Brooklyn Film Festival Goes Virtual for its 23rd Edition: TURNING POINT
More than 140 Independent Films Viewable for Free From May 29-June 7

Partial Lineup Announced

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, April 29, 2020 - Brooklyn Film Festival (BFF). New York City’s longest running international-competitive film festival, stands together with all New Yorkers to flatten the curve and stop the spread of COVID-19, announcing that its 23rd edition, themed TURNING POINT, will go on in the form of a virtual festival with its full film lineup of more than 140 films viewable for free from May 29 through June 7 at www.brooklynfilmfestival.org. A partial lineup of Feature Narrative films and Feature Documentaries are listed below. All festival films will play for free via BFF’s website for the whole duration of the festival, but viewers must first open a free account and can begin to pre-register starting today on the BFF website at https://www.brooklynfilmfestival.org/bff-audience-registration. The video server will be hosted by Vimeo. Audience voting will be limited to one vote per account. BFF will also organize parallel live events such as filmmaker introductions and Q&A sessions on the BFF website, Facebook and other social media.

BFF, a Canadian Screen Award qualifying festival, received for the current edition 2,590 film submissions from 92 countries and selected 150 film premieres programmed into 36 different, two-hour program blocks. The films are divided in six categories: Feature Narratives, Feature Documentaries, Short Narratives, Short Documentaries, Experimental Films and Animation. All types of short films, whether they are narrative, doc, experimental or animation, will play as part of the two-hour program blocks and each Feature Narrative and Feature Documentary film will play within their own program blocks. BFF’s selection criteria, a 23-year-old set of rules, constitute the true festival’s trademark. Participating films cannot be older than two years. Films are selected from submissions only. All the selected films participate in the competition. And the smallest film can win the top festival award: The Grand Chameleon.

BFF Executive Director Marco Ursino said of the 23rd edition: TURNING POINT, “Just a few months ago, nobody, not even the most daring sci-fi screenwriter, could have predicted the current situation and/or the extent of the COVID-19 takeover. Besides the fact that we are all still dealing with the basics and a resolutive approach feels still far away, one thing seems certain: we won’t be able to go back to the pre-virus thinking and lifestyle anytime soon. The fear of the ‘invisible danger’ that threatens our life is radically modifying our own life routine and the way we deal with our neighbors. It is a ‘Turning Point’ in history. It is a moment that will ultimately reveal who we are as human beings. The Brooklyn Film Festival, with its 2020 event, plans to highlight and dissect people’s character and problem solving attitude as it shifts from one time zone to the next. The international role BFF has always played on the world’s stage, will now come truly handy while with our film lineup we travel from one corner of the planet to another. ‘Turning Point’ is about refreshing our own point of view. It’s about
rethinking our old assumptions and learning from the people who share our screen whether they live in a different continent or across the street. ‘Turning Point’ is about reinventing our planet and our life.”

BFF’s list of sponsors for 2020 includes WNET-Thirteen, Yelp, Sobre Vista Resort, AbelCine, Be Electric, Xeno Lights, Big Screen Plaza, Final Draft, MPE, Media Services, The Pod, Noble Jewelry, Brooklyn Film Society, and for the 8th consecutive year, the “disruption company,” TBWA/CHIAT/DAY, will create the 23rd BFF promotional campaign.

In terms of special events, we are sad to announce that the ninth BFF Exchange has been cancelled while the 16th kidsfilmfest will follow the BFF’s steps and be staged online via the BFF’s website from May 29-June 7. kidsfilmfest, aims to discover, expose and promote the youngest generation of filmmakers. The film program is tailored for children of all ages (films are rated “G”), and consists of numerous animated shorts, documentaries and live-action films.

In each of the six film categories, BFF’s judges will select the Best Film, while the festival will select the Spirit Award, and the audience the Audience Award winners. Among all the six categories combined, BFF will award one of each of the following: Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Composer, Best Style, Best Editor, Best Cinematographer, Best Screenwriting, Best Producer, Best New Director, and Best Brooklyn Project. Through the resources of our sponsors, BFF will assign to the winning filmmakers more than $60,000 in prizes (cash, products, and services).

