

SLOW FILM FESTIVAL

APRIL 24-29, 2025



THE CENTER OF INDEPENDENT
FILM IN SAN LUIS OBISPO

FESTIVAL GUIDE!

"THE PLACE TO SEE AND BE SEEN"

- FORBES MAGAZINE

"THE PERFECT HOME BASE"

- THE GLOBAL TRAVELER

"SLO'S NEW HIGH END"

- LOS ANGELES TIMES

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2025 SLO FILM
FEST SPONSOR

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AWARDED HOTEL

JOIN US AT OUR CONVENIENT LOCATION NEXT TO THE PALM THEATER BEFORE OR AFTER SCREENINGS
FOR A DINING AND COCKTAIL EXPERIENCE THAT COMPLEMENTS YOUR CINEMATIC EXPERIENCE.

LOCATED NEXT TO THE **PALM THEATER**

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Once again, we are bringing the world to San Luis Obispo for six incredible days. Each film has been hand selected to help inspire us to create, connect, and find common ground. Since last year, we have established the SLO Film Center, bringing the spirit of the festival to life all year long. But the film festival itself still comes just once a year—made possible by our incredible community. Thank you for supporting storytelling and keeping this event alive and thriving.

SKYE MCLENNAN

SLO FILM FEST EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



SLO FILM FEST BOARD OF DIRECTORS + STAFF

Executive Director: Skye McLennan | Associate Director: Grace Tucker

Programmer and Festival Assistant: Cindy Kitagawa | Volunteer Coordinator: Ryan Austin

Intern: Abigail O'Branovich

Board of Directors — In order of appearance: Maria Kelly, Suzanne Schonig, Tom Walters, Nina Leschinsky, Paul Metchik, Janice Rohn, David Hardberger, Lydia Bates, Kyle Plummer, Ryan Hathaway

ADDITIONAL THANKS

SLO Film Center Staff | Head of Programming: Ryan Burr | Manager: Michael Lipari

Assistant Manager: Griffen Meyers | Theater Staff: Bailey Bennett, Talha Hussaini, Rhys Jansen, McKenna Kasselmann, Matthew Wingerden

Graphic Designer: Elizabeth Kurrels & Rhiannon Dudley

Publicist: Ann Flower | Social Media: Madison Quiring | Lounge Coordinator: Brooke Coffman

And a big thank you to all of our volunteers, sponsors and venues!

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

I enthusiastically support the 31st San Luis Obispo International Film Festival. I'm honored that our city hosts one of USA Today's Top 10 Film Festivals in the United States and now has created a place to celebrate film year round at the SLO Film Center. This is truly one of the most exciting cultural events of the year within our community.

ERICA A. STEWART

MAYOR OF SAN LUIS OBISPO



SLOFILMFEST.ORG





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FREE SMALL POPCORN WITH EACH VISIT +
BIRTHDAY REWARD
15% OFF SLO FILM FEST PASSES +
\$3 OFF SLO FILM FEST TICKETS +
More coming soon!






VISIT THEPALMTHEATRE.COM

SLO FILM CENTER



IN JULY 2024, IN COLLABORATION WITH JIM AND PATTY DEE, OWNERS OF THE PALM THEATRE, WE ESTABLISHED THE SLO FILM CENTER, BRINGING THE PALM THEATRE UNDER OUR STEWARDSHIP AND CREATING THE ONLY NONPROFIT ART-HOUSE MOVIE THEATER IN THE COUNTY.



Photo Credit: Aidan Harper, Joie Rahn, Namu Williams

Over the past several months, we have showcased hundreds of films, including new indie releases and retrospective screenings, while partnering with community organizations. This new venture has been an honor and a dream to be able to bring the magic of the film festival to San Luis Obispo County all year long.

The SLO Film Center will remain a vibrant hub that celebrates the independent spirit of filmmaking, and a place where you can call your second home. While some things may have evolved, rest assured—our beloved popcorn isn't going anywhere!



October 2024, Cutting the ribbon at our Grand Opening Halloween event

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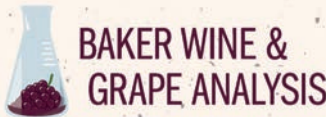


Visit slofilmfest.org/access for venue accessibility information and to find a list of our open caption screenings.

PRODUCERS



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Elizabeth "Biz" Steinberg
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Cal Poly: Department of
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Diversity Coalition SLO

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- San Luis Salsa Co.

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The Verdant Studio
(Artist Liz Lucas)

More to be added soon. Please check our website for a complete listing.

SLO FILM CENTER FOUNDING MEMBERS + ANNUAL DONORS

- The Community Foundation

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THANK YOU FOR
SUPPORTING WHAT WE DO!
CONSIDER MAKING A
DONATION TODAY.

PASSES

LINE PRIORITY

- 1. PASSHOLDER LINE:** Gets let in 30 minutes before showtime
- 2. RESERVED TICKET HOLDER LINE:** Gets let in 25 minutes before showtime
- 3. WALK UP LINE:** Gets let in 10 minutes before showtime after all passholders and reserved ticket holders.

FESTIVAL PASSES

ALL-ACCESS MOVIE MOGUL—\$350

- Access to all screenings and special events
- Passholder Line
- Festival Lounge access
- Reserve in advance required to special events

MOVIE STAR—\$225

- Access to all general and special presentation film screenings
- Excludes Special Events (Includes Opening Night, Spotlight Award)
- Passholder Line
- Daytime Lounge Access (before 5pm)

SEE + STAY—\$570 Value (\$285 per)

Book a two-night stay from April 24-29 at any hotel in the city of San Luis Obispo and receive two exclusive See + Stay passes.

- Access to special events (Excludes King Vidor event)
- 4 general screening tickets (per pass)
- Festival Lounge access
- Not available for purchase

Email your hotel booking confirmation to info@slofilmfest.org to redeem.

FAN PACK 6—\$80

6 tickets to general screenings or Spotlight Award

- Excludes Special Events (except Spotlight Award)
- Reserve tickets in advance OR join the Walk Up Line to any screening
- Shareable between multiple people

TICKETS

Individual tickets are available to each screening or event and can be purchased in advance across all venues, online or at the festival Box Office. All events are general admission and we suggest you arrive at least 30 minutes before showtime to ensure your seat.

SCREENINGS

\$15 General / \$12 Student + Palmie Members

OPENING NIGHT FILM ONLY

\$25 General / \$22 Student + Palmie Members

OPENING NIGHT FILM + PRE-RECEPTION

\$40 General / \$37 Student + Palmie Members

SURF NITE

\$25 General / \$22 Student + Palmie Members

COMMUNITY OF SKATE

\$25 General / \$22 Student + Palmie Members

KING VIDOR AWARD

\$40 General / \$37 Student + Palmie Members

MUSIC VIDEO SHOWCASE

\$20 General / \$17 Student + Palmie Members

SPOTLIGHT AWARD

\$20 General / \$17 Student + Palmie Members

CLOSING NIGHT

\$30 General / \$27 Student + Palmie Members

PANELS: \$5

R.A.C.E. MATTERS SHORTS

Pay what you can.

Proceeds go to supporting R.A.C.E. Matters.

ECOLOGISTICS SHORTS

Pay what you can.

Proceeds go to supporting Ecologistics.

ENCORE FESTIVAL

We're extending our festival past the 6-day experience! Join us at the Palm Theatre, home of the SLO Film Center, from May 1-5 as we play a celebratory screening of each of our award winning films. Official screening schedule and winning films will be available on our website on Wednesday, April 30.

PRESENTED BY



LOCATIONS

VENUES

BOX OFFICE

PALM THEATRE, SCREEN 3
817 PALM ST., SAN LUIS OBISPO

FESTIVAL LOUNGE AT EDNA CONTEMPORARY

967 OSOS ST., SAN LUIS OBISPO

FREMONT THEATER

1035 MONTEREY ST., SAN LUIS OBISPO
FREMONT.SLO.COM

DOWNTOWN CENTRE CINEMAS

888 MARSH ST., SAN LUIS OBISPO
THEMOVIEEXPERIENCE.COM



BOX OFFICE HOURS

The festival box office will be located in Theatre 3 at the Palm Theatre.

APRIL 8-APRIL 20

TUES, WED 3PM-6PM

SAT, SUN 9AM-12PM

Please note that prior to the week of the festival, the Festival Box Office will NOT be running during Palm Theatre operating hours. Purchasing tickets and picking up passes must be done during the hours listed above.

PALM THEATRE

817 PALM ST., SAN LUIS OBISPO
THEPALMTHEATRE.COM

HOTEL SAN LUIS OBISPO

877 PALM ST., SAN LUIS OBISPO
HOTEL-SLO.COM

BAY THEATRE

464 MORRO BAY BLVD, MORRO BAY
MORROBAYMOVIE.COM

LOUNGE HOURS

THURSDAY, APRIL 24: CLOSED

FRIDAY, APRIL 25: NOON-10PM

SATURDAY, APRIL 26: 10AM-10PM

SUNDAY, APRIL 27: 10AM-9PM

MONDAY, APRIL 28: NOON-9PM

TUESDAY, APRIL 29: NOON-9PM

View a detailed schedule of lounge events online.

EDNA CONTEMPORARY

ACCESS



OC Look for this icon to find the screenings playing with open captions.

For all accessible bookings or inquiries, or to notify us of your needs so we can make your visit as enjoyable as possible, please call 805.546.3456 or email: info@slofilmfest.org

Visit slofilmfest.org/access for specific venue accessibility information and to find a list of our open caption screenings.

OPENING NIGHT

Supported by Luna Red, Vina Robles Winery & COAST 104.5 FM



JOIN US FOR OUR OPENING NIGHT CELEBRATION AS WE TAKE OVER THE FREMONT THEATER WITH FOOD, MINGLING AND SPECIAL FILM, DJ AHMET.

We're celebrating the kickoff of our 31st Festival by meeting our special guests, filmmakers, and major contributors at this year's Opening Night Reception, featuring catered bites from Luna Red, wine from Vina Robles, and other treats in the pit of the Fremont Theater. With this year's film centered around the celebration of music and dance, what better way to get to know each other than in the ambiance of live music from Cal Poly Jazz, dancing, local wines, beer, and appetizers to help us kick off a fantastic week.



DJ AHMET

A Sundance Audience Award Winner, **DJ AHMET** is a heartwarming celebration of music's ability to unite and liberate, regardless of age. At 15, Ahmet, a shepherd with big dreams, enlists the help of his brother Naim to pursue his passion for music and impress Aya, a dancer preparing to dazzle at the village festival. With a cast of lovable characters, infectious humor and a catchy soundtrack, the film explores Ahmet's journey as he navigates his father's expectations, a conservative community, and his first taste of love.

DIRECTOR/WRITER: Georgi M. Unkovski
PRODUCERS: Ivan Unkovski, Michal Kráčmer, Ivana Shekutkoska
Drama / 99 min / North Macedonia, Czech Republic, Serbia, Croatia

THURSDAY, APRIL 24, FREMONT THEATER
5PM RECEPTION | 6:30PM DOORS OPEN | 7PM FILM SCREENING

Film Screening Only: \$25 General / \$22 Student + Palmie Member
 All-Access, Movie Star and See+Stay Passes accepted.

Film + Reception: \$40 General / \$37 Student + Palmie Member. Open to All-Access, Movie Star and See+Stay Passholders. Passholders must reserve in advance.

SURF NITE IN SLO

Presented by 805 Beer

Also Supported by Surfing for Hope, 93.3 KZOZ

SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 2006, SURF NITE IN SLO HAS CONTINUED TO SERVE AS ONE OF THOSE RARE EVENTS FUELED BY THE ENERGY AND ENTHUSIASM OF THE CROWD THAT ATTENDS EACH YEAR.

It is with great excitement that for our 31st festival we will be returning to the big screen at the Fremont Theater to celebrate surfing on the big screen. With drinks in the lobby, live music from RIFF TIDE, and mingling with other local surfers, join us for what's been coined the "Rocky Horror Picture Show" for surf and film lovers! This year, we're shaking it up a bit and excited to present three short films, **CREATURES OF HABIT**, **MAKING WAVES: THE LAKEY PETERSON STORY**, and **NØ WAY**.



CREATURES OF HABIT

takes viewers on a bold exploration of pushing boundaries and embracing the unknown, journeying through the unpredictable and challenging conditions of cold-water surfing. As surfers face the harsh conditions, the discomfort becomes a powerful catalyst for personal transformation, both on the waves and in life, and a celebration of the strength and exhilarating rewards found by stepping outside comfort zones.

DIRECTOR/WRITER/PRODUCER: Nate Laverty
38 min / Canada



NØ WAY

On the northernmost coastline of continental Europe, the Barents Sea fluctuates between mystic calm, ferocious instability, and fleeting windows of harmony. Rumors are, in those windows lie the sublime dream of every surfer: perfection. An antithesis to *The Endless Summer*, **NØ WAY** follows a group as they chase that dream and ponder their motivations. Experience the highs and lows of surf exploration in the 21st century with this raw and off-the-cuff look at the Arctic.

DIRECTORS: Harrison Roach, Jake Burghart
WRITER: Harrison Roach
PRODUCERS: Ian McGee, Nash Mader
41 min / USA



MAKING WAVES: THE LAKEY PETERSON STORY

takes you inside the life of Lakey Peterson, a relentless competitor whose journey is filled with triumphs, setbacks and unwavering drive. From her iconic wins to near-misses, this original documentary from 805 Beer explores Lakey's world, starting from her Santa Barbara roots to her fierce battles on the World Surf League Championship Tour.

