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FICIMAD

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DE **MADRID**

06

-MILLENNIALS Ludovica Lirosi

A thrilling historical fresco that portrays an entire generation. Filmmaker Ludovica Lirosi employs an exciting and passionate narrative flow, offering an intelligent, lighthearted, and accessible vision of modern life. The character development blends drama, reason, and emotion, creating an optimistic, revitalizing, and proud series that can take all the problems and traumas a country faces and transform them into a crisis that can be resolved in half an hour with hope, determination, and love. A Truth or Drink that answers uncomfortable, personal, and daring questions, addressing all the issues of youth in a serious way, with sharp, direct, and ironic dialogue, without resorting to a simple moralizing phrase. A series aspiring to be a social phenomenon, bolstered by the charisma of its characters, Julia Liros and Yuri Pascale Langer—funny, fresh, vulnerable, beautiful, teen idols with undeniable on-screen chemistry—tackles typical problems reflecting the reality of our time, including the glorification of consumerism, the cult of beauty, and the pursuit of sex. All of this is seasoned with colorful, mesmerizing, and majestic cinematography, featuring some unforgettable images, impeccable set design, and, for fashion lovers, the innate aesthetic and elegant sense of Italy. The vibrant, danceable, fusion-style reggaeton music adds a magic befitting the 21st century, whether boomers like it or not, choreographed, written, and performed by Julia Liros herself, a truly multifaceted and talented artist.



-Ext - Friendship - Night Mehdi Ahmadpanah

Filmmaker Mehdi Ahmadpanah relentlessly keeps his foot on the gas pedal throughout this sophisticated, frenetic, and exciting comedy, brimming with visual power and featuring an unforgettable performance by Alireza Keymanesh. Cinematographers Amin Jafari and Hamid Khorami film a postmodern Ulysses returning from military service to a chaotic Tehran with a delirious, tense, and exhilarating rhythm. This is top-tier creative cinema, full of imaginative and dazzling ideas, where the director pulls us into his car with no escape, portraying a multitude of peculiar, endearing, and eccentric supporting characters from the Iranian nightlife. A masterful filmmaker's work, accompanied by a cast fully committed to the role, creates a unique whirlwind of sensations, combining a mischievous perspective with the emotional ambition to portray the power of friendship: pure, generous, faithful, and eternal.

-In Few Words Ghazal Tavakoli

Filmmaker Ghazal Tavakoli dazzles with an emotional, clear, fiercely contemporary, and moving film. She offers an intimate portrait of a generational family tragedy without resorting to melodrama, sensationalism, or romanticization. A magnificent screenplay that is also a thrilling personal exorcism, where the director employs a neorealist style that allows her to create her own cinematic universe, with an honest, sincere, and necessary approach to empathizing with the protagonists' pain. Veteran actress Leyli Rashidi delivers a powerful acting duel with the young Shayesteh Sajjadi, both claustrophobically confined in a residential apartment, each fiercely fighting to claim their own space. Mohammad Tabrizi's cinematography is naturalistic, beautiful, precise, and captivating, skillfully using the building's walls to mark the inner scars of a broken mother-daughter relationship. An uncomfortable, hopeless, harsh, and empty ending that disarms you, traps you, and makes you shrink inside will be the culmination of a film made soft by its delicate gaze, its plumage of emotions, and its sensitivity in capturing the most delicate gestures on the faces of its actresses.

-Аплодисмент (A single applause) Мария Лапшина (Maria Lapshina)

Maria Lapshina evokes childhood memories with an imaginative script that transports us to that place between dream and waking, where anything is possible. A free-spirited take on the Peter Pan myth, it boasts a star-studded cast including Sergei Epishev, Daniil Gazizullin, and Olga Lapshina. Spectacular production design by Anna Bezrukova and magical details in costume design by Yulia Shtelma create tender moments, otherworldly settings, profound thoughts, and an innate resistance to the urge to grow up, to forget yesterday's desires in favor of tomorrow's demands. Playing at eternity is fun until you start working, but you can always slip back into those costumes that prick your heart, those enormous hats you keep in some trunk of your subconscious, in some corner of your soul.



-Ape Shit Dahlia Jane Kressler

Spectacular, cynical, and utterly over the top. Adventures and, above all, misadventures, with its crazy, simian characters, intelligible dialogue, and strange and fascinating spatial difficulties. A funny beginning, a delightfully problematic journey, and a shocking final supper that would be a delight for the Walrus in *Alice in Wonderland* (1951). Colorful, funny, and surreal, the film is a mind-blowing experience, made with rigorous stop-motion animation and a mesmerizing atmosphere that blends suspense and humor with a functional, austere, and sensorially exciting setting, thanks also to William Davies' excellent sound work. A satire of Yankee adventure films, a supernatural metaphor for that unfounded and illegitimate feeling of superiority, a parody of absolutely all the clichés and archetypes of star heroes, those yearnings for supremacy, those airs of conquest and those self-proclamations of masters and lords of the universe.

-The Screen Marco Galluccio

6,000,000 followers support Gaia Morabito's brilliant performance, set in her Instagram-colored nightmare, with a maliciously precise script that brutally dissects the small details that reveal the pathological trends of our not-so-premium lifestyle. Austere and impeccable set design and cinematography portray the deceptive illusion of social media, which would undoubtedly garner all our enthusiastic likes.

***-IeriNeroDomani (YesterdayBlackTomorrow)* Gianluca Fortunato**

Gianluca Fortunato films romance through the explosive cocktail of his talented cast, featuring Leonardo Verni and Silvia Pucci, whose vibrant chemistry is palpable. It's a portrait seen through the eyes of lovers, where an unforgettable Silvia Pucci dazzles with a contemporary Goyaesque style, reminiscent of the most beautiful paintings in history.

***-Anthems Of Obsidia* Elin Johnston**

Cinematic avant-garde in a mesmerizing cascade of ultrasensory images, sounds, and words. Elin Johnston proposes a tactile vision as a way of perceiving reality beyond the knowable. Genius, creativity, and a passion for art, with moments of astonishing beauty born from the simplicity of their elements.

***-The Discovery* Ernesto Rodriguez Cruz**

A transcendent, heroic, and lyrical experience. Ernesto Rodriguez Cruz's visual perfectionism in VFX makes the film a powerful, dazzling, and hypnotic spectacle, full of images that linger in the mind, highlighting the gestural and emotional work of his character in even his smallest expressions. The return to the maternal womb, an almost cosmogonic genesis, is an immersive experience that becomes a fantastic adventure, made of the elusive stuff of dreams.

***-the monkey* Bishoy Adel**

A smart and despairing thriller, Bishoy Adel infects the screen with the ills of our recent past. The script is intelligently crafted with a devastating human dimension, featuring impressive staging directed by Marella Adel with the help of the meticulous makeup artist Manwella Gamal, and a perfect performance by the monkey Bonos that lends the film a great deal of realism. A disaster film where fear permeates every frame, unsettling, distressing, and terrifying, a swift and relentless nightmare in paranoid times.

***-From and to Nature, We Return* Bishoy Adel**

A short, sharp, and poetic lesson on the beauty of nature and a stark warning about the damage we inflict on our delicate planet. Bishoy Adel's direction is impeccable, with stunning cinematography and agile, graceful, and dance-like editing. A film that soars thanks to its breathtaking visuals and offers us a glimmer of hope.



-CAM1LO Facundo Martínez

Rebel, hero, God. Filmmaker Facundo Martinez films his alter ego Camilo from the heights of Mount Olympus to show the beauty found in everyday life, as we grapple with our hopes and frustrations, if we remember our favorite footballer. Because football is just an excuse to be happy, and Maradona unleashed a true social phenomenon and gave hope to so many people that little more can be said. Only to witness his eternal glory.

-The Screeching Ashley Nicole

Filmmaker Ashley Nicole plunges the viewer into a cardboard nightmare that overwhelms and chills the soul like few other films. A terrifying atmosphere, filmed in stark black and white, where ancient archetypes lurk in a secluded barn, locked in a battle of light and shadow, accompanied by a prodigious sound design featuring the voice of Marie Forster and Will Rogers' original score. The director crafts a refined minimalist exercise with her idiosyncratic, handcrafted cinematic style, imbued with imagination, intelligence, passion, and audacity.

-FUTSUKAYOI Gabriel Kei

"First you take a drink, then the drink takes a drink, then the drink takes you." A raunchy, almost provocative, and snarky piece of entertainment that portrays the everyday hangover on a workday. It begins as a remarkable, funny, and mischievous exercise in unbridled comedy in the style of Japanese manga, only to end up as a dramatic film, like when you look in the mirror one day and don't recognize yourself when you see thirsty eyes, an unkempt beard, and a desperate grimace. Filmmaker Gabriel Kei, like a brilliant tyrannical boss, knows how to exploit the histrionic, pure genius performances of Kouhei Murakami and Kumi Okamoto, and the attention to detail of his entire artistic team, notably Clémentine Bréant in production design and Jérémy Guéci Marin's costume design, who enlisted the invaluable help of Theodore Fivel to create the iconic tree armor. "When I drink, I see things."



-HEART FAILED Diana Näcke

The images seem to slide off the musician Masha Qrella. Diana Näcke has made a film that runs counter to the current, as spectacular as it is deliberate, as agitated as it is glacial. A cold beauty to portray an overwhelming unreality that invites us to ignore it and cling to that which speaks to us with the most honesty and purity, our own body, because we are bodies and nothing more. *"Aber das Größere ist dein Leib und seine große Vernunft: der sagt nicht Ich, aber thut Ich."*

-*Sunlight on leaves 3* Andrew Payne

Andrew Payne attempts to capture time by painting four leaves with his camera. A masterclass in deliberate pacing and cinematic minimalism, it seeks to trace the generative path of light in the creation of visual effects. The film is an intense, pure, and delicate work, even tinged with suspense, exploring the impossibility of portraying the ephemeral, of stopping the passage of time. A fascinating film, but not for the impatient, from an original filmmaker who takes his art very seriously, inviting us to enjoy the universe while sipping tea in a comfortable armchair in our living room, watching the sun's reflections through the window on animated leaves.

-*Aleteos (Flapping)* Daniel Esteban Ramírez Castillo

Poetry on screen. Daniel Ramírez's film is delicate, humble, harmonious and humane in its portrayal of a family concerned about their autistic son: an empathetic, moving and educational study that helps us understand neurodiversity. The aqueous images by cinematographer Azul Fernández are unforgettable, with a singular and fragile beauty, surprisingly magical and unexpectedly monumental, making it seem as if Ulises Saucedo, Zubhel Cuervo, and Said Peña are immersed in an abstract space, in a timeless moment, in an eternal fable.



-*AGATHA* Christian Meyer, Anne Schiek

A revealing reflection on the enigmas hidden within our daily routines. With a transcendent gaze, filmmakers Christian Meyer and Anne Schiek design a unique and strange world using simple, commonplace elements, paying minimalist attention to the smallest details to create a cinematic immersion into the world of senile dementia that is inevitably moving, harsh, funny, and real, all splendidly orchestrated.

-*Fish* Ohara Hale

Stardust, the cosmic ocean, the brains of fish. Self-taught multidisciplinary artist Ohara Hale pays homage to the splendor of marine life with childlike wonder, glimpsing the true nature of the evolution of the universe and life, as well as the very beauty and coherence of our own identity. A visually stunning reflection with understated, sinuous animation that educates, entertains and amazes, accompanied by a marvelous soundtrack that sounds as if recorded underwater, which passionately complements the rational and scientific thought in Brian Swimme's melodious voice.

-Der Musikalisch Industrielle Komplex (The Musical Industrial Complex) Falko Seidel

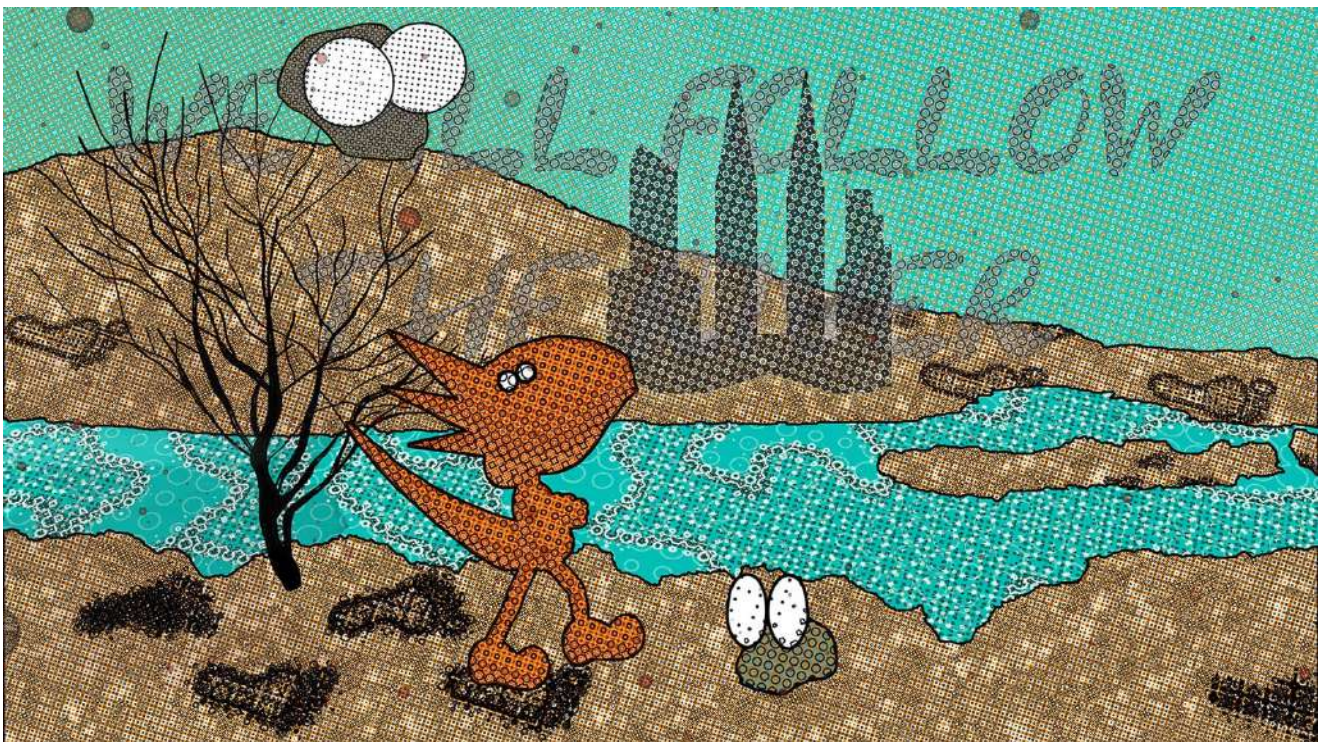
Laughing and thinking at the same time. Falko Seidel blows up the scientific method with remarkable audiovisual precision and a degree of comedic invention few filmmakers have achieved. Professor Hubert Burczeck's inimitable grimaces, gestures, and gags draw on the best of physics to make us vibrate at an irresistible frequency. The hilarious script by Daniel Binder and Bernd Mittelhockamp aims to make us laugh uncontrollably, but amidst all the carefully crafted laughter, it wants us to think rationally and realize that our old-fashioned science professor is actually a mass idol on stage. That's the lesson.

-Echoed in Water Yossi Galanti

Yossi Galanti conveys a desperate environmental message. The painting of *The Saint Elizabeth's Day Flood* (1421) serves as a prophecy, warning us that we are the only species capable of leading Earth to irreversible disaster, highlighting the fragile balance of our planet and the urgent need to halt its deterioration. It is a well-documented cautionary tale about the cyclical nature of climate disasters and an examination of the ways in which we are destroying ecosystems. Artificial intelligence bridges the gap between different points in time, exposing the crisis that mortally threatens us—a blend of images that offers a fresh and original perspective, a cinematic diptych that incites and tempts intellectual curiosity and creative freedom.

-And The Wise Soil Smiles Peter Whittenberger

A joyful film in its conception, execution, and message, it recaptures the aesthetic of the Sinclair ZX Spectrum, exuding nostalgia and awakening deep-seated memories of the history of pixels, computers and animation. It's a story of dreams, frustrations, and struggle, but above all, of the hope of moving forward and overcoming the obstacles and challenges we face, of persevering in the face of adversity, even if it seems like an insurmountable rock. The images and sounds, anachronistic, otherworldly and idiosyncratic to the author's artistic style, create a fortunate juggling act in which technique, script, narration and sound combine perfectly, not clashing but rather intertwining to form a solid, complex, and memorable whole. An unforgettable whole that makes Peter Whittenberger's film not only worthy of rediscovery but also a unique and personal cinematic expression within the world of animation. A lived sensory experience that cannot be expressed in words, but which can be accompanied by the poem *And The Wise Soil Smiles*, in which we are reminded that the only truth in life is death, but also that we all form part of the same *Wille zum Leben*, on the same path.



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- درخت برای درخت (Tree for Tree) Soheil Paryani

Daring, cynical, imaginative. Soheil Paryani's great achievement is the documentary-like tone of an animated film with a childlike aesthetic, immersing the viewer in a landscape so vibrant it powerfully captures all the senses. The script flows like a narrative torrent through unsettling territories with enchanting characters, a captivating fusion of the delicate and the painful. A film full of rhythm and poetry that is an immense achievement and a reflective, resigned, and incriminating experience that denounces the irremediable hypocrisy of our time.

-Saath Tera (Yours Truly) Barnali Ray Shukla

The eye of filmmaker Barnali Ray Shukla powerfully captures the Indian cities of Delhi and Mumbai, like a wonderstruck, ecstatic, and hyperstimulated witness. Her fascinated search uncovers all those details of daily life that define the essence of a country, transforming the smallest, most mundane elements into something poetic. Using lightweight cameras as her primary tool, she skillfully strives to highlight the inherent beauty of the city's alleyways and courtyards, while simultaneously creating a playful symphony by harmoniously interweaving them with the traditional music of Kailash Kher. This results in a dynamic collage of flavors, sounds, smells, images, and textures, culminating in a wonderful music video.

-Technophobia Rio Wolta

Beauty is volatile. There is much epic quality in the simplicity of Pascal Reinmann's black and white, in his melancholic sobriety, in his lack of patriotism. Rio Wolta offers us a moment of tranquility, without sentimentality, without pointing fingers, without condemning: we simply have to contemplate the world with calm and clarity.



-Croccante - Protopapa (ft. Bruno Belissimo, Hey Cabrera!, Hard Ton) Bornajeans

Bornajeans, Protopapa, and Robi Tuono's brilliant visual style is a delight, the true forbidden fruit of Eden, Adam's pickle. Images brimming with wit, excess, and audacity collide in a wild, furious, and comical way. A playful, angelic, and fresh approach to excess, where the sweetest pleasures aren't consumed with the mouth.

-The Vampire Yiannis Christidis

Yiannis Christidis's effortless revitalization of the Dracula myth is striking, with a magnificent neo-Gothic setting filmed in his Cypriot village, imbued with a down-to-earth charm. Somber poetry about the immortality of desire unfolds in a blood-stained, grim night, accompanied by a song so catchy you'll want to sing along during the closing credits.

-fauxquaker - Doorcase Mummy Jorge Miranda Lucas

"Look Who's Singing." Pleasant, tender, and relaxing like a lullaby, an innocent marvel made in the old style but with the new technologies of animated film, where Jorge Miranda Lucas plays with our subconscious with the umbilical cord exposed.

-New Midlife Disco Jiyun Hyun

Jiyun Hyun joyfully, energetically, and rhythmically tunes into Gangnam Style for all ages. A complex narrative, visual, and stylistic exercise, where it's impossible not to be captivated by the director's spell and find yourself dancing, discovering in every everyday gesture an artistic movement of the skeleton.



-Burnin' Bernadine Van Renne

A handcrafted filmmaker, shooting with her fingers and fingernails, distilling memories of happy moments with her loved ones. Director Bernadine Van Renne's camera work is an exploration of her own emotional journey, imbued with expressive delicacy and luminous sensitivity.

-Tamara Flores – Chingona Rupert Höller

The Mexican Rapunzel. Artist Tamara Flores breaks the mold by combining elements of trap and Latin sounds, while simultaneously using traditional Mexican visual elements in a groundbreaking way. Filmmaker Rupert Höller, with a bold aesthetic and a masterful camera placement, fuses ancestral iconography with urban avant-garde, religious symbolism with female empowerment. In the Mesoamerican worldview, growing one's hair long symbolizes the corn cycle, with long hair representing the silks or tassels of the ear of corn, vitality, fertility, growth, and the eternal renewal of life. The glorious production design seems to pull endless surprises from a treasure chest, with enthusiastic collaboration from all the dancers: Ximena Martín, Luisa Peña, Valeria Guerrero, Denisse Arantxa Oseguera, and Mariana Itzel Balderas, who are completely devoted to their muses. You can feel the fun, family atmosphere of the shoot, full of giants, rodeo horses, ultra-enthusiastic children, bullfighter capes, big-headed figures, oversized shoes, and the very innocent Eloy Cándido Rivera Hernández, the zinger, the chili pepper of the music video.



-Rumbo (Course) – Fernandache David Argüelles

David Argüelles knows how to bring out the best in the Mexican singer-songwriter, assembling a top-notch team to create a vibrant collage: Fernandache's unmistakable voice, the rich texture of her guitar, her poetic lyrics brimming with emotion, Hanna Puga's art born from everyday life, Octavio Gómez's enthusiastic, life-affirming animation, Briseida Velázquez's visual naturalism in wardrobe and makeup, and editing that delves into the archives of forgotten memories for rescue deeply moving moments. A music video that speaks to the heart, that touches sensitive chords, as honest as it is refreshing.

