

# FILM FEST DC

APRIL  
18-28

WASHINGTON, DC INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL • [FILMFESTDC.ORG](http://FILMFESTDC.ORG)

# Filmfest DC

## April 18 – 28, 2024

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



Photo: Chad Evans Wyatt

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

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

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

Tony Gittens

Founder and Director  
Washington, DC International Film Festival

## Ticket Information

General admission is \$14 unless otherwise noted.

### Advance Sales

Select the films you would like to see at [filmfestdc.org](http://filmfestdc.org) to make your purchase. Note that ticket sales online will end at noon on the day of show.

### Day-of-Sales

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

### Director's Pass

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

### Under 25 Discount Ticket

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

## Theater Locations

### Landmark's E Street Cinema

555 11th Street NW, Washington, DC 20004

Theater entrance: on E Street between 10th & 11th Streets

Parking Information: Three hours of reduced-rate parking available in the adjacent garage with validation Monday – Friday after 5 p.m. and anytime on weekends

Closest Metro station: Metro Center

### Embassy of France

4101 Reservoir Rd NW, Washington, DC 20007

Parking Information: Street parking available

### The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

2700 F St NW, Washington, DC 20566

Parking Information: Paid parking available

Closest Metro station: Foggy Bottom-GWU

### Penn Social

801 E St NW, Washington, DC 20004

Located on the corner of E & 8th Streets

Parking Information: Street parking and parking garages available nearby

Closest Metro station: Metro Center or Gallery Place-Chinatown

### The Wharf

960 Wharf St SW, Washington, DC 20024

Parking Information: Limited paid parking is available

Closest Metro station: L'Enfant Plaza or Waterfront

## Information

[filmfestdc.org](http://filmfestdc.org) | 202-234-FILM

@filmfestDC on   



# Opening Film

East Coast Premiere

## Widow Clicquot

Thomas Napper

France/UK, 2023, 90 minutes

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

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

—*Toronto International Film Festival*

In English

**Thursday, April 18, 7:00 PM, Embassy of France, \$45**

Followed by a reception



Widow Clicquot

Sponsored by:



For security reasons, film tickets must be purchased in advance. A government-issued ID that matches the name on the reservation will be required to enter the Embassy.



The Trouble with Jessica

Sponsored by:



# Closing Film

## The Trouble with Jessica

Matt Winn

UK, 2023, 90 minutes

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

**Sunday, April 28, 4:00 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema**

Followed by a reception, cash bar, at Penn Social, \$25

# Highlights



## The Lighter Side

### International Comedies

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



## Arabian Sights

### The newest films about the Arab world

- Bye Bye Tiberias (*Palestine*)
- Chanting of the Dunes (*USA*)
- Goodbye Julia (*Sudan*)
- Hajjan (*Saudi Arabia*)
- Inshallah a Boy (*Jordan*)
- The Teacher (*Palestine*)



## Trust No One

### Espionage, Crime, and Thrillers

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



## DC4Reel

### Creative community of DC filmmakers

- Bring the Beat (*USA*)
- Freedom Hair (*USA*)
- The Humbler-Danny Gatton (*USA*)
- The Novelist (*USA*)
- Hope of Escape (*USA*)



## Justice Matters

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

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



### THE AWARD JURY CONSISTS OF:

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

**Judy Hallet**—Award-winning Filmmaker and Producer

**Karen Thomas**—Producer/Director, *Film Odyssey*

## Impact Project

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



**Be A Part of The Movie Buzz**



**JOIN THE  
WASHINGTON, DC  
FILM SOCIETY!**

Go to [dcfilmsociety.org](http://dcfilmsociety.org) for more information

## Circle Award

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

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

### THE AWARD JURY CONSISTS OF:

**Felix Angel**—Former Curator, Inter-American Development Bank

**Susann Barocas**—Competition Coordinator, Writer/Producer

**Manjula Kumar**—President/Executive Director, Global Performing Arts

**Gregory McGruder**—National Geographic Society

**Peggy Parsons**—Film curator emerita

## Filmfest DC Audience Award

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



Catalog cover and banner designed by Alexis Thornlow



### Filmfest DC Trailers

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

Please enjoy!

