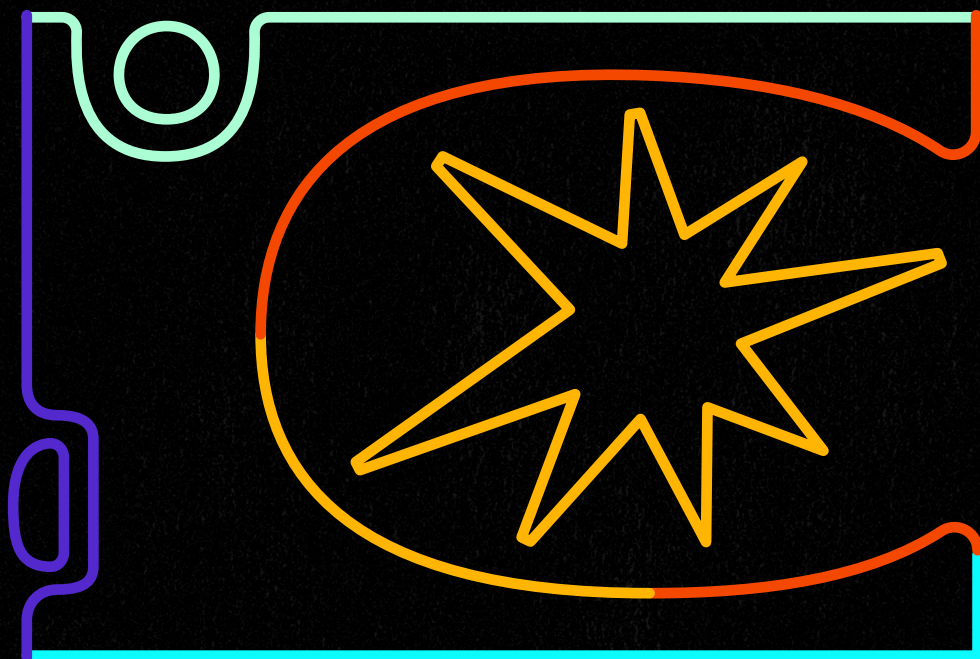


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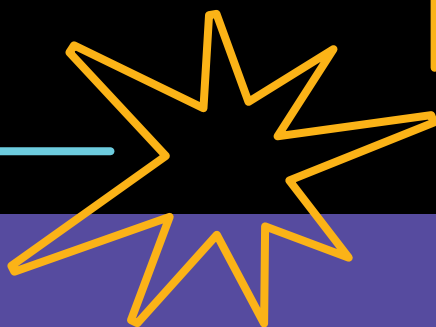
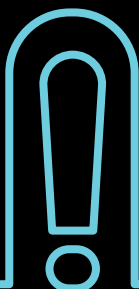
2021

Wisconsin Film Festival



20
21

05.13-
05.20



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Welcome



A reckoning has occurred for cinephiles, especially over the last year when most public cinema spaces have remained closed or inaccessible: It's a streaming world and we are just living in it, trying to watch movies. However, it can be difficult to find good movies to watch amongst the over-stuffed, yet under-nourished libraries and catalogues of even the most popular home viewing providers. Just ask anyone who has killed an evening in that quintessentially modern wild goose chase: endlessly scrolling through a streamer's gallery of poster art, hunting for something appealing to watch. It's easier finding a vaccine appointment.

In a recently published essay, the legendary director and indispensable cinema historian Martin Scorsese laments those streaming services who have taken up the reductive habit of labeling all moving images as "content," whether it is "a David Lean movie, a cat video, a Super Bowl commercial, a superhero sequel, a series episode." Bemoaning the typical streamer's reliance on unreliable algorithms to make viewing decisions, Scorsese suggests that this lack of sensible, knowledgeable, and personal curating has led to the devaluation of the art and history of cinema. As Scorsese puts it, "curating isn't undemocratic or 'elitist,' a term that is now used so often that it's become meaningless. It's an act of generosity—you're sharing what you love and what has inspired you."

In this guide are the films our team of curators have loved and been inspired by in this distinctly unlovable year. They've been rays of light for us, and hopefully they will be for you, too. These new selections are often in dialogue with great movies chosen from across all eras of international cinema history. We're grateful to share these discoveries with an audience of equally passionate moviegoers, who themselves become inspiring recommenders of cinema. Now, the 100+ movies in this guide are yours to react to, wrestle with, and, if you like, tell a friend about.

We all know it's been a long, weird year since the 2020 fest was canceled. But spring is here, and there may just be a light at the end of the tunnel. For those of us lucky enough to get out unscathed, the time has arrived to start pulling ourselves back together. To clear the cobwebs from our minds and challenge ourselves a bit. Now that we are all finally regaining our sanity and hope, let's invest our mental energy into films that awaken and reward our attention and humanity. Let's remember what it feels like to discover fresh, inspiring, and truly original global cinema—whether from 2021 or 1934. With any luck, we're going to start seeing people in real life (and real theaters) again soon. We might as well have an interesting movie to talk about.

How it Works

⊕ Set Up Your Account

WIFILMFEST.EVENTIVE.ORG

If you've already purchased a Festival pass or tickets, or screened a film through Eventive, you already have an account. Please make sure you can sign in and have a working password.

👁 Browse the Lineup

The full program will be listed and passholders can reserve individual tickets at wifilmfest.eventive.org beginning at 12 noon CDT on Friday, April 30.

📺 Reserve Your Tickets

Individual tickets for non-passholders go on sale at 12 noon CDT on Saturday, May 1, only at wifilmfest.eventive.org.

FAQ

I have a pass. Can I reserve tickets for individual films?

Yes. All programs will be available for pre-order beginning at noon on April 30, so start reserving your “must-see” titles then. You can continue reserving films with your pass throughout the festival, as long as tickets are available.

Can virtual screenings still “sell out?”

Yes. Certain films have ticket limits set by the distributors. Passes do not guarantee admission once capacity has been reached.

How do I watch films on my TV?

Use the Eventive TV App on your Apple TV, Amazon Firestick, or Roku device. Use Chromecast to cast from your Chrome browser on your computer or Android device. Use AirPlay if you have a Mac or iOS device. Connect your computer directly with an HDMI cable. Films can also be viewed directly on your computer in a browser.

What about Q&As with filmmakers?

This year, Wisconsin Film Festival programmers will pre-record interviews with many participating filmmakers. These interviews will be accessible as part of the screening package for individual films.

The Fine Print

All films will be available for the duration of the festival, starting at 10 a.m. on Thursday, May 13, through 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, May 20.

All films will be available throughout Wisconsin, but certain films will be restricted to viewing within the Midwest or USA only. Information about these “geoblocking” restrictions will be included on each film’s Eventive listing, where applicable.

Once you start actually viewing a film, you will have a “viewing window” of 24 hours to complete viewing that film.

Pricing

\$10 / individual film
\$140 / all festival pass
\$50 / BSLF pass
\$50 / Wisconsin’s own pass



WRITE-UPS:

Jim Healy (JH)

Mike King (MK)

Ben Reiser (BR)

Terry Kerr (TK)

Brody Coning (BC)

Johnny Fruit (JF)

Karin Kolb (KK)

Pauline Lampert (PL)

Fiona Quinn (FQ)

Bulat Schamiloglu (BS)

Ellie Stark (ES)

Cheunghsuan Wu (CW)

NEED MORE INFO?

Audience Guide to Eventive: bit.ly/WFFEventive
Eventive FAQs: watch.eventive.org/help

KEY FOR GUIDE



WISCONSIN'S OWN



BIG SCREENS, LITTLE FOLKS



GOLDEN BADGER WINNER



2021 / 92 min. / Costa Rica / Spanish with English subtitles / Narrative

AURORA

Director: Paz Fábrega

Cast: Rebeca Woodbridge, Raquel Villalobos

Yuli has a secret. It's not a terribly uncommon one for teenage girls, but seeing as she isn't sure who the father is, the easiest thing to do seems to be to ignore her problem for the time being. Until one day, art teacher Luisa finds her feeling sick in the school bathroom. Yuli confides in Luisa, who in turn resolves to help her navigate teen pregnancy in Costa Rica, where abortion is not an option. Single and in her forties, Luisa's intentions are genuine, but as she maneuvers herself deeper into Yuli's life and the lines between confidant and mother figure blur, is she overstepping her bounds? Furthermore, is Yuli somewhat taking advantage of her? Writer/director Paz Fábrega's warm and intimate portrait of female companionship addresses serious matters with sensitivity, without resorting to melodrama. "A delicate, minutely observed study of two unconventional female characters and the shifting common ground between them. In the emotional textures and the meticulous attention to personal details, the film evokes the work of Kelly Reichardt; as a portrait of the complexities of motherhood, it is unusually satisfying" (*Screen*). "As quietly honest as it is complexly human" (*Variety*). 2021 Rotterdam Film Festival. (MK) *Presented with support from the Department of Portuguese and Spanish.*



Becoming Geppetto

2020 / 6 min. / USA / Documentary

THE APOCALYPSE TEAM

Director: Scott Gordon, Paddy Cassidy

Cast: Ellie Erickson, Koriana Kent

East side Madison natives Koriana Kent and Ellie Erickson are musicians and guitar luthiers who bring their wildest imaginings to life through their instruments. This duo can build and fix just about anything, and this engaging short might tempt you to look them up. (BC)



2020 / 69 min. / USA / Documentary

BECOMING GEPPETTO

Director: Dale Lindquist

Cast: Bruce and Matt Petros

Surrounded by farmland in a small town in northern Wisconsin, father and son luthier duo, Bruce and Matt Petros make world-renowned acoustic guitars. These guitars have been played around the world by music giants like Paul Simon, and this documentary showcases the quiet lives that create some of the most skillfully handcrafted instruments available. *Becoming Geppetto* gives us an intimate and serenely meditative front-row seat to the Petros's guitar making process, as well as a look into their family life and history (guitar making went from Bruce Petros's hobby as an aimless college student to a successful and sustaining family business). As a bonus, the film is frequently and delightfully punctuated by wonderful musical performances on those ornate, resonant Petros guitars. (BC)





2020 / 183 min. / Germany / German with English subtitles / Narrative

BERLIN ALEXANDERPLATZ

Director: Burhan Qurbani

Cast: Welket Bungué, Albrecht Schuch, Jella Haase, Joachim Król

Alfred Döblin's 1929 novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz* was rather famously adapted by Rainer Werner Fassbinder into a 15-hour television miniseries in 1980, and that version was later shown uncut in U.S. cinemas. Döblin's story of murderer Franz, who is released from prison and tries to live honorably in Germany of the late 1920s, has been updated by director Burhan Qurbani to a more compact 3-hour feature set in present-day Berlin. After surviving a perilous journey from Guinea-Bissau, Francis (the riveting Welket Bungué) vows to be a good man, but finds few paths open for an undocumented immigrant without a nationality and without a work permit. Struggling to make a new life for himself in the big city, Francis receives an enticing offer for easy money from the gangster Reinhold (Albrecht Schuch). While he initially resists temptation, Francis is eventually sucked into Berlin's underworld by Reinhold, a psychopath who comes to resent Francis' moral superiority and his loving relationship with the prostitute Mieke (Jella Haase). The fatalistic story of how contemporary society leads one man's life to spiral out of control has been given an audacious, neon-lit reinterpretation, one that has the look and feel of a Michael Mann urban crime drama, complete with a pulsating, electronic score. "The attractive actors are flattered by scrupulously hip production and costume design, lit in pulsating hot-pink filters, and tracked smoothly through parks and clubs and brothels in the sinuous following shots of Yoshi Heimrath's glossy, neon-lit photography" (*Variety*). 2020 Berlin Film Festival. (JH) *Presented with support from from the UW-Madison Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic Studies.*



The Big Scary “S” Word

2021 / 22 min. / USA / Documentary

HOW TO FORM A UNION

Director: Gretta Wing Miller
Cast: Sara Andrews, Bjørn Thorson,
Andrew Sernatinger, Carl Aniel

Part instructional video, part call for reform, *How to Form a Union* walks us through the latest attempt to form a union at the Willy St. Co-op and details why such action was necessary. Of particular interest to Madisonians, the film shines a bright light on the power of community activism. (PL)



2020 / 82 min. / USA / Documentary

THE BIG SCARY “S” WORD

Director: Yael Bridge

The Big Scary “S” Word, directed by Emmy-nominated documentary filmmaker, Yael Bridge, offers an in-depth explanation of the fundamentals of progressive politics and the current state of socialism in the United States.

Yael weaves together historical

lessons, verité footage, expert interviews, and lively animated sequences to tell the story of socialism. Apart from these highly entertaining and informative segments, the film also introduces us to two real life American socialists: Stephanie Price and Lee J. Carter. Price is a woman of color and single mom, who faces the harsh realities of being a public school teacher in Oklahoma. We see her participate in a teacher’s strike, go to Oklahoma City to attend a state legislative session, and eventually run for office in the hopes of becoming her local union’s vice president. The other protagonist of the film, Carter, is an ex-marine turned socialist lawmaker who ran against Virginia’s Republican house majority whip in 2017 and won a seat in the state’s House of Delegates. We get an insider’s view of his struggle against both Republicans and Democrats who find common ground by using Carter’s “socialist” label against him. *The Big Scary “S” Word* is refreshingly unapologetic about socialism, and when you are done watching it, you might be too. (BS) Presented with support from Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin.



SHORTS BIRTH AND REBIRTH

Seven remarkable and diverse films from our Wisconsin's Own slate that tell stories by and about women.