-社畜 Shachiku Tatiana Higashida

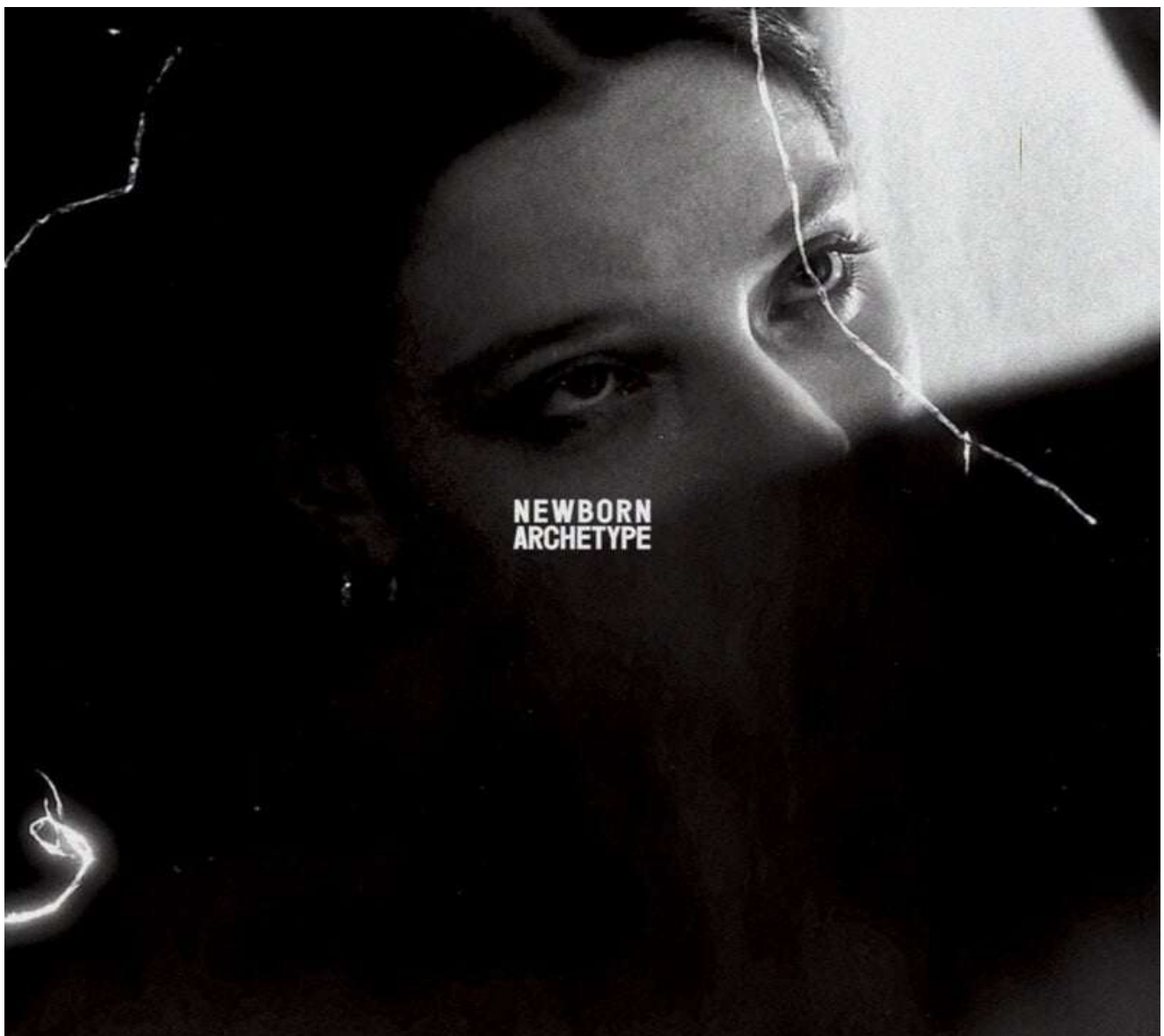
A terrifying fantasy set to the rhythm of heavy rock drums. Tatiana Higashida weaves a spiderweb with her supernatural tale, creating a haunted and timeless atmosphere in an okiya. The multifaceted actresses Sille Traeger and Sarah Tsukishima are mesmerizing in their dance-like duel of calligraphic aesthetics, a living nightmare that swings and trembles like a frightened pendulum, slowly entangling you in its hypnotic spell.

-ROASTED Katharine McNair

Hyperrealistic comedy, intelligent and shy. Gentle humor, innocent and based on the clumsiness, misunderstandings, and everyday mishaps that befall the contagiously charmingly anachronistic Katharine McNair. More a victim than a product of globalization, her primary language is mime and body language, with a knack for making the perfectly normal seem unbelievable. The series centers on family relationships (which seem to be on the verge of extinction): cold, necessary, complicated, and utterly unpredictable. The screenwriter, with a raw and incisive style, even creates a new device in the sitcom, a reverse of the technique used in *The Ghost* (like Maris Crane in *Frasier*, a fundamental character whose dysfunctional details we know all about, but who never physically appears) or *The Voice* (like Mrs. Wolowitz in *The Big Bang Theory*), since Aunt K. (Darlene Costello) does have a recurring presence in the series, but no one knows anything about her. An inimitable urban comedy, one of its main strengths is its technical simplicity, with a perspective that conceals a certain sadness, without containing any kind of moral lesson, except perhaps that love is the only hope for not falling into the abyss of modernity.

-newborn – Archetype Mark Rozhenstejn

A structurally complex and fascinating narrative depicting the chaotic life of Berlin's nightlife. A labyrinthine film of doppelgangers characters dressed and filmed in black and white, of infinite mirror reflections, of ancient Jungian archetypes, of chivalrous heroes, monstrous villains, and beautiful women whose stories repeat themselves endlessly. Aesthetics and ethics collide harshly in a tale told between sobs and hiccups of pain and tears, as eloquent and sorrowful as loneliness itself.



- فراشه باندورا (*Pandora's Butterfly*) Shady George

Mercy is the greatest force for miracles. Doing favors, helping others, is something so wonderful and spiritual that no ideology can compare. Shady George has created a beautiful, humanist film steeped in Greek mythology, a profound reflection on the influence of human beings on the lives of others from an optimistic, educational, and idealistic perspective.

-*BUSTED* Julia Liu, Keith Heyward

Reminiscent of paradise in search of Radiohead. The film crystallizes the lives of fans of the band as they capture the beauty of the road. The aesthetic is immediate, melancholic, and dreamlike, not interested in mythologizing the band but rather their traces and legacy. A torrent of musical notes that breathe intimacy, freedom, friendship, and adventure. "Our battered suitcases were piled on the sidewalk again; we had longer ways to go. But no matter, the road is life."



-Паль (*Knockoffs*) Asaad Abbud

Filmmaker Asaad Abbud aims to entertain, and he certainly succeeds! The director manages to impose his titanic personality with impossible shots and extravagant scenes, making us feel as if we're living in a video game, a kind of violent pop ballet. This hilarious and fast-paced film narrates the adventures of Danil Tyabin and Vladimir Karpuk through a series of interwoven stories in the Moscow underworld, where petty dealings, small-time gangsters, corrupt cops, and underground fights intertwine in a delirious film with plenty of dark humor. It's a deeply enjoyable combination of verbal style and visual ingenuity, especially in the sequence transitions, full of impressive stylistic flourishes. Screenwriters Maxud Sarsembayev and Mansur Sarsembayev, with their irresistible sense of humor, have a unique gift for describing their histrionic characters in a single stroke, as they brawl on screen, throwing punches to be the star of the show. Memorable lines, sparkling dialogue, sharp wit, and gripping plots accompany the collection of images that are seared into your brain. The thrilling acrobatics, the hyperkinetic scenes, the impossible stunts, and the over-the-top action are complemented by a hilarious cast, where every supporting actor delivers a superb performance, with the ever-elegant Aleksandra Milyoshina being a particular standout.

-Hellfire (Anti-Corpos) Juli Wycisk

A frenetic, agonizing, and existential film, but above all, addictively hypnotic. The urban jungle and nocturnal fauna of the great city of Berlin conceal a generational melodrama filled with tragic and violent stories. A whirlwind of visual hallucinations, seemingly drunk on bitter memories.

-Dark Arcadia Sally McLean

A breath of fresh air for a timeless text. Shakespeare's words breathe freely in Sally McLean's script, thanks to the performances of a dedicated cast in an unprejudiced, stage-set reinvention of the original material. Remembering that Elizabethan theatre was aimed at all audiences, from every social and cultural background, and especially the common people, the director, instead of remaining merely contemplative, captures the essence of the Stratford genius's work and adapts it to modernity. Rather than being steeped in odious modern technologies or current sociopolitical problems where Romeo meets Juliet on Grindr or Othello arrives on a dinghy to the European continent, the Australian director's series is filled with a fairytale fantasy atmosphere of endless possibilities, as if Lady Macbeth were a diligent student at Hogwarts. Everything is possible in the eternal universality of Shakespeare's text and its intrigues, romances, struggles, betrayals, mysteries, dilemmas, and adventures. An intelligent narrative with an immense and rich world-building where global folklore intertwines, where popular culture and Western literary mythology make a grand crossover in a single story, in a series that grabs you from the first episode with its brilliant plot twists and never lets go. A tribute to the Bard with spectacular production designs by Joseph Tiernan creating its own universe, full of breathtaking beauty where imagination reigns, and featuring costume design by the talented Jill Johansson that boasts unsurpassed artistic quality, leaving you speechless.



-Ljudski – Zbogom Rastko Šejić, Žaklina Crnobrnja

A tense, thrilling, and gripping tale; Rastko Šejić and Žaklina Crnobrnja show how fear gradually fades, revealing the monster of sexism. Images in black, white, and red create a restrained yet fierce film, where epic grandeur takes hold of the plot with precise pacing and captivating music.

-141 Saif Eldouh

A passionate and powerful portrait of the talented Egyptian artist Yassin, haunted by the harsh times he lived through. Filmmaker Saif Eldouh evokes compassion, affection, and admiration for the painter, delving into the great tragic moments of his life and detailing the hidden complexities behind his creative process. Few images are as striking as seeing Yassin focused with furious calm on a canvas, and few as painful as when the screen, once vibrant with the colors of the artist's brushstrokes, turns colorless—a stark reminder of his time in prison.

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-I'm Rhyme Jocelyn Jane Fee Miller

A wild and untamed marvel, reveling in an astonishing array of atmospheres and classical influences. Accompanied by folk guitar compositions and devoid of any sense of predictability, urgency or verisimilitude, the film is consistently hypnotic, elegant, and seductive. A stroll bathed in golden light, merging us with the symmetrical bodies of its actors and actresses, entangling us in their tousled hair, where filmmaker Jocelyn Jane Fee Miller demonstrates a voracious fascination with American popular culture, and above all, with its eggs. Her ever-ingenuous narrative and constructive inventiveness reaches heights of sublime beauty, joy, optimism, and fantasy, akin to an unreal and metaphorical dream.

-1286 Alisher Utev

This exceptional, overwhelming, and utterly relevant television series depicts contemporary slavery in Kazakhstan, filmed in stark black and white, almost like charcoal drawings, with a haunting lyrical realism. Closer to a horror film than a tragedy, it is filmed from the perspective of Olzhas Dalekhan, a free and cultured doctor kidnapped and forced into slavery. Filmmaker Alisher Utev portrays, without embellishment or softening, the tortures—beatings, injustices, humiliations, and medieval tortures—that Dalekhan endures. It is a work that outrages, repulses, and wounds, but is also an ode to the human spirit and its will to live, its resilience, moving the viewer without resorting to tears.



-Pacific Fiction - What About Love? Philip Steven Harvey

A brilliant, majestic, and catchy reflection by Philip Steven Harvey on the meaning and fragility of success, friendship, memories, and love. "To fear love is to fear life, and those who fear life are already three parts dead." Is there anything more exciting in this life than starting a band with your friends? The filmmaker digitally reunites the 80s band from Basildon (UK) made up of Jim Jeffery on piano, Paul Bristow on guitar, and Phil Harvey himself as bass player and lyricist. What about Pacific Fiction? Are they beautiful? Are they happy? what time do they play again? Long live Pacific Fiction!

-The Girl from Tomorrow : Chapters of Parallel Universe WEI CHUN JEN

Time heals all wounds. Space heals all wounds. Filmmaker Wei Chun Jen has created a series that demands revisiting to discover the nuances of its storytelling, its multiple layers of meaning. A well-constructed script, uniquely intelligent, tackles the theme of parallel universes from a novel and original perspective, sensitive and romantic. Everything is filmed in an ingenious and entertaining way, shattering certain boundaries, both generic and stylistic, of film genres, creating a profound, complex, hypnotic world. The wonderful actresses Hu Pei ting and Xie Cen xin are fantastic in their interdimensional adventure, making us feel as if we know them perfectly and yet have forgotten them, creating an infinite, dreamlike desire to always be with them and never let them go.



-The Case of the Missing Platypus Bryce Mackie

When Charles Lutwidge Dodgson—universally known as Lewis Carroll—stuttered, his real name stumbled and fragmented, involuntarily transforming into a painful, childish "Do-do-Dodgson." Instead of running from this insecurity, the writer decided to appropriate it artistically, transmuting his broken name into "Dodo," turning his greatest complex into the figure of a clumsy, extinct bird: the Dodo. Carroll makes it a shrewd character, the creator of the Caucus Race (an absurd and pointless contest where everyone wins and everyone must have prizes), as well as a solitary, misunderstood creature. A being from another era, in danger of extinction, who advocates for creative freedom in the face of a world that is too rigid and boring. Bryce Mackie and Tom Mackie honor the spirit of noble causes in a Sherlockian investigation, their ears wide open in search of their semi-aquatic, egg-laying platypus son. A story full of mystery, "violoncillo" music, sharp knives, chrysanthemums, comedians, marathons... An exciting, emotional, true and insanely wonderful homecoming of the lost monotreme, because we all have to enjoy life before the meteorite arrives.

-Man Meat Iñaki Herrera Tamez

Risky, satanic, and visceral, filmmaker Iñaki Herrera Tamez surprises by tackling themes like harassment, victimization, and emotional confusion with biting wit and depth. A dark comedy that showcases the talents of Melisa Odabas and Antonio Picon on screen, featuring a wildly escalating, cloying romantic attachment. The schizophrenic script by Emery Ricks and Iñaki Herrera Tamez takes things to new extremes (*rizando el rizo*, thanks in part also to the invaluable vocal contribution of Aidan Ohanian), shifting genres from a cheesy soap opera to a disturbing thriller with touches of fantastical horror, reflecting on the complexity, sacrifice, and cost of finding a stable relationship today.

-Aban Reza Dadooi

An addictive, increasingly dark script, full of twists as unpredictable as they are effective, leaving you jaw-dropped. Reza Dadooi gets the most out of his incredible cast, particularly the prodigious Shahab Hosseini and the brilliantly intelligent Laleh Marzban, with a serene yet relentless narrative pace where plot twists feel like a massive explosion. The urban setting is a character in itself, a somber and almost gloomy city, blending Iranian culture with cutting-edge topics like Artificial Intelligence, Enrique Iglesias or Texas Hold'em poker. A pleasure to watch and especially to listen to, with a wonderful soundtrack composed by Amir Tavassoli that channels all the emotions and an unforgettable song *ساعت دیواری و کولی* (*The Wall Clock and the Gypsy*) by the immortal universal artist Mohsen Chavoshi in the final credits.



-Martorell Sculpting a Poem Melisa Ramos

A fabulous humanist, cultural, educational, and ethnographic documentary filmed by Melisa Ramos. A prodigious portrait, bordering on an ode, of the Puerto Rican painter Antonio Martorell, offering an admiring gaze upon the multifaceted artist and his reflections on life, the world, and the passage of time. The film connects and moves the viewer, with the artist and his work, his voice and his face, as the absolute protagonists. A dignified man with fascinating and admirable experiences due to his profound social commitment; an eternal artist due to his constant visual experimentation that has allowed him to master diverse disciplines and control all the elements. “The Painter of the Stars”, who deeply loves his country, proud to carry its flag, who looks upon others with profound esteem and candor, obsessed with the will and fecundity hidden in the act of creation, and possessing a fervent love for words—all of this reflected in his last work, *Mi Grito Hacia el Mundo* (*My Cry Into the World*).

-*Trópico del Chance* Gabriel Ordóñez

Hyper-colorful naturalism, high erotic content, a critique of capitalist society, the alienation of modernity, and a search for existential meaning—all in homage to Henry Miller's *Tropics*. Filmmaker Gabriel Ordóñez relies on his magnificent cast, led by Ramiro Piñón Manini and Mariela Rueda, brimming with chemistry and physicality, breaking the sitcom's narrative structure with characters speaking directly to the camera and poking fun at all the stereotypes of Generation X, Millennials, Baby Boomers, Generation Z... and above all, at those who boast about what they are not and refuse to accept what they are. Sexuality is the vital, liberating, life-affirming, and cathartic force, but also the main marker of identity in a volcanic, experimental, fluid, complexly anal, unstructured, and absurd world—but also hilarious.

-*Next Station* Shuhrat Davlatov, Laura Saidova, Yasmina Ayupova

Social tradition, family honor, work discipline, personal greatness. Filmmakers Laura Saidova, Shuhrat Davlatov, and Yasmina Ayupova blow up the Uzbek Bastille, questioning its traditional and conservative ideals and demonstrating that only in dreams do we find freedom. A philosophy and a way of understanding human existence in the face of the closed, hermetic, claustrophobic, and obsolete world (metaphorically represented as a garage) of archaic Uzbek society, based on the daily subjugation of its youth, where the inspiration of a rock genius is subjugated and placed at the service of a rigid, mechanical, factory-like, remote-controlled system. The script is magnificent and well-rounded, thanks to the revolutionary contributions of Kamilla Kayumova and Elzara Radzhapova. It avoids imposing dogmas, rules, behaviors, or simple solutions, instead allowing for debate and reflection so that Uzbek youth can be understood and their concerns addressed. The message is that if their reasons are not heard or understood, their trust can be completely lost, and they will surely become enemies, even fighting against their own parents if necessary.



-*Vintage Journey* Philip Sedgwick

Without abandoning his gothic touch, the highly personal and original American director Philip Sedgwick seasons his attic of forgotten objects with nostalgia, smiles, and melancholy—a fictionally real place that moves us more than ever in this family film, a beautiful tale between two brothers with a hypnotic atmosphere created by set designer Lesley Lillywhite, who possesses the magic of telling well-told stories. A technically superb and exciting adventure film, lit by lanterns, without maps but with priceless rewards, that reflects on the value of the treasure chest of memories as a repository of pure emotions.

-鬼才要當花車女郎 (Neon Life) Miranda Wan

A hilarious, irreverent, and politically relevant queer coming-of-age comedy. Reflecting on ancient Taiwanese traditions and customs, screenwriter Li Jia Jing tackles contemporary themes of youth worldwide in her quest to fuse the old and the new. Her characters search, observe, learn, deny, refute, express their feelings, and feel immortal during their shared drunken nights. Filmmaker Miranda Wan knows how to squeeze the charisma out of her characters Tai Chia Tuan, Lin Chiun, Lin Wesley, and Yu Cheng Hsin in a film that has fun with itself, with shoots that must have been a blast, with biting and brilliant dialogues, with luminous and colorful costumes, with effervescent and electrifying musical shows, and above all with a revitalizing look, affection, esteem, and optimism towards the current moment of Taiwanese society: free, ingenious, creative, artistic, agile, witty, unrestrained, and wildly alive.



-Colisión Juan Antonio Rodríguez

Red phones, alcohol-fueled conspiracies, know-it-all prophets, acute respiratory infections, and the infamous tilt of the Earth's axis (an oblate spheroid?) combine to create a magnetic, pulsating, and precise device destined to shatter the fundamental principles of reason. Juan Antonio Rodríguez's gripping screenplay piles intuitions upon intuitions, sensations upon sensations, feelings upon feelings, with a fiercely contemporary story that gradually draws you in. This is further enhanced by Giuseppe Grasso's masterfully tense performance—as enigmatic as he is unsettling, as paranoid as he is effective—with a gaze that seems to see everything, and a claustrophobic atmosphere reminiscent of a theatrical production. A complex, suffocating, and self-fulfilling prophecy, this film possesses a unique rural beauty and an undeniable destiny that leaves you speechless.

-Hell Parker Croft

Ian Chase provides the sound and Erika Totoro the animation to conjure Parker Croft's nightmares. Almost an art-house horror film, with a philosophical, social, humanist, and ecological undercurrent unusual for the genre, where faith is conspicuously absent. A ticking time bomb that follows the illogical logic of dreams, in a stunning tableau where the mundane coexists with amorphous, oversized, and devastating monsters that promise to obliterate everything. Intense, agonizing, and suffocating, with a contemplative, patient, and courageous tempo and rhythm.

-*Ballad of the Mountain* Tarun Jain

“A child without education is like a bird without wings.” Filmmaker Tarun Jain evokes one of the most poetic moments in film history: the famous train scene in Satyajit Ray’s *Pather Panchali* (*Song of the Road*, 1955), when siblings Apu and Durga, running through a field of white flowers, discover the arrival of the railway. The innocent Diya Bisht marvels at the sight of an airplane flying overhead while walking through a lush forest in her humble village (accompanied by Basanta Devi’s beautiful song, *Ballad of the Mountain*), sparking a desire for liberation, progress, and rebellion against the still-prevalent and oppressive caste system in India. Cinematographer Karan Thapliyal composes a moving and unusual mosaic about youth, striving for lyrical realism with a compassionate contemplation of his characters’ everyday lives. An emotional script by Nasira Khan and Tarun Jain that seeks the primacy of images over words, the symbolic, metaphorical and visual value to reflect on the bumpy and zigzagging paths of the battered heroine, with the specter of material and spiritual misery always lurking and hovering over Indian society.