## FEATURE FILMS



### Adiós Buenos Aires

German Kral

Argentina/Germany, 2023, 93 minutes

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

—Various sources

*In Spanish with English subtitles*

**Sunday, April 21, 3:00 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**

**Friday, April 26, 6:05 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**



### Amal

Jawad Rhalib

Belgium, 2023, 111 minutes

The corner of Brussels where Amal (Lubna Azabal) teaches high school might as well be a small village—everyone is in everyone's business. Are you a secular or Muslim Belgian? Are you Muslim *enough*? In the classroom, the natural teenage pursuits of gossip and bullying can take on a dangerous quality as the youths expel the pressures of home life. After learning that one of her students, Monia, is being tormented by her peers for being a lesbian, Amal introduces the class to the eighth-century poet Abū Nuwās, who lived and wrote as a bisexual. Threats ensue, and parents, students, and teachers take sides. The young actors seem riveted around an impassioned performance by Azabal as they confront extremism's malign effects on their generation.—*Judy Bloch*

*In French with English subtitles*

**Thursday, April 25, 8:25 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**

**Friday, April 26, 6:10 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**



Justice Matters

### Bad Faith: Christian Nationalism's Unholy War on Democracy

Director/Producer: Stephen Ujlaki;

Co-Director/Co-Producer: Christopher J. Jones

USA, 2024, 89 minutes

This compelling and urgent documentary, narrated by Peter Coyote, presents Christian nationalism as the greatest threat to democracy today, and it brings the well-researched historical receipts. Christian nationalism—the belief that the United States was founded as a Christian nation and therefore should privilege Christianity over all other faiths and theology over the Constitution—has always been ideology masquerading as religion. These days the masks are coming off with the gloves: “We’re talking about Christianizing America; spreading the Gospel in a political context,” you might hear from any of the pastors who grow rich off such theatrics as they make Christian soldiers out of their flock. Not for nothing were there posters of Christ everywhere on January 6, 2021. But Donald Trump wears the halo of modern-day saint for a movement that predated and will outlive him.—*Judy Bloch*

**Saturday, April 20, 6:15 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**

**Wednesday, April 24, 6:00 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**



East Coast Premiere  
The Lighter Side

### Bonjour Switzerland

Peter Luisi

Switzerland, 2023, 88 minutes

This sly satire is both a witty throwback to the era of screwball comedies and a timely takedown of our troublesome current events. When a charismatic huckster pressures Switzerland—a nation with four official languages: German, French, Italian, and Romansh—to hold a vote that results in French becoming the single mandatory language of the country, sad-sack policeman Walter (Beat Schlatter) becomes one of the people who must enforce the new law. That Walter can only speak German and is failing his new language classes is only part of his problem. When militants in the heavily Italian-speaking region of Ticino threaten to secede, Walter and his French-speaking partner Jonas (Vincent Kucholl) are tasked with infiltrating the rebels. Of course, everyone's plans go delightfully awry.—*Dave Nuttycombe*

*In Swiss-German, French, and Italian with English subtitles*

**Saturday, April 20, 4:30 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**

**Wednesday, April 24, 8:30 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**

Co-presented with:  
Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Embassy of Switzerland  
in the United States of America



Arabian Sights

## Bye Bye Tiberias

Lina Soualem

France/Palestine, 2023, 83 minutes

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

In French and Arabic with English subtitles

Co-presented with:



Sunday, April 21, 3:15 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

Wednesday, April 24, 6:10 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema



## The Convert

Lee Tamahori

New Zealand/Australia, 2023, 119 minutes

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

In English and Te Reo Māori

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

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



World Premiere  
Arabian Sights

## Chanting of the Dunes

Mokhless Al-Hariri

USA, 2024, 80 minutes

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

Friday, April 26, 8:15 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

Saturday, April 27, 6:20 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema



US Premiere  
Trust No One

## Diabolik

Antonio Manetti and Marco Manetti

Italy, 2021, 134 minutes

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

In Italian with English subtitles

Friday, April 19, 6:05 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

Saturday, April 27, 5:50 PM, Landmark’s E Street Cinema

Co-presented with:





