



PRESS RELEASE

BAMPFA Returns as Exclusive East Bay Venue for SFFILM

Nearly 30 Festival Films to Screen in Berkeley's Premier Repertory Theater from April 6 through 16

(Berkeley, CA) March 22, 2017—The UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive ([BAMPFA](#)) will serve as one of the primary screening venues for the 60th San Francisco International Film Festival ([SFFILM](#)), renewing its role as the Festival's exclusive East Bay presenter. Many of the most anticipated films in this year's program will screen in BAMPFA's state-of-the-art Barbro Osher Theater, a 232-seat cinema that has been noted for its exceptional presentation quality since its inauguration in January, 2016.

Beginning with an opening screening of Jem Cohen's *World Without End* on April 6, BAMPFA will host 27 screenings throughout the Festival, including major new works by Albert Serra, Brillante Ma Mendoza, Cristi Puiu, the Dardennes Brothers, and many others. Tickets to SFFILM screenings at BAMPFA include same-day admission to the museum's galleries, where BAMPFA's flagship spring exhibition [Hippie Modernism: The Struggle for Utopia](#) remains on view through May 21.

Tickets can be purchased [online](#) or in-person and are \$15 for general audiences; \$13 for BAMPFA members, SFFILM members, and UC Berkeley students; and \$14 for non-UC Berkeley students, seniors, and disabled persons. A full list of BAMPFA screenings during the Festival follows below and is also available on the BAMPFA [website](#).



Thursday, April 6, 6:30 PM

[World Without End \(No Reported Incidents\)](#)

Jem Cohen (US, 2016)

English, DCP, 57 mins

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The poetic, political imagery that has made Jem Cohen an iconoclastic American treasure is on full display in his recent work. *World Without End (No Reported Incidents)*, a portrait of Southend-on-Sea, a working-class British resort town near London, gently leads us into a forgotten Britain where the unspoken specter of Brexit looms over all. Cohen visits the town and finds something typical for him: a poetry of sorts that lets small details—a look, a sound, an impromptu conversation—amplify and transform into something touching and beautiful. The people Cohen interviews—including a young student, aging members of a pub rock band, the owner of a classic hat company, and the owner of an Indian restaurant—and his unique approach to filmmaking, where he lingers on scenes of public passageways, storefronts, and moments of “everyday” doings, elevate the town into something unforgettable.

Preceded by

Birth of a Nation (Jem Cohen, US, 2017, 10 mins, Color, Digital)

Bury Me Not (Jem Cohen, US, 2016, 10 mins, Color, Digital)



Thursday, April 6, 8:30 PM

[The Death of Louis XIV](#)

Albert Serra (France, Portugal, Spain, 2016)

French with English subtitles, DCP, 115 mins

King Louis XIV is dying, but his doctors are unclear as to the cause. He is on bed rest and ordered not to see his beloved dogs; visitors must come to him to be greeted as standing proves to be too difficult, and eating is an applauded act, as any nourishment for His Majesty is a triumph. In Albert Serra’s masterful *The Death of Louis XIV*, we are a guest in the bedchamber of King Louis (Jean-Pierre Léaud), where, among his loyal servants, all energy and concern is devoted to the king’s wellbeing and hoped-for recovery. Serra draws from literary references for historical accuracy; the room is candlelit and the scenes hover between the somber reality of death and the humor that lies in the details. With groans, exhales, and simple flicks of the wrist, Léaud subtly commands the room from his bed, adorned in lavish cloaks and even more lavish wigs. The film observes royalty with painstaking attention, making arduous

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traditions seem antiquated but necessary. His Majesty is slowly dying and we are a part of the final act, but unlike all those inferior to him, this is a king's death, where the water must be served only from the finest crystal glasses.



Friday, April 7, 6:30 PM

[I Called Him Morgan](#)

Kasper Collin (Sweden, US, 2016)

English, DCP, 91 mins

Discovered by Dizzy Gillespie and an MVP of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers ensemble, Lee Morgan was a key player in New York's 1960s "hard-bop" scene—a trumpeter with a beautifully supple, expressive sound, a dapper prodigy who had played with John Coltrane by his late teens and gained the admiration of his peers by his early twenties. It was inevitable he'd eventually cross paths with Helen More, a self-proclaimed "sharp" woman whose apartment on 53rd Street was a hospitable hot spot for hungry jazz musicians. She would help Morgan kick a drug habit, clean up, and stage a comeback. She would be by his side when he formed a quintet and recorded some of his most enduring records for Blue Note. She would become his common-law wife. And on February 19, 1972, in between late-night sets at an East Village club, Helen would pull out a gun and shoot the thirty-three-year-old band leader, killing the man she loved. Gathering together archival footage, stills, testimonials from legends like Wayne Shorter and Billy Harper, and a 1996 interview with Helen conducted a month before her death, Swedish documentarian Kasper Collin (*My Name Is Albert Ayler*) traces the duo's individual histories and tries to unravel the mystery behind her impulsive act that fateful night. The movie also draws an incredible you-are-there portrait of the era's after-hours jazz scene, from the hectic recording-studio sessions to the smoky Manhattan stages where these musical pioneers chased a sound. And most of all, it recounts a wild amour fou story, in which two mercurial people can't live without each other and can't help turning their romance into something like a Greek tragedy.

