

2026 Chesapeake Film Festival Schedule of Events, October 8 -10, Easton, Maryland

Ebenezer Theater, Thursday, October 8, 2026
17 S. Washington Street, Easton, MD

OPENING FILM – SCULPTING A LEGACY

5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Dream, Touch, Believe – **Maryland Premiere** – Documentary Feature – TRT: 85 min – USA – Directed by Jenna Naranjo Winters – The Festival opens with the inspiring story of Native American sculptor Michael Naranjo, who lost his eyesight as a young Vietnam War soldier. Despite his blindness, Naranjo became an internationally acclaimed artist whose sculptures are displayed in museums, the White House, the Vatican, and private collections worldwide.

Q&A, with Director Jenna Naranjo Winters and Michael Naranjo, approximately 25 minutes.

VIP RECEPTION – PREMIERE NIGHT AT CHESAPEAKE

7:15 pm to 8:45 pm

Ebenezer Theater, Friday, October 9, 2026
17 S. Washington Street, Easton, MD

DOCUMENTARY FEATURE – SPOTLIGHT ON MARYLAND

10:00 am to 11:45 am

Loving John – Documentary Feature – TRT: 76 min – USA – Directed by Robert Rooy – John Godinet is an irrepressible Pacific Islander and ultra-runner living

with his husband Peter in rural Maryland. He's outrun abuse as a teenager and discrimination as an adult, but now has a new adversary: ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease). *Loving John* invites us to deeply inhale the fullness of our shared human experience, made all the more precious because of its transience.

Q&A, approximately 25 minutes.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM – LAND, SEA, AND SKY

12:00 pm to 2:00 pm

***A Black Rail's Tale* – Maryland Premiere** – Environmental Short – TRT: 6 min – USA – Directed by Lynn Tomlinson – A tiny Black Rail guides us through South Carolina's former rice plantations, revealing how landscapes engineered by enslaved people have become a refuge for one of North America's rarest birds.

***Choptank Swallows* – Maryland Premiere** – Environmental Short – TRT: 5 min – USA – Directed by Dave Harp – Through poetry and impeccable environmental cinematography, this film explores the Choptank River and its native swallow.

Bison Hero – Environmental Short – TRT: 4 min – USA – Directed by Zac Shamah and the World Wildlife Foundation – The plains bison is a matriarchal led species, relying on the wisdom of experienced females to guide the herd. Traditional Lakota culture follows the bison's social structure, placing great value in the women-led leadership. In this video, members of WWF's Native Nations team and partners talk about what the return of the bison means to the grasslands and Indigenous communities in the Great Plains.

The River's Gift – Environmental Short – TRT: 18 min – USA – Directed by Patrick Kirby – The Tallapoosa River brings a community of veterans together to find peace, connection and of course, red eye bass. Wind through Alabama's pines, meet Rowell and his friends, and cast a line or two with them while hearing about their healing connection to this community and this special place.

The Right Whale – Environmental Feature – TRT: 54 min – USA – Directed by Nick Dean and Cheryl Holmen Dean – *The Right Whale* is an intimate and visually stunning documentary that follows the lives of right whales across the globe, from the icy waters of New Zealand and Argentina to the busy coastlines of North America. Through groundbreaking science and emotional storytelling, we meet individual whales like Bill, who swims from New Zealand to Antarctica and back, and Ruffian, rescued from deadly fishing gear.

Q&A, with Shea Springer and Dave Harp, moderated by Irene Magafan, approximately 25 minutes.

DOCUMENTARY PROGRAM – COMPASSION AND COURAGE

2:15 pm to 4:15 pm

Forever Home – **Maryland Premiere** – Documentary Feature – TRT: 56 min – USA – Directed by Allison Argo – *Forever Home* follows a young couple’s dream to provide the best possible life for rescued farm animals by rethinking the concept of “home.” At their refuge, they base their designs on the needs of the individual animals, replacing conventional barns with customized homes. This unique film is a celebration of life and creativity!