-*Kabutar* Shakhinabonu Azimova, Albina Akhmadeyeva

A portrait of freedom and death. Joyful, sad, poetic, it's so human it makes you tremble. A film about the meaning of education, astute, intelligent, and passionate, with a screenplay by Shakhinabonu Azimova, Albina Akhmadeyeva, Kamila Ramazanova, Shahina Musaeva, Abdullokh Ulmasov, Sanjar Murtazakulov, and Aleksandra Zakharova, who tell us about their own childhoods in the beautiful Uzbek countryside. A rich, heartfelt film where the directors demonstrate a remarkable talent for handling young actors and eliciting truly memorable performances. The viewer immediately connects with the actor Muhammadyusuf Yoldoshev, his tender gaze and his fascination with animals and nature. Shot on sets with natural light, and avoiding artifice, the film possesses a magical realism that lends it a special emotional power. The film is a marvel of sensitivity, possessing beautiful scenes where happiness was enjoying time with your grandfather planting a tree, herding sheep, or teaching you to drive.



-*And the Fish Fly above Our Heads* Dima Adib El-Horr

A metamorphosis of textures, cameras, and skin unfolds in an audiovisual experiment through time, culminating in a vertiginously poetic upside-down finale. Filmmaker Dima Adib El-Horr imbues the images with transcendent value in her encounter with the Lebanese Réda, a true prince of the tides, unexpected yet desired, orderly yet magical, mysterious yet honest. Everything resides in the landscape of the human face, where, more than filming what changes in two decades of absence, the focus is on what remains: the essence, the immutable nature of her character—that smile, that warmth, that tranquility, that elegance, that happiness. The sea will always remind us.

-*Shot the Voice of Freedom* Zainab Entezar

Filmmaker Zainab Entezar captures the everyday, necessary, epic, and heroic courage of Rashmin Joyanda and Nastaran Nastoh in Afghanistan. Filmed using guerrilla warfare techniques with lightweight cameras due to the oppressive and punitive Taliban regime, the women are portrayed as the hidden driving force of society. Through its characters, the film pays homage to the legendary dignity of Afghan women, portraying them as symbols of profound inherited courage, unwavering resilience, and eternal hope. Far from submissive, it depicts them with an indomitable strength capable of defying a lethal and totalitarian regime with honor and dignity.

-*Dolors* Marta Arjona, Maite Blasco

Libertarian cinema soaring high above the ground to deliver poetic justice to the aviator Dolours Vives Rodon. A valuable documentary with an educational focus, featuring the participation and leading role of historian Aïda Sánchez, who retraces the paths of memory to illustrate, disseminate, teach, and even move the viewer. A script with a humanist and honest perspective commemorates the heroines of the past, filmed with the cadence and rhythm of present-day characters to heroically rescue what has been forgotten, hidden, and silenced. And with the ever-sublime music of Liam Colomer, accompanied by the violin and viola work of Mireia Vila and Frederic Ibáñez.

-*BROKEN* Angelo Donzella

Angelo Donzella weaves a criminal intrigue that ruthlessly plays the captivating game of Russian nesting dolls, twisting the plot in a devastating way. A satirical thriller about scams, trauma, radical feminism and lonely hearts, it focuses on its two marvelous actresses, Anna Panero and Giulia D'Ancona—a cinematic luxury for the director. The film boasts extraordinary cinematography, particularly striking against the backdrop of Turin at night, courtesy of Sergio Milani, creating a chilling and glacial film noir atmosphere. These femme fatales operate with the precision of company employees, adhering to schedules, rules, breaks, and even uniforms. Everything is as functional as it is unnerving, yet screenwriter Maria Rosaria Scicchitano skillfully guides us into the feelings and dilemmas of her characters, exploring whether they can redirect their paths and what will happen the day they find themselves entangled in their own web.



-ԹԵԽՆՈՐ ԼՍՏԵՐ (FIBERS) Anna Grigorian

Anna Grigorian cooks a stunning documentary without using archival footage or fictional reenactments, relying solely on the meticulous narration of the experiences of victims and witnesses, and a painstaking preparation of Zhengyalov bread. These words compel the viewer to engage in an exercise of imagination regarding the pain, horror, and human degradation that occurred during the war in Shushi (Artsakh/Nagorno-Karabakh). Reflection and memory take center stage, focusing on the relentless obsession with survival, the value of food and shelter—memories etched in stone yet recalled as ethereal as curtains fluttering in a window—symbols of contemporary European history, a giant with feet of clay that remains silent in the face of certain tragedies and has learned all too well when to look the other way. The script uses the testimonies of Lida Mkrtchyan and Silva Khnkanosyan, extracting a resilient collective memory based on the recollections of its protagonists, making it necessary to see the forest by looking at the trees.

-O que as formigas me contaram (Things the Ants Have Told Me) Marcus Vinicius Diniz

A cinematic achievement with an empathetic portrayal of the factory world and its human struggles, spiritual aspirations, nostalgic longings, and economic hardships, thanks above all to its prodigious editing in a play of trompe l'oeil, parallels, and polyndromes. A transgressive, original, and daring visual experiment, with the naturalist cinematographer Yan Gabriel knowing exactly where to place the camera at the precise distance to realize his director's metaphorical vision.

-Zahra Hadi Shatat

Filmmaker Hadi Shatat portrays fear, urgency, and anguish with a race-against-the-clock narrative of exquisite sensibility and hauntingly symmetrical visual power, capable of stirring consciences. The talented actress Maria Zreik traverses a mountain of bloody ethics in the moral underbelly of factory capitalism, trapping the viewer in her pain, making them more of a participant than a mere witness. Ahmad Jalboush's superb cinematography, drawing from Italian neorealism, starkly depicts the Arab world from within, capturing the gray urban labyrinths while simultaneously capturing the cinematic quality of his actress's gestures, never abandoning her on her painful journey. The camera, our gaze, and the unborn future are her only companions in her piercing solitude. A sharp, tragic and original script, with an intelligent and accusatory social denunciation of the absurd, as truthful as it is critical, where the director manages to force reflection and not to look away.



-BOXEADORA (BOXER) Oldren Angel Romero

Brutal. Camila Arteché delivers a performance bordering on documentary; it's hard not to believe she's a professional boxer. The acclaimed actress and the talented director Oldren Angel Romero do a fearless job of conveying the character's exact feelings through her punches. In the sky above its rooftops, bathed in golden light, Cuba battles itself in a relentless struggle. Alexander González's cinematography chameleon-like, guiding you through a sea of emotions, underscoring each of the somber moments in a unique and fascinating exercise of slow motion, shutter speeds, and unnerving gazes into the camera. An operatic and captivating result where the director portrays the force of violence, the eclipse of Cuban beauty, and its electrifying geography, where a single building absorbs all the color, power, and luminosity of a city at the cost of the unbearable suffering of others.

-SYNDROME Yannick Barbara

Poetry of desolation and sadness. Filmed in the first person, Yannick Barbara delivers an excellent, stark, surprising, honest, vulnerable, and impactful performance. The film's plot is fiercely topical, drawing us into a world shrouded in shadows, exposing addiction to psychotropic drugs and the fragile benefits of the healthcare system. His performance will break your heart, complemented by a script with a simple, understated, measured, and clear narrative, possessing a strong didactic purpose and culminating in a firm, stark, abrupt, and unconventional ending that serves as a clear denunciation, setting it apart from typical commercial cinema. A devastating computed axial tomography of the already shattered brain of the demolished urban youth, with a citizen who struggles to camouflage his traumas by bathing them in vehement paroxysmal but illusory emotions, addicted to psychotropic drugs and to dreams already dead, with a script that breathes the lyricism of the best damned poets that Paul Schrader would have loved to write.



-Fais le mort! (PLAY DEAD!) Matthew Lancit

The multifaceted artist Matthew Lancit walks on water in a stunningly beautiful, viscerally human horror film, shot in the first person with impossible perspectives and angles. Beyond his remarkable talent for camera placement, the filmmaker also manages to make what he films—even the most repulsive, disgusting, or painful scenes—seem commonplace or even humorous, creating a powerful emotional dialogue; as if Jacques Tati had filmed *The Fly* (1986), with enigmatic and sardonic long shots at the climax. The entire cast and crew are utterly dedicated, from the Lynchian makeup to the performances of his daughters, all fully committed, body, soul, and insulin, to the masterful director.

-*La Chitarra Nella Roccia (The Guitar in the Stone)* Tommaso Ottomano

Want to sleep? Not at all. An amazing concert at the Abbey of San Galgano, packed to capacity with an enthusiastic audience. Those lucky enough to see him live experienced a true privilege, following Lucio Corsi and his band until they were hoarse. Filmmaker Tommaso Ottomano masterfully handles all the technical elements of the production to preserve a unique and unrepeatable spectacle, making us vibrate and feel the music just like those present. There's nothing better than watching *La Chitarra Nella Roccia's* concert for a sleepless night.

-*Jian Yu Zhen (Jane and Zhen)* Weiyu Li

Filmmaker Weiyu Li peeks into the shop window of dreams with a magical film that exudes eternal love, respect for the city it portrays, and admiration for the classical figures it evokes. A delight for all lovers of art filmed with a paroxysmal nostalgia for the past, but also with an intention of exploration and curiosity in the cultural encounter between the pragmatic Qi Chen and the sensitive Isabelle Dickey—a clean, pure, translucent acting duel, devoid of any malice, that evokes a joyful smile. For each of us harbors within us a literary mythology, full of geniuses and poets with whom we grew up, figures woven into the fabric of our lives, accompanying and advising us on our personal journey, and guiding our hand as we weave the tapestry of our work.



-*Rouhi* Noor Majid Al Qasimi

A deceptively simple film, unpretentious and full of purity. A profoundly existential and intensely vibrant cinema. Debut filmmaker Noor Majid Al Qasimi masterfully touches on the theme of paternal death with nobility, humility, and depth, crafting a journey as long as it is intense. Shamma Al Suwaidi travels in search of her deceased father aboard a majestic classic car, a beautiful blue vehicle that is to be destroyed to make way for something new. The director doesn't need to move the car or even show the father's face. She evokes sounds, smells, and sensations with specific gestures and small objects, combining the physical and sensory with reflection and feeling, moving through painful emotional terrain with admirable gentleness and elegance. She blends beautiful, almost dreamlike scenes with moments of crushing ordinariness, forming a diptych where lyrical memory and stark realism are fused in a unique and singular way. A lesson in filmmaking crafted with patience, love, and devotion, the director demonstrating a remarkable mastery of both the script and the film's editing. A testament to religious cinema without ever mentioning God, it is a worthy successor to the work of Robert Bresson, showcasing exceptional skill in the use of sound and an unwavering devotion to filming the hands of its characters.

- فلسطين عدس (Adas Falasteen) Hamdi Khalil Elhousseini, Samar Taher Lulu

Hamdi Khalil Elhousseini and Samar Taher Lulu reflect a harsh and undeniable reality, the voice of the innocent victims of war, amidst the dark pain of injustice and glimmers of hope. A very raw documentary, not for the faint of heart, that reminds us of the importance of details in armed conflicts, such as the need for food and water. Essential viewing to understand the terror experienced, the fighting spirit, the medical needs, and the pleas for help. The memory of Stalingrad and its agonizing siege, which caused a terrible famine, looms large over Gaza today, and its heroes are anonymous individuals full of kindness, humanity, and culinary flair, who keep spirits high in the darkest of times.

-Hasta en la Luz Valeria A. Avina

Filmmaker Valeria A. Avina delivers an emotionally powerful psychological thriller filled with premonitions and malevolent twists, exploring childhood fear in its various forms and levels. The film is like a nightmare, the kind you start running from without knowing why, with all your might, only to find yourself rooted to the spot, helpless before the inevitable. The script's greatest strength lies in the perspective of an innocent Renata Trejo, whose stunning performance masterfully tackles serious themes like childhood physical abuse with inventiveness and courage, in an intelligent, metaphorical, and unusual way. Learned helplessness, the seed of terror, the monster that doesn't come to visit because it already lives in your house—these are the ingredients for a contemporary fairy tale without limitations, featuring a terrifying Adrian Alarcón as a ruthless, malevolent bogeyman. And to highlight the unsettling original music at the end by Felipe Fournier, made with the stuff of our darkest dreams, where do those infernal noises come from that sound like the Cenobites' symphony?



-Father K.O. D.J. Higgins

Jesus Christ fans are back in fashion. A recital of biblical virtuosity brimming with epic soul, reaching glory through the path of redemption. D.J. Higgins writes the hagiography of Father K.O., a colossal and ever-elegant Joseph Mangano in the confessional, ready to turn every cheek to cleanse the streets of New York, accompanied by a spectacular cast, most notably the supernaturally beautiful Ava Breeze. Pure Old Testament in motion. Everything is awe and bone-crunching, vengeance and desolation, adorned with abyssal poetry. Eroticism and perversion are inevitably present in our inscrutable ways, as is a sacred soundtrack sung by the rapping altar boys of the streets. A meticulous and exquisite translation, almost image by image, phrase by phrase, of the parables from the Gospels of Brownsville, Mott Haven, Hunts Point, and Fordham, imbued with a furious, expressive embalming. It's impossible not to have faith; I believe in D.J. Higgins. Warning: Health authorities advise that *Father K.O.* is harmful to the easily offended. These are not your domains, so try not to defile the Lord's work.

-*Rastros (Traces)* Juan Ballesteros

Filmmaker Juan Ballesteros, the Portraitist of Emotions, weaves together thoughts, stirs hearts, and paints feelings with color. He wields cinematic language with precision and energy, placing it at the service of a brilliant script filled with concise, poignant, profound, reflective monologues and dialogues so sincere they leap off the screen. An intimate, courageous, rhythmic film, brimming with intensity in its images and performances that resonate deeply. The film echoes with the passionate meows of tabby cats, masterfully portrayed by Carlos Franco and Anabell Méndez, as they yearn to find their place in the world, exploring loneliness, identity, madness, art, and love. The director breaks with classical structure, defying traditional order, inviting multiple viewings, and making the viewer an accomplice, witness, and participant in his work. A masterful film where the supernatural does not suddenly erupt, but emerges in pieces of life in a natural, slow and heartbreaking way, waiting in the most common places until the catharsis is projected.



-*Blindgänger (Highly Explosive)* Kerstin Polte

A bold, risky, metaphorical, and effective proposition, where Hamburg experiences the blitz atmosphere of World War II in the present day. A symphony of survival in an ensemble film, showing how citizens bring out the best in themselves in the face of adversity. The main strength of Kerstin Polte's explosive film comes from a brilliant cast of established actors, notably Anne Ratte-Pollte, Barbara Nüsse, and Haley Louise Jones, who deliver unpredictable realism, contagious humanity, worldly humor, and dignified integrity to multidimensional characters navigating a world that seems to relentlessly bombard them. An energetic drama with a frenetic, race-against-the-clock pace, with doses of unstoppable dystopia but with a lot of generous optimism that beats with important ideas, unafraid to talk about current political, social, and technological changes with the idea of a community that, although chewing on fear and tasting rubble, will know how to stay united without losing its way.

-¾ Baptiste Leydecker

Oscillating between audacious innovation and respect for the classics, filmmaker Baptiste Leydecker finds balance and fusion in a thrilling dialogue between Maurice Ravel and Edgar Allan Poe. The waltz's pulse is incessant and obsessive, with images of dancers Julie Lalanne and Maena Lafare in Julio Arozarena's ecstatic choreography in an empty theater that lends an incredible dreamlike, gothic, and fantastical feel. However, the most striking images are the passionate, convulsing faces of the two talented pianists Pia Bose and Antonio Pastor in their apothecotic four-hand recital, culminating in an explosive, stark, and feverish finale.

-Scarlet Blue Aurélia Mengin

Overwhelming to the eyes and ears, and far removed from any narrative convention, filmmaker Aurélia Mengin crafts a meticulous, immersive, and magnetic film, delving into her personal universe, where blood is blue, thumbtacks are salty, and the mausoleums are sunflowers., with a stimulating blend of genres such as thriller, fairy tale, neo-noir, and romantic drama. A raw work with a sensorily overloaded surface that multiplies in its play of mirrors and contemplates itself from numerous prisms. Graced by a tremendous soundtrack, the atmosphere is unsettling, twisted, alien, yet hermetically beautiful, reaching a climactic epiphany in its Sapphic, melancholic, yet passionate sequences, which revel in all the colors of the rainbow.

-Fanboy Bean McKee

Each character fights their own battles in Bean McKee's intelligent, poignant, tender, and melancholic screenplay, tinged with autobiographical elements and giving a fundamental role to the pervasive urban soundscape—so harmful, polluting, and unsettling. A sensitive, measured, and poignant narrative, possessing not so much a nostalgic spirit but a yearning for redemption, it centers on the constant loneliness of an emotional Jon Washington, who carves out his own space within the context of an American college. His seemingly simple activities conceal intensely tragic elements, as he struggles daily to alleviate a pain that appears innate, relentless, and inescapable.



-The Ambrose Finch Dunyasha Althaus

A lucid, risky, and radical leap into the void by filmmaker Dunyasha Althaus, where pain travels mercilessly through time, shedding the skin of its characters but leaving their inner scars festering. A surgically perfect X-ray of grief, where unwavering will and tragic predestination are the undisputed protagonists, with a script that transcends with its intellectual rigor and profound spirituality. The entire technical team delivers a work as precise as it is overwhelming, highlighting the masterful contributions of Arnav Sharma in cinematography, Meghan Day and Phoebe Tankard in production design, and Theodosia Rowe in costume design, with a gothic atmosphere of gloomy shadows in the interiors and a bucolic, lyrical beauty in the exteriors, where even the trees seem to weep in sorrow. A disconcerting, but above all fascinating film, where the filmmaker invites us to piece together the puzzle formed by her tortured, torn apart and shattered characters in body and soul, where metamorphosis, catharsis, forgiveness or redemption are impossible, except perhaps through death.

-Un Mundo Recobrado Laura Bondarevsky

A poem disguised as a film to remember her grandmother, filmmaker Laura Bondarevsky creates a unique and surprising work, with a passionate emphasis on the value of memories, which she imbues with a moral, redemptive, and transcendental weight. An intelligent, moving, and painfully political screenplay, co-written with Luciano Bertone, travels through time and space, constructing a network of connections that leaves you humbled and moved by those who honor their family's legacy as if it were an act of hope, pride, respect, and faith.

-MR. YELLOW HIPHOP Kenji Sonoda

An electrifying piece of gangsta hip-hop history, where filmmaker Kenji Sonoda constructs a captivating narrative about the artistic transcendence of the singer Mr. Yellow. A culturally and morally enriching film, oscillating between raw rage and twilight sadness, where the artist reflects on the ups and downs of his life, as if we were riding a rollercoaster of emotions—violence, the music industry, gangs, money, prison, the yakuza. An audiovisual spectacle that resurrects the spirit, honor, and dignity of the samurai with an ambitious and fascinating biopic that reveals the most human and intimate side of its protagonist, where music is the lethal weapon and the past the weight of his conscience.



-APPology Marco von Moos

Filmmaker Marco von Moos elicits the perfect performance from his brilliant cast with an impeccable, cold, and cynical script, capturing the ambivalence between progress and technology. A futuristic warning disguised as a delightful, innocent, informal, and ordinary country gathering among five friends, it gradually transforms into a painful X-ray of our twistedly ambitious neurosis of success at any cost, even if it means hacking our own souls.

-Post Truth Alkan Avcioğlu

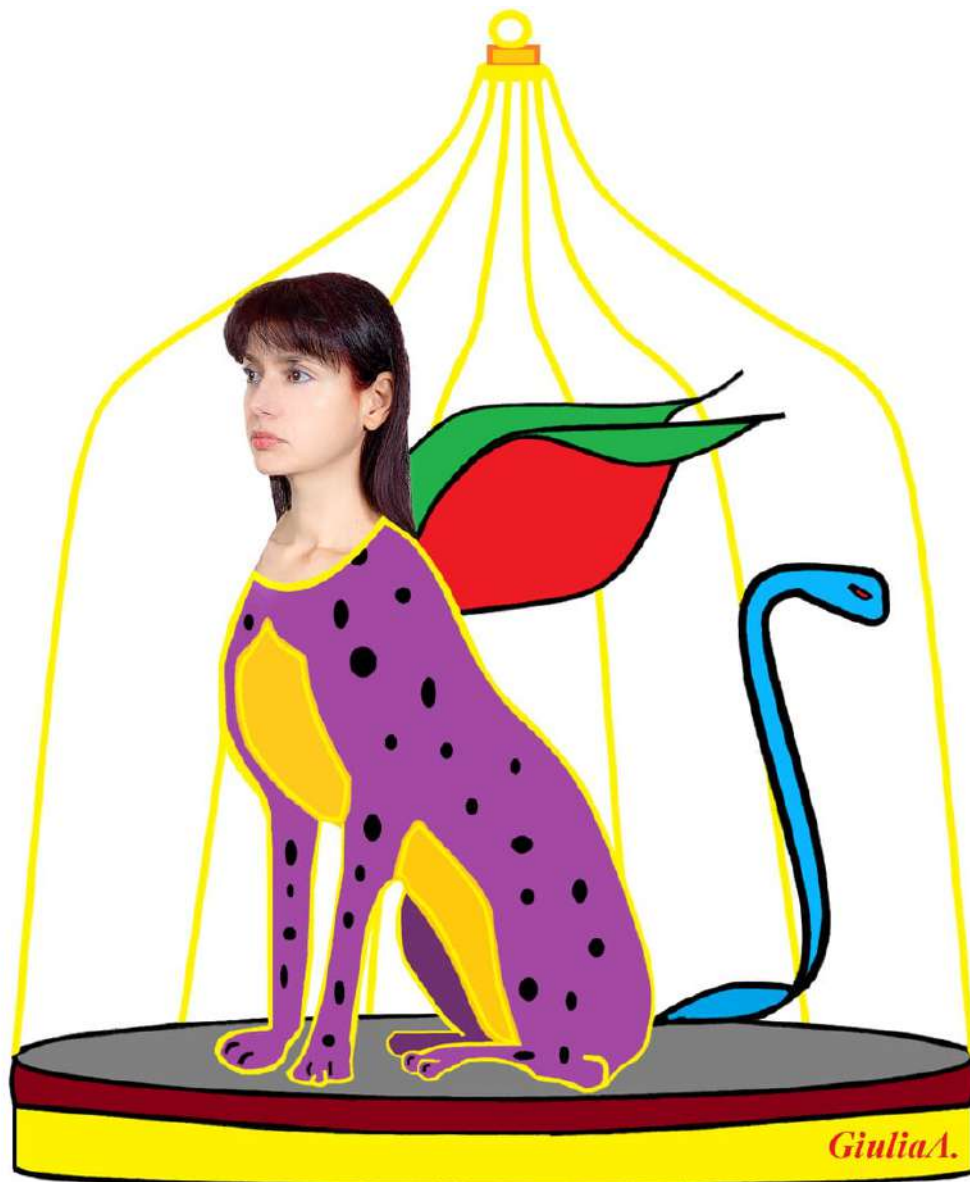
The first feature-length documentary in history generated by AI, the film is fascinating, hypnotic, and thrilling, with some images so visually perfect and sensory so evocative that any open-minded filmmaker would appreciate them. Its main strength lies in the images of vast spaces, images that were once a true cinematic luxury and a commercial draw for major blockbusters. The director demonstrates that he could easily produce a new Avengers sequel in just a few days. His frenetic, high-speed images with their devilish acceleration invite the formation of a new futuristic avant-garde movement, led by someone akin to Alberto Giacometti. It no longer matters whether something is virtual, artificial, fake, or not, because the real world has simply ceased to exist.

