

2025 Chesapeake Film Festival Rolling Script, October 10 -12, Easton, Maryland

**Ebenezer Theater, Friday, October 10
17 S. Washington Street, Easton, MD**

OPENING FILM

Brushstrokes of Genius – 12:00 to 2:00

Welcome with Irene Magafan, CFF President

Introduction with Cid Collins Walker, Artistic and Executive Director

Loving Vincent – Maryland Premiere – TRT: 95 min – USA – Directed by Dorota Kobiela and Hugh Welchman – This Polish-UK production brings the paintings of Vincent Van Gogh life and work to the screen in an oil painted animation comprising 65,000 frames by 125 artists from around the world. It received an Oscar nomination at the 90th Academy Awards. It won best animated feature at the 30th European Film Awards in Berlin.

Q&A with Anke Van Wagenberg, PhD, American Federation of the Arts, Rebekah Louisa Smith, PhD, Film Festival Doctor, and Gail Patterson, Spiral Gallery moderated by Cid Collins Walker, CFF Executive Director

This *Loving Vincent* screening is generously sponsored by Bluepoint Hospitality and Maxine Millar.

SHORTS PROGRAM 1

A Journey Through Place – 2:15 to 4:30

Introduction with Amber Monet

Spirit of Place – Maryland Premiere – TRT: 26 min – United Kingdom – Directed by Jack Cooper Stimpson – Athel and Edward enjoy visiting the wetlands. Edward likes watching the birds, whilst Athel seems to have a much deeper connection to the landscape. When Athel makes a discovery, she is forced to re-examine what the wetlands mean to her.

Underdogs – Documentary Short – TRT: 27 min – USA – Directed by Maria Vattimo – After their gym closed in 2017, South Philadelphia's Vare Gymnastics Team faced an uncertain future. Despite adversity, the team persisted, becoming a symbol of resilience and determination. Their efforts were honored with the construction of a new state-of-the-art facility.

The Reach – US Premiere – TRT: 28 min – Italy – Directed by Luca Caserta – Elderly Stella Flanders has never left Goat Island, living her entire life within its close-knit community. As winter sets in, she begins seeing visions of loved ones urging her to cross the icy Reach to the mainland. Her story becomes a poignant journey through memory, love, and life's final transition.

Shelter – Spotlight on Maryland – TRT: 36 min – United States, Ireland – Directed by Anita Groener – Through personal stories, *Shelter* explores homelessness and the challenges faced by those rebuilding their lives in Easton, MD. It also highlights the impact of the Talbot Interfaith Shelter's work. The film champions resilience and the power of community.

Q&A with Rebekah Louisa Smith, PhD, Film Festival Doctor, Anita Groener, and Peter Woicke moderated by Amber Monet

VIP RECEPTION

Tides and Talent: VIP Reception – 5:30 to 7:00

ENVIRONMENTAL NIGHT

An Evening in Focus: Where Nature Speaks – 7:30 to 9:30

Introduction with Irene Magafan, CFF President

Women of Impact - Kenya – Maryland Premiere – TRT: 4 min – USA – Produced by the World Wildlife Fund – This short film features 4 trailblazing women in Kenya and highlights their community conservation efforts as they partner with the CARE-WWF Alliance on community based conservation projects in Kenya that has lasting impact for the health of their own families and the planet.

The Grand Salmon – Environmental Feature – TRT: 56 min – USA – Directed by Jess Wiegandt – The Grand Salmon is an environmental documentary following the journey of three women who paddled 1,000 miles to recreate the journey wild salmon make each year to the Pacific Ocean. With eight dams along the way, these women experience why salmon populations are dwindling and explore what must be done to bring them back from the brink of collapse.

The Bonobo Connection – Environmental Short – TRT: 32 min – USA – Directed by Irene Magafan – Narrated by Ashley Judd, this documentary explores the lives of bonobo apes, known for their peaceful matriarchal societies. It contrasts their endangered status with their potential to inspire human models of cooperation. The film acts as a stepping stone for bonobo conservation and to generate awareness about the DRC and why it's important, as the second lung of the Earth, to preserve it for the animals who call it home and for our planet as whole.

