

MEDIA KIT

61st Ann Arbor Film Festival

March 21-26, 2023

(Online through March 29)



=

Who We Are

Founded in 1963, the Ann Arbor Film Festival is the oldest independent and experimental film festival in North America and is internationally recognized as a premier forum for film as an art form.

Our Mission

To promote bold, visionary filmmakers through the advancement of film and new media art, and to engage communities with remarkable cinematic experiences.

[Apply for a press pass](#)

[Hi-resolution stills](#)

Find us online



aafilmfest.org | [Tickets](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Vimeo](#) | [YouTube](#)

Contact us Scott Boberg | Deputy Director | scott@aafilmfest.org

What's in here?

The More You Know 3 Helpful facts and figures
How to Fest 4 FAQs, how to experience the festival, and Health and Safety
Screening Schedule 7 Your breakdown of the festival lineup
Feature Films in Competition 18 Twelve feature length films in competition
Short Films in Competition (FIC) Highlights 19 Films in Competition (FIC) shorts programs present as many as a dozen films with a mix of documentary, narrative, experimental and animated genres, each encompassing a breadth of diversity in technique and aesthetics
Off the Screen (OTS) 20 Expanded cinema, salons, performances, installations, and intermedia art OTS! Installations 24 OTS! Performances 29
Special Programs pg 33 Curated programs focusing on the 61-year history of the Ann Arbor Film Festival
61st AAFF Jurors pg 36 An introduction of our 60th AAFF jurors and a schedule of their programming.



The More You Know

A few helpful facts and figures about the festival

- For the third year in a row, the Ann Arbor Film Festival will continue to pay filmmakers to show their films in competition.
- 2,743 films from 95 countries were submitted for consideration this year.
- Films in Competition: 108 | Features: 12 | Shorts: 96 | Juror programs: 3 | Performances: 7 | Special Programs: 9
- Renowned for introducing the world to pioneering work, including the early films of Kenneth Anger, Brian DePalma, Devo, Barbara Hammer, George Lucas, Yoko Ono, Gus Van Sant, Agnes Varda, and Andy Warhol.
- One of few Academy Award–qualifying festivals in the United States. Short films that win the Ken Burns Best of the Festival Award, the Chris Frayne Award for Best Animated Film, or the Lawrence Kasdan Award for Best Narrative Film become eligible for Oscar nomination.
- The festival has received funding in the past from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and the Andy Warhol Foundation and the Michigan Film and Digital Media Office. This year it has received support from the National Endowment for the Art, the Michigan Arts and Culture Council, The Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan, and CultureSource.
- Directly supports independent filmmakers by giving awards for films that might not find commercial distribution. For the 61st AAFF, approximately \$24,300 in cash and in-kind awards.

How to Fest

FAQs and their answers to help festival-goers experience the 61st AAFF

How do I experience the festival?

The 61st Ann Arbor Film Festival will be a hybrid event, with online and in-person options for attendees. The online portion of the festival will allow the AAFF community to experience the festival in the safety of their home, whether in southeast Michigan or abroad! Online passes will allow access to most in-competition films and juror programs as well as an online film forum and filmmaker interviews. **The 61st AAFF will take place March 21-26, 2023, and the Online Festival will continue until March 29, 2023.**

Beginning on March 21, 2023, all feature films available for viewing online will be ready for viewing. All juror programs and all shorts in competition will be available at the same time as their screening at the Michigan Theater. All films available on our online platform will be available for on-demand viewing until 11:59pm ET on March 29. Viewers can stream to a TV from a laptop, using an HDMI cable or by using Chromecast from an Android device.

For those who would like to attend the festival in person, a Full Festival Pass includes access to all programs **in-person and online** during the 61st AAFF. A Weekend Festival Pass includes in-person admission to the full festival from Friday 3/24 - Sunday 3/26. The Online Only Pass includes online access to most in-competition feature films, most competition short film programs, as well as juror and other programs.

What if I'm having technical difficulties?

In the case that you are experiencing technical difficulties, make sure you're logged into your account on the [Agile](#) page. In the event you still need help, reach out to support@aafilmfest.org for help.

How do I get my tickets and passes and how much do they cost?

Festival-goers can get their tickets on the [Ann Arbor Film Festival website](#) where the [link to buy](#) is now available. Options for Online Only, Full Festival, and Weekend Festival are available with prices ranging from \$60-150. Tickets for individual programs will be available March 1st on the Agile Website. [Get your tickets and passes!](#)

Gather Town digital playground and virtual lobby | rebrand.ly/AAFFgathertown designed by Tracy Miller-Robins

Pick an avatar and join filmmakers and other festival goers in this online virtual space designed by artist Tracy Miller-Robins. For AAFF, Miller-Robins created indoor and outdoor gathering spaces where you can watch the 61AAFF sneak preview reel and trailers for the Festival and discuss the films you have just seen with anyone attending in person or online.

How to Fest (continued)

When is the full schedule announced? Where will it be posted?

The schedule will be announced on March 1 and will appear on [our website](#).

Are all the films in competition?

The 96 short films included in the Films in Competition programs and the 12 Features in Competition are eligible for the approximately \$23,000 in awards.

Are the films appropriate for all ages?

The films are not rated and some material may be more appropriate for adult audiences unless otherwise noted. Our **Films in Competition 9: Almost All Ages (6+)** program is best suited for a wide variety of viewers. The Almost All Ages Program will be Saturday, March 25th at 1:30pm, all tickets will be \$6.

What is the festival's history?

The AAFF started in 1963 by George Manupelli and is now the oldest avant-garde and experimental film festival in North America. It started as a critical venue for alternative filmmakers and artists to share their work. The AAFF has always focused on film art, serving as one of the country's premier forums for bold, visionary, experimental and avant-garde filmmakers. Learn more about the festival by checking out the [History and Mission](#), our [Statement of Integrity](#), and [Our Pledge: Standing in Solidarity with Black Filmmakers](#).

How else can people support the festival?

There are many ways festival-goers can help support the festival. [Become a member](#), [donate](#), and check out our [work and volunteer with us page](#) often for open **internship**, **volunteer** and **job** opportunities. Learn more about sponsorship and community partnerships [here](#).

[Memberships start at \\$30 for students](#) and include festival tickets, discounts, and invitations to members only events. Starting at the 16mm level, festival passes are included in your membership. [Become a member](#) and help sustain the AAFF for another 60 years!

Our volunteers help make the Ann Arbor Film Festival possible. In exchange for your time and talent, volunteers earn AAFF tickets & passes!

- Sign up for general volunteer work - use [this form](#)
- Sign up to offer **housing** for visiting filmmakers - use [this form](#)

How to Fest (continued)

To ensure a safe festival for everyone, we will be enforcing our COVID-19 protocols (masking and proof of vaccination) at every stage of our festival. Volunteers will be asked to comply. If you have any questions, please contact volunteers@aafilmfest.org.

What health and safety precautions is the AAFF taking?

The in-person festival will adhere to Michigan Theater and U-M covid protocols, which are currently face masks optional in the Michigan Theater and the State Theatre.

For more information:

[COVID Safety at the Michigan and State University of Michigan COVID-19 Response](#)

What do the program titles mean?

