue wall of silence” protecting the institution. Drucker delivers a restrained, finely calibrated performance, capturing Stéphanie's quiet resilience as certainty gives way to doubt. Inspired by the 2018 Yellow Vest protests, which saw many demonstrators seriously injured, *Case 137* offers a human-scale look at the emotional toll borne by those who seek accountability within the system. —*Various sources*

In French with English subtitles

Friday, April 17, 6:00 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Saturday, April 18, 8:30 PM, Regal Gallery Place

An Advertising Supplement to The Washington Post



East Coast Premiere
The Lighter Side

Comandante Fritz

Pavel Giroud

Germany/Greece/Spain, 2025, 109 minutes

Although opening titles say it's a "mostly true story," *Comandante Fritz* is a rom-com for the Cold War era. Simultaneously stylish, serious, and darkly funny, the film opens in 1959 at a swank Cuban hotel nightclub where singer Lola Morales (Yany Prado) is about to go onstage, but Castro's revolutionaries interrupt the fun. The action jumps to 1972, as East German agents Fritz (Dennis Mojen) and Rita (Lena Kalisch) arrive to set up surveillance equipment before a political ceremony where Cuba will transfer an island to Germany. The Germans are also concerned about a plot against Castro, who will attend the event. While monitoring the cameras, Fritz overhears Lola, now a cook in the kitchen, singing. Gradually, he finds ways to be around her, ultimately dropping his red guard to reveal a sensitive comrade. The couple's relationship develops amid suspicion and protocol, leading to an unexpected and satisfying solution.—*Dave Nuttycombe*

In Spanish and German with English subtitles

Friday, April 17, 8:30 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Saturday, April 25, 1:15 PM, Regal Gallery Place



**The Lighter Side
Cinema Bellissimo!**

Damned If You Do, Damned If You Don't

Gianni Di Gregorio

Italy/France, 2025, 93 minutes

Director Gianni Di Gregorio (*The Salt of Life, Mid-August Lunch*) returns to Filmfest DC with his latest comedy-drama, in which he also takes on the lead role. In this charming film, Di Gregorio stars as a retired professor whose peaceful, perfectly predictable life is upended by the unexpected arrival of his daughter, who's taken her two children—teenaged Olga and rambunctious young Tomasso—and left her philandering husband (Tom Wlaschiha, *Game of Thrones*) back in Germany. Having retreated to the safety and serenity of his familiar, largely isolated routine, the professor is suddenly thrust back into the world of complicated family dynamics and all the chaos, drama and, ultimately, connection, they can entail. As gorgeously shot as it is heartfelt, Di Gregorio's sixth film is an unapologetic feel-good story about family and the importance of always being there for the people you love.—*Various sources*

Co-presented with:

In Italian and German with English subtitles

Sunday, April 19, 3:45 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Friday, April 24, 8:15 PM, Regal Gallery Place



Trust No One

Diya

Achille Ronaimou

Chad, 2025, 96 minutes

Achille Ronaimou's electrifying debut feature tells the story of Dane, a driver for a humanitarian NGO, and the whirlwind moment when he runs over a young schoolboy. Accused of killing the boy, he is forced to pay a blood debt, the payment of an unthinkable sum he doesn't have. Cleverly orchestrated, *Diya* puts us right at the heart of Dane's torment: repaying an impossible debt or languishing in prison far from his soon-to-be-born first child. Twisting through the roads of N'Djamena all the way to the north of Chad, Dane's desperate search to save his family and himself takes him down a dangerous path. This relentless thriller weaves an intense tale of sacrifice, morality, and impossible choices through the lens of Chadian society. *Diya* is a suspenseful and beautiful surprise not to be missed.—*Various sources*

In French with English subtitles

Friday, April 17, 8:50 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Saturday, April 25, 6:00 PM, Regal Gallery Place



The Lighter Side

Divine Remedy

Thorkell Hardarson and Örn Marinó Arnarson

Iceland, 2024, 95 minutes

In this playful comedy, the Icelandic Church faces an unexpected crisis: its supply of sacramental wine is running dry, thanks to an unlikely surge in popularity. Seeking a solution, the bishop dispatches four unassuming priests to Rioja to find a wine worthy of both ritual and palate. What follows is a sun-drenched odyssey through Spain's famed vineyards, where the priests embrace their mission with growing enthusiasm—and increasingly blurred judgment. As they indulge in tastings and bask in the pleasures of their surroundings, their spiritual purpose begins to slip out of focus. Meanwhile, momentous events quietly unfold beyond their awareness, lending the journey an absurd and cosmic dimension. Balancing gentle satire with playful humor, the film explores faith, temptation, and human fallibility and invites audiences to reflect on what is truly sacred—and what might simply be well-aged. —*Various sources*

In Icelandic with English subtitles

Sunday, April 19, 8:30 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Thursday, April 23, 6:30 PM, Regal Gallery Place



**Arabian Sights
Global Rhythms**

El Sett

Marwan Hamed

Egypt, 2025, 162 minutes

El Sett is a sweeping, emotionally charged portrait of Umm Kulthum, the iconic "Star of the Orient," whose voice defined a nation and resonated across the world. Anchored by a luminous performance from Mona Zaki, the film traces her extraordinary rise from humble beginnings to unparalleled stardom. Moving fluidly through time, it captures both the strength and vulnerability of a woman whose artistry mirrored Egypt's turbulent journey—from monarchy to revolution and beyond. With more than 300 songs spanning six decades, Umm Kulthum's music continues to echo through generations. Her influence stretches far beyond the Arab world, inspiring legends like Bob Dylan, Robert Plant, Shakira, Beyoncé, and Maria Callas, who once called her "the incomparable voice." More than a biography, *El Sett* is an intimate exploration of legacy, identity, and the power of authenticity—an invitation to experience the voice that united millions. —*Various sources*

In Arabic with English subtitles

Sunday, April 19, 3:15 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Saturday, April 25, 8:00 PM, Regal Gallery Place



