





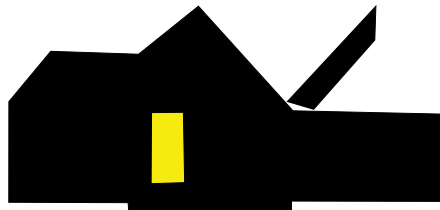
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THOMAS EDISON FILM FESTIVAL

# 2021

## Our 40th Anniversary

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The **Thomas Edison Film Festival** is a project of the **Thomas Edison Media Arts Consortium**, an independent non-profit organization based in Hudson County. The festival was launched in 1981 with the endorsement of the Thomas Edison National Historical Park in West Orange, NJ.

To become a sponsor of the **Thomas Edison Film Festival** please contact the Consortium office or make a donation via the website:

**[TEFilmFest.org](http://TEFilmFest.org)**

**Thomas Edison Media Arts Consortium**

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# create a vision

Withum and Maureen DeCicco, CPA, Partner, proudly support the Thomas Edison Film Festival for celebrating and preserving the diversity, invention and vitality of the short film and bringing the arts to the community.

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**TEBMFF is now TEFF**

**FORMERLY KNOWN AS:**

**Thomas Edison Black Maria Film Festival (TEBMFF)**



**We're retiring our former logo with great respect to our 40 year history of independent filmmaking.**

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## **CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF INDEPENDENT FILM SHOWCASES WITH OUR NEW NAME AND LOGO**

**We're celebrating** our first 40 years with the rebranding of our esteemed festival. Since 1981, the mission of the original **Black Maria Film Festival** – here forward known as the **Thomas Edison Film Festival (TEFF)** – has been to promote innovation in the art of the moving image. Films that are the centerpiece of the Festival honor the vision of Thomas Edison. Edison's West Orange, NJ employees thought his film studio resembled the so-called "black maria" police paddy wagons, which is how the original Black Maria Film Festival got its name. Edison's films did for the eye what his phonograph did for the ear. He made 75, twenty-second-long films in his West Orange studio.

Edison's earliest films presented magic shows, plays, vaudeville shows with dancers and strongmen, cowboys, and boxing matches. Coincidentally, the **Thomas Edison Film Festival** has also exhibited films featuring magic shows, plays, dancers, cowboys, and boxing matches.

The **Thomas Edison Film Festival** is an international juried film competition. We have embraced our mission for

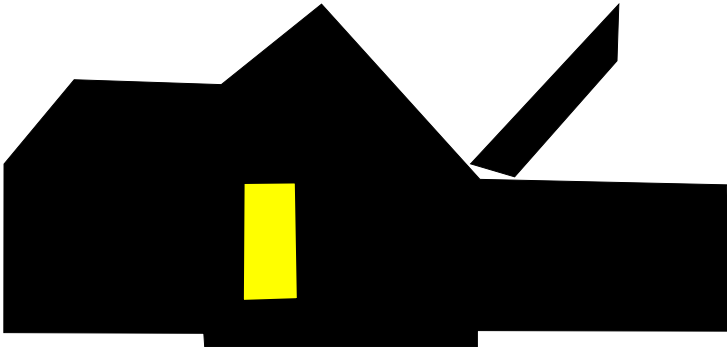


## OUR NEW NAME & LOGO

WELCOME OUR NEW NAME AND LOGO:

**Thomas Edison Film Festival (TEFF)**

**TEFilmFest.org**



**THOMAS EDISON FILM FESTIVAL**

**Celebrating our new name and logo as we show admiration and appreciation of spectacular independent filmmaking.**

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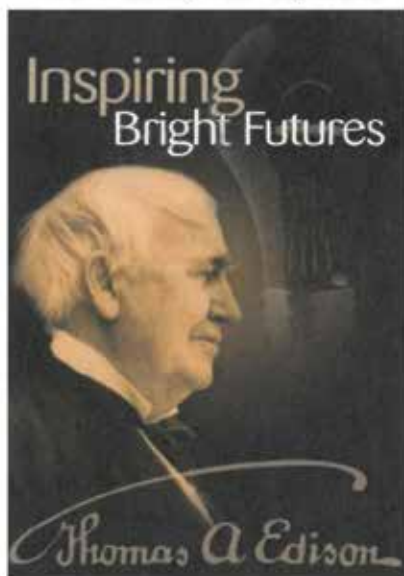
40 years by focusing on short films including those which shine a light on issues and struggles within contemporary society. We advance and support the work of diverse filmmakers from across the US and around the world. These artists often represent an under-served constituency who may not have the opportunity for live public exhibition.

The **Thomas Edison Film Festival** welcomes all genres including narrative, experimental, animation, documentary, and hybrids. We celebrate films which address the environment, race and class, immigration, the LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities and issues of social justice. Short films are celebrated in their own right – not as a sidebar to feature length films. The films we celebrate are artistic, empathetic and engaging works which simultaneously teach and entertain.



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From the Festival Director,  
Jane Steuerwald

**In October 1888**, Thomas Edison wrote: “I am experimenting upon an instrument which does for the Eye what the phonograph does for the Ear...”<sup>1</sup> That same year, Edison had a visitor - a pioneering English photographer, Eadweard Muybridge, who was studying how to capture motion through photography. Their meeting didn't come to much, but the wheels started turning in Edison's mind. One year later,



William Kennedy Dickson, one of Edison's team, combined Edison's phonograph invention with a machine that could show a continuous loop of perforated film. A working version of what we now know as a film projector was born – Edison's Vitascope - and magic happened.

Fast forward to 1981, and John Columbus of West Orange, NJ launches the Thomas A. Edison Black Maria Film & Video Festival. John's background was in printmaking, painting, drawing and experimental film making, and (cont.)

(cont. from previous page) he was drawn to Thomas Edison's West Orange workplace and film studio. He felt that the roots of experimental film in the 1960s and 70s were in many ways linked to Edison's early experimental films, and worthy of attention.

Edison's passion for innovation is what inspired Columbus. John's energy and passion for independent film ultimately led him to launch a new and unique traveling festival named for Edison's film studio, dubbed the "Black Maria" and the rest, as we say, is history.

All of Edison's early films were short. In fact, he made 75 twenty-minute-long films. Today, the Thomas Edison Film Festival continues to celebrate short films in their own right - not as a sidebar to feature length film but as a poetic, unique and compelling art form all its own.

As in a poem or short story, great short films have their own special power and resonance, and the best ones show us visions of the world that we may never have imagined. In fact, the artistic challenges to making a short film are formidable. The filmmaker doesn't have the luxury of time to develop character, atmosphere, or to explore an elaborate plot. A short film is most successful when there is a synergy between the cinematic form and the filmmaker's conceptual point of view. There is no time to waste. To grasp and hold an audience and make them think, feel, and respond is no easy task in seven minutes.

And now, 40 years later, the mission of the Thomas Edison Film Festival remains to promote, illuminate, and advocate innovation in the art of the moving image. The festival is still known for its support of spirited, cutting edge, and otherwise singular films. We are committed to works that explore the potential of the medium to inspire, provoke, enrich, and engage viewers. Imaginative and revelatory films are

continually sought including work that provides insight into the human condition and our natural world.

When John Columbus first conceived of the festival his idea was to find and gather fresh cutting-edge independent films, mostly shorts, for the public to see - work that would not normally be seen at mainstream outlets - and he decided to bring the films to the people where they lived. So, here's to the dedicated independent filmmakers who have made the brilliant short films that have inspired and changed us for so many years. Here's to their voices, vision, and courage. Here's to the magic!

<sup>1</sup>Thomas Edison National Historical Park, New Jersey, "Motion Pictures"

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## Stream TEFF Online

We've been shifting gears from over 60 in-person screenings a year to streaming our collections online. Last year the Thomas Edison Film Festival had over 10,000 viewings across 65 countries:

Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Europe, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Honduras, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Liberia, Macao, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, and Venezuela

**For online screenings please visit [TEFilmFest.org](https://TEFilmFest.org)**

While remaining committed to our in-person screenings, these only take place when health authorities permit.

2021 40th Anniversary of the  
Thomas Edison Film Festival  
Craig Saper, Baltimore, MD

**Welcome to the 40th Anniversary of Thomas Edison Film Festival.** For the 20th anniversary catalogue essay in 2001, written when I had recently published an essay about Thomas Edison, I began by recalling a scene in 1894 at Edison's Black Maria film studio - the world's first - with a roof lifted up to allow for the sun to brightly illuminate the stage, and the entire building rotating to follow the sun as it moved during the day. The dancer Annabelle Whitford, who performed on numerous filmmaking sessions for Thomas Edison films between 1894 and 1897, performed a dance for the camera in one of the first motion pictures made in America. Known as the serpentine dance, Annabelle used a simple toga-like costume to create undulating folds of material flowing from her arms as if they were wings of a butterfly; the film frames were then meticulously hand painted. My essay concluded with a discussion of the Black Maria Film Festival's impact on the future work of its audiences, who were often inspired by what they saw to make their own experimental or documentary films or videos. To appreciate this festival's history, remember Annabelle's serpentine dance in that studio playing the starring role in inventing the cinema; it is a hopeful, liberating dance.

Although much changed in the last twenty years, the last year alone brought what felt like two decades of tragedies and an upwelling of hope for a better future. Documentaries and experimental films have played a crucial role in agitating and reflecting on social and ecological justice movements: recognizing that Black Lives Matter, that climate disasters demand urgent action, that democracies in the United States and globally teeter near collapse, and that the global pandemic has killed more people than countless wars have before. These changes encouraged the festival organizers and supporters to change its name. They wanted a new name

that was more inclusive and expansive than the old name, Black Maria, that alluded only to that first film studio space. The studio was itself named because of the similarity of the look of the studio to the police paddy-wagons of the time. Perhaps it was time to move away from any association with police arresting people, for a film festival that recognizes the liberating aesthetic and social justice vision of independent short films. Although well-known among media makers and scholars, the name needed to be more public-facing, engaged, and recognizable to the wider audience, without the associations of arrest; the festival is now known as the Thomas Edison Film Festival. The festival's goals continue to champion liberating media in form and in content.