Q&A with Maggie Stogner, filmmaker and educator, Severn Smith, filmmaker, and Dave Harp, filmmaker moderated by Irene Magafan, CFF President

Ebenezer Theater, Saturday, October 11
17 S. Washington Street, Easton, MD

ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM 2

From Mountains to Shorelines – 10:00 to 11:30

Introduction with Severn Smith

On Water's Edge – Environmental Short – TRT: 24 min – USA – Directed by Severn Perry Smith and Madam Dutchess Durham – On Water's Edge tells the story of Crisfield, Maryland's relationship to the waters of the Chesapeake Bay—past, present, and what that might look like in the future. The short film is meant to raise regional awareness around Crisfield's flooding challenges and potential solutions, which includes a greater emphasis on tourism to provide a more sustainable economic backbone for the community.

Look Down Not Up – International Documentary Feature – TRT: 52 min – Nepal – Directed by Yehuda Goldman – A team of scientists and locals trek Nepal's Everest region to document native mushrooms and educate against deadly misidentification. Featuring breathtaking visuals and expert insights, the film blends science, culture, and conservation. It underscores the need for ecological awareness and indigenous education.

Q&A with Yehuda Goldman and Richard Silber moderated by Severn Smith

SHORTS PROGRAM 2

Stories of Love and Passion – 11:45 to 1:15

Introduction with Amber Monet

Elbow Grease – Narrative Short – TRT: 7 min – USA – Directed by Quamé A. Hamlin – After receiving a less-than-desirable birthday gift, a latchkey kid takes action to get the gift he wants.

Saverio – Narrative Short – TRT: 14 min – USA – Directed by Ellen Ancui – When a young woman desperate to get to an important networking opportunity finds a senior with the beginnings of dementia abandoned in her car, she must grapple with an unsupportive system and her own priorities.

When Everything Was Blue – Narrative Short – TRT: 14 min – USA – Directed by Christina Chironna – Through the lens of home videos, this short tells the story of a

firefighter and his family coping with 9/11's aftermath. As the father's health deteriorates from related illness, everyday life becomes a portrait of love, loss, and resilience. The film critiques systemic neglect while celebrating familial strength.

Grace – Spotlight on Maryland – TRT: 14 min – USA – Directed by Natalie Jasmine Harris – Sixteen-year-old Grace prepares for her baptism in the rural 1950's South. When she learns she must repent before the ritual, Grace contemplates her romantic feelings toward her best friend Louise.

Buscando Alma – Narrative Short – TRT: 16 min – USA – Directed by Melissa Fisher – A Honduran immigrant is given the chance to meet her mother after nearly two decades of separation. As she grapples with the uncertainty of their reunion, she is confronted by tumultuous memories of her past and the fact that she might not be what her mother is expecting.

Q&A with Quamé A. Hamlin (Elbow Grease) and Rebekah Louisa Smith, PhD, moderated by Amber Monet

NARRATIVE FILMS

Family Fun Unleashed – 2:00 to 4:00

Sponsored by the Robert Morris Inn

Introduction with Kimberly Skyrme

Now What? – Maryland Premiere – TRT: 21 min – USA – Directed by Maria Burton – A tightly-wound 15-year-old daughter of diplomats is shipped stateside to attend a proper school, but living with her larger-than-life bohemian grandmother might be her biggest challenge!

The Other You – Maryland Premiere – TRT: 78 min – USA – Directed by Shoshana Rosenbaum – A writer, wife and mom of three discovers a tiny door in her closet that leads to another version of her life.

