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THE WORLD'S BEST FILMS ARE COMING TO CALGARY

CIFF announces its complete 2026 Festival lineup!

Calgary, AB - The Calgary International Film Festival, **presented by Servus Credit Union**, is thrilled to unveil its complete 2026 Festival lineup, bringing the year's most acclaimed and talked-about films - from Cannes and the world's leading film festivals - to Calgary audiences from **September 24 - October 4, 2026**.

This year's Festival showcases an extraordinary collection of award winners, audience favourites, bold new voices, and highly anticipated premieres from around the world. The celebration culminates with the Closing Night presentation of **SMUDGE THE BLADES**, directed by Cody Lightning. Lightning returns to CIFF following his appearance at the Festival in 2023 for the Closing Night screening of his film **HEY, VIKTOR!** The highly anticipated new film offers audiences another opportunity to experience Lightning's distinctive voice and filmmaking style on the big screen. Together, the 2026 lineup celebrates the very best in global cinema while reaffirming CIFF as Western Canada's premier destination for discovering extraordinary films on the big screen.

"The talent in this year's lineup is extraordinary — from acclaimed filmmakers like Pedro Almodóvar, Ryusuke Hamaguchi, Martin McDonagh, Mike Leigh and Paweł Pawlikowski, to exciting young voices like Beth de Araújo, Sophia Takal, and the Esiri brothers. These are some of the most exciting directors working anywhere in the world," said Brian Owens, CIFF's Artistic Director.

"And then there are the stars. Oscar winners and nominees, including Rinko Kikuchi, Scarlett Johansson, Mahershala Ali, Julianne Moore, Adam Driver, John Malkovich, Sandra Hüller, Renate Reinsve, Sophie Okonedo, Sebastian Stan, Kenneth Branagh, and Christopher Walken, will all be lighting up CIFF screens this year. We're also incredibly proud to welcome back Indigenous filmmakers Banchi Hanuse, Joséphine Bacon, Kim O'Bomsawin, and Cody Lightning, all returning to CIFF with new work. And, of course, there's the incredible depth of Alberta-grown talent throughout the lineup."

Among this year's most anticipated presentations is **PAPER TIGER**, the acclaimed new drama from visionary filmmaker James Gray, making its Canadian premiere at CIFF. Fresh from Cannes and its North American Premiere at New York Film Festival, the gripping story follows two brothers drawn into the dangerous world of the Russian mafia, with powerhouse performances from Adam Driver, Scarlett Johansson, and Miles Teller. The lineup continues with **THE DEBUT**, Jesse Eisenberg's sharp and intimate new film about a shy woman cast in a community theatre musical who becomes increasingly captivated by her director, blurring the

lines between performance and reality. **I PLAY ROCKY**, the latest from GREEN BOOK director Peter Farrelly, brings another distinctive voice to the lineup, while **WILD HORSE NINE**, written and directed by Oscar-winner Martin McDonagh, and making its Alberta premiere, takes audiences to Easter Island on the eve of the 1973 Chilean coup. Starring John Malkovich and Sam Rockwell as CIA agents whose seemingly routine assignment becomes entangled in conspiracies, buried histories, and an unexpected connection with two rebellious students, the film promises McDonagh's signature blend of dark humour, tension and unpredictability.

"The fact that CIFF is only the third festival in the world to screen James Gray's PAPER TIGER after Cannes and the New York Film Festival is an absolute thrill. We're especially excited to host local Executive Producer Blair Ward and the Orogen team at the screenings. Honestly, I think any film lover is going to have the time of their lives at CIFF this year," added Owens.

"Film has a unique ability to bring people together, introduce us to new perspectives, and create connections that last long after the credits roll. That's what makes CIFF such an important part of Calgary's cultural community, and why we're proud to continue our support as presenting sponsor," said Ian Burns, President and CEO of Servus Credit Union. "This year, we're especially excited to introduce **Servus Free Movie Monday**, giving 1,000 people the opportunity to experience the festival at no cost and making great storytelling accessible to even more Calgarians."

Servus Credit Union, in their presenting partnership with CIFF, is proud to announce **Servus Free Movie Monday**, offering 1,000 free tickets to community members on the first Monday of the festival, **September 28, 2026**.

Designed to make world-class cinema accessible to all Calgarians, this collaborative initiative provides complimentary admission to festival screenings all day, inviting seasoned cinephiles and first-time festivalgoers alike to experience groundbreaking local and international storytelling. In addition to the free Monday screening access, Servus Credit Union members will enjoy exclusive discounts on select tickets and passes throughout the duration of the festival.