**U.S. Premiere
Global Rhythms**

The Essence of Eva

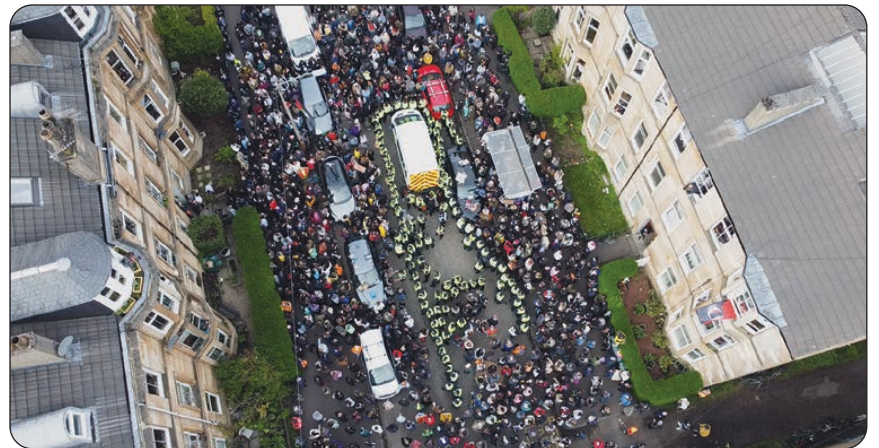
Alex Fegan and Malcolm Willis

Ireland, 2025, 82 minutes

When Sting admits that he "stole" the arrangement from the singer who recorded what is likely the definitive version of his own song "Fields of Gold," he's referring to a world-class artist. *The Essence of Eva* is a revealing portrait of Bowie, Maryland's own Eva Cassidy, who left this world too soon. The picture that emerges through home movies and interviews with bandmates, family, friends, and the likes of Mick Fleetwood is akin to one of her signature songs, "Amazing Grace." Eva labored in mostly local obscurity, once performing for an audience of one, before dying of cancer at only 33. The tragic irony is that after her death, Eva's albums sold millions in the U.K. and finally here. There is so much joy in Eva's voice that viewing this documentary will make you weep for what is lost—and feel the frisson of hearing an angel sing.—*Dave Nuttycombe*

Wednesday, April 22, 8:30 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Thursday, April 23, 8:35 PM, Regal Gallery Place



Justice Matters

Everybody to Kenmure Street

Felipe Bustos Sierra

Scotland, 2026, 98 minutes

This Sundance award-winning documentary about ordinary citizens spontaneously uniting to resist a hostile immigration raid could hardly be timelier here. May 13, 2021, happened to be Eid, an important holiday for the diverse Glasgow neighborhood of Pollokshields, yet that was the day the Home Office chose to execute a surprise dawn arrest of two men who had been part of the community for 10 years. But to take them, the cops would first have to take their Kenmure Street neighbors—hundreds of them—and also "Van Man," who placed himself under the police van and would not budge (he is voiced by co-producer Emma Thompson, crunched under a van). With skillfully edited you-are-there footage from the day-long siege and interviews rooting the incident in long local history, the film draws on the urgency of its subject to offer an uplifting picture of what is possible when people care.—*Judy Bloch*

Thursday, April 23, 6:00 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Saturday, April 25, 3:15 PM, Regal Gallery Place



The Frog and the Water

Thomas Stuber

Germany, 2025, 113 minutes

From Oscar® winner Thomas Stuber comes a heartwarming and humorous story about two characters who meet unexpectedly and quickly bond. *The Frog and the Water* follows Buschi, a man living in an assisted living facility that leaves no room for adventure. Seeking a change, he sneaks out and seizes the moment to join a group of Japanese tourists traveling to Germany. Having lived his whole life without speaking, he meets and forms a wordless friendship with Hideo—a man on a journey of his own—creating a bond that goes beyond words and starts an unusual and unexpected escapade. A sweet and sincere story about two souls who find one another and are reminded of what it is to be human.—*Various sources*

In German, Japanese, and English with English subtitles

Saturday, April 18, 1:30 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Wednesday, April 22, 6:05 PM, Regal Gallery Place

East Coast Premiere



Good Valley Stories

José Luis Guerín

Spain/France, 2025, 122 minutes

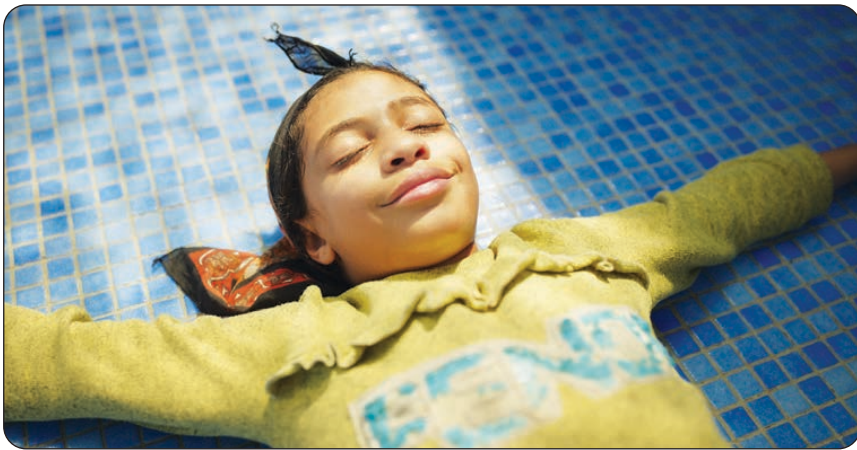
Good Valley Stories focuses on Vallbona, a northern district of Barcelona, and its inhabitants, both old and new. Renowned for his interest in the intersections of documentary and fiction, Spanish director José Luis Guerín provides a playful and thought-provoking account of many generations living, working, and playing in Vallbona.—*Various sources*

In Spanish, Catalan, French, and Russian with English subtitles

Saturday, April 18, 2:00 PM, National Gallery of Art, East Building Auditorium, FREE

This is a FREE event. Please register in advance at

<https://www.nga.gov/calendar/good-valley-stories>



Happy Birthday

Sarah Goher

Egypt, 2025, 92 minutes

Sarah Goher's acclaimed debut feature is a tour (de force) of modern-day Cairo, from its upper-class enclaves, to its streets teeming with motor scooters and life, to the beautifully observed world of 8-year-old Toha. As Toha dons a scarf for a day's work as an upper-class family's maid, she asks her "friend" Nelly, "What is a wish?" Having never had a birthday party, Toha wouldn't know. Nelly is not really her friend, but Toha doesn't know that either, so she determines that Nelly will have the perfect birthday and latches on to her otherwise indifferent employer, Nelly's mother, Leila, to make it so. In portraying Toha, captivating child actor Doha Ramadan expresses both the naiveté of an unschooled girl who thinks wishing is willing, and the clever machinations of a native intelligence, in case it is not.—*Judy Bloch*

In Arabic with English subtitles

Sunday, April 19, 7:15 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Friday, April 24, 8:30 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Arabian Sights