*Presented with support from
Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin.*

2019 / 14 minutes / USA / Experimental

SPONTANEOUS

Director: Lori Felker
Cast: Lori Felker



Filmmaker Lori Felker employs a mixture of cinematic tools to convey her physical and emotional turmoil in this alternately humorous and harrowing first-person recounting of the time she had a miscarriage while attending the Slamdance Film Festival. Come for the well observed personal memoir, stay for the surprising celebrity cameos. (PL)

2020 / 7 min. / USA / Narrative

BLOOD RUNS OUT

Director: Gracie K Wallner
Cast: Gracie K Wallner, Ray Joy Stevens, Eden Walech



UW-Madison student Wallner's vampire story features a woman surviving off the menstrual blood of her friends who realizes her supply is dwindling. This is a surprisingly charming tale of selflessness that tackles its extreme subject with a light touch. (JF)

2020 / 14 min. / USA / Experimental

HEAR ME SOMETIMES

Director: Sofia Theodore-Pierce
Cast: Erin Howe, Sylvia Gorelick, Deborah Theodore, Grace Mitchell, Steffen Pierce



The experimental *Hear Me Sometimes* is lush with beautifully textured images and sounds, addressing themes of motherhood, loss, expectation, care, and legacy. (BS)

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

2020 / 9 min. / USA / Experimental

EXIT STRATEGY #5

Director: Kym McDaniel

Cast: Kym McDaniel



Filmmaker Kym McDaniel uses a variety of artistic media to paint a strikingly honest and personal portrait of the search for identity while confronting emotional and physical traumas and reckoning with a complicated parental relationship. (JF)

2020 / 5 min. / USA / Narrative

ASHES

Director: Edith D. Rodriguez

Cast: Olivia Tovar, Michael Cooper Jr



A tragic summer romance set against the backdrop of the beautiful Texas countryside, *Ashes* is a bittersweet meditation on how grief and regret can intertwine and how we can choose to move past these feelings, or live alongside them. (JF)

2021 / 3 min. / USA / Documentary

COCOONS

Director: Megan Zabel Holmes

Cast: Dottie Jean Holmes



A three-year-old girl narrates her own story of how she navigates the pandemic and finds a bit of blissful respite raising butterflies during lockdown. (BR)

2019 / 11 min. / USA / Narrative

NOT YOU

Director: Lori Felker

Cast: Lori Felker, Jared Larson, Elodie Stroh



Lori Felker follows-up her essayistic short *Spontaneous* with this wonderfully discomfiting examination of life with a toddler. Starting with a chronological series of vignettes before focusing on an awkward encounter with a neighbor babysitter, *Not You* is Felker's funniest/eeiest short since *Discontinuity* (WFF 2014). (BR)



2020 / 82 min. / France /
French with English subtitles / Animation

CALAMITY **A CHILDHOOD OF** **MARTHA JANE CANNARY** **Calamity, une enfance de** **Martha Jane Cannary**

Director: Rémi Chayé

Cast: Salomé Boulven, Alexandra Lamy, Alexis
Tomassian, Jochen Hägele, Léonard Louf, Santiago Barban, Damien Witecka



Calamity is an empowering story of determination, resilience and resourcefulness inspired by the frontier legend, Calamity Jane. French director Rémi Chayé tells the tale in bold, bright, hand-drawn animation. The Oregon Trail in 1863 is full of danger, hardship and challenge. When her mother dies during the journey, twelve-year-old Martha Jane Cannary has to help care for her younger siblings. Then Martha's father is critically injured by their horse, and she has to manage with the reluctant help of other members of the wagon train. Martha secretly teaches herself to lasso, ride, and drive the wagon. After struggling to work in her skirts, she trades them in for a pair of pants and cuts her hair, shocking the rest of the community. When she is accused of assisting in the theft of the settlers' precious possessions, she runs away in pursuit of the real thief. Mistaken for a boy, she finds it easier to navigate the people and challenges she encounters as her male persona. *Calamity* won the Cristal Award for Best Feature Film at the 2020 Annecy International Animation Film Festival. (TK)



2019 / 91 min. / Netherlands /
Dutch with English subtitles / Narrative

THE CLUB OF **UGLY CHILDREN** **De club van lelijke kinderen**

Director: Jonathan Elbers

Cast: Sem Hulsmann, Faye Kimmijser,
Narek Awanesyanyan



President Isimo's motto is "Keep it clean."

He wants to create a beautiful world where there are no unsightly children. Paul is one of the "less-than-perfect" children who are rounded up and taken away. When he escapes, he joins with some of the "attractive" children who recognize the injustice of Isimo's judgement, and they lead a movement to rid themselves of Isimo. This dystopian adventure offers humor, heart and action. "*The Club of Ugly Children* is an exciting adventure film full of thrilling chases that can be enjoyed by kids from the age of 6...But older children often understand the references to WWII and to regimes that don't allow you to be who you are." (Director Jonathan Elbers, European Children's Film Association Journal, 2019) (TK) *Presented with support from UW-Madison's Dutch Program.*



2020 / 96 min. / Norway /
Norwegian with English subtitles / Narrative

THE CROSSING

Flukten over grensen

Director: Johanna Helgeland | Cast: Anna
Sofie Skarholt, Bo Linquist-Ellingsen, Samson
Steine, Bianca Ghilardi-Hellsten



Ten-year-old Norwegian Gerda wants to be a musketeer, much to the dismay of her older brother Otto. He really hates her apron cape and her wooden dagger. After the sudden arrest of their parents, right before Christmas of 1942, the siblings discover two Jewish children, Sarah and Daniel, hidden in their basement and realize that their parents are part of the resistance movement. With the parents imprisoned, Gerda rises to the occasion and vows to defy the Nazis and help Sarah and Daniel escape into unoccupied Sweden. Otto sympathizes with the Nazis and only reluctantly joins his sister on her quest. The group begins a dangerous and suspenseful journey across the snowy Norwegian wilderness, frantically trying to stay ahead of the Germans who seem to have supporters everywhere. Johanne Helgeland's feature film debut is an incredible story of friendship, courage, and doing what is right. The stunning cinematography and its talented young cast, makes *The Crossing* a compelling film for the whole family. Norway Amanda Award for Best Children's Film winner. Atlanta Jewish Film Festival Emerging Filmmaker Jury Prize. (KK)

2020 / 97 min. / USA / Documentary

DEAR MR. BRODY

Director: Keith Maitland



Michael Brody Jr. is the perfect embodiment of Andy Warhol's prediction about every person enjoying their 15 minutes of fame. For a few weeks in 1970, Brody, the 21-year-old hippie heir to a margarine fortune, commanded a great deal of media attention when he declared that he was giving away his personal inheritance of \$25 million to anyone in need who reached out. *Dear Mr. Brody* is a passion project for producer Melissa Robyn Glassman, who, while working in the archives of producer Edward Pressman (*Badlands*, *The Crow*), discovered thousands of mostly unopened letters appealing to Brody for financial help. Pressman had acquired the letters while attempting to turn Brody's story into a feature film in the mid-1970s, a project that was never realized. While Brody's fascinating and haunting story of fleeting celebrity is given due attention in *Dear Mr. Brody*, what makes his legend resonate are the stories of the letters' authors and their families: average Americans inspired by Brody's message of hope and generosity who are looking for some relief from hardships of all sizes. Director Keith Maitland, whose equally innovative animated documentary *Tower* told the story of infamous mass-murderer Charles Whitman, has created an original, psychedelically flavored work of nonfiction that blends archival footage of Brody, contemporary interviews with letter writers and their descendants, and staged readings of some of the letters by a talented group of actors. "Wonderfully strange, funny, and dark, it's a movie worthy of Billy Wilder. In fact, it could've been" (Kevin Jagernauth, *The Playlist*). 2020 Telluride Film Festival, 2021 SXSW Film Festival. (JH)

Discover Louis Valray

Louis Valray was born in 1896 and died in 1972. Beyond that, little is known of the man except what we can glean from his two marvelous feature films, *La belle de nuit* (1934) and *Escale* (aka *Thirteen Days of Love*, 1935), works that combine the visual invention of Jean Vigo and the humanism of Marcel Pagnol. Both movies, each clocking in at a neat 84 minutes, display a confident and expressive style that seems to take particular inspiration exploring the differences between the soulful rank and file of Marseilles and their more coldly urbane Parisian counterparts. Valray was, above all, a personal filmmaker and these two features evidence an enormous compassion for women, the underprivileged, and society's outcasts. It seems likely that Valray considered himself a real outsider too, as there was very little printed about him in France when his

movies were originally released to disappointing box office returns. Thanks to the heroic film preservation efforts of Serge Bromberg and his distribution company Lobster Films, *Escale* and *La belle de nuit* have been made available for the first time in nearly 80 years. The films are also being championed by some of America's finest film critics like Imogen Sara Smith, who writes in *Film Comment* that "stylistically the films are startlingly original and rather odd, blending exhilaratingly fresh location shooting, lyrical images, heavy-handed melodrama, and idiosyncratic composition and editing." Now you can discover these Louis Valray masterpieces for yourself in this special double feature program that allows you to see both *Escale* and *La belle de nuit* for one ticket price.

1934 / 84 min. / France /
French with English subtitles / Narrative

LA BELLE DE NUIT

Director: Louis Valray

Cast: Aimé Clariond, Véra Korene,

Paul Bernard, Nicole Martel, Jacques Dumesnil



In Louis Valray's accomplished debut feature, Paris playwright Claude (Aimé Clariond) is reunited with old war buddy Jean (Jacques Dumesnil). The friendship is betrayed when wealthy playboy Jean seduces Claude's long-time mistress, the actress Maryse (Véra Korène). Despondent, Claude retreats south to Marseilles where he encounters Maïthé (also played by Korène), a man-hating prostitute with a remarkable resemblance to Maryse. Teamed with this new accomplice, the writer then hatches an elaborate plan for revenge on his lover and pal, a plan that spins off in unexpected directions. *La belle de nuit* is at its most visually expressive during its tour of the seaside city's bordellos and other underworld locations and Valray offers up a rich study in contrasts between the stiffly privileged northerners and the far more sympathetic and earthy working class of Marseilles. An elegantly plotted work containing numerous cinematic grace notes, *La belle de nuit* should have announced the arrival of a major movie-making talent, but Valray only completed one more feature before vanishing into obscurity. (JH)



1935 / 84 min. / France / French with English subtitles / Narrative

ESCALE

Director: Louis Valray

Cast: Colette Darfeuil, Samson Fainsilber, Simone Renant, Pierre Nay, Suzy Solidor, Fernande Saala, Darlo, Parmeline

Off duty for a few weeks in Marseilles, Jean, a well-to-do passenger ship lieutenant, catches the eye of Eva (Colette Darfeuil), a denizen of the seaport town's underworld who spends her time in the company of bootleggers and gangsters. The smitten Jean invites Eva to join him on his isolated private island not far off the coast, where the only other resident is Jean's devoted manservant Zama. Though their first days in paradise are blissful, the lovers' spell is broken when Jean returns to sea and Eva is once again left vulnerable to corruption and debauchery, embodied by her old boyfriend, the smuggler Dario (Samson Fainsilber). Released in the U.S. under the title *Thirteen Days of Love*, *Escale* (stopover) is not just the story of a fleeting, unlucky romance; the unforgettable final sequences reveal a tragedy of class differences that reserves its sympathies for the passionate but impoverished Eva and the loyal Zama. Working from a scenario he wrote with his wife Anne Valray, director Louis Valray provides a rich parade of alternately lyrical and seedy imagery that he hauntingly pairs with a memorable score from the songwriter Jacqueline Batell. *Escale* was Valray's second feature and already he was an established master of sound and image. It is cinema culture's great loss that it would prove to be his final feature. (JH)



DO NOT ADJUST YOUR SETS

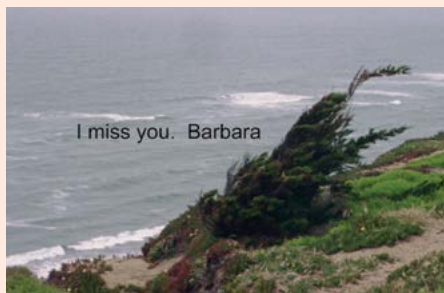
Eight selections from our Wisconsin's Own slate that are not tied down to any one media format or aspect ratio. These filmmakers won't be boxed in by anything other than their own imaginations.

*Presented with support from
Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin.*

2019 / 11 min. / USA / Experimental

SO MANY IDEAS IMPOSSIBLE TO DO ALL

Director: Mark Street, Barbara Hammer

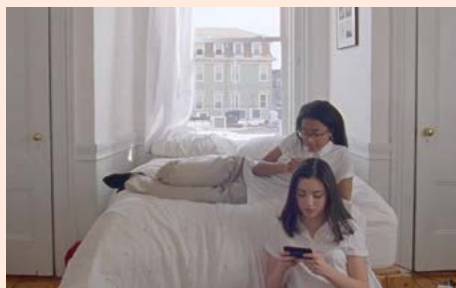


Mark Street's mixed media experimental short meditates on the relationship between filmmaker Barbara Hammer and Jane Brakhage. Street combines footage shot by Hammer of an encounter she had with Brakhage along with excerpts from letters Hammer wrote to Brakhage. (PL)

2020 / 9 min. / USA / Narrative

HANNAH'S VIDEO

Director: Julian Castronovo
Cast: Marianna Scott, Katie Serra



Told in one beautifully grainy take and featuring two wonderfully naturalistic performances from young actors, *Hannah's Video* tells the story of two high school students creating a video in memory of their recently deceased music teacher. (BC)

2020 / 8 min. / USA / Experimental

NEWS FROM NOWHERE

Director: Benjamin Balcom



Two panning shots, voiceover, and the sounds of crickets and cicadas capture the warm feeling of a summer afternoon in *News From Nowhere*, Ben Balcom's beguiling follow up to last year's *Garden City Beautiful* (WFF 2020). (BC)



2021 / 6 min. / USA / Experimental

A SAD STORY ABOUT A TREE

Director: Anders Nienstaedt

In this visually rich and personal video essay, Anders Nienstaedt connects with, and retells, Hans Christian Andersen's story, "The Fir Tree," which Nienstaedt refers to as, "the saddest Christmas story ever written." (BS)

2021 / 7 min. / USA / Narrative

04

Director: Jack Duffy

Cast: Isaac Westberg, Hayden Ketchum



Shot with an appropriately nostalgic Hi8 Camcorder, *04* employs extreme tonal shifts to tell a story about two teens spending an afternoon making a short film. (BS)

2019/ 8 min. / USA / Experimental

FORMER SINNERS OF THE FUTURE

Director: Drew Durepos



Static images, Super-8 footage, and director Drew Durepos' singularly matter-of-fact voice-over narration combine to tell a circuitous narrative that touches on themes of impostorism, aging, and addiction. (BR)