A dedicated promotional code will be available through CIFFcalgary.ca beginning on Friday, August 28, 2026, at 10 a.m. MT. Tickets are available on a first-come, first-served basis while quantities last.

FEATURE FILMS 2026

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

ALL OF A SUDDEN, directed by Ryūsuke Hamaguchi (France, Japan, Germany, Belgium)

A nursing home director's life is transformed by an unlikely friendship with a terminally ill playwright, in the latest from Oscar nominee Ryūsuke Hamaguchi. *Alberta Premiere*.

WINNER: Tao Okamoto & Virginie Efira - Best Actress, Cannes Film Festival 2026

ATONEMENT, directed by Reed Van Dyk (United States)

Boyd Holbrook, Hiam Abbass, and Oscar-winner Kenneth Branagh star in this searing story about the immeasurable costs of war and the nature of forgiveness. *Alberta Premiere*.

BACK IN BLACK, directed by Ron Murphy (Canada)

Christopher Walken leads a terrific cast in this hilarious satire about a failing funeral home suddenly thriving thanks to a suspicious spike in deaths. *Alberta Premiere*.

BITTER CHRISTMAS, directed by Pedro Almodóvar (Spain)

In 2004, an ad director endures a turbulent Christmas. In 2026, a filmmaker turns her story into a screenplay, blurring fact and fiction in Almodóvar's latest. *Alberta Premiere*.

CLUB KID, directed by Jordan Firstman (United States)

A hard-partying, washed-up New York party promoter's lifestyle is upended by the arrival of the 10-year-old son he never knew he had. *Alberta Premiere*.

THE DEBUT, directed by Jesse Eisenberg (United States)

Cast in a community theatre musical, a shy woman falls under her director's spell, blurring the line between performance and reality. *Alberta Premiere*.

FATHERLAND, directed by Pawel Pawlikowski (Poland, Germany, Italy, France) *

In 1949, Nobel Prize-winner Thomas Mann and his daughter, Erika, embark on a road trip across post-war Germany in the latest from Oscar-winner Pawel Pawlikowski. *Canadian Premiere*.

WINNER: Best Director, Cannes Film Festival 2026

FJORD, directed by Cristian Mungiu (Romania, France, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Sweden)

A devout Romanian family in Norway faces suspicious neighbours and scrutiny from the local justice system in Christian Mungiu's latest Palme d'Or winner. *Alberta Premiere*.

WINNER: Palme d'Or, Cannes Film Festival 2026

FRAMPTON, directed by Rob Arthur (United States) *Previously announced

From the arena-shaking triumph of "Frampton Comes Alive!" to a final tour shaped by a degenerative diagnosis, Frampton follows a rock icon who lost everything and fought his way back—again and again. *Canadian Premiere*.

HA-CHAN, SHAKE YOUR BOOTY!, directed by Josef Kubota Wladyka (United States) *

Oscar-nominee Rinko Kikuchi stars in this ballroom fantasia about a Tokyo dance enthusiast who must find her way after the tragic loss of her husband. *Alberta Premiere*.

I PLAY ROCKY, directed by Peter Farrelly (United States)

Sylvester Stallone writes the ultimate underdog story and must fight for his chance to play the role of a lifetime - Rocky Balboa. *Alberta Premiere*.

JOSEPHINE, directed by Beth de Araújo (United States)

After witnessing a crime, 8-year-old Josephine spirals into fear and anger as her parents struggle to help her feel safe again in this Sundance award winner. *Alberta Premiere*.

WINNER: Sundance Film Festival - U.S. Dramatic Grand Jury Prize and Audience Award

A LONG WINTER, directed by Andrew Haigh (Canada, United Kingdom, United States) *Previously announced

Set high in the mountains, fall comes to an end, and a family prepares for the long winter ahead. *Alberta Premiere*.

LOOK BACK, directed by Hirokazu Kore-eda (Japan)

Two manga artists, the brash Fujino and the reclusive Kyomoto, meet and develop a bond over making manga in the latest from Hirokazu Kore-eda (SHOPLIFTERS). *Alberta Premiere*.