In her 2016 festival essay, "A Festival for the People," Margaret Parsons notes that this festival is "a remarkable institution in our contemporary film history on the celebration of its thirty-fifth. In three and a half decades the Black Maria festival has transitioned from 16mm to digital formats without missing a beat. Yet it continues to regard traditional aspects of celluloid filmmaking as fundamental for both preservation and artistic production." In her 2018 festival essay Sally Berger, notes that this festival is "a pivotal locus of short experimental works, an ideal exhibition venue from which to reflect on artists films using archival and found footage, ... a full range of shorts in animation, documentary, narrative and experimental styles. Many of these are archival or found footage works films made either completely or partially with pre-existing films or appropriated footage (material from silent films, home movies and amateur films, newsreels, television footage, industrials, outtakes, etc.)."

In her festival essay Tess Martin explains the important place of this festival because it is a venue for the non-corporate model of animation: "Independent animation has a long history and exists in many contexts. You can find it at film festivals, on the internet, or in art galleries. And yet the (cont.)

(cont. from previous page) medium of animation is still most commonly identified with big studio projects: Disney, Pixar, or, if you meet a stop-motion fan, LAIKA. This is, of course, a shame. ... The format with the most advocates within the independent animation community is probably the short film. This format is conducive to an ‘auteur’ approach, where the creator works primarily alone or with a few trusted collaborators.... Especially in animation, short films are a format complete unto themselves. There should be no expectation that animators who make short films should be interested in making feature-length films.”

Of course, there is nothing inherently liberating or apt about one model of writing or filmmaking over another, as the experimental-film historian, Scott McDonald, explained in his 1994 festival essay. McDonald recounts his excitement in discovering forbidden Hollywood films as a pre-teen, meant for older adults and teenagers, his enthusiasm for great filmmakers after a college seminar in the late 1960s, and also his initial disgust and outrage with experimental cinema. He could not forget these experimental films, they haunted him, and he has devoted a large part of his viewing time to exploring experimental cinema. He ends his story by explaining that watching all types of film is an acquired taste. In our childhood we learn how to understand conventional films, and later, if we can return to that child-like thrill, we might also learn to get beyond disgust, anger, and rejection of experimental media. In fact, the independent direction of the festival initially troubled the sponsors, connected to the Edison National Historic Site, who did not see the connection between Edison’s early experiments and later experimental films, as media scholar David Tafler’s 1993 festival essay explained.

In his program notes for the 1991 tour of this festival, film curator Richard Herskowitz explained that “experimental viewing meant watching movies from the standpoint of an



editor” looking for possibilities, where film audiences can learn to “uncover new narratives” to allow us to regard film as “footage” which we might manipulate and recreate; perhaps reminding us in this time of tragic upheaval that this is an opportunity to recreate our global narratives. This festival allows audiences to get ideas for their own work and serves as a gateway through which the experimental viewer can “break a film’s frame and become critically and playfully reflective on its purposes and potential uses.” The task of the festival is to project those possible worlds.

Jon Gartenberg, an administrator in the 1980s of the film collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, mentions the identification of contemporary filmmakers with the mythic pioneers of the cinema in his 1985 program notes. Gartenberg notes that in the early cinema, before the invisible narrative style became standardized in Hollywood and even before distribution and exhibition were standardized, films resembled cartoons, magic lantern slides, and skits. Many competing styles appeared simultaneously. Experimental filmmakers often find inspiration and ideas in early cinema experiments. These new experiments seek to illuminate a time of innovation before the corporate industrialization of film and media became the dominant mode of production. There is often, in this festival, a discovery of inclusive global excellence beyond the commercial restraints of the film industry. Gartenberg quotes British Film Studies pioneer Philip Drummond, to conclude that “early cinema offers a number of roads not taken, ambiguities not absorbed into the commercial narrative cinema. But for the avant-garde these need not be seen as history’s dead-end streets. They can be inspirations for new understandings of tradition and for new films.” In 2021, the media in this festival serves as inspiration for new social systems, traditions, and solutions for our contemporary crises. (cont.)

(cont. from previous page) P. Adams Sitney, the influential author on experimental film, in his 1988 program notes, recalls that at the 1967 International Experimental Film Competition in Belgium Michael Snow's *Wavelength*, that resembles an early cinema experiment in many ways, won the grand prize and became the critical success of the festival. Sitney notes that "at the same time it was also the occasion of a political demonstration, the first of many during film festivals in the following year, contesting the relevance of showing such films. Far from coinciding with political protest, the avant-garde cinema was a vulnerable object of attack." As the late sixties saw the explosion of a wider experimental culture, and an openness to finding artisanal pre-industrial and independent ways to make and watch films, it also produced a new concern with reaching wider audiences with larger socio-political issues rather than experiments in style and form alone. The festival is still challenging us to ask if the imagining of new forms can coexist with the urgent need to reach a larger public.

The first and foremost scholar of documentary film, and a crucial influence on the foundation of this Festival, Eric Barnouw, discusses in his 1992 program notes his interviews with people associated with Dziga Vertov (Denis Kaufman), the highly acclaimed Soviet filmmaker. Barnouw begins by recounting his trip in the early 1970s to the Soviet Union to do original research on Vertov's films and life. The uniqueness and uncertainty of such a trip during the waning decades of the Cold War make his story read like a suspense thriller about research and discovery. At the archive he began looking through Vertov's films. He discovered some episodes of Kino Pravda previously unavailable outside the Soviet archives. In his investigation of Vertov's life, he began by asking about Mikhail Kaufman, Vertov's brother, the main cameraman and the central character in their famous film *A Man With The Movie Camera*. One confusion Barnouw sought to settle was the identity of Boris Kaufman, who had worked with Jean

Vigo on the satirical documentary *A Propos de Nice*. Some critics confused Boris with Mikhail, and at least one other critic wondered if this was a third brother. Barnouw set out to find the third brother. He met with Mikhail for an interview, and from that interview Barnouw was able to track down the third brother. Boris had fled the Nazis by emigrating to Canada where he worked with John Grierson at the National Film Board of Canada, and later he entered the U.S. where he worked as a cinematographer for *On the Waterfront*. When Barnouw finally finds Boris living on 9th Street in New York City, he learns that the brothers had corresponded non-stop for fifty years, and, as Boris explained, “Mikhail taught me cinematography by mail.”

Because of the real and lasting fears of the Cold War at the time, Boris was less than forthcoming at the interview and later refused to participate or even allow a MoMA retrospective of all three Kaufman brother’s films. Denis Kaufman chose the name Dziga Vertov because it was the onomatopoeia for the sound of a spinning (revolving) top, perhaps symbolizing a spinning film reel, the spinning of industrial machines, and the political *revolution* that might grow from those two more concrete images of spinning. The spinning reels from Annabelle’s Serpentine dance to Dziga’s modernist films always involve change and risks.

Patricia Zimmermann, the activist eco-feminist film scholar, wrote a manifesto for the 1998 festival describing how media conglomerates now increasingly control the aesthetics or look of all media thus making experimental forms inherently political, and forums like this festival crucial. She celebrated the festival as a “space for an unofficial, samizdat culture of hope,” and like many others who have written the program notes for the festival over the last forty years, Zimmermann connects the world situation to a personal recollection of discovering her “thirst for a long, intoxicating drink of new work I couldn’t see otherwise.” (cont.)

(cont. from previous page) Connecting experimental film to the early cinema, Zimmerman casts John Columbus, the impresario of the festival in those early decades, as a 19th century magic lantern showman “who travels from town to town delighting the bored, starved populace” with “a trunkful of films and videos.” This description now applies equally well to the current festival and consortium director, Jane Steuerwald. Steuerwald also directs the NJ Young Filmmakers’ Festival and the Global Insights Collection of media works. Jane brings with her “one of the only festivals in the world that travels to its audience.” By traveling to its audience, the festival resembles and re-invents the most important social innovation of the early motion picture industry: the films traveled in a circuit to the audiences rather than audiences having to go to central locations to see films. We need to recognize the festival’s films and videos not as monologues or pictures but as invitations to invent - as ways to find solutions to the crises confronting us. The films in this Festival usually do not appear on mass culture’s radar; as Zimmerman notes, this “festival’s offerings differ in significantly powerful ways from the independent narrative features screened at the Sundance Film Festival, which seem to me to have simply replaced the old B-picture system in Hollywood. I can’t discern the difference between an Indy-film at Sundance and a Hollywood studio film once the elaborate sound mixes and special effects are stripped away.”

In her festival essay Rebekah Rutkoff uses her personal poetic reading of Leighton Pierce’s *50 Feet of String* (1995) to explore her own “Late Season Cinematic Blooms,” as a way to unpack how she had become interested in anything outside mainstream movies. Her encounter with Pierce’s film, “late and accidentally,” reminded me how often those happy accidents might happen when attending a film festival like this one. Rutkoff describes her epiphany in watching Pierce’s film at “a yearly week-long non-fiction film seminar.” Most importantly, Rutkoff saw that there was no “inherent

opposition” between film and the other visual arts like painting, and that film could “take on poetic value, even gain an ethical aura.” It was in that chance encounter with Pierce’s film that won the Juror’s Citation Award in 1996 at this festival that Rutkoff found “an appetite for film ... a point of entry, into a vast universe of moving images that had previously felt foreign.”

Animator, professor, and long-time festival participant, Lynn Tomlinson, recounted to me how the festival reinvented itself and “travelled” over video conferencing during the pandemic shut-down of 2020, visiting colleges, streaming films, hosting young filmmakers, and introducing a new generation to the transformative power of the short film. “The palpable excitement my students felt after meeting over the tele-conference with Jane, watching the variety of films, and learning first-hand about the thoughtful festival selection process, showed that they were realizing, during this 21st-century magic lantern touring festival, that they can become filmmakers themselves: they don’t need to first become part of a corporate industry.”

In the picture below, from the 1980s, nearly 40 years ago now, we see John Columbus at a film location with Jane Steuerwald, and wonder if they knew then that this festival would still be thriving four decades later and have had such an outsized influence on truly independent media making. Watching the variety of media projects at this festival might help audiences to begin to see the experimental as one more possibility rather than an affront to our conceptions of what a film, video, or essay *should* look like. The experimental is *not* the enemy of the serious, the popular, or the powerful. Twenty years ago, when I last wrote the festival essay, I had just published an essay on Edison’s experiments. This year I again returned to writing about Edison’s Studios in a book about an experimental writer and media-maker, who began his career by writing the best-selling magazine stories (cont.)