Films in Competition

Short film programs built from films submitted to our festival this year. Short films are all less than 60 minutes (usually less than 20 minutes), and each program will have anywhere from 6-14 films.

Features in Competition

Programs that either consist of a single feature film (60 minutes or longer), or a feature and a short film that were submitted to the festival this year (if a program includes a paired feature and short, the films may relate to each other, but have not been submitted together by the same filmmaker).

Special Programs

Specially curated programs of films that have *not* been submitted for award consideration this year, but instead were curated around a thematic idea by friends and artists of the Ann Arbor Film Festival.

Off The Screen (OTS)

New media, video, live performance, and art installations that are either ongoing during festival week or happen at a specific time. Including our **Speaker Series** which features panel discussions, workshops, and presentations by friends and artists of the Ann Arbor Film Festival.

Screening Schedule

All Films in Competitions will be screened in the Michigan Theater Main Auditorium, the State Theatre 1, or University of Michigan SKB 2500.

All ticket prices are \$12 for the general public, \$8 for students, members, and seniors unless otherwise noted (tickets for the in-person **Almost All Ages program**, for example, are \$6 for everyone).

12 Feature Films in competition will be available **online** starting Tuesday, March 21. All juror programs and shorts in competition will be available **online** at 11:59pm ET the day they screened in person at the Michigan Theater. All online programming will be available until 11:59pm EDT on March 29.

TUE 3/21

Opening Night Party

6:30–8pm | Michigan Theater Grand Foyer

Celebrate the first night of the festival with drinks and food generously provided by Ann Arbor area businesses including Ann Arbor Distilling Company, Bigalora, Bløm, Dalat, Everest Sherpa, Havana Island BBQ and Tapas, Mothfire Brewing Co., Side Biscuit, Teahaus, Vinology, and more. DJ set by Alvin Hill, and open bar. A ticket to Films in Competition 1 is included in the price of admission.

Films in Competition 1

8:15pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

The 61st Festival kicks off with this screening of experimental, documentary, narrative, and animated films, featuring a minimalistic musical, plant sentience, a guided pseudo-mindfulness exercise, the last thing left of the Aral Sea, smear frames through the history of painting, a recently discovered monarch butterfly subspecies, members of the UK polyamorous community, and three masters of football.

Screening Schedule (continued)

WED 3/22

Juror Presentation

Koyo Yamashita:

Stories Buried and Unburied

1pm | State Theatre 1 | Free

Stories and myths, covered and forgotten, breathe beneath our daily contemporary lives. These three films made in East Asia by Aya Momose, Mowen Wang, and Chikako Yamashiro deal with the body, spirituality, and memories. These topics, while marginalized in the dominant discourse, open up communication with other possible worlds and narratives.

Feature in Competition

Burial

5pm | State Theatre 1

A python slithers and curls over the abandoned control room of Chernobyl's sister, the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant, its radioactive core an unleashed monster that will slither through time for a million years. From Etruscan ruins and sunken cities to the most modern of underground repositories, director Emilija Škarnulytė follows our attempts to bury the immortal. Addressing the epochal effects of nuclear technology on all levels, *Burial* follows the cycle of power, an eternal return, another serpent eating its tail.

Films in Competition 2

5:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Featuring *Mangrove School* by Filipa César, this program of recent experimental, documentary, and animated films includes a lost balloon, a fourth floor loft at the edge of Skid Row, a hitherto unseen magical life form, the seemingly passing landscape, the beam of an electron microscope, and a void plagued with strange objects.

Feature in Competition

Diòba

7pm | State Theatre 1

Elba is an indigenous woman who has lost her roots. She is 63 years old and lives alone in a humble peasant house located inside a forest. She spends her days between her house and the forest, fulfilling her needs partially with what she finds along the paths she takes every day through the woods. The day arrives when Elba must battle her own delusions, revive them and expel them. This may or may not help her rediscover herself, her essence, her roots. Directed by Adriana Marcela Rojas Espitia.

Screening Schedule (continued)

Special Program

Expanded Cinema Performances

7:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Four performances that employ live manipulation of the moving image, creating a dynamic audience experience: *Surface Connection* by Senem Pirlir and Monica Duncan, *The Sick Sense 2023: The Year We Make Kontakte (or, My Friend Flicker)* by Brent Coughenour, *Night Out of Song* by Scott Stark, and *Microstars* by Le désert mauve.

Special Program

The root and the harvest/La raiz y la cosecha

9pm | State Theatre 1

A mix of Mexican and Chicago films that speak to each other through long-term experience. Identity as a way of expanding time, connecting disparate times with images, opposing the immobility of the past. | Una mezcla de películas mexicanas y de Chicago que hablan entre sí a través de una larga experiencia. La identidad como forma de expandir el tiempo, conectando tiempos dispares con imágenes, oponiéndose a la inmovilidad del pasado. Curated by Raul Benitez and Tzutzu Matzin.

Films in Competition 3

9:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

This program of contemporary experimental, documentary, and animated films features 3,684 separate cyanotype sunprints, old film negatives discovered in an out-of-business film lab, a system of repression, the duality of feelings, a sequence of gargoyles, the concept of anger, and Black metamorphosis.

THU 3/23

Juror Presentation

Christine Panushka:

Blood of the Family Tree

1pm | State Theatre 1 | Free

Blood of the Family Tree is an experimental animated film that explores questions of connections, hidden family history, disease, and our ties to the past. The artist's objective was to create a work of animation that uses complex cinematic structures to tell a personal story, illustrating the connective tissue that binds humanity to history. Can we escape our history? Probably not, but we can recognize it and make peace with it.

Screening Schedule (continued)

Feature in Competition

Berbu - The Wedding Parade

5pm | State Theatre 1

In Serekaniye, a city threatened by war, three young Kurdish women, Gule, Barin, and Naze, are planning their lifelong dreamed weddings. When the first bombs hit the city, they flee Serekaniye while their destiny changes and so do their dreams. Directed by Sevinaz Evdike.

Penny Stamps Speaker Series

Sam Green: *32 Sounds*

5:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium | Free

32 Sounds is an immersive documentary and profound sensory experience from filmmaker Sam Green that explores the elemental phenomenon of sound. The film is a meditation on the power of sound to bend time, cross borders, and open our perception to the world around us. The documentary is designed for a live audience, complete with individual headphones for each audience member to better immerse themselves in the film's soundscapes, and features live narration by Sam Green and original music performed live by JD Samson and Michael O'Neill.

Special Program

Remembrance/Vacancy: The Films of Edward Owens

7pm | State Theatre 1

The recent re-emergence of Edward Owens' flash of experimental filmmaking in the New York avant-garde scene of the late '60s has the potential to animate new discussions around a largely unknown and obscure(d) history of early Black experimental filmmaking. Despite the artistic merits of the work, Owens' period as a young filmmaker was short-lived and his artistic career cut short by complicated personal issues. The program will be followed by a post-screening conversation with program curator Emily Martin and film professor Jessica Ruffin.

Films in Competition 4

7:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

These recent experimental, documentary, narrative, and animated films include an experiment in light and form, electricity pylons, a strange wonder, unfinished ideas on thought disorders, a fresh understanding, four meat processors, mysteries that help her heal wounds, his relationship with his father, and the spirits of space test dogs.