2020 / 7 min. / USA / Dance

EROSION PROJECT

Director: Dan Su
Cast: Dan Su



Dan Su's dance film makes use of one of the most unique structures on the UW-Madison campus: the George L. Mosse Humanities building. A tribute to its stark brutalist architecture, the film combines haunting choreography and a harsh, industrial-techno score to capture the coexistence of the natural human form and the bare concrete exterior of the building. (JF)

2021 / 6 min. / USA / Narrative

RAH-RAH RILEY

Director: Maya Castronovo
Cast: Naomi Rubin



A hapless freshman creates a video to explain why she deserves a spot on the women's basketball team at Columbia University. (BS)



1970 / 91 min. / Taiwan / Mandarin with English subtitles / Narrative

THE END OF THE TRACK

Pao dao zhong dian

Director: Mou Tun-fei

Cast: Tsai Tuu-yuan, Chen Dawei, Liou Yiin-shang, Yi Ming, Chang Ping-yu

Banned in its day and unseen for decades, this newly rediscovered Taiwanese indie is an early milestone of queer cinema. As adolescent pals Yung-shen and Hsiao-tung kill sunny afternoons exploring caves and skinny-dipping, they develop an intimate and physical bond. But when one of the boys suddenly dies in an accident, the other channels his grief into becoming a surrogate son to the family of his lost friend, and the carefree grace of the film's beginning morphs into a tender and moving melodrama. With its real-world exteriors, gorgeous black-and-white cinematography, outsider characters, and understated atmosphere, this lyrical indie recalls contemporaneous American trailblazers like *The Exiles*. An undeniably daring undertaking during Taiwan's repressive regime, *The End of the Track* stops short of explicitly defining Yung-shen and Hsiao-tung's relationship as romantic, but was still suggestive enough to be banned for its "homosexual undertones and ideology." Thanks to the preservation efforts of the Taiwan Film and Audiovisual Institute, this valuable time capsule of late 1960s Taiwan can be seen and admired at last. (MK) *Presented with support from UW-Madison Center for East Asian Studies.*



False Alarm

2021 / 30 min. / USA / Documentary

SWING COUNTRY

Director: Sam Klein, Yael Even Or
Cast: Lee Snodgrass, Brandon Yellow Bird Stevens, Keith McGillivray

In this endearingly homespun documentary focusing on the run-up to the 2020 National Election, filmmakers follow Wisconsinites from the Fox Valley area who work to swing Wisconsin back to blue: Lee Snodgrass, a candidate for state assembly fights for her election as well as the top of the ticket. Brandon Yellow Bird Stevens, Vice Chairman of the Oneida Nation, pushes his community to vote in record numbers to showcase the power of the Native vote. Keith McGillivray hears that the local Democratic office is short on signs and launches his own sign making operation. (BC)



2021 / 54 min. / USA / Documentary

FALSE ALARM

Director: Nick Lyell
Cast: Kalama Oka'aina Niheu, Andrew Arakawa, Matthew LoPresti, Colleen Green, Will Caron, Ava and Cindy Rooney

The focus of this enlightening documentary is an event that many may remember: the ballistic missile alert that was mistakenly sent to the 1.4 million residents of Hawaii in January, 2018. But most are not aware of the impact it had on the people of Hawaii, nor the concerning and largely unaddressed implications of this blunder. Director Nick Lyell captures the diverse reactions to the surreal and traumatic morning when families, soldiers, and tourists were forced to confront an unthinkable reality—an incoming nuclear missile. Just as pressing are bigger issues concerning militarism and colonialism in a state that was once its own sovereign nation. *False Alarm* provides varying perspectives on the situation in Hawaii, including voices of both military members and Native Hawaiians. (JF) *Presented with support from Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin.*





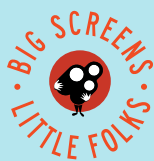
2020 / 100 min. / Bulgaria / Bulgarian with English subtitles / Narrative

FEAR

Strah

Director: Ivaylo Hristov | Cast: Svetlana Yancheva, Michael Fleming, Ivan Savov, Stoyan Bochev, Krassimir Dokov

In a Bulgarian backwater village, unemployed widow Svetlana is out hunting when she comes across Bamba, an African refugee passing through on his way to Germany. She attempts to turn him in to the utterly inept local authorities, but they are already busy botching their capture of a group of Afghan refugees. Unsure what to do, the flinty Svetlana reluctantly takes Bamba in—a small act of humanity that quickly awakens her to the extreme close-mindedness of her so-called friends and neighbors. Director Ivaylo Hristov's daring, blacker-than-black comedy lays bare the absurdity of the migrant crisis with pitiless precision—this is a film about the obstructionists, and in its laser focus on European bigotry, *Fear* can be seen as the disturbing reverse shot to any number of recent WFF selections like *Midnight Traveler*, *Saudi Runaway*, or this year's *This Is My Desire*. The film itself proves as tough and unsparing as its protagonist, mercilessly mocking the backwards racism of the townsfolk, whose vain idea of citizenship consists exclusively of passing the buck. "Ask someone else" and "it's not my problem" are repeated like refrains time and again as the locals refuse to take personal responsibility for anything, especially not the refugees unlucky enough to be stuck with these people. This sharp-edged satire has already won Best Film at both the Tallin Black Nights Film Festival and the Golden Rose Film Festival in Bulgaria. "A marvelously acerbic offbeat comedy which has its roots firmly embedded in a human drama. Using humor to make more serious points, *Fear* is something of a wonder" (*Backseat Mafia*). (MK)



FINDING A WAY LITTLE FOLKS

AGES 3-8

Stories about finding your place in
the world and pursuing your passion.

2020 / 5 min. / Switzerland / Animation

THE LITTLE BIRD AND THE BEES

Der kleine Vogel und die Bienen

Director: Lena von Döhren



Mishaps and mayhem ensue as a sneaky fox
attempts to outsmart a curious bird and its new
buzzing bee friend. (ES)

2019 / 2 min. / France / Animation

MAESTRO

Director: Illogic



The full moon inspires a woodland opera. (TK)

2020 / 4 min. / Germany / Animation

PATCHWORK SPIDER

Die spinne auf meiner schmusedecke

Director: Angela Steffen

Cast: Skye Theeng



The Patchwork Spider wants to play music on
his web, but something is not quite right. Can
his friends help him? (TK)

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

2019 / 11 min. / France / Animation

HOME AWAY 3000

Director: Philippe Baranzini, H  lo  se P  tel
Cast: Bruno Montenon



A space traveller struggles to repair his vehicle on an alien planet, and encounters an unexpected challenge. (TK)

2018 / 6 min. / Japan / Animation

GOODNIGHT

Director: Makiko Nanke



Bedtime, lights off, it's time to enter two rival siblings' exciting dreamland. When the toys come alive, who will win the fight? (CW)

2020 / 7 min. / France / Animation

A LYNX IN THE TOWN

Un lynx dans la Ville

Director: Nina Bisiarina

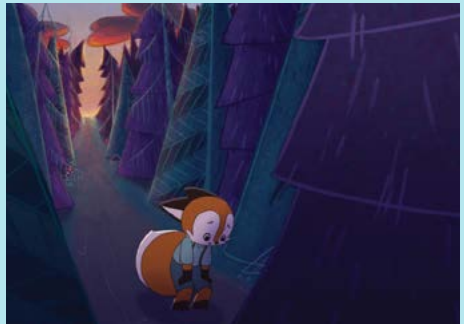


On a snowy night, a curious lynx is attracted by city lights and explores the town. In the morning, the townsfolk are delighted when they find him napping in the snow! (CW)

2019 / 7 min./ Germany / Animation

FAMILY BONDS

Director: Maria Schmidt



A little fox and his geese parents discover that love overcomes differences and expectations. (TK)



FINDING A WAY (CONTINUED)

2020 / 5 min. / USA / Animation

GO! GO!

Director: Patradol Kitcharoen



Aaron the alligator lives in a tank at the amusement park and craves the excitement outside. He escapes and leads the staff on a wild chase as he tries to realize his dreams. Get ready for an exhilarating trip! (CW)

2020 / 5 min. / Russia / Animation

THE WITCH AND THE BABY

Malyshka y Baba Yaga

Director: Evgenia Golubeva

Cast: Evgenia Golubeva, Audrey McLeod, Myles McLeod



An aging witch needs a baby for a spell that will make her young again. But she gets more than she bargained for when she kidnaps a baby princess. (TK) *Presented with support from the UW-Madison Center for Russia, Central, and Eastern Europe.*

2020 / 6 min. / France / Animation

MIDO AND THE INSTRUMENTALS

Mido et les Instrumeaux

Director: Roman Guillanton



Mido lives alone and loves to sing. When he meets a group of musical animals, he wants to join them. But his singing does not impress! How can he be part of the band? (TK)

FITTING IN AND STANDING OUT NOT SO LITTLE FOLKS

AGES 8-11+

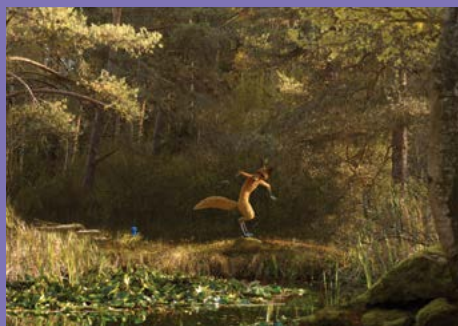
Sometimes you just want to fit in
and sometimes you don't!

2019 / 12 min. / France / Animation

THE FOX AND THE BIRD

Le Renard et l'Oisille

Director: Sam and Fred Guillaume



A starving fox discovers a homeless blue egg just as it hatches! A cross-species family is formed, and the two depend on each other for survival until destiny separates them. (CW)

2019 / 5 min. / France /
French with English subtitles / Animation

ESPERANÇA

Director: Cécile Rousset, Jeanne Paturle,
Benjamin Serero | Cast: Esperança



Fifteen year old Esperança and her mother leave Angola to find a new life in France. She feels isolated and confused at her new school, but seeks a way to belong. (TK)

2019 / 21 min. / USA / Documentary

THE MISSFITS

Director: Ellie Wen



The Missfits, an all-girl robotics team from San Francisco, build robots, compete in mostly male engineering contests and give STEM workshops for other girls. Each teen feels like a misfit on their own. But the team gives them a mission and support. (TK)



2019 / 4 min. / Chile / English / Animation

SHY AND KETCHUP

Director: Teresa Romo | Cast: Maria Ignacia Hagreaves



Sometimes even a shy person has to speak up! Especially when it comes to a favorite condiment! (TK)

2019 / 15 min. / Netherlands,Guinea-Bissau / Creole
with English subtitles / Documentary

RENILDO AND VANILDO

Director: Eva van Barneveld, Heleen D'Haens



Renildo and Vanildo (Re and Va) are twins who live in Guinea-Bissau and love to dance. After their mother died, their father could not care for them. They live with Mama Dila and visit their father when they can. Will he be pleased when they dance for him? (TK) *Presented with support from the UW-Madison Department of African Cultural Studies.*

2019 / 3 min. / Australia / Animation

ACCENTS

Director: Robertino Zambrano

Cast: Denice Frohman



A vibrant scratch animation of poet Denice Frohman's ode to her mother's Puerto Rican accent, embodying the energy, rhythm and passion of her heritage. (TK)

2019 / 9 min. / USA / Narrative

THE ONE YOU NEVER FORGET

Director: Morgan Jon Fox

Cast: London Curtis, Tasha Smith, Charles Malik Whitfield, Owen D. Stone



As fourteen year old Carey gets ready for his first dance, his parents recall their first dance together. When Carey tries to slip away with his date, there is a tense moment when Dad insists on a photo. (TK)
Presented with support by the Gender & Sexuality Campus Center.

2019 / 15 min. / Brazil / Portuguese with English subtitles / Narrative

DELA

Director: Bernard Attal

Cast: Lorena Santana, João Lima



With different hair and a strange name, Mandela can't seem to fit in to her Brazilian school. Determined to understand why she is unique, she may uncover more than she expected. (ES)



2021 / 84 min. / Australia / Narrative

FRIENDS AND STRANGERS

Director: James Vaughan

Cast: Emma Diaz, Fergus Wilson, Victoria Maxwell, Greg Zimbulis, David Gannon, Jayden Muir, Poppy Jones

A fresh and entrancing take on the timeless subject of young adulthood, *Friends and Strangers* introduces a clique of Australian twentysomethings who are looking for their direction, but keep getting distracted along the way. Ray and Alice are on an impromptu camping trip in the Australian countryside, ensconced in the private world of their tent but not really connecting with each other. Back home in Sydney, these rudderless millennials are on no more solid ground, particularly as wedding videographer James's meeting with a wealthy client takes a series of increasingly surreal turns. Writer/director James Vaughan's debut feature is brilliantly composed all around, from its crisp, lovely cinematography and precisely calibrated atmosphere to the striking paintings and vintage Jon Gibson music that serve as a counterpoint to its characters' careful hesitancy. "What a saga!" one character exclaims towards the end of this beguiling series of casual detours and drifts, a quip that well sums up the film's self-aware humor. "The funniest, best movie from Oz in several years. Movie audiences (whether they know it or not) seek fresh voices, attitudes. This is it, the real deal. Ten years from now, this'll still be fresh" (Robert Koehler). "Masterful. There is great depth in these characters, and ultimately the paradoxical nature of their existence pays off superbly" (*Flickering Myth*). 2021 Rotterdam Film Festival. (MK)



2020 / 99 min. / France / French with English subtitles / Narrative

GOLD FOR DOGS

De l'or pour les chiens

Director: Anna Cazenave Cambet

Cast: Tallullah Cassavetti, Ana Neborac, Corentin Fila, Carole Franck, Julie Depardieu

Looking for love while working a job at the beach, eighteen-year-old Esther (Tallullah Cassavetti) has a summer fling with Jean (Corentin Fila). At season's end, she takes off for Paris and arrives, unannounced, on Jean's doorstep. Rebuffed, Esther is left to wander in the City of Light and ultimately finds shelter in a convent. Exiting a hyper sexualized world and entering an oasis of calm, Esther comes to understand herself through an uneasy relationship with a novice who has taken a vow of silence. Though sexually graphic, *Gold for Dogs* is not overly explicit about Esther's background, and we come to recognize her as a person who, while not naïve, probably doesn't completely understand her own sexuality and is just beginning to recognize the codes and signals of relationships. Strictly following Esther's point-of-view, director Anna Cazenave Cambet allows for the viewer to experience the surprising and unsentimental journey just as our protagonist does. To complement the young woman's increasingly interior odyssey, Cambet and cinematographer Kristy Baboul Gremeaux employ a visual style that moves us from the wide-open colorful spaces of the seaside to the desaturated, claustrophobic world of the nuns. The resulting film is an unconventional, sometimes unsettling, but always compelling experience that its director has described as a coming-of-age movie in reverse. 2020 London Film Festival. (JH) *This Young French Cinema program was made possible with the support of UniFrance and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy.*