DIRECTOR: Morgan Maassen
PRODUCERS: Dustin Hinz, Nathan Sheetz
28 min / USA

FRIDAY, APRIL 25, FREMONT THEATER
5:30PM DOORS OPEN + LIVE MUSIC | 7PM INTRO AND FILMS

\$25 General / \$20 Student + Palmie Member
 All Access and See+Stay Passes accepted. Passholders must reserve in advance.

KING VIDOR

*Presented by Hotel San Luis Obispo
Also Supported by Variety Magazine
After Party Supported by Ancient Peaks Winery*

JOIN US FOR OUR MOST HIGHLY ANTICIPATED AFTERNOON AS WE CELEBRATE AN EXCLUSIVE AND INTIMATE CONVERSATION WITH OUR KING VIDOR RECIPIENT AND VARIETY EDITOR AT THE HOTEL SAN LUIS OBISPO. STAY TUNED FOR A LATE ANNOUNCEMENT ON OUR AWARDEE!



We present the King Vidor Award as an annual tribute to a talented filmmaker, actor, or film artist in recognition of his or her exceptional artistic contributions and impacts on the motion picture industry and to filmmaking in general. See a history of the award and our past attendees at slofilmfest.org/history.

Before the conversation, enjoy a pre-reception with mimosas and a red carpet opportunity for filmmakers and special guests, then head over to the Festival Lounge after the conversation for a special celebration with drinks, bites, live music and an interactive photobooth to commemorate the memories!

**SATURDAY, APRIL 26
HOTEL SAN LUIS OBISPO,
Seven Sisters Ballroom**

**1PM MIMOSA PRE-RECEPTION
2PM KING VIDOR
AWARDEE CONVERSATION
3:30PM AFTER PARTY AT
THE FESTIVAL LOUNGE**

Conversation: \$40 General
\$37 Student + Palmie Member
All Access Passes accepted.

Passholders must
reserve in advance.

After Party: All Access and
See+Stay
Passes accepted.

MUSIC VIDEO SHOWCASE

Sponsored by Idler's Home & The Krush 92.5

**REMEMBER BACK IN THE '80S, '90S
AND EARLY 2000S WHEN MTV
ACTUALLY PLAYED MUSIC VIDEOS?**

For the fifth year in a row, music videos have a home at our festival. We are elated to once again be able to experience and celebrate the eclectic mix of creative music videos in person with many of the filmmakers in attendance to talk about their films.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 26
PALM THEATRE, 5PM**

\$20 General / \$17 Student
All Access and See+Stay
Passes accepted.

LIVE MUSIC

Enjoy a live acoustic set before the film with Tippy Trio (Hilary Brooke, Reese Galido, Forrest Williams) of the long time local favorites: The Tippy Gypsies.

After the screening, stay for our juried Music Video Awards along with a conversation with all of our attending Music Video Filmmakers! See page 49 for more information on our Music Video Showcase and a full list of this year's Music Videos.

COMMUNITY OF SKATE

Presented by 93.3 KZOZ

Also Supported by Skate Warehouse, Ceremony Skate Shop

Skate films have been a fundamental part of independent filmmaking since its early origins and have often been the launchpad to cultural art movements and social change. This year, we're excited to honor this community and its contributions to film with multiple films that celebrate the culture, community and impact of skateboarding.

Join us for a meet and greet with our special guests before the event at Ceremony Skate Shop, then head over to the Fremont for live music from JOONE, a showcase of custom skateboard designs and live-screen printing by the SLO High School Advanced Graphic Design class. Stay after the screening for a discussion moderated by Dan Parks of Unearthed Skateboarding and Loose Bearings Artwork with pro skaters Leandre Sanders and Chico Brenes, Skate Director Aaron Meza, along with SKATEGOAT director, Van Alpert.



SKATEGOAT

Leandre Sanders was born into a world of gangs and crime, but skateboarding became his escape. Instead of following in his family's footsteps, Leandre spent his days at the skate park honing his skills, evolving from an aspiring skater to an internationally respected athlete. Set against the gritty backdrop of LA, SKATEGOAT offers a raw, authentic look at the grit required to thrive in the skateboarding world while surviving as a disadvantaged youth—proving that anyone can chase their dreams, no matter the odds.

DIRECTOR: Van Alpert | **WRITERS:** Michael Lawrence, Van Alpert, Justine A. Rosenthal, Lester Jones
PRODUCERS: Nicholas Cook, Michael Lawrence
84 min / USA, Australia



AGAINST THE CURRENT

A tribute to skateboarding and a celebration of creativity, explore the artistic journey of Stacy Peralta as he reflects on his childhood inspirations, the challenges of developing his unique visual style, and his deep connection to his skateboard collection which holds the memories of the past.

DIRECTOR: Dana Shaw | **WRITER:** Stacy Peralta
PRODUCER: Charles Smith
11 min / USA

**SATURDAY, APRIL 26, FREMONT THEATER
6PM DOORS OPEN + LIVE MUSIC | 7PM INTRO + FILMS
8:45PM CONVERSATION**

\$25 General / \$22 Palmie Member / \$15 Student
All Access and See+Stay Passes accepted. Passholders must reserve in advance.

**Content Warning: SKATEGOAT is unrated and may have content
not suited for young children.**

SPOTLIGHT AWARD

Presented by The SLO Film Center



WE ARE THRILLED TO PRESENT THIS YEAR'S SPOTLIGHT AWARD TO INDIE-FILM DIRECTOR, WRITER, ACTOR AND PRODUCER, JAY DUPLASS. THE SPOTLIGHT AWARD WAS CREATED IN 2012 TO HONOR A TALENTED AND SUCCESSFUL FILM INDUSTRY PROFESSIONAL WHO CONTINUES TO BE A LEADER IN A VARIETY OF FIELDS IN THE MOTION PICTURE INDUSTRY.

JAY DUPLASS began his career in the early 2000s writing, directing and producing several award winning independent and studio films with his brother Mark, including *THE PUFFY CHAIR* and *CYRUS*. In 2014, Jay and Mark created the critically acclaimed television series, *TOGETHERNESS*, inking a television deal with HBO, where they've since produced shows like *SOMEBODY SOMEWHERE*, *THE LADY AND THE DALE* and *ROOM 104*. The brothers also produced the Emmy winning Netflix docu-series *WILD WILD COUNTRY*.

Jay began acting in 2012 when Joey Soloway cast him in their Amazon TV series, *TRANSPARENT*, which won a Golden Globe for best comedy series, multiple Emmys, and Jay was nominated for a Critic's Choice Award in 2016. He has also starred in shows like HBO's *INDUSTRY*, Netflix's *THE CHAIR*, Disney's *PERCY JACKSON*, and in feature films like *OUTSIDE IN* with Edie Falco, and *BEATRIZ AT DINNER* with Salma Hayek.

For the first time in 14 years, Jay has returned to his roots of writing and directing films with *THE BALTIMORONS*, which we are privileged to showcase alongside a conversation with Jay.



THE BALTIMORONS

Sponsored by Rosh Wright

When newly sober Cliff cracks a tooth on Christmas Eve, he visits emergency dentist, Didi. What starts as a simple dental emergency quickly turns into an unexpected adventure through the streets of Baltimore. As the night unfolds, the two strangers, each facing their own struggles, form a surprising bond and the budding of a unique romance. Full of warmth and wit, *THE BALTIMORONS* captures the magic of second chances and love when you least expect it.

DIRECTOR: Jay Duplass
WRITERS: Jay Duplass, Michael Strassner
PRODUCERS: David Bonnett Jr., Michael Strassner, Jay Duplass, Mel Eslyn, Mark Duplass
Comedy / Drama / 100 min / USA

SUNDAY, APRIL 27, FREMONT THEATER
5PM AWARD + CONVERSATION | 5:30PM FILM SCREENING

\$20 General / \$17 Student + Palmie Member. All Access, See+Stay, Movie Star and Fan Pack 6 Passes accepted. Passholders must reserve in advance.

CLOSING NIGHT

Presented by Baker Wine & Grape Analysis, Inc.



OUR 2025 FESTIVAL WILL WRAP UP WITH AN AWARD CEREMONY FOR BOTH OUR JURIED AWARDS AND AUDIENCE AWARD VOTED ON THROUGHOUT THE FESTIVAL, ALONGSIDE A SHOWING OF DARYL HANNAH'S NEWEST DOCUMENTARY FOLLOWING NEIL YOUNG'S SOLO TOUR, COASTAL.

COASTAL invites viewers to take an intimate journey with legendary musician Neil Young in a personal, behind-the-scenes documentary as he cruises the coast on his recent solo tour. Directed by acclaimed filmmaker Daryl Hannah, *COASTAL* offers a rare, unguarded glimpse of the iconoclast navigating his return to the stage post-Covid. From everyday moments on the tour bus to candid, witty interactions with his audience, *COASTAL* captures the magic of his performances, including songs that Young has rarely, if ever, played live before.

WE ARE PRIVILEGED TO WELCOME BOTH DARYL HANNAH AND NEIL YOUNG TO THE CENTRAL COAST FOR AN AUDIENCE-DRIVEN Q&A AFTER THE FILM.

DIRECTOR: Daryl Hannah
PRODUCERS: Gary Ward
Documentary / 106 min / USA

TUESDAY, APRIL 29
FREMONT THEATER
5:30PM DOORS
6PM FILMMAKER AWARDS +
FILM SCREENING + Q&A

\$30 General
 \$27 Student + Palmie Member
 All Access and
 See+Stay Passes accepted.
 Passholders must
 reserve in advance.

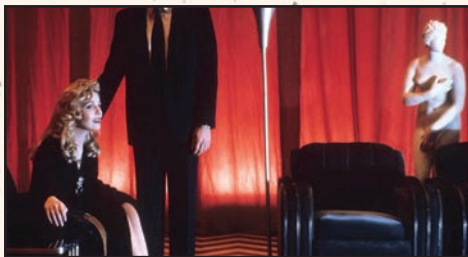
COASTAL AWAKENING: DAVID LYNCH

Presented by The Coastal Awakening
Also Supported by KVEC News Talk 96.5 FM



IN HEAVEN EVERYTHING IS FINE: THE SPIRITUAL CINEMA OF DAVID LYNCH

This year's Coastal Awakening film series honors the visionary artistry of David Lynch, whose meditative storytelling blurs reality to reveal deeper dimensions of existence. These screenings invite contemplation of the unseen forces shaping our waking and dream states through suffering and transcendence, darkness and light, and infinite layers of cosmic consciousness.



TWIN PEAKS: FIRE WALK WITH ME (1992)

Seekers of the mysterious and the mystical: join us for coffee and donuts and step into the Black Lodge with the haunting prequel to the Twin Peaks television series.

Horror / 134 minutes / USA

SUNDAY, PALM, 11:30AM



ERASERHEAD (1977)

Lynch called this his most spiritual film. A nightmarish meditation on fatherhood and fear, Eraserhead has become a cult classic of unsettling ambiguity.

Horror-Fantasy / 89 minutes / USA

SUNDAY, PALM, 3PM



MEDITATION, CREATIVITY, PEACE (2012)

Follow Lynch on a 16-country tour across Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America as he celebrates the potential of Transcendental Meditation (TM) for personal and global transformation. After the film, join us for a special Q&A with Bob Roth, CEO of the David Lynch Foundation and close friend of Lynch, as he offers deeper insight into how TM helped shape Lynch's creative alchemy.

Documentary / 71 minutes / USA

SUNDAY, PALM, 7PM

Free Screening.

CENTRAL COAST FILMMAKER SHOWCASE

Sponsored by Central Coast Film Society



JUST A SHORT DRIVE TO NEARBY MAJOR CITIES, THE CENTRAL COAST BOASTS INCREDIBLE SCENIC FILMING LOCATIONS AND SOME OF THE MOST AMAZING TALENT.

Join us on Monday, April 28, as we spend the day showcasing films from our Central Coast Filmmakers and celebrate this outstanding community. At the top of the evening we are proud to present the Cal Poly Short Cuts at the Fremont Theater. See pages 45-47 for more information on the films in the Central Coast Filmmaker Showcase.

CCFS SHORTS #1

**MOTHERING
THEATER KID
WONDERS OF THE WOLF**
MON 11:30AM DOWNTOWN

CCFS SHORTS #2

**BEAUTIFULLY UGLY
SON-MAT
TOLEDO
YES**
MON 1:15PM DOWNTOWN

CENTRAL COAST FEATURE FILMS

HIDDEN CREEK
MON 3PM DOWNTOWN

UNEARTH
MON 7:30PM PALM

CCFS SHORTS #3

**THE MONDAY CLUB AND
THE WOMEN WHO BUILT IT
VOCES DE OLD TOWN
CARPINTERIA**
MON 3:30PM DOWNTOWN

CAL POLY SHORT CUTS

MON 7PM FREMONT

**MONDAY, APRIL 28
DOWNTOWN CENTRE CINEMAS,
FREMONT THEATER, AND
PALM THEATRE**



SUNDAY, APRIL 27, PALM THEATRE

The Coastal Awakening partners with the Shanbrom Family Foundation and other 501(c)(3) organizations to award micro-grants to Central Coast writers, artists, musicians, and creatives of varied disciplines who embody an awakened way of being—one that honors the land and self-liberation through their arts and avocations.