(cont. from previous page) used for the first serialized movies ever made and, which in turn, led to the Edison's Studios creating the film industry's earliest distribution system. Although we now often think of Edison as having started the film industry,



John Columbus and Jane Steuerwald on a film set in Hoboken, New Jersey circa late 1980s.

those studios were also the locus for innovation. The newly named Thomas Edison Film Festival alludes to the cinema's origins even as it offers a window onto new experiments in imagining other ways of making, resisting tyranny, and celebrating new inclusive ecologies.

**Craig J. Saper** recently published a new edition of *Readies for Bob Brown's Machine* (2020), a collection of modernist avant-garde short stories originally published in 1931. That collection's introduction and annotations draws on Saper's research for *The Amazing Adventures of Bob Brown* (2016) including a chapter on how Brown wrote the magazine stories that became the plots for the first serialized movies *What Happened to Mary* made by Edison Studios in 1912.

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## Map of International Submissions for 2021



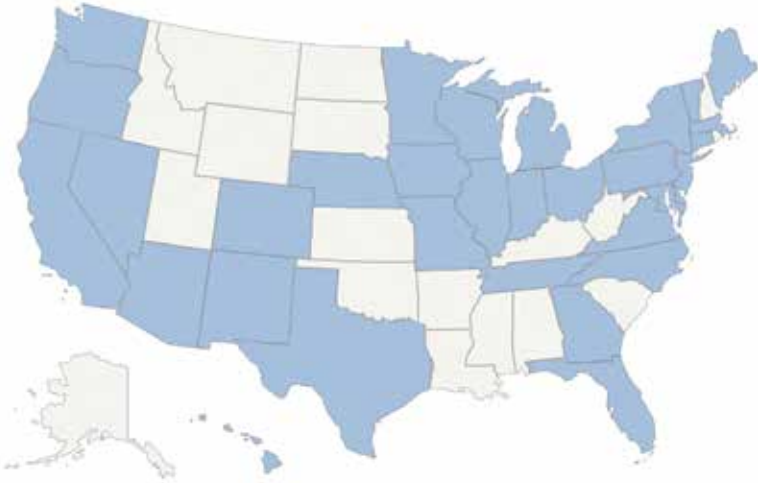
We are very proud that filmmakers from all over the world choose to submit work to our festival. For our 2021 season submissions came from 45 nations across five of the seven continents.

### TEFF Countries

Australia	Honduras	Poland
Austria	Hong Kong	Portugal
Belgium	Hungary	Russian Federation
Brazil	India	Singapore
Canada	Indonesia	Slovenia
Chile	Israel	South Korea
China	Italy	Spain
Colombia	Japan	Sweden
Costa Rica	Lithuania	Switzerland
Czech Republic	Luxembourg	Taiwan
Denmark	Mexico	Thailand
France	Netherlands	Turkey
Germany	New Zealand	Ukraine
Greece	Nicaragua	United Kingdom
Guatemala	Norway	United States



## Map of US Submissions for 2021



Our 2021 submissions include films from 33 US States.

### TEFF USA States

Arizona	Iowa	New York
California	Maine	North Carolina
Colorado	Maryland	Ohio
Connecticut	Massachusetts	Oregon
Delaware	Michigan	Pennsylvania
District of Columbia	Minnesota	Tennessee
Florida	Missouri	Texas
Georgia	Nebraska	Vermont
Hawaii	Nevada	Virginia
Illinois	New Jersey	Washington
Indiana	New Mexico	Wisconsin

## In Search of a Creative Identify

Ilene E, Princeton, NJ

**Four years ago**, I was an 18-year-old art student taking classes at a small studio in South Brunswick township. Photorealism trained my eye; charcoal, pencil, pen and ink, and oil paint steadied my hand. Despite having practiced art my entire life, I wasn't an artist. I lacked direction and artistic purpose. I dreamt of "finding my visual style".

Upon graduating high school, I began to realize and articulate the unique position in which I found myself as a Chinese American: heavily connected to and invested in Chinese and American communities, both of which greatly misunderstood each other. My Beijing friends asked curiously about blond-haired and blue-eyed Americans who couldn't add and battled obesity while my New Jersey friends profiled them back as communist nerds. What do they eat for breakfast? How do they pass the time during boring classes? What do they talk about over dinner? Neither side knew.

Meanwhile, my childhood dream to create animated movies like those I'd grown up on continued to drive my academics. When I arrived at Princeton University, this dream shaped my undergraduate studies: majoring in computer science and minoring in visual arts and applied math—my own version of a computer graphics degree.

I learned to animate. Tim Szetela, then my professor and now my advisor, showed my classmates and me an immense variety of animated shorts, from abstract to figurative, from fantasy to documentary, from digital to stop motion. I realized the range and potential that animation has as a medium in terms of both storytelling and visual experimentation. I realized it could serve as a common ground between my disparate cultures as well as a platform for me to explore texture, materiality, color, and dimensionality.

In designing my films, I decided that authenticity would be the key to forming this common ground. With guidance from Tim, I learned that a specific, intimate story resonates better than an intentionally generalized one. In retrospect, it feels obvious that a personal, authentic film portrayal can touch a wider audience than one that is vague, pedantic. So I focused on illustrating my own experience.

With this in mind, I started making my very first film. I went back to my childhood home in New Jersey, trying to find in it the most beloved mundane scenes that had shaped my cultural identity: the rice paper paintings hanging in the foyer, the chatter in the kitchen as we cooked dumplings and scallion pancakes, the air vent that served as a whistling backdrop to our dinner conversations. The result, “Home | 家,” bears a minimalistic style as I focused on color balance and line drawing for the rotoscoped visuals, paired with a nearly unedited soundscape of my home.

At the end of the semester, our visual arts department hosted a screening. I only invited my mother to the event. The deeply personal nature of the film, paired with the lingering flimsiness I felt toward my identity as an artist, formed a self-consciousness bordering on embarrassment. When my film played, I felt more like an anxious teenager than a filmmaker.

The next fall (my junior year at Princeton), I made numerous collages, digital animations, and drawings to explore the idea of having multiple realities exist within a single object, the way that my seemingly conflicting identities exist within me. These explorations originally stemmed from a pair of 3D glasses: I created pieces that used the contrasting colors of red and cyan to create different appearances when the user wore the glasses in different ways (or didn't wear them).

Over winter break, my mother retold a story that I had loved since I was a baby—a childhood story of my sister's in which she faced a classmate's Sinophobic remarks by proudly wearing a qipao to school the next day. I brought my (cont.)

(cont. from previous page) previous visual explorations to this story, using contrasting colors to reflect the dualities of culture, environment, and inclusion at play within it. Like the visual beauty and depth created by combining shades of red and green in the scenes of this film, beauty can arise from embracing and embodying seemingly conflicting cultural identities. Veering in a decidedly different direction from “Home | 家,” “筒 | Jane” consists of textures of acrylic paint on Chinese and English newspapers while my mother narrates in the background. The final film was my birthday present to my sister for her thirtieth birthday.

To my surprise, I loved the final result. I was confident in the story, having heard it hundreds of times and loved it for decades; I was excited by the complexity and depth that arose in the collaged visuals; I was touched by the pride that my mother exuded in the audio. For the first time ever, I couldn't wait to share my work: to my sister on her birthday, to my parents, to my closest friends, and finally to my community. The film was the most transparent reflection of myself that I had ever created, yet I felt excitement rather than anxiety to show it to the world.



In August, I attended a screening of “筒 | Jane” before the feature film at the Bridge Arts Festival Family Drive-In, thanks to Jane Steuerwald and the NJ Young Filmmakers Festival. Amid a pandemic, I watched

my film play on a huge outdoor screen while my mom took pictures of and with me in front of it and a parking lot full of strangers gave time and attention to my artwork—a rare opportunity I would never have imagined, pandemic or not (not to mention the free large popcorn I got with my VIP



access and receiving a sea of honks as applause for the first time).

At Jane Steuerwald's recommendation, I received another exceptional opportunity: I was invited by Lynn

Tomlinson to participate in a young filmmaker's panel at Towson University's Department of Electronic Media and Film. Before the event, I searched up and quickly felt intimidated by the other participating filmmaker, Yumeng Guo. Throughout the screening and subsequent discussion, I was slightly bewildered to see these other artists and students ask about my film and my storytelling process, then listen intently to and engage with my answers. I felt honored, and empowered, that people cared about and appreciated what I, a clueless 21-year-old student, had to say about filmmaking.

Looking ahead, it appears that I will yet again be veering off into another direction of artistic exploration for my senior thesis film. But I no longer feel frustration about not having found a consistent or recognizable "visual style." In fact, I do not long for one at all. The rapid evolution of my visual experimentation reflects my own growth as a young artist and filmmaker, and I can't wait to see what comes next.

**Ilene E** is a senior at Princeton University majoring in computer science and minoring in visual arts and applied math. She has interned at Google and conducted computer graphics research with Princeton University and Pixar. At Princeton, she directed the Student Design Agency, and created animated films that have been screened at film festivals across the U.S. She aspires to combine her technical and creative skills into a career in animation, fostering responsible younger generations through socially conscious animated films.