2020 / 92 min. / Israel /
Hebrew with English subtitles / Narrative

HERE WE ARE

Director: Nir Bergman
Cast: Shai Avivi, Noam Imber, Smadar Wolfman,
Efrat Ben Zur

Aharon (Shai Avivi), in his fifties and separated for years from his wife, has given up his career as a graphic designer over the last two decades in order to raise and care for his autistic son, Uri (Noam Imber). When Uri's mother suggests that it is time for her now young adult son to live in a specialized group home, Aharon is concerned that Uri is not ready for their gentle routine to be disrupted. While on their way to the institution, Aharon decides to run away with his son and, with almost no money in his wallet, the two begin a road trip across Israel. During an odyssey filled with unexpected and revealing encounters, Aharon begins to consider the possibility that perhaps it is, in fact, he that is not ready to be separated from Uri. Along their journey, Uri compulsively views Charlie Chaplin's first feature *The Kid* (1921), and while 100 years have passed since the premiere of Chaplin's comedy milestone, *Here We Are* shows that there is still power in the simple, universal, and cinematic premise of a parent protecting their child. Though the locales and situation have a decidedly contemporary feel, director Nir Bergman (creator of the television series *In Treatment*) and screenwriter Dana Idisis take a classical approach to storytelling that nonetheless avoids easy sentimentality and uncomplicated characters. "Handling its themes with sensitivity and respect, the latest film from Nir Bergman is a gratifyingly textured portrait of a loving father son relationship teetering on the brink of suffocating co-dependency" (Wendy Ide, *Screen Daily*). 2020 Cannes and Toronto Film Festivals. (JH) *Presented with support from Mosse/Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies and the Hillel Foundation at the University of Wisconsin.*



2020 / 90 min. / USA / Narrative

HOLLER

Director: Nicole Riegel
Cast: Jessica Barden, Gus Halper, Austin Amelio, Grace Kaiser, Pamela Adlon, Becky Ann Baker

Ruth ought to be focusing on getting into college, but she's too busy trying to keep her family afloat. While their mom's in jail, she and her brother start doing jobs for a shady scrap metal dealer, dangerous work that has them breaking into abandoned factories under the cover of night. The kind of hardscrabble indie that thrives on its keen attention to detail, and filmed on beautifully grainy 16mm in the middle of a polar vortex, *Holler* exudes authenticity. A former soldier in the US Army, writer/director Nicole Riegel returned to shoot in her Ohio hometown, drawing inspiration from Barbara Loden's rust-belt classic *Wanda*. Star Jessica Barden (best known for the British series *The End of the F***ing World*) has received wide and deserved praise for bringing Ruth to vivid life, along with a supporting cast that includes the great Pamela Adlon (*Better Things*). "Pays a kind of elegiac respect to a class of Americans who work harder than the rest, but grasp only a fraction of the benefits dangled before them by the media. Life isn't fair, and it shows on the face of British actor Jessica Barden (*The Lobster*), whose remarkable performance illuminates this unvarnished dive into tough, small-town survival ... and escape" (*Variety*). (MK)





Ice Breakers and Kusasa (AGES 10+)

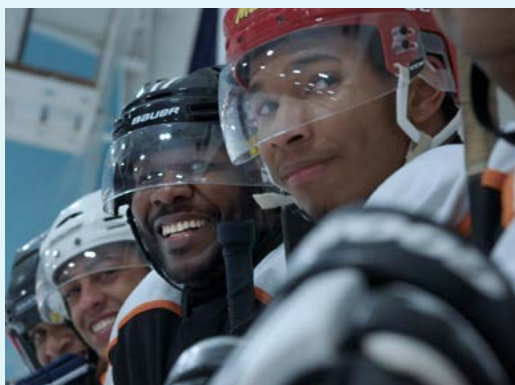
2019 / 15 min. / Canada / Documentary

ICE BREAKERS

Director: Sandi Rankaduwa

Cast: Josh Crooks

Josh Crooks is a talented Canadian hockey player and one of the few African-Canadians in the predominantly white sport. When he and his father uncover the forgotten history of black hockey leagues, Josh learns that he is part of a remarkable heritage. (TK)



2019 / 54 min. / South Africa / Xhosa with English subtitles / Documentary

KUSASA

Director: Shane Vermooten

Kusasa follows the journey of a youth soccer team from the slums of Cape Town, South Africa to the world's largest youth football (soccer) competition, the Gothia Cup, in Sweden. It is the adventure of a lifetime. Supported by their remarkable coaches and families, the players must overcome personal challenges along the way. Warning: *Kusasa* contains reenactments of violence that shaped the lives of these young athletes. (TK) *Presented with support from African Cultural Studies.*

2020 / 100 min. / USA / Narrative

THE INHERITANCE

Director: Ephraim Asili

Cast: Nozipho McClean, Eric Lockley, Chris Jarell, Julian Rozzell Jr.

In a brightly colored West Philadelphia house, a group of Black artists and activists are forming a collective. While they share common goals for society at large, cohabitation is another matter, and *The Inheritance* peppers its politics with knowing, funny observations about cooperative living.

Ephraim Asili's formally adventurous and lively debut feature is deeply invested in building on the art and activism of his predecessors, weaving its narrative with a valuable documentary history of Philadelphia's Black separatist MOVE organization, and freely incorporating jazz, literature, and poetry into its overall vision. A poster for *La Chinoise* (WFF 2018) earns pride of place on the house's wall, and indeed, very few films have so successfully recaptured the freewheeling mix of radical politics, humor, and bold cinematic expression found in Godard's run of masterworks in the 1960s. "One of the best movies of the year. An excellent debut. Observed with warmth and playful humor, without ever losing sight of serious political purposes and the potential for poetry therein" (*Sight & Sound*). "Unquestionably one of this year's great films. History, art, ideology, and love make up the four pillars of Ephraim Asili's *The Inheritance*, a thrillingly alive debut feature" (*The Film Stage*). (MK)



2020 / 90 min. / USA / Documentary

IRON FAMILY

Director: Patrick Longstreth

Cast: Jazmine Faries, Chad Faries, Kate Faries-German, Greg Banks, Holly Harvey

The life of playwright Jazmine Faries is appropriately fraught with drama and tension. So many decisions to be made. Who will produce her work? (Herself). Who will play the autobiographical lead role? (Herself). Who will play her love interest, Matthew McConaughey? (Her brother). This breathtakingly vivid documentary begins as a portrait of a young artist who happens to have Down syndrome but quickly expands its horizons as far as the eye can see, as it introduces us to Jazmine's immediate and extended family, along with a rich cast of characters made up of her friends, neighbors, and acquaintances. Delicately directed by Patrick Longstreth, *Iron Family* is a detailed, warm and funny story of an Upper Peninsula community. Winner of a 2021 Golden Badger Award. (BR) Presented with support from ARTS for ALL Wisconsin and Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin.



Josep



2021 / 16 min. / France /
French with English subtitles / Animation

SOUVENIR SOUVENIR

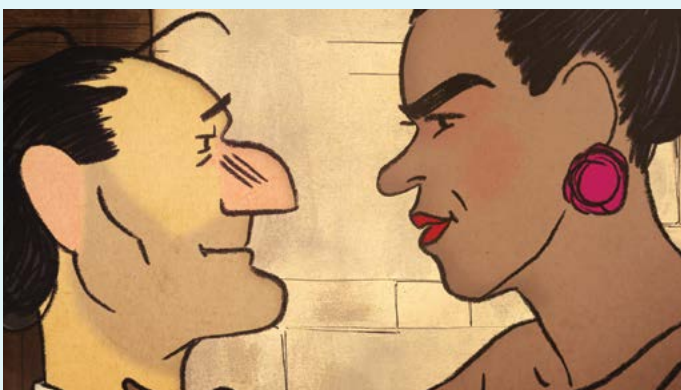
Director: Sebastien Dubois

In this haunting, journalistic short, filmmaker Bastien Dubois utilizes a number of animation styles to recount his grandfather's experiences in the Algerian War. Winner, Short Film Jury Award: Animation, 2021 Sundance Film Festival. (JH)

2020 / 74 min. / France /
French, Spanish with English
subtitles / Animation

JOSEP

Director: Aurel
Cast: Sergi Lopez, Bruno Solo,
David Marsais, Silvia Perez Cruz



Set primarily in 1939 just before the end of the Spanish Civil War, this evocative animated movie reveals the French concentration camps that were established to contain Spanish republicans fleeing Franco's dictatorship. Against the often-brutal backdrop of one camp, where the refugees barely have access to hygiene, water, and food, a trusting friendship develops between a French guard and the anti-fascist Spanish illustrator Josep Bartoli (1910-1995). The first feature-length movie from the cartoonist and graphic novelist Aurel is an extension of his journalistic work that often explores fascinating figures neglected by history. Such a figure is Bartoli, who later continued his work in Hollywood, New York, and Mexico where he was one of Frida Kahlo's lovers. Aurel structures *Josep* with a framing story about a young man discovering his grandfather's past that is told with more traditional, fluid animation. In contrast, the extended flashbacks that tell Bartoli's saga are expressed in limited animation, a simple technique that pays tribute to both Bartoli and Aurel's drawing style through implied movement. These sequences also successfully rely on the force of editing and sound design to give the narrative impact. The resulting feature is an actualization of Aurel's stated theme: "Drawing is the force behind everything that happens in the film." *Josep* is a unique cinematic experience about the ability to transcend pain and build a life through art. "A delicate, thoughtful film, moving and real. Not utterly bleak either, ending with a rampage of colour and life in Mexico – and a brilliantly swearsy cameo from Kahlo" (*The Guardian*). (JH) *This Young French Cinema program was made possible with the support of UniFrance and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy.*

2020 / 111 min. / Hong Kong / Cantonese with English subtitles / Documentary

KEEP ROLLING

Director: Man Lim-chung

“One of the greatest directors in Hong Kong film history receives the close-up profile she has long deserved with this enthralling documentary. Insightful, deeply personal and even surprisingly funny... a must-see” (Edmund Lee, *South China Morning Post*). Six-time winner of Best Director at the Hong Kong Film Awards (the HK Oscar equivalent) and sundry other accolades, the independent-minded, good-humored, and indefatigable Ann Hui proves just as compelling in front of the camera as behind it. Like Agnes Varda, Hui was effectively the sole female voice in a vital “new wave” film scene—collaborators and key Asian cinema peers including Tsui Hark, Hou Hsiao-hsien, and Jia Zhangke are all on hand to testify to her impact. But make no mistake, this is not your typical hagiography: a career as long as Hui’s is bound to have its ups and downs, and she is remarkably, gratifyingly candid about her successes and failures in both art and life. Rare is the celebrity profile that captures its subject in such a variety of situations, and as we observe Hui do everything from command a film set and endure a publicity tour to take her aging mom to the doctor, we get the inescapable sense that she is showing us her authentic self. Of course, an artist as honest as Ann Hui wouldn’t do it any other way. (MK) *Presented with support from UW-Madison Center for East Asian Studies.*



2020 / 85 min. / France, Denmark /
French with English subtitles / Documentary

LITTLE GIRL

Petite Fille

Director: Sébastien Lifshitz

“When I grow up, I’m going to be a girl.” At home in her little working-class French town, Sasha is indeed a happy 7 year-old girl, a playful sister, and affectionate daughter. But at school or in ballet lessons, she’s not allowed to be her carefree self, is forbidden from wearing dresses or answering to “she,” for Sasha was born a boy. This moving and clear-eyed documentary records one family’s resolve to have their child accepted by society in the most basic ways—a heartache that should, of course, be totally unnecessary. With impeccable craft, director Sébastien Lifshitz achieves the kind of tender honesty that can only come from deep trust between filmmaker and subject, as when Sasha’s mom, now her fiercest advocate, admits initial difficulty in wrapping her head around her daughter’s gender dysmorphia. As we witness the strain placed upon this normal family by retrograde bureaucrats, *Little Girl* stands out for its combination of lovely filmmaking and straightforward plainspokenness. At this point, Sasha’s family doesn’t require sympathy and has moved onto more pragmatic concerns, like getting their daughter in school—as her dad puts it, “it’s not a matter of tolerating. It’s Sasha and that’s it.” (MK) *Presented with support from UW Madison Gender and Sexuality Campus Center.*





2019 / 110 min. / Bhutan / Dzongkha
with English subtitles / Narrative

LUNANA: A YAK IN THE CLASSROOM

Director: Pawo Choyning Dorji
Cast: Sherab Dorji, Ugyen Norbu Lhendup,
Kelden Lhamo Gurung, Pem Zam, Sangay
Lham, Chimi Dem



Ugyen, a young teacher in the capitol of Bhutan, dreams of moving to Australia and launching his career as a singer. In order to earn money for the move, he reluctantly agrees to teach at the world's most remote school in the Himalayas. The villagers treat him with respect, gratitude and love. Filmed at an actual Himalayan school at 5,000 meters altitude, the production used solar-powered batteries to shoot the film. Stunning scenery, traditional songs and customs, and a sweet-natured yak are among the many pleasures of this calm and beautiful film. (TK)



2021 / 95 min. / Malta /
Maltese with English subtitles /
Narrative

LUZZU

Director: Alex Camilleri
Cast: Jesmark Scicluna, Michela
Farrugia, David Scicluna

In a rapidly modernizing Malta, young fisherman Jesmark (Jesmark Scicluna) contends with a newfound leak in his wooden luzzu, a small hand-crafted boat used by his father, grandfather, and

great-grandfather. A hard worker who is willing to hustle, Jesmark is still just barely eking out a living. He sees his livelihood—and his family tradition—vanishing before his eyes through a ruthless fishing industry and global warming that has led to diminishing harvests and a stagnating ecosystem. When he and his wife discover that their newborn son needs special medical treatment, the desperate Jesmark begins to work for an illicit black-market fishing operation. Prior to making his feature directorial debut with *Luzzu*, the Maltese-born Alex Camilleri served an apprenticeship as assistant editor on three movies directed by acclaimed filmmaker Ramin Bahrani, and now Bahrani serves as one of the producers on *Luzzu*. As in his mentor's early features like *Man Push Cart* (WFF 2007) and *Chop Shop* (WFF 2008), Camilleri keeps the traditions of Italian neorealist cinema alive by working on authentic locations and with non-professional actors like real-life fisherman Scicluna, who won a Special Jury Award at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival for his performance. *Luzzu* harnesses reality, extracting compelling drama out of the seemingly commonplace daily lives of working-class characters. "Though you've seen the beautiful coastal views of Malta on the big screen mined by Hollywood as dazzling locations, you've probably never watched a movie about the people who live there. Crafted with humanistic grace, *Luzzu*...contributes to filling that void" (Carlos Aguilar, *Rogerebert.com*). (JH)



MAGIC AND WONDER NOT SO LITTLE FOLKS

AGES 8-11+

Tales of amazing worlds
and everyday magic.