MAN IN MOTION: THE RICK HANSEN STORY, directed by Adrian Buitenhuis (Canada)

Rick Hansen's 26-month wheelchair journey across 40,000 km raised millions to break down accessibility barriers and transform perceptions of disability. *Alberta Premiere.*

PAPER TIGER, directed by James Gray (United States)

Adam Driver, Miles Teller and Scarlett Johansson star in this thriller about a family man pulled into a shady scheme with Russian criminals by his brother. *Canadian Premiere.*

QUEENS FOR A DAY, directed by Chris Carter (United States)

A controversial talk show host wakes up and finds herself back in the 1950s, forced to live not her own life, but that of her mother's. *Alberta Premiere.*

RUN TERRY RUN, directed by Sean Menard (Canada)

Filled with never-before-seen footage, Sean Menard's RUN TERRY RUN is the intimate and inspiring portrait of Canadian legend Terry Fox's 1980 Marathon of Hope. *Alberta Premiere.*

THE STUNT DRIVER, directed by Michael Dowse (Canada, Ireland) *

Jay Baruchel and director Michael Dowse re-team for a raucous yet heartfelt comedy about a Canadian stuntman who dared to dream big and fly (very) high. *Alberta Premiere.*

WILD HORSE NINE, directed by Martin McDonagh (United Kingdom, United States)

A CIA mission to Easter Island unravels amid conspiracies, secrets, and Chile's looming coup. *Alberta Premiere.*

YOU HAD TO BE THERE: HOW THE TORONTO GODSPELL IGNITED THE COMEDY REVOLUTION, SPREAD LOVE & OVERALLS, AND CREATED A COMMUNITY THAT CHANGED THE WORLD (IN A CANADIAN KIND OF WAY), directed by Nick Davis (Canada, United States)

This high-spirited documentary reveals how a humble Toronto production of the hippie musical GODSPELL became an historic incubator for modern comedy. *Alberta Premiere.*

YOUR MOTHER YOUR MOTHER YOUR MOTHER, directed by Bassam Tariq (United Kingdom, United States)

Two-time Academy Award®-winner Mahershala Ali stars as a religious hitman who struggles to balance work, faith, and fatherhood. *Alberta Premiere.*

* Previously announced

CANADIAN NARRATIVE FEATURES

HOW WE STAND, directed by Marie Clements (Canada)

A contemporary drama that converges the dreams, blood, and tears of three separated sisters against the political, cultural, and social currents of 1970s Los Angeles. *Alberta Premiere.*

I COME HOME, directed by Glen Wood (Canada)

A polyamorous relationship already tested by an unplanned pregnancy threatens to collapse at a cottage wedding. *Alberta Premiere.*

IN ALASKA, directed by Jaap van Heusden and Vinnie Karetak (Canada, Netherlands)

A suicidal Inuk teen accidentally pierces an oil pipeline with a bullet, causing the FBI to launch a full-scale manhunt across the northern wilderness. *Alberta Premiere.*

IN THE HEART OF THE SOUTH, directed by Nyla Innuksuk (Canada)

Yura, a booming artist, is forced to incorporate a traumatic story from her past into her work. An old friend arrives and immediately impacts her process. *Alberta Premiere.*

JULIÁN, directed by Louise Bagnall (Canada, Ireland, United Kingdom, Denmark, Luxembourg)

Spending the summer with a grandmother he barely knows, Julián uncovers surprising truths about his heritage and identity in Louise Bagnall's first feature. *Alberta Premiere.*

LUMI, directed by Jim Walden (Canada)

A young northerner must brave the dangerous and vast tundra of the post-apocalyptic north in search of life-saving plasma for her humanoid A.I. mother-figure. *Alberta Premiere.*

NINA ROZA, directed by Geneviève Dulude-De Celles (Canada, Belgium, Italy, Bulgaria)

Mihail, a major art collector, returns to his home country after 30 years as a viral video of an 8-year-old Bulgarian artist catches his eye. *Alberta Premiere.*

PARADISE, directed by Jérémy Comte (Canada, France, Ghana)

Two teenagers, one from Ghana and one from Quebec, live separate lives but are connected through the desire to find their respective fathers. *Alberta Premiere.*

PHREAKER, directed by Adam Yorke (Canada)

A blind, lonely 15-year-old joins the underworld of phone hackers called "phreakers," which earns him money, power, and a place on the FBI cyber squad's most wanted list. Inspired by true events. *Canadian Premiere.*

POCKET MIRROR, directed by Adrian Murray (Canada)

Maisie hires a private investigator to confirm her suspicions that someone replaced her cat with a doppelganger, revealing that her reality might not be what it seems. *Alberta Premiere.*