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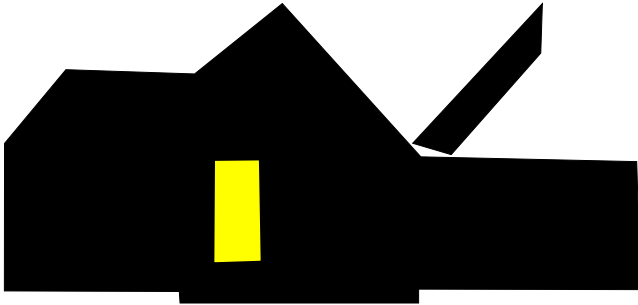
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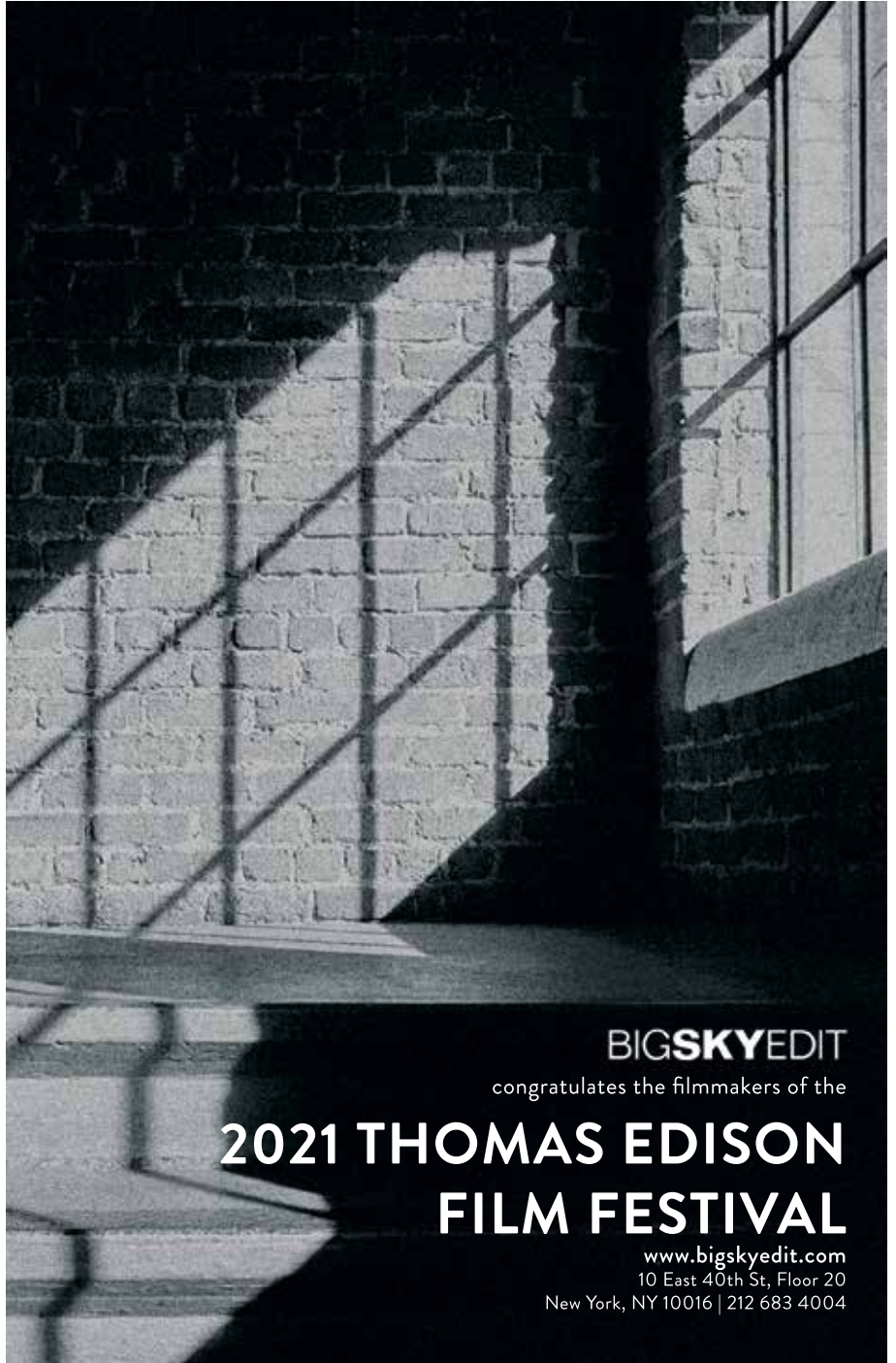
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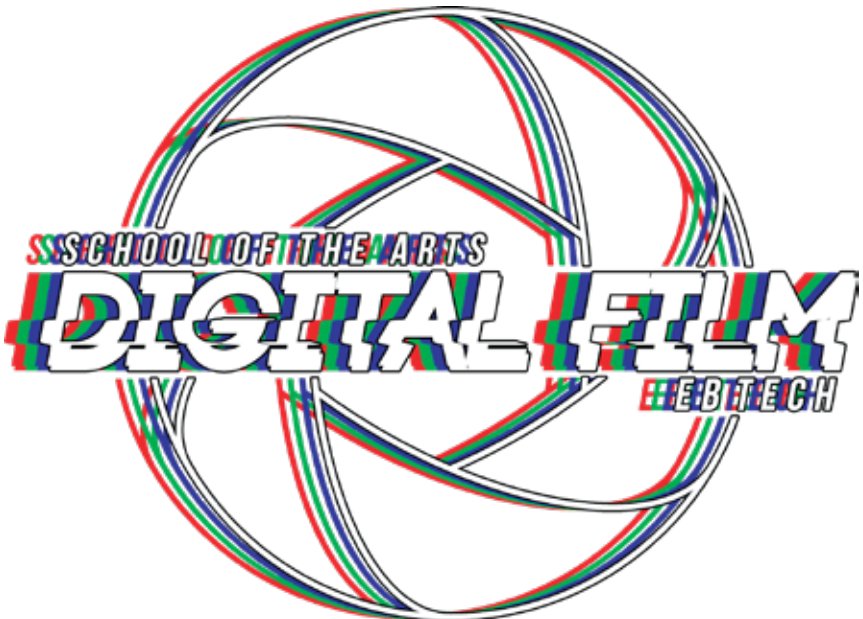
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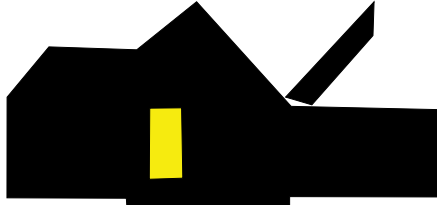


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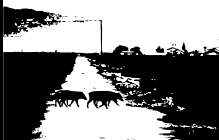
# JURY'S STELLAR AWARDS



THOMAS EDISON FILM FESTIVAL

# 2021

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## The Ephemeral Orphanage

### Animation

by Lisa Barcy

Chicago, IL, US. 15 min.



### JURY'S STELLAR

A group of tattered paper dolls daydream alternate realities and surreptitiously explore the hidden lives of their strict and secretive caregivers. Hijinks ensue and discoveries are made as the characters live out their childhood fantasies. Created with found paper dolls cut from a 1920's newspaper and found in an attic,

the film explores the adults attempt to dictate what girls learn, and the children's talent for discovering forbidden knowledge.

---

## The Toxic Pigs of Fukushima

### Documentary

by Otto Bell

New York, NY, US. 35 min.



### JURY'S STELLAR

The Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011 triggered a tsunami, nuclear meltdown and mass evacuations in Fukushima Prefecture. As part of a government push to encourage resettlement, local hunters have been enlisted to dispose of radiated wild boars that roam the abandoned streets and buildings. The

film follows a lone hunter into the isolated landscape. "The Toxic Pigs of Fukushima" was inspired by the photographs of Toru Hanai and Yuki Iwanami, and the score was written and performed by renowned artist Midori Takada.

## De-Eschatology

### Experimental

by Charly Santagado and  
Eriel Santagado

Metuchen, NJ, US. 5 min.



### JURY'S STELLAR

“De-Eschatology” is a physical manifestation of the claustrophobic conditions created by the Covid-19 crisis and the yearning to break free from them. The piece seeks to draw attention to a heightened sense of touch, which directly results from the lack of physical contact many in quarantine face. The film’s trajectory explores the gradual de-escalation of shelter-

in-place orders, and its psychological effects.

---

## A Trip with Mom

### Narrative

by Sophie Shui

New Taipei, Taiwan. 25 min.



### JURY'S STELLAR

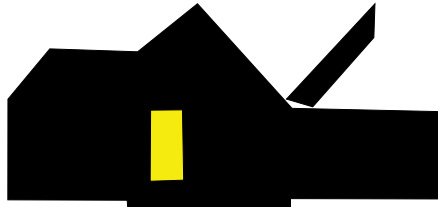
In order to take care of his aged and disabled mother with dementia, Xia Changming is unable to work and lives at home with his mother, wife and son. Under multiple pressures, complaints from his wife, and economic, physical, and mental stress, Changming is always depressed and feels hopeless

and helpless to change his family’s situation. Finally, after the police bring his mother back after she has wandered away, Changming decides to take her on a trip.

2021

Winners and Touring Collection

# GLOBAL INSIGHTS AWARDS



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## Liberation Heroes: The Last Eyewitnesses

### Documentary

by Vanessa Roth, New York, NY  
and June Beallor and  
Andy Friendly  
Los Angeles, CA, US. 40 min.

## GLOBAL INSIGHTS STELLAR

Heroic World War II veterans vividly share their liberation journeys, drawing parallels between the past and present. These powerful eyewitness accounts from

Steven Spielberg's USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive<sup>®</sup>, share a cautionary tale and compelling reminder of what can happen when insidious hatred remains unchecked. With antisemitism, racism and xenophobia on the rise worldwide, this film serves as a call to action to stand against hatred in all its forms.

As Alan Moskin, a featured Liberator in the film, says to a group of young cadets, "The hate is still out there... It's up to your generation to change that."





## Who Won the War

### Documentary

by Francesca Di Marco  
Albany, CA, US. 12 min.

### GLOBAL INSIGHTS JURY'S CITATION

In 1956, orphaned and partially blind, Hiroshima survivor Takashi was invited by the American

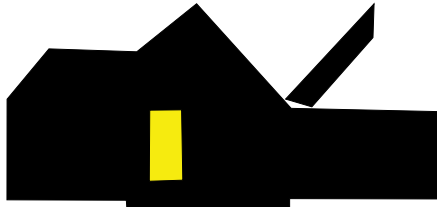
Government to the United States to “regain his health.” A second grader when the atomic bomb dropped, with six members of his family dead of radiation poisoning, Takashi embarked for the U.S. at 18. As soon as he landed in California, Takashi realized that he had been identified as an eligible subject for experimentation undertaken by the ABCC (Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission) to understand the effects of intense radioactive energy on the human body. Takashi’s story is the journey of an angry young man whose misfortunes begin after the Hiroshima bombing. It is a story of revenge, acceptance of the past, and forgiveness.



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# JURY'S CHOICE AWARDS



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## 1-1

### Narrative

by Naures Sager  
Malmö, Sweden. 7 min.