2019 / 11 min. / Argentina / Animation

QUMA AND THE BEASTS Quma y las Bestias

Director: Iván Stur, Javier Ignacio Luna Crook



Attempting to prove his hunting prowess, young Quma meets both fascinating and formidable animals in an exciting, yet dangerous South American wilderness. (ES)

2019 / 12 min. / Colombia /
Spanish with English subtitles / Narrative

THE SIZE OF THINGS El tamaño de las cosas

Director: Carlos Felipe Montoya

Cast: José Anatolio Delgado, Diego Estiven Delgado



Diego and his father live a simple life in a hut without furniture or things. When he discovers a chair in the middle of the rainforest, he learns about the desire to possess and the mystery of the world. (TK)

2019 / 4 min. / Germany / Animation

THE BEAUTY

Director: Pascal Schelbli



The sea is deep and tranquil, and alive with.... plastic! A magical and alarming vision of the toll of our disposable culture. (TK)

2019 / 5 min. / Japan / Animation

KONIGIRI-KUN: BOAT

Director: Mari Miyazawa



Our favorite friend the little rice ball and his bento box friends are ready for a new adventure: winning the Tokyo Olympics. A new tasty delight by Mari Miyazawa. (KK)

2020/ 13 min. / Lithuania /
Lithuanian with English subtitles/ Animation

MATILDA AND THE SPARE HEAD

Matilda ir atsargine galva

Director: Ignas Meilunas

Cast: Karolina Leciute, Ignas Meilunas, Rytis Saladzius



When one head is not enough for all the knowledge Matilda wants to keep, her ambitious mother has the perfect solution: order a second one. But her strategy backfires when a soccer ball accidentally gets shot into Matilda's bedroom. Best Animated Short, New York International Children's Film Festival. (KK) *Presented with support from the UW-Madison Center for Russia, Eastern and Central Europe.*

2019 / 5 min. / USA / Documentary

THE MAGIC OF CHESS

Director: Jenny Schweitzer Bell



At the Elementary Chess Championships, competitors share their hard-learned wisdom and marvel at the joys of chess. (ES)

2020 / 14min. / USA / Narrative

MAKE A WISH

Director: Elijah Edwards

Cast: Elijah Edwards, Robin Smallman, Flynn Marcus,
Alys Dickerson

High-Schooler Elijah Edwards' fresh variation on the classic "genie in a bottle" story is remarkably self-assured, filled with charming performances and pleasingly cheesy special effects. (BR)

2020 / 101 min. / Portugal / Portuguese with English subtitles / Documentary

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF BIRDS

A metamorfose dos pássaros

Director: Catarina Vasconcelos

“What human beings can’t explain, they invent.” This koan-like bit of wisdom serves as a guiding principle for director Catarina Vasconcelos’s exquisitely moving family reminiscence. Her grandparents, Henrique and Triz, married young, but spent most of their lives apart: he was a sailor, and she was left in Portugal to raise their six children. Their relationship transpired through letters, which they requested be burned upon their death. From the ashes, Vasconcelos resurrects their family life as a series of tableaux rendered with the uncanny vividness of still life paintings. In her role as granddaughter, Vasconcelos knows the players firsthand but the situations only through what she’s been told. In response, she weaves a brilliant speculative family history through heart-rending narration passed between Henrique and Triz’s children, subtle reenactments, and supremely elegant visual metaphors. Filmed on rich 16mm and treated with the care of a newly unearthed family album, *The Metamorphosis of Birds* is above all a moving consideration of motherhood and its relationship with the natural world. A prize-winner at film festivals the world over, Vasconcelo’s debut feature has earned critical comparisons to the work of master film essayists Chris Marker and Chantal Akerman. “Luminous... a breathtaking arrival for Vasconcelos. Striking imagery and lyrical language turn a family-history essay into an aching meditation on generational love” (*Variety*). (MK) *Presented with support from UW Madison Department of Portuguese and Spanish.*





2020 / 90 min. / UK / English, Urdu with English subtitles/ Narrative

MOGUL MOWGLI

Director: Bassam Tariq

Cast: Riz Ahmed, Alyy Khan, Sudha Buchar

Actor/musician Riz Ahmed is the co-writer, producer, and star of this energetic passion project, which he has called “the most personal work I’ve ever made.” Ahmed plays Zed, a British-Pakistani rapper on the cusp of his big break, a high-profile slot on a major European tour. But while visiting his conservative Muslim family in suburban London, Zed undergoes a sudden medical trauma that derails his plans and forces him to reckon with his fractured cultural identity. Capitalizing on his parallel career as an MC, polymath Ahmed gives it his all in a staggering performance that “affirms his standing as one of Britain’s most vital, risky actors” (*Variety*). Nominated for Best British Film of the Year at the BAFTAs (the UK Oscar equivalent) and winner of a critic’s prize at the Berlin Film Festival. “Culturally rich and emotionally raw, *Mogul Mowgli* is a brilliant showcase for Riz Ahmed’s bevy of talents, and speaks visceral truth to the British-South Asian experience so rarely explored on screen” (*Empire*). “Blistering. Ahmed is in career-best form” (*Time Out*). (MK)



2019 / 80 min. / Brazil, Denmark / Portuguese with English subtitles / Documentary

MY DARLING SUPERMARKET

Meu Querido Supermercado

Director: Tali Yankelevich

In a brightly florescent, pre-pandemic São Paulo *supermercado*, the cashiers, stock clerks, and the rest of the essential workers take center stage in this charming documentary. With natural curiosity and perceptive camerawork, director Tali Yankelevich awakens us to the dramas and daydreams unfolding in and around the aisles: whether it be the bakers flirting behind the counter, or the security guard peering into her bank of closed-circuit monitors, wishing she could use them to watch over her grown-up children, while breathlessly exclaiming “Two suspects near the condensed milk!” into her walkie-talkie. The repetitiveness of the work leaves plenty of time for interiority and soul-searching, which makes for a surprisingly deep film—albeit one punctuated by abrupt reminders that everyone is still on the clock, as when a baker concludes a poignant, cosmic reverie by noting, “the cheese bread is ready.” As they discuss their hopes, fears, and passions while wearing hairnets and nametags, the interviewees strike a philosophical tone reminiscent of Studs Terkel’s landmark oral history *Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do*. Just seeing the supermarket hum along under the guidance of these folks feels reassuringly normal, particularly with nary a mask in sight. “In this existentialist delight, whimsical and profound, the mundane gains new enlightenment” (Carlos Aguilar, *Los Angeles Times*). (MK)
Presented with support from Metcalfe’s Market.



2020 / 96 min. / France / French w/ English subtitles / Narrative

MY DONKEY, MY LOVER & I

Antoinette dans le Cévennes

Director: Caroline Vignal

Cast: Laure Calamy, Benjamin Lavernhe, Olivia Cote, Marc Fraize

Laure Calamy (ensemble member of the French comedy series *Call My Agent!*) stars as Antoinette, a bright, attractive, and imaginative schoolteacher who is carrying on an affair with the married father of one of her young students. When her lover cancels their school vacation getaway plans to be with his family, Antoinette, without invitation, follows the small clan to a hiking trail in Southern France's Cévennes National Park. Antoinette learns she has signed up for the same walking trip recounted by Robert Louis Stevenson in his 1879 journal *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes* and that she will be accompanied by an independently minded burro named Patrick. As our heroine and her animal companion try to catch up with her lover, Antoinette embarks on a commune with nature that begins uneasily but leads her to some unexpected and self-revelatory places. Writer/Director Caroline Vignal's second feature is a comic character study that presents the impulsive and endearing Antoinette without any moral judgement or dramatic confrontations. The English title is a nod towards Howard Hawks' beloved Western *Rio Bravo* (and its specialty number "My Rifle, My Pony and Me") and Vignal captures some of that film's relaxed, breezy storytelling style, but it is the performance from leading lady Calamy that imbues *My Donkey, My Lover & I* with a consistently engaging and surprising life force. (JH) *This Young French Cinema program was made possible with the support of UniFrance and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy.*



N of 1 + The Mystery of Now



2019 / 16 min. / USA / Documentary

THE MYSTERY OF NOW

Director: Audrey Buchanan
Cast: Douglas Miles, Douglas Miles Jr.,
Tashadawn Hastings, Di'orr Greenwood,
Tray Polk, Reuben Ringlero, Tommy Guerrero

In response to centuries of indigenous oppression, Apache Skateboards founder Douglas Miles has dedicated his life to designing equipment and inspiring youth.

This beautifully photographed documentary short confronts stereotypes and shines light on a creative culture too often ignored. (FQ)



2019 / 101 min. / USA / Documentary

N OF 1

Director: Bernard Friedman

An appliance repairman from Canada, an immunologist from Israel, and a transplant surgeon from England meet in a hospital in India. This might sound like the start of an elaborate joke, but it is actually a remarkable real-life collaboration established in an effort to save the life of

26-year-old Kayte, a young Florida woman dying of liver cancer. As this unlikely team invent and then carry out an experimental procedure, the stakes could not possibly be higher, both for Kayte, as well as the broad implications for currently untreatable cancers. An emotionally charged documentary equally notable for its vivid, unforgettable characters and for its thought-provoking twists and turns, Bernard Friedman's Golden Badger-winning directorial debut takes the viewer on a journey that spans five countries, and elicits the widest possible gamut of emotions. A riveting tale and an eye-opening exploration on the front lines of western medicine, *N of 1* is a potent inquiry into the nature of innovation. (BR)





Operation Wolf Patrol

2019 / 12 min. / USA / Documentary

ORIN & KEPA

Director: Caleb Peavy

An animal trainer forms an unusual bond with a wolf. A unique story told through an eclectic array of home movies and other archival materials. (PL)



2020 / 86 min. / USA / Documentary

OPERATION WOLF PATROL

Director: Joe Brown

Cast: Rod Coronado, Joe Brown

This urgent documentary highlights the efforts of a team of wolf conservationists, known as Wolf Patrol, who are attempting to monitor the activities of wolf hunters in Northern Wisconsin. These activists have no power or institutional support for their efforts, but are nonetheless dedicated to curtailing the unethical, often punitive practices of local hunters. The film uses hidden camera footage to reveal the use of trained dogs to chase down big game animals. These dogs are often killed in the process, which motivates hunters to exact revenge on local wildlife. The revenge hunting of wolves is illegal, yet there is little that these activists can do to curtail this behavior, beyond making themselves a presence in areas where hunters typically set-up camp. As these environmentalists keep a watchful eye on the hunters and their prey, they are in turn watched and threatened by angry hunters and local law enforcement who have been emboldened by “anti-harrasment” laws put in place to protect hunters and their sport. The film also delves into the backstory of Wolf Patrol’s controversial founder Rod Coronado, including the act of eco-terrorism that landed him in prison, and his efforts to adopt more peaceful activist practices. This story has an added immediacy now that the grey wolf was removed from the endangered species list in October of 2020. This is tough but necessary viewing for those who wish to understand what is at stake with current Wisconsin hunting laws and practices. (PL)



2020 / 77 min. / South Korea /
Korean with English subtitles / Narrative

OUR MIDNIGHT

Director: Lim Jung-eun

Cast: Lee Seung-hun, Park Seo-eun, Lim Young-woo

Late one night on a bridge over the Han river, two lonely young souls meet. This chance encounter kicks off of an overnight odyssey through contemporary Seoul, richly etched in luminous black-and-white. In addition to that restless aimlessness specific to young adults, struggling actor Ji-hoon and office worker Eun-yeong are both going through relationship issues, though hers are more troubling. As they walk through the city and confide in each other, the two develop a tentative bond, and slowly restore a bit of their faith in humanity. But don't be fooled—while it may be sweet-natured, *Our Midnight* is no rote indie romance. Lim Jung-eun's first feature is after deeper emotional territory, and her sensitive handling marks her clearly as a filmmaker to watch. This contemporary South Korean riff on indie classics like *Before Sunrise* "takes the best of what's come before and channels them into a work completely its own. It's focused on how special one night with a stranger can be, allowing yourself to be truly vulnerable with someone that you might never see again. Sometimes it does feel like your entire life will be okay after one perfect night" (*The Film Stage*). (MK) Presented with support from UW-Madison Center for East Asian Studies.