**The Lighter Side**

## A Difficult Year

**Eric Toledano and Olivier Nakache**

France, 2023, 120 minutes

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

—Various sources

*In French with English subtitles*

**Saturday, April 20, 6:20 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**

**Sunday, April 21, 4:30 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**



## Evil Does Not Exist

**Ryusuke Hamaguchi**

Japan, 2023, 106 minutes

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

*In Japanese with English subtitles*

**Friday, April 19, 6:15 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**

**Saturday, April 27, 1:45 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**



**Trust No One**

## The Extortion

**Martino Zaidelis**

Argentina/USA, 2023, 106 minutes

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

*In Spanish with English subtitles*

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

**Saturday, April 27, 6:35 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**



**Arabian Sights**

## Goodbye Julia

**Mohamed Kordofani**

Sudan/Egypt, 2023, 121 minutes

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

*In Arabic with English subtitles*

**Friday, April 19, 6:00 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**

**Thursday, April 25, 6:10 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**





## Guardians of the Formula

**Dragan Bjelogrić**

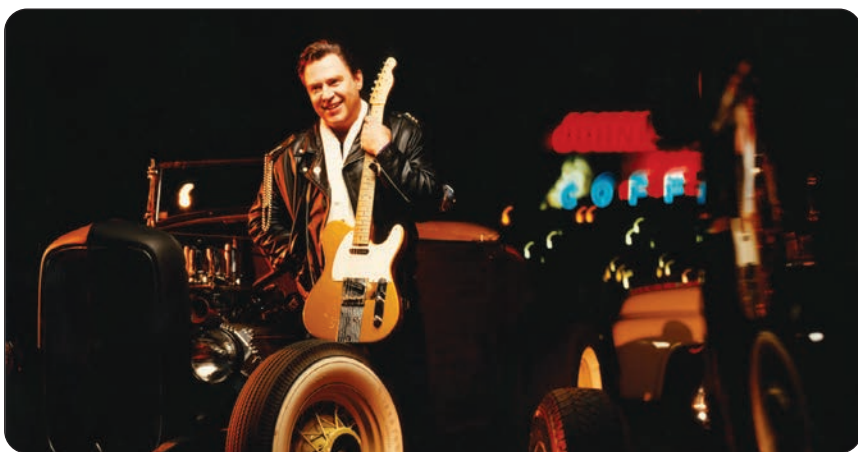
*Serbia/Slovenia/Montenegro/North Macedonia, 2023, 120 minutes*

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

*In French and Serbian with English subtitles*

**Friday, April 19, 8:30 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**

**Wednesday, April 24, 8:00 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**



## The Humbler – Danny Gatton

**Virginia Quesada**

*USA, 2023, 92 minutes*

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

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

DC4Reel



Arabian Sights

## Hajjan

**Abu Bakr Shawky**

*Saudi Arabia/Egypt/Jordan, 2023, 117 minutes*

In the high-energy world of small-circuit camel racing, Ghanim is preparing for the Great Safwa Race—where heroes are made. Younger brother and Bedouin tailor Matar grew up hearing Ghanim recite poetry about their legendary grandfather known as “Hajjan,” the Arabic word for *jockey*. While following in his grandfather’s footsteps and building a name for himself in a regional qualifying race, foul play cuts Ghanim’s dreams short. Although Matar doesn’t share Ghanim’s passion for the track, he does share a rider’s love for his camel, Hofira.

The devoted pair, unaware of the sprawling battle ahead of them, set out together to avenge Ghanim’s fate and instead commit to an outsized fight against a regional champion.

*Hajjan* is a rousing feature backed by an evocative score and the awe-inspiring atmosphere of the Arabian desert.

—*Toronto International Film Festival*

*In Arabic with English subtitles*

**Saturday, April 20, 6:30 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**

**Thursday, April 25, 8:30 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**

Co-presented with:



