

#### FILM FESTIVAL







Family and Employee Owned

































# Welcome to the 25th annual Fargo Film Festival!

Ahh, our twenties. A time of growth and discovery.

When I turned 25, I was a hot mess (and not in a Charli XCX brat way). As assistant manager of a local multiplex, I was searching for a place to belong whilst being invariably soaked in faux butter topping. Later that year, I accepted a position with the cinema I adored (hint hint: the one in which you're currently sitting). My life changed in so many wonderful ways, but I'm forever grateful to the years that shaped me, 2001 even if they did introduce me to the rank existence of "movie theater garbage juice." Character building can be a stinky, sticky process.

Undoubtedly, the Fargo Film Festival has experienced a few growing pains of its own. Twenty-five years ago the FFF sprang to life. Fargo Theatre staff and volunteers had a vision for a celebration of independent cinema and the artists that make it. They poured their hearts into creating something unique and beautiful for the community. While the festival has evolved significantly through the years, it has always been driven by this common vision and shared passion.

So did the FFF have an awkward phase? Oh, absolutely. We did once screen films in the basement of a former funeral home. But with guts and gumption that would make Chief Marge Gunderson proud, the FFF team persevered.

As we celebrate 25 years of magical movie memories, I offer heartfelt thanks to our festival founders, staff, volunteers, sponsors, artists, and audiences. Through the power of film, we've all been on a journey of growth and discovery together. I hope you experience a bit of that this week.

And, as always, I hope you enjoy the show.





#### FARGO THEATRE / FESTIVAL STAFF

Emily Beck, Executive Director, Programmer Megan Fritz, Development and Engagement Manager Nicole Larson, Operations Manager Adam Roder, Technical Director Betsy Dreessen, Finance Manager Lynette Triebwasser, Graphic Designer Lizzie Allan, Festival Intern

#### **PROJECTIONISTS**

Lee Wrona, Head Projectionist Noah Eddy Andrew Gullickson Arthur Kaese Bee Nikle Mira Wittenberg

CONCESSION

Kvle Blase Rachel Fenner Chloe Johnson **Emily Swenson** 

COVER ARTIST Allison King

#### FARGO THEATRE BOARD

Trevor Mathew President Cody Schuler, Vice President Janet Brandau, Secretary Steve Wood, Treasurer Greg Carlson Lisa Edison-Smith Danielle Erdmann Christine Hoper Kirsten Jensen Mark Kolstad Iane Mathew Christine McClellan Veronica Michael Kendra O'Brien

Austan Wellman

Ann Hall Anderson Krista Arendes Kari Arntson Brian Arett Margie Bailly Aaron Baker Mary Balstad Shane Barnes John Beaudine, Animation Chair Janet Brandau, Experimental Chair Brent Brandt. Festival Co-Chair Elizabeth Burhans Mike Burton Greg Carlson, Special Projects Producer

Anthony Adah

#### **FESTIVAL COMMITTEE AND VOLUNTEERS**

Jennifer Carney Jeremy Carney Jo Cavins, Student Chair Derek Dahlsad Tracie Demianiuk Nancy DiTunnariello IoAnn Eberhard Cori Edgerton Danielle Erdmann Dominic Erickson, Narrative Short Chair Lisa Faiman Josh Fenner Rachel Fenner Rhonda Ficek Dinah Goldenberg Jay Goldenberg Scott Halmrast Aaron Hill

Linda Hinrichs Jessica Hoener Rachel Hoffman Christine Hopei Kvle Iverson Rebecca Iverson lenny lensen Kim Jore Diane Kaiser Grant Klevgaard Evan Kraft Kyja Kristjansson-Nelson, *Narrative* Feature Chair Thomas Krumel Elisabetta Liverani Jennifer Luther Olson lane Mathew Trevor Mathew Chris Meissner

Chelsey Niklas

Kendra O'Brien Matt Olien Karen Olson Rvan Richardson Craig Roath, Festival Co-Chair Bill Roden Tristan Ross Diane Rustad Tom Speer, Doc. Short Chair Michael Stromenger Drew Swenson Tony Tilton Kavla Voltz Matt Voltz Doc. Feature Chair Jeff Walkowski Leslie Wegner

Bev Welder

Lee Wrona

2025

FILM FESTIVAL

## Tuesday, March 18 | 7:00 p.m.

**EVENING HOST:** Kendra O'Brien

## Thursday, March 20 | 7:00 p.m.

**EVENING HOST:** Tom Speer



Speak.
Invited Film

Directed by Guy Mossman and Jennifer Tiexiera | USA | 103 mins *Speak.* follows five of the nation's top teenage speech competitors, capturing the euphoria of victory and the devastation of defeat as they craft and perform original oratories over the course of a 9-month season. Their dream is simple: To win the Super Bowl of public speaking, the NSDA Nationals.

We witness them, their coaches and their parents as they fight to keep school speech programs alive amid budget cuts, book bans and censorship efforts that reach a fever pitch during the 2024 election year.

The film begins at the 2023 National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA) Championships, introducing our eclectic orators: Noor, Noah, Mfaz, Esther, and Moorhead High's Sam Schaefer. We follow them to the 2024 Nationals, where Esther hopes to beat the record set by SPEAK's Executive Producer Josh Gad in 1999.

Speak. captures the passion, joy, and courage of unforgettable teens using their voices to change hearts and minds. This film is the perfect antidote for these fraught times — intense, funny, and most of all, hopeful.

After the screening, Sam Schaefer will appear live on stage to participate in a conversation about his experience with the film from production to its premiere at the 2025 Sundance Film Festival.