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE

**MANY FILMS IN THE FESTIVAL ARE
ELIGIBLE FOR AN AUDIENCE AWARD!**

**THIS YEAR YOU WILL HAVE SEVERAL
OPTIONS FOR VOTING:**

**CAST YOUR VOTE AT THE EXIT DOOR AFTER EACH
SCREENING! OUR VOLUNTEERS WILL HAVE VOTING TABLETS
ON HAND TO MAKE SURE YOUR VOTE GETS TALLIED!**

**WANT TO THINK ABOUT YOUR RATING A LITTLE LONGER?
YOU WILL BE EMAILED AND TEXTED (IF YOU PROVIDED
YOUR PHONE NUMBER) A BALLOT AFTER YOUR SCREENING!**

**THE SLO FILM FESTIVAL IS PROUD TO BE
AN ACADEMY QUALIFYING FESTIVAL FOR
DOCUMENTARY SHORT FILMS.**

Winning films at
this festival may be
eligible to enter for
Oscars® consideration.



**CELEBRATE CINEMA YEAR-ROUND
AT THE ACADEMY MUSEUM OF MOTION PICTURES**

academymuseum.org

GEORGE SIDNEY INDEPENDENT FILM COMPETITION

Our annual film competition continues to attract exciting new independent films from around the world. Named after George Sidney, the Festival's first recipient of the King Vidor Award. Sidney was a Central Coast resident and a passionate supporter of independent filmmaking.

A panel of more than 100 screeners evaluated over 1,500 submissions, helping us make some very difficult decisions to finalize our Official Selections. The finalists in competition are juried by a panel of film and media professionals, and cash prizes will be awarded at the Fremont Theater during our Closing Night Ceremony on Tuesday, April 29. Full Jury bios are available at slofilmfest.org.

NARRATIVE FEATURES

ALEXANDRA FREDRICKS: Distribution and International Sales (*Oscilloscope Laboratories*)

MARC MARRIOTT: Director (*Tokyo Cowboy*, 2024 SLO Film Festival)

BORYS KIT: Senior Film Writer (*The Hollywood Reporter*)

DOCUMENTARY FEATURES

JOHN HOFFMAN: Documentary Producer (*The Barber of Little Rock*, 2023)

SAV RODGERS: Filmmaker (*Chasing Chasing Amy*, 2024 SLO Film Festival)

SOPHIE KISSINGER: Documentary Producer (*Couple's Therapy*, *Jerrold Carmichael Reality Show*, *Spermworld*)

NARRATIVE SHORTS

BARBARA TWIST: Executive Director (*Film Festival Alliance*)

BERNADETTE BECK: Actor, Producer (*Riverdale*)

SOFIA GARZA-BARBA: Filmmaker (*Peccadillo*, 2024 SLO Film Festival)

DOCUMENTARY SHORTS

BEN BRYAN: VP of Development & Documentary (*Red Bull Media House*)

DANIEL SOL: Co-Director, Co-Founder (*HollyShorts Film Festival*)

JEFFREY CHRISTIAN: Filmmaker (*Sludge*, 2024 SLO Film Festival)

ADDITIONAL FILM COMPETITIONS

CENTRAL COAST FILMMAKER SHOWCASE

EMILY RYALLS: Associate Professor (*Cal Poly State University*)

TALHA HUSSAINI: Writer, Director (*Superstar*, 2024 SLO Film Festival)

LEE KEMP: Festival Alumni (*Wrestled Away*, 2024 SLO Film Festival)

MUSIC VIDEO SHOWCASE

AMY WRIGHT: Co-founder (*DittyTV*, *Music Road Trip*)

VAN ALPERT: Filmmaker (*Post Malone: White Iverson*, *Machine Gun Kelly: My Ex's Best Friend*)

SCOTT AUGAT: VP, Partner (*DittyTV*, *Music Road Trip*)

SLOFILM.FEST.ORG



NARRATIVE

40 ACRES

Sponsored by Covelop, Inc.
DIRECTOR: R.T. Thorne
WRITERS: R.T. Thorne, Danielle Deadwyler
PRODUCER: Jennifer Holness



After a series of plagues and wars devastate society, Hailey Freeman and her family are the last descendants of African American farmers who settled in rural Canada. Surviving on a remote farm, they fend off occasional raiding parties, but now face a final battle to protect their 40 acres from a brutal militia determined to take it. As Hailey's eldest son matures into a young man, his desire for human contact threatens to put the entire family in danger.

FRI 4:45PM DOWNTOWN
SAT 2:15PM DOWNTOWN
TUES 2PM DOWNTOWN
Drama, Action, Sci-Fi / 113 min / Canada

AONTAS

Sponsored by Patricia Gomez and Frank Seiple
DIRECTOR: Damian McCann
WRITERS: Sarah Gordon, Damian McCann
PRODUCERS: Órfhlaith Ní Chearnaigh, Chris Myers



In a backward structure, AONTAS traces the build-up to the robbery of a rural Irish bank by three unlikely thieves. Beginning in the tragic aftermath of a heist gone wrong, the story unfolds in reverse, unraveling the events that led to this moment. What begins as a botched robbery evolves into a portrait of a woman trapped by her past, willing to drag everyone down with her. This fragmented narrative explores how our choices shape us and how memories we can't escape define our lives.

FRI 12PM DOWNTOWN
SAT 7:30PM PALM
SUN 7:15PM DOWNTOWN
Drama, Crime / 91 min / Ireland

THE BALTIMORONS

Sponsored by Rosh Wright
DIRECTOR: Jay Duplass
WRITERS: Jay Duplass, Michael Strassner
PRODUCERS: David Bonnett Jr., Michael Strassner, Jay Duplass, Mel Eslyn, Mark Duplass



When newly sober Cliff cracks a tooth on Christmas Eve, he visits emergency dentist, Didi. What starts as a simple dental emergency quickly turns into an unexpected adventure through the streets of Baltimore. As the night unfolds, the two strangers, each facing their own struggles, form a surprising bond and the budding of a unique romance. Full of warmth and wit, THE BALTIMORONS captures the magic of second chances and love when you least expect it.

SUN 5PM FREMONT
MON 1PM PALM
Comedy, Drama / 100 min / USA

BOCA CHICA

Sponsored by Rosh Wright
DIRECTOR: Gabriella A. Moses
WRITERS: Mariana Rondon, Marite Ugas
PRODUCER: Sterlyn Ramirez



A vibrant coming-of-age, BOCA CHICA follows 12-year-old Desi, a determined Dominican girl with dreams of leaving her beachside community to become a famous singer. When she meets a group of teens also pursuing music, her passion is reignited, but her dream is threatened by lies, child exploitation, and betrayal from those she trusts most. This powerful story portrays Desi's resilience as she navigates traumatic circumstances in pursuit of a brighter, artistically driven future.

FRI 1:30PM DOWNTOWN
SUN 12:45PM DOWNTOWN
MON 3:15PM DOWNTOWN
Drama / 96 min / Dominican Republic

NARRATIVE

CORINA

Sponsored by Latino Outreach Council & Frederick Law Firm
DIRECTOR: Úrzula Barba Hopfner
WRITERS: Úrzula Barba Hopfner, Samuel Sosa
PRODUCERS: Carlos Hernández, Iván López-Barba



WEST COAST PREMIERE

At just 20 years old, Corina rarely leaves her house except to work at a local publishing house in her neighborhood. After making a critical mistake with the final installment of the company's most famous book series, she must confront her deepest fears and embark on a journey to find a mysterious author with a mission to save her job, and ultimately, the fate of the entire company.

FRI 4:30PM PALM
SAT 1:15PM DOWNTOWN
Mystery, Comedy, Drama / 98 min / Mexico

MAGIC HOUR

Sponsored by Adamski, Moroski, Madden, Cumberland & Green LLP
DIRECTOR/WRITER: Jacqueline Christy
PRODUCERS: Jacqueline Christy, Eva Minemar



Starring Miriam Shor, MAGIC HOUR follows Harriet, a once-promising filmmaker, who finds herself stuck in the suburbs, alienated from her cheating husband and rebellious daughter. Desperate to reignite her long-lost passion, she secretly enrolls in film school, embarking on a thrilling double life. When she lands her first directing job and faces the harsh realities of the cutthroat film industry, Harriet must decide: Is her dream worth fighting for, or just a fleeting fantasy?

SAT 7:15PM DOWNTOWN
SUN 12PM DOWNTOWN
MON 7PM DOWNTOWN
Drama / 95 min / USA

PAPER FLOWERS

Sponsored by Dr. Brian and Jeri Roberts
DIRECTOR: Mahesh Pailoor
WRITER: Mary Krell-Oishi | **PRODUCER:** Asit Vyas



Based on a true story, PAPER FLOWERS follows Shalin, who defies his parents' wishes to pursue a medical degree and instead joins the Peace Corps. When diagnosed with a rare form of cancer, he embarks on a journey of self-discovery and gratitude, sharing his story through a viral manifesto that encourages others to find beauty in every sunset. PAPER FLOWERS is a powerful exploration of love, loss, hope, and the importance of cherishing each moment.

FRI 12:30PM DOWNTOWN
SAT 7:15PM PALM
TUES 2:30PM DOWNTOWN
Drama / 101 min / USA

THE PLAYERS

Sponsored by Hyde Park Partners
DIRECTOR/WRITER: Sarah Galea-Davis
PRODUCER: Sonya Di Rienzo



US PREMIERE

Emily's dream of becoming an actor is realized when she's cast in an experimental production of Hamlet, but what starts as a sense of family within the company takes a darker turn as the director's risky techniques grow. As the pressure mounts, Emily's grip on reality slips in this tense exploration of manipulation, enablement, and the delicate boundary between childhood and adulthood. THE PLAYERS goes behind the curtain, offering a compelling look at the power dynamics shaping artistic environments.

FRI 1:45PM PALM
SAT 7PM DOWNTOWN
SUN 7:30PM DOWNTOWN
Drama / 93 min / Canada

NARRATIVE

SEW TORN

Sponsored by Maggie King

DIRECTOR: Freddy MacDonald | **WRITERS:** Freddy MacDonald, Fred MacDonald

PRODUCERS: Fred MacDonald, Barry Navidi, Sebastian Klinger, Diamantis Zavitsanos, Socratis Zavitsanos



After a sewing appointment sets Barbara on a quest to replace her client's lost button, she unexpectedly stumbles upon a drug deal gone wrong. Faced with the crime scene, Barbara is forced to pick among three choices: commit the perfect crime, call the police, or drive away. Using thread to enact each decision, this vibrant, inventive narrative unravels the consequences of all three paths as Barbara fights to save her struggling fabric shop.

FRI 6:45PM DOWNTOWN
SAT 7PM DOWNTOWN
SUN 10:45AM DOWNTOWN

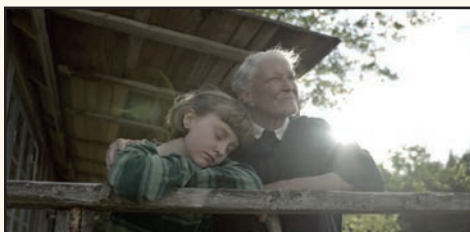
Comedy, Drama, Crime / 96 min / USA

THE SUMMER BOOK

Sponsored by Kim and Jerry Scott

DIRECTOR: Charlie McDowell

WRITER: Robert Jones | **PRODUCERS:** Kath Mattock, Kevin Loader, Alex Orlovsky, Duncan Montgomery, Aleksis Bardy, Helen Vinogradov, Glenn Close, Charlie McDowell, Ronald Santos



Starring Glenn Close, THE SUMMER BOOK explores the deepening bond between a young girl and her grandmother as they spend the summer on an uninhabited island. Both coping with the recent loss of a loved one, they explore the coastline, build boats, and teach each other lessons on life, death and love. Through their shared journey, they find solace in each other's company and learn the value of a present and fulfilled life.

FRI 7:30PM DOWNTOWN
SAT 4:30PM DOWNTOWN
MON 12:30PM DOWNTOWN

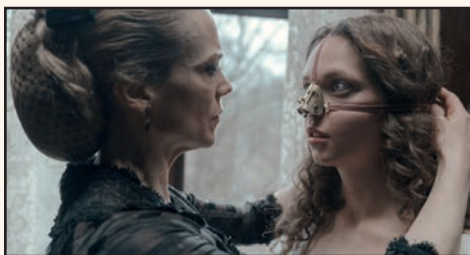
Drama / 90 min / USA, Finland

THE UGLY STEPSISTER

Sponsored by Mary Baiamonte

DIRECTOR/WRITER: Emilie Blichfeldt

PRODUCERS: Maria Ekerhovd, Lizette Jonjic, Mariusz Wlodarski, Ada Solomon, Theis Norgaard, Jesper Morthorst



A sinister twist on the classic Cinderella story, THE UGLY STEPSISTER is a coming-of-age body horror that follows Elvira as she prepares to earn the prince's affection at any cost. In a kingdom where beauty is a brutal business, Elvira will compete with the beautiful and enchanting Agnes to become the belle of the ball.