Justice Matters

## Igualada

**Director/Producer: Juan Mejía Botero; Producers: Juan Yepes, Sonia Serna, Daniela Alatorre**

*Colombia/Mexico/USA, 2024, 81 minutes*

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

*In Spanish with English subtitles*

**Wednesday, April 24, 6:05 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**

**Friday, April 26, 6:00 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**

# Filmfest DC 2024 Schedule

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

THURSDAY, APRIL 18

## Opening Night



### Widow Clicquot

Embassy of France

Film at 7 PM

Followed by a reception



SATURDAY, APRIL 20

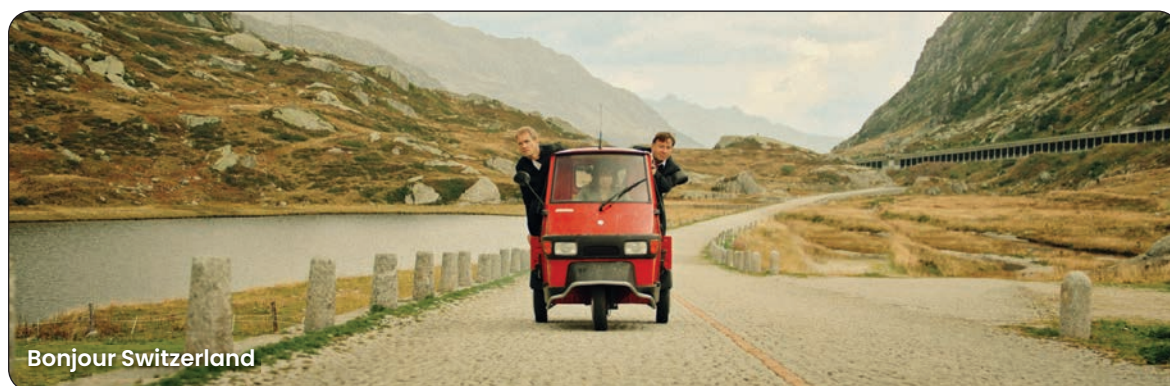
SUNDAY, APRIL 21

FRIDAY, APRIL 19

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

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

- 1:00 PM Short Stories 1
- 2:00 PM In the Rearview
- 3:00 PM Adiós Buenos Aires
- 3:00 PM Bring the Beat (Kennedy Center)
- 3:15 PM Bye Bye Tiberias
- 3:15 PM Taking Venice
- 4:30 PM A Difficult Year
- 5:00 PM The Old Oak
- 5:00 PM The Teacher Who Promised the Sea
- 5:35 PM The Queen of My Dreams
- 7:00 PM The Teacher
- 7:15 PM Kabuliwala
- 7:20 PM The Convert
- 7:35 PM Let Me Go



**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24**

- 6:00 PM Bad Faith: Christian Nationalism's Unholy War on Democracy
- 6:05 PM Igualada
- 6:10 PM Bye Bye Tiberias
- 6:20 PM Thelma
- 8:00 PM Guardians of the Formula
- 8:25 PM The Nature of Love
- 8:25 PM Short Stories 2
- 8:30 PM Bonjour Switzerland

**THURSDAY, APRIL 25**

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

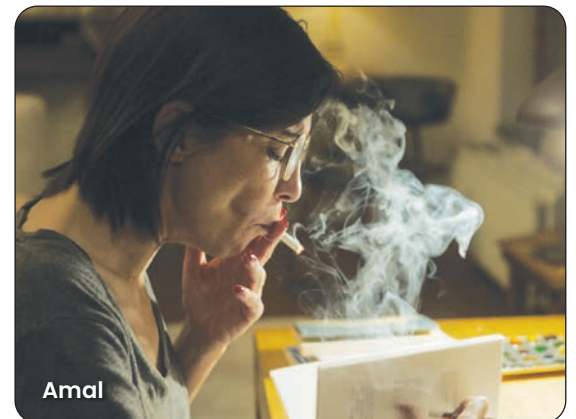
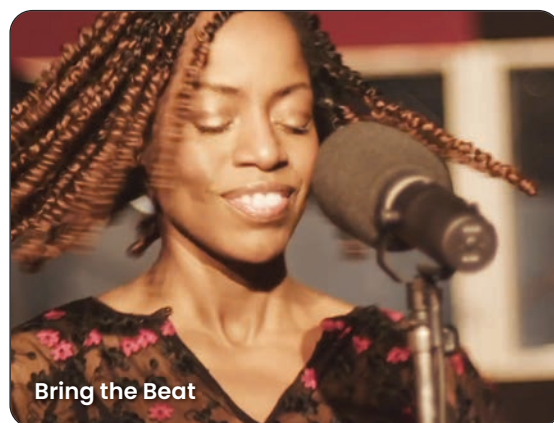
**FRIDAY, APRIL 26**

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



**SATURDAY, APRIL 27**

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



**SUNDAY, APRIL 28**

**Closing Night**



**The Trouble with Jessica**

Landmark's E Street Cinema

**Film at 4 PM**

Followed by a reception at Penn Social

## FEATURE FILMS

Continued from page 9



Justice Matters

### In The Rearview

**Director/Producer: Maciek Hamela; Producer: Piotr Grawender**

Poland/France/Ukraine, 2023, 84 minutes

When Putin's war on Ukraine broke out in 2022, displacing millions, Polish director Maciek Hamela put his polyglot skills, his love of the Ukrainian people, and his van to work, ferrying countless families across Ukraine to safety in Poland. In this documentary, as both driver/savior and director, Hamela makes his passengers at home as he dodges landmines. Thus, the everydayness that was interrupted by Russian bombs is on display in the backseat (a 7-year-old explains, "'Worried' means when your grandma is afraid"). Filming from the front seat to the back was a necessity that doubles as a stroke of visual poetry, capturing faces stunned by a new reality and harrowing stories that have become the stuff of chatter. We can only hope that when this terrible war is finally in the rearview, Maciek's film (and his work) will be a testament to the humanity that survived.—*Judy Bloch*