2020 / 131 min. / Germany, France /
Documentary

PARIS CALLIGRAMMES

Director: Ulrike Ottinger

Paris in the 1960s—an artistic mecca if there ever was one. Then in her early twenties, aspiring artist Ulrike Ottinger hitchhiked from Germany (after her elaborately painted car broke down on the way) and immersed herself in the city's vibrant scene of cafés, bookstores, art studios, cinémathèques, and nightclubs. Now, after a lengthy career as a celebrated film director, Ottinger looks back on her formative years and the people that influenced her, introducing us to an incredible array of artists and intellectuals through a wealth of archival footage. Beyond vividly resurrecting a specific time and place, *Paris Calligrammes* serves as a powerful reminder of the immense cultural and social value of physical meeting places such as the shops, restaurants, venues, and theaters that we've been mostly shut out of for the past year. These are the spaces that make a community, and their impact continues to inspire artists like Ottinger fifty years later. "One of the great works of first-person cinema... a work of vital and energetic modernism. Ottinger's personal and political masterwork" (Richard Brody, *The New Yorker*). (MK)





The Passing On

2021 / 32 min. / USA / Documentary

BID CALLER

Director: David Van Auken

About as Wisconsin as Wisconsin's Own gets, *Bid Caller* follows Harold Betthausen, an auctioneer who has been overseeing auctions in Milwaukee, Wisconsin for over 50 years. Filled with the colorful personalities, nostalgia and collectibles that are the center of Betthausen and his wife Marilyn's weekly estate auctions, this doc feels as lived in as the homes we visit as Betthausen peruses future estate sales. Alternately humorous and heartbreaking, *Bid Caller* explores the relationship between impermanent material goods and the important and emotional connections that people imbue them with. (BS)



2020 / 70 min. / USA /
Documentary

THE PASSING ON

Director: Nathan Clarke
Cast: James Bryant,
Clarence Pierre

The Passing On takes us inside the world of Black-owned funeral homes, a profession that has been historically vital to the Black



community but whose ranks are now dwindling in number. Focusing on 2016 Embalmer of the Year James Bryant and his San Antonio funeral home, we are flies on the wall as Bryant puts his faith in a new generation whom he hopes will pick up his mantle and carry on his legacy. He's met with resistance from his young intern, Clarence Pierre, who himself is conflicted about his commitment to the profession due to the judgment he feels from the Black Christian community as a queer man. An in-depth and startlingly observant look into a profession many find grim, *The Passing On* is filled with characters worth rooting for, finding both the beauty and humanity in this under-told story. Winner of a 2021 Golden Badger Award. (JF)

1960 / 106 min. / Italy /
Italian with English subtitles / Narrative

THE PASSIONATE THIEF

Risate di gioia

Director: Mario Monicelli

Cast: Anna Magnani, Totò, Ben Gazzara,
Fred Clark



Lello (Ben Gazzara), a handsome low-level crook, recruits fame-hungry movie extra Tortorella (Oscar-winner Anna Magnani) and her old pal Umberto (Italian comedy legend Totò) in his efforts to pick pockets at a ritzy New Year's Eve party. Soon, the trio are on an all-night odyssey across Rome, encountering ugly Americans, German aristocrats, and assorted other swanky celebrations and celebrants in this brilliant character-based comedy with a big heart. *Risate di Gioia* (or "joyful tears") was the original Italian title of *The Passionate Thief*, and the movie is a career highpoint for director and co-writer Mario Monicelli (1915-2010). A master of the commedia all'italiana, Monicelli was known for delivering big laughs, often while exploring deeper societal issues. Here, the satirist with a gentle touch joins forces with a trio of instantly likeable movie stars to create a funny yet compassionate portrait of three downtrodden misfits who are just trying to survive in the era of Italy's economic "miracle." It would be apt to compare Lello, Totorella, and Umberto to the gang of inept criminals in Monicelli's best known movie, *Big Deal on Madonna Street*, but *The Passionate Thief* also plays like a scaled-down, working class parody of *La Dolce Vita*. Indeed, it was released the same year (1960), shot on some of the same Roman locations, and utilizes the same production designer (Piero Gherardi) as Fellini's masterpiece. Gazzara, making his first appearance in a non-U.S. production, is memorably suave, while Totò and Magnani, frequent co-stars on the Italian stage, each provide one of their finest big-screen performances. The recent digital restoration of *The Passionate Thief* has been provided by Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna and Rialto Pictures. (JH)



2019 / 80 min. / USA

PERSONHOOD

Director: Jo Ardingher



Passed in 1997, Wisconsin's "Unborn Child Protection Act" protects a fetus in the event of substance or alcohol abuse by the parent. When Tammy Loertscher discovered she was pregnant, she decided to disclose her past drug use with her doctor.

This alarming, exhaustively researched documentary tells the story of the unending nightmare that followed, in which the state assigned an attorney to her fetus and stripped Tammy of her constitutional rights. With an unwavering eye, Jo Ardingher's directorial debut bears witness to outrages on both a local and national level, from the breaching of doctor-patient confidentiality to the criminalization of lower income women. When justice becomes a privilege rather than a right, this film asks, do pregnant women lose their personhood? 2019 Doc NYC. (FQ) *Presented with support from Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin.*

Promising Young Women

The determined, innovative, and inspired young women that serve as the central characters in this specially curated program of short works range in age from 8-years-old to early 20s. Whether they are an outspoken student, a loyal daughter, a frustrated consumer, or a dedicated employee, each of these protagonists take dramatic steps towards changing their situations and making their voices heard. The program also provides an exciting showcase for a talented group of young filmmakers and actors who demand attention. (JH)



2020 / 12 min. / USA / Narrative

IMPORTANT POLICE SHIT

Director: Andrew T. Betzer

Cast: Eleanore Pienta, Armando Horsey, Scott Swope, Derrick Ward

The lone female among a group of young police trainees experiences some unequal treatment during a mentally and physically grueling day of hazing and ridiculous exercises. Screened at prestigious festivals all over the world, *Important Police Shit* is the latest work from talented filmmaker Andrew Betzer, whose *Young Bodies Heal Quickly* screened at WFF in 2015. (JH)



2019 / 16 min. / Philippines / Tagalog with English subtitles / Narrative

EXCUSE ME MISS, MISS, MISS

Director: Sonny Calvento

Cast: Angelina Kanapi, Phyllis Grande

At Trendysitas, a new kind of department store in Quezon City, Vangie, a member of the floor staff tries to avoid the wrath of a strict supervisor and hold on to her job. Vangie soon learns the secret truth about her boss's workaholicism in this surreal and satirical gem. (JH)



2021 / 14 min. / USA / Narrative

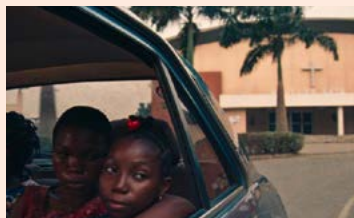
WIGGLE ROOM

Director: Julia Baylis, Sam Guest

Cast: Deanna Gibson, Sam Stillman

Wheelchair bound Daisy (Deanna Gibson), fed up with the run-around she's getting from a shady insurance outfit, decides to take drastic action in order to get a long-standing claim reimbursed. For her lead performance, Gibson received a Short Film Special Jury Award at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival. (JH)

Promising Young Women



2020 / 18 min. / UK, Nigeria / Narrative

LIZARD

Director: Akinola Davies

Cast: Pamilerin Ayodeji, Rita Edward, Osayi Uzamere

An 8-year-old student at a Mega Church and school in Lagos observes multiple types of reckless adult behavior during one tumultuous afternoon. Short Film Grand Jury Prize, 2021 Sundance Film Festival. (JH)



2021 / 11 min. / USA / Narrative

AVA FROM MY CLASS

Director: Younmin Kang

Cast: Bae Bonalle, Rowan Cooper

A shy youngster decides to express her admiration for a fellow performer in her youth drama group. The wonderfully real performance by Bae Bonalle as the reserved hero makes this quiet and naturalistic short a must see. (JH)



2020 / 14 min. / Germany /
German, Dari with English subtitles / Narrative

BAMBIRAK

Director: Zamarin Wahdat

Cast: Lara Cengiz, Kailas Mahadevan

8-year-old Kati stows away in a van so she can spend the day at work with her courier father, Faruk. Immigrants from Afghanistan, Kati and her Dad encounter a wide sampling of Germany's population over one day while Faruk struggles to balance the responsibilities of his job and fatherhood. Winner, Short Film Jury Award for International Fiction, 2021 Sundance Film Festival. (JH)



Ringolevio



2021 / 25 min. / USA / Narrative

ONE FOOT IN

Director: Eric Schabla | Cast: James DeVita, Marcus Truschinski

Two graverobbers skulk, scrape, scrap, and soliloquy their way through a night of skullduggery and gravediggery. With David Milchian dialogue flowing from the mouths of longtime American Players Theater stalwarts James Devita and Marcus Truschinski, and gorgeous nighttime cinematography from Jack Whaley, *One Foot In* is a delicious trip to the darkside. (BR)

2020 / 80 min. / USA / Narrative

RINGOLEVIO

Director: Kristin Peterson

Cast: Meredith Johnston, Nicole Velasco Lockard, Joshua Koopman, Cory Hardin, Zachary Krueger

In this captivating and incisive feature film debut by Milwaukee-based artist and poet, Kristin Peterson, amateur entomologist, Ada (Nicole Velasco

Lockard), travels to a remote part of Wisconsin to meet her girlfriend Marissa's (Meredith Johnston) three brothers. Although Marissa offers Ada some warning about the unusual familial dynamic between the siblings, Ada is still unprepared for the level of seeming disregard for courtesy or personal boundaries. A series of ill-fated attempts to ingratiate herself within the family expose some fissures in Ada and Marissa's relationship. This humorous, well-observed drama has a Wisconsin Film Festival pedigree: Not only did Meredith Johnston star in the 2019 Wisconsin's Own feature, *Pet Names*, it is also exquisitely lensed by *Pet Names* Director of Photography Dana Shihadah. (PL) *Presented with support from Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin.*





2020 / 90 min. / France / French, Lebanese with English subtitles / Narrative

SKIES OF LEBANON

Sous le ciel d'Alice

Director: Chloe Mazlo

Cast: Alba Rohrwacher, Wajdi Mouawad, Isabelle Zighondi

The feature debut from animator Chloe Mazlo is a strikingly original live action love story inspired by the real-life experiences of Mazlo's grandparents. In the 1950s, Alice (Alba Rohrwacher) escapes her rigid lifestyle in the Swiss Alps by accepting a position as a nanny in Beirut. There, she falls in love with scientist Joseph (*Incendies* playwright Wajdi Mouawad), who works dedicatedly on putting the first Lebanese on the moon. As Alice and Joseph marry and start a family, Mazlo brings to life an enchanted time when Lebanon was a paradise for these two lovers and not the war-torn nation it has been for several decades. Inevitably, however, it is the civil war that begins to take the joy out of Alice and Joseph's relationship. In order to experience and bring-to-life the country that she only heard about in the modest and hopeful legends told by her family, Mazlo presents us with a story that doesn't confront the horrors of war straight-on. The filmmaker also employs cinematic language (including some stop-motion animation) that is usually reserved for tales of fantasy and whimsy. Immeasurably aided by the gifted cinematographer Hélène Louvart, Mazlo's heartfelt technique makes the bittersweet and melancholic aspects of her grandparents' story hit home in *Skies of Lebanon*'s concluding scenes. A selection of the 2020 Cannes Film Festival Critic's Week. (JH) *This Young French Cinema program was made possible with the support of UniFrance and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy.*

2021 / 90 minutes / USA / Narrative

STRAWBERRY MANSION

Director: Albert Birney, Kentucker Audley
Cast: Penny Fuller, Kentucker Audley, Grace Glowicki,
Reed Birney, Linas Phillips, Constance Shulman

It's 2035, and the government is taxing our dreams. Dream about a buffalo last night? That'll run you 25 cents. Plus 17 cents for the violin. And that's on top of all the ads and product placement interrupting your REM. James Preble is a mild-mannered government lackey, assigned to audit the dreams of an eccentric artist who's been dodging her payments. The elderly Bella welcomes James into her remote farmhouse, where he sets about combing through decades of her recorded dreams, prepared to nickel and dime her. But as he wades into her unconscious, he meets and falls for her younger self. As James pursues the young Bella through a mind-melting fantasia of dreamscapes, he uncovers some unsettling conspiracies infiltrating our subconscious. A true psychedelic charmer, *Strawberry Mansion* boasts a dazzling handcrafted aesthetic, conjuring its unique universe through colorful props and costumes rather than lifeless CGI. The thrift-shop look is a supreme asset, creating a cinematic experience with more visual imagination and wit per frame than any generic blockbuster. 2021 Sundance Film Festival. "Enchanting, mind-bending and heartwarming... feels like walking through another's dream. Simply put, *Strawberry Mansion* is sensational, strange, and sophisticatedly sweet" (Kristy Puchko, *rogerebert.com*). (MK)



2020 / 99 min. / Iran / Farsi with English subtitles /
Narrative

SUN CHILDREN **Khorshid**

Director: Majid Majidi | Cast: Rouhollah Zamani,
Ali Nasirian, Javad Ezzati, Mahdi Mousavi

12-year-old Ali (Roohollah Zamani) and his pals are working hard to survive and support their families by doing small jobs in a garage and even committing petty crimes on the streets of Tehran. Ali sees big opportunity when the shady garage boss entrusts him to put together a team and uncover a treasure that is buried underground. Now, Ali and his young recruits must enroll in the Sun School, a charitable institution committed to educating street kids and child laborers. The school's basement provides a direct line to the fortune and the gang's biggest challenge is sneaking away to dig undetected below the classrooms. Working with non-professional juvenile performers, director/co-screenwriter Majid Majidi (*Children of Heaven*) has succeeded wildly in merging a contemporary Iranian neorealist drama with the language of escape and heist movies. One of *Sun Children*'s key visual references appears to be Jacques Becker's 1960 prison break classic *Le Trou*, and Majidi has captured the suspense of that film by similarly guiding the viewer to identify with the criminal protagonists. Ultimately, though, the deeply humane *Sun Children* reveals itself to be less concerned with crime and punishment but invested in the well-being of the titular characters and vulnerable kids everywhere. "Gripping. Majidi has made some of the most visually stunning and emotionally stirring films in world cinema about the plight of under-privileged, exploited and abused young people, and *Sun Children* is one of his very best" (Deborah Young, *The Hollywood Reporter*). Winner, 2020 Venice Film Festival Lanterna Magica Award and Marcello Mastroianni Award for Best Young Actor. (JH) *Presented with support from UW-Madison Middle East Studies Program.*





2020 / 150 min. / Iran, Germany, Czech Republic / Farsi with English subtitles / Narrative

THERE IS NO EVIL

Sheytan vojud nadarad

Director: Mohammad Rasoulof

Cast: Ehsan Mirhosseini, Kaveh Ahangar, Mahtab Servati, Mohammad Valizadegan, Shaghayegh Shourian, Alireza Zareparast

Winner of the top prize at the Berlin Film Festival, this searing knockout by Mohammad Rasoulof was directed in defiance of a lifetime ban on filmmaking by the Iranian government. *There Is No Evil* is divided into four discrete stories, each concerned with the effects of capital punishment in Iran, the country with the highest rate of executions per capita of anywhere on the globe. Rasoulof uses the anthology structure to interrogate the myriad ways these government executions impact Iran's citizenry, as evinced by the broad range of the film's protagonists: a middle class family man, a company of conscripted soldiers, a pair of young lovers in the countryside, and a long-lost extended family. Etched with a profound moral clarity, each of the four parables exposes the paradoxes of an oppressive system the filmmaker knows all too well. Like Jafar Panahi, his collaborator on *The White Meadows* (WFF 2011), Rasoulof has been sentenced to prison in his own country for the crime of cinema, or as he has been officially charged, creating "propaganda against the system." "Pulses with humor, romance, and life. Rasoulof has turned filmmaking into an act of resistance" (Justin Chang, *Los Angeles Times*). "A major work of Iranian cinema... an enraging, enthralling, enduring testament" (*The Film Stage*). (MK) Presented with support from UW-Madison Middle East Studies Program.