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Friday, April 7, 8:45 PM

[The Unknown Girl](#)

Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne (Belgium, France, 2016)

French with English subtitles, DCP, 106 mins

Though the Dardenne brothers are best known for their portraits of working-class lives, the protagonist of their latest film is an empathetic and hard-working doctor. And yet the filmmakers' allegiance to the lives of the downtrodden and underrepresented remains clear as the story unfolds. Jenny Davin (Adèle Haenel) is working with her intern late one night when someone buzzes for entrance to her practice. Since it's after hours, Jenny doesn't answer the call; she finds out the next day that the woman who rang died later that night, and that police have been unable to identify her. Feeling culpable and remorseful, the young physician tries to uncover the identity of the deceased, which takes her into a world of refugees that brushes up against her own in unforeseen ways. Compassion isn't always an easy emotion to convey, but Haenel gives the character an immensely inviting demeanor, whether she's making house calls to a man who might have known the woman who died or encouraging her intern to stay in school. With Dardenne's regulars Jérémie Renier and Olivier Gourmet in supporting roles, *The Unknown Girl* is another stellar entry in the Belgian filmmakers' illustrious careers.



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Saturday, April 8, 1:30 PM

[The Paris Opera](#)

Jean-Stéphane Bron (France, Switzerland, 2016)

English and French with English subtitles, DCP, 110 mins

The Palais Garnier has graced the ninth arrondissement since 1875, dazzling onlookers with its ornate beaux-arts facade and gilded statuary honoring the fine arts. To Parisians it is known simply as “L’opéra,” the historic home of the world-renowned Paris Opera and the birthplace of classical ballet. In this captivating documentary, Swiss director Jean-Stéphane Bron takes audiences inside one of the world’s great performing arts venues for one season, revealing the complex artistic collaborations at its heart. Covering two performance spaces—the Palais Garnier and its newer sibling, the Opéra Bastille—this film illuminates the backstage bustle of the Opéra National de Paris and the scores of artists, financiers, administrators, and patrons who make the whole endeavor possible. Through the company’s tireless director Stéphane Lissner, the glories and peculiar challenges of working in such a legendary setting are detailed: Can the production designer safely get a 1200-pound live bull onstage during a performance of Schoenberg’s *Moses and Aaron*? How far can ticket prices be lowered to combat the perceived elitism of the opera? Is Bryn Terfel available for a last-minute substitution in Wagner’s *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*? A sense of barely contained chaos descends as labor unions strike, a precocious young bass-baritone debuts, and tensions arise between the corps de ballet and their improbably named choreographer, Benjamin Millepied. All the while, an army of polyglot chorists, stage managers, wig stylists, linen pressers, and makeup artists help shape the much-lauded performances that leave ballerinas and maestros alike sweating and exhausted, collapsing in the wings.



Saturday, April 8, 4:00 PM

[Serenade for Haiti](#)

Owsley Brown (US, 2016)

Haitian Creole and French with English Subtitles, DCP, 72 mins

“Music is our refuge,” says a student at the Sainte Trinité Music School in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. “With music . . . we feel we are in another world, far from troubles.” This documentary recognizes those troubles but celebrates the refuge, testifying to the role that art can play in creating community and sustaining hope under the most difficult of circumstances. Shot in Port-au-Prince over a seven-year period both before and after the 2010 earthquake that killed hundreds of thousands and reduced much of the city to rubble, *Serenade for Haiti* finds a locus of continuity at Sainte Trinité, which has been training young people in classical European and Haitian musical traditions since the 1950s. Replete with vivid images and joyous sounds, the film focuses on interviews with students—most of them poor, some orphaned by political violence—and their teachers, many former students themselves. All speak eloquently about how the discipline of music has helped them discover their own voices and value in the world, but nothing speaks more forcefully than the music itself. After the quake, with the school’s stately white buildings in ruins, lessons and practice continue outdoors, maintaining a rhythm of resilience. In one teacher’s words, “The country is destroyed. All the buildings are destroyed. Music must go on. Life goes on.”