Sneak Preview – *Ring of Kibo* – TRT 5 min – USA

Q&A with Vincent De Paul (*Ring of Kibo*), Evan Woodward (*Ring of Kibo*), John O’Hurley (*Ring of Kibo*), Julie Gold, *The Other You* writer and producer, Vivienne Sievers, actor, and Maralyn Facey, *Now What* creator and actor moderated by Kimberly Skyrme

INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FEATURE

Candles in the Dark – 4:30 to 6:00

Introduction with Martin Zell

Photophobia – International Documentary Feature – TRT: 71 min – Slovakia – Directed by Ivan Ostrochovsky and Pavol Pekarčík – On a cold February morning, 12-year-old Niki and his family arrive at the Kharkiv metro station to take shelter from the terrifying war raging outside. While aimlessly wandering around the abandoned cars and full platforms, Niki meets Vika (11), and a new world opens up to him.

INTERNATIONAL NARRATIVE FEATURE

Truth on Trial: Saturday Night Feature – 6:15 to 9:00

Introduction with Cid Collins Walker

Anatomy of a Fall – International Narrative Feature – TRT: 151 min – France (with English Subtitles) – Directed by Justine Triet – A woman is suspected of murder after her husband's death; their half-blind son faces a moral dilemma as the main witness. The film premiered at the 76th Cannes Film Festival in 2023, where it won the Palme d'Or.

Academy Art Museum, Saturday, October 11

106 South St, Easton, MD 21601

SHORTS PROGRAM 3

High Voltage Shorts – 10:00 to 12:30

Introduction with Monda Raquel Webb

Just be Awesome – Maryland Premiere – TRT: 14 min – United Kingdom – Directed by Ed Kear and Cringo Williamson – With spiraling debts and a partner at the end of her tether, Alex, a mid 40s freelancer, desperately needs some work. A golden opportunity at an absurdly trendy agency offers a way out. But he's going to have to play their game if he wants to land the role.

Mother Knows Best – Narrative Short – TRT: 28 min – USA – Directed by Monda Raquel Webb – Liza, an overbearing widowed Italian mother squares off against Emma, her only son Donnie's fiancée for his love, loyalty, and devotion. Who wins this catty, churlish, contentious contest? Will Emma, the good doctor, marry the man of her dreams, or does Liza, rife with a closet chock full of skeletons and decades-old secrets break them up? Who really knows best? Karma. Perhaps.

Punks – Narrative Short – TRT: 11 min – USA – Directed by Hannia Yeverino – A vignette of a Houston punk show through the eyes of a lonely teenager. Amidst the chaos of mosh pits and rebellion, they struggle to find their place until interactions with a show photographer, a concert promoter, and a punk couple, along with a mosh pit collision, unexpectedly pave the way for acceptance and understanding.

Beefy: Portrait of a Lake Monster – Animation – TRT: 6 min – USA – Directed by Ryan George Kittleman – Augustus tries to turn local legend Beefy into a household name. His quest blends folklore, frustration, and humor in a retro cartoon style. The result is a quirky, genre-bending “monster movie” with heart.

Vasomotor Rhinitis – Narrative Short – TRT: 15 min – Georgia – Directed by Mikheil Gabaidze – Based on Chekhov's "Death of a Civil Servant", a man sneezes on a high-ranking official and is consumed by guilt and fear. Despite apologies, his escalating anxiety leads to tragedy. The film satirizes power, deference, and human fragility.

Life Support – Narrative Short – TRT: 11 min – USA – Directed by Jamon Tolbert – Inspired by true stories, an emergency doctor struggling under the weight of

life-and-death decisions must confront his own hidden traumas as he teaches a young medical student what it truly means to save a life. Told with raw intensity and emotional depth, Life Support is a 10-minute short film that explores the emotional toll of the medical profession, offering a rare glimpse into the world of emergency medicine, where every decision carries profound consequences.

Memory Project – Narrative Short – TRT: 20 min – USA – Directed by Timothy Parsons – When volunteer subjects participate in a simple Yale University experiment in 1962, the unsettling exercise uncovers disturbing truths deeply embedded in each human being.