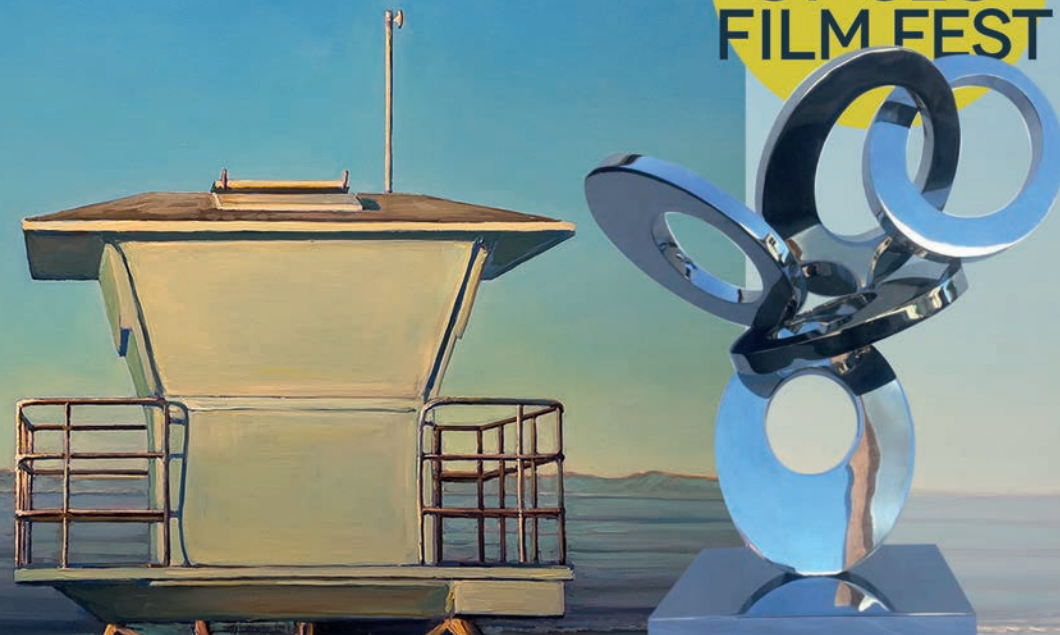
FRI 7PM PALM
SUN 6PM PALM

Drama, Body Horror / 105 min / Norway



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AMERICAN GENERAL MEDIA - PROUDLY SUPPORTING SLO FILM FEST SINCE 2007

DOCUMENTARY

AMERICAN CATS:
THE GOOD, THE BAD,
AND THE CUDDLY

Sponsored by Sharon and John Dobson, in honor of the Cal Poly Cat Program

DIRECTOR: Todd Bieber | **WRITER:** Amy Hoggart
PRODUCER: Grace Leeson



Comedian Amy Hoggart uncovers the surprising truth behind cat declawing in America. Through interviews with veterinarians, activists and pet owners, AMERICAN CATS reveals that beneath what seems like a harmless procedure lies a hidden industry profiting from feline suffering, all told through humor, unexpected revelations and, of course, plenty of adorable kittens to keep things light.

SAT 4:15PM DOWNTOWN

SUN 10AM DOWNTOWN

MON 5:30PM PALM

93 min / USA

BOB MACKIE:
NAKED ILLUSION

Sponsored by Hyde Park Partners

DIRECTOR/WRITER: Matthew Miele
PRODUCERS: Anne Chertoff Tavelin, Joe McFate



From his most iconic looks and extravagant costumes to the rare and unseen creations that never made it to the stage, THE NAKED ILLUSION takes you on a journey through the career of legendary costume designer Bob Mackie. Featuring interviews with Cher, Miley Cyrus, Carol Burnett and more, the film offers an intimate portrait of Mackie—exploring his unique upbringing and the inner circle that shaped him and the optimism and boldness that define his groundbreaking work.

SUN 7PM DOWNTOWN

MON 4PM PALM (Q&A with BOB MACKIE)

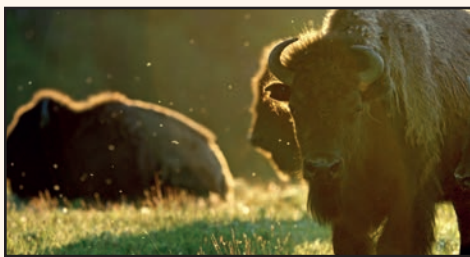
TUES 11:30AM DOWNTOWN

105 min / USA

BRING THEM HOME

Sponsored by Phil Wagner and Mary Blackler

DIRECTORS: Ivan MacDonald, Ivy MacDonald, Daniel Glick | **WRITERS:** Ivan MacDonald, Daniel Glick | **PRODUCERS:** Daniel Glick, Sarah Clarke, Ivan MacDonald, Candice Dalsing



Chronicling a decades-long effort to restore wild buffalo to the Blackfeet Reservation, BRING THEM HOME follows the journey of how reintroducing a thriving buffalo population could reignite a deep connection to heritage, spirituality and identity. Along the way, the initiative faces fierce opposition from ranchers who view the buffalo as a threat to cattle ranches, even as it holds the potential to transform the community through economic opportunities and healing.

SAT 11:15AM DOWNTOWN

MON 4PM DOWNTOWN

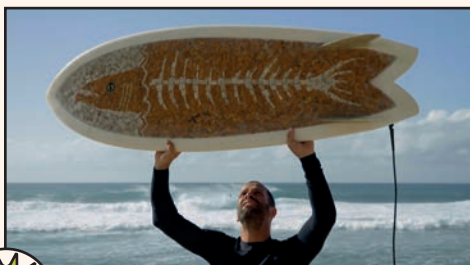
TUES 3PM DOWNTOWN

86 min / USA

THE CIGARETTE
SURFBOARD

Sponsored by Lygia Smidt and Roxy Peck

DIRECTOR: Ben Judkins
PRODUCERS: Ben Judkins, Taylor Lane



Driven by passion and purpose, surfer Taylor Lane sets out to create a functional surfboard made from 10,000 cigarette butts collected from California beaches, all in a bold effort to hold Big Tobacco accountable for its toxic, plastic waste. As the Cigarette Surfboard takes shape, it evolves into a powerful symbol for a grassroots movement, sparking conversation, raising awareness, and uniting professional surfers in the fight to protect our oceans.

FRI 2PM DOWNTOWN

SAT 11AM DOWNTOWN

SUN 3PM BAY

93 min / USA

DOCUMENTARY

DRIVER

DIRECTOR/WRITER: Nesa Azimi

PRODUCERS: Nesa Azimi, Nicolas Borel, Ines Hofmann Kanna



After losing everything, Desiree Wood reinvents herself as a long-haul truck driver, joining an irreverent group of women truckers fighting for a life on the road. DRIVER closely follows Desiree and her sisterhood of truckers as they navigate a system that promises safety and autonomy but often denies it, all while balancing work demands and leading a driver-led movement from their trucks, confronting the harsh realities of an industry indifferent to their survival.

FRI 5:45PM DOWNTOWN

SAT 11:30AM PALM

SUN 4:30PM DOWNTOWN

90 min / USA

MADE IN ETHIOPIA

Sponsored by The Bame Living Trust

DIRECTORS: Max Duncan, Xinyan Yu
PRODUCER: Tamara Dawit



When a massive Chinese factory expands in rural Ethiopia, three women seeking prosperity have their faith in industrialization tested. Filmed over four years, MADE IN ETHIOPIA reveals China's complex impact on Africa and explores Ethiopia during a time of crisis. As the women's stories unfold, the film challenges us to rethink the balance between tradition and modernity, growth and welfare, and national development versus people's well-being.

FRI 4:30PM DOWNTOWN

SAT 1:30PM DOWNTOWN

TUES 12PM DOWNTOWN

90 min / UK

MIDDLETOWN

Sponsored by Covelop, Inc.

DIRECTOR/WRITERS: Jesse Moss, Amanda McBaine
PRODUCERS: Teddy Leifer, Florrie Priest, Jesse Moss, Amanda McBaine, Danny Breen



Inspired by an unconventional English teacher, a group of teenage misfits embarks on a student film project and uncovers a vast conspiracy poisoning the ground beneath their feet. Banding together to confront indifferent adults, corrupt politicians, and a violent criminal organization threatening their town, they create an investigative documentary that sends shock waves through their community.

FRI 2:45PM DOWNTOWN

SAT 4PM DOWNTOWN

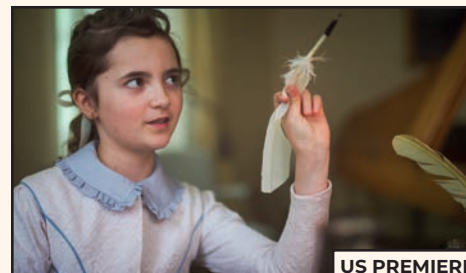
MON 1:30PM PALM **OC**

110 min / USA

MOZART'S SISTER

Sponsored by Festival Mozaic

DIRECTOR/WRITER: Madeleine Hetherton-Miau
PRODUCERS: Rebecca Barry, Madeleine Hetherton-Miau



Who was the other Mozart? For the first 16 years of her life, Maria Anna Mozart shared equal billing with her brother, inseparable as childhood prodigies on tours across Europe. As musical partners, the siblings performed before kings and queens, captivating all of Europe, but then her story goes silent. Forced to withdraw from public life because she was a woman, a groundbreaking new investigation explores why she was sidelined and what happened to her music.

FRI 1PM DOWNTOWN

SAT 11AM PALM

SUN 4PM DOWNTOWN

97 min / Australia

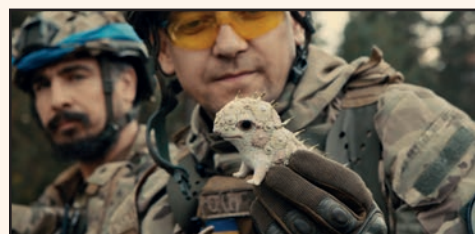
DOCUMENTARY

MR. NOBODY
AGAINST PUTIN*Sponsored by Tom and Judy Walters***DIRECTORS:** David Borenstein, Pavel Talankin
PRODUCER: Helle Faber

As Russia launches its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, primary schools across the country are transformed into recruitment grounds for the war. Confronted with the ethical dilemma of working in a system steeped in propaganda and violence, one brave teacher goes undercover to expose the realities of what's really going on within his own school.

FRI 4PM DOWNTOWN
SAT 11:30AM DOWNTOWN
90 min / Denmark

PORCELAIN WAR

*Sponsored by The Movie Group***DIRECTORS:** Brendan Bellomo, Slava Leontyev
WRITERS: Aniela Sidorska, Brendan Bellomo, Paula DuPré Pesmen, Slava Leontyev
PRODUCERS: Aniela Sidorska, Paula DuPré Pesmen, Camilla Mazzaferro, Olivia Ahnemann

Amid the chaos and destruction of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, three artists defiantly find inspiration and beauty as they defend their culture and their country. Armed with art, cameras and for the first time in their lives, guns, they discover resistance and purpose through their creativity, showing that while it's easy to frighten people, it's harder to destroy their passion for life. 2025 Oscar Nominee.

FRI 4PM PALM
SAT 2PM PALM
MON 4:45PM DOWNTOWN
87 min / Australia, USA, Ukraine

ROW OF LIFE

DIRECTOR: Soraya Simi**PRODUCERS:** Nicholas Weissman, Jaime Chew

Angela Madsen's unstoppable ambition led her toward the Marine Corps, 3 Paralympics, and 14 Guinness World Records. At 60, she set her sights on her boldest goal yet: to become the first paraplegic and oldest woman to row the Pacific Ocean solo and unassisted. ROW OF LIFE poetically captures Angela's journey, showcasing her bravery, resilience, and the deep love between her and her wife, Deb, as they support each other's dreams across the ocean.

SAT 4:30PM PALM
SUN 11AM PALM
MON 6PM DOWNTOWN **OC**
82 min / USA

SALLY

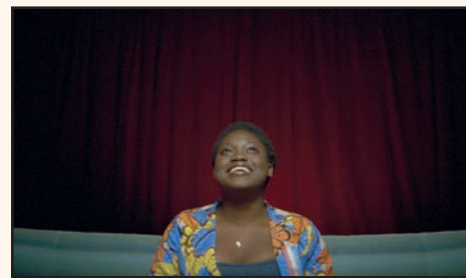
*Sponsored by Sue and Tim Rueda***DIRECTOR:** Cristina Costantini
WRITERS: Cristina Costantini, Tom Maroney
PRODUCERS: Lauren Cioffi, Cristina Costantini, Dan Cogan, Jon Bardin

Straight from Sundance, SALLY chronicles the life and career of Sally Ride, the first American woman to travel into space, and unveils the secret she carried beneath her unflappable composure. For the first time, Sally's life partner, Tam O'Shaughnessy, reveals the full story of their 27-year relationship, sharing the romance, sacrifices and complexities of this iconic astronaut's life.

SUN 4:15PM DOWNTOWN
MON 6:30PM DOWNTOWN **OC**
TUES 12:30PM DOWNTOWN
103 min / USA

DOCUMENTARY

SPEAK

*Sponsored by Mona and Gordon Jennings***DIRECTORS:** Jennifer Tiexiera, Guy Mossman
PRODUCERS: Pamela Griner, Guy Mossman, Jennifer Tiexiera

Straight from Sundance, SPEAK follows five of the nation's top teenage speech competitors, capturing the euphoria of victory and the sting of defeat as they craft, perfect and perform original oratories. With passion, humor and courage, these teens use their voices to challenge hearts and minds, fighting to preserve school speech programs in the face of budget cuts, book bans and censorship.

FRI 6PM DOWNTOWN
SAT 2PM DOWNTOWN
103 min / USA

THERE WAS,
THERE WAS NOT**DIRECTOR:** Emily Mkrtchian**PRODUCERS:** Brock Williams, Mara Adina

The first line of every Armenian fairy tale, THERE WAS, THERE WAS NOT weaves the myth of a homeland lost forever, focusing on the resilience of four women who defy that loss. Set in Artsakh, an unrecognized country caught between wars, the women strive to rebuild their lives until a new conflict erupts, turning their stories into a poignant record of endurance. From the front lines to exile, their journey becomes a testament to the power of storytelling in preserving the memory of their homeland.