*In Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, French, and English with English subtitles*

**Friday, April 19, 6:00 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**

**Sunday, April 21, 2:00 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**



Arabian Sights

### Inshallah a Boy

**Amjad Al-Rasheed**

Jordan, 2023, 113 minutes

*Inshallah a Boy* is the first Jordanian film to compete at the Cannes Film Festival and is Jordan's submission to the Academy Awards®. This story of a widow who pretends she is pregnant with a boy to keep a roof over her head is a suspenseful and engrossing portrait of resistance and strength. The film follows Nawal, a mother and housewife whose husband suddenly dies unexpectedly. In the absence of legal documents, her brother-in-law swoops in under the auspices of inheritance laws to exercise his claim on not just the couple's apartment but also on guardianship of Nawal's young daughter, Nora. Nawal is forced into a series of rash situations to hold onto her family and claim what should rightfully be hers.—*Various sources*

*In Arabic with English subtitles*

**Friday, April 26, 6:10 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**

**Saturday, April 27, 8:30 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**



Trust No One

### Just the Two of Us

**Valérie Donzelli**

France, 2023, 105 minutes

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

*In French with English subtitles*

**Thursday, April 25, 8:15 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**

**Saturday, April 27, 4:30 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**



### Kabuliwala

**Suman Ghosh**

India, 2023, 106 minutes

Award-winning Indian director Suman Ghosh's film is a poignant adaptation of Rabindranath Tagore's timeless tale set in 1965 Kolkata, India. The film beautifully captures the vibrant city's atmosphere, portraying the heartwarming bond between Rahmat (Mithun Chakraborty) and Mini (Anumegha Kahali), a connection that transcends cultural boundaries. Exploring themes of love and friendship, the film highlights the universal human experience and the profound significance of affection. *Kabuliwala* received critical acclaim, winning the Best Feature Film award at the Indian Film Festival of Houston and earning Chakraborty the Popular Choice Best Hero award at the Telangana Bengali Film Festival. Through evocative storytelling and compelling performances, *Kabuliwala* stands as a timeless cinematic gem, celebrating enduring bonds and the universal language of love.—*Various sources*

*In Bengali with English subtitles*

**Saturday, April 20, 4:00 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**

**Sunday, April 21, 7:15 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema**



## Les Indésirables

US Premiere

Ladj Ly

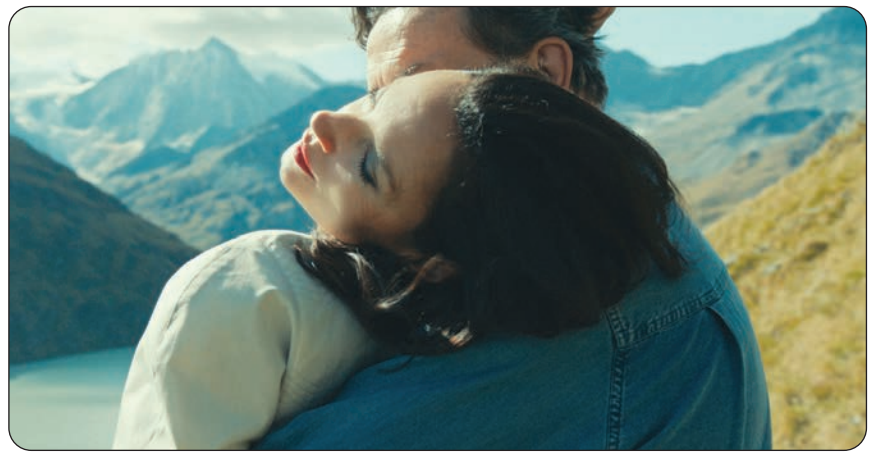
France, 2023, 105 minutes

The follow-up to his previous Oscar®-nominated film, *Les Misérables*, finds director Ladj Ly returning to similar themes from a fresh angle. Set in a deteriorating immigrant neighborhood on the outskirts of Paris, *Les Indésirables* pits naive yet reactionary young mayor Pierre (Alexis Manenti) against the earnest but frustrated activist Haby (Anta Diaw) in a battle for both the lives of the town's inhabitants and its future. The mayor was put in place by the political machine with the instruction "Don't make waves." But as conditions for the residents of a rapidly deteriorating apartment building worsen and Haby begins petitioning for help and understanding, the storm of problems escalates. The ultimate confrontation is both shocking and relevant for policymakers and citizens everywhere.—*Dave Nuttycombe*