Saturday, April 8, 6:00 PM

[Ma' Rosa](#)

Brillante Ma Mendoza (Philippines, 2016)

Filipino and Tagalog with English subtitles, DCP, 110 mins

In the Philippines, no one trusts the police. *Ma' Rosa*, the latest film by internationally acclaimed Filipino director Brillante Mendoza, tells the story of an ordinary family who try to make ends meet by selling small amounts of “ice” (crystal meth). Set up by a customer, the parents are arrested and taken to the police station. Thus begins a harrowing race against the clock, as their children try to find the money to bribe corrupt police into releasing the couple. The drama unfolds in what feels like real time, in a gritty social realist style aided by the incredibly intimate cinematography of Odyssey Flores. Lead actress Jaclyn Jose gives the performance of a lifetime as the detained mother and was awarded the Best Actress award at the 2016 Cannes Film Festival. More than six thousand people have been killed in the Philippines since the election of President Rodrigo Duterte, who campaigned on a promise to kill thousands of drug offenders. Though *Ma' Rosa* was completed shortly before Duterte was elected, it

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shows in chilling detail the consequences of how corruption in a country's institutions can destroy the lives of everyday people.



Saturday, April 8, 8:30 PM

[Who Cares. Who Sees: Experimental Shorts](#)

Cosponsored by San Francisco Cinematheque

Curated by Vanessa O'Neill and Kathy Geritz

How we see others and understand them is explored through six poetic films: three portraits—of a geologist, of the Andes, and of “anyone” or “nobody”; an homage to Robert Frank’s photographs in *The Americans*; a collage featuring photos of a Masonic order; and a consideration of communication between dogs, humans, and computers. New films by Janie Geiser, Christoph Girardet and Matthias Müller, Adam Levine and Sara Smith, Brigid McCaffrey, Jesse McLean, and Madi Piller.

Untitled, 1925 Part Three

Part three of a trilogy witnesses the space, the people, and the culture of the Andes and reflects on time and belonging. (Madi Piller, Canada, Peru, 2016, 11 mins, Digital)

You Got Eyes

An experiment in movement and single-frame video inspired by Robert Frank’s *The Americans*. Featuring dancers Aretha Aoki and Sara Smith. (Adam Levine, Sara Smith, US, 2016, 7 mins, Digital)

Bad mama, who cares

Geologist Ren Lallatin moves into a small housing complex located between a rail yard and the interstate. Desert vistas are replaced with an arsenal of tactile pursuits; seismic vibrations serenade the home. (Brigid McCaffrey, US, 2016, 12 mins, 35mm)

Flowers of the Sky

Flowers of the Sky—a medieval term for comets—draws on two panoramic photographs, found in an LA thrift shop, that depict a gathering of members of the Order of the Eastern Star. The film reveals and

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obscures the original event. (Janie Geiser, US, 2016, 9 mins, Digital)

personne

This is somebody, nobody, anyone. This is us in the course of time. Persistently, in vain. The self is the need for permanent self-assertion. (Christoph Girardet, Matthias Müller, Germany, 2016, 15 mins, DCP)

See a Dog, Hear a Dog

A consideration of the deficits and surpluses produced by attempts at communication among humans, animals, and machines. (Jesse McLean, US, 2016, 18 mins, DCP)



Sunday, April 9, 1:30 PM

[Leaning into the Wind—Andy Goldsworthy](#)

Thomas Reidelsheimer (UK, 2017)

English, DCP, 92 mins

In the past ten years, San Francisco has been a stopover for acclaimed British artist Andy Goldsworthy, whose nature-driven artworks are ensconced in the Presidio and at the de Young Museum. What makes Goldsworthy tick? In the 2001 documentary *Rivers and Tides*, Thomas Riedelsheimer followed Goldsworthy around to great effect, and *Leaning into the Wind* is their collaborative sequel. Like their earlier production, the new film is a sensation for the eyes and ears that takes viewers into the terrains and outdoor spaces where Goldsworthy feels most at home. It's a way to examine the work anew—how nature informs it, guides it, and gives back, as Goldsworthy gives to it. But *Leaning into the Wind* is also a journey into the artist's maturing life and accompanying self-reflective thinking. Now sixty, Goldsworthy is a bigger "name," and institutions around the world commission him to work his magic. Riedelsheimer is there, for example, when Goldsworthy orchestrates one of his Presidio pieces, *Tree Fall*, which debuted in 2013. But the director is also on hand when Goldsworthy talks about his divorce from his wife, and hints at other difficulties. Goldsworthy questions his earlier assumptions about art, and gives more insight into his hands-on process. The work always carries Goldsworthy forward. So, too, does his eternal joy and wonder.