SAT 10:30AM DOWNTOWN
SUN 5PM DOWNTOWN
TUES 1:30PM DOWNTOWN
94 min / Armenia, USA

THIRD ACT

*Sponsored by Elizabeth "Biz" Steinberg in memory of her husband Howard Steinberg***DIRECTOR:** Tadashi Nakamura
WRITERS: Victoria Chalk, Tadashi Nakamura
PRODUCERS: Tadashi Nakamura, Eurie Chung

Generations of artists revere Robert A. Nakamura as "the godfather of Asian American media," but for filmmaker Tadashi Nakamura, he's simply Dad. What begins as a documentary about his father's iconic career takes an emotional turn with a Parkinson's diagnosis, evolving into a poignant exploration of art, activism, grief and fatherhood. As Tad delves into his father's life and legacy, he uncovers not just Robert's story, but his own.

FRI 3:15PM DOWNTOWN
SAT 1:45PM DOWNTOWN
MON 12PM DOWNTOWN **OC**
91 min / USA

TOKITO: THE 540-
DAY JOURNEY OF A
CULINARY MAVERICK*Sponsored by The Krush 92.5***DIRECTOR:** Aki Mizutani
PRODUCER: Masashi Nozaki

Documenting a 540-day journey, TOKITO follows Michelin-starred chef Yoshinori Ishii and his team as they work to transform a beloved historic Japanese inn into Tokyo's premier destination for a once-in-a-lifetime dining experience. Blending all aspects of traditional Japanese cuisine with innovation, Ishii sets out to create a culinary experience unlike any other, redefining the art of Japanese dining.

SAT 7:30PM DOWNTOWN
SUN 1:45PM DOWNTOWN
84 min / Japan

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SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, APRIL 24

FESTIVAL
BOX
OFFICE
OPEN
9AM-6PM

FREMONT

5PM
OPENING NIGHT RECEPTION + RED CARPET (p10)

7PM
OPENING NIGHT CEREMONY + FILM (p10)

FRIDAY, APRIL 25

PALM THEATRE

DOWNTOWN CENTRE CINEMAS

LOUNGE

OTHER

FESTIVAL BOX OFFICE OPEN 9AM-6PM

FESTIVAL LOUNGE OPEN 12PM-10PM

1:45PM
THE PLAYERS
(p21)

4:30PM
CORINA
(p21)

7:30PM
SHORTS #6: RED
EYE SHORTS
(p48)

4PM
PORCELAIN
WAR
(p26)

7PM
THE UGLY
STEPSISTER
(p22)

1PM
MOZART'S
SISTER
(p25)

4PM
MR. NOBODY
AGAINST PUTIN
(p26)

6:45PM
SEW TORN
(p22)

12:30PM
PAPER
FLOWERS
(p21)

3:15PM
THIRD ACT
(p27)

6PM
SPEAK
(p27)

1:30PM
BOCA CHICA
(p20)

4:30PM
MADE IN
ETHIOPIA
(p25)

7:30PM
THE SUMMER
BOOK
(p22)

2PM
THE CIGARETTE
SURFBOARD
(p24)

4:45PM
40 ACRES
(p20)

12PM
AONTAS
(p20)

2:45PM
MIDDLETOWN
(p25)

5:45PM
DRIVER
(p25)

5:30PM
SURF NITE
7PM
FILM BEGINS
(p11)

4PM
FILMMAKER
& SPONSOR
MIXER

SATURDAY, APRIL 26

FESTIVAL BOX OFFICE OPEN 9AM-6PM

SUNDAY, APRIL 27

FESTIVAL BOX OFFICE OPEN 9AM-6PM

SCHEDULE

MONDAY, APRIL 28

FESTIVAL BOX OFFICE OPEN 9AM-6PM									
PALM THEATRE		DOWNTOWN CENTRE CINEMAS						OTHER	LOUNGE
			11:30AM CCFS SHORTS #1 (p17)		12PM THIRD ACT (p27) OC				
1PM THE BALTIMORONS (p20)		1:30PM MIDDLETOWN (p25) OC		1:15PM CCFS SHORTS #2 (p17)			12:30PM THE SUMMER BOOK (p22)		
			3PM HIDDEN CREEK (p45)		3:30PM CCFS SHORTS #3 (p17)		2PM SHORTS #2: LIFE ON SCREEN (p48)		
4PM BOB MACKIE: NAKED ILLUSION (p24)						4PM BRING THEM HOME (p24)	3:15PM BOCA CHICA (p20)		5PM CENTRAL COAST FILMMAKER MIXER
		5:30PM AMERICAN CATS (p24)		6PM ROW OF LIFE (p26) OC				FREMONT	
7:30PM UNEARTH (p46)			6:30PM SALLY (p26) OC				7PM MAGIC HOUR (p21)	7PM CAL POLY SHORT CUTS (p53)	
FESTIVAL LOUNGE OPEN 12PM-9PM									

oc Open caption screening

SCHEDULE

TUESDAY, APRIL 29

FESTIVAL BOX OFFICE OPEN 9AM-6PM		DOWNTOWN CENTRE CINEMAS		FREMONT THEATER	
11:30AM BOB MACKIE: NAKED ILLUSION (p24)		12PM MADE IN ETHIOPIA (p25)			
	12:30PM SALLY (p26)		1:30PM THERE WAS THERE WAS NOT (p27)	2PM 40 ACRES (p20)	
2:30PM PAPER FLOWERS (p21)		3PM BRING THEM HOME (p24)			
					6PM CLOSING NIGHT (p15)

ENCORE FESTIVAL

We're extending our festival past the 6-day experience! Join us at the Palm Theatre, home of the SLO Film Center, from May 1–5 as we play a celebratory screening of each of our award winning films. Official screening schedule and winning films will be available on our website on Wednesday, April 30.

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THE SLO FILM CENTER

MAKE A PLAN + MAP OUT YOUR WEEK!

THERE ARE SO MANY FILMS TO KEEP TRACK OF! USE THIS DEDICATED SPACE TO MAKE NOTES ABOUT YOUR MUST-SEE FILMS, PLAN OUT YOUR WEEK, AND JOT DOWN THOUGHTS AND REMINDERS ABOUT YOUR FAVORITES. WE'LL SEE YOU AT THE MOVIES!

Lined area for planning and notes.

NARRATIVE

CHERRY-COLORED FUNK

Sponsored by Janet Kershaw-McLennan M.D.

DIRECTOR: Chelsie Pennello

WRITERS: Chelsie Pennello, Corbett Blair

PRODUCERS: Melissa LaMartina,
Chelsie Pennello, Corbett Blair

SHORTS #1



WEST COAST PREMIERE

Lifetime schemer Winston Lee, now calling himself Roberto Ferrari, has opened Roberto's Italian Ice and Gelati, his ticket to wealth and respect. But instead of customers, a series of outraged individuals arrive, each with their own grievances. Set to the rhythm of an enigmatic DJ's beats, Ferrari must navigate this chaos while desperately clinging to his dream of success.

SAT 5:30PM DOWNTOWN
SUN 1PM DOWNTOWN

Comedy, Drama / 16 min / USA

CIELA

DIRECTOR: Mauricio Sierra

WRITER: Walker Kalan

PRODUCERS: Walker Kalan, Cesar Leon,
Jose Nuñez, David Kohan

SHORTS #3



An exploration of a child's struggle with isolation, the power of friendship, and a celebration of the rhythms, textures and traditions of life in rural Mexico, CIELA shares a magical-realist fable through the eyes of Ciela, a young girl who feels out of place in her sleepy fishing village. When Ciela forms a secret friendship with an octopus, her fantasy world collides with reality and sets off a chain of events that disrupt her village.

SAT 5PM DOWNTOWN
SUN 2:45PM DOWNTOWN

Drama, Fantasy / 15 min / Mexico

THE DEVIL'S PLOT

Sponsored by Megan's Organic Market

DIRECTOR/WRITER: Julia Weisberg-Cortés

PRODUCERS: Edgar Cortés Campoy,
Santiago Vázquez Gaytán, Jason Ehssan
Barkeshli, Mariel Álvarez Rodríguez,
Ernesto Paulsen Chain, Julia Weisberg-Cortés

SHORTS #6



Trapped in an arranged marriage and exiled to a desolate mountain homestead, Eleonora's life begins to unravel—her crops fail, her body weakens, and her mind falters. As a mysterious call from the woods pulls her toward an escape, she meets a stranger who ignites within her a yearning for something more, pushing her to question everything and seek a new path.

FRI 7:30PM PALM
SAT 8PM DOWNTOWN

Drama, Thriller / 23 min / Mexico, USA

DON'T EVEN KNOW YOU

Sponsored by William Pendergrass

DIRECTOR: Anna Volosnik

WRITERS: Anna Volosnik, Jack Smithies

PRODUCERS: Anna Volosnik, David Freedman

SHORTS #4



US PREMIERE

A heartfelt exploration of the power of unexpected connections, DON'T EVEN KNOW YOU follows an ambitious student whose seemingly perfect life is turned upside down when she meets a quirky, directionless barista with a talent for drawing and a gift for making her laugh. His artistic passion disrupts her rigid world as their unlikely friendship teaches them that stepping outside the plan can awaken buried ambitions.

SAT 10:45AM DOWNTOWN
SUN 6:30PM DOWNTOWN

Romance / 17 min / UK

NARRATIVE

FANTAS

DIRECTOR/WRITER/PRODUCER:

Halima Elkhatabi

SHORTS #3



In an effort to unite the two parts of herself, Tania decides to bring her beloved horse, Fantas, to meet her friends in her working-class neighborhood. Hoping to bridge the gap between her rural passion and urban reality, she introduces the horse to those around her, setting the stage for a collision of cultures and identities with surreal overtones where the boundaries between reality and fantasy blur.

SAT 5PM DOWNTOWN
SUN 2:45PM DOWNTOWN

Drama / 12 min / Canada

FISHTANK

DIRECTOR/WRITER: Wendi Tang

PRODUCER: Philip Yuzhong Ge

SHORTS #5



Newly sober Jules discovers that the vomiting she thought would go away never truly stops. Instead, she now vomits fish whenever faced with negative stimuli. While she typically keeps this bizarre condition a secret, after a series of bad dates, Jules meets a fish enthusiast. As things quickly escalate between them, this unexpected connection forces Jules to confront something she's avoided her entire life.

SAT 2:15PM PALM
SUN 10:15AM DOWNTOWN

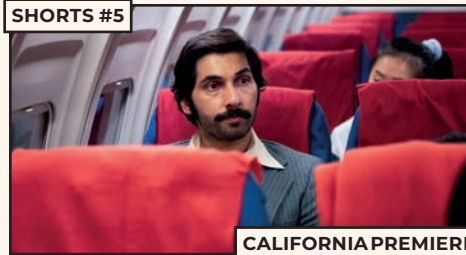
Drama, Fantasy / 17 min / USA, China

FLIGHT 182

DIRECTOR/WRITER: Rippin Sindher

PRODUCER: Rippin Sindher, Archie Panjabi,
Julia Gouw, Janet Yang, Cindy Huang, David
Thies, Martin Russell Johnson, Corey Jackson,
Gurinder Sindher

SHORTS #5



CALIFORNIA PREMIERE

As his mother's final days slip away, a devoted husband faces an impossible choice: board the next flight to India to see her one last time or heed warnings from a separatist group seeking revenge against the government. Based on true events, FLIGHT 182 is a heart-wrenching drama diving into a family's emotional struggle with love, duty, and the paralyzing fear of a homeland ravaged by riots and radicalism.

SAT 2:15PM PALM
SUN 10:15AM DOWNTOWN

Drama / 17 min / USA

HEARTS OF STONE

Sponsored by B.K. Richard and Emily Rosten

DIRECTOR: Tom Van Avermaet

WRITERS: Allison Kathleen Kelly,
Tom Van Avermaet

PRODUCER: Katleen Goossens

SHORTS #4



In a sculpture park, Paula, a lonely street artist, performs as a living statue, yearning for an impossible love with Agatha, the stone sculpture beside her. When a festival replaces Agatha with a modern piece, Paula finds her discarded among other statues and, overcome with emotion, longs to kiss Agatha with the hope of awakening her from her stone slumber. Can a kiss bring these two lost souls together?

SAT 10:45AM DOWNTOWN
SUN 6:30PM DOWNTOWN

Drama / 30 min / Belgium

NARRATIVE

IN THE FOLD

DIRECTOR: Manuel Del Valle
WRITERS: Manuel Del Valle, Erika Aldana
PRODUCERS: Lena Waithe, Rishi Rajani, Naomi Funabashi, Travis Ing, Doménica Castro, Constanza Castro, Camila Madero, Tatum Brontë

SHORTS #1



At Dim Sum Fiesta Café, tradition meets technology when an advanced algorithm creates eerily accurate fortune cookies, causing a young waiter to question his future after a customer's troubling prediction. Exploring family dynamics and blending Mexican and Chinese cultures, IN THE FOLD celebrates life's unpredictable beauty, encouraging us to embrace uncertainty and the twists and turns that shape us.

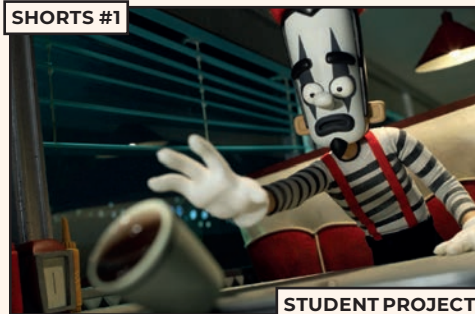
SAT 5:30PM DOWNTOWN
SUN 1PM DOWNTOWN

Drama / 16 min / USA

LE CHARADE

Sponsored by Bill Clemens and Susie Clark
DIRECTOR/WRITER/PRODUCER: Erika Totoro

SHORTS #1



STUDENT PROJECT

Set in a run-down 1950s diner, this stop-motion psychological comedy follows the final performance of a lonely mime whose psychotic breakdown unfolds after his imaginary friend breaks up with him. Struggling to cope, he's forced to re-enter society and confront the reality he's long avoided.