We Ride for Her

#### **Short Form Documentaries**

**Reel Stories** 

Join us for an unforgettable collection of short form documentaries that celebrate the best in humankind: our ability to persevere, explore, connect, and grow. The eclectic program includes portraits of a trail-blazing trans politician, an Indigenous women's motorcycle group, and a swimming instructor with unusual tactics that lead to profound discoveries.





Directors Prairie Rose Seminole and Joshua Carlon will appear live to discuss their creative processes.



Rectangles

# Wednesday, March 19 | 7:00 p.m.

**EVENING HOST:** Kyja Kristjansson-Nelson



The Long Run

Shot on the road in nine days with a micro budget of just \$50k, this dramedy captures the essence of exceptional independent cinema. When two oddball strangers leave their lives behind to chase their Hollywood dreams, they discover that what they lack in talent, they make up for with determination and a shared delusion. As an unexpected friendship develops, the two actors question the realities of chasing a dream.



Director Mylissa Fitzsimmons and actors Nicole Rodenburg and Fred Thomas will join us to discuss bringing the project from script to screen.



Mylissa Fitzsimmons



Nicole Rodenburg



Fred Thomas

Friday, March 21 | 7:00 p.m.

**EVENING HOSTS:** Janet Brandau and Dominic Erickson



The Death of James

#### **Short and Sweet**

With inspired brevity, these short movies give us snapshots of life, love, and the ties that bind. This showcase program of animated and live action films includes laugh-out-loud comedy, poignant drama, and one fabulous fox (voiced by the legendary Sir Ian McKellen).



Strangers on the A Train

Dragfox

Join us in celebrating filmmakers Sam Chou and Rachel Kerry as they participate in conversations following their films.



# 2 - Minute Movie Contest

Tiny run times, ginormous personalities.

friday, march 21 9:30 p.m.

PRODUCED BY GREG CARLSON

This dynamic program of pint-sized pictures spans all genres and includes work from filmmakers close to home and around the globe. From kids capturing images on cell phones to the shortest movie ever nominated for an Oscar, the 2-Minute Movie Contest has delighted curious Fargo Film Festival audiences for years. See what a group of ingenious artists can do when given but a single rule: Tell us a story in 120 seconds or less.

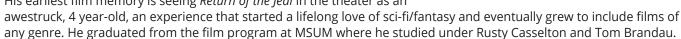
THE 2025

FARGO FILM FESTIVAL

MARGIE BAILLY VOLUNTEER

# Michael Stromenger

**MICHAEL STROMENGER** is a producer, writer, director and editor who came to filmmaking late in his education (he was originally going to be a choir teacher) but has loved film for as long as he can remember. His earliest film memory is seeing *Return of the Jedi* in the theater as an



He has been a volunteer for the Fargo Film Festival since 2007 and has chaired several juries (student, documentary short, narrative short) and served as a festival co-chair. He's also a festival alum, having had films screened as part of the student, narrative short, and narrative feature categories, as well as the 2-Minute Movie Contest.



Michael grew up in Larimore, ND and has lived in Fargo the past 21 years with this wife, Aimee, and daughter, Emilie. As a family, they enjoy escape rooms, board games, RedHawks baseball, and watching their backlog of recorded Jeopardy episodes. Michael also enjoys crossword puzzles, video games, pinball, and anything nerdy and puzzly.

Molly Ringwald is an actor, singer, and author. Her extensive film credits include Paul Mazursky's Tempest and the iconic John Hughes films Sixteen Candles, Pretty in Pink, and The Breakfast Club. On stage, Ringwald has starred in numerous Broadway productions, including Cabaret, Enchanted April and Sweet Charity, and her television credits include the hit series Riverdale, Dahmer -Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story, and Feud: Capote vs. the Swans. She is the author of two bestselling books, Getting the Pretty Back and When It Happens to You. Her essays have appeared in The New York Times, The New Yorker, Vogue, Marie-Claire, and The Guardian.



Award Info

After the film,
Ringwald will appear
live onstage for
a conversation about
her remarkable career.
To celebrate her
artistic achievements,
Ringwald will receive the

Fargo Film Festival's most distinguished honor, the **Ted M. Larson Award**.

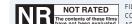


The Breakfast Club
with Molly Ringwald

The Breakfast Club is a classic work of art and enduring piece of American pop culture. The story of five teenagers forced to serve Saturday detention has remained a treasured part of the cultural zeitgeist for 40 years. Unflinchingly honest, uproariously hilarious, and infinitely quotable, the film is both a snapshot of a specific generation and a universal reflection on the high school experience.

# 65

Directed by Yumi Joung | South Korea | 7 mins A girl draws a circle on the ground and it soon fills with people, all struggling to stay within.



FILMS IN THE FARGO FILM FESTIVAL HAVE NOT BEEN RATED FOR ADULT CONTENT AND MAY INCLUDE VIOLENCE, NUDITY, LANGUAGE AND ADULT SITUATIONS. VIEWER DISCRETION IS ADVISED.

#### **ANIMATION WINNERS**

#### Dragfox

#### **Winner: Best Animation**

Directed by Lisa Ott | United Kingdom | 8 mins Sam's search for identity gets interrupted by a mysterious neighborhood fox. Together, they embark on a magical journey to discover the surprising things they might have in common and celebrate the ways in which they differ.

# The Brown Dog Honorable Mention

Directed by Nadia Hallgren and Jamie-James Medina | USA | 14 mins Night after night, a watchman logs his long, lonely hours in a security booth for an upscale apartment complex. As darkness slowly closes in on him, he abandons his post in search of a mysterious brown dog.