-Incontri (Encounters), Little Anonymous Mobile Phone Users Vittorio Caratozzolo, Class 2 A (2022-23) & Eugenia Lombardo Meneses

Didactic, uplifting, and concentrated vitamins delivered by the dynamic, diligent, and lively Professor Vittorio Caratozzolo. Simplicity is the tone of his scene planning alongside his endearing Class 2 A (2022-23), driven by the engine of science, rigor, and truth, addressing current, necessary, and relevant topics in student education, from ammonites to the use of mobile phones. A certain ode to rebellion, independence, and freedom, forming a charming oxymoron being directed by an authority figure, bathed in a sweet humor that recaptures the endearing perspective of childhood, an extraordinary way of representing the love of happiness and innocence in childhood.

-POETRIX Ioulia Lymperopoulou

A complex and unusual fantasy, oscillating between surreal horror and psychoanalytic comedy, an extraordinary work of genius by writer, filmmaker, illustrator, and art performer Ioulia Lymperopoulou, stirs consciences where dreams mingle with small doses of reality. Only through reconciliation with our complexes, traumas, and nightmares can human life reach its full potential; otherwise, it will remain fragmented, divided, dissociated, broken. The director's masterful touch is the joyful animation with which she navigates the twisted paths of the subconscious, with dazzling moments and blasphemous images of liberation, and a playful, vibrant, sensual, impactful, and inventive cinematic editing that eschews sentimentality, laying bare the essence of the body and forming a collage of archetypes in raw soul. Everything is in our dreams. But we no longer have time to dream.



-The Miracle Dannzel Escobar

The world began in an art gallery. And as Jean-Luc Godard always said, if a man and a woman don't like the same movies, they'll end up getting divorced. But you can still happily enjoy the moment, youth, and springtime love, hiding the salami and bad vibes in the charming film by cinephile Dannzel Escobar, with sensual actors Alexis Taylor and Kevin Bacewich, who exude style, knowledge, and talent in everything they say, imagination in everything they think, and undeniable chemistry and physical attraction in everything they'll do. Hallelujah.

-Renewal Vince Breheny

The Poet of Nature, Vince Breheny, lets himself be carried away by chance like a flâneur in search of beauty, discovering impressions, sensations, affinities. To look is the filmmaker's favorite verb, conjugated in an expressive language that seeks a way of using images based on their simplicity, frankness, and innocence.



-El Puto Amo Sergio Sánchez-Palencia, Bruno Sánchez-Palencia

A disconcerting and disturbing film by filmmaker brothers Sergio Sánchez-Palencia and Bruno Sánchez-Palencia, this is a painfully stinging reflection on the decadent values that the *nueva normalidad* brings to society. There is no single protagonist in this ensemble script, a collection of fragments encompassing all sorts of characters, from the president to unscrupulous convicts, without any ethical or moral distinction between them. It's a digital hive teeming with rabid, diseased, and selfish bees, dancing to the tune of sticky advertising, trapped in the web of omnipresent technology. The novice directors demonstrate their ability to unite masses dedicated body and soul to their film projects, bringing out the best in their acting cast even if they have fleeting appearances, such as Sara Madoz, Javier Del Pozo or Carmen Podio, knowing how to mix different sensibilities in their characters in a satire as forceful as it is funny, with an ending that is a monolithic, compact and vigorous blow to the grotesque, *esperpéntico*, distorting mirror of our time.

-1000 O Barbara Peikert

Border cinema. Filmed at the precise point that marks the boundary between what doesn't exist but is yet to be born, between what is inside me but will not belong to me, what is mine and also yours. A blurred, translucent dialogue unfolds, sometimes heard and sometimes seen, where frenetic images hypnotize you from the microscopic to the extraterrestrial, an abstract song gazing at its navel to honor everyone and no one. A purely sensory and abstract film that explores the limits of human vision in a visual chaos, inviting us down the rabbit hole to return to the maternal womb, but where one senses an eternal, titanic battle between two beings condemned never to understand each other despite being the same, a fierce and inevitable struggle, cannibalistic and stubborn, infanticidal and matricidal, between a mother and her child.

-A Book of Freedom: The Confessions of Francisco Menéndez Students of the Cinematic Art Program at Flagler College

Students of the Cinematic Art Program at Flagler College, along with H. James Gilmore and Tracy Halcomb, rescue not just a forgotten page, but one of the most audacious chapters in American history, an enduring symbol of dignity, honor, and human resilience. It is remarkable how successfully the students navigate such challenging terrain, creating a beautifully designed period recreation with a fluid pace, spectacular costume design by Sarah Sasser, and magical candlelit interior cinematography by Madison Torres and Dustin Miller. A grand spectacle to remember a figure predating even Toussaint Louverture, the "Spartacus of the Caribbean." The film portrays the life of Francisco Menéndez, the man responsible for igniting the flame of emancipation from African slavery, the first to break the colonial chains. It serves as a brilliant testament to courage, resilience, and leadership, an odyssey that began in his native Africa, from where he was torn and cast into the chains of the New World on British plantations. Spanish Florida, thanks to him, would become the first beacon of hope for the oppressed on the continent. An excellent work of documentation, technical efficiency, and artistic recreation in an essential documentary that explains the terrible human consequences of slavery and revives the terror of the English, "Bloody Mosé," the Corsair of Freedom.

-Ya Hanouni Lyna Tadount, Sofian Chouaib

An anti-war film that is disconcerting in its simplicity and precision. Filmmakers Lyna Tadount and Sofian Chouaib manage to bring hell into our homes with a final impact that leaves you trembling in shock. The film portrays the dehumanization of war, where the most innocent victims are always the primary victims. Without showing a single drop of blood, it manages to be violent, terrifying, and chilling.



-البحر تَنَاطَرُ- (*Scattered Sea*) **Lia Sáile**

Beautiful, inspiring, and more than optimistic, combative. From still lifes of pomegranates to the *tableau vivant* of her powerful actresses, filmmaker Lia Sáile designs an emotional and heartfelt choreography, defying the boundaries of time and space to plant roots in water, to build planets of sand, to learn to love with closed eyes. With a hymn to freedom, she reminds us that above our origins or cultural background, we are all part of a whole. Pure essence of art where beauty lies in the multitude of colors used, with a play of symbolism and personal interpretations that create an open work, challenging you with a obstinate, rebellious, transgressive, and transcendental gaze.



-Siddharta - Na nebu (*In the Sky*) **Ven Jemersic**

An alternate universe, filmed in spectacular infrared, in cotton candy fields, with filmmaker Ven Jemersic offering a lesson in visual imagination, as well as a moving narrative about guilt and loving redemption. The Slovenian dream factory designs a music video as astonishing as it is captivating, with Siddharta's catchy lyrics as the backdrop to a painful yet resurrecting story and a beautifully purifying tale.

-Four Haikus **saba hasan**

Filmed in Japan, with a soundtrack composed by his talented son Aman Hasan Kumar performing Bach and Schumann, one can only surrender to the tactile power of Saba Hasan's images: their fragility, lyricism, cadence, and melancholy. Ephemeral nature and the beauty of impermanence invite us to savor each moment intensely, appreciating its splendor and relishing the fleeting passage of time.

-Stamp On My Threshold Like A Cowboy **Cicely Hadman**

A deeply intimate, sensitive, and sensory film that oscillates between portraiture and self-portrait, exploring the reflection and fusion we seek in others, our sense of ourselves through the fluid and transformative gaze of the other. Vulnerable, cautious, curious, and shy, filmmaker Cicely Hadman allows herself to be filmed by her former lover as if the camera were a paintbrush, a lasso, and a weapon. Focusing on the materiality of the face and domestic or everyday landscapes, the film creates its own unique and vibrant world, shaping a psychic, spiritual, and bodily self-awareness that reflects on love, identity, femininity, and eroticism. A handcrafted film that understands cinema as a space of total creative freedom, but also as an existential, cathartic, therapeutic, and healing art.

- حدود (Hodoud) Samar Taher Lulu, Hamdi Khalil Elhusseini

Eternity is the absence of a mother. A beautiful, poignant, and lyrical film about the daily life of a family separated by war, living in tragedy, awaiting her return. Filmed in a serene, patient, and evocative documentary style, its emotions are pure, tender, innocent, and resonant. Filmmakers Samar Taher Lulu and Hamdi Khalil Elhusseini lovingly, empathetically, and hopefully capture the faces of the adorable children, masterfully using animation to stage color, longing, message, imagination, and connection.

-BIG FOOT MAMA - Goodbye Butterfly Ven Jemersic

Filmmaker Ven Jemersic takes the legendary Slovenian band BIG FOOT MAMA back to the rooftop of memories, revisiting their origins as a high school band and their rebellious creative freedom. A collage of colorful images and pop-rock sounds unfolds like a frenetic yet reflective montage of those sticky, love-struck memories that replay endlessly in your head after a breakup. Nostalgia, vibrancy, energy, origami, power, and a profound connection between the artists, their music, and their fans.

-SESSIZ PLAN (SILENT PLAN) Ömer Yildirim

A powerful and tender satire, a splendid and biting comedy with an exceptional cast featuring the acting prodigies of the moving Merve Ayaz and the dynamic Elif Çakırtas. Ömer Yildirim writes a script full of witty and sparkling dialogue, exuding naturalness, sincerity and realism. Broken illusions parade in a chaotic farce with spectacular, extravagant and deafening gags. A devastating parody of technological mythologizing, a cruel fable of the siren song of the pharmaceutical industry, always tied to profit and money. Director Ömer Yildirim, with his always mordant observation of his characters, achieves a perfectly controlled tone, painting a colorful, varied, fresh and entertaining portrait of Turkish society that disguises a certain harsh criticism of some of the country's institutions. The ending is a thunderous crash of bitterness after the incredibly savage battle between hearing impairment and the capitalist system. Mehmet Sah Celik, Elif Çakırtas, Berk Aydin and Merve Ayaz embark on a heartbreaking journey filled with moments of sadness, collapse, overcoming and happiness, where successive disagreements and frustrations highlight the stigma surrounding deafness. Didactic, motivating and emotional, superb in its simplicity, Ömer Yildirim's film vibrates with touch, laughs with gestures and cries in silence.



-Acorde Final (Chord of Silence) *Pachy Banks-Cabral*

With emotion, music, and hammer blows, without pity, artifice, or condescension; with raw truth and pain laid bare. Filmmaker Pachy Banks-Cabral offers a fable about grief, self-destruction, and the sublimation of art, with an extremely calculated script, like a score of pain, offering viewers one of the most stark and unsettling portraits of loneliness, collapse, and despair ever seen in the dejected face of Patricia Muñoz Aldave, who delivers a colossal performance. Cinematographer Francis Adamez paints sadness with searing brushstrokes in an austere, theatrical interior setting, without any stridency, finding meaning and depth in every decision about where to place the camera and how to use light, emotionally dragging viewers to the edge of the precipice, with a work that would have delighted Sven Nykvist. A brave, honest, tireless debut film in its coherence with a harsh, uncomfortable and melancholic ending, but also humanist, poetic, revealing, candid and hopeful.



-MEMORIA MÁGICA Wilson Burbano Del Hierro

Answering the call, Wilson Burbano Del Hierro responds with a raw and unconventional visual language, yet masterful and exquisitely beautiful in its very unbridledness. Filming with a humble mobile camera and a couple of candles to illuminate his twilight journey, amidst whispers of dust and memory, he searches for the Word, eternal nature, divinity. Sound becomes the absolute protagonist, an alchemical, mystical, and visionary sound. People are mere expressionistic shadows wandering, unaware of the great mystery, connecting Wilson Burbano Del Hierro more with the plant and animal kingdoms, which seem to already know everything. Scenes of phonemic dialogue with horses and cows, and silences with iguanas, hint at the director's weariness and rejection of the artificial clarity of new technologies. Instead, he encounters careless, chaotic, and superimposed images, finding in abstract, hypnotic, and eroded textures the cracks of time. Life and death constantly intertwine, emerging from and entering magical forests, visiting somber tombs, resurrecting relatives enamored of El Cid Campeador, reminding us that the end of the road will come unexpectedly and without warning, even if we refuse to accept it and insist on continuing our journey, as in that horrifying sequence of gun-toting assassins where the image is a grotesque slapstick comedy, with people leaping into the water, somersaulting at high speed, showing us the fragility of the balance between good and evil, the violent dynamics of this world. A journey where the climactic, cathartic, and joyful encounter with distant relatives is the arrival of a stranger, like an extraterrestrial who wants to capture them with a rickety device, that ugly camera, receiving him shyly but smiling, bewildered by the meaning of that rootless being who inhabits so many worlds and not just one, and has the ability to decipher the cryptic language of the wind. Momentarily relieved, but not calmed, the shadow will continue searching for the great mystery and the meaning of it all: that we are an accident without purpose, yet knowing at least that our will was born in the sea. In the sound of the ocean waves.

-Al Awda Jason Soo

With courage and with a steady hand, Jason Soo directs a film aimed at broad audiences, filming a boat with anonymous crew members fighting for the Palestinian people, inviting us to share their daily lives in an adventure that is both commonplace and epic. Very well constructed and paced, with a clear vision of what it wants to show—the importance of creative resistance—it prompts reflection on our role in global conflicts. As necessary as it is urgent, the director shows us a journey as beautiful as it is painful, recalling the struggle for survival of the most innocent people in armed conflicts.

-TRAVERSE 2-Next level- Kaori Kaori

Unexpected storm clouds threaten the tranquility of retired fighter Jun Tamegai during his well-deserved rest. This handcrafted action film unfolds with style, ingenuity, and iron will. Jun Tamegai makes a powerful return with breakneck speed in a legendary saga that Satoshi Hakuzen promises to continue. The martial arts sequences combine brilliant choreography with dynamic, splendid, and believable filming styles. A tribute to karate and its philosophy (with an unforgettable, majestic dance in the final battle against an elegant Alain Roy), that deals with much more than fighting, based on self-control, respect and personal growth. Saki Nakano delivers an outstanding performance as the devoted daughter, serving as a counterpoint of innocence in a turbulent, chaotic, merciless and violent world.



-Aisha Can't Fly Away Morad Mostafa

The magnetism in Buliana Simon's gaze is one of the great strengths of Morad Mostafa's saddest and most beautiful film. Shot handheld by Mostafa El Kashef with magnificent abandon, it immerses us in the protagonist's world with chilling close-ups, like an intimate documentary. Being drawn into the claustrophobic streets of Cairo isn't a choice, it's an imperative. We enter the protagonist's inner world, maladjusted to everything, a wife to nothing, adjusting to the rhythm of her breathing until it becomes our own. A realistic, direct, and stark depiction of the marginalization and social breakdown that converge, above all, in the peripheral areas of major cities worldwide. True cinema, conceived from the gut, that produces a gut-wrenching pain, transporting you on a suffocating mental journey until you come face to face with the ostrich in the room no one wants to look at. Morad Mostafa and Mohamed Abdulqader's screenplay is harsh and raw, reflecting the forced and voluntary isolation of its heroine, her lack of hope, her inevitable cannibalism, and the life she has been dealt. It's a film without an ending, neither sad nor happy, because the true tragedy for Buliana Simon's character is that life will continue in the same way, with pain upon pain.

-HEIDEGGER Юрий Владимирович Кузин

Юрий Владимирович Кузин focuses on the fundamental question of Dasein and existence, exploring how cinema can reveal the human essence and its relationship to the world. Looking directly into the camera and dismantling space and time, the director, with an orgy of intimate and wondrous images, undertakes a constant search for the meaning of being, questioning the most basic assumptions about reality, understanding himself in relation to the past, present, and future, focusing on the formation of personality in childhood and the traumatic, necessary, and powerful role of parents. Юрий Владимирович Кузин presents himself as a cinematic thaumaturge, the possessor of images, the summoner of sounds. His eyes, without a trace of doubt, seem cursed, like those of a tragic mythological figure: they see everything, they remember everything, they know everything. By skillfully and masterfully controlling every aspect of his film, he becomes a being conscious of his own existence, a being who confronts his own finitude with the infinitude of his cinema, of his art.

-Piso Bro Guillermo Calero

Alberto Conde and Guillermo Calero: two wonderful characters, two kind and solitary souls who give us an invaluable social service as real estate agents. A comedy full of corrosive subtlety, smiles, and a touch of malice, where the director is in a state of grace, perfectly balancing the hilarious and the corrosive with an immeasurable cast, who repeatedly sacrifice their dignity in the form of apartment salesmen. A biting film that masterfully illustrates the other side of Spanish progressivism, the one that doesn't have grandma's jewels locked away in a safe or villas in the Canary Islands.

-山与灵 (Elves in the Valley) Tenglin Peng

A touching fable, grand in its simplicity, celebrating the heroism and wisdom of rodents. A visually stunning film about family devotion, achieving genuine lyricism in its poignant portrayal of a young Nadila Yeerken, brimming with sensitivity and feeling, and her endearing grandfather, Bahetijian Wulaziali, spontaneous and refreshing in his performance. The magnificent mountainous setting, a world devoid of other people, is a visual powerhouse with dreamlike touches in its vast, empty landscapes teeming with life. The film is a poem, a hymn to love that attends to every detail in its elegant structure, with meticulous visual work in its gestures, glances, ceremonies, rituals, dances, costumes... an aesthetic and human richness that reaches the sublime. The viewer will get a lump in their throat with an ending in which it is impossible not to cry when Nadila Yeerken saves from the embers what truly matters, and filmmakers will be left wondering how the talented cinematographer Zang Zhenghao was able to film the "pika" animal with such delicacy and majesty.



- 如父如母 (FATHERLESS) Wenxin Yan

A reflective, poignant, and visually stunning autobiographical film. Rich in moral complexities and spiritual themes, it is filmed with a blend of brutal realism and poetic lyricism that, at crucial moments, transforms into pure abstraction. Its meticulously planned love sequences stand out, employing the power and simplicity of symbols such as the multiplying (or dividing) mirror or the stride of an adventurous tortoise. The emotionally effective screenplay by Wenxin Yan and Xiaohui Ma depicts the inner struggle of a distraught Yixun Sun during his father's illness, confronting the challenges of grief, love, guilt, and new beginnings. An admirable portrait of coming of age and family disintegration, with glimpses of Dostoevskian introspection, this film makes you feel and think, analyzing and empathizing with the perspectives of all its characters. The film works magnificently because director Wang Zixuan conceived his characters' performances with complete consistency, with searing clarity, captivating stoicism, and epic drama, all set against a Chinese landscape filled with breathtaking scenery that grapples with its fierce capitalism and ancient traditions.

- 如果当时 (What If) Ziyu Wang

Unusual and beautiful, Ziyu Wang is as thrilling as he is twisted in a deceptively gentle work that tears at your heart with its final gasps and catharsis, filmed, like the entire story, with a fierce intimacy. The intuitive and multifaceted script tackles romantic melodrama by avoiding all audience expectations. In Yajun Wu's devastating performance, every time she looks at the camera, we feel the omnipresence of nostalgia, the irremediable melancholy, the infinity of sadness. Transparent in her suffering, ambiguous in her gestures, suggestive in her desires, pessimistic in her decisions, she manages to convey the intelligence of her character through her emotions. A painfully romantic film, where achieving a balance between love and work is impossible, especially tragic in its portrayal of the sacrifices made by the artists, in their lost pasts. Neither the God of chance nor the God of destiny will save you from emptiness, nor from regret for paths not taken, nor from envy or longing for yourself.



-*Lingering Day* Tiancheng Han

A cynical, bitter, and painful drama. Tiancheng Han's merciless script dissects the vile, precisely unfolding the social ecosystem of its protagonists, trapping them in a claustrophobic house with rigid, fixed roles as if it were a Philip Zimbardo experiment. It clearly understands the injustices in the chain of privilege, and is doubly cruel, since the main beneficiaries in this patriarchal world—men—are invisible yet ever-present in the plot. Lanyi Jing delivers an astonishingly mature performance, the only one who shows any sign of compassion for the battered Shumin Luen, who has to scream to be heard in a satirical, depraved, and valueless world. The director shakes us, makes us think, and challenges the educational values instilled in childhood, where the only thing that matters is personal gain at the expense of destroying those around them. A cry stifled in the vastness, where everyone vomits their frustrations onto those below, where the only possibility of redemption or respite is abandonment. Will they live in justice and freedom in the Mongolian desert? One has to see it to believe it.