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Sunday, April 9, 3:45 PM

[Godless](#)

Ralitza Petrova (Bulgaria, Denmark, 2016)

Bulgarian with English subtitles, DCP, 99 mins

In the shadow of a mountain nicknamed “Godless,” justice is rare and making the right choice comes at a cost. Outwardly impassive Gana works as a home care nurse in post-Communist Bulgaria. Her relationship with her mechanic boyfriend consists mainly of a shared morphine addiction and a side gig selling identity cards to black-market operators. And with Gana’s job, both drugs and IDs are within easy reach. The only thing that stirs this stoic woman’s soul is the music of the choir led by one of her patients. When Gana’s actions threaten her one glimmer of hope, will she break the cycle of corruption or spiral deeper? Artful 35mm cinematography (employing unusual 4:3 framing) and an award-winning performance by lead actress Irena Ivanova bring texture and grit to this bold observation of a woman trapped in a fatalistic culture.



Sunday, April 9, 6:00 PM

[A Date for Mad Mary](#)

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Darren Thornton (Ireland, 2016)

English, DCP, 82 mins

Fresh off serving a six-month jail sentence for brawling, an unorthodox maid of honor (Seána Kerslake) embarks on a time-crunched search for an acceptable bloke to be her “plus one” at the tightly choreographed ceremony of her stressed-out and slightly distant best friend (Charleigh Bailey). While this might sound like fodder for standard rom-com fare (except for that jail part), director Darren Thornton’s energetic debut, based on a stage play he also directed and adapted for the screen with brother Colin, avoids conventions and stays focused on its mercurial, well-drawn characters who are living in an Irish port town. One of the pleasures of *A Date for Mad Mary* is its unpredictability, as the foul-mouthed, volatile Mary returns home and eventually befriends the enchanting Jess (Tara Lee), a singer and part-time videographer, who assists her in an attempt to find that elusive wedding date. In between this alternately humorous and poignant quest, Mary labors at trying to craft the perfect maid-of-honor speech, a redemptive exercise that expresses as much about herself as her relationship with the bride-to-be. You’ll likely never forget the fiery, trouble-prone Mary nor the passionate yet vulnerable performance at the heart of the film from Kerslake.



Sunday, April 9, 8:15 PM

[The Transfiguration](#)

Michael O’Shea (US, 2016)

English, DCP, 97 mins

Combining gritty urban realism with vampire-movie name-checks galore, *The Transfiguration* (selected for Cannes’s Un Certain Regard) tells the story of a teenage loner with a problem—he has a thirst for blood—and the slightly older girl who befriends him. With a collection of vampire memorabilia and journals where he tracks plans for his next victims, he is both obsessive and methodical. A chance encounter with a white girl named Sophie, who has moved into his building, leads to an awkward friendship of sorts. Milo unveils some of his secrets to her, including his favorite vampire films (he’s partial to Romero’s *Martin* and *Let the Right One In*), as she reveals her own personal problems; together they try to help each other with their respective demons. Milo’s cinematic references reveal

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some of O'Shea's predilections as well, as the film is more concerned with atmosphere and character development than graphic violence. To that end, *The Transfiguration* features beautifully modulated performances by Eric Ruffin as the pensive and deliberate Milo and Chloe Levine as the sensitive and damaged Sophie. As Milo lays a plan to remove the elements that threaten them both, *The Transfiguration* offers a pathway towards hope that leads its characters past and through all of the bloodletting.



Tuesday, April 11, 6:30 PM

[Sieranevada](#)

Cristi Puiu (Romania, 2016)

Romanian with English subtitles, DCP, 173 mins

A movie about big themes set in a small space, master Romanian director Cristi Puiu's latest film takes place primarily in a three-bedroom flat where various and numerous relations wait (and wait) for the local priest to deliver last rites to the family patriarch. As the film begins, a married couple in a car argue about what kind of dress their daughter needs for a play she's in. Near *Sieranevada's* end, this same husband and wife will again have a heated conversation in the same car, but the stakes will be much higher. As he did with *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu* and *Aurora*, Puiu builds tension through an accretion of details that seem minor at first, but gain in importance and resonance as the drama proceeds. As family members amble in and out of the apartment, conversations and arguments about politics, 9/11 conspiracy theories, adultery, and the proper respect to be paid to the dead man ensue. Puiu uses these discussions to explore, among other matters, the psychic cost when people know they're being lied to but pretend otherwise. Lest this seem overly dark or dire, the film is leavened with the director's trademark black humor, from the cheery pop songs that play in the background to the household's Buñuelian predicament of not being able to eat until the endlessly delayed arrival of the man of God. Death may wait for no man, but in *Sieranevada* everyone must wait to dine.