### The Death of James

#### **Honorable Mention**

Directed by Sam Chou | Canada | 14 mins Based on a true story, this unique journey follows two friends grappling with mortality as they are confronted with the impending loss of a cherished pet ferret.

#### ANIMATION OFFICIAL SELECTIONS

#### Ana Morphose

Directed by João Rodrigues | Portugal | 10 mins A little girl dozes off while reading and enters an alternate reality where the contents of a book rule supreme over the laws of physics.

#### Au Revoir Mon Monde

Directed by Estelle Bonnardel, Quentin Devred, Baptiste Duchamps, Maxime Foltzer, Florian Maurice, and Astrid Novais | France | 5 mins As the end of the world approaches, a man stuck in a fish costume navigates a chaotic city to reach a mysterious tower.

#### Avenir

Directed by Katarina Fink | USA | 6 mins After being transferred to the beach during D-Day, young James T. Conley's life flashes before his eyes.

#### Circle



WINNER

WINNER

WINNER





Dragfox



SAT 22 2:00 p.m. SCREEN 2

The Brown Dog



FRI 21 7:20 p.m. SCREEN 1

The Death of James



1:40 p.m. SCREEN 2

Ana Morphose



7:15 p.m. SCREEN 1

Au Revoir Mon Monde



4:20 p.m. SCREEN 2

**3:20 p.m.** SCREEN 2







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The Smallest Power





Tiny





Film Is Dead. Long Live Film!





Call Me Mule





For the Living

#### ANIMATION [CONTINUED]

#### Loop Line

Directed by Renuka Shahane | India | 8 mins In the heart of Mumbai, a housewife escapes her husband's chauvinism and the tedium of her relentless chores by entering into a rich fantasy world.

#### Marvelous Gift

Directed by German Acuña and Danna Galeano | Columbia | 6 mins In a world where humanity has gained the gift of eternal life, accidents are never fatal and aging never ceases.

#### The Smallest Power

Directed by Andy Sarjahani | Iran | 6 mins Recorded in secret in Iran at the height of the women-led uprising, this animated documentary follows a medical resident who risks her life to protect a doctor from the secret police.

#### Tiny

Directed by Ryan Haché and Ritchie Hemphill | Canada | 16 mins 'Nakwaxda'xw Elder Colleen Hemphill reflects on her childhood years living on a float-house in the wild and unpredictable Pacific Northwest.

#### **DOCUMENTARY FEATURE WINNERS**

#### Film Is Dead. Long Live Film! Winner: Bill Snyder Award for **Best Documentary Feature**

Directed by Peter Flynn | USA | 103 mins Explore the vanishing world of private film collecting — an obsessive, secretive, often illicit world inhabited by passionate cinephiles devoted to the preservation of photochemical film.

#### Call Me Mule **Honorable Mention**

Directed by John McDonald | USA | 77 mins A man traveling with three mules fights to maintain his nomadic lifestyle in the American West.

#### For the Living

**Honorable Mention** 

Directed by | USA | 117 mins

When 250 cyclists mount their bikes outside Auschwitz-Birkenau and pedal a WWII liberation path across the Polish countryside, every mile reveals humankind's journey from dehumanization towards empathy.

#### **DOCUMENTARY FEATURE OFFICIAL SELECTIONS**

#### **Bring Them Home**

Directed by Daniel Glick, Ivan MacDonald, and Ivy MacDonald | USA | 86 mins A small group of Blackfoot people works tirelessly to establish the first wild buffalo herd on their ancestral territory since the species' near-extinction a century ago.

#### Champions of the Golden Valley

Directed by Ben Sturgulewski | USA | 81 mins In the high peaks of Afghanistan, young athletes build makeshift wooden skis and convene for a mountain race that unites the community just before their country's collapse.

#### The Day Iceland Stood Still

Directed by Pamela Hogan | USA | 70 mins When 90% of Iceland's women walked out of their homes and off the job one morning in 1975, they brought their country to a standstill and catapulted their small island nation to the world's superpower of gender equality.

#### Dog War

WINNER

WINNER

WINNER

Directed by Andrew Abrahams | USA | 92 mins A team of war-hardened, canine-loving combat veterans infiltrates the dog meat farms and markets in South Korea to save as many animals as possible.

#### Rooted

Directed by Bridget Besaw and Par Parekh | USA | 95 mins Faced with the lack of fresh produce in a Charleston, South Carolina food desert, Germaine Jenkins creates an urban farm on an empty city lot.



**Bring Them Home** 



Champions of the Golden Valley



The Day Iceland Stood Still



4:10 p.m. SCREEN 2

3:35 p.m.

10:25 a.m.





Rooted







A Swim Lesson





The ABCs of Book Banning





I Am Ready, Warden





Been There





Beer Saves the World!





Rig Moves





Carl Ben Eielson: Over the Top of the World

#### **DOCUMENTARY SHORT WINNERS**

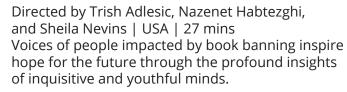
#### A Swim Lesson

**Winner: Best Documentary Short** 

Directed by Rashida Jones and Will McCormack | USA | 21 mins

Everyday hero Bill Marsh is a swim teacher who helps children manage their fears and discover their own power when submerged in an overwhelming unknown.

# The ABCs of Book Banning Honorable Mention



#### I Am Ready, Warden Honorable Mention

Directed by Smriti Mundhra | USA | 37 mins In the days leading up to his execution, Texas death row prisoner John Henry Ramirez seeks redemption from his victim's son.



WINNER

WINNER

#### **DOCUMENTARY SHORT OFFICIAL SELECTIONS**

#### Been There

Directed by Corina Schwingruber Ilić | Switzerland | 10 mins Never before has the desire to travel been so widespread and tourist destinations so overloaded. What do we get out of it, other than picture proof that we have been there?