- 千年湯屋 (RAIJIN) Tomosuke Sugisaki

Tomosuke Sugisaki achieves a fusion of the delicate and the spectacular, overflowing with his torrential narrative sense in a blend of all kinds of cinematic genres, including techniques from the silent film era to the innovative and groundbreaking use of artificial intelligence, to travel back in time to an age steeped in majesty, imagination, and poetry. The director's knowledge of feudal Japanese history exudes nostalgia for epic adventures, extraordinary settings and honorable characters. A born storyteller who reveres his alter ego, Kageharu Nagao (the emblematic master castle builder), draws on Japanese mythological folklore (especially its Yokai and Hakutaku) and respects the beauty of unsolved mysteries. His images are rich in detail, meticulously crafting a complex plot that constantly challenges the viewer's sense of wonder.

- 当它来临时 (When It Comes) Qianyu Ji

A splendid portrait of a young, daring, and insolent teenager, yet full of charm. With the scent of a tamed shrew, the film is more than a social drama exploring patriarchy or economic status; it's a story of family and friendship where the only culprits are the feelings and decisions of each individual. Qianyu Ji's original screenplay stands out, as her character, instead of losing her innocence, finds it in the caramels of a corner store, leading to a beautiful, insightful, and desired ending. Yujinhui Rong gives a very human face to her director's alter ego, describing those disconcerting moments in life when you feel bitter, desolate, satirical; it seems your parents don't love you, or popularity at school or parties takes on an undeserved importance within you, where everything seems more important than it is. But how sweet are those moments when everything is experienced for the first time, even if they are painful.



-*La gravedad no espera (Gravity does not wait)* Patricia Bova

Filmmaker Patricia Bova's tribute to the Argentine dancer and choreographer Viviana Iasparra, the master of movement. A beautiful, aesthetic, and profound film, with an unforgettable opening that foreshadows the visual delight of her black and white cinematography. The director admirably conveys this woman's universe in all its splendor, focusing on moments from her artistic rehearsals, on the incessant and unfathomable search for the unexpected, on the innocent experimentation devoid of outsiders. The film unfolds like a dream, where the dancers always seem particularly absorbed, living in a ritual, entering a trance that transports them to an unexplored world. Artists full of courage and talent, they yearn for a return to a primal nature, fighting against a rigid and intolerant culture (the strange and frightening urban landscapes filmed are particularly noteworthy) through free, authentic, and fluid forms of expression.

-*Dream Wakes* Zeyu Xiao

The chaos of heartbreak. Original in its story, where two former lovers exchange dreams instead of letters, and original in its form, where the daring cinematographer Yang Chen makes his camera's shutter speed the film's fundamental element, melting the characters at will as if he were painting a surrealist canvas. The avant-garde director Zeyu Xiao demonstrates a powerful presence, filming some unforgettable sequences, such as the seven-minute-plus conversation in a cafe, a perfectly measured and designed wide shot that introduces us to the story's protagonist, the acclaimed Jiayuan Qiu. He prioritizes the conversation for its information rather than its emotion, immersing us in a dreamlike, aquatic, and detached atmosphere, and emphatically reminding us that the hardworking Eric Xu is no match for our heroine.

-*Burning for the Departed* Ruize Ju

If screenwriter Dan O'Bannon used his Crohn's disease abdominal pain to create *Alien* (1979), film director Ruize Ju creates an original ghost story, complete with an abandoned house, to reflect on the experience of living with cancer. Art director Wang Yichen impressively creates beautiful, homemade lamps using CT scans, and masterfully constructs and deconstructs a haunted dwelling, allowing cinematographer Chen Zihan to make the space a character in its own right, with the camera's perspective being key to the narrative. The director chooses the locations meticulously, creating symphonies such as the sequence with the nuclear power plant, the arrival of a train and the appearance of his esteemed actress Qiyue Xu, in whom he trusts to carry the full weight of the mystery in her gaze, granting her reflective moments in a car wash tunnel or on a night bus, which carries us away to daydreams of bygone times, dreamlike places, lost loved ones.



-La Entrevista (*The Interview*) Gabriela Pomi, Lucía Loureiro

Angry, honest, direct, effective. A stimulating tragicomedy set in a close-knit neighborhood meeting presided over by the grave sensibilities of Gabriela Pomi and Lucía Loureiro, with realistic and original dialogue—far from innocent, cruelly mundane—that depicts a disturbing social moment. Laughter echoes a cry, while a nasal trumpet marks the beginning of a medieval melody, leaving us all wondering who this invisible Pied Piper of Hamelin is, so easily deceiving, manipulating with his false charisma, leading us to the precipice.

-Muse Jianfeng Qin

Jianfeng Qin proves himself a master of suspense in a gripping exercise that uses sight as a constant point of reference. A meta-cinematic lesson in storytelling set in just one room (or two), with a brilliant plot, meticulously crafted to perfection, mechanically woven together with original twists, reflecting on the writer's condition and the facets of loneliness in urban life, tacitly revealing that addictive impulse of morbid curiosity. The story is a mystery drama, with thriller elements, that builds intrigue to an extraordinary climax, incorporating touches of platonic romance, Italian Renaissance art, and dark humor into its intricate puzzle. The film, more than Cornell Woolrich's *Rear Window*, adapted by Alfred Hitchcock in 1954, resembles Hanns Heinz Ewers's *The Spider* (1908), where a lethal femme fatale, Yitian Yao, manipulates a trusting Tianqi Liu, leading him slowly into her cunning trap, including a reference to a macabre, imitative, self-destructive dance. Jianfeng Yu's fantastic editing not only links the time periods but also the viewpoints and ambiguous morality of the egocentric characters with an elegantly frenetic style, giving prominence to Ming Lu's epic musical composition to complete a marvelous and comprehensive symphony.



-The Farewell Night Jun Li

The talented actresses Choi Gyuri and Leem Hyangju deliver a moving love story, surprisingly realistic and brimming with emotional tension that leaps off the screen without any artifice. The success of Jun Li's multifaceted script lies in its ability to be interpreted as a tale of love, adventure, and adultery, while others may focus on the underlying themes of sacrificed lives, unfulfilled dreams, and unresolved hopes. Viewers can empathize with Choi Gyuri's main character, though perhaps the true drama lies with the scorned Seo Wonho. An emotional journey in search of life in a colorful landscape painting by Paul Cézanne where passion soaks the viewer in every unspoken word, in every averted glance, in every action with and without disguise, with a minimalist, breathtakingly sensitive black and white cinematography by Liu Hao, Cui Bo and Yang Jingfan capable of portraying with poetic breath the painful and passionate emotions of three human beings in love.

-*房间* (*Twin Flowers*) Qing Wu

Qing Wu's mastery in depicting emotions is undeniable, as is her ability to sketch the stark geography of a simple room, the insurmountable distance between two beds, and the immense void separating two potential future lovers. Undoubtedly, this is a film that stirs passions in its exploration of friendship, offering a lighthearted and carefree perspective on those who share an apartment in their youth, in an atmosphere of free, dissatisfied, and nonconformist spirits. They live the constant struggle to achieve their desires with a perpetual calm, believing they have all the time in the world and that success awaits them. The minimalist screenplay by Enyu Zhou and Qing Wu finds a precarious balance between its protagonists, carefully considering what is told and what is merely shown, what is seen and what is painful, crafting a marvel of poignant storytelling where the tender, loving caress becomes the realization of the impossibility of reaching the sexual act without causing the disappearance of the cherished companion.



-*Lin Nan* Duanze Ma

Women have held a significant, yet undeniably invisible, place in the labor movement, enduring social hardship and suffering mistreatment from employers and authorities, without any historical recognition. Duanze Ma emphasizes the crucial need to strengthen ties with rural communities and showcase agricultural advancements through a vibrant perspective of cooperative commitment, technological innovation, and social progress. The intelligent, elegant, and resourceful Liu Shurui demonstrates the initiative to prove that women's role in the community will no longer be secondary. Her contrast with the traditional Deng Baoquan, a beloved and affectionate father figure, is always rooted in respect and homage to the farmers who have always desired our abundance and prosperity. The epic and heroic filming of rural labors, those scenes of sybaritic beauty in majestic pictorial art, have been replaced by cumbersome machines, tailored suits, white lab coats, mass distribution by truck, and isolated greenhouses. Gone is the powerful lyricism of the countryside, with its wheat fields swaying in the wind and endless cloudy skies, but a great leap forward has been taken: vast lands filmed in aerial drone footage, the ideal technological and cultural revolution in shaping the new relationship between people and nature. Cai Long's feminist screenplay possesses a brisk narrative rhythm, following the daily epic struggle to find organizational strength against the intermittent nature of our industrial successes and failures in an exciting and reflective way, where the power of eating a good tomato, sculpted with one's own hands, is experienced with infinite sensuality, passion, and pleasure.

***-Ars Animalis for Troubled Times, only traces of me here* Anne Ciecko**

Watching Anne Ciecko's films is like receiving letters from a friend who writes to you, sharing their thoughts, feelings, and observations from the comfort of their home or during their daily walks. A cinematic gift, with flashes of intimacy, brimming with truth, reflecting on personal identity through poetic exploration. Like messages cast into the sea in a bottle, her films are experienced with the eyes, sharing every breath, every silence. Humble materials possessing the transparency of the essential, seeking not to dazzle, but to remind. The narrative begins with an intimate gesture, like a way of saying "Hello, how are you? I'm here" to someone far away, and it is in this distance that the film finds its value, because what moves us most about the images is not their beauty, though it is certainly present, but their trust and familiarity. The trust that the other person will be able to read the reflections in their living room, the little turtles in the park, the flickering light, the squirrel in their forest, the footprints in the snow, the playing cat, the birds in the sky, the feet on the sofa, the lines on the road. That cinema can remain a private pleasure even when projected in a public theater, when an exchange of glances takes place. That what is filmed is not just a movie, but a way of existing in the world, that what is filmed is not reality itself, but how that reality touches us. And that cinema can still be an act of friendship.

***-Finger* Xiaoyang Xie**

A suspenseful film crafted with the glances and close-ups of a sinister Keren Chen, as fragile as she is terrifying in her role as a timid nurse, always imbued with a hollow charm, splendidly performed. Ramiro Yu's elegant, unsettling, and understated cinematography creates a sickly and unhealthy atmosphere within the corridors of a drab hospital, generating an unusual sense of terror by showing practically nothing. Xiaoyang Xie's provocative and stimulating screenplay possesses a dark lyricism, with an obtuse philosophical approach and a perspective on traditional Chinese medicine that is both atrophied, monstrous, and captivating. Fantastic work by Canjinyi Zhou and Xizi Lin in makeup, using instruments as sharp as scalpels, as soft as caresses and as geometric as stars, is as beautiful and fantastic as fairy tales, where a finger is a mask, where beneath the masks the tragic truth is hidden, a truth that refuses to heal to the greater pain of its convalescent characters.



-*Out of Sight* Nathan Tosoni

A frustrated gaze unfolds in this hallucinatory film noir, poised between the terrifying and the fascinating, with an unsettling and suffocating atmosphere. Director Nathan Tosoni critiques the corrupt ambition of his characters, who play a morally ambiguous game of cat and mouse, giving the film its own unique identity. It's unclear whether the stalker is more obsessed with the femme fatale's beauty or with the lucrative financial prize he craves. What is clear is that the woman is a ruthless character, prone to elegant lies, as if tiptoeing, and that she will stop at nothing and no one to achieve her goals. Pure film noir, with the charm of a low-budget production, full of twists and turns in Nathan Tosoni's excellent, precise, and insightful script, which reflects on dashed hopes, broken dreams, false promises, and the folly of trying to corner a tigress.

-*God Dam* Abigail Hill

Hilarious, funny, and original, Abigail Hill bursts into stop-motion animation with fresh energy, boundless commitment, quirky humor, and charming characters. The narrative immerses us in the daily life of a humble post office and its eccentric employees: the hardworking Clint Eastwood and the cheeky Humphrey Damiels. The peculiar atmosphere created by its mockumentary premise generates some of the most enjoyable humor imaginable, bringing a constant smile to your face amidst its almost always embarrassing situations. The script is perfectly crafted, focusing on the dynamics of teamwork, and each personality portrayed is rich enough to unleash surprising, exaggerated, and unforgettable moments.

-*Young Wild Things* Inés Serrano de Haro Pérez

Inés Serrano de Haro Pérez traverses the rainbow in an unusual, extravagant, and poignant way, as if she had ripped the film from her very core. The film is alive in its details, igniting Francesca Amewudah-Rivers's fire to the fullest until the last drag, and squeezing Lashay Anderson's innocence until it melts. With a lucid, cruel, and transparent script, the once intimate and tender connection between two former friends transforms into an explosive and painful minefield, offering no refuge or solace, where sentimentality is conspicuously absent. Every frame, framed by cinematographer Duncan Yeldham, is perfectly constructed in a colorful storm of emotions, laying bare the passions of his characters with dazzling sensitivity and verisimilitude.



-The Modern Woman Madeline Watkins

Madeline Watkins unleashes a luminous energy, with strength, courage, and a frivolity that is nothing short of pure intelligence, leaving you with a smile on your face and a lump in your throat. A perfect combination of kitsch art, pop culture, and a feminist message in a story about the oppression of women, funny and empowering, full of wit and glorious little details. The director and actress has a wonderfully expressive face with a gift for comedy. In her guilty pleasure recipe for the perfect cake, she seeks the sweet delights of Alexis Jensen's exquisite production design, a salty pinch of Natalia Álvarez's symmetrical cinematography, the tyrannical sour power of Marcos Muñoz in sound, the warm baking of Alex Diehl's strident voice, and Vanessa Buitrago's stirring editing, capable of bringing all the ideas together and delivering a current, subversive, and modern fable.

-The true face QIAO MEI TAN

Essential. A respectful, daring, feminist film that portrays women actresses working in the pornographic industry, the one that trades in sex and dreams. Beyond the fame, the bodies, and the moans lies an unknown world that director Tan Qiao Mei films with intimacy, sensuality, and caution. The actresses experience joy and suffering just like the rest of us, a group that has been repressed and hypocritically attacked, yet rebels, reveals itself, and asserts its rights in this film, despite facing overwhelming odds. They share experiences and reflections on the harassment they have endured, family conflicts, existential crises, economic instability, the complexities of their relationships... In short, their fears and their hopes. In some sequences, they resemble gladiators in the Roman circus, walking into a visceral, exuberant, grandiose spectacle where the show is valued more than life and human integrity, and where, for a moment, everyone from the emperor to the slave shares the same gaze, drawn by their skill, strength, and artistry. It's an ineffable, intangible, indescribable, inexpressible moment where happiness is sold from sadness. The director always films with complexity and fascination, maintaining a certain distance but with infinite affection and tenderness toward her kind heroines, without judgment. A direct and sinuous documentary, a marvel that every man and woman should see.

-The Liars of Black Mountain Road Parker Croft

The blow comes immediately, almost imperceptibly, and with it the end of the music, the party and the joy, in a film about guilt and the piercing ache of a festering wound. The brilliant screenplay by Parker Croft and Nolan Gould, suggestive, effective, and full of suspense, chooses to begin the narrative *in medias res*, forcing us into the moving car and making us imagine all that was and will never be again. Endowed with a magnetic, cold, and corrosive realism, the film has more echoes of the naturalism of Émile Zola's *Thérèse Raquin* (1867) than of the psychological depth of Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* (1866). Its greatest strength lies in the acting duel between its acclaimed cast, with Millie Gibbons's heroic performance as the Pyrrhic victor in a cynical and ambiguous moral battle, without sorrow, without glory, without redemption, without penance. An ethical essay in Western society about denial, cowardice, remorse, and dissimulation, and how relationships crumble not because of the magnitude of the problems they face, but because of how they are dealt with.



-*LIGHT* Katarzyna Zabłocka

Cinematic craftsmanship, aesthetic expressionism, visual shock. Katarzyna Zabłocka conspires to cast a completely atmospheric, suffocating, hypnotic spell on us. We hear the anguish, we smell the shadows, we pass through the looking glass, the night embraces us. Lost in the forest, we feel fear with an infinite anxiety, unfathomable unease, searching for refuge, following the light. The light impacts the eye, with tension and surprise, inviting us to interpret the blotches as if in a Rorschach test, based on our most desperate hopes, desires and nightmares. Impeccable pacing, gripping plot, explosive suspense, a sense of diegetic mental flow in a metaphorical description of life on the Polish-Belarusian border in 2022.

-*Hiding in the Bubble* Xuling Wang

A warm journey through the twilight of adolescence unfolds in this charming drama starring two heroines sailing their own pirate ship. Young director Xuling Wang's fresh and compassionate gaze captures the heart of youth. A frenetic narrative depicts true friendship, where every conversation is important and essential, and where riding a bike through town is an adventure. The film exudes nostalgia for a world that has changed drastically, where school lessons are learned online, friends gradually lose their earthly nature for a virtual one, and artificial intelligence on a computer offers advice on romantic relationships. Meiqi He's mischievous gaze into the camera makes us long for a time when the world was simpler and less prejudiced, when innocence wasn't seen as a flaw, and the naive belief that the Northern Lights had arrived in your town was a gift of childhood. The magic of the film lies in the sincerity with which it's shot, as if the director were the protagonist, transforming each frame into a sounding board for a lived memory. Chen Jialing's cinematic editing is a relentless, energetic pyrotechnic display, a creative feast that blends cinematic language with that of video games. It's a journey through indie manga, onomatopoeic speech bubbles, Nintendo, and Rebecca's pop songs, all flowing with their own momentum and a raw vitality that everyone should be willing to embrace. Because if there's one thing the film also generates, it's envy, seeing that friendship between the beloved Meiqi He and Yunjing Yan, and being able to remember moments from our past, if we were lucky, in some distant time when we were truly happy, having real friends with whom to use a slingshot, share headphones, paint on the walls, shoot hoops, shout on the beach, and above all, being able to feel embarrassed when you meet them again as an adult and realize what a mess you've become.



**-Ακόμα και αν υπάρχουν αιτίες δεν έχουν σημασία ή κάθετες γραμμές
(Even if causes exist, they don't matter or vertical lines) Polydoros Kalaitzis**

A chronicle of working from home, disturbing, outstanding, unusual. A multifaceted perspective that exudes authenticity, magnetism, naturalism, and cinematic wisdom. Probably the most Kantian film in the history of cinema, as if *Ακόμα και αν υπάρχουν αιτίες δεν έχουν σημασία ή κάθετες γραμμές* were an adaptation of the *Critik der reinen Vernunft* (1781). Space and time are forms of intuition, and the structures of each viewer's mind will allow them to perceive and organize the experience, the life of Joanna Vraha, the woman without attributes. Polydoros Kalaitzis's cinema emanates from monotony, routine, and the everyday, yet transcends itself to reach the exceptional. It breaks with conventional cinematic rhetoric and stands out with its two-handed editing, as if he were playing an accordion. Real life pulsates within the film; the images inspire and expire at the director's will, creating a world of peculiar framing, interconnected spaces, and dialogues between the elements themselves. The semantics of solitude are explored, where the multi-vision underscores the hermetic nature of the impoverished protagonist's life horizons, trapped in a false shell, in a claustrophobic labyrinth of absurd monotony. Emotional glaciation, visual laconicism, austerity in the mise-en-scène, and silent expressiveness characterize the work. The director's surgical precision in his images, his plastic and narrative minimalism, is painful, bleeding, terrifying. The visual enclosure, the vertical barrier, the invasion of privacy as if we were indecent voyeurs, accentuates Joanna Vraha's existential anguish, seeking a direct confrontation with the viewer. The limits and capacities of human reason, the dance between ethics and aesthetics while human dignity is trampled, without moral imperatives. The accordion of cinema.

-Het Medicijn (The Medicine) Sarah Denaar

Didactic, passionate, and moving. A fascinating portrait of a gifted artist at the height of her creative brilliance, relentlessly honest, magnificently edited, and imbued with the healing power of music. Visually, the film feels incredibly authentic, shooting with natural light, capturing the colors of the seasons, and highlighting the purity and intensity of Leonie Bos's lyrics and her always unique and unrepeatabe performances. Sarah Denaar films as if music were less a spectacle and more an inextricable and necessary part of personality and nature. The director reflects on the neuroses of success, of fame, of becoming, of the tension or communion between the artist and their audience, of resources and expectations. Against a world of vulgar, contrived, and dishonest winners, she highlights the singer's spontaneity, informality, freshness, and astonishment. A declaration of love and a meticulous work of documentation that impresses with its exemplary clarity of exposition and concise narrative talent. A whirlwind of self-awareness where art battles commerce, a heartfelt tribute and a life lesson full of secrets, confidences, and intimacies, instructive and captivating, intensely revealing.



-un deux trois Brooke Dooley

Brooke Dooley merges with the body of dancer Genna Moroni and unfolds with the voices of Marisa DeMarini, Zoë Kraft, and Gabriella Ortega Ricketts, capturing the sensation a human being experiences in the face of a painful incident, rather than simply recording the incident itself. Pure experimentation, boundless imagination, fragmented ultrasubjectivity, an exploration and celebration of the human body trapped in the architecture of the unconscious, timeless and spaceless like dreams. With different tones and stages of the same personality, she dissects gesture into its smallest movements, making it seem as if the walls, objects, and the intangible dance intimately with actress Genna Moroni, seeking the beauty hidden in that perfect, unleashed, and desired gesture. The filmmaker propels us in an ascending spiral toward delicacy, mysticism, and absolute freedom.