Forgotten Founder: The Untold Story of Samson Occom and Dartmouth – Documentary Short – TRT: 30 min – USA – Directed by Signe Margueritte Taylor and Melissa Tantaquidgeon Zobel – *Forgotten Founder* uncovers Samson Occom, a Mohegan minister, educator and Indigenous intellectual whose fundraising efforts were instrumental in the founding of Dartmouth College. Despite his central role, Occom's contributions—and the promises made to Native communities—were erased from the historical record.

Q&A, approximately 25 minutes.

NARRATIVE FEATURE – COMEDY SPOTLIGHT

4:30 pm to 6:30 pm

Show Business – **Maryland Premiere** – Narrative Feature – TRT: 84 min – USA – Directed by Alexander Tovar – *Show Business* is an American comedy that follows screenwriter Guy Franklin as he moves from New York City to Los Angeles with his fiancé. It should be a great gig, but Guy soon realizes that being in show business and balancing his love life is easier said than done.

Q&A, with Director Alexander Tovar and Producer Bonnie Hargett, moderated by CFF Programming Coordinator Zane Jacquot, approximately 25 minutes.

ENVIRONMENTAL NIGHT – VOICES FOR THE WILD

6:45 pm to 8:45 pm

Frozen Frames: Murphy's Yellowstone – **Maryland Premiere** – Environmental Short – TRT: 27 min – USA – Directed by Allison Argo – Photographer Tom Murphy has dedicated his life to speaking out for the wildlife of Yellowstone. In the dead of winter, Murphy treks deep into the Park to capture the lives and struggles of those who survive there. His remarkable photographs capture both the magnificence of Yellowstone and one man's tenacious dedication to protect what is still wild.

Lifeblood: Chesapeake River Stories – Environmental Feature – TRT: 59 min – USA – Directed by Sarah Sampson – *Lifeblood: Chesapeake River Stories* examines the waterways that shape and sustain the Bay's landscapes and communities, from the perspective of those that live, work, and play in the watershed.

Q&A, with Sarah Sampson, *Lifeblood* Director and Senior Producer MPT, moderated by Severn Smith, The Nature Conservancy, approximately 25 minutes.

Talbot County Free Library, Friday, October 9, 2026
100 W Dover St, Easton, MD

**INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURE – VIGNETTES OF
THE HUMAN SPIRIT**

10:00 am to 11:45 am

Bola – Environmental Feature – TRT: 74 min – USA – Directed by Ryan Nichols – Plastic pollution is inescapable in Ghana, but Ghana's story comes from its people, not its problems.

Q&A, approximately 25 minutes.

SHORTS PROGRAM – STORIES WITH BIG HEART

12:00 pm to 1:30 pm

Allure – Animated Short – TRT: 4 min – USA – Directed by Jerry van de Beek and Betsy De Fries – A junior astronaut fulfills a dream of going to the moon. Once there, exhilaration gives way to reality. But what has been left behind? Created in a colorful, prismatic, 2D graphic style with a haunting soundtrack that echoes with loneliness.

Brumsic Brandon, Jr: Legacy in Art and Community – Documentary Short – TRT: 18 min – USA – Directed by Carletta Hurt – A documentary film dedicated to the life and work of Brumsic Brandon, an influential African American artist and the creator of the beloved comic strip “Luther”.

Anyone Lived in a Pretty How Town – Animated Short – TRT: 9 min – Lithuania, Monaco, USA – Directed by Daniel Kreizberg – In a picturesque town, a man named “Anyone” rejoices in the beauty of everyday life and celebrates the natural world. The people around him, however, are more focused on conforming to modern society, and ostracize anyone for being different.

Shared Time – Documentary Short – TRT: 8 min – USA – Directed by Ethan Kauffman – A caregiver finds purpose and joy in life’s simplest rituals with the man he supports.

The Perfect Stranger – Narrative Short – TRT: 27 min – USA – Directed by Steven Ford – A woman's journey through loss and interaction with grief counselors in search of the perfect stranger.