#### Beer Saves the World!

Directed by Kelly G. Sallaway | USA | 11 mins Meet the advocates, farmers, and brewers who champion the use of Kernza, a sustainable, perennial plant that can heal the soil and help wash down a plate of nachos.

#### **Big Moves**

Directed by Sarah Grant | United Kingdom | 14 mins This personal portrait explores dancing as a plus-size woman through the lens of pop culture.

#### Carl Ben Eielson: Over the Top of the World

Directed by David Kuznicki | USA | 16 mins From humble roots in North Dakota, Carl Ben Eielson rose to worldwide fame with pioneering acts of aviation.

#### Dwight in Denmark

Directed by Cristopher Anderson | USA | 27 mins From Iowa to Washington, D.C., to Denmark, fiddler Dwight Lamb's preservation of nearly extinct folk music is celebrated by generations.

#### Hold the Line

Directed by Daniel Lombroso | USA | 17 mins When the nation's largest Protestant organization decides to purge women in leadership positions, the influence of two prominent pastors is put to the test.

#### Kowloon!

Directed by Erin Ramirez and Mona Xia | USA | 16 mins As the biggest Chinese restaurant in the US, Kowloon represents the Wong family's American Dream. As third-generation owner Bobby Wong and his brothers approach their seventies, they consider the weight of their legacy.

#### Livestreams with GrandmaPuzzles

Directed by Emily Sheskin | USA | 6 mins A lifelong hobby becomes a lifeline for an unexpected Twitch streamer.

#### Nita: Hotbed in Deadwood

Directed by Justine Koehler | USA | 44 mins Former call girl Nita Celaya shares her fearless story and her pivotal role in the 1980 Deadwood brothel raid.

#### Rectangles

Directed by Joshua Carlon | USA | 17 mins An old family mystery leads a filmmaker on a discursive journey to discover the past.

#### Seat 31: Zooey Zephyr

Winner: Ruth Landfield Award

Directed by Kimberly Reed | USA | 15 mins After Zooey Zephyr was expelled from the Montana House of Representatives for defending transgender medical care, she made a nearby bench her office.

#### She Marches in Chinatown

Directed by Della Chen | USA | 33 mins In 1952 Ruby Chow created the Seattle Chinese Community Girls Drill Team. Today the team continues to represent and celebrate the evolving Asian-American experience.

#### **Stud Country**

Directed by Lina Abascal and Alexandra Kern | USA | 11 mins Stud Country is the largest queer country western line dancing event in America. Despite its success and fiercely committed community, the event is set to lose its venue due to gentrification.



Dwight in Denmark

2:40 p.m. SCREEN 2

THU 20 **7:50 p.m.** 

1:55 p.m. SCREEN 2

7:55 p.m. SCREEN 1

**THU 20** 

7:00 p.m.

FRI 21

3:35 p.m. SCREEN 2

3:20 p.m. SCREEN 1



Hold the Lin



Kowloon!