Q&A with Monda Raquel Webb and Timothy Parsons moderated by Cedric Hill

STUDENT SHORTS

Next-Gen Storytelling – 1:00 to 3:15

Introduction with Zane Jacquot, Student Filmmaker

Lucky – Student Short (Animation) – TRT: 3 min – USA – Directed by Arwen Creswell – Follow a wild rabbit through his rather eventful day. Produced in the SF Bay Area, this student short film is sure to delight.

!Que Colombianada! – Student Short – TRT: 18 min – USA – Directed by Samuel Vargas – A Colombian family is forced to celebrate Thanksgiving for the first time after their eldest son invites the man he likes to a holiday celebration at their house, causing tension among the family members.

Kil and the Kids – Student Short – TRT: 12 min – USA – Directed by Ethan Baker – A devoted mentor in Southeast D.C. carries the weight of a young life lost to gun violence while helping another teen find healing through art and self-expression in the aftermath of a robbery.

The Life of a Small Bean – Student Short (Animation) – TRT: 3 min – USA – Directed by Peyton Coleman and Claire Isett – A tiny bean is teased in school, but

in the end, an even smaller bean comes and saves the day. Proving that size doesn't determine strength or courage.

Sketchitis – Student Short (Animation) – TRT: 4 min – USA – Directed by Sophia Jinan Allen and Ariana Jones – A sketch pencil is born into a world of writing pencils. She's bullied in school for drawing, but sticks with her passion. In the end, her creativity earns her the recognition she deserves.

Second Chance – Student Short – TRT: 9 min – USA – Directed by India Anne Mitchell – A student filmmaker captures the emotional journey of a juvenile offender navigating the court system, featuring insights from family, judges, and legal staff, the film reveals a path toward redemption. *Second Chance* is a compassionate call for reform and understanding in youth justice.

If You Plant it, They Will Come – Student Short – TRT: 7 min – USA – Directed by Corinne Krimmel – This documentary spotlights native bees and the ecological threats they face. Experts explain their vital differences from honeybees and how to help them survive. The film encourages backyard conservation as a step toward global impact.

Busy Beavers – Student Short – TRT: 6 min – USA – Directed by Ethan Kauffman, Madison Minges, and Katie Babinksi – *Busy Beavers* dives into the wild, waterlogged world of nature's most relentless builders—revealing how these furry engineers are reshaping landscapes, reviving ecosystems, and proving that saving the planet starts one dam at a time.

Potomac Protector – Student Short – TRT: 7 min – USA – Directed by Madison Minges – Dean Naujoks has dedicated his life to protecting the Potomac River. From courtroom battles to community organizing, he's a fierce advocate for clean water. This film honors his environmental activism and unwavering commitment.

Silver Apples of the Moon/Golden Apples of the Sun – Student Short – TRT: 5 min – USA – Directed by Emma Schoeffler – A lost alien and a lost astronaut each navigate their predicament in isolation, dreaming of finding someone to share it with.

Not in the Public Interest – Student Short – TRT: 14 min – USA – Directed by Anastasiia Polyakov– Amid Washington, D.C.'s political upheaval, lives unravel in real-time as federal employees face layoffs, policy shifts, and uncertainty, all set against the backdrop of the city's iconic, fleeting cherry blossoms.

Us, Chatting – Student Short – TRT: 9 min – USA – Directed by Anni Spacek – An Artificial Intelligence provides information on nature and how one can become more in touch with it.

Listen With Your Eyes – Student Short – TRT: 15 min – USA – Directed by Sam Von Hagen – Earl, a man with a hearing impairment, learns to experience the many wonders of music beyond the boundaries of sound. Through the natural world around him, he is transported to extraordinary mindscapes.