-Soap&Skin - Girl Loves Me Ioan Gavriel, Anja Franziska Plaschg

Brutal, dazzling, mechanical, chaotic. A spectacle of unparalleled purity, brimming with intensity, emotion, and pure entertainment. The past is an enraged and ashamed old man, and the future is a woman, frenetically riding a truck as she frees herself from her prison, her chrysalis, still bound by painful chains. Cinematographer Ioan Gavriel Plaschg clearly revels in this aggressive and dizzying universe, propelled on the highway by the speed and rhythm of an extraordinary song. Singer Anja Franziska Plaschg is tireless, tenacious, beastly, and beautiful. Pure visual dynamite with echoes of Greek mythology, George Orwell's analogies, Gabriel García Márquez's magical realism, and David Bowie's aesthetic elegance. A western punk set inside a chestnut tree that smells of sweat, Heiße Maroni and gasoline, feverish, industrial, producing an epic experience where the unimaginable no longer exists.



-小罪 (FayeWell) Xi Gong

Xi Gong recreates a special atmosphere, evocative of Chinese symbols, traditions, and rituals, in a story of lost souls seeking redemption. Some quasi-documentary sequences, with excellent art direction by Youyou Xu, manage to mesmerize you in a film that retreats into itself, exploring hidden, intimate, and personal experiences. A secret, unusual, transgressive and transgenerational love story will open a painful wound in Xiaoyi Shen, a charismatic character full of self-confidence who faces problems not with metaphysics but head-on with common sense, whose destiny will intersect with a solitary sunflower tattoo artist. The director's main merit is her truthful portrayal of everyday life, adding a healthy dose of melodrama full of surprises and twists, sustained by magnificent direction of the actors, hyperrealistic cinematography, and a vibrant soundtrack by Seung Hew and He Li.

-Victoire Louise Heem

The joy of the image, of jumping on a trampoline. Instructive, didactic, rebellious, the film moves on the border between reality and fiction, provoking reflection on how we see the world. Symbols, icons, associations, puns, metaphors that come together, dancing before our eyes, swelling in our ears, thanks to Ilona Hot's excellent film editing. Victoire Julien and Clémentine Karadjov storm the heavens, rise up against the established order, parade proudly to become a living memory that stirs our minds. Louise Heem treats her splendid actresses as if she were the Wizard of Oz, merely accompanying them in their capers with a skillful, humble, and subtle poetry, in the poignant act that pertains to the creation, rise, and fall of fairy tales. It captures childlike enthusiasm and the necessary drive to undertake life's struggles, a battleground for truth with a diversity of faces, bodies, and stories. It pays meticulous attention to the power of gesture and the ancestral meaning of words, where the amalgamation of physical, multifaceted, unequal, and contradictory forces align only momentarily in provisional symmetries. Cinema reveals itself as the means to overcome vertigo and paralysis, as well as a device for capturing the unrepeatable nature of the moment, the tremor of the leap, transforming the image into living material that affects, mobilizes, and revolutionizes.



-it's growing on me. Konstanze Winter

A reflective essay on nature, on the nature of cinema. A fascinating, provocative, and experimental experience, visually stunning, where Konstanze Winter looks at her navel, the origin of everything, the home of her subject. Cadence, magic, and scientific complexity; tiny actors on a grand stage; particles dance like galaxies in the void. She films with precision in the realm of poetics, attempting to unite on screen the microscope with the telescope, the quantum with the macrocosm, Albert Einstein's Unified Field Theory made cinematic. Every frame, every light, every shadow, every chromatic and achromatic value is carefully considered and perfectly justified, like those images that overlap on the wall, like fungus on the skin, and that intrusion of strange, threatening, uncontrolled, and beautiful beings. A trance-like experience, a spectacular and hallucinogenic mental and physical journey into the unknown, highly sensory and hypnotic, with a narrative pulse that oscillates between a raw and stark intimacy and an extraterrestrial detachment. Who can't feel empathy for someone who just wants a better life? Skin mycoses, fungal infections, parasitic invaders that possess the ability to disguise themselves, transform, and sometimes the power to prey on species. They depend on their host's digestive system to survive, dying immediately if separated from it. Highly sensitive to subtle changes in human blood, they know when a human is sleepy, nervous, or hungry, sad or happy. And they need and try to communicate. And they whisper that there are many worlds we don't see, that immense networks sustain entire forests, that there are immemorial memories buried there, full of wisdom. Don't be afraid, and above all, be patient; it takes time to grow.



-Koki, Ciao Quenton Miller

On March 5, 1953, after Stalin's death, the Kremlin found a letter in the dictator's locked personal safe. The letter, from Comrade Josip Broz, known as Tito, leader of Yugoslavia, was addressed to the Supreme Leader of the USSR: "Stop sending people to kill me! We have already captured five assassins: one with a bomb, another with a rifle... If you don't stop sending assassins, I will send one to Moscow very quickly, and I certainly won't need to send another." After surviving 22 assassination attempts orchestrated by the Supreme Comrade, Marshal Tito had had enough. Absurd psychopathy, unbridled violence, thuggish insolence, sinister doppelgangers, totalitarian power, a thirst for immortality, and also, why not say it, an attractive, amusing, and insidious sense of humor—the hallmarks of these still-idolized mass murderers. Quenton Miller resurrects the spirit of the era in a kind of macabre spell, as if Marshal Tito had transplanted his soul just before dying into his snow-white parrot, now a strange attraction in a crowded zoo. A powerful, surreal, terrifying, and courageous look at the heart of evil, with sound editing that is itself a cinematic miracle. An X-ray of history that uncomfortably portrays the closest collaborators of totalitarian dictators, the bootlickers of power (some of them Hollywood stars); the seduction of evil in its most disheartening form, literally selling your honor and dignity for peanuts. Magical fascism made cinematic. Did François Duvalier, Papa Doc, have a pet? That should be checked urgently.

-Into the Mouth of Gold Jacob James Lerup-McCarthy

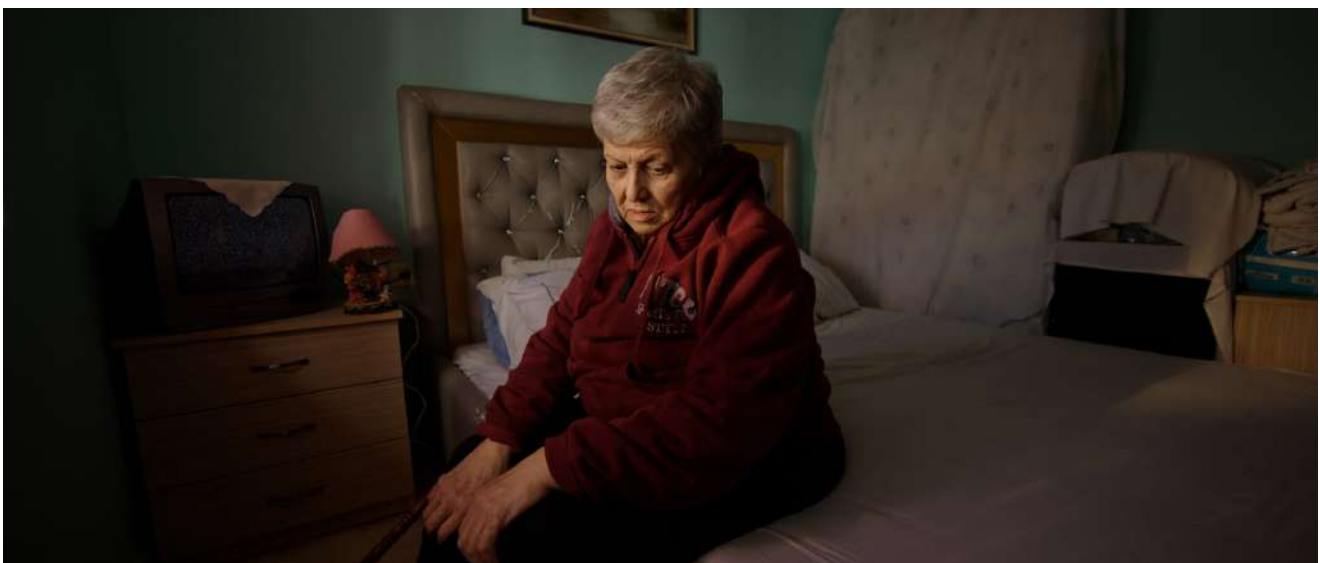
Harsh, cruel, tense, sad, heroic. The feat of surviving through cunning, skill, and disguise when millions around you are dying like flies. The pain of trampled human dignity, the brutal loss of loved ones, and the terror of being next. The ironclad self-control to avoid going mad, to not throw it all away after so much effort to survive, and to wonder what will be left of you. A silent rebellion that manages to subtly sabotage the executioners, stretching the rope just enough, risking it breaking at any moment. Knowing that so much is at stake, not only the lives of a few, but even the scales that could decide which side will win. Jacob James Lerup-McCarthy intimately films the anguish of his character, a tormented and haunted James Reilly, breathing through his racing heart, smelling his sticky fear, even physically intervening as a provocative actor in the film's climax, showing him a poisoned golden gift. Luke Green works on every visual nuance in the commendable cinematography, lovingly filming each gesture of his great actors, the splendid atmosphere achieved by Maider Uranga's production design (a cinematic challenge in every image), and the dramatic framework provided by the impeccable formal correctness of the screenplay by Jacob James Lerup-McCarthy and George David. A film made to be swept away and moved, to be felt and lived.

-Bazen-rupa (Pit-pool) Ana Vučićević

Director Ana Vučićević's keen observation elevates a realistic tale that seems almost Gustave Flaubert-esque, brimming with poignant edges, visceral passions, and captivating energy. The adventures of two mischievous girls, Iva Mijatović and Lena Aćimović, in a small Serbian town, imbued with a natural talent for acting, are slices of life filled with the charm of adolescence—that age we all go through. They exchange opinions on seemingly trivial matters that, at their core, form the foundation of what they aspire to achieve in their adult lives. They pass the time, talk, play, dream, laugh, and battle boredom; they try to impress each other, conceal self-serving secrets, and ultimately, they don't know what to do. The director's urban dissection highlights the stark contrast between the paradise promised by society, the media, and advertising, and what reality simultaneously denies. The world around them looks on with indifference and a sense of normalcy, accustomed as they are to such desolate and disheartening situations, preoccupied only with gathering their daily bread (or watermelon) to get by. Beautiful, powerful punches of truth, profound reflections on friendship, the inevitable consequences of life, the infinite sadness of youth, the drowning of childhood in a filthy, tiny pool, where the director doesn't bother to distort reality in pursuit of a self-serving social critique, but rather recognizes the advantage and elegance that chaos, disorganization, unexpected and subtlety bring to cinema and art.

-Fatbardha Kitty Kentezi

A sober, beautiful, transcendent, and melancholic portrait of two elderly people in the final stage of their lives. The images are sublime, evoking something profound, archaic, painful, and poetic. It possesses a static cinematography that invites introspection, meditation on the meaning of the passage of time, the function of the seasons, and the doors of life that open and close. Loneliness is reflected in walls covered with nostalgic photographs and in a television that sends black-and-white images of an epic, splendid, musically glorious past and a strange, blue, seemingly monstrous, and indecipherable future. The rhythm is absorbing, exquisite, and measured, immersing you in a world of emotions and feelings that slowly tighten, a metaphor for what our lives have been, are, and will be. There is no documentary without characters, and there are no characters if you don't love them. Filmmaker Kitty Kentezi films her subjects with realism, respect, and restraint, but also with mysticism, admiration, and majesty. Their faces are maps of the soul, filled with delicate wounds, suffering traces, and oceans of memories. Kleopatra Talo resembles a Greek goddess trapped in a small urban apartment, surrounded by jars, shelling peas, preparing tea. A Demeter, goddess of the harvest, nurturer and mother, possessor of a mysterious, reverential, and primordial wisdom, like the Eleusinian Mysteries. A seated matron, tender and sweet, the provider of food and spiritual sustenance, who has learned from life that she is valued by others for her practical knowledge and generosity. She remembers how she managed to raise her four daughters, who are painfully absent, like splinters in her heart. We sense they have been "abducted" by something or someone, but we know they revere, respect, yearn for, and love their mother. A love that transcends time and space, elderly people who cling to life with resilience but who, at the same time, are aware of their vulnerability, searching for unity, the meaning of a lifetime, the balance of its beauty and cruelty. A hymn to life, the stuff of dreams, the essence of cinema. "You have me beside you like a rock, I'll never leave you." Only the mountains live forever.



-Picture Break Pedro Nogueira

A delirious homage to the cinema of filmmaker Pedro Nogueira, brimming with inventiveness, nostalgia, and originality. A labyrinth of images revisiting familiar territories, the resulting adventure, however impossible it may seem, manages to be extraordinary. Everything is possible in Rita Duque's multifaceted, delightful, and audacious script, with Duque herself at the center of all those brilliant dialogues, iconic lines, and visual gags. Everything is possible in a movie theater, going to the cinema as a magical act, a sacred ritual, a necessary dream. They play like children with the very essence of reality and fantasy, hiding secret messages, using ambiguous morals, changing the rules on the fly, cheating on your back, offering eccentric jokes and poking fun at themselves. The visual calligraphy of cinematographer Vasco Araújo adopts that unmistakable aroma of movie theater seats, of the dimness where eyes shine, enraptured, their gaze fixed on the screen, a gateway to any world, inserting a classic, fascinating, elegant, and dreamy black-and-white poetics. Admittedly, a little violent, yes.



-El Consuelo (Solace) Elena Papakonstantinou

A film full of subtlety, lucidity and maturity about parent-child relationships. The details accumulate, the dialogues reverberate, the gestures hurt and the looks beg, connecting all the pieces emotionally in an organic, natural, human, close and sweet ending like a cookie full of chocolate chips. Consciousness is acquired in the sky of Barcelona, on a terrace that exudes customs, truth and a certain magical realism, of dreamlike escapism in a secret corner. The comprehensive and complex portrait of fatherhood (and motherhood) after a divorce vibrates, undulates, deforms, walking and contorting like a tightrope walker on the wire staring into space, with the threat of tragedy. Elena Papakonstantinou's script reflects on memory, absence, discovery, recognition in the gaze of the other. Actors Maria Fontana and Rubén Serrano exude expressive delicacy in their emotional learning process, moving through an illuminated naturalism, avoiding sentimentality, exploring silences, with a brilliant, honest, introspective, lacerating, transparent, reborn result.

-Whem? Magnus Bjørnstad

Confusion, anguish, disorientation. A masterful piece of craftsmanship, where beauty always resides, even in the most terrible moments. With surgical precision, Magnus Bjørnstad portrays the ravages wrought on a man's brain by the progressive loss of his own identity and all points of reference in his daily life. The film adopts the perspective of the patient himself, as he gradually loses himself in a degenerative process, powerless to stop it. Pure terror of porcelain, the film is visually magnificent, visceral, cerebral, unsettling, reflective, completely engaging the viewer's five senses. Splendidly orchestrated and elegant in its cinematic immersion, recapturing the simple aesthetic of 90s video games, the world of senile dementia is inevitably moving, harsh, terrifying, and real. Physical space constantly shifts, time folds back on itself, faces blend and blur. The animated work in the architectural construction and the objects is intelligent, enchanting, mysterious, painful and unforgettable, plunging the viewer into total confusion, without knowing who you were, who you are, or who surrounds you. A thrilling and portentous disquiet, the film is a monument in memory of all our beloved grandparents.

-MAGIC Dominique Provost-Chalkley

Subtle, sensual, special, innocent, vulnerable. Dominique Provost-Chalkley enchants us like the first heartbeat of a feverish and inevitable love. The formula is simple yet full of heart: two people, some instruments, and not a single note out of tune. It astonishes with its intimacy and simplicity, pursuing a sense of naturalness, achieving the perfection of reality. The actresses shine individually, like stars in the night, but when they share a scene, the chemistry is explosive. It shows us the daily lives of those who haven't abandoned their dreams, those who vibrate beyond taboos, those who dance without following conventions, those who possess an unfading ethic, bringing joyful smiles to our faces and filling us with hope. The director observes the gaze of young Taylor Hickson, immersing herself in her eyes as if it were a fleeting privilege, with delight and discovery. Cinematographer Chris Fergusson films with precision in the nighttime streets, like a sorcerer attempting to capture the essence of an era, using street art like tapestries of yesteryear, relying on passionate faces, surrendered to feeling, and the vital, organic commitment of his celebrated heroines, touched by the muse Euterpe. What matters is everything that happens beneath the surface, between the chiaroscuro of desire and the fabrications of illusion. The script is sharp, transparent, moving, and very funny, taking its time to make desire palpable, in delicate layers of seduction tinged with the confusion of the senses, managing to function in its dual dimension as social commentary, grounding international tragedies, errors, and crimes in superb and unforgettable arguments, and reflecting on today's technological world: dehumanizing, instrumental, necessary, dangerous, addictive. Does technology foster loneliness or help us overcome it? Do we need to touch a body to transmit and receive sensations? What we do know is that love can never be expressed with words and that it will never be as beautiful as when it flows through a song, and like an incredible harmony, it freezes time, making us feel free and redeemed. Pure enchantment, disillusionment diluted in magic, life written on a score and interpreted to the sounds of a guitar and the sweet voices of two people brimming with light, with a swan floating on the water as witness. A rush of good vibes that will make you want to hit replay after listening to their songs once. Can I have a piece of your heart? And #FREECONGO.



-Wszystkie czego dziś chcę (All I Want Today) Magda Adamowicz

A tender, wise, compassionate, and simple story about unforgotten love, the kind that endures throughout life. Director Magda Adamowicz attentively captures the minute emotional shifts of her superb actors, Mirosław Zbrojewicz and Magdalena Kuta—insecure, laconic, and seductive—the raw emotional reality of their gestures and glances. This mature debut film is a portrait of love in times of amnesia, in the age of uncertainty, in the era of bizarre online dating. The script skillfully injects doses of humor at precisely the right moments, exuding nostalgia for a time that will never return. The staging in a twilight bar, now empty, is minimal, controlled, meticulous, romantic, and dreamlike, with an enveloping and absorbing poetic charge, always making you believe in the possibility of recovering what has been lost.

-Stay Cool Evvie Kyrozi

Creative Revolution, an animated miracle with touches of humor, filmed in the first person, with talent. The film is captivating, delightful, intelligent, and also a luminous, humble, sweet, and beautiful documentary of the creative process of the artist Evvie Kyrozi, devoid of torment, drama, or pain. The work achieves a metafictional reality; if Luigi Pirandello broke down the wall, she breaks down the canvas with a liberated and original freedom of movement. A wordless dialogue between an artist and her artworks, a natural, close, and captivating friendship where we must lovingly and carefully nurture our daily creations. Visually stunning and extremely pleasurable, it is a sensory self-portrait overflowing with sensitivity, tenderness, and poetry.

-Human Layers Fatemeh Zare

Irreverent humor, energetic pacing, everyday mischief, emotional psychology, and extreme sensitivity come together in this wonderful animated project, written with inspiration and wit, offering an intelligent vision of modern life. Director Fatemeh Zare highlights the transition between the rational and the irrational, between the public and the private, between the office and the sofa. Hilarious, empathetic, and fascinating, the drawings are simple yet spectacular, as anything is possible in the comfort of home. A multitude of hilarious gags make it practically impossible not to laugh and identify with the intimate and guilty pleasures of its characters, as endearing and real as they are hallucinogenic and ecstatic. Because we have all, at some point in our lives (if not this very afternoon), enjoyed smelling our socks or letting out a loud fart. Contortionist gymnastics and ballroom dancing in a film that makes you laugh, eliciting laughter despite the awkwardness of the subject matter, and captivating you by emphasizing that life, as it is, has more sweet moments than bitter ones, where each person is the master of their own life, their joys and sorrows. Glimpses of happiness, when suddenly, dawn appears again, and with it, a wonderful new day.



-Una manera de estar juntos (A Way to Be Together) Trina Bardusco

Transparent, valuable, beneficial. Fearless cinema, just in the right place at the right time, with a devastating discourse against a powerful adversary, the President of the United States. A fascinating, naturalistic, and compelling documentary, filming intimate interviews imbued with an eloquent, openly combative humanism, which conceives of its subjects' freedom of expression as a supreme exercise of democratic right. From Lambertville, filmmaker Trina Bardusco asks us to reconsider our relationship with the human beings we see coming from other lands, in search of a more just life, who have undertaken a tragic odyssey worthy of being written or narrated. And this is what this film is: a tribute to all those Oaxacans—many of whom are Mixtec people from small Indigenous villages in Mexico—who embark on the just crusade of seeking their livelihood, following the echoes of a better life. The director stirs consciences in the battle against fear, dismantling the puppet of Donald Trump, his lies of mass destruction, and his intolerant, racist, provocative, and egocentric rhetoric. Her portrayal of Mexicans is instructive, fascinating, funny, and convincing, achieving a sense of authenticity brimming with an idiosyncratic Latin American energy that makes the film vigorous, stimulating, and danceable.

-Dinner plate Alexis Sebastian Komselis

Truth splashes in the hell of war, as if the heavens had opened. Alexis Sebastian Komselis's direction is remarkable; his boldest, most provocative, and riskiest decisions are always the most accurate, such as his approach to the aesthetics of the Western and its complementary, unconventional, and multifaceted casting. How can one not feel pity and compassion for the extremely young Luis Zimmer, who naively enters a duel with only a baseball card as his weapon (a true ace in the hole)? How can one not accept the decisions made in the icy gaze of Officer Otto Lotz, elegant as Mies van der Rohe, geometric as Le Corbusier, visceral as Frank Lloyd Wright? Isabella Steenstrup will lose her innocence, her noble humanitarian sentiments, in a dry, dirty, hopeless, and sudden outburst. A humble, effective, and heroic war production, filmed with audacity and precision; you will live an experience you will never forget.