Livestreams with

**GrandmaPuzzles** 



Nita: Hotbed in Deadwood



WINNER

على ليالة

**Award Info** 

Rectangles



Seat 31: Zooey Zephyr



She Marches in Chinatown



d Country

|              |                          | SCREEN 1 • MORNING SESSIONS   | SCREEN 2 • MORNING SESSIONS   |              | SCREEN 1 • AFTERNOON SESSIONS  |                           | SCREEN 2 • AFTERNOON SESSIONS   |                           | SCREEN 1 • EVENING SESSIONS   |
|--------------|--------------------------|---|---|--------------|--|---------------------------|---|---------------------------|---|
| TUESDAY 18   |                          | FILM FESTIVAL 2025  Although we make every effort to stay on schedule, times are approximate and may vary by a few minutes.                                       |   |              | 1:30 p.m. Big Moves p. 9 1:45 p.m. All the Words on the Page p. 16 2:10 p.m. Away with the Fairies p. 16 2:20 p.m. Loop Line p. 7 2:50 p.m. The Professional Parent p. 18 3:05 p.m. BREAK — 3:15 p.m. The Power of Art at Plains Art Museum p. 21 3:20 p.m. Stud Country p. 10 3:35 p.m. Good Boy p. 17 3:55 p.m. The High & Lonesome Ladies p. 17 4:05 p.m. And Now I Lay Me Down p. 16 4:35 p.m. Knead p. 18 4:45 p.m. The Ugly Chickens p. 19 |                           | 1:30 p.m.   |                           | 7:00 p.m. <b>Speak.</b> p. 3, 21  |
| WEDNESDAY 19 |                          | 10:00 a.m. <b>Been There</b> p. 9<br>10:10 a.m. <b>Weree</b> p. 13<br>10:25 a.m. <b>Rooted</b> p. 8   | 10:00 a.m. <i>Matta and Matto</i> p. 13 10:10 a.m. <i>I Would've Been Happy</i> p. 13 10:20 a.m. <i>Strange Creatures</i> p. 15 |              | 1:30 p.m. <b>The Strange Dark</b> p. 15<br>3:15 p.m. — BREAK —<br>3:25 p.m. <b>The Ladder</b> p. 15  |                           | 1:30 p.m.   |                           | 7:00 p.m. <b>The Long Run</b> p. 3, 15  |
| THURSDAY 20  | EEN 1 • MORNING SESSIONS | Top of the World p. 9<br>10:30 a.m. Film Is Dead,<br>Long Live Film! p. 7   | 10:00 a.m.  | EN 1 • AFTEI | 1:30 p.m. <b>Battersea</b> p.14 3:20 p.m. — BREAK — 3:30 p.m. <b>Camping in Paradise</b> p. 16 3:55 p.m. <b>The Therapy Room</b> p. 19 4:20 p.m. <b>In the Trees</b> p. 21 4:45 p.m. <b>Have You Heard the One About the Couple in the Tent?</b> p. 17 4:55 p.m. <b>Wabi-Sabi</b> p. 19  | EN 2 • AFTERNOON SESSIONS | 1:30 p.m.   | REEN 1 • EVENING SESSIONS | 7:00 p.m.   |
| FRIDAY 21    | SCRI                     | 10:00 a.m.  | 10:00 a.m. <i>For the Living</i> p. 7   | SCRE         | 1:30 p.m. <i>Sideways for Attention</i> p. 14<br>3:25 p.m. — BREAK —<br>3:35 p.m. <i>Dog War</i> p. 8  | SCREE                     | 1:30 p.m. Then Comes the Body p. 13 1:45 p.m. Beer Saves the World p. 9 1:55 p.m. NITA: Hotbed in Deadwood p. 10 2:40 p.m. Dwight in Denmark p. 10 3:25 p.m. BREAK — 3:35 p.m. She Marches in Chinatown p. 10 4:05 p.m. Bring Them Home p. 8  | SCF                       | 7:00 p.m. Presentation of the Margie Bailly Volunteer Spirit Award to Michael Stromenger p. 5 7:15 p.m. Au Revoir Mon Monde p. 6 7:20 p.m. The Death of James p. 6 7:55 p.m. Revenge of the Language Master 1757B p. 19 8:05 p.m. Strangers on the A Train p. 19 8:25 p.m. Room Taken p. 15 8:45 p.m. Dragfox p. 6 9:30 p.m. 2-Minute Movie Contest Winner p. 3 |
| SATURDAY 22  |                          | 10:00 a.m. The Smallest Power p. 7 10:10 a.m. The ABCs of Book Banning p. 9 10:35 a.m. Punter p. 19 10:50 a.m. Kind Mother p. 17 11:20 a.m. Hearts of Stone p. 15 | 10:00 a.m. <b>Fortune</b> p. 17<br>10:30 a.m. <b>Lie of the Land</b> p. 14  |              | 1:30 p.m. <b>Call Me Mule</b> p. 7<br>3:10 p.m. — BREAK —<br>3:20 p.m. <b>I Am Ready, Warden</b> p. 9  |                           | 1:30 p.m. Where We Once Roamed p. 20 1:45 p.m. The Deer Divide p. 20 2:00 p.m. The Brown Dog p. 6 2:15 p.m. I Would've Been Happy p. 13 2:25 p.m. Sauna Day p. 19 2:40 p.m. As Easy As Closing Your Eyes p. 15 3:00 p.m. Dragfox p. 6 3:10 p.m. BREAK — 3:20 p.m. Brooklyn p. 21 3:40 p.m. Room Taken p. 15 |                           | 7:00 p.m. <b>The Breakfast Club</b><br><b>with Molly Ringwald</b> p. 5  |





Te Pito o Te Henua





Then Comes the Body





We Ride for Her





Weree





I Would've Been Happy





Mast-Del





Matta and Matto

#### **DOCUMENTARY SHORT** [CONTINUED]

#### Te Pito o Te Henua

Directed by Nils Cowan and Martin Kingman | Chile | 30 mins An Indigenous community on the most remote island in the world prepares to host an annual celebration that reinforces deep connections to their culture, language, and land.

#### Then Comes the Body

Directed by Jacob Krupnick | USA | 14 mins Self-taught dancer Daniel Ajala opens the first ballet school in Nigeria in his front yard: humble, rigorous, and free to anyone with dedication.

#### We Ride for Her

#### **Winner: Prairie Spirit Award**

Directed by Prairie Rose Seminole and Katrina Sorrentino | USA | 18 mins The dedicated participants of the Medicine Wheel Ride bring the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women to the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally.



#### Weree

Directed by Tal Amiran | United Kingdom | 15 mins Having fled the Liberian civil war, Johnson Weree seeks asylum, creates art, and longs for a brighter future.

#### **EXPERIMENTAL FILM WINNERS**

#### I Would've Been Happy

Winner: Best Experimental Film

Directed by Jordan Wong | USA | 9 mins The aesthetics of architectural language are used to reconstruct memories of the filmmaker's domestic spaces in the hope of uncovering logic or reason in a broken home.



WINNER

#### Mast-Del **Honorable Mention**

Directed by Maryam Tafakory | Iran | 17 mins Two women lie together in bed. As the wind bashes against the window, one recalls a past date to the cinema.



#### **Matta and Matto Honorable Mention**

13

Directed by Bianca Caderas and Kerstin Zemp | Switzerland | 10 mins

In a dystopian world where touch is forbidden, Matta and Matto offer refuge to the lonely at Hotel Vaip. But everything has a price.

#### **EXPERIMENTAL OFFICIAL SELECTIONS**

#### 14 Poems

Directed by Maxine Swann | USA | 11 mins A woman decides to free herself from a troubled past relationship that has, in many ways, determined the course of her life.

#### Born Days — How to Disappear

Directed by Louis Morton | USA | 4 mins Falling rain on a window transforms into scenes of fleeting thoughts and loosely grasped memories.

#### Despite

Directed by Kate Raney | USA | 11 mins Through collage and fragmentation, this film explores the tension between the wonder of motherhood and the anxiety of illness.

#### Rain

Directed by Vasilios Papaioannu | USA | 6 mins Rain, as circular shapes of memory imprinted on fast-paced celluloid or as liquid moving sculptures of the present in digital form, documents a verbal interaction between two people.