PURGATORY, directed by Lindsay Lanzillotta (Canada, United States)

3-year-old Beatrice tries to reunite her recently separated parents in this 1980s set coming-of-age dramedy. *Alberta Premiere.*

THE SNAKE, directed by Jenna MacMillan (Canada)

When an ungovernable 40ish wild child collides with her venomous mother, her life blows up spectacularly, leaving her evicted, partially single, and in bed with her best friend's husband. *Alberta Premiere.*

SO LONG PLUTO, directed by Marianne Cormier (Canada)

A charming little planet named Pluto dreams of joining the official dance troupe of the Solar System. *Alberta Premiere.*

STRONG SON, directed by Ian Singh Bawa (Canada)

A former bodybuilder returns home to care for his aging father, trading independence for responsibility. *Alberta Premiere.*

CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION

BA'S BOOK, directed by Ashley Duong (Canada)

A father writes a memoir as letters to his daughter about his harrowing experiences of the Vietnam War and Iranian Revolution. She responds by making a film. *Alberta Premiere.*

CEREMONY, directed by Banchi Hanuse (Canada)

When the Nuxalk trace their vanished ooligan to a land claim filed the day smallpox arrived, their radio station becomes courtroom and conjuring ground. *Alberta Premiere.*

THE FINAL ACT, directed by Sophie Deraspe (Canada)

As they approach death, individuals reveal moments of profound intimacy that speak to an essential truth: love and life endure with force until the very last. *Alberta Premiere.*

GIMME TRUTH, directed by Simon Ennis & Brad Abrahams (Canada)

Through interviews with conspiracy theorists and ex-believers, GIMME TRUTH explores why the search for certainty can untether us from reality. *Alberta Premiere.*

THE GYMNASTS OF FISHERMAN COLONY, directed by Habiba Nosheen (Canada, United States, Pakistan)

The birth of a gymnastics team in Pakistan provides an inspiring spark of light for a small group of girls on the margins in this lyrical coming-of-age journey. *Alberta Premiere.*

LOUF, directed by Aziz Zoromba (Canada)

Against the heartbreaking backdrop of the unfolding catastrophe in Gaza, celebrated chef Fadi Kattan and his Canadian partner, Nicole Mankinen, race to open a new Palestinian restaurant in Toronto. *World Premiere.*

NITASSINAN, directed by Kim O'Bomsawin (Canada)

For the Innu, the land is more than home — it is identity, language, and memory. Now, they fight to protect it for future generations. *Alberta Premiere.*

NUISANCE BEAR, directed by Jack Weisman, Gabriela Osio Vanden (Canada, United States, United Kingdom)

A polar bear is forced to navigate a human world of tourists, wildlife officers, and hunters as its ancient migration route collides with modern life. *Alberta Premiere.*

RELAX OPEN YOUR EYES, directed by David Ehrenreich (Canada)

As her husband's condition worsens, young mother Carrie Radomski races to build an experimental cryonics facility, wagering all they have on the belief that death can be conquered and their family can live far into the future together. *World Premiere.*

THE WIND'S THIRST, directed by Alejandro Valbuena (Canada, Colombia)

In Colombia's La Guajira desert, three Wayuu guardians fight the corporate powers that are contaminating their water and exploiting their ancestral lands. *North American Premiere.*

CONTEMPORARY WORLD CINEMA

ADULT SUPERVISION, directed by Alex Schulmani (Sweden)

When a middle-aged man joins his 13-year-old daughter on a school trip in an attempt to repair their relationship, he soon finds himself caught up in conflicts that stir dark memories from his past. *Canadian Premiere.*

CLARISSA, directed by Arie Esiri & Chuko Esiri (United States, Nigeria)

Sophie Okonedo, David Oyelowo, and Ayo Edebiri star in this adaptation of Woolf's MRS. DALLOWAY set in contemporary Lagos, Nigeria. *Alberta Premiere.*

COWARD, directed by Lukas Dhont (Belgium, France)

1916. During the First World War, two soldiers try to keep up their morale behind the trenches. Stirred by wartime rhetoric, each of them seeks their own path. *Alberta Premiere.*

DIARY OF A MAD OLD MAN, directed by Wayne Wang (Japan, United States)

Wayne Wang (THE JOY LUCK CLUB) adapts Jun'ichirō Tanizaki's novel about an aging widower and his relationship with his daughter-in-law caregiver. *Alberta Premiere.*