Below is a partial line-up of BFF films including the Feature Narrative and Feature Documentary sections in alphabetical order. The film lineup, which also includes Narrative and Documentary Shorts, Experimental Films and Animation, will be announced soon on the BFF site at www.brooklynfilmmfestival.org.

FEATURE NARRATIVES:

“Before Oblivion” - U.S. PREMIERE
Dir. Iria Gómez Concheiro, Mexico, 103 min.
Facing the threat of an eviction, the tenants of a vecindad (low-income tenement house) join in solidarity to come out of their self-absorption and fight for a common cause.

“Before the Fire” - EAST COAST PREMIERE
Dir. Charlie Buhler, USA, 92 min.
Deep in the throes of a global pandemic, up-and-coming TV star Ava Boone (Jenna Lyng Adams, "The Kominsky Method") is forced to flee the mounting chaos in Los Angeles and return to her rural hometown. But as she struggles to acclimate to a way of life she left behind long ago, her homecoming attracts a dangerous figure from her past— threatening both her and the family that serves as her only sanctuary.

“Between Wars” - WORLD PREMIERE
Dir. Tom Phillips, USA, 99 min.
“Between Wars” takes an intimate look at the struggle of re-entering civilian life post combat. It follows Veteran Marine Franny Malloy of the Bronx as he struggles with integrating himself back into civilian life post combat in Afghanistan. Michael Imperioli ("The Sopranos") co-stars.
“Black Emperor of Broadway” – N.Y. PREMIERE  
Dir. Arthur Egeli, USA, 95 min  
In 1921, Eugene O’Neill rejects the use of blackface and casts African American actor Charles Gilpin in the lead of his groundbreaking play “Emperor Jones.”

“Macabre” - EAST COAST PREMIERE  
Dir. Marcos Prado, Brazil, 100 min.  
“Macabre” is based on the true story of the “Necrophile Brothers,” two youths who are accused of brutal murders in the Serra dos Órgãos during the 1990s. The thriller follows sergeant Teo’s search for the alleged perpetrators, who are hidden in the Atlantic Forest.

“Milkwater” - WORLD PREMIERE  
Dir. Morgan Ingari, USA, 101 min.  
Seeking direction and purpose, Milo (Molly Burnett, “Younger”) rashly decides to become a surrogate and egg donor for an older gay man she meets in a bar. However, as Milo becomes increasingly attached to him, she starts leveraging the pregnancy as a means of staying embedded in his life.

“Our Own” - U.S. PREMIERE  
Dir. Jeanne Leblanc, Canada, 103 min.  
When faced with life’s challenges, Ste-Adeline’s community has always stuck together. But this time, a scandal sends shockwaves through the quiet little town’s very foundation, testing its inhabitants. At the center of the storm is Magalie, a teenager with a girlish pout; Manuel, the foster child of the beloved mayor; and Isabelle and Chantale, the powerless yet protective mothers. In Ste-Adeline, appearances are deceptive. And the town’s carefully maintained social veneer will come to crack, slowly revealing the true nature of its residents.

“Right Near the Beach” - U.S. PREMIERE  
Dir. Gibrey Allen, Jamaica, 79 min.  
When prominent Jamaican sprinter Jeffrey Jacobs is brutally murdered, rumors about the secret life he may have lived create public uproar, causing obstacles to the murder investigation and for Jeffrey’s father, who simply wants justice for his son. Filmed on location with a cast of local Jamaicans, this film is an authentic case study of a country that continues to face the consequences of its turbulent past while trying to confront the new realities of sexuality and equality.