#### Torii

Directed by Martin Gerigk | Germany | 13 mins Japanese Torii gates symbolically mark the transition from the mundane to the sacred. In this piece, the gates are used to represent a personal, spiritual journey.

#### **NARRATIVE FEATURE WINNERS**

#### Sideways for Attention **Winner: Best Narrative Feature**

Directed by Brady Bryson | USA | 96 mins As NYC college student Chloe navigates the aftermath of 9/11 and personal trauma, she uncovers a classmate's terrifying secret.



Directed by John Carlin | Ireland | 80 mins About to lose everything, the Wards prepare to escape crippling debt when a mysterious stranger offers them a new life for the right fee.

#### **NARRATIVE FEATURE OFFICIAL SELECTIONS**

#### Battersea

Directed by T.J. Sandella | USA | 90 mins Estranged siblings reconvene at their childhood home, where they spend a precarious weekend drinking, talking, and uncovering the secrets that have shaped their lives.



14 Poems



Born Days — How to Disappear





2:00 p.m. SCREEN 2

1:50 p.m. SCREEN 2

2:20 p.m. SCREEN 2

Rain

Despite



2:10 p.m. SCREEN 2

1:30 p.m.

WED 19

Torii



Sideways for Attention

WINNER

WINNER



10:30 a.m. SCREEN 2

SAT 22

1:30 p.m. SCREEN 1

Lie of the Land



Battersea

















The Strange Dark





Taste the Revolution

SAT 22 **2:40 p.m.** SCREEN 2



As Easy As Closing Your Eyes







Hearts of Stone







Room Taken

#### NARRATIVE FEATURE [CONTINUED]

#### The Ladder

Directed by Emilio Miguel Torres | USA | 103 mins An aging Alaskan fisherman contemplates a new start with the help of a mysterious scientific procedure.

#### The Long Run

Directed by Mylissa Fitzsimmons | USA | 90 mins When two oddball strangers leave everything behind to chase their Hollywood dreams, they discover that what they lack in talent, they make up for in determination and a shared delusion.

#### Strange Creatures

Directed by Henry Boffin | Australia | 95 mins Two estranged brothers are forced to reconnect when they are tasked with scattering their mother's ashes in the country town where she grew up.

#### The Strange Dark

Directed by Chris Messineo | USA | 84 mins Edgar believes he can see the future. His wife thinks he's mad, his daughter thinks he's strange, and the agents from Double Star Accounting will stop at nothing to get their data back.

#### Taste the Revolution

Directed by Daniel Klein | USA | 86 mins Two aspiring filmmakers chronicle the story of charismatic revolutionary Mac Laslow (Mahershala Ali) and a group of disillusioned college students drawn together one summer to change the world.

#### **NARRATIVE SHORT WINNERS**

#### As Easy As Closing Your Eyes Winner: Tom Brandau Award **for Best Narrative Short**

Directed by Parker Croft | USA | 22 mins A grieving mother battles her addiction to a black market drug that gives her life-like dreams about the son she lost.

#### Hearts of Stone **Honorable Mention**

Directed by Tom Van Avermaet | Belgium | 30 mins Noomi Rapace stars as Paula, a lonely street artist who entertains people as a living statue. She longs for an impossible love with Agatha, an actual stone sculpture about to be moved into storage.

#### Room Taken **Honorable Mention**

15

Directed by TJ O'Grady-Peyton | Ireland | 18 mins Through a chance meeting, an unhoused man and an elderly blind woman form a unique bond.







#### **NARRATIVE SHORT OFFICIAL SELECTIONS**

Directed by Mack Hastings and Shane Sleger | USA | 13 mins A young boy's life is forever changed after discovering a mysterious sound on a synthesizer.

#### All the Words on the Page

Directed by Hunter Gause | USA | 7 mins In this tale about navigating an invisible disability, a dyslexic actor is asked to perform an impromptu reading during a big audition.

#### **Amarela**

Directed by André Hayato Saito | Brazil | 15 mins On the day of the World Cup final between Brazil and France, a teenage Japanese-Brazilian soccer superfan is plunged into a painful sea of emotions.

#### And Now I Lay Me Down

Directed by Rani DeMuth | USA | 27 mins Fading actress Celia Dalvi arranges her perfect last day on earth. It doesn't go as planned.

#### Artist Uncredited

Directed by Sven Fuhrken and Chris Hirschhaeuser | Germany | 20 mins Holding court in a museum, a man explains his displayed artwork to visitors. But behind the showmanship, a tragic truth is hidden.

#### Away with the Fairies

Directed by René Brar | Canada | 13 mins On a remote island, three exhausted sisters weigh the decision to euthanize their violently ill mother.

#### The Bingo Sisters

Directed by Andrew Przybytkowski | Canada | 21 mins In a distant and surreal land, a secret society of ladies elects their leader by playing bingo.

#### **Bloody Fury**

Directed by Jordan Inconstant | France | 23 mins In the West, a fur trade is raging. Bloody Furry, one of the last red wolves, is determined to avenge his exterminated family.

#### Camping in Paradise

Directed by Eirik Tveiten | Norway | 23 mins A twist of fate leads a couple to a nudist campsite and pushes them far beyond their comfort zone.





All the Words on the Page



10:50 a.m.

4:05 p.m.

2:20 p.m.

THU 20 2:55 p.m. SCREEN 2

**TUES 18** 

2:10 p.m. SCREEN 1

1:50 p.m. SCREEN 2

TUES 18 1:45 p.m. SCREEN 1

**TUES 18** 



And Now I Lay Me Down



Artist Uncredited



Away with the Fairies



The Bingo Sisters



THU 20 **10:15 a.m.** 

3:30 p.m. SCREEN 1

Bloody Fury



Camping in Paradise







Fortune





Get You Better





Good Boy





Have You Heard the One About the Couple in the Tent?