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Wednesday, April 12, 6:30 PM

[Muhi—Generally Temporary](#)

Rina Castelnuovo-Hollander, Tamir Elterman (Israel, Germany, 2017)

Hebrew and Arabic with English subtitles, DCP, 87 mins

Muhammad (a.k.a. Muhi) is a cherubic Palestinian toddler with an infectious laugh and a life-threatening immune disorder. With inadequate medical care available to him at home in Gaza, Muhi was transported to an Israeli hospital as a baby for emergency treatment that included amputation of all his limbs. He has lived in that hospital ever since, running gleefully through its corridors in his prosthetics; it is the only home he's ever known. But while the hospital is able to keep Muhi alive and well, it also keeps him and his devoted grandfather, Abu Naim, in a bizarre state of limbo. In Gaza, says his mother, "the boy will die." In Israel, Abu Naim is denied a visa or work permit. Stuck on either side of a fiercely guarded checkpoint, their family is indefinitely torn apart. As the Israeli-Palestinian conflict rages around them, the no man's land of the hospital walls that Muhi and his grandfather inhabit is a strange source of both medical salvation and uncomfortable contradictions, where Muhi bounces between Hebrew and Arabic, the Torah and the Koran. With both empathy and precision, Jerusalem-based journalists Rina Castelnuovo-Hollander and Tamir Elterman place one family's unique story within the crucible of the relentless Mideast strife that impacts everyone in its orbit.



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Wednesday, April 12, 8:45 PM

[Family Life](#)

Alicia Scherson, Cristián Jiménez (Chile, 2017)

Spanish with English subtitles, DCP, 81 mins

While housesitting for an estranged cousin who's just left for Paris with his wife and young daughter, Martín takes the phrase "make yourself at home" to the extreme. He sleeps in their bed, wears their clothes, and rearranges the furniture. After the family cat, Mississippi, disappears, he sparks a fiery romance with Pachi, a single mother. He welcomes Pachi and her young son into the home as if it's his own, crafting a deceitful narrative out of the space and of his life, turning domestic living into a foolhardy theatrical indulgence. Adapting a short story by Alejandro Zambra with the author, luminary Chilean filmmakers Alicia Scherson (*Il futuro*) and Cristián Jiménez (*Bonsái*) examine the slippery truth of identity with wry wit and freewheeling spontaneity, underlining the different roles we play not just in our relationships, but with ourselves when we're alone. *Family Life* is a funhouse mirror of self-examination, one that turns intimate spaces inside out and reveals how even the most private corners of our lives—including something as innocent as a jar of Nutella—are not entirely safe from invasion.



Thursday, April 13, 6:30 PM

[The Wedding Ring](#)

Rahmatou Keïta (Niger, Burkina Faso, France, 2016)

Songhoy, Zarma, Hausa, and Fulaani with English subtitles; DCP; 96 mins

The Wedding Ring is a rare achievement, a wondrously complex dramatic feature directed by an African woman that explores female desires and empowerment in a traditional Muslim society. It also comes from one of the world's most impoverished countries, one that barely has a film industry. After attending college in Europe, Tiya (Magaajyia Silberfeld, the daughter of director Rahmatou Keïta) returns to Niger, but lingering romantic daydreams about the handsome young man she left behind disrupt her reintegration into village life. According to custom, women are not supposed to have such thoughts, let alone be sexual outside of marriage. As Tiya grapples with her conflicted feelings, her best friend takes her to a sage who advises her to take part in a ceremony at the new moon that will

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help clarify things. While she waits out the changing lunar phases, Tiya interacts with a variety of women who also challenge traditional norms, and Keïta employs a fresh approach to portray their complicated lives. From the landscapes immersed in sandy-colored architecture to the blue-hued fashions characteristic of the region, *The Wedding Ring* paints a visually stimulating picture. In her first narrative feature, director Rahmatou Keïta proves herself to be a strikingly accomplished storyteller—just like her griot ancestors.



Thursday, April 13, 8:45 PM

[Hermia & Helena](#)

Matías Piñeiro (US, Argentina, 2016)

English and Spanish with English subtitles, DCP, 86 mins

Foreknowledge of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is by no means required to enjoy Argentine writer-director Matías Piñeiro's quasi-adaptation. Agustina Muñoz stars as a young theater director who departs Buenos Aires for a fellowship residency in New York, ostensibly to translate Shakespeare's play into Spanish. Complications gently ensue, with game turns from a companionable cast full of indie-film notables including Keith Poulson, Mati Diop, Dustin Guy Defa, and Dan Sallitt. Piñeiro and cinematographer Fernando Lockett have a gracious and easygoing way of following people around, favoring human gestures even amidst periodic flourishes of formal experimentation. It all has a decidedly Bard-like aspect of deeply engaged creative playfulness, though the filmmaker's voice is fully his own. It's also a neat trick that this low-key tale of lostness in translation becomes a resonant affirmation of cultural commonality. Piñeiro handles heady stuff with a wonderfully light touch, and the film casts a lasting spell with its genuine intimacy, ephemeral beauty, and unpretentious vitality.