FILIPINANA, directed by Rafael Manuel (Singapore, United Kingdom, France)

This Sundance prize winner, executive-produced by Jia Zhangke, follows a young "tee girl" at a posh golf club outside Manila, whose wanderings reveal troubling truths about the club, her native Philippines, and her own past. *Alberta Premiere.*

THE FROG AND THE WATER, directed by Thomas Stuber (Germany, Switzerland)

Buschi's routine in an assisted living facility is monotonous. Seeking change, he leaves a group outing and joins a tour of Japanese tourists. *Canadian Premiere.*

THE GARDEN WE DREAMED, directed by Joaquin del Paso (Mexico) *

In a land not their own, amid a fading forest, a family carves out a fragile bubble of tenderness - a fleeting garden of hope where love can still take root. *Canadian Premiere.*

THE INCOMER, directed by Louis Paxton (United Kingdom, Ireland) *Previously announced

On a remote Scottish isle, two siblings hunt, talk to mythical beings, and refuse incomers. Their lives change when a local official arrives to relocate them. *Canadian Premiere.*

IRON BOY, directed by Louis Clichy (France, Belgium)

Christophe, a 11-year-old boy with balance issues, navigates life in an orthopedic brace while his struggling family farm faces modernization. *Alberta Premiere.*

MINOTAUR, directed by Andrey Zvyagintsev (France, Latvia)

Russia, 2022. As corporate pressures mount, a successful executive's carefully ordered life unravels, spiralling toward violence. *Alberta Premiere.*

OBJET A, directed by Ann Oren (Germany, Luxembourg, Greece)

Ingeborg and Adam are visionary hand surgeons bound by love, control, and irresistible fixations. *Canadian Premiere.*

POSSIBLE LOVE, directed by Lee Chang-dong (Korea)

A laid-off worker and his wife cross paths with a documentary filmmaker and her spouse and confront their hidden desires. *Alberta Premiere.*

THE RED HANGAR, directed by Juan Pablo Sallato (Argentina, Chile, Italy)

As the 1973 Chilean military coup unfolds across the country, Captain Jorge Silva – the former head of Air Force Intelligence – receives an order that will change his life forever. *Canadian Premiere.*

TENDER LOVING CARE, directed by Mike Leigh (United Kingdom)

A woman turns to her lifelong friend for laughter and support while confronting the bittersweet realities of aging in the latest from the legendary Mike Leigh. *Alberta Premiere.*

NEW AMERICAN CINEMA

ACT ONE, directed by Sophia Takal (United States) *

A young aspiring actress, desperate for belonging, falls under the spell of a manipulative acting coach who draws her into a web of control and obsession. *Canadian Premiere.*

ANCHORS AWEIGH, directed by Matt Barats (United States)

When a well-meaning loser gets rejected by his much younger and more successful blonde girlfriend, he rents a small sailboat by the airport and spirals into a state of deep personal reflection. *Alberta Premiere.*

DOWNBEAT directed by Danny Madden (United States)

A troubled drummer crashes with his sister in Boston and rediscovers his passion through street performing. *Canadian Premiere.*

EDIE ARNOLD IS A LOSER, directed by Megan Rico & Kate Atwood (United States) *

Timid dork Edie accidentally takes the spotlight when she starts a punk band, becoming an icon to the rest of the losers at her all-girls Catholic school. *Alberta Premiere.*

LOVE - LOVE, directed by Thomas Leisten Schneider (United States)

Two brothers set out on a road trip to find their father, a disgraced former professional tennis player, now living in seclusion in the California desert. *Canadian Premiere.*

THE ONLY LIVING PICKPOCKET IN NEW YORK, directed by Noah Segan (United States)

Anchored by an Oscar-worthy performance from John Turturro, this low-key crime drama harkens back to the character-driven films of 1970s New Hollywood. *Alberta Premiere.*

OUT OF THE WOODS, directed by Sal Bardo (United States)

When Max reconnects with her old friend, Diana, long-forgotten emotions are brought to the surface. *Alberta Premiere.*

TEST, directed by Sam McConnell (United States)

An amateur bodybuilder in rural Ohio must confront a dysfunctional family, substance abuse, and his own emerging sexuality on his quest to become a champion. *Alberta Premiere.*

INTERNATIONAL NARRATIVE FEATURE COMPETITION

THE ARAB, directed by Malek Bensmaïl (Algeria, France, Switzerland, Belgium, Saudi Arabia)