### JURY'S CHOICE

Ayman's sex date with Jonas gets crashed by his friends Amirah and Samir. This comedy short takes a hilarious and positive turn as it breaks stereotypes and celebrates diversity.

---

## A.I. Mama

### Experimental

by Asuka Lin  
Los Angeles, CA, US. 5 min.



### JURY'S CHOICE

A.I. Mama is a post-cyberpunk Super 8 film that features Kei, a young non-binary programmer who attempts to reconnect with their lost mother by building an AI that can import and process Kei's memories through ingesting their diary entries. The film incorporates themes of young queer gender identity, under a repressed

cultural upbringing that is specific to Asian mothers and their children post Western immigration.

## A Family That Steals Dogs

### Animation

by John C. Kelly

Knoxville, TN, US. 7 min.



### JURY'S CHOICE

Strange experiences and realizations lead a grieving artist to reconsider his identity and beliefs in this meditation on grief, family and mental illness.

---

## Alina

### Narrative

by Rami Kodeih

Los Angeles, CA, US. 25 min.

month-old baby to safety before the Nazis send her to a concentration camp. The film is a story of women taking action in the face of persecution and fascism and is based on true events.

### JURY'S CHOICE

“Alina” is about a group of women in Poland’s Warsaw Ghetto during World War II, who try to smuggle a three-



## A Portrait

### Documentary

by Carlotta Beck Peccoz  
London, UK. 26 min.



## JURY'S CHOICE

Following a journey to Dungeness and Prospect Cottage, acclaimed cinematographer

Christopher Hughes reminisces about his life, his career and his life-long friendship with director Derek Jarman. The film was shot on a cartridge of Super8 film and edited in-camera and is a loving tribute to Hughes – the filmmaker's friend and mentor.

---

## Beyond Noh

### Animation

by Patrick Smith  
New York, NY US and  
Kaori Ishida, Osaka, Japan. 3 min.



## JURY'S CHOICE

“Beyond Noh” rhythmically animates 3,475 individual masks from all over the world, beginning with the distinctive masks of the Japanese Noh theater and continuing on a cultural journey through ritual, performance, utility, and politics.

## Black Thoughts

### Narrative

by Dwayne Logan  
Nashville, TN, US. 30 min.



### JURY'S CHOICE

Aiming to bridge the divide that exists between embattled Americans, “Black Thoughts” places viewers within the history ravaged mind of a broken-hearted Black man, as he contemplates how confusion has kept citizens engaged in an endless cycle of conflict.

---

## BoxBallet

### Animation

by Anton Dyakov  
Saint Petersburg, Russia. 15 min.



### JURY'S CHOICE

One day, a delicate ballerina named Olya meets the rough, surly boxer Evgeny. The contrast between their worlds and their philosophies is so sharp that even the possibility of these two characters crossing paths seems incredible. Are they ready to embrace those shy

feelings that have sprung up between them? Can they overcome all external influences and allow their fragile loving souls to step out into the open?

## Carolee, Barbara & Gunvor

### Documentary

by Lynne Sachs

Brooklyn, NY, US. 8 min.



### JURY'S CHOICE

From 2015 to 2017, Lynne Sachs visited with Carolee Schneemann, Barbara Hammer and Gunvor Nelson, three multi-faceted artists who have embraced the moving image throughout their lives. From Carolee's 18th Century house in the woods of Upstate New York to Barbara's West Village studio to Gunvor's childhood

village in Sweden, Lynne shoots film with each woman in the place where she finds grounding and spark.

---

## Close as Brothers

### Documentary

by Jennifer Hardacker

Forest Grove, OR, US. 5 min.



### JURY'S CHOICE

Two teenage boys, one neurotypical and one not, discuss what it's like to be brothers, and why we shouldn't treat anyone like normal human beings.

## Digits of Pi

### Experimental

by Tom Bessoir  
New York, NY and  
Joshua Pines,  
San Francisco, CA, US. 3.14 min.



## JURY'S CHOICE

Inspired by Marcel Duchamp's "Anemic Cinema," filmmaker Tom Bessoir set out to create a film composed within a circular frame. This circular composition led directly to using the number pi for the underlying structure. Having the digits of pi sung on the soundtrack is an homage to "Einstein on the Beach" by Philip Glass and Robert Wilson.

---

## Ekstase

### Experimental

by Marion Kellmann  
Cologne, Germany. 11 min.



## JURY'S CHOICE

"Ekstase" is a montage of scenes from various European silent films. Based on similar settings and gestures it explores the stereotype of women on the verge of insanity. Reaching its peak in an eruption of hysteria the film displays the women as captives in a continuous cycle of symptoms, diagnosis and treatment.

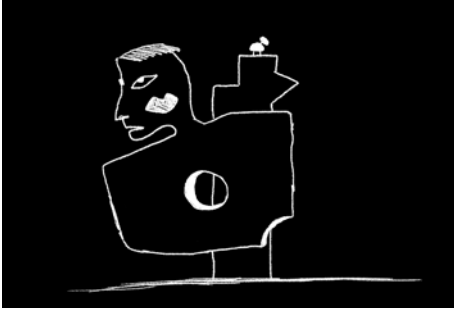


## Lines of Exile

### Animation

by Eric Patrick

Evanston, IL, US. 7 min.



## JURY'S CHOICE

Hamid Naficy is a scholar of cultural studies of diaspora, exile, and postcolonial cinemas and media, and of Iranian and Middle Eastern cinemas. His fifty years of drawings of prominent scholars, philosophers, and theorists form a unique index of the evolution of cultural theory over the last decades. In this portrait, Naficy intimately recounts this evolution through his drawings.

---

## Metro6

### Animation

by Geoff Hecht

San Francisco, CA, US. 8 min.



## JURY'S CHOICE

Today is an important day for Zak, but everything is going horribly wrong. During his adventurous bus ride, Zak goes through a deeply personal metamorphosis. Below the comedic surface lies a warning for all of us to not lose the importance of

human connections. As Zak becomes more socially aware and appreciative of his diverse community, so do we.

## My Body Given for You

### Experimental

by Anna-Clair Ostasenko Bogdanoff  
Paris, France . 12 min.



### JURY'S CHOICE

Beautifully shot in lush black and white “My Body Given for You” invokes themes of religion, desolation, and emotional hunger. Enigmatic and stunning.

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## No Place

### Narrative

by Gabriel Amaral  
São Paulo, Brazil. 23 min.



### JURY'S CHOICE

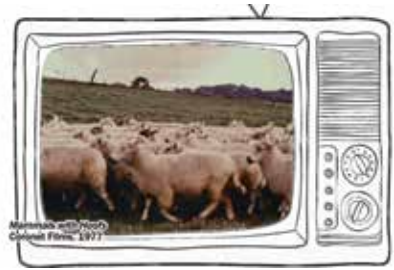
When Nego discovers that the cacao farm he lives and works on is going to be sold, he must face not only the loss of his home and job, but also the daily contact he has with the land he cherishes so much. This moving film deals with the hierarchical and co-dependent relationship between employer and employee, specifically within the context of a developing country where the power one holds over the other is often unconscionable.

## On the Domestication of Sheep **JURY'S CHOICE**

### Animation

by Jill Godmilow  
New York, NY, US. 8 min.

and turned into machines – in the case of sheep, wool, milk and meat machines gives precise instruction and gives precise instruction on how that is accomplished. It proposes that, historically, the domestication of wild animals was a model for human slavery and for the sexual subjugation of women... at first female captives, then wives and daughters. The film also contextualizes an “educational” film which teaches us how to appreciate, naively, the “gifts” that animals “give” us.



---

## Pond

### Narrative

by Tyler Macri  
San Francisco, CA. US. 14 min.

in the bathtub. Dark visuals and dream-like pacing converge to create a first-person portrait of distressed childhood.

## **JURY'S CHOICE**

Elizabeth, ten years old, lives with her reclusive mother in a dilapidated apartment where fish infest the piping, surfacing by way of a drain



## Raw

### Narrative

by Drake Shannon  
LA, CA, US. 10 min.

### JURY'S CHOICE

During a military patrol, past and present are blurred by a horrifying transgression. "Raw" is based on a composition of true stories, interviews, and discussions with women of war.



## The Chimney Swift

### Animation

by Frédéric Schud  
Hamburg, Germany. 5 min.

### JURY'S CHOICE

Until the end of the 19th century children between four and eight were used as chimney sweepers. In this allegorical film, a child climbs up a chimney while a bird sails down into it to build a nest. An encounter with no way back. We hear a British chimney sweeper describing his everyday



routine – forcing young children to become workers. While we observe a child cleaning a chimney, the master's statement gets more personal with every sentence, until we understand that he is speaking about his own past.

## Wuqiao Circus

### Documentary

by Lukas Berger

Lisbon, Portugal. 14 min.

## JURY'S CHOICE

In Wuqiao, a small Chinese town, the inhabitants are dedicated to the circus.

For decades, different generations have been presenting themselves as clowns, magicians, acrobats and tamers. During the holidays of Chinese New Year, the Wuqiao Acrobatic World turns into a big playground for spectators. Surrounded by Buddhist temples and Taoist sculptures, artists create their own space of circus tradition, imagination, illusion and reality. Backstage life is melancholic. "Wuqiao Circus," is a film about circus life fragments, performative existence and the love for playfulness.



# NJ YOUNG



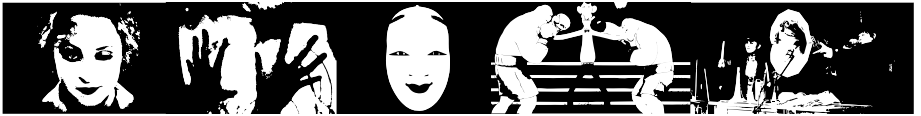
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# FILMMAKERS

## NJ Young Filmmakers Coordinating Committee

The **New Jersey Young Filmmakers Festival (NJYFF)** is a project of the **Thomas Edison Media Arts Consortium**. The mission of **NJYFF** is to support and promote the work of young emerging filmmakers, who either live in or attend school in the State of New Jersey. **NJYFF** gives students the opportunity to submit their films to a highly respected and long-running film festival and have it evaluated by prominent representatives in the field of film and media. Since the very beginning of **New Jersey Young Filmmakers** in 1975, the purpose of the festival has been to recognize, celebrate, and encourage emerging young talent in New Jersey, the state in which Thomas Edison first developed the motion picture.