Friday, April 14, 4:00 PM

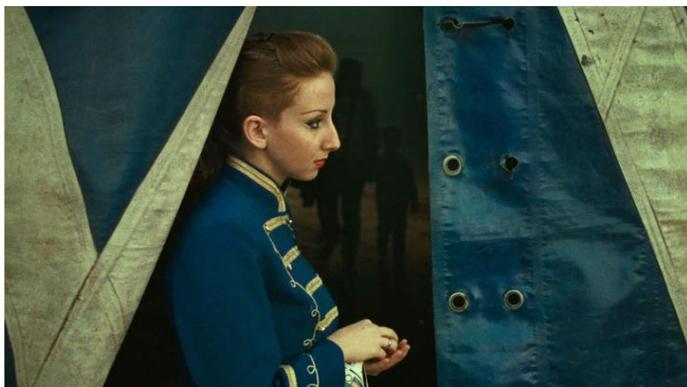
[Life After Life](#)

(Zhi fan ye mao)

Zhang Hangyi (China, 2016)

Mandarin with English subtitles, DCP, 80 mins

Produced by Jia Zhangke, this evocative and poetic debut depicts a rapidly disappearing way of life with a gorgeous visual sensibility and subtly wry humor. Mingchun and his bored young son Leilei live in a remote Chinese farming village scheduled to be razed. One day, the two are out collecting firewood, and without explanation Leilei is matter-of-factly possessed by the ghost of Mingchun's wife. The ghost has one thing on her mind—the replanting of a beloved tree before it is swept away by bulldozers in the name of modernization. As she says, "This tree knows who we are." In addition to this plea, she draws attention to other ghosts in their midst, some of them in surprising guises. So *Life After Life* is a ghost story, but one that is more interested in metaphysics and subtle humor than clanging chains and rattling windows. Coupling a desaturated palette of browns and grays with surprising images that feature goats stuck in trees or a giant boulder that moves sideways, Zhang's film has a lyrical sensibility that sits comfortably alongside its criticism of a society that is laying waste to a particular kind of life.



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Friday, April 14, 6:30 PM

[Mister Universo](#)

Tizza Covi, Rainer Frimmel (Austria, Italy, 2016)

Italian with English subtitles, DCP, 90 mins

Each night, underneath a threadbare big top, Tairo puts an aging pride of big cats through their paces. Audiences may be dwindling, but the young lion tamer is happy, living a life that he's dreamed of since he was a little boy. When some trailer park neighbors steal a cherished lucky charm, Tairo, uneasy without it, sets off down the back roads of Italy to find the strongman who bequeathed it to him many years ago. For this captivating docudrama, filmmaking duo Tizza Covi and Rainer Frimmel mine not only their own cinematic past—viewers first met young Tairo in their film *La Pivellina*—but that of Italy as well. The spirit of early Fellini can be felt in *Mister Universo*, alongside that of prime De Sica, as the workaday world of the circus, gently refracted through the lens of the filmmakers, reveals a sense of wonder that may fade, but will never be extinguished.



Friday, April 14, 8:45 PM

[The Future Perfect](#)

(*El futuro perfecto*)

Nele Wohlatz (Argentina, 2016)

Spanish and Mandarin with English subtitles, DCP, 65 mins

Eighteen-year-old Xiaobin travels from China to Buenos Aires to join her conservative family who immigrated years earlier. Her parents, who refuse even to learn Spanish, want her to fit in with the Chinese immigrant community and marry a nice Chinese boy, but the low-key teenager with a quiet smile has a few surprises up her sleeve. She rebels by secretly taking a Spanish class, hiding her savings, and spending time outside class with one of her fellow students on the sly. As the students in the class improvise simple dialogues to practice what they've learned, Xiaobin turns new lessons learned into a new experience in life. Improvising scenarios for what she wishes would happen, or not happen, for Xiaobin the future perfect becomes not only a grammatical tense, but a way to imagine the life she

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wants to live. Director Nele Wohlatz recruited most of the cast, including her lead, from actual language-school students, and brilliantly uses their innocence and naïveté to create an atmosphere of spontaneity, realism, and genuine camaraderie. “The language school,” she says, “could be understood as a rehearsal stage for a new identity after immigration.”