Screening Schedule (continued)

Special Program

Radical Curiosity: Short Films by Sam Green (2000–2021)

9:00pm | State Theatre 1

Known for his feature films including *The Weather Underground* (2003) and *32 Sounds* (2022), Sam Green is also a prolific storyteller in short-form documentary. This program highlights a selection of Green's shorts from 2000 to 2021. Visit the unmarked grave of an 18-year-old Hells Angels victim, explore the greatest pet cemetery in the world, watch fog envelop iconic San Francisco streets, and listen to the world around you with pioneering experimental composer Annea Lockwood. Green's playful curiosity and eclectic approach guarantees something for everyone in this wide-ranging ode to grief, ephemera, history, and life itself.

Films in Competition 5: Out Night

9:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

The 22nd celebration of queer cinema at AAFF spotlights contemporary experimental films with LGBTQ+ themes and features bodily insides as cosmology, growing up LGBTQ+ in rural Wales, the colorful and transgressive universe of the artist Nazario Luque, the most private moments, a woman's life, research in bioarchaeology, and a simple visit to the grocery store.

FRI 3/24

Juror Presentation

Amir George:

The Romare Marquee

1pm | State Theatre 1 | Free

The Romare Marquee is a short film program featuring moving image works from Amir George that situates each film in contrast to the art of visual artist Romare Bearden. Bearden's collage work represents the undertones and Black aesthetic themes that George inserts into his films. Archives explored on canvas, layered and assembled. The title is inspired by an experience of George encountering Bearden's work on a trip to Michigan.

Screening Schedule (continued)

Feature in Competition

Dor (Longing)

5pm | State Theatre 1

A cinematic and existential encounter between Belgian-Romanian Stefan Gota and a group of young shepherds. Gota returns to his native Romania to make a fresh start as a shepherd. Jannes Callens's film moves at the same pace as a pasture crossing, between expedition, pause, and contemplation. Striking images of this profession merge with existential considerations. How can you guide a flock when you're a little lost yourself?

Films in Competition 6: 35mm + 16mm

5:30pm | University of Michigan SKB 2500

A program of 35mm and 16mm experimental, animated, and documentary films, featuring the world premiere of Philip Hoffman's *deep1*, field journal entries, the surface of the river, one the most polluted zip codes in the US, a fifty-year veteran of British film and television, film layers and silver halides, and the legacy of a utopian college.

Special Program

Celluloid Body

7pm | State Theatre 1

Celebrating the meticulous craft of direct animation and handmade cinema, *Celluloid Body* offers a glance at an inventive type of experimental cinema that grows beyond its painted, scratched, and manipulated techniques. This program is a journey from celluloid to digital, surveying personal, sexual, and spatial narratives on screen. These films celebrate the textural experience between filmmaker and medium and the sensory experience between spectator and the creative process. Curated by Diana Sánchez Maciel in memory of Zane Timpson.

Films in Competition 7

7:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

These contemporary experimental, animated, personal, and documentary films feature *Somewhere Higher* by Mohammad Gorjestani and include a prickly sensory playground, plant and animal life, a small yellow house, flamboyant visual language, an imaginary cinema, reeds on the banks of a big river, and the koel bird.

Screening Schedule (continued)

Feature in Competition

Huahua's Dazzling World and its Myriad Temptations

9pm | State Theatre 1

Huahua, an eccentric and exuberant woman from Xiongan New Area, livestreams herself dancing, singing, and chatting with fans for a living. Cellphone screens, beauty filters, and digital soundscapes reveal a world that Huahua creates with her own image. Directed by Daphne Xu.

Films in Competition 8: Animation

9:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Jeremy Rourke's expanded cinema performance *You're Not Listening* launches this program of recent animated films from near and far that includes the color blue, digital representations of nature, the footsteps of a being, a unique experimental stop-motion film created by progressively carving images in a large round of wood, this morning, a series of choreographies by mannequins, automatic drawing, and the most desperate moment.

Feature Film

Weekend

11pm | State Theatre 1

A surreal tale of a married couple going on a road trip to visit the wife's parents with the intention of killing them for the inheritance. This outrageous, chaotic 1967 film vividly demonstrates how French-Swiss director Jean-Luc Godard (1930–2022) broke so many rules and conventions to become an iconoclastic pioneer of modern cinema art.

SAT 3/25

Feature in Competition

Up the River with Acid

1pm | University of Michigan SKB 2500

After years of wandering the globe, the filmmaker's parents have returned to his mother's village in France. His father, who worked as a philosophy professor for 42 years, has slowly seen his cognitive abilities decrease and his daily life increasingly difficult to negotiate. Through a series of portraits we observe a man's attempt to hold on to a rapidly shifting and alien world. Directed by Harald Hutter.

Screening Schedule (continued)

Films in Competition 9: Almost All Ages (6+)

1:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium | \$6

Mixed genre, family-friendly films featuring machinery, life, and our subconscious; a face born out of chaos; a blind artist; multi-million dollar apartments; the constant reconfiguration of images, characters, and forms; a family film; a neurodiverse thirteen-year-old skater; daily motions and mundane tasks; the remaining blank sheets; and a very subjective homage.

Feature in Competition

Darkness, Darkness, Burning Bright

3pm | University of Michigan SKB 2500

Handmade and uniquely personal, this 16mm film in two parts explores a rural landscape with mythical connotations. First part: prelude. “Darkness, darkness, burning bright In the forests of the night. Vast flowered paths, fresh branches, Groves full of perfumes, birds and whispers, Site often seen again, and always contemplated...” Second part: Oraison. “Darkness, darkness, burning bright In the forests of the night And the mad impulse of this distraught soul, And that had, the forehead circled in copper, under the moon...” Directed by Gaelle Rouard.

Films in Competition 10

3:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

This program of recent experimental, narrative, documentary, and animated films features *Neighbour Abdi* by Douwe Dijkstra and includes geological transformations, a strange desire to get closer, the supervision of their teacher, songs and voices, and people and machines.

Feature in Competition

Adieu Sauvage

5pm | State Theatre 1

Since the 2000s, several waves of male suicide have followed one another in the Amerindian population of the Colombian Amazon. The filmmaker discovers that lovesickness is often the cause. Wives leave their husbands for “white” men who think that Indians do not feel anything because they do not express their feelings in the Cagua Language. Is it possible that members of the Cagua community have no feelings and no words to talk about love? Directed by Sergio Guataquira Sarmiento.

Screening Schedule (continued)

Feature in Competition

Kapr Code

5:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

A “documentary opera” reconstructing the life of a contradictory Czech composer and once prominent communist Jan Kapr (1914–1988), a Stalin Award laureate who was later banned in socialist Czechoslovakia and erased from public memory. Director Lucie Králová starts a philharmonic dialogue with Kapr by mixing newly composed opera songs (written by Jiří Adámek) with Kapr’s never-before-shown private archive, revealing his humor, inner struggles, and desire to leave a mark.

Special Program

MFW Decades

7pm | State Theatre 1

The Millennium Film Workshop is a nonprofit organization invented, named, and founded in 1966 by filmmaker Ken Jacobs. He conceived Millennium as a community-based organization dedicated to providing open screenings, low-cost equipment rental, and training programs. *MFW Decades* features film and digital works selected from Millennium’s ongoing calendar of events with examples from almost every decade of its existence. Millennium continues to serve as one of the longest running artist-run workshops for independent and experimental cinema. Curated by Paul Echeverria.