## NJYFF Coordinating Committee Members

**Chris Corey**, Middletown High School South

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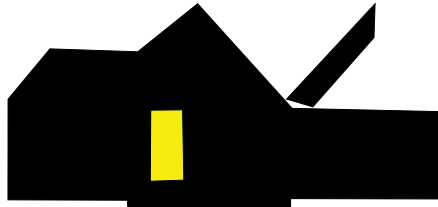
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# JURY'S CITATION AWARDS



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## Exposed Man with Gun in Hand **JURY'S CITATION**

### Narrative

by Francisco Saco  
San José, Costa Rica. 4 min.



An armed man tries to rid himself of the burden that is his aggression. The weapon he wields acts as a symbol of the patterns of behavior produced by an overly violent society.

---

## Green Grass

### Animation

by Michael Greco  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada. 8 min.



## **JURY'S CITATION**

Poignant, powerful, and told without dialogue, “Green Grass” is a thought-provoking allegory that follows two hopeful migrants who make the arduous journey to what they believe must be a better life only to discover their destination may no longer be the place they thought it was.

## Heartbreaker

### Narrative

by Aidan Cheeatow  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada. 7 min.



### JURY'S CITATION

“Heartbreaker” is based on observations by the filmmaker while he worked as a visiting hours security guard at the Catholic Children’s Aid Society in Scarborough, Toronto. In this poignant film, a young mother struggles to cope with losing custody of her baby girl.

## How Can I Forget?

### Narrative

by Natalia Andreadis  
London, UK. 8 min.

### JURY'S CITATION

Joe and Connie’s awkward blind date takes an interesting turn when they discover that they share the same magical ability. “How Can I Forget” is a fantastical romance about acceptance – accepting one’s self, accepting adventure and accepting the inevitable.



## I want to make a film about women

### Documentary

by Karen Pearlman  
Sydney, Australia. 12 min.



### JURY'S CITATION

“I want to make a film about women” is a queer, speculative, documentary love letter to Russian constructivist women. It asks what the revolutionary women artists of the 1920s said, what they did, and what they might have created had it not been for Stalin’s suppression.

---

## Jane

### Animation

by Ilene E  
Princeton, NJ, US. 5 min.

### JURY'S CITATION

Based on true events, “Jane” is an animated film about being proud to be Chinese American.



## **Last Stop for Lost Property** **JURY'S CITATION**

### **Documentary**

by Vicente Cueto  
Brooklyn, NY, US. 13 min.

Deep underground, as millions rush through the New York City subway system, countless items get left behind. The MTA's gargantuan Lost Property Unit is near impossible to navigate alone. Luckily, Sonny Drayton can point us in the right direction. Through his humor and intimate personal knowledge of the subway, Sonny invites us to consider what it means to lose and be lost underground, often the last stop for those who've fallen through the social safety net and have nowhere else to go. "Last Stop for Lost Property" questions how we value the artifacts of our lives: big and small, cherished and dismissed, tangible and existential.



---

## **Lost Lula**

### **Animation**

by Steven Vander Meer  
Arcata, CA, US. 3 min.

I felt the need to animate my figures, but not in the typical way that a human being moves." Steven Vander Meer's figures flow in and out of existence, much like their ephemeral poses during drawing sessions. The rhythm and tempo of the music, results in a kind of two-dimensional dance of lines on a surface.

### **JURY'S CITATION**

"Having practiced life drawing (the study of the live human figure in art) for many years,



## Lullaby for a Pandemic

### Experimental

by Gwendolyn Audrey Foster  
Lincoln, NE, US. 1 min.

Surrealist dream, filmed and edited under quarantine, made during the pandemic of Spring 2020.



## JURY'S CITATION

“Lullaby for a Pandemic” is a cineaste’s “pandemonic” lullaby for nodding off to dreamland. A

## Maya at 24

### Experimental

by Lynne Sachs  
Brooklyn, NY, US. 4 min.

her mother, in a circle – clockwise – as if propelling herself in the same direction as time, forward. Conscious of the strange simultaneous temporal landscape that only film can convey, we watch Maya in motion at each distinct age.



## JURY'S CITATION

Lynne Sachs films her daughter Maya in 16mm black and white film, at ages 6, 16 and 24. At each iteration, Maya runs around

## One of Their Own

### Narrative

by Allen Colombo  
LA, CA, US. 4 min.

### JURY'S CITATION

A digital boy gets into trouble trying to fit in with the human kids.



---

## Orville + Bob

### Documentary

by Alan Griswold  
LA, CA, US. 30 min.

### JURY'S CITATION

“Orville + Bob” is the story of two individuals from incredibly different backgrounds who came together after a serendipitous encounter in Manhattan in 1971. More than the story of their meeting, this is the story of how these men have stayed together for over 49 years despite the many cultural and societal mores that would otherwise divide them. The film offers proof of the age-old adage that “love truly is love.”



## Perfect Fifths

### Experimental

by Courtney Stephens  
LA, CA, US. 8 min.

on intervals in music, nature, and language. In dialogue with the materiality and history of celluloid film, the film moves between the act of tuning, which brings the world into harmony, at least temporarily, and the expanse of time, which brings suffering and instability.



## JURY'S CITATION

“Perfect Fifths” is a portrait of artist and piano tuner Jerome Ellis, and a meditation

---

## Pipo and Blind Love

### Narrative

by Hugo Le Gourrierc  
Paris, France. 13 min.

love with a woman sitting on a bench. He will try anything to attract her attention and seduce her with his own “language.”

## JURY'S CITATION

In a de-humanized world where emotions are rationed and measured by a gauge, Pipo, a factory worker, falls in



## Time Perspective

### Experimental

by Line Klungseth Johansen  
Trondheim, Norway. 3 min.

### JURY'S CITATION

“Time Perspective” explores time perspective theory – the idea that our perception of time influences our emotions, perceptions and actions.



## Waste Away

### Animation

by Elly Stern  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada. 5 min.

an unexpected turn. The responsibility of motherhood gives her the strength to fight for survival, while the forces of nature threaten to overtake her.

### JURY'S CITATION

In a trash-filled city, a homeless woman's encounter with a fish takes





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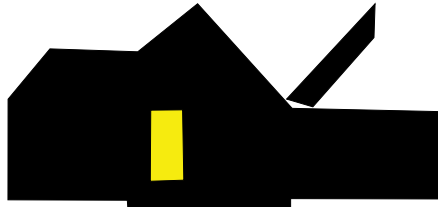


DAY ONE  
AGENCY

2021

Winners and Touring Collection

# DIRECTOR'S CHOICE AWARDS



THOMAS EDISON FILM FESTIVAL

2021

Our  
40th Anniversary



## Alder

### Experimental

by Vanda Ladeira  
London, UK. 9 min.

spirit of the forest faces a dilemma between following its heart or its mind. The film looks at the power struggle we all face when duty and love, pulls us in opposite directions. “Alder” has an ecological message conveyed through visual metaphors and inspired by folk and fairy tales.



## DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

“Alder” is a magical realist short drama set in an imaginary and eerie forest. The guardian

---

## A Poem in Bamboo

### Animation

by Chun-Yao Chang and XuFei Wu  
Jersey City, NJ, US. 5 min.

death of her lover. Her big house contains many memories. This film is a glimpse of a traditional and silent woman who doesn't speak but has many secrets locked in her mind.

## DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

When bad things happen in life, some people are lucky enough to move on, but not the lady A-Yuan. A-Yuan is trapped in the past after the



## Broken Relationship

### Experimental

by Wrik Mead

Toronto, Ontario, Canada. 4 min.

“Broken Relationship” moves through a kaleidoscope of colour and pixels to fragments of embracing bodies. Using glitched video footage from classic porn, the broken and distorted imagery speaks to the difficulty that LGBTQ youth often encounter when trying to navigate through their sexuality and relationships.



## DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

“Broken Relationship” moves through a kaleidoscope of colour and pixels to fragments of embracing

---

## Concerning the Way of Describing Places

### Documentary

by Sean Hanley

Brooklyn, NY, US. 14 min.



## DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

In 1817, a surveyor's line was inscribed through Bergen County, New Jersey and became one of the foundational measurements in the mapping of the United States. The film retraces the line 200 years later and along the way considers the consequences of precision, place names, and viewing from a distance.

## **Covid-19: A Portrait of NYC**

### **Documentary**

by Duda Penteadó  
Jersey City, NJ, US. 7 min.



### **DIRECTOR'S CHOICE**

A documentary short that explores NYC through the lens of seasoned photographer and Daily News editor, Luiz C. Ribeiro. In the midst of an unfolding global pandemic, the images captured are often rare and unexpected. Isolation, frustration, and tension spill over into the streets as images move from iconic empty spaces to the Black Lives Matter protest scenes and police confrontations.

---

## **Dancing is an Old Friend**

### **Experimental**

by Marta Renzi  
Nyack NY, US. 12 min.

### **DIRECTOR'S CHOICE**

Two old friends re-connect virtually. One still dances professionally, the other only for pleasure. Like their friendship, their dancing manages to transcend time and distance.



## Holly

### Animation

by Chris Carboni

Brooklyn, NY, US. 9 min.

“Holly” tells the story of a woman coping with a new reality after enduring a life-altering medical procedure that leaves her unable to speak. She must learn how to navigate the world anew and come to terms with how each facet of her life has changed.

### DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

“Holly” tells the story of a woman coping with a new reality after enduring a life-altering medical procedure that leaves her unable to speak. She must learn how to navigate the world anew and come to terms with how each facet of her life has changed.



## JamieSonShine

### Experimental

by Phoebe Jane Hart and

Jamison Hart

LA, CA, US. 5 min.



### DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

“JamieSonShine” is an experimental documentary that explores the effect of mental illness on the younger sibling of a person with schizophrenia. A collaborative reimagining that uses animation and home videos, the film is a testament to the complex and powerful

bond between a brother and sister and the line between fantasy and reality. A diagnosis is never the whole story.

## Kapaemahu

### Animation

by Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu,  
Dean Hamer, and Joe Wilson  
Honolulu, HI, US. 8 min.



### DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

Long ago, four extraordinary individuals of both male and female spirit brought the healing arts from Tahiti to Hawaii. Beloved by the people for their gentle ways and miraculous cures, they imbued four giant boulders with their powers. The stones still stand on what is now Waikiki Beach, but the true story behind them

has been hidden – until now. Narrated in an ancient Hawaiian dialect, “Kapaemahu” brings this powerful legend back to life in vivid animation, seen through the eyes of a curious child.

---

## Lazarus

### Experimental

by Tuixén Benet Coscolluela  
Barcelona, Spain and  
LA, CA, US. 8 min.



### DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

Through a dialogue between movement and landscape, “Lazarus” reflects on the objectification of the woman body in film. The famous quote by Edgar Allan Poe “the death of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world” triggers a succession of falls and recoveries that escape the poetic by trying too hard to find it.



## Liberate

### Experimental

by Karen Lavender  
Beverly Hills, CA, US. 5 min.

art piece, Ingrid Rogers, a woman of color, expresses her desire to be fully seen and heard. “Liberate” is a call to action to step into your light and create unapologetically.



## DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

Have you ever felt that the world only sees you as sliver of who you really are? In this performance

art piece, Ingrid Rogers, a woman of color, expresses her desire to be fully seen and heard. “Liberate” is a call to action to step into your light and create unapologetically.

---

## Listen to Us

### Documentary

by Juliana Henao  
Savannah, GA, US. 15 min.

## DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

“Listen to Us” is a documentary that highlights the many contributions of women in sound within the American film industry. It addresses women’s underrepresentation in the industry and explores what the future holds for them. “Listen to Us” is a celebration of women in sound.



## Metamorphosis

### Animation

by Wang Xi

LA, CA, US. 4 min.



## DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

A butterfly is resurrected from a rare specimen collection and explores the ruins of an ancient civilization that leads to a mysterious underground frozen cave. In the cave, the butterfly meets the Butterfly Man, who is an amalgamation of many other butterflies. The film explores philosophical ideas about life forms decomposing and then transforming into new organisms, between dreams and reality, and between humans and non-human creatures.

---

## Miracle on Central Park West

### Animation

by Candy Kugel

NY, NY, US. 5 min.

past. "Miracle on Central Park West" demonstrates that a random act of kindness leads to a real New York miracle!

## DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

Following her 22-minute animated autobiography, "I, Candy," filmmaker Candy Kugel continues regaling us with stories from her



## Mutiny!

### Narrative

by Matthew Gratzner  
LA, CA, US. 17 min.

old ways— all while confronting gender inequality and the lack of self-awareness of overt masculinity... but all seen through the eyes of 17th Century Pirates.



## DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

A swashbuckling, action-adventure comedy featuring a progressive Captain dealing with a crew that's set in their

## Phantasmagoria, 1945

### Experimental

by Karl Nussbaum  
Brooklyn, NY, US. 11 min.

children while presenting an after-dinner slide show. It is a children's ghost story about propaganda and the media; a meditation on the past as a warning to the present.

## DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

"Phantasmagoria, 1945" is the story told by Nazi Propaganda Minister, Joseph Goebbels, to his six young



## Radical Care: The Auntie Sewing Squad

### Documentary

by Valerie Soe

San Francisco, CA, US. 8 min.



tribes, recently incarcerated people, Black Lives Matter demonstrators, and others in need in the U.S. Using images, voices and sounds primarily generated by the Aunties themselves, in tandem with Kronos Quartet's performance of Susie Ibarra's "Pulsation," the film seeks to inspire others to work toward radical care in the time of Covid-19.

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### DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

This documentary short looks at the Auntie Sewing Squad, a group of mostly women of color volunteers who came together following the U.S. government's botched response to the COVID-19 crisis. The Aunties sew masks for farmworkers, day laborers, unhoused people, refugee and immigrant groups, First Nations

## Roberto Lugo: Without Wax

### Documentary

by Cyrus Duff and

Edward Columbia

Brooklyn, NY, US. 11 min.

### DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

After escaping the hard knocks of Kensington, Philadelphia, to become a world-renowned ceramics artist, Roberto Lugo returns to the

'hood' to pay his inspiration forward and make art that confronts systemic injustice, starting close to home.



**Russ Johnson:**  
**The Fork King**

**Documentary**

by Eugene Lehnert and Elizabeth Niles  
Brooklyn, NY, US. 5 min.

**DIRECTOR'S CHOICE**

NYC-based artist, Russ Johnson, brings forks to life in his graffiti. He uses forks to be critical of our consumer-society, to promote tolerance, to comment on other social issues and to simply be amusing.



---

**Salvage**

**Documentary**

by Christopher Boulton  
Tampa, FL, US. 10 min.

**DIRECTOR'S CHOICE**

Salvage questions the allure of old objects by reimagining obsolete tools as reliquaries haunted by the souls of disgruntled workers who resent their new jobs. This hybrid intersectional documentary uses magic realism to critique the inequities of gender, ethnicity, and class that underpin consumer capitalism.



## Sonnie

### Documentary

by Samuel Mirpoorian  
Indianapolis, IN, US. 11 min.

### DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

For Deon “Sonnie” Casey, life has not gone according to plan. Raised by his grandmother after the

death of his parents, Deon is now a single parent himself, working over 60 hours a week. Despite setbacks, Deon is determined to provide a better life for his son. Finding strength and solace in competitive weightlifting and his work at the YMCA, Deon pushes onward in hope that things will get better. SONNIE is an intimate, vérité documentary short that illuminates determination, redemption, and fatherhood.



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## The Descent

### Narrative

by Brandon Mercer  
Brooklyn, NY, US. 9 min.

### DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

“The Descent” is a complex and fantastical tale that traverses the precarious aftermath

of trauma, how these events shape us and our realities. Follow a sister as she dives headfirst into the distorted mind of her lost brother and the world he has created.



## The Moviegoer

### Narrative

by Leif Larson

Brooklyn, NY, US. 17 min.

### DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

With cinemas closed throughout the city, a moviegoer creates a film experience at home.



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## The Winter

### Animation

by Xin Li

Melbourne, Australia. 5 min.

### DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

Walking in a snowy forest, a peasant sees an unusual deer and goes to follow it. The deer is alluring, and the peasant wants to catch it.



## Three

### Animation

by Soyeon Kim

Lake Balboa, CA, US. 2 min.

was originated from a phase in ‘Walden’ by Henry David Thoreau: “I had three chairs in my house; one for solitude, two for friendship, three for society.” Using the chairs as metaphors, the abstract imagery symbolizes how our relationship evolves among us and allow us to re-evaluate



ourselves in current days. The film was created using an object stop-motion and traditional & digital drawing techniques.

---

## Tides

### Experimental

by Andre Silva

Wilmington, NC, US. 8 min.

“Tides” contemplates the liminal space between the modern technological world and that more ecological dimension we label as “nature” or “the environment.”



### DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

Filmed at Masonboro Island, an undeveloped barrier island in southeastern North Carolina,



## Tumbling Towards Home **DIRECTOR'S CHOICE**

### Documentary

by Imelda O'Reilly

NY, NY, US. and

Kildare, Ireland. 14 min.

“Tumbling Towards Home” is a coming-of-age story about Malcolm Adams, an Irish immigrant who moves to New York

in 1989 to study acting under Alan Langdon. He works through the grief from the loss of his mother and his friend Philip Seymour Hoffman. This leads to his decision of where to put his hat down and call it home.



---

## Twinkle Twinkle Little Star **DIRECTOR'S CHOICE**

### Narrative

by Shiyue Xu

Tianjin, China and

Glendale, CA, US. 12 min.

“Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” is the story of a boy’s pursuit to achieve his dream of becoming a pianist but having to

give up his dream when reality sets in. The song of the same name was used and adapted into various compositions to mirror the stages and challenges of his life from boy to man.



## We, the Slow

### Animation

by Jeanne Waltz

Lisbon, Portugal. 5 min.



### DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

An animated essay film about time and the different representations we have of it, following two main metaphors – the movements of water and competitive running.

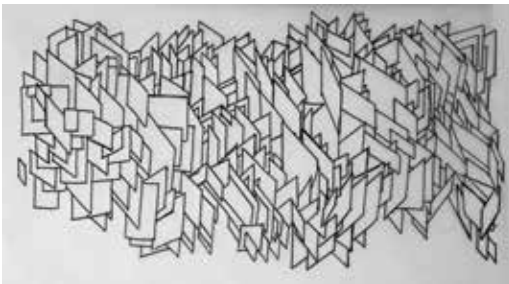
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## Whirlwind

### Animation

by Adolfo Ruiz

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. 2 min.



### DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

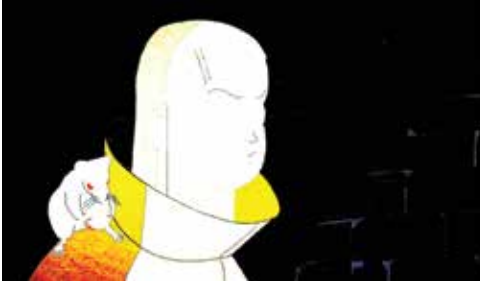
“Whirlwind” is a hand-drawn animation, consisting of over 700 ink drawings, rendered during the early stages (from March to July) of the 2020 global pandemic. The film’s visuals were elicited by unfolding events during these months. The process of drawing this film,

frame by frame, coincided with a unique sense of time and space that emerged during the pandemic. Influenced by early twentieth century animation, this film attempts to visualize new rhythms of life emerging during a time of rapid sociocultural change—shifting away from carefully controlled perspectives and vanishing points, while depicting a constant sense of movement and transformation.

## Wild Eyes

### Animation

by Nina Prange  
Ludwigsburg, Germany. 6 min.



### DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

With a classic look and experimental perspectives, “Wild Eyes” takes us into the dark world of the blind girl Kitana. Through her eyes, we can see again and understand how big the sacrifice was. A 2D animated short about friendship and guilt.

---

## Willingboro: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

### Documentary

by Kelvin Z Phillips  
NY, NY, US. 16 min.

the canaries in the coal mine when measuring the true economic and racial health of communities, and of America.

### DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

A short documentary that exemplifies how America ignores its dying suburbs. These beloved hometowns are



## Wolf Call

### Documentary

by Ramey Newell

Vancouver, BC, Canada. 9 min.

## DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

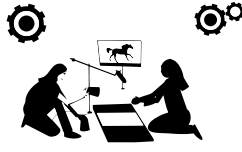
John Ramer has worked in animal sanctuaries most of his adult life, often without pay, and

feels this is his life's calling. John's experiences working with captive wolves have left him deeply changed, driving him to share his knowledge and passion with others in the hope that wild wolves might one day return to Colorado's open lands. Filmed entirely at a remote wolf sanctuary in the Wet Mountains of southern Colorado, "Wolf Call" asks us to rethink our relationship to wild and captive animals, as well as the world we inhabit together.



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## Official Selections Honorable Mentions

**Beneath** – Animation  
5 min. by Ian Martinez  
Nevada City, CA, US

**Bru'dhars** – Narrative  
14 min. by Sriram Papolu  
Northville, MI, US

**Caravan** – Narrative  
13 min. by William Michael  
Anderson, Alhambra, CA, US

**Charlotte's Photographs**  
– Documentary  
9 min. by John Akre  
Minneapolis, MN, US

**Dear Elsa: 10 Letters + 10  
Experiments** – Experimental  
31 min. by Amanda Madden  
Salt Lake City, UT, US

**Hyphen** – Documentary  
18 min. by Laura Kamugisha  
La Prairie, Québec, Canada

**I've Been Afraid** –  
Experimental  
6 min. by Cecelia Condit  
Shorewood, WI, US

**Lairs** – Experimental  
2 min. by Emma Penaz  
Eisner, San Francisco, CA, US

**"Love"** – Narrative  
4 min. by Andrea Ashton  
Brooklyn, NY, US

**my favorite software is  
being here** – Animation  
18 min. by Alison Nguyen  
Brooklyn, NY, US

**Only the Earth and the Mountains** – Documentary  
30 min. by Elleni Sclavenitis  
Denver, CO, US

**PreGame** – Narrative  
8 min. by Dana Silverman  
Los Angeles, CA, US

**Rockin' the Coffin**  
– Documentary  
9 min. by Cailleah  
Scott-Grimes  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

**Shaking a Singapore Spear** – Animation  
17 min. by Hannes Rall  
Singapore

**Space Vamps** – Animation  
6 min. by Cooper Troxell  
New York, NY, US

**Tesseract** – Experimental  
8 min. by João Pedro Oliveira  
Portugal and Santa  
Barbara, CA, US

**The Ballad of Lucky Dave** – Animation  
5 min. by Courtney Pratt  
Daly City, CA, US

**The Heart of Camden – The Story of Father Michael Doyle** – Documentary  
40 min. by Douglas Clayton  
Lawrence Township, NJ, US

**The Most Beautiful Song I've Heard** – Experimental  
16 min. by Blake Braden  
Kansas City, MO, US

**The WBGO Story...Bright Moments from Newark to the World** – Documentary  
55 min. by Chris Daniel  
Tinton Falls, NJ, US

**Tiger and Ox** – Animation  
8 min. by Seunghee Kim  
Seoul, Republic of Korea

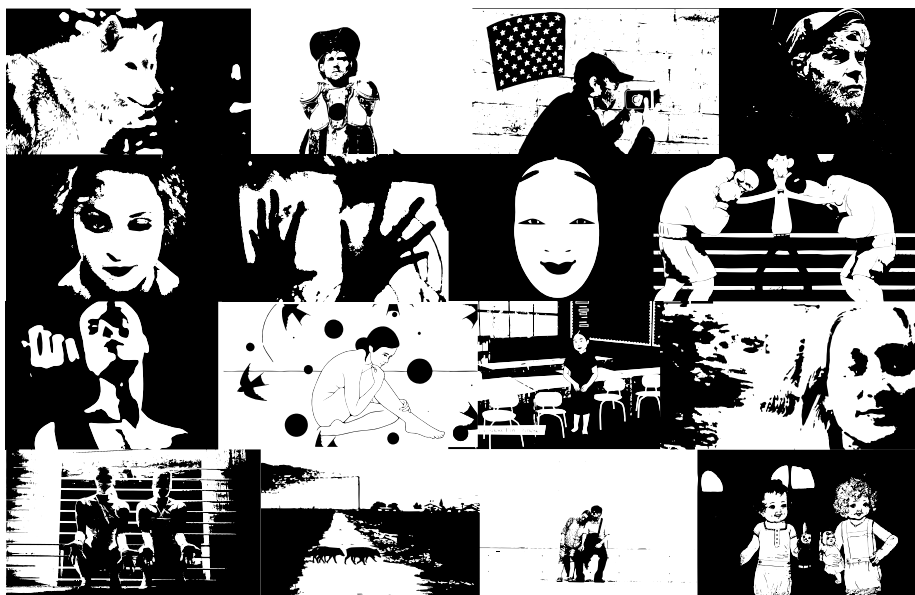
**Unguarded** – Documentary  
45 min. by Simonetta D'Italia  
Weiner, Brooklyn, NY, US

**Up We Soar** – Animation  
50 min. by Yan Ma  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

**What Will Become of Us** – Documentary  
57 min. by Stephanie  
Ayanian and Joseph Myers  
State College, PA, US

## Thomas Edison Film Festival JURORS 2021

**Henry Baker** began his career at the ground-breaking video arts facility: Synapse Video Center. His work as educator, curator and director helped launch video as an art form in America. He co-created the NYS Media Alliance. As premiere video Paintbox artist, his work on award-winning and innovative videos includes the first MTV Video Music Awards: The Cars “You Might Think.” Establishing his own company enabled projects with Menudo, Celeste Holm, HBO, SONY, Panasonic and others. You’ll find his works in the permanent collections of the NY Public Library and Everson Museum of Art. His award-winning documentary “PISS OFF” has been included in 40+ film festivals around the world. He served as a dedicated juror for the National Endowment for the Arts, WNET-TV Lab, Corporation for Public Broadcasting and Thomas Edison Film Festival. He resides with his husband in Washington DC.





## Thomas Edison Film Festival JURORS 2021

**Margaret Parsons** founded the film program at the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC. She serves as curator of film for the Gallery and regularly organizes screenings related to film history, film art, and the role of time-based media in society. She has curated media exhibitions or programs at embassies and cultural organizations including the Corcoran Gallery of Art, American University, the National Archives, the Smithsonian Museum of American History, and Smithsonian Museum of American Art. She has served on the boards of film organizations ranging from the Robert Flaherty Film Seminar to the Environmental Film Festival in the Nation's Capital, and has been on the editorial boards for *The Moving Image* and the Getty Trust's experimental *Art on Film* in association with the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She has been an international festival juror and in 2012 she founded Glimmerglass Film Days in central New York State. For her work in film preservation Parsons has received awards from the governments of France, Georgia, Italy, and the Czech Republic, and in the U.S. has been the recipient of life achievement awards from the Thomas Edison Black Maria Film Festival, DC Independent Festival, and Women in Film and Video. Her scholarship is in the field of outsider art and her articles have appeared in *Raw Vision*, *Folk Art*, *The Folk Art Messenger*, *New York Folklore*, *Curator*, and *The Moving Image*.



## SPECIAL THANKS:

**Henry Baker**

Producer, director, filmmaker

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Annabel Reyes

Jane Steuerwald

Tim Szetela

Wendy Weinberg

John Wendell

And film students in

Visual Arts at

Princeton University, NJ



**Thomas Edison Film Festival  
Call for Entries for the 2022  
Mark Your Calendar  
Early Bird Entry Date is June 1, 2021**

2021 marks the 40th Anniversary Season of the **Thomas Edison Film Festival (TEFF)**.

The Festival seeks spirited short films that explore, enrich, and expand the expressive possibilities of film as art.

**TEFF** is an international, open genre, touring festival seeking short animation, experimental, documentary, movement-based, narrative, and hybrid films.

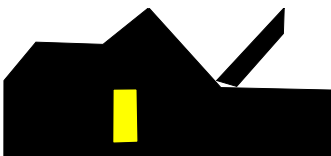
We will be accepting work for our **2022** season on June 1st, 2021.

**Early Bird Submission** Fee is only \$30 from June 1st through July 15th, 2021.

**Regular Submission** fee is \$35 from July 16th through the final deadline – October 15th, 2021.

To enter, visit the **Thomas Edison Film Festival** page on **FilmFreeway**:

<https://filmfreeway.com/ThomasEdisonFilmFestival>



THOMAS EDISON FILM FESTIVAL

Questions? Contact the Festival office  
**Phone: +1 201.856.6565**  
**eMail: Jane@TEFilmFest.org**

## Thomas Edison Media Arts Consortium supports the Americans with Disabilities Act

**The Thomas Edison Media Arts Consortium - Thomas Edison Film Festival** is fully committed to ensuring that accessibility guidelines and requirements as set forth by the federal government and state of New Jersey are implemented in as timely and efficient a manner as possible. The Consortium is consistently responsive to making film accessible for all people with disabilities and will continue to strive to provide the utmost accessible experience possible. Through our programming, design, and service, we reach out to and provide assistance and appropriate accommodations whenever possible. We provide effective communication and follow best practices of effective and sensitive techniques to serve members of the community with disabilities. The Consortium is also committed to exercising best practice and outreach in regard to recruiting persons with disabilities as festival volunteers, interns, and employees whenever possible. The Consortium, through the efforts of the ADA Compliance Committee, regularly reviews its policies and procedures to adapt, accommodate and address any issues or problems that might arise in regard to ADA compliance and regularly assesses its progress in achieving full compliance. People with disabilities and/or their liaisons are welcome to contact the festival director at: [Jane@TEFilmFest.org](mailto:Jane@TEFilmFest.org), 201-856-6565.



**We are grateful to the following individuals  
for their generous financial support**

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# HOBOKEN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

The Hoboken Historical Museum welcomes visitors 6 days a week, showcasing Hoboken's history, diverse culture, architecture and landmarks with exhibits, guest speakers and educational programming in the former Bethlehem Steel Machine Shop at 1301 Hudson St. Admission is just \$5; free for children and Museum members. The Museum is a 501c3 nonprofit organization, founded in 1986.

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