The Petal Pusher – Documentary Short – TRT: 15 min – USA – Directed by David Abel – An ode to New York's Penn Station and one of its longest-running businesses, *The Petal Pusher* is a reflection on the economics of love (and desperation), and it's a testament to a bygone era — before recent construction transformed the station into a kind of mall filled with chain stores. At its heart, this is a story about love, loss, and family.

DOCUMENTARY FEATURE – SPOTLIGHT ON MARYLAND

1:45 pm to 3:45 pm

Heartbeat Behind the Badge – Documentary Feature – TRT: 95 min – USA – Directed by Vickie Warehime – Since 1997, approximately 2500 law enforcement officers have died in the line of duty. Every May during National Police Week, thousands of active and retired officers, along with surviving family members, embark on a 300-mile bicycle journey. This documentary follows several riders as they push their physical limitations and honor those who have fallen in service to their communities.

Q&A, with Steven Ford, Director of *Perfect Stranger*, Rick Kain, Producer of *Heartbeat*, and Vicki Warehime, Director of *Heartbeat*, moderated by Kimberly Skyrme, approximately 25 minutes.

Ebenezer Theater, Saturday, October 10, 2026
17 S. Washington Street, Easton, MD

**STUDENT FILMS PROGRAM – EMPOWERING AN EMERGING
GENERATION**

10:00 am to 11:30 am

Entangled – Student Short – TRT: 5 min – USA – Directed by Katherine Hee-Yeon Tae – *Entangled* is an experimental documentary that follows a teenage girl as she uncovers the physical thread connecting her everyday life to the ocean. The film tracks the trajectory of a red balloon as it moves from her hand in a party supply store to its eventual destination: the stomach of a sea turtle.

Reconcile – Student Short – TRT: 2 min – USA – Directed by Konja Liu – *Reconcile* explores relationship dynamics through a speechless narrative focused on physical human interaction. Using visual metaphors like boxing matches, kitchen fights, and banquet dances, *Reconcile* examines a changing relationship, revealing how emotions influence behavior.

The Silent Retreat – **Maryland Premiere** – Student Short – TRT: 11 min – Switzerland – Directed by Mason Mirabile – *The Silent Retreat* explores the rapid disappearance of Switzerland’s glaciers and what their loss reveals about our warming planet. Blending striking alpine imagery with scientific insight, the film traces how glaciers—once stable reservoirs of water and life—are now retreating at unprecedented rates.

One Bad Day Away – Student Short – TRT: 15 min – USA – Directed by Jeremy Mitchell – Homelessness affects many in Maryland. This documentary explores homelessness, the common misconceptions surrounding it, and how shelters in the Eastern Maryland community are trying to help.

The Boy and The Bear – Student Short – TRT: 8 min – USA – Directed by Audrey Wood – A young man gives away his childhood teddy bear, only for it to return and haunt him, leading him to embrace his inner child to stop the haunting.

The Book of Nemo: A Psychedelic Gospel – Student Short – TRT: 21 min – USA
– Directed by Warren C. Harris – An American has a psychedelic experience where a spiritual encounter reckons with his morality.

Q&A, moderated by Cedric Hill and Carly Dernetz, approximately 25 minutes.

INTERNATIONAL SHORTS PROGRAM – WORLD CINEMA SHOWCASE

11:45 am to 1:15 pm

Santa Maria – **Maryland Premiere** – International Documentary Short – TRT: 7 min – Italy – Directed by Carlo Gargiulo – *Santa Maria* tells, through the daughter's voice, the story of Michele, one of the last master shipwrights who still build traditional wooden boats by hand. Between childhood memories and family life, a portrait emerges of a quiet man and of a craft destined to disappear, which the family tries to preserve as a living legacy of a world tied to the sea and to memory.