Films in Competition 11

7:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

A program of recent experimental, documentary, and animated films featuring *The Truss Arch* by Sonya Stefan and including sets of danced improvisations, a magic realist portrait of model Rico Sanches, certain parts of the path, a piece of the collective memory of the year of the pandemic, an ink-jet direct-on-film technique, a camera-less handmade film collage, and her late father’s home movies.

Feature in Competition

Super Natural

9pm | State Theatre 1

Super Natural is a film that talks and listens, that interferes and seeks out those who are beholding it. Its desire is to abandon the screen, to take a look at those who look at it, and listen to them, but also to be smelled and seen beyond what is being seen. *Super Natural* is a transcendent experience occurring outside of the body, of all bodies, but particularly of one’s own. It is like a superpower and, in this movement, it focuses on the image, a sensitive existence with which one intends to speak. Directed by Jorge Jácome.

Screening Schedule (continued)

Films in Competition 12

9:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Brent Coughenour's live video performance *left/right/wrong (or, RGB and You and Me): The Sick Sense, Part 3* closes this program of recent experimental, narrative, animated, and personal films that includes silent walls, unpredictable digital artifacts, an album of music videos, a dreamy underworld, how I learned to lucid dream, the diagnosis of an eye disorder, the post-industrial landscape of Detroit, and a charming animation rhyme.

SUN 3/26

Feature in Competition

I have not been afraid of going blind for a long time

12pm | State Theatre 1

"Today, a flock of starlings swooshed past overhead. / In my mind, I repeat the sound over and over, / while I watch the footage." Filmmaker Yannick Mosimann captures his environment with the camera, fearing he might be losing it more and more. Strict rules about using the entire clip length and its original audio track inform the editing process. The tableaux and their insistence in duration create a pull into an increasingly isolated state of perceiving the outside world in its unspectacular yet strangely unfamiliar intensity.

Special Program

Life ⇌ Ritual ⇌ Cinema

The Experimental Films of Donald Richie

12:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Donald Richie (1924–2013) spent most of his life in Japan and is credited with introducing the world to Japanese cinema. Best known as a prolific author, his books on Japanese film history, Ozu, and Kurosawa are considered classics. A queer man who found a safe haven in Japan, he delighted in the surreal. This particularly comes out in his experimental cinema, which he began making in the 1940s. By the 1960s, Richie was well respected as an organizer on the Japanese experimental film scene. This program introduces the other Richie, who was always sexy, strange, dirty, and quite amusing. Curated by Markus Nornes and Hannah Glass-Chapman.

Screening Schedule (continued)

Feature in Competition

Answering the Sun

2:30pm | Michigan Theater main auditorium IN-PERSON ONLY

Rainer Kohlberger's work speaks of seduction, an overstimulation and deception of the senses, monochrome-pumping color surfaces, powerful drones. A night-black sequence in front of a wall of sound is followed by a hallucinatory passage without sound, which finally turns into shimmering Op art geometry. Strong light signals create afterimages on the retina, while specific acoustic stimuli stimulate the ear to generate sounds on its own, and the entire body is affected with an implicit loss of control. And in all the dizzying flickering, throbbing, and pulsating, a sun ball appears, largely bathed in vibrant colors.

Special Program

Between Resilience and Resistance

3pm | State Theatre 1

Resistance refers to the ability to withstand a disturbance, while resilience is the capacity to recover after suffering from the disturbance. Systems of oppression such as gender, racial, and class discrimination thrive in countless forms across our planet. Each film in this program reveals a different vantage point to consider this dichotomy that allows revelations and revolutions to manifest. These projected images shine a light to reveal complexities in humanity's intrinsic motivation to resist injustice and the resilience to persevere through time and space. Curated by Brandon Walley.

Festival Award Celebration

Closing night of the festival offers a program of select award-winning films, as chosen by this year's panel of three distinguished AAFF jurors.

Awards 1

5pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Come for the live announcement of the 61st AAFF awards and a screening of select awarded films.

Awards 2

7pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Stay for a second screening to see even more of the award-winning films from the 61st AAFF.

Feature Films in Competition

11 of the 12 Features in Competition will be available for on-demand viewing online starting Tuesday 3/21 and continuing until 11:59pm EDT on 3/29.

- **Burial** by Emilija Škarnulytė
 - Wednesday, March 22 | 5pm | State Theatre 1
- **Diòba** by Adriana Marcela Rojas Espitia
 - Wednesday, March 22 | 9pm | State Theatre 1
- **Berbu - The Wedding Parade** by Sevinaz Evdike
 - Thursday, March 23 | 5pm | State Theatre 1
- **Dor (Longing)** by Jannes Callens
 - Friday, March 24 | 5pm | State Theatre 1
- **Huahua's Dazzling World and its Myriad Temptations** by Daphne Xu
 - Friday, March 24 | 9pm | State Theatre 1
- **Up the River with Acid** by Harald Hutter
 - Saturday, March 25 | 1pm | University of Michigan SKB 2500
- **Darkness, Darkness, Burning Bright** by Gaelle Rouard
 - Saturday, March 25 | 3pm | University of Michigan SKB 2500
- **Adieu Sauvage** by Sergio Guataquira Sarmiento
 - Saturday, March 25 | 5pm | State Theatre 1
- **Kapr Code** by Lucie Králová
 - Saturday, March 25 | 5:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium
- **Super Natural** by Jorge Jácome
 - Saturday, March 25 | 1pm | State Theatre 1
- **I have not been afraid of going blind for a long time** by Yannick Mosimann
 - Sunday, March 26 | 12pm | State Theatre 1
- **Answering the Sun** by Rainer Kohlberger | **IN-PERSON ONLY**
 - Sunday, March 26 | 2:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Short Films in Competition (FIC) Highlights

Films in Competition 1

TUE 3/21 | 8:15pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

The 61st Festival kicks off with this screening of experimental, documentary, narrative, and animated films, featuring a minimalistic musical, plant sentience, a guided pseudo-mindfulness exercise, the last thing left of the Aral Sea, smear frames through the history of painting, a recently discovered monarch butterfly subspecies, members of the UK polyamorous community, and three masters of football.

Films in Competition 2

WED 3/22 | 5:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Featuring *Mangrove School* by Filipa César, this program of recent experimental, documentary, and animated films includes a lost balloon, a fourth floor loft at the edge of Skid Row, a hitherto unseen magical life form, the seemingly passing landscape, the beam of an electron microscope, and a void plagued with strange objects.

Films in Competition 3

WED 3/22 | 9:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

This program of contemporary experimental, documentary, and animated films features 3,684 separate cyanotype sunprints, old film negatives discovered in an out-of-business film lab, a system of repression, the duality of feelings, a sequence of gargoyles, the concept of anger, and Black metamorphosis.

Films in Competition 4

THU 3/23 | 7:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

These recent experimental, documentary, narrative, and animated films include an experiment in light and form, electricity pylons, a strange wonder, unfinished ideas on thought disorders, a fresh understanding, four meat processors, mysteries that help her heal wounds, his relationship with his father, and the spirits of space test dogs.