Saturday, April 15, 4:00 PM

[The Force](#)

Peter Nicks (US, 2017)

English, DCP, 93 mins

The Oakland Police Department, an agency burdened by a long-standing legacy of problems, comes into sharp relief in this powerful, immersive documentary. For this second chapter of his documentary trilogy focused on the East Bay city, award-winning filmmaker Peter Nicks gained incredible access to the OPD over a two-year period from 2014 to 2016. Nicks vividly captures a particularly turbulent time, first as protests erupt on Oakland’s streets, fueled by national police abuse reports, and then as a shocking 2016 scandal involving officers and an underage sex worker engulfs the department. In addition to these headline-making developments, *The Force* covers the day-to-day realities of becoming and being a cop, dropping in on police academy recruits as they train and discuss how they would react in the face of a suspect behaving erratically and coming at them, possibly with a weapon, and accompanying officers on volatile, potentially dangerous calls. *The Force* also spotlights activists as they seek and demand action and change at both community meetings and protests. As with *The Waiting Room*, his potent look at the overburdened Highland Hospital emergency department, Nicks takes a fly-on-the-wall approach to his topic. Intended as a catalyst for conversation and change, Nicks’s empathetic and observational style avoids easy generalizations and upends expectations, resulting in a rich, thought-provoking real-time conversation about social justice and the mutual responsibilities of police officers and those they serve and protect.



Saturday, April 15, 6:30 PM

[*The Winter*](#)

(El invierno)

Emiliano Torres (Argentina, France, 2016)

Spanish with English subtitles, DCP, 93 mins

As befits its stark and seasonally specific title, director Emiliano Torres's feature debut is a handsomely flinty Western set on a windswept Patagonian sheep ranch. An elderly longtime foreman (Alejandro Sieveking) grapples with an existential threat posed by the younger ranch hand (Cristian Salguero) who comes to work for the season. Each man soon enough finds himself in an adapt-or-die situation. Torres's laconic storytelling style, abetted by cinematographer Ramiro Civita's great eye for craggy landscapes and faces, allows for mythic overtones without belaboring them. (Early scenes of sheep shearing neatly portend a certain razoring off of all woolly melodrama.) The result is somehow insouciantly primal, and it's no insult to the film's fine and fully human performances to declare that, after all, winter itself is the true main character here. This is not the Patagonia of tourism. Torres manages a geographically exact window on globalization, but also a universal parable about how challenges to livelihood can and do become challenges to life itself.



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Saturday, April 15, 8:30 PM

[The Ornithologist](#)

(O ornitólogo)

João Pedro Rodrigues (Portugal, France, Brazil, 2016)

Portuguese, English, Mandarin, Mirandese, and Latin with English subtitles; DCP; 118 mins

On a solo expedition to study black storks, a mishap separates strapping young ornithologist Fernando (Paul Hamy) from his camp, his kayak, and the outside world. His increasingly bizarre ordeals as he attempts to get back to civilization encompass encounters both sacred and profane: first, two Christian Chinese pilgrims try making him an all-too-literal martyr to their faith, then a goatherd named Jesus offers erotically welcoming counterbalance. This remote northeastern corner of Portugal seems ominously full of secretive pagan rites. An international cineaste favorite since his 2000 breakthrough *O fantasma*, João Pedro Rodrigues has created arguably his most accessible work to date, without abandoning any of his trademark idiosyncrasies. This metaphysical (but also very physical) adventure, shot entirely outdoors, is by turns sexy, surreal, mystic, and mystifying. It twists Catholic iconography into a playfully modern pretzel shape that does not neglect the filmmaker's customary frank homoeroticism. Nor does it neglect humor—though the tribulations Fernando endures may be dead serious to him, with the film's airy absurdism, they seldom seem so to the viewer.



Sunday, April 16, 1:30 PM

[Maliglutit](#)

(Searchers)

Zacharias Kunuk (Canada, 2016)

Inuktitut with English subtitles, DCP, 94 mins

Canadian-Inuk filmmaker Zacharias Kunuk's *Maliglutit (Searchers)* continues in the breathtaking vein of his unforgettable *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*. Spoken entirely in Inuktitut, the new film zeroes in on a smaller-scale story of good versus evil, more immediate and desperate, and rooted in the Westerns that Kunuk grew up watching. A loose remake of John Ford's masterpiece *The Searchers*, *Maliglutit* is more a

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study of cruelty than of racial hatred; the kidnapers in this story are of the same tribe, but are vulgar and selfish—they don't share food—and have been exiled. It's 1913, and Kuanana (Benjamin Kunuk) goes out hunting caribou and returns to find his wife and daughter gone, stolen like possessions. (The kidnapping sequence is shown in a panicky frenzy of swarming furs, twisting and squirming in and out of frame.) Kuanana and his teenage son head back out into the snowy tundra by dogsled, seeking their family members and cold revenge. Like Ford, Kunuk pays vivid attention to the landscape, using lengthy takes to emphasize growing exhaustion as the Arctic ice pummels the search party. The unsettling sound design features a kind of female guttural chanting, as well as animal noises, raising a sense of harrowing dread. At first sharp and brutal, the film ultimately achieves a visceral, lyrical state.