“Rotten Ears” - U.S. PREMIERE  
Dir. Piotr Dylewski, Poland, 60 min.  
A story about a couple, who go through a crisis in their marriage at a very early stage, resulting from unfulfilled expectations and lack of communication. Janek and Marzena must face their most inner demons, under the watchful eye of an unconventional therapist, whose meticulously crafted therapy plan is slowly getting out of hand. The reality starts to blur and the suppressed grudges and understatements will soon get at the two.

“Snaeland” - N.Y. PREMIERE  
Dir. Lise Raven, Iceland/USA, 75 min.
A disgraced German journalist goes to Iceland, and stumbles upon the tabloid story that could redeem his career. A French nanny – once accused of killing a baby, and long thought to be dead – appears to be living in a small Icelandic fishing village. A cool neo-noir, set in Iceland’s midsummer sun.

“Snatchers” - WORLD PREMIERE
Dir. John Kingman, USA, 85 min.
“Snatchers” is a Sci-fi Comedy about an alien invasion in Brooklyn, NY. Alien pods that look like purple corn get spread through Brooklyn’s hipster food truck scene, commandeering people’s bodies and turning Brooklyn, NY into something closer to Suburbia, USA -- unless a rogue FDA agent and a rudderless trust-fund millennial can stop them in time.

“Suffocation” - U.S. PREMIERE
Dir. Kenya Márquez, Mexico, 88 min.
After getting out of jail, where she learned to care for the sick, Alma, an albino woman, is determined to recover something much more important than her freedom. In order to do so, Alma must spend her nights taking care of Clemente (a hypochondriac compulsively obsessed with avoiding sudden death). Their relationship moves through suspicion, fear and compassion to tenderness and love.

“The Erotic Fire of the Unattainable” - WORLD PREMIERE
Dir. Frank Vitale, USA, 80 min.
One successful writer, one eccentric Wall Streeter, one feeling ex-con-turned-businessman, a witty literary agent and a sensitive woman - all of a certain age and then some -- try to figure out this thing called love.

“The Journey of Murder” - U.S. PREMIERE
Dir. Jun Wang, China, 104 min.
Sha Tao is a village girl with mental disorders who gets involved in a money transaction of a ghost marriage.

“Zoro Solo” - N.Y. PREMIERE
Dir. Martin Busker, Germany, 90 min
A 13-year-old refugee from Afghanistan living in an emergency shelter in Germany joins a Christian boys’ choir to save his father who was left stranded in Hungary, and clashes with the strict choir master.

FEATURE DOCUMENTARIES:

“Current Sea” - N.Y. PREMIERE
Dir. Christopher Smith, USA/Malaysia, 90 min.
An environmental thriller that follows investigative journalist Matt Blomberg and ocean activist Paul Ferber in their risky efforts to create a marine conservation area and combat the relentless tide of illegal fishing, inspiring a new generation of Cambodian environmentalists to create a better life for their people along the way.

“Higher Love” - N.Y. PREMIERE
Dir. Hasan Oswald, USA, 80 min.
A blue-collar father tries to rescue his pregnant, heroin-addicted girlfriend from the dangerous streets of Camden, NJ. Once their son is born, a new journey begins for the fate of the baby and the family's sobriety that may split them apart forever.  
Winner, Documentary Feature Grand Jury Prize at 2020 Slamdance Film Festival

**“Into the Storm” - WORLD PREMIERE**  
Dir. Adam Brown, UK/Peru, 84 min.  
A troubled teenager from a crime-ridden barrio of Lima, Peru, struggles against the odds to realize his dream of becoming a professional surfer and lift his family out of poverty.

**“Kingdom of Archers” - WORLD PREMIERE**  
Dir. Robert Hanson, USA/Bhutan, 77 min.  
“Kingdom of Archers” explores a unique cultural tradition in the tiny mountain kingdom of Bhutan which, due to a combination of internal and external factors, is rapidly evolving -- for better or for worse.

**“Opeka” - WORLD PREMIERE**  
Dir. Cam Cowan, USA, 89 min.  
An iron-willed Argentine priest inspires hope for an entire nation by teaching people living in Madagascar's largest landfill to build a highly functional city in their failing African country.