Short Films in Competition (Continued)

Films in Competition 5: Out Night

THU 3/23 | 9:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

The 22nd celebration of queer cinema at AAFF spotlights contemporary experimental films with LGBTQ+ themes and features bodily insides as cosmology, growing up LGBTQ+ in rural Wales, the colorful and transgressive universe of the artist Nazario Luque, the most private moments, a woman's life, research in bioarchaeology, and a simple visit to the grocery store.

Films in Competition 6: 35mm + 16mm

FRI 3/24 | 5:30pm | University of Michigan SKB 2500

A program of 35mm and 16mm experimental, animated, and documentary films, featuring the world premiere of Philip Hoffman's *Deep 1*, a fifty-year veteran of British film and television, one the most polluted zip codes in the US, the legacy of a utopian college, film layers and silver halides, the surface of the river, and field journal entries.

Films in Competition 7

FRI 3/24 | 7:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

These contemporary experimental, animated, personal, and documentary films feature *Somewhere Higher* by Mohammad Gorjestani and include a prickly sensory playground, plant and animal life, a small yellow house, flamboyant visual language, an imaginary cinema, reeds on the banks of a big river, and the koel bird.

Films in Competition 8: Animation

FRI 3/24 | 9:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Jeremy Rourke's expanded cinema performance *You're Not Listening* launches this program of recent animated films from near and far that includes the color blue, digital representations of nature, the footsteps of a being, a unique experimental stop-motion film created by progressively carving images in a large round of wood, this morning, a series of choreographies by mannequins, automatic drawing, and the most desperate moment.

Short Films in Competition (Continued)

Films in Competition 9: Almost All Ages (6+)

SAT 3/25 | 1:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium | \$6

Mixed genre, family-friendly films featuring machinery, life, and our subconscious; a face born out of chaos; a blind artist; multi-million dollar apartments; the constant reconfiguration of images, characters, and forms; a family film; a neurodiverse thirteen-year-old skater; daily motions and mundane tasks; the remaining blank sheets; and a very subjective homage.

Films in Competition 10

SAT 3/25 | 3:30pm | Michigan Theater main auditorium

This program of recent experimental, narrative, documentary, and animated films features *Neighbour Abdi* by Douwe Dijkstra and includes geological transformations, a strange desire to get closer, the supervision of their teacher, songs and voices, and people and machines.

Films in Competition 11

SAT 3/25 | 7:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

A program of recent experimental, documentary, and animated films featuring *The Truss Arch* by Sonya Stefan and including sets of danced improvisations, a magic realist portrait of model Rico Sanches, certain parts of the path, a piece of the collective memory of the year of the pandemic, an ink-jet direct-on-film technique, a camera-less handmade film collage, and her late father's home movies.

Films in Competition 12

SAT 3/25 | 9:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Brent Coughenour's live video performance *left/right/wrong (or, RGB and You and Me)*: *The Sick Sense, Part 3* closes this program of recent experimental, narrative, animated, and personal films that includes silent walls, unpredictable digital artifacts, an album of music videos, a dreamy underworld, how I learned to lucid dream, the diagnosis of an eye disorder, the post-industrial landscape of Detroit, and a charming animation rhyme.

Off The Screen

New media, video, live performance, and art installations that are either ongoing during festival week or happen at a specific time. *Off The Screen* also includes panel discussions, workshops, and presentations by friends and artists of the Ann Arbor Film Festival.

Tuesday March 21

Reception

4–5:30pm | North Quad Space 2435

Along The Perimeter by Darrin Martin

Live cinema performance

4:30–5pm | North Quad Space 2435

Wednesday March 22

Film Art Forum

Lightning rounds

3–5pm | North Quad Space 2435

Live Cinema Performances by Senem Pirlir & Monica Duncan,
Brent Coughenour, Scott Stark, and Le désert mauve (ticket required)

7:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Thursday March 23

Online Film Art Forum

Live online lightning rounds

(Participate online or in-person)

10:30am–12pm | North Quad Space 2435

Off The Screen (continued)

Exhibition Viewing

3–5pm | Ann Arbor Art Center

May Waves Rise From Its Floor by Mattieu Hallé

Live cinema performance

4–4:30pm | Ann Arbor Art Center

Friday March 24

Cinema Guild and Campus Film Societies: Their History and Legacy moderated by Frank

Uhle

Roundtable

3:30–4:30pm | North Quad Space 2435

You're Not Listening by Jeremy Rourke

Performance (presented with FIC 8, ticket required)

9:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Saturday March 25

The Joy of LOOPing with Pickle Fort Collective Film Collective

Workshop

10:30am–12:30pm | North Quad Space 2435

The Sick Sense, Part 3 by Brent Coughenour

Performance (presented with FIC 12; ticket required)

9:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Sunday March 26

What the Hell Was That? moderated by Daniel Herbert

Panel

10:30–11:30am | North Quad Space 2435

Bitch, Thunder!

performance by your favorite all-female party drumline

various times starting at 4:30pm | Outside the Michigan Theater

Off The Screen Installations

Free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.

Ann Arbor Art Center | Christopher Pavsek, Troy Ramos, Alexandre Roy, Lilan Yang
Michigan Theater and State Theatre | Joel Swanson
North Quad 2435 | Darrin Martin, David Opdyke, Dawn Roe, New Voices

Ann Arbor Art Center (A2AC) | 117 West Liberty Street

MON–FRI 10am–7pm & SAT–SUN: 12am–6pm

A special festival week viewing event of the AAFF installations at the A2AC is scheduled from 3–5pm on Thursday 3/23; it includes a live cinema performance by Matthieu Hallé.

***Scenes from “Deseret”* by Christopher Pavsek**

Vancouver, Canada | 2022 | two-channel large-scale video installation

Scenes from “Deseret” is a two-channel video installation about the landscape of Utah. It is an immersive and rigorous structural video that pays homage to James Benning’s work.

Christopher Pavsek is a filmmaker, photographer, and professor at Simon Fraser University’s School for the Contemporary Arts in Vancouver, BC, Canada.

***Moving in Shorter Thoughts* by Troy Ramos**

Livonia, MI | 2021 | video & sound

This installation comprises nine screens; each has its own video and sound. The videos vary in length and are played on a loop giving rise to infinite possibilities in sight and sound. The work experiments with evolving interactions and demonstrates the importance of subtle gestures (e.g., a single, orange light bulb that sways slowly).

Troy Ramos is an artist based in Metro Detroit. He creates paintings and installations focused on sound, light, video, and sculpture.

***Trompe-L’oeil* by Alexandre Roy**

Montreal, Canada | 2021 | single-channel video, optical toys & installations

Trompe-L’œil (French for “deceiving to the eye”) is an interactive exhibition inspired by the technologies used to capture and show moving images before motion pictures were invented. It features modern reinterpretations of 19th century optical toys, such as the phenakistiscope and the praxinoscope, and a video projection that revisits the works of pre-cinema pioneers Eadweard Muybridge and Étienne-Jules Marey.

Alexandre Roy is an experimental animation filmmaker and digital artist living in Montreal. His work explores the relationship between analog and digital images, and how the use or (voluntary) misuse of technological tools impacts creation. *Trompe-L’œil* is his first installation.