In French with English subtitles

Friday, April 19, 8:25 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema

Friday, April 26, 8:25 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema



## Let Me Go

East Coast Premiere

Maxime Rappaz


Switzerland/France/Belgium, 2023, 92 minutes

This film, which opened the ACID program at Cannes in 2023, explores themes of sacrifice, desire, and the longing for change. Claudine, a woman in her fifties devoted to caring for her special-needs son, finds solace in brief encounters with passing men at a hotel every Tuesday. Her routine is interrupted when she meets Michael, who extends his stay for her. As Claudine navigates this unexpected connection, she begins to yearn for a different life. Set against the backdrop of a Swiss mountain village, *Let Me Go* is a poignant drama with unexpected moments of lightness and caring. Jeanne Balibar delivers an exceptional performance, bringing depth and complexity to Claudine without reducing her to mere indecisiveness.—*Various sources*

In French with English subtitles

Sunday, April 21, 7:35 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema

Thursday, April 25, 8:35 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema

Co-presented with:  
 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
 Confédération suisse  
 Confederazione Svizzera  
 Confederaziun svizra  
 Embassy of Switzerland  
 in the United States of America



Trust No One

## Like Sheep Among Wolves

Lyda Patitucci

Italy, 2023, 100 minutes

A gutsy undercover police agent, Vera has infiltrated a dangerous Serbian crime syndicate in Rome's criminal underworld. To survive in such an unforgiving world, Vera is forced to present a tough, insensitive facade. All seems to be going as planned for a big upcoming heist, until she learns that her younger brother, Bruno, whom she hasn't seen in years, is also mixed up with the syndicate. Caught on opposite sides of the barricade, old wounds resurface as the siblings must make choices that seriously jeopardize their goals. Combining a hard-boiled crime thriller with a family drama, Lyda Patitucci's fierce, gripping feature debut is a story of revenge and redemption against the backdrop of a moody, dangerous city.—*Seattle International Film Festival*

In Italian with English subtitles

Saturday, April 20, 8:50 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema

Saturday, April 27, 8:30 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema

Co-presented with:  
 ISTITUTO  
 italiano  
 di CULTURA



Justice Matters

## Mountains

Director/Writer: Monica Sorelle; Producer/Writer: Robert Colom

USA, 2023, 95 minutes

Xavier is a thoughtful and steadfast husband, father, and wage earner in an immigrant working-class family in Miami's Little Haiti who wants to buy a bigger house for his family. Ironically, Xavier works for a company (and a racist boss) that demolishes homes, and he is ultimately troubled that the developments could displace residents like himself. Esperance, his good-natured wife, works as a crossing guard, sews clothes to earn extra money for the family, and seems okay with their present house. They don't understand but still love their son, the U.S.-bred Junior, who aspires to be a stand-up comic—an inexplicable career to his parents. This warm and delightful multi-award winner explores generational divides in immigrant families and the sounds of "back home" conflicts between different communities in Miami and gentrification. It's full of color, and the characters feel and sound like real people. It's a gem.—*Cornelius Moore*

In English, Haitian Creole, and Spanish with English subtitles

Thursday, April 25, 6:00 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema

Saturday, April 27, 3:55 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema

## FEATURE FILMS



### The Movie Teller

Lone Scherfig

Spain/France/Chile, 2023, 116 minutes

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

*In Spanish with English subtitles*

Friday, April 19, 8:45 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema

Saturday, April 27, 8:40 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema



### The Nature of Love

Monia Chokri

Canada/France, 2023, 110 minutes

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

*In French with English subtitles*

Friday, April 19, 8:20 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema

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



Trust No One

### A Normal Family

Hur Jin-ho

South Korea, 2023, 116 minutes

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

*In Korean with English subtitles*

Friday, April 26, 8:00 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema

Saturday, April 27, 4:00 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema



### The Old Oak

Ken Loach

UK, 2023, 113 minutes

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

*In English and Arabic with English subtitles*

Saturday, April 20, 8:50 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema

Sunday, April 21, 5:00 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema



The Lighter Side

## The Queen of My Dreams

Fawzia Mirza

Canada/Pakistan, 2023, 97 minutes

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

—Various sources

In Urdu and English with English subtitles

Sunday, April 21, 5:35 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema

Thursday, April 25, 6:05 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema



Justice Matters

## Rainbow Warrior

Director: Edward McGurn; Producer: Docsville Studios

UK/France, 2023, 94 minutes

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

—Judy Bloch

In English and French with English subtitles

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

Thursday, April 25, 6:15 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema



## Taking Venice

Amei Wallach

USA, 2023, 98 minutes

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

—Various sources

Saturday, April 20, 4:10 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema

Sunday, April 21, 3:15 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema



US Premiere  
Arabian Sights

## The Teacher

Farah Nabulsi

UK/Palestine/Qatar, 2023, 115 minutes

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

In Arabic and English with English subtitles

Saturday, April 20, 3:20 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema

Sunday, April 21, 7:00 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema



# FEATURE FILMS



## The Teacher Who Promised the Sea

Patricia Font

Spain, 2023, 105 minutes

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

In Spanish with English subtitles

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

Co-presented with:



The Lighter Side

## Thelma

Josh Margolin

USA, 2023, 97 minutes

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

Saturday, April 20, 7:30 PM, The Wharf, \$10

Wednesday, April 24, 6:20 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema



North American Premiere  
Trust No One

## The Undertaker

Michael Wright

UK, 2023, 89 minutes

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

Friday, April 26, 8:30 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema

Saturday, April 27, 6:15 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema

# Go-Go at The Kennedy Center



DC4Reel

## Bring the Beat

Chris McDonald

USA, 2023, 60 minutes

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

Sunday, April 21, 3:00 PM, The Kennedy Center's Justice Forum at the Reach, **FREE**  
Please visit [filmfestdc.org](http://filmfestdc.org) to reserve tickets.

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



Sunset at The Wharf

# THE WHARF

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



The Lighter Side

## Streaker

Peter Luisi

Switzerland, 2017, 98 minutes

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

*In Swiss German with English subtitles*

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



The Lighter Side

## Thelma

Josh Margolin

USA, 2023, 97 minutes

Please see film note on page 16

Saturday, April 20, 7:30 PM, The Wharf, \$10

DC4Reel



## Bring the Beat

Chris McDonald

USA, 2023, 60 minutes

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

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

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



## Freedom Hair

Dianne Houston

USA, 2023, 99 minutes

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

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



## Hope of Escape

Amy Gerber

USA, 2023, 91 minutes

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

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



## The Humbler - Danny Gatton

Virginia Quesada

USA, 2023, 92 minutes

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

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



## The Novelist

Harold Jackson III

USA, 2023, 77 minutes

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

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

# Shorts

## Short Stories 1

Total running time: 83 minutes  
Sunday, April 21, 1:00 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema

### Earthling

Keith Lane and Molly Graham/USA, 2023, 10 minutes, animation

Jack Weiner claims he was abducted by aliens in the summer of 1976. Archival recordings of hypnosis sessions provide the backdrop for this engrossing animation about a man who stands by his story.

### Blood Like Water

Dima Hamdan/Palestine, 2023, 15 minutes, narrative, in Arabic with English subtitles

Facing blackmail, Shadi accidentally drags his proud Palestinian family into a trap where they only have two choices: either collaborate with the Israeli occupation or face shame and humiliation in their community. Based on a true story.

### Mercy

Xinyue Wu/USA, 2024, 15 minutes, documentary, in English and Chinese with English subtitles

After losing her leg as a child in China, a young woman becomes a passionate advocate for disability rights and faces unexpected challenges in her fight for a more inclusive society.

### Ciranda Feiticeira

Lula Gonzaga and Tiago Delácio/Brazil, 2023, 8 minutes, animation, no dialogue

Janaina shares with her mother the ritual of fishing in the sea off the island of Itamaracá, and the pain and beauty of the cycles of life.



### Flail

Ben Gauthier/USA, 2023, 13 minutes, narrative

It's her boss's birthday, and Allie is trying as hard as she can.

### Hope

Volkan Girgin/Turkey, 2023, 9 minutes, narrative, in Turkish with English subtitles

Three refugee women are connected across time through a single picture frame.

### Make a Wish, Benóný!

US Premiere

Katla Sólnes/Iceland, 2023, 12 minutes, narrative, in Icelandic with English subtitles

Rolling stone and absentee father Benóný is in for a surprise when his path unexpectedly crosses that of his teenage daughter, who is blissfully unaware of him, while she's on vacation in his isolated seaside village.