NIO KO BOKK (This Belongs to All of Us) – International Documentary Short – TRT: 10 min – France – Directed by David Clancy – *NIO KO BOKK* follows Pape and Seydi, two young men who find purpose and community in the ocean, choosing a different path than the perilous journeys many peers take in search of opportunity abroad. Through their story, the film explores how belonging at home can be as powerful as the promise of elsewhere.

In Absentia – International Narrative Short – TRT: 14 min – United Kingdom – Directed by Charles Sharman-Cox – On the morning of his wedding, just a few days before his regiment is due to embark for the 1944 D-Day Allied invasion of Europe, Gunner Frank Swift is having second thoughts. What's the point of tying the knot with the girl he loves if he's only going to get blown to bits a few days later? As he wrestles with his conscience, he encounters an old man who tries to convince the young gunner to do the right thing and marry the love of his life.

Gallina – International Narrative Short – TRT: 17 min – Spain – Directed by Fernando Reinaldos – In rural Spain, ten-year-old Pablo loves spending time at his granny's countryside home, playing with his younger sister Alba and his best friend Martín. Everything changes when Martín pressures him to betray his family, leaving Pablo to question where he truly belongs.

Ahoy! – Narrative Short – TRT: 15 min – USA – Directed by Julian Alvarez – Generations after a global environmental collapse, a young boy raised at sea discovers a map and begins a journey to a mythical place once known as "land".

Q&A, moderated by Martin Zell, approximately 25 minutes.

FAMILY FILMS – BIG DREAMS AND ADVENTURES

1:30 pm to 3:45 pm

Couture to the Max – **Maryland Premiere** – Documentary Short – TRT: 35 min – USA – Directed by Dori Berinstein – At just 9-years-old, fashion prodigy Max Alexander fearlessly fuses his boundless imagination with an unwavering commitment to sustainability, inspiring us to dream boldly and act responsibly.

Ring of Kibo – **Spotlight on Maryland** – Narrative Feature – TRT: 75 min – USA – Directed by Christian Filippella, Vincent De Paul, and Kimberly Skyrme – Two intrepid adventurers, Professor Justin Ashcroft and Kevin Dandrige, journey through time with the help of a mystical ring in search of a long-lost treasure. Alongside teen sleuths Jackie and Tiffany, they race to uncover an international mystery—while being pursued by the cunning Gideon Proffit and his alluring partner Pilar. Ancient secrets, global peril, and thrilling twists await as they hunt for the all-powerful Ring of Kibo.

Q&A, with Vincent De Paul and Kimberly Skyrme, directors of *Ring of Kibo*, moderated by Cid Collins Walker, approximately 25 minutes.

NARRATIVE FEATURE – TEN YEARS STRONG

4:00 pm to 6:15 pm

TRI – 10th Year Anniversary – Narrative Feature – TRT: 100 min – USA – Directed by Jai Jamison – Natalie, an ultrasound tech with a history of not finishing things, is inspired by a cancer patient to sign up for a triathlon. Natalie is introduced to the strange (and aerodynamic) world of triathletes and meets a colorful cast of characters as she trains for the DC Nation's Triathlon. With the support of her new teammates, she digs deep to discover just how far she can push her mind and body.

Q&A, with Ted Adams III, moderated by Kimberly Skyrme, approximately 25 minutes.

CLOSING PROGRAM – THE EVENT HORIZON

6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

Us and Them – Student Short – TRT: 8 min – USA – Directed by India Anne Mitchell – When a 15-year-old filmmaker conducts the first youth-led in-depth interview with Ameca, the most expressive humanoid robot on Earth, the Q&A blossoms into an unexpected friendship that dissolves the boundary between silicon and soul.

***Wider Than The Sky* – Maryland Premiere** – International Documentary Feature – TRT: 84 min – Italy, Switzerland – Directed by Valerio Jalongo – A.I. is many things, all larger than life: an amazing opportunity, a huge risk, even a big lie. Valerio Jalongo's *Wider Than the Sky* explores AI's diverse paths, from corporate secrecy to a human-AI drone race.