**“Sisters: Dreams & Variations” - U.S. PREMIERE**  
Dir. Catherine Legault, Canada, 85 min.  
“Sisters: Dream & Variations” invites us to discover the creative and personal worlds of two distinctive Montreal artists. Tyr and Jasa have Icelandic roots, and they've always been artists at heart. Having become a musician and an interdisciplinary artist respectively, they have developed artistic practices that draw on their colourful imaginations and family roots, including the use of audio recordings of their Icelandic great-grandmother.

**“The Right Girls” - N.Y. PREMIERE**  
Dir. Timothy Wolfer, USA/Mexico, 85 min.  
At the peak of the 2018 migrant caravan, there were roughly 7,200 people attempting to walk thousands of miles to the American border. Among those making the journey was a small group of trans women. These women, strangers at the outset, formed a community along the way to keep each other safe.

**“Twinkle Dammit” - WORLD PREMIERE**  
Dir. Chuang Xu, USA, 67 min.  
In 1971, Margaret Leng Tan was the first woman to earn a Doctorate degree from the Juilliard School. Since then, her five-decade career has made the musician a figurehead of avant-garde music, owing predominantly to her incorporation of the toy piano in her performances. We meet Leng Tan at the age of 71 as she embarks on an iconic collaboration with George Crumb, one of the last remaining avant-garde composers of his era.

**“Uncivilized” - N.Y. PREMIERE**  
Dir. Michael Lees, Dominica, 71 min.  
A young man sets off to the forest in search of the simple life of ‘uncivilized’ man, but when Category 5 Hurricane Maria strikes his island, his project takes on new meaning as everyone is
sent back to ‘primitive living.’ What lessons will Michael and his comrades learn as they fight to survive in a post-disaster world?

**About the Programmers**

BFF’s Feature Narrative programmer is Brazilian-born-turned-New-York filmmaker Emilia Ferreira. Her debut feature, “The Unattainable Story,” premiered at the New Directors Competition at the Mostra–São Paulo International Film Festival. She was the feature programmer for the narrative section of the 20th Brooklyn Film Festival and an advocate for women in film as the co-founder of WIFT/Brazil. The Feature Documentary programmer is Brandon Harrison, a graduate of the UCLA School of Film and Television who previously programmed short docs for BFF. Natalie Gee, a multiple short film producer, leads BFF’s Short Narrative category. Mara Bresnahan is the Short Documentary programmer, who currently serves as the festival director for the Boston ReelAbilities Film Festival and as a lead programmer for the Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival. Melanie Abramov, a BFF Alumni and director from Brooklyn, is the Experimental category programmer. She received her BFA from Parsons School of Design and later founded her production company, Dame Productions, which lends a necessary and provocative voice to women in media. Julia Cowle, BFF’s Animation and kidsfilmfest programmer, is an independent filmmaker, illustrator, animator and comedy writer.

**About BFF**

The organizers of the Brooklyn Film Festival have been staging International, competitive film events since 1998. BFF’s mission is to provide a public forum in Brooklyn in order to advance public interest in films and the independent production of films, to draw worldwide attention to Brooklyn as a center for cinema, to encourage the rights of all Brooklyn residents to access and experience the power of independent filmmaking, and to promote artistic excellence and the creative freedom of artists without censure. BFF, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

For more info about the festival and to register to activate your film viewer account please visit [https://www.brooklynfilmfestival.org/bff-audience-registration](https://www.brooklynfilmfestival.org/bff-audience-registration).

For background info about kidsfilmfest, visit [http://www.kidsfilmfest.org/](http://www.kidsfilmfest.org/)

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For Festival Press Accreditation, visit: [https://www.brooklynfilmfestival.org/press-registration](https://www.brooklynfilmfestival.org/press-registration)

BFF Social Media Links: [http://www.brooklynfilmfestival.org/subscribe/](http://www.brooklynfilmfestival.org/subscribe/)