## Three kaleidoscopic takes on life in these times

Filmmakers expected at the screening are listed on the [filmfestdc.org](http://filmfestdc.org) website.

## Short Stories 2

Total running time: 83 minutes  
Wednesday, April 24, 8:25 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema

### Bogotá Story

Esteban Pedraza/Columbia, 2023, 16 minutes, narrative, in Spanish with English subtitles

In 1992, as Colombia faces an era of drug violence, car bombs, and daily power outages, a young mother in Bogotá receives an internship opportunity in the United States and must choose between her dreams and her family.

### Hair Care

Fatima Wardy/USA and Ivory Coast, 2023, 12 minutes, narrative and animation, in English and French with English subtitles

When her hair braider disappears on her, a young woman must traverse an animated Ivory Coast in order to track her down.

### Night Ride from LA

Martin Gerigk/Germany, 2023, 5 minutes, experimental, no dialogue

A trip from downtown Los Angeles to the desert near Palm Springs is condensed into a flickering twirl of time-stretched movements and night light graffiti in this love letter to the energy and vibe of the California way of life.

### Blue Hour

J.D. Shields/USA, 2023, 16 minutes, narrative

Personal journeys intersect when a struggling young photographer is hired for a cheap last-minute portrait gig. The unfolding photo session leaves an indelible mark on two women.

### Living Dictionary: American Sign Language

World Premiere

Ciella Sfirri and Laura Garber/USA, 2023, 13 minutes, documentary, in ASL with English subtitles

Three deaf professionals—a photographer, a pizza chef, and a teacher—explore the beauty of American Sign Language and how it empowers, connects, and inspires the deaf community.

### Two One Two

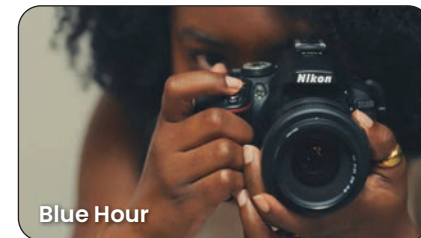
Shira Avni/Canada, 2023, 4 minutes, animation, no dialogue

Filmmaker Shira Avni employs shimmering clay-on-glass animation in this deeply intimate love letter to motherhood, parenting on the spectrum, and two-headed monsters everywhere.

### The Looming Cloud

Matthew Tyler/USA, 2024, 17 minutes, narrative

After their mother's death, three siblings navigate grief in the age of social media.



\* Closed Captions \* Open Captions

## MetroShorts

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

Total running time: 87 minutes  
Saturday, April 27, 1:00 PM, Landmark's E Street Cinema



### Build Me Through the Image

Paula Hung/USA, 2023, 9 minutes, documentary, in English & Spanish w/Spanish & English subtitles

The experiences of a father, mother, and daughter are the conduit through which the filmmaker explores the complexities of a transmarginal Latine, multiracial, and queer identity.

### On The Mountain

World Premiere

Anya Raza/USA, 2024, 12 minutes, narrative, in English and Dari with English subtitles

An Afghan family is forced to make an agonizing choice as they resettle in the United States. Inspired by true events.

### Mailman

Nicholas G. Pelecanos/USA, 2023, 18 minutes, narrative

A perceived racial slight and a simple action misjudged to be an act of racial aggression alter the lives of three men forever.

### One Wheel Bandit

Rick Gonzalez/USA, 2022, 5 minutes, documentary

Is it a unicycle? Did he steal the bike? How does he weave through D.C. traffic like that? Cyclist Allen explains.

### The Test

Claudia Myers and Laura Waters Hinson/USA, 2023, 16 minutes, documentary, in English with English subtitles

A Ghanaian maintenance worker at a Virginia retirement community dreams of becoming an American citizen and engages the help of two elderly residents to prepare for the biggest test of his life: the U.S. citizenship exam.

### Room to Breathe

World Premiere

Dave Haft/USA, 2024, 27 minutes, documentary, in English and Spanish with English subtitles

Mary and Dave confront pandemic parenting and virtual school with two young kids in a state of growing emotional imbalance. In this moment of collective recovery from community disconnection, this intimate portrait of family life in isolation provides a tool for reflection and healing.

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

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## Filmfest DC on TV

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

### WETA IS THE OFFICIAL TELEVISION STATION OF FILMFEST DC.

It is the leading public broadcasting station in the nation's capital. WETA Metro will screen the 2023 selection of MetroShorts films that will entertain as well as inform you.



weta.org

This program airs on WETA Metro on April 13

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



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