Off The Screen Installations (Continued)

***Everything Comes Full Circle* by Lilan Yang**

Providence, RI | 2022 | 16mm inkjet-printed film

Following Wim Wenders's *Paris, Texas* (1984) filming locations from Houston, Texas, to Los Angeles, California, Lilian Yang uses a 16mm Bolex camera to capture the vastness of the American West. The footage inspired Yang to reminisce about snippets of everyday life. Recollections of people and places can be distorted, unrecognizable, and fictitious. These memories diminish with the passing of time. *Everything Comes Full Circle* is a personal attempt to remember things that will soon be forgotten.

The original footage was shot on Kodak 16mm film stocks during the summer of 2021 and edited digitally with added voiceover. The moving digital images were then inkjet printed on clear film spliced together and perforated with a laser cutter. With each projection, the printer ink slowly melts, forcing the film to decay over time.

Lilan Yang is an artist whose practice focuses on: the myth of cities and landscapes; how we perceive the world through analog optical apparatus and digitally shared media; and how moving images and artificial intelligence change people's perceptions of places.

Ann Arbor District Library | 343 South Fifth Avenue

10am–8pm daily

From March 1st through April 13th the Ann Arbor District Library downtown branch will feature an exhibit of film festival, film society, and local experimental filmmaking memorabilia from the 1950s–1980s. Curated by *Cinema Ann Arbor* author Frank Uhle, the exhibit is located in the lower level display cases, while the second floor displays a collection of historic Ann Arbor News photographs of local movie theaters.

Michigan Theater | 603 East Liberty Street

***Spiral Coil Turn About* by Noel Stupek**

Ann Arbor, MI | 2023 | mixed media

The spiral, a coiling shape illustrates the twists and turns of the exceptional mind of the experimental filmmaker as it pushes the boundaries of filmmaking. These decorative spiral coils installed in the Michigan Theater lobby are the result of collaboration with the Ann Arbor community. Many of the components were created in partnership with the Ann Arbor District Library. Using your mind's eye, can you pair a spiral coil with a film you have seen during the AAFF?

Noel Stupek is an installation artist, arts enthusiast, and collaboration lover.

Off The Screen Installations (Continued)

Box Portrait 1 & 2 by Joel Swanson

Ann Arbor, MI | 2020 | 4K video on 55" TV, mounted vertically

Movie screens and cell phone screens assert technology's dominance over people by making them into giants or homunculi. A life-sized video portrait pushes back at these exaggerated representations by insisting on natural scale. This piece comprises life-sized video portraits, displayed on vertical 55" OLED video displays, of different people in a box whose side dimensions match the TV screen. Despite the obvious physical constraints, the presentation format, lighting, and pose dignify the sitters, revealing each subject's distinct character.

Joel Swanson is a portrait artist who works across several media, including video and painting. He trained at the Art Students League and the New York Film Academy. He is also a cell biologist conducting research at the University of Michigan.

State Theatre | 233 South State Street

***Box Portrait 3* by Joel Swanson**

See description above, under Michigan Theater

U-M North Quad Space 2435 | 105 South State Street

TUE: 12–5:30pm | WED–SAT: 10am–5:30pm | SUN: 10am–2pm

The exhibition reception will take place at the University of Michigan North Quad Space 2435 from 3–5pm on TUE, 3/21, including a live cinema performance by Darrin Martin.

***Last Word* by David Opdyke**

New York, NY | 2022 | algorithm-driven video

Last Word generates dialog in the form of a screenplay. Two characters engage in distracted conversation, heated arguments, and occasional references to a car they are traveling in. Each mention of “problems” and “weather” makes it more and more clear that the undercurrent of the conversation is the climate crisis. An algorithm assembles the dialog from phrases and sentence fragments giving the work a loose, cyclical form. It is never the same, and never repeats, but the characters are stuck, talking past each other in looping, unresolved conversations.

David Opdyke explores consumerism and civilization's abusive relationship with the environment in this work using various media, including modified postcards and animation, that manifest as large installations. He lives and works in Ridgewood, Queens.

Off The Screen Installations (Continued)

***Conditions for an Unfinished Work of Mourning: Wretched Yew* by Dawn Roe
Portland, OR | 2018–2020 | digitized gelatin-silver prints, cyanotypes, HD video**

This project centers on the *Taxus brevifolia* species of yew tree specific to the Pacific Northwest in North America where fires have become increasingly destructive in recent years. A vital component of forest ecosystems, the Pacific yew was largely eradicated in the 1990s, yet scattered old growth yew remain and new saplings continue to emerge. *Wretched Yew* reveres this tree as a symbol of endurance.

Dawn Roe (b. 1971, Sault Ste. Marie, MI) is a professor of studio art in the Rollins College Department of Art & Art History in Winter Park, FL. Working between and within the still and moving image, her projects examine the role of these media in shaping personal and social understandings of our environment through site-responsive engagement.

***Along the Perimeter* by Darrin Martin
Oakland, CA | 2022 | live cinema & multiscreen installation with sound**

An interlude with the backyard sublime, comprised of images and sounds recorded from the start of the pandemic lockdown by motion-activated surveillance cameras and a micro-lensed device in the periphery of the artist's home. Commingled flora and fauna are accompanied by a reimagined glass harp played with hearing aid feedback. Lenses and listening devices open a multiplicity of ways in which to imagine the worlds of those with whom we share the land.

Darrin Martin engages the synesthetic qualities of perception found in nature as expressed by technologies both old and new. Working primarily in video, sound, and installation, Martin lives in Oakland, CA, and teaches art at the University California, Davis.

New Voices

Work by students from the College for Creative Studies (Detroit, MI); Edge Hill University (Ormskirk, UK); Michigan State University Film Studies and Digital Storytelling; the University of Michigan Department of Film, Television, and Media in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (Ann Arbor, MI); the University of Michigan Penny W. Stamps School of Art and Design (Ann Arbor, MI); Wayne State University (Detroit, MI).

Off The Screen Installations (Continued)

316 South State Street | storefront window installation

***Longing, A Documentary. Shot List* by Jim Cogswell and Franc Nunoo-Quarcoo
Ann Arbor, MI | 2023 | adhesive vinyl on glass**

In celebration of the Ann Arbor Film Festival and National Poetry Month, visual artist Jim Cogswell and designer Franc Nunoo-Quarcoo and have collaborated to install “Longing, A Documentary. Shot List”, a poem by Anne Carson, on the streetside windows of the Red Hawk Bar & Grill in Ann Arbor.

Jim Cogswell has installed public art projects internationally and is Professor at the University of Michigan Stamps School of Art & Design.

Off The Screen Performances

***Along The Perimeter* by Darrin Martin**

TUE 3/21 | 4pm | U-M North Quad Space 2435 | Free

Oakland, CA | 2022 | 25 min | live cinema & multiscreen installation with sound

An interlude with the backyard sublime, comprised of images and sounds recorded from the start of the pandemic lockdown by motion-activated surveillance cameras and a micro-lensed device in the periphery of the artist’s home. Commingled flora and fauna are accompanied by a reimagined glass harp played with hearing aid feedback. Lenses and listening devices open a multiplicity of ways in which to imagine the worlds of those with whom we share the land.