SAT 5:30PM DOWNTOWN
SUN 1PM DOWNTOWN

Comedy, Animation / 4 min / USA

MEAL TICKET

DIRECTOR: Wes Andre Goodrich
WRITERS: Wes Andre Goodrich, Patrick Nichols
PRODUCER: Indeed, 271, Hillman Grad, Lena Waithe, Patrick Nichols, AJ Brody

SHORTS #1



Tour manager Saint is faced with life-changing news about his client, an up-and-coming hip hop star, just 12 minutes before his debut performance on the first night of their major tour. With everything on the line, Saint must make a crucial decision that could derail the young artist's career before it even begins.

SAT 5:30PM DOWNTOWN
SUN 1PM DOWNTOWN

Drama / 13 min / USA

OUT FOR DELIVERY

Sponsored by Mary Qualls
DIRECTOR/WRITER: Chelsea Christer
PRODUCERS: Clinton Trucks, Alexa Rocero, David B. Lyons

SHORTS #1



When terminally ill Joanna decides to take control of her final days through the Death with Dignity Act, things don't go quite as planned. Instead of a peaceful, dignified exit, she's met with a series of hilarious and stressful mishaps, but everything changes when she meets Mark. Can a little bit of unexpected company turn her last hours around? Starring Martin Starr, this dark comedy will keep you laughing through the chaos.

SAT 5:30PM DOWNTOWN
SUN 1PM DOWNTOWN

Comedy, Drama / 17 min / USA

NARRATIVE

PALINDROME

Sponsored by Megan's Organic Market
DIRECTOR/WRITER: Krit Komkrichwarakool
PRODUCERS: Jovanna Burke, Shanyng Maguire, Josh Huculiak

SHORTS #6



CALIFORNIA PREMIERE

Living in a cocoon of their own creation, a man fervently seeks the truth behind his partner's disappearance after a mysterious return. Serving as a visual depiction of depression and feeling locked away in a box of our own minds, PALINDROME is an abstract exploration of a couple navigating their own unique and delicate circumstances, unraveling the complexities of their emotions and the fragile nature of our relationships.

FRI 7:30PM PALM
SAT 8PM DOWNTOWN

Mystery, Drama / 15 min / Canada

RAGAMUFFIN

DIRECTOR/WRITER: Kaitlyn Mikayla
PRODUCERS: Hannah Alline, Christina Jundt, Sailor Larocque, Amber Neukum

SHORTS #3



12-year-old Ryan, a young female motocross rider, spends what seems like a typical race weekend at the track with her father. But as the weekend progresses, Ryan faces a series of challenges in her fight to find a place in the motocross world, where her gender and disability set her apart. With a crucial race ahead, Ryan confronts her identity, her deafness, and what it means to be a girl in the sport, determined to prove herself and claim her spot.

SAT 5PM DOWNTOWN
SUN 2:45PM DOWNTOWN

Drama / 14 min / USA

RAT!

Sponsored by Megan's Organic Market
DIRECTOR/WRITER: Neal Suresh Mulani
PRODUCERS: Lottie Abrahams, Neal Suresh Mulani

SHORTS #6



This horror-comedy follows a chronically online music journalist who, after hearing a global pop star's latest single, seizes the opportunity to accuse the singer of queerbaiting. As his social capital skyrockets and the internet erupts, he unwittingly invites trouble to his doorstep when devoted fans arrive to seek retribution in a hilariously terrifying clash of online outrage and real-world consequences.

FRI 7:30PM PALM
SAT 8PM DOWNTOWN

Comedy, Thriller / 17 min / USA

SHANGRI-LA

Sponsored by Victoria Grostick
DIRECTOR: Rhys Raiskin
WRITERS: Rhys Raiskin, Hannah Rice
PRODUCER: Jeffrey Ramos

SHORTS #4



STUDENT PROJECT

Nostalgic of a high school romantic dramedy, SHANGRI-LA follows Joe, a senior grappling with the fear that he'll never have sex again. When his old high school crush moves into the same nursing home, Joe enlists his best friend Alma as his wingwoman—unaware that Alma has a little crush of her own. What follows is a hilarious and heartfelt journey of friendship, love, and proving that age is no barrier to living life to the fullest.

SAT 10:45AM DOWNTOWN
SUN 6:30PM DOWNTOWN

Comedy, Romance / 14 min / USA

NARRATIVE

SICK DAY

Sponsored by Hyde Park Partners

DIRECTOR/WRITER: Hughes Ransom

PRODUCERS: Hughes Ransom, AJ Prager, Tyler Burke

SHORTS #1



A burnt-out assistant's plan to get sent home sick unravels when a locust swarm hits Los Angeles. Elara, a mid-20s assistant, tries to feign illness to make it to her mom's musical, but her oblivious boss keeps standing in her way. As the locusts approach, Elara resorts to desperate measures to persuade him she's sick, but when the swarm finally arrives, she's left facing a tough decision.

SAT 5:30PM DOWNTOWN
SUN 1PM DOWNTOWN

Comedy, Drama / 12 min / USA

SUNDOWN

Sponsored by Megan's Organic Market

DIRECTOR/WRITER: Rafael Agustín

PRODUCERS: Steven Garcia, Alicia Marie Agramonte, William T.A. Davies, Sergio Monserrate

SHORTS #6



WORLD PREMIERE

In a forgotten part of America, two young friends stop at a rundown diner for a brief reprieve from their travels. Lost and hungry, they must learn to trust each other to manage their growing anxiety as the town's dark secrets begin to surface. As the sun sets, tensions rise, and the young couple realizes they've clearly overstayed their welcome.

FRI 7:30PM PALM
SAT 8PM DOWNTOWN

Drama, Thriller / 10 min / USA

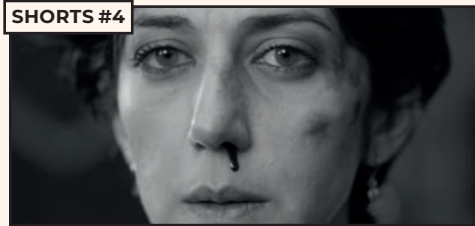
TWO PEOPLE EXCHANGING SALIVA

Sponsored by Hyde Park Partners

DIRECTOR/WRITERS: Alexandre Singh, Natalie Musteata

PRODUCERS: Violeta Kreimer, Valentina Merli, Natalie Musteata, Alexandre Singh

SHORTS #4



An absurdist tragedy set in a repressive society where kissing is punishable by death and people pay for things with slaps to the face, TWO PEOPLE EXCHANGING SALIVA follows Angine, an unhappy woman who compulsively shops at a department store and becomes captivated by an innocent salesgirl. Despite the ban on kissing, the two grow close, drawing the suspicion of a jealous colleague who threatens to unravel their budding connection.

SAT 10:45AM DOWNTOWN
SUN 6:30PM DOWNTOWN

Drama, Surrealist / 36 min / France, USA

ZARI

Sponsored by NAACP San Luis Obispo County Branch

DIRECTOR/WRITER: Shruti Parekh

PRODUCER: Kajri Akhtar, Shruti Parekh

SHORTS #3



Amid preparations for her sister's wedding, Neelu is reluctantly brought to India to shop for wedding saris, which she has no interest in wearing. Struggling with the gendered expectations placed on her, she meets Zeyb, a quiet clerk with a unique approach to modeling the garments. When Neelu learns of Zeyb's secret life as an internet drag queen, an unexpected connection forms, guiding them both to understand themselves better.

SAT 5PM DOWNTOWN
SUN 2:45PM DOWNTOWN

Drama / 19 min / USA, India

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DOCUMENTARY

ALL THINGS METAL

Sponsored by Hyde Park Partners

DIRECTOR: Motoki Otsuka

PRODUCERS: Lucy Sexton, Jenna M. Kelly, Beth Aala, Dee Snider, Karen Jorgensen, Justin Lacob, Bryn Mooser, Gus Wenner, Jason Fine, Alexandra Dale

SHORTS #2



A heartfelt exploration of metal craft, artistry and brotherhood, ALL THINGS METAL follows the Patterson brothers, who run an iron forge creating heirloom ironwork while embracing their love for heavy metal music. Bonded by shared struggles, familial upheavals and disability diagnoses, their story is an ode to the healing power of creativity and a celebration of a family that defines itself through creativity rather than disability.

SUN 3:30PM DOWNTOWN
MON 2PM DOWNTOWN

18 min / USA

KOPALA

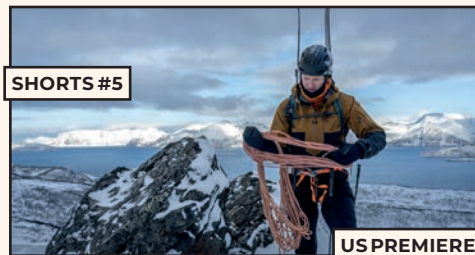
Sponsored by Kristin and Harvey Schwartzman

DIRECTOR: Hugh Francis Anderson, Vette Sevid

WRITER: Hugh Francis Anderson

PRODUCERS: Hugh Francis Anderson, Vette Sevid, Krister Kopala

SHORTS #5



US PREMIERE

In the stunning mountains of Arctic Norway, snowboarder Krister Kopala prepares for his thrilling first descent. Driven by childhood trauma, he finds solace in the mountains, seeking adventure and answers to life and death within the pristine yet risky landscape. As we witness his gripping run, we are drawn into Krister's bold journey toward finding presence, freedom and the healing power of nature.

SAT 2:15PM PALM
SUN 10:15AM DOWNTOWN

33 min / Norway

THE LONG VALLEY

Sponsored by NAACP San Luis Obispo County Branch

DIRECTORS: Robert Machoian, Rodrigo Ojeda-Beck | **PRODUCER:** Robert Machoian, Rodrigo Ojeda-Beck, Chris Carpenter

SHORTS #5



Does dreaming allow us to envision a better future, or does it hold us back from living in the present? THE LONG VALLEY meditates on our struggle to accept reality and the passage of time, offering a contemplative space to continue dreaming. Through a poignant exploration of the people and landscapes of California's Salinas Valley—one of the state's most fertile agricultural regions—the film invites us to reflect on how dreams shape our lives while we navigate the world around us.

SAT 2:15PM PALM
SUN 10:15AM DOWNTOWN

13 min / USA

MOTORCYCLE MARY

Sponsored by Debby and Steve Nicklas, dedicated to Lumina Alliance

DIRECTOR: Haley Watson

PRODUCER: Rachel Greenwald

SHORTS #2



In the 1950s, Mary McGee found a sense of freedom when she became the first American woman to race motorcycles. With stunning archival footage, MOTORCYCLE MARY brings to light an undaunted racing career spanning 30 years that saw Mary shatter gender norms, confront sexism and personal tragedy all while mastering multiple racing disciplines and pushing herself to greater and greater heights.

SUN 3:30PM DOWNTOWN
MON 2PM DOWNTOWN

22 min / USA

DOCUMENTARY

TIGER

Sponsored by Films for Good: Bob and Christine Williams

DIRECTOR/WRITER: Loren Waters

PRODUCERS: Loren Waters, Dana Tiger, Robert L. Hunter

SHORTS #5



WEST COAST PREMIERE

In an effort to feel closer to her late father, Dana Tiger, in memory of her father, turned to his art and built a successful T-shirt business with her family until tragedy struck again with the unexpected passing of her brother, bringing the business to a halt. In an abstract collage of stories, TIGER unfolds the journey of how, for nearly 30 years, Dana and her family fought to revive the iconic brand the world now clamors for, all while enduring profound grief and Dana's battle with Parkinson's disease.

SAT 2:15PM PALM
SUN 10:15AM DOWNTOWN

13 min / USA

WE WERE THE SCENERY

Sponsored by Dave Keitel

DIRECTOR: Christopher Radcliff

WRITER: Cathy Linh Che

PRODUCERS: Cathy Linh Che, Jess X. Snow

SHORTS #2



Soon after the end of the Vietnam War, Hoa Thi Le and Hue Nguyen Che, along with nearly 100 other refugees in The Philippines, were used as background extras in the filming of *Apocalypse Now*. Guided by their perspective and memories of their lived experiences, WE WERE THE SCENERY traces Vietnam, the Philippines and the USA within past and present, truth and fiction, and through life and cinema.

SUN 3:30PM DOWNTOWN
MON 2PM DOWNTOWN

15 min / USA

THE WILHELM SCREAM

Sponsored by Hyde Park Partners

DIRECTOR/WRITER: Anna Quinlan

PRODUCER: Anna Quinlan, Steve Lee

SHORTS #2



WEST COAST PREMIERE

Every moviegoer recognizes the iconic "Wilhelm Scream," a sound effect that has appeared in hundreds of films, TV shows, video games and commercials over the past 73 years. Fun, quirky and fast paced, THE WILHELM SCREAM delves into cinema's most infamous inside joke, its mysterious origins, its rise to fame and the people who keep using it time and time again.

SUN 3:30PM DOWNTOWN
MON 2PM DOWNTOWN

12 min / USA

XCLD: THE STORY OF CANCEL CULTURE

Sponsored by Sandra Duerr

DIRECTOR: Ferne Pearlstein

WRITER: Trevor Noah, Ferne Pearlstein

PRODUCER: Kiana Jackson, Amy Hobby

SHORTS #2



XCLD offers a comedic exploration of the controversial phenomenon of 'cancel culture': its origins, evolution, and the heated debate over its impact on free speech and accountability. What began as a progressive effort to hold people accountable has been co-opted by conservatives, who now see themselves as its victims. Entertaining and thought-provoking, XCLD is sure to spark impassioned conversation about some of today's hottest topics.