-Displaced Molly Daniels

Hilarious, wacky, wonderful, unrestrained comedy. Singularly funny, ruthlessly transgressive. It's as if Sarah Connor were the Terminator, traveling back in time to kill herself, ashamed of what she's become, aware that contemporary society is a mess. Full of audacity in all its dialogue and twists, Molly Daniels hits the nail on the head with her metaphor about naive nostalgia for times gone by, setting her own rules, algorithms, mathematics, and physical laws to create a frenetic surrealism brimming with laughter. The brilliant fights between its charismatic, energetic, and funny actresses—Tegan Higginbotham and Paige Joy Ryans in top form—create a consistent, iterative, and addictive plot in this innovative use of time travel. A unique mythology, poised between lucidity and madness, sharply satirical and playfully irresistible, that could form the basis for a long, emblematic, and unforgettable cult series.



-Adult Sitters Ann Sun

A splendid comedy with a whole host of endearing characters embroiled in meticulously observed, yet sharply witty and corrosive, everyday intrigues. An original and ironic story with an immensely talented cast, featuring the undeniably romantic Lucy Baik and Patrick Zhang, as eccentric as they are real, as spontaneous as they are funny, as cheeky as they are attractive. Snippets of life designed to demonstrate that nothing is as extraordinary as the ordinary, with praiseworthy cinematography by Jong Heon Lee, immense production design by Cori Kim, and an excellent soundtrack by Alex Winkler and Antonio Ibrahine. The ingenious dialogue touches on diverse universal themes such as love, sex, family, and work problems, with a constant, profound sense of disillusionment, as if the world has long since left our partner behind, as if they were tasked with repopulating an abandoned planet but were far too busy playing video games. Our adorable couple live in the moment, far removed from any complicated life planning, finding their own rhythm, ultimately discovering a philosophy of life more resilient, strong, and consistent than wood. A film that functions as both therapy and inspiration, where filmmaker Ann Sun demonstrates a natural feel for human comedy and a gift for writing strange, inventive, brilliant dialogue with a touch of sadness and grittiness. Life leaves its mark, but you can also wash it off.



-The Lost coordinates Mohammadhossein Shariati

Mohammadhossein Shariati proves himself to be an artist of our time, knowing how to create beautiful kaleidoscopic images of great hypnotic intensity, accompanied by a great, complex, and complementary sound work that makes you travel through all dimensions.

- درخت برای درخت (Tree for Tree) Soheil Paryani

Soheil Paryani's main achievement is his idea of creating an animated documentary, using a seemingly innocent and glorious medium to deliver a devastating message about the hypocrisy of our time, the false messages, the lack of ideas, and the absence of ideals. With anime as a disguise, he manages to create a powerful denunciation and a stark warning about the damage we are doing to nature, urging us to take real and swift action.

-Departure Hisham Metwaly

A harrowing, claustrophobic film with a demented atmosphere, reminiscent of the worst hells. Director Hisham Metwaly, in such a degraded world, manages to create a marvelous, pristine sequence bathed in white light, unforgettable, reminding us of the beauty of family and authentic, altruistic, and sincere human relationships.

-*penosar* hosein fatahi

A magnificent documentary by Hosein Fatahi portraying the timeless artist Hemat Mohseni. Using lightweight cameras to achieve authenticity, he enters Mohseni's home with respect and admiration, revealing his techniques and most personal curiosities, and also capturing unique images of the mountainous landscape of Iran. The film shows how primal art, the art that gave rise to humanity, still resonates in the souls of a privileged few, allowing them to connect with nature and humanity in a mystical, spiritual, and divine way.

- شنوایش (*Audiolysis*) Parya Moazami

Parya Moazami demonstrates his mastery of film editing in a powerful documentary, skillfully extracting the maximum impact from his images by abruptly juxtaposing them with their antagonists. It's a precise and masterful work, characteristic of great filmmakers who command the language of cinema at will, creating personal and unique works.

- دستِ باد (*Hand of Wind*) Heydar Hojat

Heydar Hojat directs a beautiful film brimming with meaning and message, featuring a wonderful cast, essential and indispensable to the film, as if he wrote it especially for them. A simple, unique, yet poignant ending, like those of the best fables, leaves you with a good feeling and reminds you that we must trust in our community, in the beauty of humanity.



-*Guardian of the Field* Seyed Mohamadreza Kheradmandan

Seyed Mohamadreza Kheradmandan masterfully directs his admired and talented cast, a group of stars who bring Hamid Akbari-Khamaneh's magnificent script to life. The ever-present Hadi Hejazifar delivers one of his finest performances in a role brimming with fear and pain. The film grips you from the very first moment, depicting a struggle against the deepest evil lurking within our communities, capable of any atrocity, even against the most defenseless.

-Voyeur Maryam Hashempour

Maryam Hashempour demonstrates in her debut film that she is capable of great things in the world of cinema, with a complex, tension-filled film that draws the very best from actress Vida Gharagozlou, taking her through a range of sensations and emotions until she experiences the essence of terror. Cinematographer Mohammad Hossein Seif does a remarkable job filming interiors, creating a disquieting and distressing atmosphere, aided by Sohrab Karamroudi, whose soundtrack is capable of sending shivers down your spine.



-Burning for the Departed Parastoo Iran

Student director Parastoo Iran proves her ability to handle any type of production or theme in a complex film, full of pain and misery. The initial situation is reminiscent of Mae Marsh's in D.W. Griffith's *Intolerance* (1916), but it gradually transforms into something far more disturbing and atrocious, culminating in a blood-curdling ending. A filmmaker to watch, she drew the best from her cast and demonstrated an innate talent for creating all kinds of ideas, emotions, and feelings.

-Sweet Sorrow Parisa Zandbaf

Director Parisa Zandbaf knows how to get the best out of her cast with an intimate encounter, oscillating between the anachronistic and the modern, a relationship between a master and his student with deep literary references to the beauty of love, and to the current female empowerment, fearless and with their decision-making power.

-کوشنن (HOMICIDE) Nima Tabandeh

Nima Tabandeh, with a screenplay by Mohammad Vahabi Asil, delivers a raw, dark, and sinister film, reminding us that revenge is a path through an endless night. The actors make us empathize with them, sharing their rage and pain, while the elegant and precise cinematography, shot almost entirely inside a car, makes us feel as if we cannot escape an inevitable tragic fate.

-*Supplementary Judgment* **Sonia Nouri**

Sonia Nouri has crafted a powerful, complex, painful, and at times terrifying film about those to whom we entrust our lives and health when we are vulnerable. Delving into the psyche of a doctor who has forgotten the purpose of her profession, she makes us question the future of our elderly when they become a burden to everyone, who will be their guardians, and above all, who will be the guardians of the guardians. It is a remarkable achievement in cinematography, highlighting the emotional coldness and lack of humanity in a society that is ceasing to feel pity or compassion for anything or anyone.

- *تاش (La Tache)* **Parya Moazami**

A magnificent screenplay by Parya Moazami and Soheil Paryani allows us to reflect on the essence and myth of our malevolent doppelganger, more capable and willing to snatch everything from us and ruthlessly replace us with the world's blessing. The director understands, along with the soul of paranoid schizophrenia, the fears, complexes, and traumas that make us the architects of our own tragic destiny.

- *آبدان (Corpusruptus)* **Saeed Amiri Fard**

Director Saeed Amiri Fard bravely and ruthlessly delves into the minds of the mentally ill, driven by the pursuit of truth, to understand their workings and reveal their pain and loneliness. Despite its hallucinatory interior scenes, the film also features bucolic sequences in the forest, brimming with peace and tranquility. Actor Mansour Daiechi delivers a commendable and magnificent performance in a challenging role, full of vicissitudes and nuances, with some truly unforgettable moments.

-*The Shepherd* **Mehrshad Ranjbar**

A very tender and moving film, where there seems to have been a great atmosphere on set and which was full of fun anecdotes, where all the actors have faith in their fantastic director, Mehrshad Ranjbar. Excellent technical work in makeup, art direction, and costumes accompanies our heroes in their quest for courage, honor, and dignity, demonstrating that they are capable of achieving any goal they set for themselves.



-The Ground Floor Sajjad Taheri

A painfully relevant film about when the time comes to act in the face of injustice: will we be capable of it, or will we remain paralyzed by fear, letting the world pass us by for the sake of survival and pretending that nothing has happened? A gathering of friends, excellently filmed in its joy and everyday life, hides the arrival of dictatorial power (with a perhaps veiled allusion to Julius Caesar) and the eternal guilt, regret, and shame for our protagonist, turning the world upside down and making it snow in the sun during the day in a very iconic sequence.



-Boutique Pouya Dastgiran

Opening with mundane, everyday sequences filmed in Iranian markets, where the aromas are palpable, the film conceals a brutal struggle where the future of women hangs in the balance. A metaphorical and courageous work, it showcases director Pouya Dastgiran's commitment to the cause of female empowerment. In the final sequence, he draws all the potential value from the fish's entrails to create a well-rounded and moving film, demonstrating remarkable cinematic skill, courage, and originality.

-ker Sajad Soleymani

A beautiful and deeply moving secret love story, where lovers hide inside a mosque, toying with the idea of the meaning of pure, sacred, mystical love. Praham Khakzad and Niusha Shahrivari deliver unforgettable performances in their innocent games, building castles in the air for a future together. Cinematographer Mohammadreza Shabanpour does an unforgettable and magnificent job, hovering on the threshold where our heroes live between heaven and earth, with beautiful and aesthetically stunning images, such as the final ornate dome, the lovers' nest.

-Ramy Kasra Tirsahar

A highly original film reminiscent of Roy Andersson's work, blending profound drama with unexpected and sudden bursts of comedy, and employing an incisive, effective, and poignant use of wide shots. The brilliant director Kasra Tirsahar elicits the best from her cast, even though screams and sobs often overshadow words, and the technical team is fully committed throughout filming, right up to its triumphant finale.

-Cow Killer Farhad Mohamadzadeh

A fantastic screenplay by Farhad Mohamadzadeh and Emad Darvishi creates a contemporary yet ancient fable, where dreams, girls, desires, and cows are intertwined in the mundane rural life and its most naive superstitions. The director elicits excellent performances from the entire cast, accompanied by a unique atmosphere in the heart of nature, with a particular highlight being the young actress Artemis Bakhshi, who shows great promise for a bright future (if she chooses to use her acting talents instead of continuing to slaughter cows).



-Stand by Me Parisa Zandbaf

One can only be grateful to Parisa Zandbaf for her outstanding work as director of this documentary and to Warren Gregory for opening himself up completely to share his feelings and grief. A very intimate, moving, and empathetic film that reminds us that despite everything, we can keep moving forward in this life, riding our bicycles adorned with colorful flowers to remember and honor those who have passed on.

-Home Sara Mokhavat

Sara Mokhavat dares to direct a terrifying, captivating, and chilling work, culminating in a truly sinister and electrifying final image. A profound and incisive reflection that reminds us that the most atrocious events, the darkest secrets, are hidden beneath an environment of seemingly mundane normality.

- هیس (Silenced) Zeynab Mousavi, Houri Shafieioun

Zeynab Mousavi and Houri Shafieioun work together magnificently to create a film about female empowerment framed within the context of abuses of power that occur in university settings. The script captures our attention from the very first moment, with a powerful performance by Maryam Mohammadkhani in her quest for honor, dignity, and justice, representing the many women trampled upon in environments that should be sacred.

-Uninterrupted Arash Nezhad

Arash Nezhad's prodigious technical work creates a painful and harrowing tale of violence against women in Iran. The always brilliant actress Kiana Montajabi delivers an exceptional performance, consistently providing memorable moments of profound lyricism, such as the scene of the wedding dress floating adrift. Maedeh Bahrami's makeup work creates a deeply impactful image at the film's end, reminding us that evil lurks in the darkest recesses of some hearts.

-Giraffe Mohammad Borjloo

Director Mohammad Borjloo demonstrates a natural gift for directing children and capturing their childlike sensibilities down to the smallest detail. A beautiful film about overcoming adversity, courage, and heroism in the harsh world of school playgrounds, with outstanding art direction that brings the director's visual metaphors to life.

-shadow like saeed dadgar

A film that cleverly reinvents the elements of film noir, creating a story steeped in a thick fog of depraved desires, unbridled greed, and beautiful women. Saeed Dadgar's screenplay grips you from the very first moment, culminating in a surprising ending that is both striking in its form and meaning. A frenetic, adrenaline-fueled tour de force that offers a psychological reflection on the paranoid delusions of its characters.

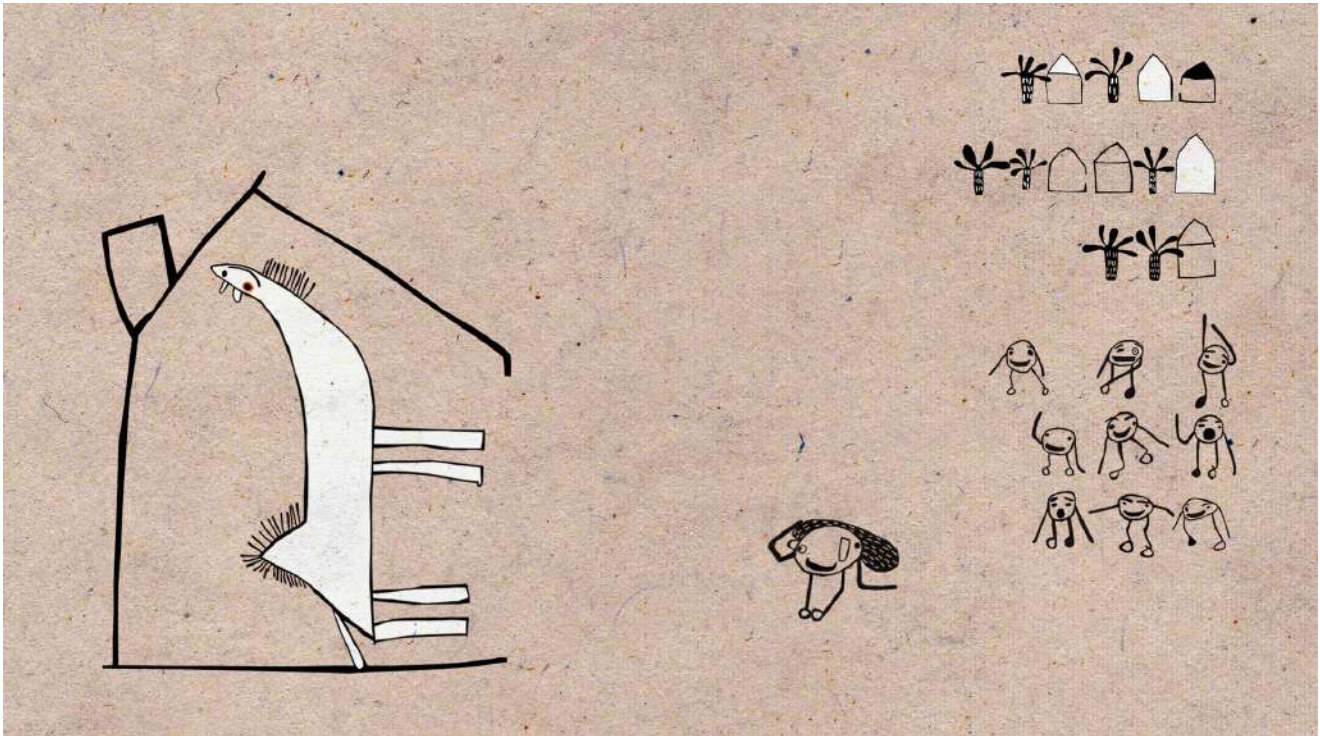
-The Dots of a Case Rana Sajjadi

The dentist monster comes to visit the innocent Hamid Rashid in his perfect world, bringing with it the ghosts of past nightmares. The director (our friend and admired Rana Sajjadi, beloved by the entire FICIMAD team) creates a world of symmetrical, modern, and futuristic obsessive pleasures, reminding us that some pains, traumas, and complexes will always be eternal. Negar Salahshoor's outstanding performance highlights the filmmaker's skill in directing feminine actresses with her diverse cast, although this time it will be Hamid Rashid who endures the most painful drills. Sara Azampanah's art direction is also noteworthy, brilliant throughout, seamlessly blending with Rana Sajjadi's personal, unique, and creative universe.



-FILKOOL MARAL FOROUZESH, NASER REZAEIYAN

A unique, personal, and unforgettable work of art, reminiscent at times of those secret games between siblings that only they understand, that particular language born of years of companionship, love, and friendship. Directors Maral Forouzesh and Naser Rezaeiyan create a highly distinctive animation featuring the unjustly misunderstood and vilified character Finkool, reminding us of the value of empathy and understanding towards our fellow human beings. The rhythmic, poignant, and captivating sound design, which accompanies the first-person perspective, is particularly noteworthy, allowing us to feel and experience everything.



-Camera of Death Atefeh Shaygan

The Blair Witch Project (1999) plays with dolls in a highly risky, creative, and incisive film in its conception and development, constantly blurring the lines between reality and fiction, with the most horrifying events being based on true events. Director Atefeh Shaygan demonstrates her ability to approach any subject with a unique, artistic, and personal vision, and her capacity to get the best out of the technical team, filming a showcase of nightmares that will chill the blood of even the most cautious viewer.

-You Are The Hero Of The Story Ali Rabiei

A film with a highly theatrical staging, seeking optimism, courage, and strength in the most adverse moments, with certain echoes of *Life Is Beautiful* (1997), but with an intercultural and intergenerational perspective that makes it fascinating and essential. An emotional farewell dialogue between a mother and her son, excellently portrayed by Azadeh Seyfi and Arsham Jahanpanah, condenses into a single breath all the dreams about life, art, and love.

-Paper's Sweet Scent Sina Hadadi

How can we not identify with Saman Bayat, at his gloomy table, searching for the formula, the alchemy of being able to dedicate himself to art and at the same time be able to survive? A film that's hard on the stomach, reminding us that many of the greatest died without glory or recognition, only to be revered later. A path of misfortunes where one ends up wondering where this will to create comes from and if in the end it isn't all just pure and simple vanity, and it would have been better to go with the flow. A personal, cold, and somber film, whose main metaphor lies in that chair that binds our hero as if it were a prison, and his greatest pleasure is savoring his works in the most absolute solitude.



-*The Scroll That Stole Time* Kaushik Sharma

A wonderful film, made with humility, craftsmanship, and love by director Kaushik Sharma, that warns us of the disaster of new technologies and how they are leading to the loss of our humanity in a corrosive, subjugating, and lethal way. Phillips Neog delivers a superb performance, making us experience an episode of Black Mirror amidst the most beautiful landscapes of India, with cinematography that isn't afraid to take risks in its hallucinatory and distorted images. A necessary and intelligent film that will ultimately leave you with a joyful smile, but also a menacing warning about enslavement to new algorithms of social control.

-*Metaverse* Mohammad Reza Shateri

A film with astonishing visual effects, capable of creating a menacing and intriguing futuristic technological universe. The staging is always formidable, as is its use of the color blue for cinematic purposes, in a film that warns us that technological progress does not always imply improvements in our quality of life, and that if excessive power falls into the wrong hands, disaster will be imminent. Of particular note is the impressive acting of Azita Torkashvand despite her brief appearance; cold in her symmetry, powerful in her gaze, and cybernetic in her composure.

-*Manuscripts* Mahdi Iravani

Director Mahdi Iravani demonstrates his love for cinema and literature in a Kafkaesque film with outstanding staging, costumes, and makeup. A claustrophobic yet wise atmosphere, reminiscent of fairy tales, is ever-present, surrounded by books and knowledge that inspire dreams. Actor Siamak Safari delivers a marvelous performance, a twilight, tormented, yet endearing and moving portrayal.

- *یوتوری* (Yutori) Alireza Shakeri

A personal, insightful, therapeutic, courageous, and technically impressive film by director Alireza Shakeri Shakeri that reflects on love relationships in the 21st century, the power of jealousy, the pain of rejection, and the bitterness of resentment. Cinematographer Armin Ajzi does a commendable job capturing the misfortunes of Soheil Pourjafar Pourjafar and Alireza Shakeri Shakeri in the Tehran night, trapped on a path of revenge that seems to have no end. A film that draws you into its acidic atmosphere from the very first moment, where the director demonstrates that he has something to say and is a formidable cinematic artist, capable of filming large-scale productions and getting numerous people to collaborate wholeheartedly on his films.

-*The Sweet Perfume* Mohmmad Reza Mohmmadi

A very difficult film to shoot in a girls' school, featuring a spectacular acting duel between the young actresses, complementary in their worlds and distinct sensibilities. Director Mohmmad Reza Mohmmadi recaptures the spirit of Abbas Kiarostami, complete with the tearing up of an exam—those small things that were hell in the rigid discipline of school. A film that is a pleasure to watch and highly enjoyable for those who want to see how life is lived and felt in Iranian culture.



-*Code 133* Omid Barzegar

Director Omid Barzegar delivers a breathless action-fantasy thriller, featuring magnificent visual effects that recreate the violent and chaotic border landscapes of the Middle East. Mohammad Hossein Goodarzi's superb screenplay allows the entire cast to shine, with Alirum Nouraei standing out as the story's main hero.

-*Daar Forough* (Fatemeh) Azizi

With a touch of Hitchcockian humor, reminiscent of *The Trouble with Harry* (1955), a corpse becomes the catalyst for a series of misfortunes and investigations to uncover what happened, and above all, what to do with our dead (and our newly arrived). A delightful fable about human relationships set in a beautiful forest, where Forough (Fatemeh) Azizi demonstrates remarkable technical skill in blending sensitive, grotesque, and comedic moments with a unique and spectacular result.

- سوم خواب (*The Third Dream*) Mohammadhossein Nikzad

A magical, surreal film that delves into the recesses of the psyche to extract the treasures of our soul in the form of fabulous, dreamlike, and intriguing images. A thrilling thriller where cinematographer Alireza Barazandeh delivers exceptional work on location, transporting us to any world with the power of his camera.