Q&A with Lucy Saper, Ethan Kauffman (*Busy Beavers*), Madison Minges (*Potomac Protector*), Clair Sapilewski (*If You Plant It, They Will Come*), and Sam Von Hagen (*Listen With Your Eyes*), moderated by Zane Jacquot

DOCUMENTARY PROGRAM

Rhythm, Motion, and Meaning – 3:30 to 5:15

Introduction with Tim Smith

100 Foot Photo – Documentary Short – TRT: 10 min – Directed by Matt Kresling – Robert Rauschenberg, one of the most important American artists of the 20th century, spent his long career restlessly inventing new means of expression. In 1982, he created the world's longest photograph with the help of two current Eastern Shore residents.

Lives Beyond Motion – Documentary Feature – TRT: 72 min – USA – Directed by Keith Glassman – This documentary celebrates men in modern dance and their fight for artistic expression. Featuring icons like Bill T. Jones and Kyle Abraham, it reveals struggles with race, class, and sexuality. The film is a powerful ode to resilience, creativity, and movement.

Q&A with Keith Glassman (*Lives Beyond Motion*), moderated by Kimberly Skyrme

Talbot County Free Library, Saturday, October 11
100 W Dover St, Easton, MD

FILMMAKER BREAKFAST

Breakfast for Champions – 9:30 to 10:30

Live Podcast with Filmmakers and Actors – 10:30 to 11:45

Casting Confidential with Rose Rosen, Kimberly Skyrme, and special guest John O’Hurley.

DOCUMENTARY PROGRAM 1

Beauty Through Art: Dignity Honored – 12:00 to 1:45

Introduction with Tim Smith

Jacob Kainen: The Last Expression – Documentary Short – TRT: 26 min – USA
– Directed by Mark Christopher Covino – From his immigrant upbringing to his rebellious artistic journey in NYC, his leftist ideologies and eventual impact on the D.C. art scene, Jacob Kainen's story is one of perseverance and passion. Despite facing challenges like McCarthyism and career limitations, he found solace in his art, especially with the support of his second wife, Ruth. His legacy as an artist's artist and influential mentor endures, shaping generations of artists to come.

Building Hope: Ending Homelessness – Maryland Premiere – TRT: 57 min – USA – Directed by Richard Kane – This film exposes the deep roots of homelessness in America—from addiction and abuse to systemic inequality. Through real stories and urgent questions, it dismantles the myth that homelessness

only happens to others. The message is clear: anyone can become homeless, and everyone can help to stop it.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM 3

Water, Wildlife, and the Will to Act – 2:00 to 4:30

Introduction with Irene Magafan

One Bad Crab – Environmental Short – TRT: 38 min – USA – Directed by Sandy Cannon-Brown – Trillions of invasive European green crabs are decimating juvenile shellfish and destroying eelgrass on the northern Atlantic and Pacific coasts of America. This is the story of how communities, organizations and individuals in New England are responding to the invasion.

Upstream, Downriver: Uniting for Water Justice – Environmental Feature – TRT: 57 min – USA – Directed by Maggie Burnette Stogner – "Upstream, Downriver: Uniting for Water Justice" takes viewers into the heart of the battle for water justice. Powerful stories with frontline community activists are interwoven with historical context about landmark regulations that significantly reduced water pollution in the U.S. but failed to serve disadvantaged communities that are hardest hit by today's climate crisis.

Chesapeake Rhythms – Environmental Short – TRT: 30 min – USA – Directed by Dave Harp – This poetic short captures the seasonal rhythms of Chesapeake Bay—its tides, migrations, and natural beauty. It emphasizes humanity's role in protecting this vital ecosystem. The film is both a tribute and a call to environmental stewardship.

Q/A with Maggie Stogner, filmmaker and educator, Marissa Woods, and Dave Harp, filmmaker moderated by Irene Magafan

Ebenezer Theater, Sunday, October 12

DOCUMENTARY PROGRAM 3

Breaking Boundaries: Revealing Truths – 10:00 to 11:45

Introduction with Zane Jacquot, filmmaker

The Rewilders – Environmental Short – TRT: 39 min – Canada – Directed by Marlene Rodgers – As biodiversity collapses, conservationists fight to restore wild ecosystems across continents. *The Rewilders* showcases efforts to bring back jaguars, salmon, elephants, and bison. It's a visually stunning call for rewilding as a global solution to the environmental crisis.