The High & Lonesome Ladies





I Don't Care If the World Collapses





Kind Mother

#### NARRATIVE SHORT [CONTINUED]

#### **Fortune**

Directed by Matthew Perkins | USA | 28 mins In this Southern Gothic tale of greed, a blue collar timber yard worker miraculously wins a massive lottery jackpot.

#### Get You Better

Directed by Danica Jensen | USA | 20 mins When an in-denial alcoholic is turned away from a treatment center for not being drunk enough, his estranged girlfriend must find a way to get him admitted.

#### **Good Boy**

Directed by Colin Russell | USA | 18 mins An isolated widower must decide whether to accept a new companion, warts and all.

#### Have You Heard the One About the Couple in the Tent?

Directed by Joe Greening | USA | 10 mins Brent and Tori spend the evening trying to outdo one another with their scary stories.

#### The High & Lonesome Ladies

17

Directed by Megan Chumbley | USA | 9 mins After years on the dive bar circuit, a female bluegrass trio has the opportunity to perform before their favorite country singer.

#### I Don't Care If the World Collapses

Directed by Karim Shaaban Morsy | Egypt | 20 mins When a one-day commercial shoot is on the verge of collapse, a producer must choose between her ambition and conscience.

#### **Kind Mother**

Directed by Clare O'Connor | USA | 15 mins At a silent retreat, an estranged mother and daughter engage in an unusual and fantastical power struggle.

#### Knead

Directed by Timothy Michael Cooper | USA | 11 mins An alien landing mysteriously drives people around the world to achieve their deepest dreams. When an aspiring baker remains unaffected, she is forced to take matters into her own hands.

#### Masterpiece Mommy

Directed by Dorothy Sing Zhang | United Kingdom | 15 mins In this musical, a mother and daughter are confronted by an unwelcome discovery after the mother suffers a fall.

#### Nap

Directed by Javier Chavanel | Spain | 14 mins Four people are about to undergo a dangerous experiment. The rules are simple: you must sleep if you want to live.

#### **Neither Donkey Nor Horse**

Directed by Robin Wang | USA | 28 mins Amidst the outbreak of the 1910 Manchurian plague, a young Chinese doctor must defy prejudices to champion his groundbreaking theory.

#### No Light / No Darkness

Directed by Margo Margossian | USA | 14 mins Following the collapse of the USSR, an informant in the Republic of Armenia must decide if she'll betray her people by leaking highly classified information.

#### Óbito

Directed by Fernando Amador | Spain | 15 mins Unexpected consequences unfurl when Eugenia is offered a large sum of money to participate in a mysterious ritual.

#### On a Sunday at Eleven

Directed by Alicia K. Harris | Canada | 9 mins A young Black ballerina performs her Sunday rituals while facing pressures to conform to Eurocentric beauty standards.

#### The Professional Parent

Directed by Erik Jasañ | Slovakia | 15 mins Ingrid becomes the legal representative of a young Roma girl, whose arrival upsets the fragile balance of the home.





Masterpiece Mommy



2:05 p.m. SCREEN 2

**TUES 18** 

3:30 p.m. SCREEN 2

**TUES 18** 

3:15 p.m. SCREEN 2

THU 20 2:20 p.m. SCREEN 2

**TUES 18** 

1:30 p.m. SCREEN 2

4:35 p.m. SCREEN 1



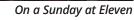
Neither Donkey Nor Horse



No Light / No Darkness









TUES 18 **2:50 p.m.** 

The Professional Parent







Punter





Revenge of the Language Master 1757B





Sauna Day





Strangers on the A Train





Sunflower Girl





The Therapy Room





The Ugly Chickens





Voyager





#### NARRATIVE SHORT [CONTINUED]

#### **Punter**

Directed by Jason Adam Maselle | USA | 14 mins Young Brett must navigate the underbelly of the Johannesburg gambling world as a horse race bet jeopardizes the surprise he's prepared for his father's birthday.

#### Revenge of the Language Master 1757B

Directed by Michael Beeson | USA | 7 mins Three young students discover a machine that allows them to say whatever they want.

#### Sauna Dav

Directed by Anna Hints and Tushar Prakash | Estonia | 13 mins After a hard day's work, men in southern Estonia unwind in the dark and intimate space of a smoke sauna.

#### Strangers on the A Train

Directed by Rachel Kerry | USA | 6 mins Perceptions collide when two commuters on the A train listen to very different podcasts.

#### Sunflower Girl

Directed by Holly M. Kaplan | USA | 13 mins Rosie, a 13-year-old Chinese-American girl, embarks on a skateboarding escapade through the streets of New York with her crush and abandons her responsibility to her little sister.

#### The Therapy Room

Directed by Justin Schaack and Kristin Schaack | USA | 7 mins A mistake when booking a family therapy session creates new tensions and solutions.

#### The Ugly Chickens

Directed by Mark Raso | USA | 28 mins Upon learning that the supposedly extinct dodo bird might still exist, ornithology professor Paula Linberl sets out on a cross-country expedition to unravel the mystery.

#### **Voyager**

Directed by Pablo Pagán | Spain | 20 mins A shy, socially anxious night janitor discovers a mysterious drug that provides a new freedom at a heavy cost.

#### Wabi-Sabi

Directed by Josephine Green Zhang | USA | 20 mins When an insecure, half Japanese woman is invited on a date to a traditional tea ceremony, her friend's advice threatens to ruin her love life and sanity.