How to Divorce During the War

Andrius Blaževičius

Lithuania/Czech Republic/Luxembourg/Ireland, 2026, 108 minutes

Andrius Blaževičius took home the Best Director award in the World Cinema Dramatic competition at the 2026 Sundance Film Festival for this insightful social commentary. Centered around a marriage that ends just as Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine begins, the drama follows newly separated exes Marija (Žygimantė Elena Jakštaitė) and Vytas (Marius Repšys), who are both struggling to adjust to their lives apart while also dealing with the effects of the war. Demonstrating support for Ukraine becomes a priority for both, but as each awkwardly tries to be seen as a better person, it soon becomes clear that "activism" may be adding yet another complicated layer to an already difficult situation. Smart and sharp, the film explores the many faces of conflict with family, with expectations, and within oneself.—*Various sources*

In Lithuanian, English, and Russian with English subtitles

Tuesday, April 21, 6:05 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Thursday, April 23, 6:00 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Filmfest DC 2026 Schedule

All screenings at Regal Gallery Place unless otherwise noted

THURSDAY, APRIL 16

Opening Night



Colours of Time

Embassy of France

Film at 6:30 PM

Followed by a reception



SATURDAY, APRIL 18

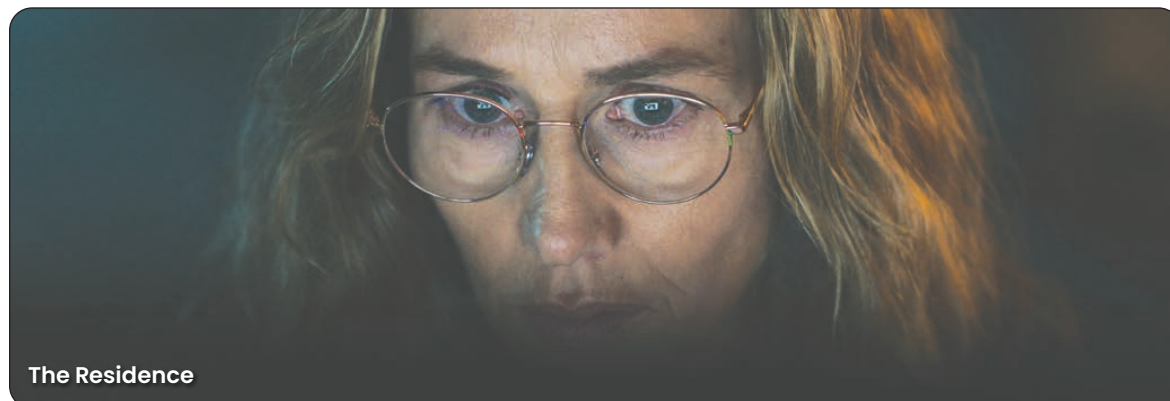
- 1:30 PM The Frog and the Water
- 2:00 PM Good Valley Stories (National Gallery of Art)
- 2:00 PM Nous, l'orchestre de Paris
- 2:30 PM Making Their Pointe
- 4:00 PM The Negotiator
- 4:00 PM People vs. Politics
- 4:15 PM Winter of the Crow
- 6:15 PM Spices and Lies
- 6:45 PM The Altar Boys
- 6:45 PM Maigret and the Dead Lover
- 8:30 PM Case 137
- 8:30 PM Primavera
- 9:00 PM Baristas vs Billionaires

SUNDAY, APRIL 19

- 12:30 PM Bust!
- 1:00 PM MetroShorts 1
- 3:00 PM Baristas vs Billionaires
- 3:15 PM El Sett
- 3:45 PM Damned If You Do, Damned If You Don't
- 5:15 PM Nous, l'orchestre de Paris
- 5:45 PM The Negotiator
- 6:15 PM Sundays
- 7:15 PM Happy Birthday
- 7:30 PM The Color of Money (The Wharf)
- 8:00 PM The Altar Boys
- 8:30 PM Divine Remedy

FRIDAY, APRIL 17

- 5:30 PM People vs. Politics
- 6:00 PM Case 137
- 6:15 PM Maigret and the Dead Lover
- 6:30 PM Primavera
- 8:00 PM Irkalla: Gilgamesh's Dream
- 8:20 PM The Residence
- 8:30 PM Comandante Fritz
- 8:50 PM Diya



TUESDAY, APRIL 21

- 6:00 PM Sundays
- 6:05 PM How to Divorce During the War
- 6:15 PM Irkalla: Gilgamesh's Dream
- 6:30 PM Almost Grazia
- 8:20 PM Ky Nam Inn
- 8:30 PM MetroShorts 2
- 8:30 PM A Sad and Beautiful World
- 8:45 PM The Residence



WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22

- 6:00 PM TCB: The Toni Cade Bambara School of Organizing
- 6:05 PM The Frog and The Water
- 6:15 PM Risa and the Wind Phone
- 6:30 PM Once Upon a Time in Gaza
- 8:15 PM Almost Grazia
- 8:30 PM The Essence of Eva
- 8:45 PM Lost in Territories
- 8:45 PM Reading the World

FRIDAY, APRIL 24

- 6:00 PM Primavera
- 6:15 PM Spices and Lies
- 6:30 PM Once Upon a Time in Gaza
- 8:15 PM Damned If You Do, Damned If You Don't
- 8:30 PM Happy Birthday
- 8:30 PM Short Stories 1



THURSDAY, APRIL 23

- 6:00 PM Everybody to Kenmure Street
- 6:00 PM How to Divorce During the War
- 6:05 PM Ky Nam Inn
- 6:30 PM Divine Remedy
- 8:20 PM TCB: The Toni Cade Bambara School of Organizing
- 8:30 PM Risa and the Wind Phone
- 8:35 PM The Essence of Eva
- 8:45 PM Lost in Territories

SATURDAY, APRIL 25

- 1:00 PM Reading the World
- 1:15 PM Comandante Fritz
- 1:15 PM Short Stories 2
- 3:15 PM Everybody to Kenmure Street
- 3:30 PM Sundays
- 4:15 PM Risa and the Wind Phone
- 6:00 PM Diya
- 6:00 PM Winter of the Crow
- 6:15 PM Maigret and the Dead Lover
- 8:00 PM El Sett
- 8:05 PM The Negotiator
- 8:20 PM A Sad and Beautiful World

SUNDAY, APRIL 26

Closing Night



Gloria!

Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial
Library Auditorium
Film at 4 PM
Followed by a reception



Continued from page 9



East Coast Premiere
Arabian Sights

Irkalla: Gilgamesh's Dream

Mohamed Jabarah Al-Daradji

Iraq, 2025, 109 minutes

Beneath Baghdad's bridges and bustling streets, 9-year-old orphan and dreamer Chum-Chum and 13-year-old rebel Moody navigate the city's unforgiving reality with youthful determination. Inspired by the legend of Gilgamesh, Chum-Chum (Youssef Husham Al-Thahabi) clings to the belief that he will be reunited with his beloved parents in the blue-black waters of the Tigris. Moody (Hussein Raad Zuwayr) survives through cunning; he plots and steals in an attempt to obtain safe passage to the Netherlands for Chum-Chum and his sister Sarah (Lojin Star Naimal). As Chum-Chum's mythic vision deepens, it collides with danger: Moody's tasks for a violent militia leader and a world shaped by adults consumed by militant grief. In Mohamed Jabarah Al-Daradji's soulful approach, ancient Iraq, the birthplace of the world's oldest known written work of literature, echoes through the present and shapes an epic and deeply moving story of loss and resilience.—*Judy Bloch*

In Arabic with English subtitles

Friday, April 17, 8:00 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Tuesday, April 21, 6:15 PM, Regal Gallery Place



Ky Nam Inn

Leon Le

Vietnam, 2025, 140 minutes

The deep ache of desire is at the core of this gorgeously shot romantic drama set in 1980s' post-war Saigon. In the same vein as Wong Kar Wai's classic *In the Mood for Love*, this rich and dreamy film revolves around translator Khang (Liên Bình Phát), who's moved to the city to work for the new regime, and the intense relationship he slowly develops with his neighbor, Ky Nam (Đỗ Thị Hải Yến), a grieving widow and gifted home cook who operates a small food-delivery service out of her apartment. When an injury hampers Ky Nam's ability to prepare meals, Khang volunteers to help and, as the pair gets to know each other over time, their mutual attraction begins to grow. From its lush visuals to the undeniable chemistry between the leads, this engrossing and timeless love story that will take hold of your heart.—*Various sources*

In Vietnamese with English subtitles

Tuesday, April 21, 8:20 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Thursday, April 23, 6:05 PM, Regal Gallery Place



Lost in Territories

Nadav Shlomo Giladi

Israel/France, 2025, 108 minutes

Set in the charged landscape of the West Bank, *Lost in Territories* offers a comic, deeply human glimpse of life beyond the headlines, uncovering moments of connection and absurdity where division seems absolute. Told through five interwoven stories, this audacious debut finds unexpected humor in the impossible, revealing how coexistence in the "Wild West of the Middle East" can feel both tragic and farcical. Jews and Arabs—neighbors divided by fear, fences, and history—are thrust into absurd encounters that expose how much they share. Soldiers, checkpoints, and rockets turn ordinary interactions into surreal tests of survival and empathy. Blending biting wit with genuine warmth, this ensemble film transforms everyday coexistence into a poignant reflection on what it means to live side by side amid chaos.—*Miami Jewish Film Festival*

In Hebrew and Arabic with English subtitles

Wednesday, April 22, 8:45 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Thursday, April 23, 8:45 PM, Regal Gallery Place



North American Premiere
Trust No One

Maigret and the Dead Lover

Pascal Bonitzer

France/Belgium, 2025, 80 minutes

Denis Podalydès is a fine addition to the many Detective Maigrets who have appeared onscreen and in novels since 1930. His Maigret is a man of precision. In this latest adventure set in early 2000s Paris, the ever-cautious Chief Inspector summons Maigret to investigate the murder of a renowned former ambassador. The scene of the crime poses more questions than answers. Likewise, longtime servant Jacotte seems to say less than she knows. But Maigret discovers a 50-year trove of love letters between the ambassador and a married princess. In a twist, the noblewoman's husband has also just died, leaving the couple free to finally carry on their affair in the open—or even marry. The mysteries of so many secret lives that aren't entirely secret pile up until a thoroughly surprising resolution is revealed.—*Dave Nuttycombe*

In French with English subtitles

Friday, April 17, 6:15 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Saturday, April 18, 6:45 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Saturday, April 25, 6:15 PM, Regal Gallery Place



Cinema Bellissimo!
Trust No One

The Negotiator

Alessandro Tonda

Italy/Belgium, 2025, 108 minutes

The Negotiator creates such an edge-of-your-seat feeling that when you realize the film is based on actual people and events, the story hits even harder. Amid the bleak chaos of the Iraq war in 2005, an Italian journalist has just been kidnapped. Among other consequences, this interrupts veteran Italian secret service agent Nicola Calipari's family skiing vacation. As Calipari lands in Baghdad, Alessandro Tonda masterfully captures the deep tension of the agent's attempts to navigate the intrigue and intricacies of finding hard-to-find people who may know other people who might be trusted to offer help—and every small step along the way comes with risk and worry. Negotiating not only with terrorists but with the smug American CIA, opportunistic Sunni separatists, and even with his own family, Calipari remains relentless. *The Negotiator* won Best Film Award at the 2025 Italian Golden Globes. —*Dave Nuttycombe*

In Italian, English, and Arabic with English subtitles

Saturday, April 18, 4:00 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Sunday, April 19, 5:45 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Saturday, April 25, 8:05 PM, Regal Gallery Place



North American Premiere
Global Rhythms

Nous, l'orchestre de Paris

Philippe Béziat

France, 2025, 90 minutes

Philippe Béziat's latest documentary opens the doors of the Philharmonie de Paris, granting rare access to a rehearsal of the Orchestre de Paris. More than a simple behind-the-scenes portrait, the film captures the delicate balance of orchestral life—where moments of transcendence coexist with strain and uncertainty. Through candid reflections from the musicians, it explores the challenge of blending individual voices into a unified whole without losing one's identity. At its center stands the young conductor Klaus Mäkelä, whose role emerges as both guide and catalyst. For the first time, cameras and microphones move freely among the ensemble's 120 players, creating an intimate, immersive experience. Blending visual elegance with rich, layered sound, the film evokes the deeply sensory nature of music-making, inviting viewers into the emotional core of collective artistic creation.—*Various sources*

In French and English with English subtitles

Saturday, April 18, 2:00 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Sunday, April 19, 5:15 PM, Regal Gallery Place



Arabian Sights

Once Upon a Time in Gaza

Tarzan Nasser and Arab Nasser

Palestine, 2025, 90 minutes

In 2007 Gaza, Yahya works at his friend's falafel shop—a storefront that secretly doubles as a hub for drug dealing. Drawn into the operation, he witnesses a brutal crime that will haunt him for years. Years later, Yahya is selected to star in a TV series celebrating martyrs and heroes of the resistance. As tensions simmer and conflict looms, the line between performance and reality begins to blur—especially when Yahya is unexpectedly handed real weapons. Suddenly, he is faced with a dangerous opportunity to confront the man responsible for the violence that altered the course of his life. Winners of the Best Director award in the Un Certain Regard section at Cannes, twin Palestinian filmmakers Tarzan and Arab Nasser craft a bold fusion of dark comedy and political satire, delivering a searing critique of the cycles of violence that shape personal and political life in Gaza.—*Various sources*