Closing Remarks and Festival Close

Academy Art Museum, Saturday, October 10, 2026
106 South St, Easton, MD 21601

SHORTS PROGRAM – THE TIES THAT BIND US

10:00 am to 12:00 pm

Lay Lefty Down – Narrative Short – TRT: 15 min – USA – Directed by Traven Rice – Two women unexpectedly unite through stories of grief and laughter, after their family throws a surprise memorial for a left breast.

The Heir – Narrative Short – TRT: 20 min – USA – Directed by Tia A. Smith – A grieving granddaughter inherits her grandmother’s home in a gentrifying D.C. neighborhood, where family tensions and generational scars force her to choose between preserving tradition or redefining legacy.

On The Nose – Narrative Short – TRT: 5 min – USA – Directed by Thomas Davisson – Preparing for a night out, a woman seeks outfit advice from her boyfriend. However, when he tries to give her the “right” answer, she recognizes that the only way to get the truth is to play rough, even at the risk of ruining their relationship... and their lives...

Intertwined – Narrative Short – TRT: 14 min – USA – Directed by John Schwert – Marci’s arrival to a new city finds her facing a crippling fear that conflicts with her determination to fulfill a promise. She follows a handsome local barista named Kurt to his home and work in search of an answer to her pressing question. Marci’s opportunities, days, and courage dwindle as she holds out for the right moment, the right place, and the right sign. As time runs out, she must confront what brought her to Kurt and reveal the truth to him.

She Follows – Narrative Short – TRT: 15 min – USA – Directed by Gio Randazzo – In a quiet Jersey beach town, a haunting encounter with a ghost searching for her lost love, challenges a man to face his own fears. Based on a true ghost story.

Woman Reclining on Grass – Narrative Short – TRT: 21 min – USA – Directed by Claudia Doumit – A family on the verge of auctioning their newly discovered lost masterpiece must confront one last hurdle in the shape of their daughter's new art critic boyfriend.

Q&A, moderated by Cid Collins Walker, approximately 25 minutes.

DOCUMENTARY PROGRAM – LIGHT AND SHADOW

12:15 pm to 2:30 pm

Emergence – Documentary Short – TRT: 3 min – USA – Directed by Margaret Rorison – A series of summer occurrences, an observation of life cycles. Shot on 16mm BW Reversal film and hand-processed by the artist.

Cindy Sherman: Picture This – Documentary Short – TRT: 23 min – USA – Directed by Sophie Chahinian – In this intimate portrait, iconic and legendary artist, Cindy Sherman, reveals her childhood preoccupation with family photos, the reason behind her use of photography, and what challenges she has overcome in her four decades plus career.

The Muse – International Documentary Short – TRT: 18 min – Canada – Directed by Wanda Nolan – Take a road trip across Newfoundland with photographer Ting Ting Chen and her muse, Robert Tilley, as they explore memory, identity and the power of creative connections.

An Auschwitz Album Story – Documentary Feature – TRT: 65 min – USA – Directed by Jeffery Gary – Mitch Kreitenberg, the son of Auschwitz survivor Mike Kreitenberg, recounts his discovery of the Auschwitz Album and the moment he shared the only surviving photographs of his family members. The album represents both unimaginable loss and the hope for new beginnings.

Q&A, moderated by Zane Jacquot, CFF Programming Coordinator, approximately 25 minutes.

DOCUMENTARY FEATURE – LIVING LEGENDS

2:45 pm to 4:15 pm

Lasting Impressions – Documentary Feature – TRT: 59 min – USA – Directed by Carl Welden – *Lasting Impressions* is an exploration of the life and work of Dan Welden, a driving force in the fine art of printmaking throughout the world. We follow Dan's journey through his creative process in his own words, as well as those of his contemporaries including Eric Fischl and Kiki Smith, as we ponder the question, "Why is art all that important?"

Q&A, with Dan and Carl Welden, moderated by Candice Spielman, approximately 25 minutes.

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