2020 / 110 min. / Nigeria / English, Nigerian Pidgin with English subtitles / Narrative

THIS IS MY DESIRE

Eyimofe

Director: Arie Esiri, Chuko Esiri

Cast: Tomiwa Edun, Jude Akuwudike, Cynthia Ebijie, Temiloluwa Ami-Williams

This stunning diptych brings us two street-level stories from contemporary Lagos, both featuring lead characters who hope to eventually emigrate to Europe. In practical terms, this means each must scrape by with multiple jobs and side hustles as they save up money and attempt to navigate Nigeria's Kafkaesque bureaucracy in pursuit of their goal. But the goalposts keep moving, and both Mofe, a middle-aged electronics repairman, and Rosa, a twentysomething hairdresser and bartender, face obstacles that test just how far they're willing to go to improve their lives. These situations may be difficult, but first-time twin directors Arie and Chuko Esiri imbue their portrayals with a generosity of spirit and dignified compassion. Rather than directly intersecting, the parallel halves of *This Is My Desire* rhyme and resonate off each other, creating a deeper overall experience. Adding to the film's beauty is the vibrant 35mm photography, which shows off the colors and patterns of Lagosian life. "Gorgeous. A formally and stylistically impressive film that gives fascinating insights into the society of the sprawling conurbation of Lagos. *This Is My Desire* is a powerful film and well worth seeking out" (Kristin Thompson). (MK)

Presented with support from UW-Madison Department of African Cultural Studies.



2020 / 139 min. / Japan / Japanese with English subtitles / Narrative

TRUE MOTHERS *Asa ga Kuru*

Director: Naomi Kawase

Cast: Satoko Kurihara, Kiyokazu Kurihara,

Hikari Katakura, Shizue Asami

After many unsuccessful fertility treatments, Satoko and her husband make the decision to adopt a child. Six years after adopting a boy they name Asato, Satoko receives a phone call from a young woman named Hikari who says, "I want my son back." Though Satoko and Hikari met briefly right after Asato was born, Satoko does not recognize the biological mother when she eventually shows up on the adoptive parents' doorstep. If she is not Hikari, then who is she? *True Mothers* is classically compelling melodrama material that is even more involving and mysterious because of the striking shifts in time and narrative perspective employed by the prolific director and co-screenwriter Naomi Kawase, here adapting a novel by Mizuki Tsujimura. Kawase's three-sectioned approach begins with the adoptive parents in the present day, then jumps back to show the viewer how they reached their decision to adopt, and then details Hikari's story: what led to her pregnancy, and what led her to give up her child. As the storylines ultimately converge in the movie's emotional final scenes, Kawase displays enormous compassion for her titular characters who are trapped in a fragile existence by the shame associated with unconventional motherhood. "The pacing is leisurely but doesn't drag; this is a film which takes its time getting to know the characters and also makes a persuasive case that they are worth knowing" (Wendy Ide, *Screen International*). 2020 Toronto and Cannes Film Festivals. (JH) *Presented with support from UW-Madison Center for East Asian Studies*

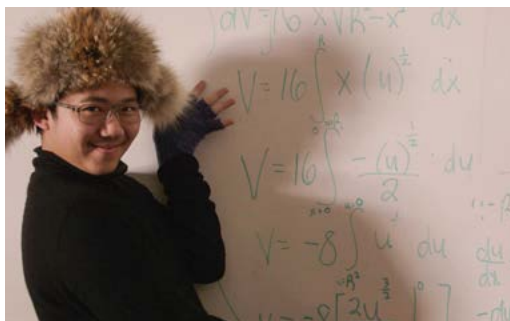


2021 / 84 min. / USA / Documentary

TRY HARDER!

Director: Debbie Lum

At Lowell High, the senior class is collectively freaking out. Finishing up their tenure at the top-ranked public high school in San Francisco, the most academically ambitious teens in the nation are knee-deep in the cutthroat college application process, with all eyes and essays trained on a handful of uber-elite universities. As they stack countless extracurriculars on top of demanding AP courses, prom is the last thing on these brainiacs' minds. Documentarian Debbie Lum gets us rooting hard for a memorable batch of charming and energetic teens (and their comparatively maniacal parents) as they navigate this critical moment, the culmination of years and years of tireless effort. Along with this breathless tension, Lum takes a hard look at the mercurial standards of frequently opaque college admissions offices; Lowell High's student body is majority Asian American, and its students are saddled with stereotypes that greatly affect their acceptance rate to choice Ivy League schools. For all the stress onscreen, *Try Harder!* maintains a spirited and often funny tone as it exposes a fundamentally broken system, thanks to the temperament of its indefatigable teens. 2021 Sundance Film Festival. (MK) *Presented with support from UW-Madison Department of Asian American Studies.*



2020 / 90 min. / Germany, France /
German with English subtitles / Narrative

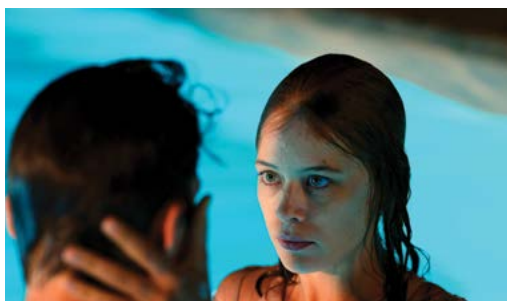
UNDINE

Director: Christian Petzold

Cast: Paula Beer, Franz Rogowski

“If you leave me, I’ll have to kill you.” So begins the latest film from leading auteur Christian Petzold (*Phoenix*, WFF 2015), a modern riff on an ancient myth about a water nymph.

Undine reunites Paula Beer and Franz Rogowski, the two captivating leads of Petzold’s *Transit* (WFF 2018), as star-crossed lovers caught up in a whirlwind romance. Industrial diver Christophe meets Undine as she’s giving a museum tour, and their bond is sealed when an aquarium explodes over them at a café, showering them with water and shattered glass. This beautiful, dreamlike sequence is emblematic of the film’s ability to cast a spell through the magnetic pull of its imagery and actors. As the couple transforms one another, *Undine* proceeds with the eerie, enigmatic logic of an adult fairy tale. “Heartfelt and profound. Hans Fromm’s crystalline cinematography trusts the gorgeous faces of the actors enough to let a look or a gesture tell the story. Beer and Rogowski are so good, and have such amazing chemistry, that it’s hard to look away or not root for them to be together” (*The Hollywood Reporter*). Winner of the Silver Bear for Best Actress and the FIPRESCI Award at the Berlin Film Festival. (MK) Presented with support from the UW-Madison Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic Studies.



2019 / 91 min. / India /
Maithili with English subtitles / Narrative

THE VILLAGE HOUSE

Gamak Ghar

Director: Achal Mishra

Cast: Abhinav Jha, Mira Jha, Satyam Jha, Soniya Jha

The astonishing debut feature from 23-year-old writer/director Achal Mishra, *The Village House* gently and lovingly captures a large extended

Indian family over several decades as they gather at the matriarch’s rural home. As the movie follows the inevitable rhythms of change, such as children growing older and moving away to the city, it is the village house itself that emerges as the central character in this tale of the inexorable decay of traditional village life. Mishra keeps the film continually captivating on a visual level through gorgeous fixed-camera long takes and he has split this generational story into three separate chapters that take place years apart, employing a different screen aspect ratio for each segment. The narrative mostly avoids moments of tension to favor a flowing series of warm, nostalgic images: food cooking, old men playing (and cheating) at cards, a family gathered around a small television to watch a movie. As time slips away, and the house falls slowly into disrepair, Mishra’s storytelling technique builds to its devastating final moments, resulting in an intimate mini-epic that traces the intertwining of family and nature through the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. *The Village House* provides a resounding emotional experience through quiet observation of the human condition. “Like master filmmakers Edward Yang and Hou Hsiao-hsien, Mishra understands how cinematic aesthetics can beautifully mirror the invisible momentum of time” (Glenn Heath Jr., *The Film Stage*). (JH)



Voices Of Cinema

For the price of one ticket, this special cinephilic-minded program provides access to two marvelous movies: Federico Fellini's surreal and enchanting final feature, *The Voice of the Moon*, and Evgeny Ruman's *Golden Voices*, an offbeat romance about two cinema professionals who heroically strive to get Fellini's film released in Israel.



2019 / 88 min. / Israel / Russian and Hebrew with English subtitles / Narrative

GOLDEN VOICES

Director: Evgeny Ruman

Cast: Maria Belkin, Vladimir Friedman, Evelin Hagoel, Uri Klauzner, Elizabeth Kon

In 1990, Victor and Raya Frankel arrive in Israel along with a mass of other Jewish immigrants from the crumbling Soviet Union. Back in the USSR, the couple were the most in-demand dubbers of international cinema, sometimes providing their voices to dozens of characters in a single movie. Now, the sixty-somethings are struggling to learn Hebrew and having equal difficulty in finding suitable work in their new homeland. While Victor secures them a low-paying gig dubbing bootleg videos for the exploding Russian-speaking immigrant market, Raya gets a more lucrative job using her native tongue as a phone sex worker, a job she keeps secret from her husband to protect their increasingly rocky marriage. *Golden Voices* is a rare find: a romantic comedy that finds a rich, warm supply of often absurd situational humor in the lives of two film workers who are not superstar performers or directors. Victor and Raya eventually use clout from their association with Federico Fellini to bring the maestro's little-seen final feature, *The Voice of the Moon*, to Israeli audiences. The cineophile couple's success in importing Fellini is shown to be more a personal triumph than a professional or financial one, reminding us that *Golden Voices* is an affectionate salute to the uplifting power of cinema and the countless number of working-class heroes who make the magic possible. (JH) *Presented with support from UW-Madison's Mosse/Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies.*

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



1990 / 121 min. / Italy, France / Italian with English subtitles / Narrative

THE VOICE OF THE MOON

La voce della luna

Director: Federico Fellini

Cast: Roberto Benigni, Paolo Villaggio, Nadia Ottaviani, Marisa Tomasi

Comedian and Oscar-winning actor Roberto Benigni stars in the final feature from the legendary Federico Fellini, concluding a career that stretched over fifty years in the Italian film industry. Adapted from a novel by Ermano Cavazzoni, *The Voice of the Moon*'s story centers around Ivo Salvini (Benigni), recently released from a mental hospital and in love with Aldini (Nadia Ottaviani). As he attempts to win her heart, he wanders a strange, dreamlike landscape and encounters various oddball characters including Gonnella (Paolo Villaggio), a paranoid old man prone to conspiracy theories. Like his similarly nostalgic and surreal *Amarcord*, *The Voice of the Moon* takes place in the Emilia-Romagna countryside of Fellini's youth but filmed on wonderfully elaborate sets at the director's beloved Cinecittà studios. *Voice* also offers another variation on Fellini's innocent-adrift-in-a-brutal-world structure that was earlier explored in *La Strada* and *Nights of Cabiria*. Upon its original release, *Voice* emerged without fanfare: it played the Cannes Film Festival after its Italian premiere but was never distributed in the U.S. Now, you can discover this odd and entrancing gem for yourself, in a recent restoration courtesy of Arrow Films and the American Genre Film Archive. (JH)

2020 / 110 min. / Germany /
German with English subtitles / Documentary

WALCHENSEE FOREVER

Director: Janna Ji Wonders

In this moving and personal story about identity, roots, and self-fulfillment, director Janna Ji Wonders seeks to uncover the sometimes-tragic secrets of her family's past while figuring out her own place among four generations of strong, passionate women. Entrenched in their home near Bavaria's

Lake Walchensee, the women manage a café and inn while the men in their lives come and go. With the freedoms of the 1960s, Wonders' mother Anna Werner and Anna's sister Frauke take off for Mexico, where they perform traditional German music and take part in Ayahuasca ceremonies. They also visit San Francisco during the Summer of Love, travel to Indian ashrams, and became part of Kommune 1 in Berlin, led by the controversial Rainer Langhans. Though this is a multi-generational saga, it is Anna Werner who emerges as the central figure in *Walchensee Forever*, thanks to her candid and emotional reflections on her life, as well as her generosity in providing the movie with a treasure trove of photographs and home movies that bring the past vividly to life. The portrait of her mother that Wonders has lovingly provided is of one who sought neither fame nor fortune, but still managed to have an adventurous, experimental, and well-lived life complete with friends, love, and loss. "Involving... the film also works on a secondary level — as a first-hand account of the late 60s and early 70s counterculture movement in Germany and America" (*Screen Daily*). Winner, Compass Perspektive Award, 2020 Berlin Film Festival. (JH) *Walchensee Forever* is presented with support from UW-Madison's Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic Studies.