19

#### **STUDENT FILM WINNERS**

#### Where We Once Roamed

#### Winner: Burton O'Neill Award for Best Student Film

Directed by Madee Sabatier and Ruthie Weeks | USA | 15 mins After re-releasing free-roaming buffalo to their native lands after centuries of absence, the Blackfeet Nation has set off on an unprecedented path towards cultural and spiritual renewal.

#### The Deer Divide **Honorable Mention**

Directed by Nate Markquart and Chloe Prahl | USA | 15 mins An invasive species of mule deer poses a significant threat to Catalina Island's unique ecosystem. Residents and conservationists are deeply divided about how best to address the issue.

#### Slobopoly

#### **Honorable Mention**

Directed by Yinghui Li | USA | 9 mins A grumpy hermit is offered a bribe to run for mayor of her rural town.

#### STUDENT FILM OFFICIAL SELECTIONS

#### Alpha 27

Directed by Nick Azzaro | USA | 12 mins After a decade on Earth, Diego must protect the life he's built when unforeseen events pressure his return to his space colony of origin.

#### Ash Wednesday

Directed by Grace O'Brien | USA | 15 mins When Catholic schoolgirl Bridget gets her period during Ash Wednesday mass, she must quickly find a tampon and make it back in time to get her ashes or face suspension.

#### A Better Place

Directed by Shih-Chun Hsiao | USA | 17 mins Henry returns home to convince his aging, immigrant parents to sell their farm.

WINNER

WINNER

على لا

WINNER

Where We Once Roamed



The Deer Divide

1:30 p.m.

1:45 p.m. SCREEN 2

1:30 p.m. SCREEN 2

**THU 20** 

1:40 p.m. SCREEN 2

**TUES 18** 

2:45 p.m. SCREEN 2

**TUES 18** 

1:40 p.m. SCREEN 2



Slobopoly



Alpha 27





A Better Place

#### The Burton O'Neill Award for Best Student Film

THE FARGO FILM FESTIVAL HONORS THE LIVES AND WORK OF TOM BURTON AND PEGGY O'NEILL.

Tom Burton and Peggy O'Neill were cherished members of the Fargo Film Festival community. Peggy actively served as a festival volunteer for nine years. She enjoyed working alongside her dear friend Jenny Jensen and being a part of the Student Film jury. Tom was a great supporter of Peggy at the festival and embraced opportunities to meet new people during festival social functions. After losing Tom and Peggy in a tragic car accident, the Burton and O'Neill families created a memorial fund through the FM Area Foundation. This fund will annually provide a monetary prize to the winner of Best Student Film in loving memory of Tom and Peggy.

20



TUES 18 2:00 p.m. SCREEN 2



Brooklyn





The Color of Fire





Dress to Impress





Hasta la Raíz





The Tale of Mari





The Breakfast Club





The Power of Art at Plains Art Museum





Speak





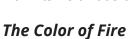
In the Trees

#### **STUDENT FILM** [CONTINUED]

#### Brooklyn

#### Winner: Rusty Casselton Award

Directed by Timur Guseynov | USA | 20 mins After saving an abused pit bull, a troubled Brighton Beach teenager must protect the dog from its nefarious owners.



Directed by Seunghee Chang | USA | 9 mins A young woman struggles with the aftermath of a fatal hit-and-run accident.

#### **Dress to Impress**

Directed by Marsalis Lam | Australia | 14 mins An insecure costume shop employee discovers the merchandise has magical powers which may hold the key to winning the heart of his crush.

#### Hasta la Raíz

Directed by Nuria Schettino González | USA | 15 mins Set in 1856 in the greater Los Angeles basin, a Gabrieleno (Tongva) woman working at a Mexican ranch must fight for her land and daughter.

#### The Tale of Mari

Directed by Anya Vaughn | USA | 7 mins Mari Arakaki Gaskins recounts her experiences growing up in Okinawa, moving to America, and attempting to become a newspaper cartoonist.

#### **INVITED FILMS**

#### The Breakfast Club

Directed by John Hughes | USA | 97 mins Five high school students meet in Saturday detention and discover how they have a great deal more in common than they thought.

#### The Power of Art at Plains Art Museum

Fargo-Moorhead community members discuss the impact of the arts and Plains Art Museum, the only accredited art museum in North Dakota.

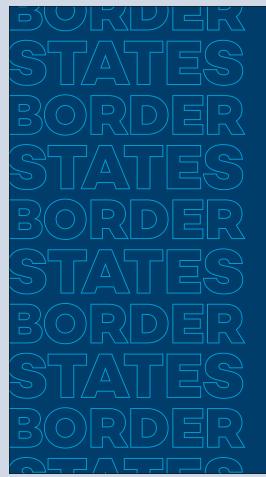
#### Speak.

Directed by Guy Mossman and Jennifer Tiexiera | USA | 103 mins Five top-ranked high school oratory students spend a year crafting spellbinding spoken word performances with the dream of winning one of the world's largest and most intense public speaking competitions.

#### In the Trees

21

Directed by Craig Roath | USA | 11 mins Lifelong golf buddies share camaraderie in life and in death.



# We Value Our Communities

When the world needs more, we're ready to leave an impact and give back to the communities where we live and work.

Enjoy the festival!

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22

# 25 Years & Counting!

Bell Bank is proud to have been a major sponsor of the Fargo Film Festival, from the very beginning.



Celebrating 25 years of the Fargo Film Festival:

Bell Bank chairman Richard Solberg, Fargo Theatre executive director Emily Beck, Bell Bank president & CEO Michael Solberg, and Bell Bank chief culture officer Julie Peterson Klein.