In Arabic with English subtitles

Wednesday, April 22, 6:30 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Friday, April 24, 6:30 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Co-presented with:



World Premiere
Justice Matters

People vs. Politics

Robert Pease and Carol Wingard

USA, 2025, 105 minutes

"I cannot vote today. Ask me why," reads the homemade sandwich board sign that D.C. native Lisa Rice wears on primary election day. Passing voters ask, and this good-natured election reformer has answers and petitions to sign. Like the fastest-growing contingent of voting Americans, Lisa is a registered Independent and therefore unable to vote in party primaries—that is, in the very selection of candidates. Lisa, the hand behind D.C.'s successful Initiative 83 to create open primaries and ranked-choice general elections, has counterparts around the country in states as disparate as Nevada, Idaho, Colorado, Montana, and Alaska. *People vs. Politics* profiles these grassroots organizers, capturing their enthusiasm, commitment to civility and responsive government, and incredible grit in the face of pushback from both political parties in America's polarized public sphere. The campaign is ongoing, but just in the effort, citizen-activists, passionate about the vote, represent the best of democracy.—*Judy Bloch*

Friday, April 17, 5:30 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Saturday, April 18, 4:00 PM, Regal Gallery Place



Cinema Bellissimo!
Global Rhythms

Primavera

Damiano Michieletto

Italy, France 2025, 110 minutes

In the early eighteenth century, in Venice, Italy, the fate of a virtuoso violinist named Cecilia is transformed when her orphanage hires an ambitious composer as the new musical instructor: Antonio Vivaldi. The young women's ensemble performances attract the attention of audiences, patrons, and even suitors, who become enchanted by their talent, believing their training will make them more virtuous wives. Without a choice at the orphanage, Cecilia is promised to a decorated army official upon his return from the battlefield. With this arranged marriage looming on the horizon, she is awakened to the power of her musical gift and its possibilities for an independent destiny. Voted as the top film by audiences at the Chicago, Gasparilla, and Palm Springs International Film Festivals, this vibrant centuries-old tale is elevated by its sumptuous costumes and lavish production design. Combining stunning visuals from cinematographer Daria D'Antonio and an unforgettable score from Fabio Massimo Capogrosso.—*Various sources*

In Italian with English subtitles

Friday, April 17, 6:30 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Saturday, April 18, 8:30 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Friday, April 24, 6:00 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Co-presented with:



North American Premiere
Justice Matters

Reading the World

Catherine Murphy and Iris De Oliveira

Brazil, 2025, 70 minutes

"Education does not change the world. Education changes people. People change the world," said Paulo Freire. Featuring newly unearthed archival footage of Brazil in the 1960s, this fascinating excursion into Freire's early work shows how he implemented the ideas of democratic, non-hierarchical education that made him an internationally revered education philosopher. "Learn to read in 40 hours" was a promise Freire and his teaching corps made to illiterate farmworkers in the Brazilian countryside, and they made it to themselves. Simply put, instead of rote memorization, educators used familiar surroundings and objects to construct meaningful vocabulary. Moving interviews with some of the hundreds whose lives were forever changed by learning to read, sign their name, and thus vote personalize the link between education and democracy. Both were upended by the 1964 military coup that exiled Freire for 16 years and gave him to the rest of the world.

—*Judy Bloch*

In Portuguese with English subtitles

Wednesday, April 22, 8:45 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Saturday, April 25, 1:00 PM, Regal Gallery Place



Trust No One

The Residence

Yann Gozlan

France/Belgium, 2025, 110 minutes

Real threat or a strange delusion? With an impressive world premiere at the Cannes International Film Festival, Yann Gozlan's psychological drama explores the colliding worlds of rigid artificial intelligence and vibrant human creation. Set in the near future, the film follows novelist Clarissa (César winner Cécile de France), a novelist suffering from writer's block who joins a prestigious artist residency at the cutting edge of technology. There, she finds support in Dalloway, her virtual assistant, who helps her write. But Clarissa begins to grow uneasy with the AI's increasingly intrusive presence, a discomfort intensified by the ominous warnings of another resident. Sensing surveillance, Clarissa secretly embarks on an investigation to discover the program's true intentions. This gripping thriller will leave you wondering about the growing authority of AI in every sphere of human life.

—*Various sources*

In French and English with English subtitles

Friday, April 17, 8:20 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Tuesday, April 21, 8:45 PM, Regal Gallery Place



East Coast Premiere

Risa and the Wind Phone

Juan Cabral

Argentina, 2025, 94 minutes

Two-time winner of the Cannes Grand Prix awards, acclaimed filmmaker Juan Cabral returns to the big screen with *Risa and the Wind Phone*, a poignant and poetic piece that will break your heart just to mend it again. After losing her father in a tragic fire, 10-year-old Risa discovers that an abandoned out-of-service phone booth allows her to speak with the dead. Each caller has a story, a lingering regret, a final wish. They strike a deal: if Risa can help them resolve their unfinished business in the world of the living, they will grant her the impossible: a final conversation with her father. With the help of her nanny Estaban and her hamster Kuro, they embrace the strange mission with a journey of tough revelations and tender moments.—*Various sources*

In Spanish with English subtitles

Wednesday, April 22, 6:15 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Thursday, April 23, 8:30 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Saturday, April 25, 4:15 PM, Regal Gallery Place



Arabian Sights

A Sad and Beautiful World

Cyril Aris

Lebanon, 2025, 110 minutes

Lebanon's official submission for the 98th Academy Awards® for Best International Feature Film, *A Sad and Beautiful World* spans three decades of passion, loss, and hope. It centers on the magnetic bond between Nino and Yasmina, born on the same day amid a tragic massacre in Beirut, their lives bound by fate from childhood. United by hardship—Nino's loss of his parents and Yasmina's fractured family—they form a deep connection. Yasmina dreams of escape, imagining a magical train journey to a distant island, a plan Nino eagerly embraces, but their dream is cut short when she moves away. Reunited 24 years later, Yasmina is disillusioned but is drawn to Nino's unwavering optimism. As love rekindles, she abandons emigration plans, choosing the fragile, powerful bond they share. A tender meditation on longing, love, and destiny, the film is elevated by performances that reveal the quiet beauty of life.—*Various sources*

In Arabic with English subtitles

Tuesday, April 21, 8:30 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Saturday, April 25, 8:20 PM, Regal Gallery Place