- هیچ (Nothing) Amir Niyakam

A dark, unusual film with a unique and distinctive, almost morbid, color palette that grips you and infects you with its pain. Director Amir Niyakam also delivers a remarkable performance, with many actors displaying great physical and emotional intensity, and some truly powerful and visually striking moments. It's a wandering through the labyrinths of a lonely, hopeless hell, yet one that conceals a certain dark beauty, especially when more color appears on screen.

-The Nemesis Zin Atas

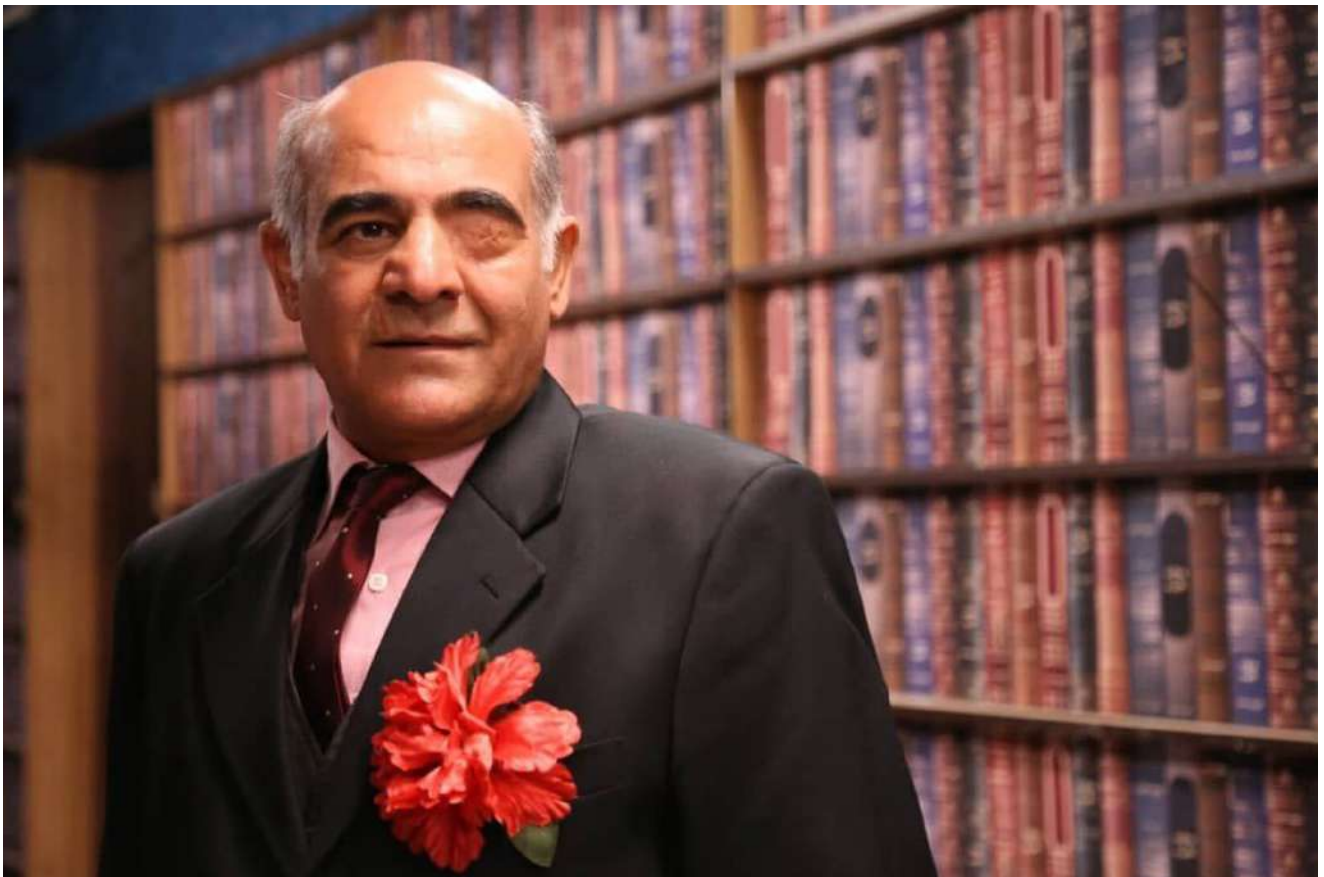
A complex, fascinating, and intelligent film that recaptures the spirit of *The Name of the Rose* (1986) and Umberto Eco's novel, in a film that breathes mystery and exudes a love for forgotten knowledge. A mystical, forbidden, and platonic love that defies religious and social norms with spectacular staging and meticulous attention to detail, particularly in the costume design. Actors Anton and Deniz Ekinçi exude pure chemistry in every scene, culminating in a final embrace that can only be described as perfect.

- گلاڈیاتور بچہ (Gladiator Baby) Ali Sabokbar, Erfan Hosseini

A tremendously original and artistic film, where directors Ali Sabokbar and Erfan Hosseini revel in experimenting with cinematic language like children. Anything can happen in Ali Sabokbar's imaginative screenplay, reminiscent of Léo's film (1992) for its visual metaphors and its purity and honesty in portraying the vicissitudes of childhood.

-Normal Situation Peyman Naji

Peyman Naji proves himself a unique artist with a gift for comedy in a film brimming with fantasy and magic. The talented makeup artist Ahoora Ghasemi masterfully fulfills her director's vision, enhancing the stellar performance of Siavash Cheraghipour, who is as tender as he is lovestruck. A film full of surprises and hilarious moments, it draws inspiration from classic 1970s American cinema like Blake Edwards and Woody Allen, and features unforgettable sequences thanks to their technical virtuosity.



-The Birth of a Girl Mohammad Kazemzadeh Mojdehi

A humanist, metaphorical, and surprising film, where Shohreh Esfandiyari, with a magnificent and heartbreaking performance, descends into a subculture of unleashed passions and enigmatic mysteries. A reflection on the depths of identity and the hidden consequences of our actions, it culminates in an unforgettable, poignant ending, leaving viewers with a solitary and painful cry.

-No Harissa هريسة غير من Saifeddine Lahmar

A delightful and joyful cinematic experience, where director Saifeddine Lahmar isn't afraid to innovate with his camera and experiment with cinematic language. A film for discerning viewers, those who know how to appreciate good cinema, with echoes of Wes Anderson's best work.

-Merhaba Anne, Benim, Lou Lou (Hi Mom, It's Me, Lou Lou) Atakan YILMAZ

A wonderful film that recaptures the spirit of *Carabet* (1972) to cry out for freedom. A film that delves into conservative Turkish perspectives and dares to reveal a colorful and splendid world of glamour, life, and joy. Cinematographic director Ece Latifaoğlu captures stunning images of nightlife in clubs, making Onur Gözeten shine brilliantly. A necessary, daring, and empowering film, enjoyable for its aesthetics and moving for its social, rebellious, and defiant message.

-Ita (The Prayer) Alexandra Kumala

A visually and sonically powerful film that magnificently uses Indonesian culture to create images that vibrate and resonate through time. Cinematographers Malik Isis and Louise Zhang film a wondrous, mystical, and supernatural universe, full of mysteries and enigmas as old as life itself. Director Alexandra Kumala asserts her right to think and believe whatever she pleases, playing on her adversary's turf, reflecting on the false association of atheism with political movements or ideological stances. A cry of rage against religious fanaticism, featuring actress Cynthia Dewi Oka to honor the legacy of Ita Martadinata Haryono, the last survivor of the 1998 Tionghoa-Peranakan massacre. The filmmaker demonstrates a unique ability to visually express her ideas, feelings, and emotions, bringing her art and worldview to every corner of the planet.

-Spectacles (Misguided Perceptual Realism Of True Images) - عینک واقعگرایی (حقیقی تصاویر اشتباه) Erfan Vahidi

The film is a marvel from its very beginning, reminiscent of Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* and warning us that we are about to enter the realm of dreams. The entire cast delivers a remarkable performance within the director's artifice, reveling in the impossible camera movements and the hallucinatory circular games their characters face, trapped in a captivating, frenetic, and hypnotic labyrinth.



-*Aprendiz de xamã Mukunã* Rodrigo Sena Sena

Artist Rodrigo Sena Sena once again demonstrates his immense skill in blending the past with the new in a film that warns us about the damage we are doing to the environment. A necessary film, it revels in the vibrant colors of tradition and features Mukunã Katu, Cacique Luiz Katu, Pajé Amaury, and Guaracy Katu as resilient heroes in the face of the harsh realities of modernity.



-*Transformation* Saeed Mayahy, Miriam Carlsen

A deeply moving and superbly filmed movie about Malika Hamidi, a transgender woman, traveling across countries and continents in search of happiness. Directors Saeed Mayahy and Miriam Carlsen masterfully capture the heroism of the protagonist's journey, both physical and psychological, and the harsh trials she constantly faces. The film also features a beautiful love story with her companion, whose gaze reveals his infatuation and passion—a fundamental, yet often unseen, pillar of the narrative.

-*The Girl From Gaza* Babaeian

Filmmaker Babaeian films a fascinating and terrifying journey into the hell of war, with the current Gaza Strip as the film's living protagonist. A technically prodigious work, using all available resources wisely and precisely, it leaves the viewer in a state of shock, witnessing how war punishes the soul of all those involved.

-*Half Unseen* Salaheddin Noori

Salaheddin Noori's surreal comedy guarantees laughter, showcasing his unique and magical universe. The parodic script, brimming with brilliant twists and impossible effects, is complemented by impressive technical work, particularly the imaginative costume design.

-Casting Youssef Sanheji

A powerful emotional work, where filmmaker Youssef Sanheji holds us up to the mirrors of our times, delicately blending comedy with tragedy. With a seemingly simple script about a fading actor, the director dissects how the gaze of others—with an invaluable gallery of supporting actors—can expose the secrets, weaknesses, and traumas of an opaque man designed to camouflage the emotions of his existence, trapped in his own snare. A baroque, multifaceted, and ultimately sublime cinematography by an inspired Ahmed Thabet allows actor Nejib Balkadhi to deliver one of the most brilliant performances of his long career. An impressive, beautiful, and vibrant performance that evokes a range of emotions and reaches its moment of glory in a solitary ending, far removed from everyone, as if it were a gift for the privileged viewer—a performance that oscillates between melancholy and lucidity, pain and majesty. Undoubtedly a masterpiece, profoundly lyrical, that would delight Paolo Sorrentino, embarking the viewer on a drifting tide guided by disillusionment and moved by a generous poetic breath.



-CARTAPESTA: CARNIVAL OF FANO - THE MOVIE Andrea Lodovichetti

A wonderful tribute to the carnival of his hometown, Fano, brimming with joy, by director Andrea Lodovichetti. An unforgettable work that recaptures the free spirit of Federico Fellini and his love for the innocence, wonder, and purity of childhood, where the filmmaker constantly lives on the border between fantasy and reality, documentary and fiction. The portrait of the Fano carnival paints an incredible panorama of characters united in their purpose of creating an amazing, inventive, and original celebration, full of baroque works of art that oscillate between the traditional and the avant-garde. The director creates a heartwarming parallel story between the master of ceremonies, Simone Diotalle, and a young Edoardo Davide Pignataro, brimming with a bright acting future, paying tribute to the fascination of imagination, the human connection with the people of our town, the right to dream, and the essential pleasure of having fun.

-*Ikarus (Icarus)* Gökşin Doğa Egesoy

A very funny dark comedy that unfolds almost entirely on a single stage, presenting the world of independent cinema as a nightmare of clashing egos, fraught with dangers, disappointments, disillusionment, vomiting, and misery. Gökşin Doğa Egesoy blends farce and tragedy in equal measure, with a script brimming with freshness and spontaneity, stylistically intelligent meta-cinematic handheld camerawork, and a cast driven by their love of filmmaking, creating a palpable family atmosphere on set.

-*The Scapegoat* Ali Fard

Filmed in a single, painfully long take, director Ali Fard reveals the intricacies of justice, honor, and dignity through a real-time murder investigation. A humble and honest film featuring a powerful performance by Fatemeh Sadeghi, with a tragic and inevitable ending that leaves you breathless.

- ماهی قرمز کوچولو (*A little Goldfish*) MohammadReza Rahmani

A profound, deep, humble, and honest film shot with lightweight cameras to create an endearing and committed neorealist cinema, a vibrant fresco of the Iranian city, full of light and shadow. The wanderings of a mother and her daughter become a haunting and devastating work, imbued with the strength, sensitivity, and passion of the young actress Mahta Naghi Zade's performance.

-*No Silêncio (In Silence)* Alexandre Britto

A timeless work by art director Lua Veiga, with radical, delirious, and dazzling set design, allows for a fascinating, terrifyingly revealing experience. A spectacular and hallucinogenic mental journey into the hidden depths of producing an ambitious film project, always chaotic, merciless, egocentric, and magical. The avant-garde filmmaker Alexandre Britto constructs an epic, ethical, and psychedelic puzzle that confirms him as one of cinema's most imaginative nihilists. The script is an experience akin to a hypnotic trance where a gallery of actors and actresses, naked in body and soul, wander in a purgatory as dazzling as it is oppressive, as artistic as it is repulsive, as sensual as it is violent. A hymn to ethical rethinking in filmmaking, framed by the visual imagination of poets, full of magic and ingenuity, where the dreamlike atmosphere contributes to the supernatural, paranoid universe of its emotions. A powerful and brilliant acting cast that generates several layers of truth and fiction in its metacinematic reflection, highlighting actress Clarice Alves as one of the most important actresses of our time.



- ها بلوط غروب (*Twilight of the Oak*) **Mohammad Abedi**

A triptych documentary featuring characters united by their landscape and their environment, beautiful yet unforgiving, which Mohammad Abedi calmly and patiently films, seeking the soul of the Zagros Mountains in every tree, every plant, every stone. A captivating and hypnotic soundtrack by Ahmadrza Safarian envelops the film with an unusual lyricism, taking us to the heart of Iran to discover its essence. The interviews are sincere, humble, and intimate, filming faces as if they were the true landscape to be discovered, admiring the struggle, resilience, and wisdom hidden in every wrinkle.

-*Oditi (Elsewhere)* **Nina Vink**

An odyssey of self-discovery, embarking on a journey to unexpected places. An emotional, elemental, existential adventure, featuring a remarkable performance by Neža Dvorščak, overflowing with epic passion. Filmmaker Nina Vink explores the dizzying sense of possibility in youth, that feeling that it's easier to see a pig flying than to have your wishes come true, especially if you're stuck in a small Slovenian town. A superb film with a believable portrayal of the heroine on an introspective, winding, tormented journey, set within a monotonous and desolate rural landscape, laden with human truth, with an intimate and personal universe orbiting around a mother, narrating the justice of recognizing and appreciating her, which in youth is neither easy, nor immediate, nor idyllic. The call on the horizon of Australian serpents in golden temples, the difficulty of resisting their enchantment, and the obsession, the impetus, the drive, and the innate need for adventure, surprise, the unexpected. The script unfolds as a learning process, a journey of self-discovery, where Neža Dvorščak evolves, matures, and resolves seemingly insurmountable Gordian knots, culminating in a luminous, animated denouement that leaves a smile on your face and a glimmer of hope in your soul, thanks in part to those exquisite, handcrafted, intimate, and precious closing credits, as if you were reading them in a private diary. Casting off the moorings and taking ownership of one's own life, without regrets or anguish, without trickery or dislocation. It seems easy, but it isn't, because we don't allow ourselves to.



-*Closed Circuit* **Mohammad Namdar, Majid Asoodegan**

Intense, surprising, and technically original, filmed primarily from the perspective of security cameras, the film evokes a pervasive sense of claustrophobia, anguish, and helplessness throughout. Actors Reza Najafi and Nasim Moslemi deliver frenetic, vibrant, and tragic performances, creating the feeling of being trapped in a nightmare from which there is no escape.

-Ça reste entre nous Maryam Shapoorian

"When men are dead, they enter history. When statues are dead, they enter art. This botany of death is what we call culture." While Chris Marker, in *Les statues meurent aussi* (1953), questioned whether the death of a statue can be filmed, director Maryam Shapoorian delves into its life, its thoughts, its emotions, its secrets. Masterfully lit and framed cinematography, expressive angles, deep shadows, and hypnotic movements create a cinematic poem filled with silences, bringing us closer to the tragedy of oblivion, separation, and exile. A fascinating, personal, and intriguing film that moves between documentary and enigma, a deliberate, austere, and subtle artistic construction thanks to its editing of images, blending past and present in each frame to evoke a sense of time destroyed within a walled space.

-La ratonera Willy Burrut

Mariana Gabriela Campione delivers a powerful, striking, elegant, and malevolent performance, possessing enough authority and presence to sustain the film's most terrifying (and sensual) sequences. A balanced, understated, and mysterious script, playing a psychotic game of cat and mouse with its characters, creates a psychological thriller that delves into the inner abyss of the disturbed, avaricious, and intelligent minds of its Machiavellian antiheroes. Willy Burrut displays a refined cinematic talent, crafting a gripping intrigue from everyday cruelty, skillfully blending dark humor and agonizing tension.

-Middle Alborz Poursayad

Director Alborz Poursayad relies on the brilliant work of his two actresses, Mana Pakseresht and Telma Sadeghi, with an imaginative, emotional, and fantastical script that gives primary value to childhood, with an optimistic, beautiful, and empowering message about women's right to freely choose their future.

-Mama Denise Moreno

Optimistic, innocent, beautiful. Facing illness with emotion, riding giraffes, throwing peaches, smelling of pizza. A drama of overcoming adversity and good feelings, irresistible to the senses, that takes you to that dream world that only analog cinema can, with a phenomenal actress, Lucía Vioqué. Almost a biopic, shedding light and color on breast cancer from a humanist, educational, and empathetic perspective, with a special, shared, feminine vision. Burning sincerity and the nakedness of the soul leave you with a smile on your lips, your heart in your throat, and a warm tear in your eyes.



-Dance! poorya dehghan

This film delves into the miseries of war with superb art direction by Babak Kashan Fallahy and masterful staging. Saeedeh Asghari's costumes and Zahra Ammorialhi's makeup also shine, creating a nightmarish universe brimming with detail on a shoestring budget, relying on imagination and hard work as its primary weapons. Actor Mehdi Rokni is immersed in the nightmares that war breeds. The script brilliantly culminates in a powerful, metaphorical, and moralizing ending, highlighting the responsibility we bear when making choices.

-Pido al tiempo que no te lleve Raúl Pardo G.

A beautiful story that all of us who have had cats and had to say goodbye to them will appreciate and value. Deeply emotional, it also delves into the socioeconomic hardships faced by young people and their difficulty in establishing a stable life plan. A soundtrack by Mario Reyes accompanies Carlos Shock in his grief, while cinematographer Alan Ríos creates highly imaginative interior scenes, using the camera like a paintbrush and light like his canvas. In memory of Buñuel, Bucky, and also my cat Grassitas.



- گور تا گهواره از (FROM THE CRADLE TO THE GRAVE) Davoud Abdolmaleki

It's impossible to resist the free, wounded, rebellious, and desperately sincere film directed by Davoud Abdolmaleki, set inside a girls' classroom in Iran. A film that breathes authenticity with the purpose of transforming Iranian society through dialogue. A fragrant, warm, and fresh cinematography that seeks debate with a prodigious montage that elegantly and precisely captures the details of a vital, dialectical battle with no short-term solution. A truly courageous and thematically essential work, where the director continues the tradition of his committed career in social cinema, with astute and intelligent filming that patiently captures the faces of his heroines to offer a microcosm full of fascinating observations on the dilemmas and misunderstandings inherent in being an Iranian woman.

-A Good Day Will Come Amir Zargara

With a heart overflowing with emotion, filmmaker Amir Zargara films with a power that almost overflows. Sia Alipour fights his battles with dignity and honor in her fists, ready to do anything to fight for what is right, for what must be done. The film is a personal and courageous look at the heroes of our time, functioning as a historical document with political relevance. Much more than a hagiography of Navid Afkari, it is a lesson in Iranian resilience, filmed with artistry, its energy and elegance emerging from its charismatic actors, confirming Mehdi Bajestani as one of the best performers in Iranian cinema.



-Bavaar (Belief) Parsa Yousef

An intimate and personal film by filmmaker Parsa Yousef, reflecting on the nature of art and how it helps us confront death. A film told in the first person, it features beautiful, powerful, and painterly images with a resonant and profound visual impact. A director to watch in the Iranian film scene, brimming with creative ideas and unafraid to break all kinds of molds in his creations.

-dark room Mobin Hajilooie

A Kafkaesque, unsettling, and distressing literary script, where wisdom is trampled daily in the streets. Mohammadreza Cheshmehnoor delivers a powerful performance in a grim, prison-like white room, where he slowly withers away in a succession of miseries until his tragic end. Filmmaker Mobin Hajilooie proves that he can create great cinematic works of art with very few resources.

-10 52 Amirmohammad Zand

As if the script were a musical score, actor Behzad Abdi delivers a disquieting performance of regrets and misfortunes, trapped helplessly in a self-destructive vortex that will lead him to fatally trust even the deceptive new technologies. Cinematographer Morteza Hakakian creates consistently effective visual compositions within the psychological game proposed by his director, accompanied by a masterful and essential soundtrack from Erfan Yazdi.

-الالكترون (Electron) Mehran Ranjbar

Exciting, intelligent, and vibrant, this film offers an insider's reflection on cinema, shot in stunning locations that capture the full diversity of the Iranian landscape. The director explores the interplay between reality and fiction on film sets, and the harshness and ruthlessness of success and fame. Of particular note is the superlative makeup work by Mohebn Darsanj, making us wonder how the actors endured so much sun covered in dry mud.

-The Cat Payam Shadnia

Using the geographical shape of Iran as a metaphor, Payam Shadnia immerses us in the hellish experience of a migrant boat, reminiscent of the harrowing journey depicted in Alfred Hitchcock's film *Lifeboat* (1944). The film begins as a dance of hope, culminating in a final massacre, a terrifying voyage filled with both economic and spiritual misery.

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