2021 / 94 min. / USA / Documentary

WHEN CLAUDE GOT SHOT

Director: Brad Lichtenstein

On the streets of Milwaukee, third year law student, father, and husband Claude Motley is shot in the face by 15-year-old carjacker Nathan King. Filmed over five years, *When Claude Got Shot* follows Claude's life after the shooting and his struggles to recover mentally and physically. Di-

verted from a legal career, Claude must contend with multiple surgeries, catastrophic health care bills, and stress on his family while remaining engaged as the criminal justice system resolves Nathan's fate. Torn between a desire for punishment and an awareness of the injustice of mass incarceration of young black men, Claude reflects on his own life and its similarity to Nathan's. Prolific and award-winning Milwaukee-based documentary filmmaker Brad Lichtenstein (*As Goes Janesville, There Are Jews Here* – WFF 2017) has crafted an inspiring and riveting portrait of one man's journey from victim of violent crime to someone with a profound and hopeful vision of justice. While *When Claude Got Shot* is an unmistakably Wisconsin story, it speaks most powerfully and universally to the human condition and the desire to change and forgive. "Nuanced... offers multidimensional storytelling amid facts, balancing events and personal lives without turning anyone into nameless statistics" (Mae Abdulbaki, *Screen Rant*). 2021 SXSW Film Festival. (JH)





Wisconsin's Own the Lonely

Seven shorts from the Wisconsin's Own section of our Festival touch on themes we can all relate to after this past year: loneliness, isolation, the need for human contact and the connections we have to those we long for, miss, or have been affected by, for better or worse. The characters in these films also use their alone time to make the sometimes tricky journey to connect with their inner selves. *Presented with support from Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin.*

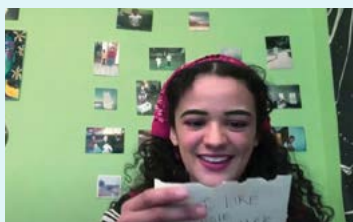


2019 / 4 min. / USA / Dance

WEST

Director: Kate Corby | Cast: Katie Graves

Kate Corby masterfully fuses dance and film once again in this short piece that loosely plays off of the Western genre, offering a gendered perspective on the rugged individualism, archetypes, and violence of the "American West". (BR)

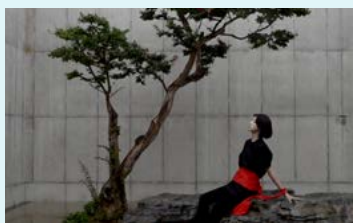


2021 / 5 min. / USA / Narrative

YOU'RE ADORABLE

Director: Marissa Bode | Cast: Marissa Bode

Marissa Bode stars in and directs this comedic short featuring an obsessive young woman who employs increasingly extreme methods to win over the man of her dreams. (BS)



2021 / 11 min. / USA / Chinese, English, Korean with English subtitles / Experimental

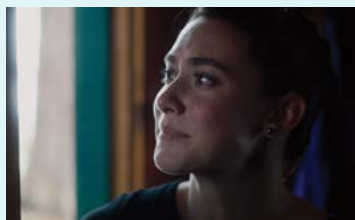
THE MESSENGER

Director: Emma Chang | Cast: Lahee Lee, Jinsook Lee

A woman wanders through a variety of striking locations, seeking her inner identity while confronted with different versions of herself in this unique short film. Director Emma Chang combines a Maya Deren-influenced dreamlike narrative with notable architecture and an experimental use of calligraphy to create a unique cinematic world. (JF)



Wisconsin's Only the Lonely



2020 / 6 min. / USA / Narrative

WAY UPSTATE

Director: Beah Travis | Cast: Audrey Pincus

A woman travels to her family's cabin to find comfort in the familiar belongings held within. *Way Upstate* is an understated and beautifully realized exploration of grief and memory. (BC)



2020 / 7 min. / USA / Experimental

I'VE BEEN AFRAID

Director: Cecelia Condit

As fun and playful as it is harrowing, *I've Been Afraid* finds experimental auteur Cecelia Condit reimagining the horror genre by using images from the digital age. Condit casts a mixture of familiar forms as objects stalked by mysterious and amorphous forces of terror. (PL)



2021 / 10 min. / USA / Narrative

IN DUE TIME

Director: Young Min Choi | Cast: Kaylene Yong, Young Min Choi

Movies, takeout dinners, loneliness, and more movies — *In Due Time* is the sometimes surreal, all too relatable story of one young woman's Madison-based pandemic experience in apartment sitting, isolated from friends and family. (BC)



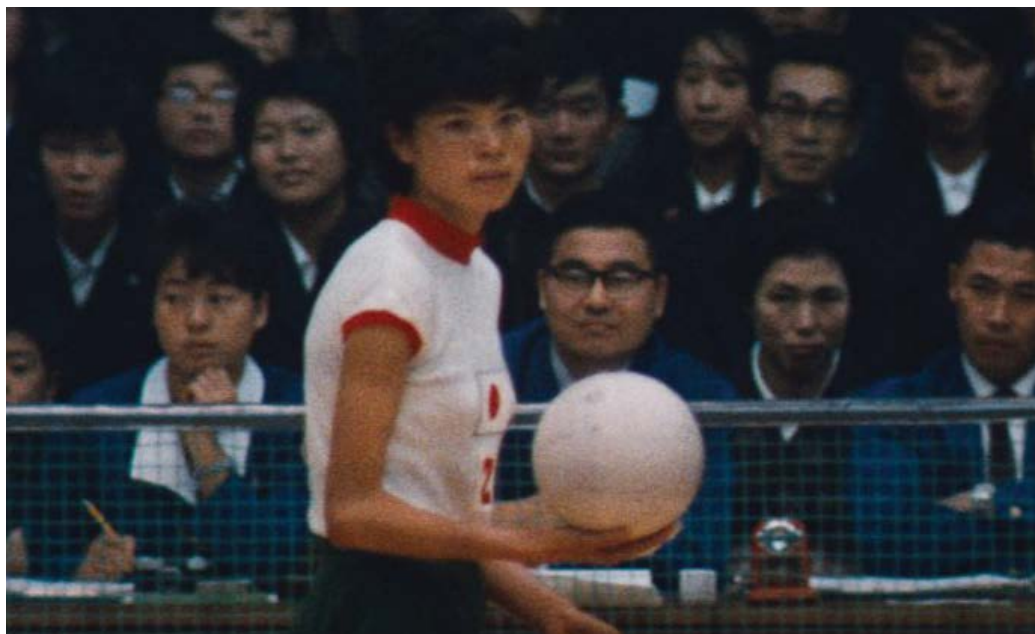
2021 / 27 min. / USA / Experimental

DESCENDED

Director: Jean Laurenz, Evan Chapman, Kevin Eikenberg

Cast: Jean Laurenz, Maria Finkelmeier

An abstract ghost story, based on the life and work of 19th century writer, Lafcadio Hearn, *Descended* is notable both for the uniquely committed lead performance by co-director Jean Laurenz as well as the intricate, trumpet-inflected score written by Maria Finkelmeier and performed in part by Laurenz, who is also a descendent of Hearn's. (BR)



2021 / 100 min. / France / Japanese, Russian, French with English subtitles / Documentary

THE WITCHES OF THE ORIENT

Les Sorcières de l'Orient

Director: Julien Faraut

The most unbeatable team you've likely never heard of gets a revolutionary treatment in this stylish documentary, which breathes vital new life into the sports film. Our heroes are the Japanese women's volleyball team, who utterly dominated the sport in the 1960s, winning the Olympic gold medal plus a whopping 258 consecutive matches along the way—a record that still stands to this day. The squad began as a workers' team at a textile factory, with all-night practice sessions under the ruthless training of their notorious head coach. By the end of their run, they were national icons, credited with inspiring Japan in its post-WWII malaise. Now in their 70s, we meet the surviving teammates at a lunch get-together, the camera orbiting around these casually tough champions with a reverence that recalls the opening of *Reservoir Dogs*. As demonstrated in his visionary John McEnroe documentary *In the Realm of Perfection*, director Julien Faraut has a genius for repurposing archival footage in new ways. *The Witches of the Orient* brilliantly intercuts a wide array of source material: training films, transcontinental broadcasts, and most memorably, clips from vintage anime and manga fictionalizing the team's journey. Music is the motor that ties together and propels Faurat's gripping montage, including new original songs by Granddaddy mastermind Jason Lytle. 2021 Rotterdam Film Festival. (MK) Presented with support from UW-Madison Center for East Asian Studies.



Witness Underground

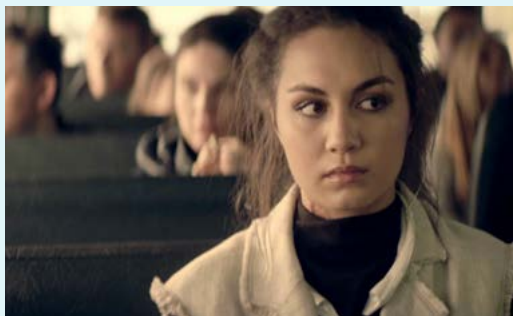
2019 / 18 min. / USA / Narrative

SCARS

Director: Jonny Zeller

Cast: Meg DeLacy, Jeremy Shada, Toni Trucks, Adam Kang, Avy Samala, Ted Larkin Jr., Adi Shankar, Terry Virts

In a world where every lie a person tells leaves a permanent mark on their body, the new boot camp instructor without a single scar is an anomaly... until one cadet discovers a single, massive sore across his back, leaving everyone on base to wonder what terrible lie could create something so gruesome. (JF)



2021 / 83 min. / USA / Documentary

WITNESS UNDERGROUND

Director: Scott Homan

Cast: Ryan Sutter, Cindy Elvendahl, Eric Elvendahl, Chad Rhiger, James Zimmerman

Punk rock, B-movies, and Jehovah's Witnesses unite in this heartfelt documentary. As members of Jehovah's Witness start to explore culture outside of their religion, they have to wrestle with the possibility of being excommunicated from friends and family. Featuring in-depth interviews and extensive home video footage, *Witness Underground* tells the story of punk rocker Witnesses pushing against the highly controlling Jehovah's Witnesses religion as they build their own community through music and art. This prolific community of Witness musicians create their own record label (Nuclear Gopher), and become early adopters of promoting their music through the internet, including what may have been the first album to ever be livestreamed. This community's history is well documented through archival footage of their home movies and self-produced music videos, all with a very charming energy. Featuring music from Witnesses and ex-Witnesses, *Witness Underground* is a heartfelt documentary about the families and communities we are born into, as well as the ones we choose while celebrating the healing power of punk rock. (BC)





2021 / 94 min. / India / Hindi with English subtitles / Documentary

WRITING WITH FIRE

Director: Rintu Thomas, Sushmit Ghosh

Hailed as “the most inspiring journalism movie—maybe ever” by *The Washington Post*, this rousing documentary spotlights the only Indian newspaper run entirely by women. Founded nearly 20 years ago by a band of fearless Dalit women in rural Uttar Pradesh, the *Khabar Lahariya* paper has aggressively taken on India’s patriarchy and beaten the odds to have a real-world impact on local politics. But now, its reporters are facing the directive dreaded in newsrooms the world over throughout the 21st century: it’s time to “pivot to video.” As members of India’s lowest caste, many of the paper’s staff have never handled a smartphone before, and reconfiguring their reportage for YouTube is no small hurdle. But with an online presence comes a broader reach, and as their webpage’s clicks start climbing, the self-taught team behind *Khabar Lahariya* finds themselves taking on national issues and gaining global recognition. This real-world David and Goliath story of women standing up to speak truth to power won both an Audience Award and Special Jury Award at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival. “A stirring and inspiring documentary about some very courageous women, who deftly articulate and defend the need for accurate, fearless journalism in the pursuit of justice” (*Vox*). (MK)



Statement from the Golden Badger Jury

Each year, a jury of industry professionals screens all of the Wisconsin's Own selections and honors a few films with a Golden Badger Award for excellence in Wisconsin filmmaking.

This year our jury got to watch films and deliberate from the comfort of their own homes: Rebecca Weaver, director of *June Falling Down* (WFF 2016) watched our slate in California. James Runde (Golden Badger winner 2019 for *Played Out*) deliberated with us from Florida, and Amanda McQueen, former Wisconsin's Own Programmer, joined us from her home in Alabama. Here are their thoughts on the two winners they selected, as well as a host of honorable mentions:

THE PASSING ON

The Passing On is an intimate and loving exploration of an unlikely subject: the vanishing of Black funeral homes and one particularly notable embalmer, James Bryant. Understandably, this documentary could be easy to avoid based on its subject matter alone. In our society, death is something we rarely talk about, and the process afterward is even more taboo. However, as a jury, we were deeply moved by this exceptional film. Nathan Clarke's graceful direction allows plenty of space for the dignity and humanity of Bryant and his embalming students to unfold. *The Passing On* encompasses so many transitions and their repercussions: the passing on of a trade and a tradition, a Black community facing gentrification, the shifting tides of LGBTQ acceptance, the ache of growing into one's vocation and confidence, and, of course, the transition of the body itself from life to death. This is an unassumingly beautiful film and a real accomplishment.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

David Van Auken's documentary short *Bid Caller* immerses us in the world of auctioneer Harold Betthausen and his team in Milwaukee. Instantly engaging & surprisingly moving, the film deftly turns a portrait of one man's career into a broader exploration of loss, memory, and nostalgia. Three short narratives also stood out to us. *Blood Runs Out*, by UW-Madison student Gracie K. Wallner, is a bold twist on a vampire story with clever visual metaphors. The deliberate minimalism of Julian Castronovo's *Hannah's Video* is bolstered by strong performances from its two actors. And Lori Felker's *Not You* perfectly balances frankness and humor to convey the love and exhaustion that come with motherhood. Finally, we thoroughly enjoyed Jack Duffy's *04* and first-time writer/director Elijah Edwards' *Make a Wish*. We can't wait to see more from these young filmmakers.

IRON FAMILY

From the struggling iron mining region of Michigan's Upper Peninsula comes an incredibly touching documentary about a family and a town. Playwright Jazmine Faries is the film's heartbeat, a precocious woman committed to her craft and to her dream of becoming a big star. However, the film's focus doesn't end with Jazmine. We are introduced to her older half-brother Chad, her stepfather Greg, her mom, Kate, and a host of other extended family and friends who congregate in Iron River to help produce the latest installment of Jazmine's series of plays based on a reimagining of her own life. What emerges is a beautiful portrait of a family and community that has taken their share of lumps but is rich in love and spirit (and sass). *Iron Family* is brimming with character, inspiring laughs as well as tears, and a reminder of what strength lies in believing in oneself and having the support of one's family and community.

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