East Coast Premiere
The Lighter Side

Spices and Lies

Amine Adjina

France, 2025, 104 minutes

Acclaimed actress Hiam Abbass shines in this comedy about a young chef named Medhi, who is struggling to launch a restaurant with Léa, his French girlfriend, while dealing with his long-suffering mother's attempts to set him up with a proper Algerian wife. Adding to the tension is the fact that Léa has yet to meet Medhi's mother, although her parents are putting up most of the money for the restaurant. As temperatures rise inside and outside the kitchen, Mehdi comes up with a plan that leads to even more comic chaos. He enlists the extravagant Souhila (Abbass) to pretend to be his mother to impress Léa and her folks. As Souhila becomes more enamored of her role, she takes everyone on a most unexpected journey. As things boil over, Mehdi learns that his Algerian heritage is a strength, both in the kitchen and at home.—*Dave Nuttycombe*

In French and Arabic with English subtitles

Saturday, April 18, 6:15 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Friday, April 24, 6:15 PM, Regal Gallery Place



Sundays

Alauda Ruiz de Azúa

Spain, 2025, 117 minutes

At 17 years old, Ainara stands at a crossroads. On the verge of leaving high school—maybe starting university, maybe falling in love—she's actually considering a life as a cloistered nun. This bombshell ripples through her family, particularly affecting her widowed father and her aunt Maite, a progressive atheist who has been very active in raising her, challenging everyone's worldviews and igniting long-buried tensions. As Ainara's friends begin to explore the joys and turmoils of adolescence, going out, and experimenting with new freedoms, she feels increasingly torn between an internal call to the convent and an external pressure to lead a more conventional life. A major triumph at the Spanish box office and winner of the Golden Shell Award at the San Sebastián International Film Festival, this drama offers a moving and thought-provoking exploration of the fragile tension between devoted faith and unshakable skepticism.—*Various sources*

Sunday, April 19, 6:15 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Tuesday, April 21, 6:00 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Saturday, April 25, 3:30 PM, Regal Gallery Place



Justice Matters

TCB—The Toni Cade Bambara School of Organizing

Louis Massiah and Monica Henriquez

USA, 2025, 105 minutes

"The role of a revolutionary artist is to make revolution irresistible," Toni Cade Bambara (1939–1995) was known for saying. She was a novelist, filmmaker, professor, and editor of the groundbreaking 1970 literary anthology *The Black Woman*, but none of these accomplishments defined her; she referred to herself simply as a "culture worker." "She swept into the room like she owned it," poet Nikki Finney recalls, "then sat down and started stuffing envelopes." For her editor, the estimable Toni Morrison, "She was the finest fiction writer I had encountered." Cade Bambara's activist and artistic enthusiasms, her oratory wit, and the love of community they held resonated with filmmakers Louis Massiah and Monica Henriquez, whose documentary set to a jazz score by Jerome Jennings perfectly reflects TCB's sensibilities. She filled folks up. This irresistible film fills us up as we rediscover an icon of a beautiful moment in Black liberation.—*Judy Bloch*

Wednesday, April 22, 6:00 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Thursday, April 23, 8:20 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Trust No One

Winter of the Crow

Kasia Adamik

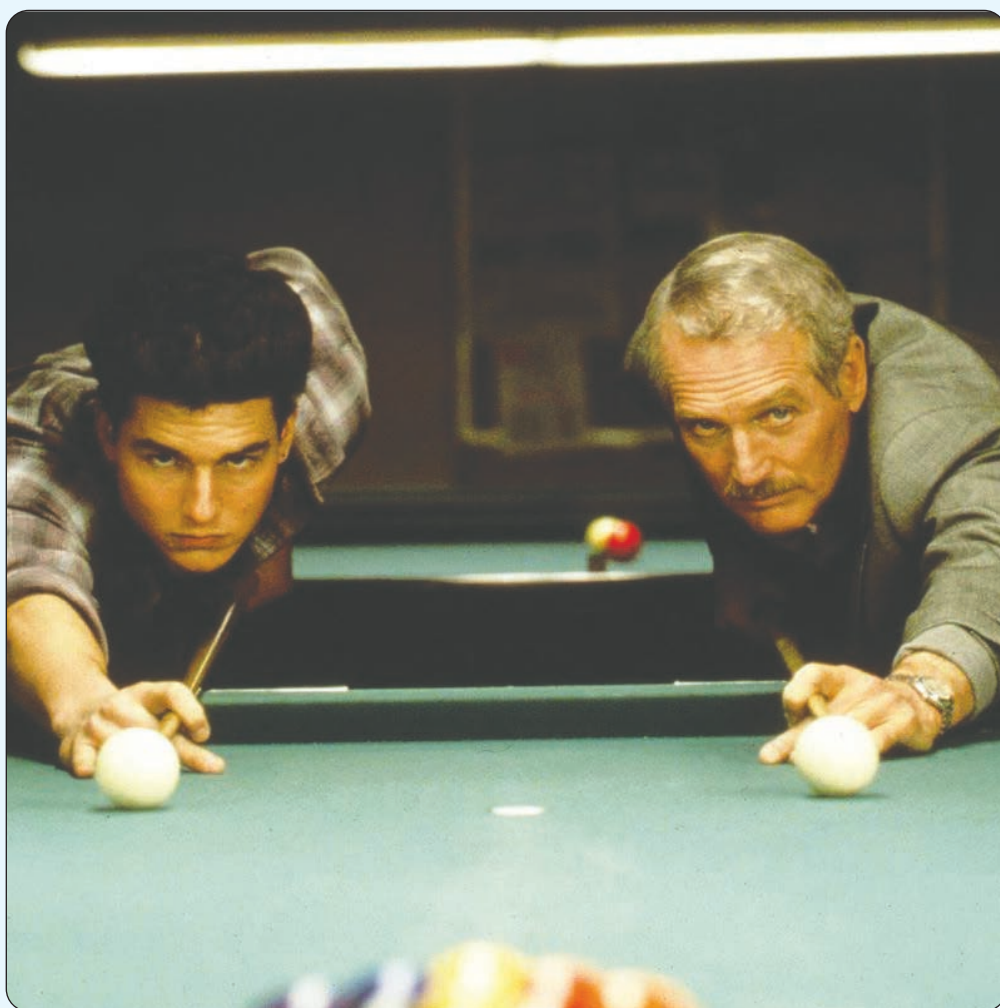
*Poland/Luxembourg/United Kingdom/2025,
112 minutes*

Based on a short story by Nobel Prize–winner Olga Tokarczuk, *Winter of the Crow* is a chilling cat-and-mouse drama. Starring multi-award winning Lesley Manville as Dr. Joan Andrews, the film follows a British psychology professor who travels to Poland to deliver a lecture in late 1981, only to find herself targeted as a fugitive in the chaos of a country on the eve of imposing martial law. Suddenly, Dr. Andrews is on the run through barren streets as taxis are replaced by tanks and citizens are treated like criminals by a corrupt militia. As she navigates this Kafkaesque concrete labyrinth and scrambles for any way home, the absurdity of state repression is overcome by a growing underlying voice guiding her to be on the right side of history.—*Various sources*

In English and Polish with English subtitles

Saturday, April 18, 4:15 PM, Regal Gallery Place

Saturday, April 25, 6:00 PM, Regal Gallery Place



Scorsese, M. 1986. Touchstone Pictures.