SUN 3:30PM DOWNTOWN
MON 2PM DOWNTOWN

39 min / USA



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CENTRAL COAST

BEAUTIFULLY UGLY

DIRECTOR/WRITER: Adalberto Angulo
PRODUCERS: Adalberto Angulo, Ricardo Rosario, Mike Lev

CCFS #2



WORLD PREMIERE

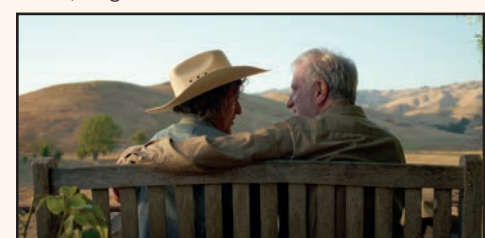
After a devastating breakup, Bill's emotional journey through the five stages of grief becomes a surreal, distorted experience. As reality bends and his emotions clash with dreamlike sequences, he faces heartbreak, self-destruction, and moments of unexpected healing in a raw and intimate look at love, loss, and the messy journey toward finding oneself again.

MON 1:15PM DOWNTOWN

Drama / 8 min / USA

HIDDEN CREEK

Sponsored by Elizabeth "Biz" Steinberg in honor of the CAPSLO Adult Day Program
DIRECTORS: Julian Mercado Avila, Darien Jewel
WRITER: Steve Brody PhD
PRODUCERS: Julian Mercado Avila, Darien Jewel, Magnus Marthaler



Widowed rancher Jimmy has spent a lifetime protecting his land, but as dementia takes hold of his mind, so does paranoia. When his son and daughter start making decisions behind his back, he begins to wonder if his mind is failing him or if his family is gaslighting him into giving up his legacy.

MON 3PM DOWNTOWN

Drama / 99 min / USA

THE MONDAY CLUB AND THE WOMEN WHO BUILT IT

Sponsored by Victoria Grosttick
DIRECTOR/WRITER/PRODUCER: Robin Smith

CCFS #3



Discover the rich history of our local Monday Club and the bold women who paved the way for its legacy, including Julia Morgan, a trailblazing architect who constructed the home for the dynamic women's club that has now thrived for over 100 years. As the turn of the century saw passionate women breaking barriers and reimagining their futures, women's clubs became centers for change, justice and community.

MON 3:30PM DOWNTOWN

Documentary / 30 min / USA

MOTHERING

DIRECTOR/WRITER: Robin Nystrom
PRODUCERS: Jodi Norton, Robin Nystrom, Jennie Nystrom, Jason Kaiser, Alex Raban

CCFS #1



In a therapy session designed to uncover the truth behind his recurring nightmares, Chamai is forced to confront the chilling possibility that his trauma may not be confined to his sleep. The dark forces clawing at him within his dreams are now invading his waking life, and as reality and nightmare blur, Chamai must face the terrifying truth that what he fears most may be closer than he ever imagined.

MON 11:30AM DOWNTOWN

Horror / 8 min / USA

SLOFILMFEST.ORG



CENTRAL COAST

SON-MAT

DIRECTOR/WRITERS: Haaram Kim
PRODUCER: Dana Walker

CCFS #2



STUDENT PROJECT

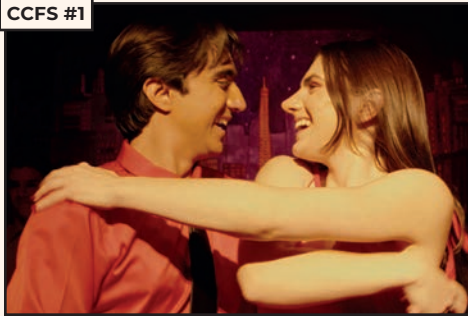
After the loss of his mother, a son embarks on a heartfelt journey to honor her memory by preparing a nostalgic Korean dish she once lovingly made. As he navigates the complexities of grief, family and tradition, cooking becomes a bridge to the past, offering him a way to reconnect with cherished memories and find healing through the comforting flavors of his youth.

MON 1:15PM DOWNTOWN*Drama / 9 min / USA*

THEATER KID

DIRECTOR/WRITER: Liam Burns
PRODUCERS: Alena Mauhs, Curran Seth

CCFS #1



Kenneth's delusions and distorted sense of stardom lead him to sabotage the high school theater production he and his cast mates have been working so hard on. At the same time, his poorly executed attempts to win over his crush and co-star, Jane, only make matters worse.

MON 11:30AM DOWNTOWN*Musical, Drama, Comedy / 17 min / USA*

TOLEDO

DIRECTOR/WRITER: Alyssa Toledo
PRODUCERS: Chase Stokes, Jonathan Daviss, Anthony Vasquez

CCFS #2



WEST COAST PREMIERE

Amid the hot summer cilantro fields, a brooding teenage cowboy, Santos, wrestles with his unspoken love for Emma. Before returning to Mexico, he must confess his feelings, but a cruel rival stands in his way. Torn between cultures and desire, this captivating tale weaves a web of forbidden passion, the clash of expectations, and the struggle to test the boundaries of love and identity. Will he choose to fight for love or surrender to fate?

MON 1:15PM DOWNTOWN*Drama / 15 min / USA*

UNEARTH

Sponsored by Swift Action Fund

DIRECTORS: John Hunter Nolan, Auberin Strickland, Dunedin Strickland | **WRITER:** Vickie Curtis
PRODUCERS: Gina Papabeis, Auberin Strickland, Dunedin Strickland, Eyal Levy, John Hunter Nolan



Amid the urgent demand for metals and minerals to combat climate change, commercial salmon fishermen and Indigenous tribal council members in Bristol Bay, Alaska, face the looming threat of North America's largest copper mine. As they battle to protect their beloved homeland, they uncover the systematic recklessness of a powerful industry while demonstrating the enduring strength of community activism.

MON 7:30PM PALM*Documentary / 93 min / USA*

CENTRAL COAST

VOCES DE OLD TOWN CARPINTERIA

DIRECTORS: Brent Winebrenner, Leslie Westbrook
PRODUCER: Leslie Westbrook

CCFS #3



VOCES DE OLD TOWN CARPINTERIA uncovers the story of Aliso School, one of California's last segregated schools, through the voices of the resilient Mexican American children who attended before integration in 1947. Told by historian Jim Campos and the collective memories of former students, the film highlights their perseverance in the face of injustice and their pride in both personal and generational achievements, offering a powerful look at healing and the importance of remembering history.

MON 3:30PM DOWNTOWN*Documentary / 14 min / USA*

WONDERS OF THE WOLF

Sponsored by Jeanne Potter and Ron Tilley

DIRECTOR/WRITER: Angie Ruiz
PRODUCERS: Angie Ruiz, Aaron Weber

CCFS #1



An exploration of one of the most successful conservation efforts in modern history—the Yellowstone Wolf Project. From the wolves' historic reintroduction in 1995 to the thriving packs of today, biologists share inspiring stories about the wolves they study in the park. Using bioacoustic technology, researchers are uncovering how wolves communicate, applying their findings to resolve wildlife-livestock conflicts and protect these majestic creatures.

MON 11:30AM DOWNTOWN*Documentary / 31 min / USA*

YES

Sponsored by Nurse Mo

DIRECTOR/WRITER: Randi Barros
PRODUCERS: Hollis Sherman-Pepe, Jennie Lew Tugend

CCFS #2



A story of loss, resilience and unexpected connections, YES follows 8-year-old Mia, who has been unable to speak since tragically losing both of her parents. Now living with her aunt on the California-Mexico border, Mia's world is shaken when she discovers an undocumented mother and daughter hiding in her backyard. Determined to help them while avoiding her aunt's xenophobic boyfriend, Mia must figure out how to protect the family while confronting her own trauma.

MON 1:15PM DOWNTOWN*Drama / 21 min / USA*

SHORTS PROGRAMS

SHORTS #1

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK (78 min)

Is it the weekend yet?! 6 short films where the workday takes wild, unexpected, defeating and sometimes life-altering turns.

CHERRY-COLORED FUNK
IN THE FOLD
LE CHARADE
MEAL TICKET
OUT FOR DELIVERY
SICK DAY

SAT 5:30PM DOWNTOWN
SUN 1PM DOWNTOWN

SHORTS #2

LIFE ON SCREEN (106 min)

Dive through the screen with 5 films exploring the many forms of artistic expression and its ripple effects in influencing culture and inspiring creativity.

ALL THINGS METAL
MOTORCYCLE MARY
WE WERE THE SCENERY
THE WILHELM SCREAM
XCLD: THE STORY OF CANCEL CULTURE

SUN 3:30PM DOWNTOWN
MON 2PM DOWNTOWN

SHORTS #3

rites of passage (60 min)

4 films capturing the magic, wonder, uncertainty and self-discovery of growing up.

CIELA
FANTAS
RAGAMUFFIN
ZARI

SAT 5PM DOWNTOWN
SUN 2:45PM DOWNTOWN

SHORTS #4

LOVE IN A HOPELESS PLACE (97 min)

Love knows no bounds in this mix of narratives exploring connection and all that love makes possible, even when it feels out of reach.

DON'T EVEN KNOW YOU
HEARTS OF STONE
SHANGRI-LA
TWO PEOPLE
EXCHANGING SALIVA

SAT 10:45AM DOWNTOWN
SUN 6:30PM DOWNTOWN

SHORTS #5

TRUE GRIT (93 min)

An exploration of loss, endurance, and perseverance through the unpredictable journey of life.

FISH TANK
FLIGHT 182
KOPALA
THE LONG VALLEY
TIGER

SAT 2:15PM PALM
SUN 10:15AM DOWNTOWN

SHORTS #6

Sponsored by Megan's Organic Market

RED EYE SHORTS (65 min)

Red Eye Shorts delivers mystery, scandal, and twists, taking you to places you never wanted to be when darkness falls.

THE DEVIL'S PLOT
PALINDROME
RAT!
SUNDOWN

FRI 7:30PM PALM
SAT 8PM DOWNTOWN

ADDITIONAL SHORTS PROGRAMS:

CENTRAL COAST SHORTS #1 (p17)
CENTRAL COAST SHORTS #2 (p17)
CENTRAL COAST SHORTS #3 (p17)
CAL POLY SHORT CUTS (p53)

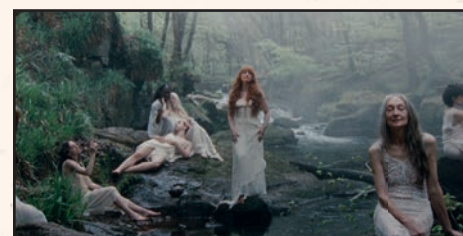
R.A.C.E. MATTERS SHORTS (p50)
ECOLOGISTICS SHORTS (p51)
MUSIC VIDEO SHOWCASE (p49)
FILMMAKERS OF TOMORROW
YOUTH SHOWCASE (p52)

MUSIC VIDEOS

Sponsored by Idler's Home & The Krush 92.5

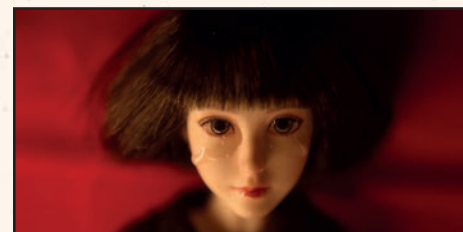
REMEMBER BACK IN THE '80S, '90S AND EARLY 2000S WHEN MTV ACTUALLY PLAYED MUSIC VIDEOS?

For the fifth year in a row, music videos have a home at our festival. We are elated to once again be able to experience and celebrate the eclectic mix of creative music videos in person with many of the filmmakers in attendance to talk about their films.



BLYTH

DIRECTOR: Tom Dream
WRITERS: Tom Dream, Liana Cornell
PRODUCER: Liana Cornell
6 min / Australia



BOOKED A ROOM

DIRECTOR/WRITER/PRODUCER: Krij Lefcoe
3 min / USA



DOUBLE SIDED GIRL

DIRECTOR/WRITER/PRODUCER: Vanessa Marzaroli
2 min / USA



FLOODED REALMS

DIRECTOR/WRITER/PRODUCER: Virginie Bluzat
5 min / France

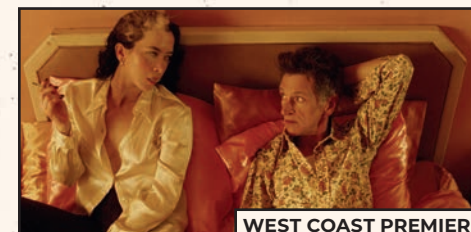
SATURDAY, APRIL 26
PALM THEATRE, 5PM

\$20 General / \$17 Student
All Access and See+Stay
Passes accepted.