Darrin Martin engages the synesthetic qualities of perception found in nature as expressed by technologies both old and new. Working primarily in video, sound, and installation, Martin lives in Oakland, CA, and teaches art at the University California, Davis.

Expanded Cinema Performances

WED 3/22 | 7:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Four performances that employ live manipulation of the projected moving image, creating a dynamic audience experience.

***Microstars* | Le désert mauve**

Montréal, Canada | 2020 | 20 | Audiovisual Performance

Microstars unfolds a soft and playful universe which explores the sensitive relationship between visual and sonic vibrations. The abstract visuals, created by Charline Dally through modular synthesis and video feedback loops, are characterized by saturated hues and undulating lines. The sound, created by Gabrielle HB, conceives minimal spaces that rely on the delicacy of gesture and an economy of material means. Using two oscillators and a polyphonic synthesizer, she composes smooth and luminous scenes. Together, the sonic and visual oscillations blend and transform through deliberately slow progressions.

As a duo, sound artist **Gabrielle HB** and video artist **Charline Dally** produce video artworks and performances oscillating between fluid landscapes, never-ending views, and microscopic dances.

Off The Screen Performances (Continued)

Surface Connection | Senem Pirlir & Monica Duncan

Brooklyn, Troy & Alfred, NY | 2019–present | 20 | Performance

Surface Connection is a live performance that explores the concept of queer space, objects, and the relationship between queer bodies through a series of audiovisual interactions where we touch/vibrate/fluctuate/excite surfaces and objects. In our collaboration, the artists channel their camp sensibility and create performative actions by “vibrating,” “deviating,” and “disrupting” bodies, objects, and surfaces from their normative representations and their linear paths.

Monica Duncan and Senem Pirlir create audiovisual performances that investigate everyday objects, concepts of agency, and queer potentiality. Their collaborative work has been shown in numerous festivals. They have been artists-in-residence at IEA, Signal Culture, and PACT Zollverein.

Night Out of Song | Scott Stark

San Francisco, CA | 2022 | 20 | Double 16mm Projection with Separate Audio

Abstractions are lifted from the urban palette and deposited atop shapes both organic and inorganic, in an ebb and flow of movement through the city. A kind of breathing.

Scott Stark is an artist working in film, video, moving image performance, and installations. He lives in San Francisco.

The Sick Sense 2023: The Year We Make Kontakte (or, My Friend Flicker)

Brent Coughenour | Portland, OR | 2023 | 20 | Live Video

“During a sunny afternoon foray spent gamboling along the thresholds of the fusion frequency, I discovered ways to bring all properties under a single control in order to create a total serialism of the mind, a psychophysiological gesamtkunstwerk in which the fabric of time is rolled up like a rug, cut into sections, taken out of doors to be cleaned slice by slice, then reassembled, seamlessly blanketing the surface of our conscious reality.” –Karlheinz Stockhausen.

Brent Coughenour is a media artist whose most recent work focuses on building audiovisual systems for live exploration of the boundaries of the perceptual system.

Off The Screen Performances (Continued)

***May Waves Rise From Its Floor* by Mattieu Hallé**

THU 3/23 | 4–4:30pm | Ann Arbor Art Center

Ottawa, ON, Canada | 2018 | 30 min | live digital projection with custom 16mm projector, candles, broken crystals, and live music performed by Chien-An Yuan and Sophiyah E.

An improvised performance piece for visuals and sound. Candlelight flickers from Hallé's breathing and gets focused with handheld pieces of broken crystal onto a video camera sensor, which becomes the light source that illuminates a 16mm film of an abstracted ocean landscape. The live music and visuals play off each other. Hallé's barely perceptible hand gestures and his intentional breathing spontaneously adapt and create the projected world of light and shadow, color and movement.

Matthieu Hallé is a filmmaker based in Ottawa, Canada. His work includes short film and video work, as well as the creation of different visual instruments for live performance in collaboration with other artists and musicians. Improvised musical accompaniment will be provided by Ann Arbor based interdisciplinary composer **Chien-An Yuan** and Detroit sonic healer / vocalist **Sophiyah E.**

***You're Not Listening* by Jeremy Rourke**

**FRI 3/24 | 9:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium | Part of FIC 8: Animation
San Francisco, CA | 2020 | 20 min | expanded cinema, animation, digital video**

This live cinema performance recounts a journey to filmmaker Craig Baldwin's 16mm archive. While digging into the illuminated content, we can hear heartfelt musings on its serendipitous strength and repurposed relevancy. The ponderous stacks of cans and reels teeter as we breathe the underground aura of lyrical titles. Guitar in hand, as this song is spliced together, Jeremy sings.

Jeremy Rourke is a stop-motion animator. He creates intricate, handmade, 12fps homes for his performative, musical, educational, and collaborative endeavors.

Off The Screen Performances (Continued)

Mystic Fire with Jesse Clayton

THU 3/23 | 10:30pm–12:30am | Club Above

\$5, free for AAFF pass holders

***Mystic Fire* | Fort Collins, CO | 2020–ongoing | variable | analog video live cinema performance**

Conjuring analog apparitions and scan line specters, *Mystic Fire* creates a hypersonic visual immersive experience. Creating live a/v performances with relics of video's past, *Mystic Fire* is a champion of the lo-fi aesthetic and an homage to the great home video company that distributed masterworks of the avant-garde throughout the late 20th century.

Jesse Clayton is a composer and performer of electronic music using classic and modern synthesizers to create performances informed by perception and flow.

Brent Coughenour

SAT 3/25 | 9:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium | Part of FIC 12

Ticket Required

left/right/wrong (or, RGB and You and Me): The Sick Sense, Part 3

Portland, OR | 2020 | 10 min | live video

Phasing, color blending modes, and the verbal transformation effect combine to create a sensory overload, spurring a variety of auditory and visual hallucinatory phenomena and depth illusions. These techniques are clinically proven to have salutary effects on depression, schizophrenia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, chronophobia, and other maladies of the mind.

Brent Coughenour is a media artist whose most recent work focuses on building audiovisual systems for live exploration of the perceptual system's boundaries.

Bitch, Thunder!

SUN 3/26 | Various times starting at 4:30pm | Michigan Theater

To help wrap up this year's festival, *Bitch, Thunder!* will lay down their percussive sounds in front of the theater and in the theater before the 61st Awards screenings. Afterwards, weather-permitting, they'll lead a parade of festival goers down Liberty Street to the afterparty at Havana Island BBQ & Tapas where everyone is invited to celebrate the 61st Festival's exciting conclusion.

Bitch, Thunder! is an all-female drumline from Toledo, Ohio is led by accomplished percussionist Jess Hancock. The women in the group are committed to inspiring female musicians and proving the power of drumming in public spaces.

Special Programs

Special Programs are only available in-person.

In addition to exhibiting over one hundred new films in juried competition programs each year, the AAFF presents filmmaker retrospectives, historic and thematic surveys, and contemporary artist programs. Find the lineup for the 61st special programs below.

Expanded Cinema Performances

WED 3/22 | 7:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Four performances that employ live manipulation of the moving image, creating a dynamic audience experience: *Surface Connection* by Senem Pirlir and Monica Duncan, *The Sick Sense 2023: The Year We Make Kontakte (or, My Friend Flicker)* by Brent Coughenour, *Night Out of Song* by Scott Stark, and *Microstars* by Le Désert Mauve.