THE WHARF

Enjoy a special outdoor film screening. 40 years ago, in 1986, *The Color of Money* was the top film in Hollywood. As we close out this milestone festival anniversary, we reflect on the endless years of incredible cinema we have experienced.

The Color of Money

Martin Scorsese

USA, 1986, 119 minutes

Twenty-five years after *The Hustler*, Eddie Felson (Paul Newman) has stopped playing pool and is an alcoholic beverage salesman. When he discovers Vincent Lauria (Tom Cruise), a talented pool player, his desire to return to his old passion comes back and he organizes a trip through the United States with the young man and his girlfriend. From one pool hall to another, the three make money by hustling as many adversaries as possible. Vincent's exuberance and Eddie's humiliating defeat put an end to their partnership. After receiving an Honorary Award the year before, Paul Newman finally won an Oscar® for Best Actor in a Leading Role. He once again plays his most famous character as he embarks on a generational clash with Tom Cruise. Scorsese accepted the job for commercial reasons but thanks to Michael Balhaus's cinematography and Thelma Schoonmaker's film editing, he sharpened his furious, hyperrealistic style to reflect the outer edge of 1980s American cinema and the contradictory relationship between art and industry.—*Various sources.*

Sunday, April 19, 7:30 PM, The Wharf, \$15

DC4Reel

**Bust!****Richie Kamtchoum***USA, 2025, 105 minutes*

Kameron Richards' professional basketball career ended so terribly that he took on the name "Bust." When he's offered a chance at a comeback through a fledgling sportswear company, he must return home and confront all that he's left behind. From basketball legend and Executive Producer Greg Oden, comes a tale of redemption that aims to humanize those we discard when they fail to meet our expectations.

Sunday, April 19, 12:30 PM, Regal Gallery Place, FREE

**Making Their Pointe****Kamilah Thurmon***USA, 2026, 54 minutes*

African-American ballet teachers made it possible for children in underserved communities in Washington, D.C. to infiltrate the stereotypical world of ballet and thrive as ballerinas during segregation. The cultural shift these teachers created in Washington D.C., has lasted through generations.

Saturday, April 18, 2:30 PM, Regal Gallery Place, FREE

MetroShorts 1

This is the ninth edition of our popular program of films from the vibrant, creative community of filmmakers in D.C. and the immediate Metro area. Filmmakers expected at the screening are listed on filmfestdc.org.

Total Running Time: 87 minutes

Sunday, April 19, 1:00 PM, Regal Gallery Place



Paralysis by Analysis

Sudakas

East Coast Premiere

Ricardo Betancourt/USA/Venezuela, 2025, 13 min, narrative, in English and Spanish with English subtitles

What happens to highly educated people when they flee their home countries? A lawyer and civil servant, Ricardo's mom had to leave Venezuela for her safety. She shares her feelings about her changed social position as an immigrant, now living in New Orleans and working as a hotel maid.

Kaju Katli

Sujay Khona/USA, 2025, 10 min, narrative, in English and Marathi with English subtitles

Consumed by grief, Akshay, a Marathi-American teenager, struggles to prepare his grandmother's traditional kaju katli recipe for the annual Diwali party.

A Poem

Vasilios Papaioannu/Greece/Italy/USA, 2025, 3 min, experimental, in Greek with English subtitles

In an underground garage, a voice message becomes the testament to a love left in limbo while fleeting images allude to the moment that led to it.

A Poet in Self-Exile: James A. Emanuel

North American Premiere

Tyechia Lynn Thompson and Rodney Kimbangu/USA, 2025, 25 min, documentary

Ranked by critics among the finest mid-century Black American poets, James A. Emanuel's commentary on racial injustice should have made him a household name, but his self-imposed exile to Paris altered that course. This insightful documentary traces his journey from Nebraska to France, revealing a legacy shaped by artistic conviction, intellectual clarity, and transatlantic vision.

Paralysis By Analysis

East Coast Premiere

Jolene T. Carter/USA, 2025, 19 min, narrative

When an anxious, perfectionist PhD student discovers an AI app that predicts the outcome of her decisions before she makes them, she thinks her worries are over.

From the Hill to the Horizon

Rakhi Varma/USA, 2025, 17 min, documentary

On the road in her RV named Lucille, former Maryland Congresswoman Donna Edwards leaves Washington politics behind—but not her fight for America's wild spaces. She's determined to visit all 63 national parks, despite the challenges of multiple sclerosis. Her travels reveal why public lands are for everyone, and why they matter now more than ever.

Short Stories

A kaleidoscopic lens on our world today.

Filmmakers expected at the screening are listed on filmfestdc.org.

Short Stories 1

Total Running Time: 100 minutes
Friday, April 24, 8:30 PM,
Regal Gallery Place

Carmela

Vicente Mallols/Spain/France, 2025, 14 min, animation, in Spanish and Valencian with English subtitles

At the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, Carmela joins the militias alongside thousands of other women to confront fascism and defend women's rights. Her story unfolds through her poignant letters from the front lines.

Ludmilla

North American Premiere

Vinicius Moreira/Brazil, 2025, 15 min, narrative, in Portuguese with English subtitles

An unmotivated Phys Ed teacher is confronted by her past and learns that there are some things sweeter than victory.

Black Boys Being Beautiful

Kelvin Z. Phillips/USA, 2025, 6 min, experimental

This poetic and visual meditation explores the transformation of society's perception of Black males from childhood to adulthood.

As I Lay Dying

Mohammadreza Farzad and Pegah Ahangarani/Iran, 2025, 15 min, experimental, in Persian with English subtitles

In the chaos of the Iranian protests after the presidential election of 2009, a young Green Party member recounts with an unearthly calm both the violence and solidarity of a moment in time.

The Muse

U.S. Premiere

Wanda Nolan/Canada, 2025, 17 min, documentary

The friendship between a young Chinese fine-art photographer and a 74-year-old Newfoundlander becomes the catalyst for a unique artistic vision and challenges our preconceptions of intergenerational relationships.