Sunday, April 16, 3:45 PM

[Duet](#)

Navid Danesh (Iran, 2016)

Persian with English subtitles, DCP, 103 mins

Navid Danesh's tightly conducted feature debut conveys the impact the past has on the present lives of its quartet of characters. Hamed is a musician who has recently released an album that includes a piece he wrote at university while involved with a woman named Sepideh. Their relationship ended badly, but he takes this opportunity to see his old girlfriend. The ensuing encounter sets off a chain of fraught conversations among the two former lovers and their current spouses. Though the title reflects Hamed's college composition, it also points at the film's technique of building emotional tension through a series of intense scenes between different pairings of the protagonists as they circle around their feelings and frustrations with one another. Everyone in the cast performs with impeccable timing, and fans of Iranian cinema will recognize the formidable Ali Mosaffa as Sepideh's architect husband, Massoud. Building on the spare dramatic tradition of Iranian masters like Asghar Farhadi, Danesh has created a resonant and moving symphony for four voices.

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Sunday, April 16, 6:00 PM

[Donkeyote](#)

Chico Pereira (Spain, Germany, Scotland, 2017)

Spanish with English subtitles, DCP, 86 mins

Manolo leads a simple life on the rural outskirts of a town in southern Spain; more often than not, he sleeps in the open air, and spends his days roaming the countryside. His constant companions are his phlegmatic but lovable donkey, Gorrión (“Sparrow”); his excitable dog, Zafrana; and, at his daughter’s insistence, his cell phone. Now in his seventies, Manolo wants to embark on one last adventure: he plans to go to America and walk the 2,200-mile Trail of Tears, the path of the Cherokees’ nineteenth-century forced march west. And he aims to take Gorrión with him. The title pun fairly begs us to see Manolo’s quest as quixotic; certainly his family, not to mention travel agencies and embassies, think he’s tilting at a prize only he sees as winnable. But *Donkeyote*’s irony—and beauty—is that the viewer comes to see Manolo and his world on his terms, and often through Gorrión’s eyes. The understanding between man and animal has rarely been so intimately conveyed as it is through Julian Schwantz’s stunning cinematography.



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Sunday, April 16, 8:15 PM

[*El mar la mar*](#)

Joshua Bonnetta, J. P. Sniadecki (US, 2017)

English and Spanish with English subtitles, DCP, 94 minutes

A timely and altogether mesmerizing portrait of place filmed in 16mm, Joshua Bonnetta and J. P. Sniadecki's lyrical documentary is best described as being from, rather than about, the Sonoran desert. The US–Mexico border looms as an unspoken presence, the better to train our attention on the landscape's primordial drama: hillsides burning through the night, bats flooding a cave, and a borderless sky—and deadly lack of shade—in all directions. The enveloping soundtrack is itself an epic poem of wind, gunshots, helicopters, and radio signals. Nestled into this sensory detail are firsthand accounts of the borderland and its crossings. Crucially, the speakers are not named, credentialed, or even pictured; periodically the image goes black, and we find ourselves listening to their stories as if around the campfire. Haunted by things left unseen and people left behind, *El mar la mar* gives every impression of walking hallowed ground even as it recognizes its own complex kinship to the activists, border agents, and self-appointed patrollers following the tracks of migrants. Refreshingly, though, Bonnetta and Sniadecki's patient filmmaking suggests that we reserve judgments until we know something of the terrain.

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The longest-running film festival in the Americas, the San Francisco International Film Festival (SFFILM Festival) is an extraordinary showcase of cinematic discovery and innovation in one of the country's most beautiful cities. The 60th edition runs April 5-19 at venues across the Bay Area and features nearly 200 films and live events, 14 juried awards with close to \$40,000 in cash prizes, and upwards of 100 participating filmmaker guests. www.sffilm.org/festival

About BAMPFA

Internationally recognized for its art and film programming, the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA) is a platform for cultural experiences that transform individuals, engage communities, and advance the local, national, and global discourse on art and film. BAMPFA is UC Berkeley's primary visual arts venue with screenings of some 450 films and presentations of up to twenty exhibitions annually. BAMPFA's mission is to inspire the imagination and ignite critical dialogue through art and film.

The institution's collection of more than 19,000 works of art dates from 3,000 BCE to the present day and includes important holdings of Neolithic Chinese ceramics, Ming and Qing Dynasty Chinese painting, Old Master works on paper, Italian Baroque painting, early American painting, Abstract Expressionist painting, contemporary photography, and Conceptual art. BAMPFA's collection also includes more than 17,500 films and videos, including the largest collection of Japanese cinema outside of Japan, impressive holdings of Soviet cinema, West Coast avant-garde film, seminal video art, as well as hundreds of thousands of articles, reviews, posters, and other ephemera related to the history of film.