The root and the harvest/La raiz y la cosecha

WED 3/22 | 9pm | State Theatre 1

A mix of Mexican and Chicago films that speak to each other through long-term experience. Identity as a way of expanding time, connecting disparate times with images, opposing the immobility of the past. | Una mezcla de películas mexicanas y de Chicago que hablan entre sí a través de una larga experiencia. La identidad como forma de expandir el tiempo, conectando tiempos dispares con imágenes, oponiéndose a la inmovilidad del pasado. Curated by Raul Benitez and Tzutzú Matzín.

Remembrance/Vacancy: The Films of Edward Owens

THU 3/23 | 7pm | State Theatre 1

The recent re-emergence of Edward Owens' flash of experimental filmmaking in the New York avant-garde scene of the late '60s has the potential to animate new discussions around a largely unknown and obscure(d) history of early Black experimental filmmaking. Despite the artistic merits of the work, Owens' period as a young filmmaker was short-lived and his artistic career cut short by complicated personal issues. The program will be followed by a post-screening conversation with program curator Emily Martin and film professor Jessica Ruffin.

Special Programs (Continued)

Radical Curiosity: Short Films by Sam Green (2000–2021)

THU 3/23 | 9pm | State Theatre 1

Known for his feature films including *The Weather Underground* (2003) and *32 Sounds* (2022), Sam Green is also a prolific storyteller in short-form documentary. This program highlights a selection of Green's shorts from 2000 to 2021. Visit the unmarked grave of an 18-year-old Hells Angels victim, explore the greatest pet cemetery in the world, watch fog envelop iconic San Francisco streets, and listen to the world around you with pioneering experimental composer Annea Lockwood. Green's playful curiosity and eclectic approach guarantees something for everyone in this wide-ranging ode to grief, ephemera, history, and life itself.

Celluloid Body

FRI 3/24 | 7pm | State Theatre 1

Celebrating the meticulous craft of direct animation and handmade cinema, *Celluloid Body* offers a glance at an inventive type of experimental cinema that grows beyond its painted, scratched, and manipulated techniques. This program is a journey from celluloid to digital, surveying personal, sexual, and spatial narratives on screen. These films celebrate the textural experience between filmmaker and medium and the sensory experience between spectator and the creative process. Curated by Diana Sánchez Maciel in memory of Zane Timpson.

MFW Decades

SAT 3/25 | 7pm | State Theatre 1

The Millennium Film Workshop is a nonprofit organization invented, named, and founded in 1966 by filmmaker Ken Jacobs. He conceived Millennium as a community-based organization dedicated to providing open screenings, low-cost equipment rental, and training programs. *MFW Decades* features film and digital works selected from Millennium's ongoing calendar of events with examples from almost every decade of its existence. Millennium continues to serve as one of the longest running artist-run workshops for independent and experimental cinema. Curated by Paul Echeverria.

Special Programs (Continued)

Life ⇌ Ritual ⇌ Cinema: The Experimental Films of Donald Richie

SUN 3/26 | 12:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Donald Richie (1924–2013) spent most of his life in Japan and is credited with introducing the world to Japanese cinema. Best known as a prolific author, his books on Japanese film history, Ozu, and Kurosawa are considered classics. A queer man who found a safe haven in Japan, he delighted in the surreal. This particularly comes out in his experimental cinema, which he began making in the 1940s. By the 1960s, Richie was well respected as an organizer on the Japanese experimental film scene. This program introduces the other Richie, who was always sexy, strange, dirty, and quite amusing. Curated by Markus Nornes and Hannah Glass-Chapman.

Between Resilience and Resistance

SUN 3/26 | 3pm | State Theatre 1

Resistance refers to the ability to withstand a disturbance, while resilience is the capacity to recover after suffering from the disturbance. Systems of oppression such as gender, racial, and class discrimination thrive in countless forms across our planet. Each film in this program reveals a different vantage point to consider this dichotomy that allows revelations and revolutions to manifest. These projected images shine a light to reveal complexities in humanity's intrinsic motivation to resist injustice and the resilience to persevere through time and space. Curated by Brandon Walley.

61st AAFF Jurors

Every year the AAFF invites three distinguished artists to jury and confer awards to deserving films and filmmakers. This year, the jury consists of filmmakers Amir George and Christine Panushak, and Koyo Yamashita, film programmer and festival director.



Amir George



Christine Panushka



Koyo Yamashita

The three will attend the six-day festival, viewing 108 films in competition and awarding approximately \$23,000 in cash and in-kind awards. In addition, each juror will present a specially curated program of work during the festival., free to attend in-person, sliding scale online.

Amir George is an award-winning filmmaker based in Chicago. George is the artistic director of Kartemquin Films. As an artist, George creates spiritual stories, juxtaposing sound and image into an experience of non-linear perception. George's films have screened at institutions and film festivals including the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Institute of Contemporary Arts (London), Anthology Film Archives (New York), Glasgow School of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Ann Arbor Film Festival, Trinidad and Tobago International Film Festival, BlackStar Film Festival (Philadelphia), and Camden International Film Festival (Maine), among others.

Christine Panushka is an internationally known artist, filmmaker/ animator, and educator. Her films have won numerous awards including the Grand Prize at the Aspen Filmfest and Best Feature Film Experimental at the Salto International Film Festival (Uruguay). Panushka was jury chair at the Hiroshima International Animation Festival, has curated many animation programs, and has served on the selection committees for numerous animation festivals. She is professor emerita in Expanded Animation: Research + Practice at the University of Southern California.

61st AAFF Jurors (Continued)

Born in Tokyo, Japan, **Koyo Yamashita** has been the director of the Image Forum Festival (Japan) since 2001 and the programmer of the Theater Image Forum (Tokyo) since 2005. He has been a guest programmer/curator for many film and media art festivals and events around the world such as Transmediale (Berlin), Bozar (Brussels), and Arkipel International Documentary and Experimental Film Festival (Jakarta). He has served on juries for many international film festivals, including Cannes' Directors' Fortnight, and the Rotterdam International Film Festival.

Juror Programs

All Juror Programs, free and open to the public, will be presented in State Theatre 1.

Stories Buried and Unburied | Koyo Yamashita
WED 3/22 | 1pm

Stories and myths, covered and forgotten, breathe beneath our daily contemporary lives. These three films made in East Asia deal with the body, spirituality, and memories. These topics, while marginalized in the dominant discourse, open up communication with other possible worlds and narratives.

Blood of the Family Tree | Christine Panushka
THU 3/23 | 1pm

Blood of the Family Tree is Christine Panushka's experimental animated film that explores questions of connections, hidden family history, disease, and our ties to the past. Her objective was to create a work of animation that uses complex cinematic structures to tell a personal story, illustrating the connective tissue that binds humanity to history.

The Romare Marquee | Amir George
FRI 3/24 | 1pm

The Romare Marquee is a short film program featuring moving image works from Amir George that situates each film in contrast to the art of visual artist Romare Bearden. Bearden's collage work represents the undertones and Black aesthetic themes that George inserts into his films. Archives explored on canvas, layered and assembled. The title is inspired by an experience George had when encountering Bearden's work during a trip to Michigan.