Beast of the Seine

Jon Portman/USA, 2025, 13 min, animation

When the children of a quaint Parisian village are terrorized by a sinister threat, a remarkable Newfoundland emerges as an unlikely hero—until a shocking revelation changes everything. Inspired by real events.

For My Ela

North American Premiere

Mallika Prasad/India, 2025, 14 min, narrative, in English & Hindi with English subtitles

In the wake of loss, armed with a Polaroid camera and little else, Ela embarks on a pilgrimage to the majestic and desolate Spiti Valley in Himachal Pradesh.

Candy Bar

Nash Edgerton/Australia, 2025, 6 min, narrative

A man finally feels ready to embrace parenthood after a young girl in the concessions line tells him he looks like her dad.



Ludmilla

Short Stories 2

Total Running Time: 101 minutes
Saturday, April 25, 1:15 PM,
Regal Gallery Place

Happy Anniversary

World Premiere

Munjal Yagnik/USA, 2026, 7 min, narrative

An interracial couple's ride takes a turn when the driver fixates on Chris's immigrant identity.

Table 12

U.S. Premiere

Roxanne Peguet/Luxembourg, 2025, 7 min, narrative, in French with English subtitles

Through the window of a café, a few years of Konstantin's life unfold.

Somewhere To Be

Christy Chan/USA, 2025, 9 min, narrative, in English and Mandarin with English subtitles

It's 1985, and an 8-year-old girl must grow up quickly during a tense car ride.

The Diva, My Grandma and Me

North American Premiere

Inés G. Aparicio/Spain, 2025, 10 min, animation, in Spanish with English subtitles

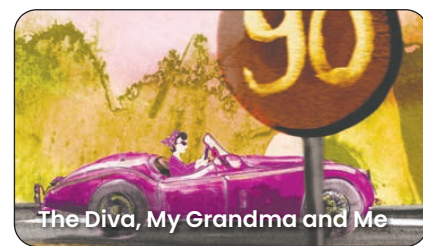
Traditional animation, collage, and images blend in a joyful story of a cabaret song.

The Truth About Space

North American Premiere

Jeremiah Towolawi/UK, 2025, 14 min, narrative

A young man is released from prison and must face up to the lie that his estranged daughter has been led to believe—that he was in space.



Remembrance

World Premiere

Mariana Andrade & Mariana Borges Brazil, 2026, 15 min, documentary, English and Portuguese with English subtitles

Dulce and Carl choose to relocate to a senior home, embarking on a journey of memories.

Too Far, Too Late

World Premiere

Reza Daghighi/Iran, 2025, 15 min, narrative, in Persian with English subtitles

While driving his dad between rural cities in search of medicine, Morteza receives terrible news that affects them both.

Rolling Film, Rocking History: Al Maysles Captures the Beatles

Bart Weiss/USA, 2025, 11 min, documentary

When Beatlemania strikes the U.S.A. in the winter of 1964, filmmakers Albert and David Maysles stumble into the chance of a lifetime.

The Gun Machine

Ryan McDowell/USA, 2025, 7 min, narrative

A desperate man cruises into a remote gas station in search of a place to buy a gun.

Hugs

Nicolas Fong/Belgium, 2025, 6 min, animation, no dialogue

A sentient being bikes through a land of cuddles.

MetroShorts 2

This is the ninth edition of our popular program of works from the vibrant community of filmmakers in the Metro D.C. area

Total Running Time: 89 minutes.
Tuesday, April 21, 8:30 PM,
Regal Gallery Place



CHOCOLATE: A Motion Poetry Homage to Black D.C.

Words of Power: Mastering the Art of Calligraphy

Zackary Tamimi/USA, 2025, 12 min, documentary

Follow master calligrapher Josh Berer through the creation of a piece of Arabic calligraphy as he discusses the trials he went through to perfect his craft and pursue his passion.

Sin Luces

Shahriar Shafiani/USA, 2025, 19 min, narrative, in English and Spanish with English subtitles

A bartender, grappling with personal loss and watching his old D.C. neighborhood gentrify, turns to liquid courage to face a world that feels increasingly distant.

Highly Visible

World Premiere

Jay Mallin/USA, 2025, 13 min, documentary

From sign-waving and chants to prayer and meditation, local groups and neighbors organize regular "visibility actions" that remind us of the power of coming together in the fight against injustice.

The Magical World of Joan Danziger

Susan J. Goldman/USA, 2025, 23 min, documentary

Over the course of 60 years, renowned Washington, D.C. painter, sculptor, and glass artist Joan Danziger has brought to

life a phantasmagorical world populated with animals, nature, and myths. At 91, she shows no signs of slowing, greeting the wondrous creatures of her own creation as each new day dawns in her studio.

Work From Home

Justin Lamb/USA, 2025, 6 min, narrative

A spy's dangerous mission goes awry when Headquarters decides to downsize.

Hill Boy

Eilythia Penati/USA, 2025, 8 min, narrative

When a pessimistic recluse meets a carefree spirit at group therapy, he realizes that healing can come through embracing the unconventional—and the ridiculous.

CHOCOLATE: A Motion Poetry Homage to Black D.C.

World Premiere

Eliamani Ismail/USA, 2025, 8 min, experimental

A cinematic love letter to Black Washington, D.C., this work is a portrait of a city and culture at risk of erasure.

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

Thank You

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INDEX

Almost Grazia.....	6
Altar Boys, The.....	6
Baristas vs Billionaires.....	6
Bust!.....	17
Case 137.....	6
The Color of Money.....	16
Colours of Time.....	3
Comandante Fritz.....	7
Damned If You Do, Damned If You Don't.....	7
Divine Remedy.....	8
Diya.....	7
El Sett.....	8
Essence of Eva, The.....	8
Everybody to Kenmore Street.....	8
Frog and the Water, The.....	9
Gloria!.....	3
Good Valley Stories.....	9
Happy Birthday.....	9
How to Divorce During the War.....	9
Irkalla: Gilgamesh's Dream.....	12
Ky Nam Inn.....	12
Lost in Territories.....	12
Maigret and the Dead Lover.....	12
Making Their Pointe.....	17
MetroShorts 1.....	17
MetroShorts 2.....	18
Negotiator, The.....	13
Nous, l'orchestre de Paris.....	13
Once Upon a Time in Gaza.....	13
People vs. Politics.....	13
Primavera.....	14
Reading the World.....	14
Residence, The.....	14
Risa and the Wind Phone.....	14
Sad and Beautiful World, A.....	15
Short Stories 1 & 2.....	18
Spices and Lies.....	15
Sundays.....	15
TCB: The Toni Cade Bambara School of Organizing.....	15
Winter of the Crow.....	16

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