Burying the Hatchet: The Tom Quick Story – Documentary Feature – TRT: 57 min – USA – Directed by Christopher King – *Burying the Hatchet: The Tom Quick Story* is about how one largely white community and disenfranchised tribal leaders worked together to reconcile the past and forge a shared path forward based on trust, friendship and an inspiring and healing vision of the future.

SHORTS PROGRAM 4

From Giggles to Goosebumps – 12:00 to 1:45

Introduction with Monda Raquel Webb

Invasion '53 – Narrative Short – TRT: 10 min – USA – Directed by Danielle Weinberg – A man-eating alien crashes a suburban cocktail party.

The Big Slip – Narrative Short – TR: 6 min – USA – Directed by Sean Gentry – In the past month, four people have fatally slipped on banana peels in the same city. The newly transferred Detective Baker is sure someone is behind the deaths, but his partner O'Brien assures him it is just a series of accidents. Undeterred, Baker maintains that a murderer is on the loose, and finds himself the target of a shadowy figure.

Strut – Animation – TRT: 3 min – Portugal – Directed by Lynn Tomlinson – Created in a Portuguese animation workshop, this vibrant short brings a rooster's strut to life. Set to jazzy brass music, it's a celebration of movement and rhythm.

The film is playful, energetic, and the quintessence of how it feels to “strut”.

Night Light – Narrative Short – TRT: 5 min – USA – Directed by Luke Baker – A young woman, feeling the pressures of the outside world, has a panic attack while trying to fall asleep. Now, she must look for the light to overcome her struggle.

The Campfire – Spotlight on Maryland – TRT: 15 min – USA – Directed by Logan Bilbrough – A man goes on an annual camping trip with his best friend. This year something has changed.

Encuentro Americano – Narrative Short – TRT: 11 min – USA – Directed by Elizabeth Taide Vazquez – On a hot Sunday morning, in a bustling American diner, the fragile lives of strangers collide over greasy breakfasts, black coffee reflections, and tense interactions amidst the 2024 U.S. election cycle.

The Pearl Comb – Maryland Premiere – TRT: 21 min – United Kingdom – Directed by Ali Cook – In 1893, an endearing Cornish fisherman’s wife captures the attention of the medical profession as the first person to ever cure someone of Tuberculosis. A doctor, hell bent on proving a woman’s place is in the home and not practising medicine, is sent to investigate her miraculous claim - only to discover the source of her unearthly power...

Q&A with Danielle Weinberg and John Judy (*Invasion ‘53*), Rob Simmons and Logan Bilbrough (*The Campfire*), and Sean Gentry and Victoria Wallace Kinhead (*The Big Slip*), moderated by Monda Raquel Webb

NARRATIVE FEATURE

One Fragile Bond – 2:00 to 3:45

Introduction with Martin Zell

Strangers – Maryland Premiere – TRT: 80 min – USA – Directed by Harold Jackson III – As a couple drifts apart, unexpected connections force them to

confront love, intimacy, and commitment in this emotionally rich portrait of modern marriage.

Q&A with Harold Jackson, III, Adrian Arthur, Kelsey Delemar, Andria Langston, Donnie Brown Jr., Michael J. Patterson, and Corey Spriggs, moderated by Martin Zell

CLOSING NIGHT FILM

United by Hope: Closing Film – 4:15 to 6:15

Introduction with Cid Collins Walker, CFF Executive Director

Holding Liat – Documentary Feature – TRT: 97 min – USA – Directed by Brandon Kramer – After Liat Beinon Atzili is kidnapped on October 7th, her Israeli-American family faces their own conflicting perspectives to fight for her release and the future of the places they call home.