GIVE YOU UP

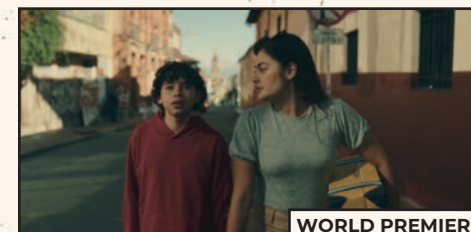
DIRECTORS: Josh Martin, Ryan McNeely
WRITERS: Thomas Dutton, Josh Martin
PRODUCER: Christopher Heinrich
4 min / USA



WEST COAST PREMIERE

LISTA

DIRECTOR: Bianca Poletti | **WRITER:** Nikki Lorenzo
PRODUCERS: Kelly Silva, Shayna Gianelli
3 min / USA



WORLD PREMIERE

OLDER

DIRECTOR: Luis Enrique Vanegas Obando
WRITER: Madeline Marlowe
PRODUCERS: Dan Polko, Yuri Vargas, Carlos Andrés Vanegas
5 min / Colombia



QUEEN OF SIN

DIRECTOR/WRITER/PRODUCER: Cameron Zayec
5 min / Australia

R.A.C.E. MATTERS PRESENTS: CULTURE, STRENGTH, AND STORIES THAT MATTER.... UNITED WE THRIVE

Presented by R.A.C.E. Matters SLO



BARBERSOUL WORLD PREMIERE

SPONSORED BY: CJ's Barbecue & Thrifty Beaches

Lino Campos, a master barber with 23 years of experience, reflects on his journey as a small business owner in Los Angeles. From the struggles of his first barbershop to the success of opening a second, he shares the story of his legacy and the pride of passing down his craft to his son.

DIRECTOR/WRITER: Sergio Herrera
PRODUCERS: Christo Mercado, Sergio Herrera, Joel Romero
Documentary / 8 min / USA

THE LAST DANCE

SPONSORED BY: The Allen Family & Compelling Vision

When the council forces the closure of a legendary bar, a cornerstone of the Caribbean community, a haven for reggae music, and a hub for the Windrush generation, Fox's world unravels, and his patrons face displacement. In defiance, the community unites, culminating in a powerful final dance that will resonate through history.

DIRECTOR/WRITER: Hayden Mclean
PRODUCERS: Lurleen Johnson, Harold Salakinathan, Ade O'Adesina, Hayden Mclean
Drama / 17 min / UK

CUT ME SUMMA DAT NOISE

SPONSORED BY: Jeff and Kerry Heller & Friends of R.A.C.E. Matters

A celebration of the rhythms of everyday life, seen through the eyes of a neighborhood matriarch who sets the tone for the day with the beat of her own heart. As the neighborhood comes to life, people of all ages unite in a joyous symphony of sounds, highlighting the connections between them as they unite in the rhythm of their vibrant, diverse community.

DIRECTOR/WRITER: Cara Hagan
PRODUCERS: Jeannette Bonner, Cara Hagan
Dance / 6 min / US

OVER THE BOARD

SPONSORED BY: Diversity Coalition SLO & Friends of R.A.C.E. Matters

Identical twins Ian and Eric have never met. One is a chess prodigy at Columbia, the other a street-smart inmate with a natural gift for the game. When fate brings them together, their only way to bridge the gap between their worlds is over the chessboard. But as they face off, will the game bring them closer as brothers, or tear them apart forever?

DIRECTOR: Emiliano Bolado
WRITERS: Isaac Bell, Elijah Bell, Emiliano Bolado
PRODUCERS: Isaac Bell, Elijah Bell, Madalyn Hordner
Drama / 27 min / USA

SOUL OF THE CITY WEST COAST PREMIERE

SPONSORED BY: The Wilkins Family & L. Cherry and C. Bell

On a routine, music-filled ride through Los Angeles, Chris, a rehabilitated pedicab driver, and his passenger, Jasmine, are unexpectedly reminded that no matter how far you've come, judgment can follow you anywhere.

DIRECTOR/WRITER: Roger Melvin
PRODUCER: Loren Semmens
Drama / 8 min / USA

ECOLOGISTICS SHORTS

Presented by Ecologistics
Also Supported by Stacey Hunt

DIVE INTO THE BEAUTY AND URGENCY OF OUR PLANET WITH ECOLOGISTICS' ENVIRONMENTAL SHORT DOCUMENTARY SERIES.

This captivating collection showcases powerful, thought-provoking stories that highlight the wonders of nature and the challenges we face in preserving it. From the delicate ecosystems on the brink of collapse to the inspiring individuals and communities working to make a difference, these films will leave you informed, inspired, and motivated to take action. Don't miss the chance to witness the world through a new lens—one that emphasizes the importance of sustainability, conservation, and our shared responsibility to protect the Earth.



ELLA, EL AGUA

Laura Babahekian is a visionary professional diver known for capturing extraordinary scenes of everyday life beneath the sea. By showcasing ordinary people engaging in familiar activities underwater, she bridges the gap between land and ocean, offering a unique perspective on the fragility of our marine ecosystem.

DIRECTOR/WRITER/PRODUCER: Miguel Angel San Joaquin
Documentary / 25 min / Argentina

NO ONE IS AN ISLAND

In this thought-provoking animated conversation, environmental artist James McKay delves into the possibility of living a fulfilling life without harming the environment. Through his insights, he uncovers how hope, creativity and innovative thinking can spark meaningful change.

DIRECTOR/WRITER/PRODUCER: David Bunting
Documentary, Animation / 10 min / UK

EL PULMO

Mario Castro, a retired commercial fisherman, played a pivotal role in transforming Cabo Pulmo, Mexico, into the world's most successful marine park, preserving its natural beauty for future generations. But his hard-won paradise now faces modern challenges: large-scale development, a lack of authority, and a growing population.

DIRECTOR/WRITER/PRODUCERS: Mark Kronmeyer, Begoña Felix
Documentary / 30 min / Mexico

SUNDAY, APRIL 27
PALM THEATRE
2PM

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AT LUNA RED FOR A
BRUNCH FUNDRAISER WITH
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FILMMAKERS OF TOMORROW

Sponsored by Mark Buchman, Schoolyard Communications

Now in it's 19th year, this program continues to inspire youth filmmakers from around the world to share their talents with our festival audience. This showcase presents some of the very best films submitted this year from around the world by under 18 filmmakers in Elementary, Middle and High School.



BLOODRED SODA

Meredith Whitcher, Joanna Rawlings, Gianna Dossa, Mackenzie Temple
9 min / San Luis Obispo, CA

CAMINOS DIVERGENTES

Analy Rangel Chávez, Izabella Alfaro, Gauri Bullington, Leo Wilmsen, Alex Rangel Chávez, Ryan Schnur
4 min / Colorado

CHAD GPT

Bex Furlong, Aaron Ramseier, Eidan Siddle, Naia Cano, Maya Haddouchi, Carlota Reverter, Tom Payne, Rye Rattanamaneecharat, Oli Flinn, Isla Kerr, Otis Reich
4 min / United Kingdom

DARK BLUE

Mitong Wang, Du Jianhua, Zhao Wendi, Su Xiaomeng, Zhuang Yusen, Cao Lan, Peggy Wu, Zhao Wendi, Wang Chen
5 min / China

DAZED

Nelan Castillo, Jack Rosenberg, Timothy Okajima, Zach Willis, David Pineda, Howie Choi, Aiden Ahn, Enzo Consani
4 min / California

DRIFTING

Lilia Spiegel
3 min / California

ILLUMINATION

Charlotte Anthony
3 min / California

KAINE INTERCEPTION

Johnny White, Harry White
4 min / Colorado

LOCAL MUSIC

Ella Bettencourt, Elliott Johnson, Asa Selverston, Taj Katzoff, Daniel Cordez
5 min / Morro Bay, CA

MOM'S PHOTOS

Isabella Kira, Kyan Whiten, Sathya Chey, Zion Patterson
2 min / California

THE PASSION PROJECT

Kyan Whiten, Emily Fitzgerald, Abby Zidonis, Jaden Bober, Nathan Spolter, Charlie Peterson, Isabella Kira, Karen Anderson, O'Brien Sale
2 min / California

PICTURESQUE

Aidan Rutman, Hudson Hillin, Josephine Reitman, Emmy DeSilva, Josie DeSilva
4 min / California

PROGRESSION

Cade Savage Schwartz, Levi Obendorfer-Hoggan, Grayson Rothbart, Ethan Schwartz, Pete Billington
4 min / California

PULPITUM

Caleb Reese Paul, David Paul, Lara Paul, Robert W. Bevis, Mona Mekki, Kathryn Bailey, Dean McGinnes
15 min / New York

TALES AND TAILS

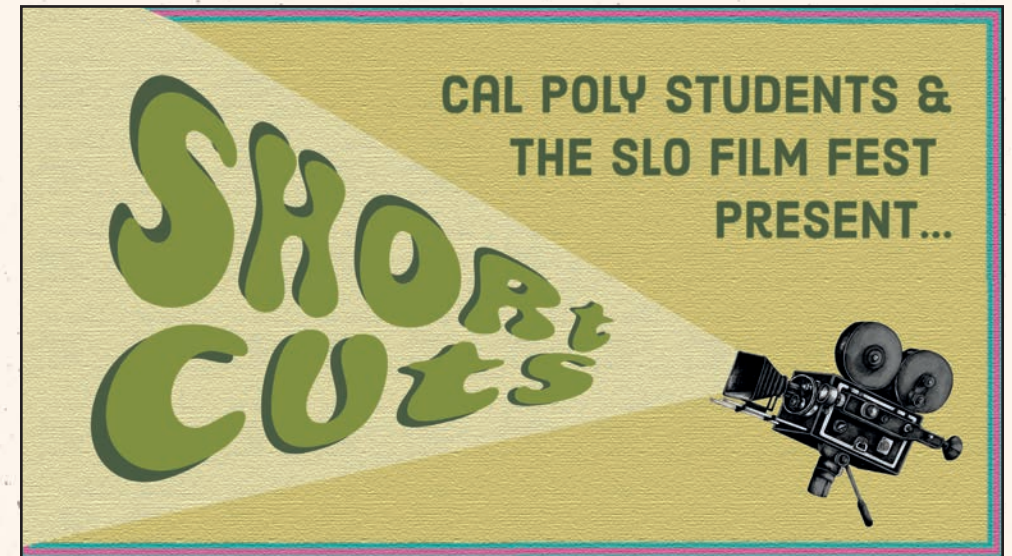
Zhi Wang
3 min / China

SUNDAY, APRIL 27
DOWNTOWN CENTRE CINEMAS
1:30PM

\$15 General
\$12 Student + Palmie Members
All passes accepted.

CAL POLY SHORT CUTS

Sponsored by Cal Poly Center of Expressive Technologies | Cal Poly Department of Interdisciplinary Studies in Liberal Arts | Cal Poly Art and Design Department



SHORT CUTS features 6 short films created by Cal Poly students under the mentorship of Randi Barros, screenwriter, editor, and ISLA Lecturer, and James Werner, artist and Associate Professor of Art & Design. Engage with emotionally charged stories exploring love, loss, discovery, and unexpected moments of connection. See tomorrow's filmmakers at work today.

MONDAY, APRIL 28
FREMONT THEATER

6:30PM DOORS
7PM FILMS BEGIN

\$10 General / \$5 Student
All Access, See+Stay
and Movie Star
Passes Accepted.

GOAT CREEK

An eclectic older woman returns home to scatter the ashes of her younger sibling, hoping to reconnect with her only living sister, who wants nothing to do with her.

INTERCEPTION

An aspiring 20-year-old fashion designer stuck in a dead-end job spars with her difficult manager, but after intervening in an accident involving the manager's son, their relationship shifts in an unexpected way.

LIFE ON THE LINE

A man speaks on the phone with a customer service representative in an attempt to cancel his subscription to life.

OPERATION LOST PUP

An overwhelmed mother makes the difficult decision to sell the family dog, but fails to inform her young imaginative daughter of the exchange which ignites a madcap adventure.

STICKY

A hopeless romantic starts a relationship through the exchange of sticky notes on a public bus.

STUCK

A young woman, haunted by her parents' broken marriage finds herself reliving her past through her relationships, leaving her stuck in a cycle of destruction and heartbreak.



CAL POLY
Center for Expressive Technologies
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS



CAL POLY
Interdisciplinary Studies
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS



CAL POLY
Art & Design
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

BEHIND THE SCENES PANELS

Sponsored by Mechanics Bank

LEARN FROM THE PRO'S!

Panels take place at the Festival Lounge and are free to all passholders, and \$5 for general admission.



PANEL #1

THE FESTIVAL CIRCUIT AND BEYOND

The importance of film festivals and what comes after.

SAT 10AM LOUNGE

PANEL #2

UNDERSTANDING LIGHT

A workshop focused on the practical approaches to mastering and understanding the placement, science and behaviors of light for your next film shoot.

SAT 12PM LOUNGE

PANEL #3

HOW TO FINANCE YOUR INDIE FILM

Learn how to finance your film or TV production by utilizing pre-sales, and foreign and domestic tax credits.

SUN 10AM LOUNGE

PANEL #4

BEYOND ENTERTAINMENT

Using stories to achieve a purpose beyond entertainment, aiming for real-world impact and engagement.

SUN 12PM LOUNGE



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Downtown SLO Walk of Fame

THE OFFICIAL FILM FEST SHOPPING AND DINING GUIDE!

*Look for posters in windows
as you explore downtown!*



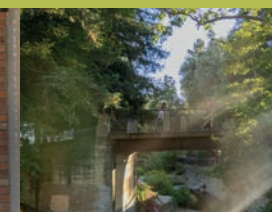
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*NO CONCERT ON JULY 4

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Live the SLO Life

Lights, camera, climate action! Did you know Visit San Luis Obispo's Keys for Trees program donates a portion of your hotel room charge to plant trees in our community? It's an easy way to travel sustainably while you're here for the SLO International Film Festival, plus support our city's vision to be carbon neutral by 2035.

Learn about our goal to plant 10,000 trees and other sustainable tourism initiatives at VisitSLO.com/Sustainable-SLO