In 1990s Algeria, Kamel meets Haroun, brother of the 'Arab' in Camus's *The Stranger*. Moussa's story reopens colonial wounds, family silences, and violence. *Canadian Premiere.*

BIG GIRLS DON'T CRY, directed by Paloma Schneideman (New Zealand)

Summer 2006, 14-year-old Sid is caught between her own burgeoning sexual curiosity and the teenage woes of social acceptance. *Alberta Premiere.*

CRYSTAL CROSS, directed by Richie James Follin (United States)

Dotty, a Christian singer chasing fame, hitches a ride with James, a grieving father bent on ending his life. On the road, their twisted love story unfolds as two desperate souls find faith, music, and truth on the way to life and death. *Canadian Premiere.*

FUNK, directed by Aly Muritiba (United States) *

In a neon-lit Rio de Janeiro favela, fearless young queer talent MC Sabrina must fight to reclaim her music, her body, and her roots—entirely on her own terms. *Canadian Premiere.*

MARIE MADELEINE, directed by Gessica Génés (Belgium, Canada, France, Haiti, Luxembourg)

In Jacmel, Haiti, the sea, the churches, and the spirits shape daily life. *Alberta Premiere.*

NOSOTROS, directed by Joaquín Ruano (Guatemala, Mexico)

A security guard leaves his family for the city, finding refuge and desire, until violence among his coworkers exposes the truths he can't outrun. *Alberta Premiere.*

RUNNER, directed by Laura García Alonso (Spain) *

A driven, young 800-meter runner suffers a psychotic break under mounting pressure and must fight to reclaim both her mind and the dream that defines her. *International Premiere.*

SENDER, directed by Russell Goldman (United States) *

A recently sober and unemployed woman starts receiving an absurd amount of oddly specific packages that she didn't order and believes she's being watched. *International Premiere.*

THEIR TOWN, directed by Katie Aselton (United States) *

Abby and Matt spend a long night wandering around their town, examining their futures and unearthing surprises from their past. *Canadian Premiere.*

UNION COUNTY, directed by Adam Meeks (United States)

Assigned to a county-mandated drug court program, Cody Parsons embarks on the tenuous journey toward recovery amidst the opioid epidemic in rural Ohio. *Alberta Premiere.*

WHERE THE RIVER BEGINS, directed by Juan Andrés Arango Garcia (Canada, Colombia, Norway)

A young Indigenous mother, her daughter, and a young gang member embark on a cathartic journey, leaving their fate to the jungle. *Alberta Premiere.*

YESTERDAY THE EYE DIDN'T SLEEP, directed by Rakan Mayasi (Lebanon, Belgium)

In a valley veiled by fog and tribal codes, two sisters walk into the night not as daughters, but as offerings — where blood, memory, and silence attempt to keep the fire from spreading. *Canadian Premiere.*

INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION

ALL ABOUT THE MONEY, directed by Sinéad O'Shea (Ireland, Denmark)

The curse of old money haunts a young anti-capitalist heir from one of America's wealthiest families in one of the craziest stories of the year. *Canadian Premiere.*

ALL RIVERS SPILL THEIR STORIES TO THE SEA, directed by Jeanie Finlay (United Kingdom) *

When a mystery tide of poisoned sealife washes ashore on England's NE coast, grief gives way to a turbulent quest for answers, led by the unlikelyst of rebels. *Canadian Premiere.*

BIRDS OF WAR, directed by Janay Boulos & Abd Alkader Habak (United Kingdom, Lebanon, Syrian Arab Republic)

Over 13 years of war and exile, a Lebanese BBC journalist and Syrian activist sustain a love story through texts, voice notes, and frontline footage. *Alberta Premiere.*

DEREK VS. DEREK, directed by James Dawson (United Kingdom)

Two neighbouring Devon farmers, both named Derek, go to war over the future of their land in this funny and timely documentary. *Alberta Premiere.*

KIKUYU LAND, directed by Andrew H. Brown & Bea Wangondu (Kenya)

In Kenya's tea highlands, one man's claim to his family's stolen land sets Mr. Mungai against a multinational giant. *Alberta Premiere.*

KNIFE: THE ATTEMPTED MURDER OF SALMAN RUSHDIE, directed by Alex Gibney (United States)

After surviving a brutal assassination attempt in 2022, Salman Rushdie confronts his past in a deeply personal way in the latest from Oscar-winner Alex Gibney. *Alberta Premiere.*

ONCE UPON A TIME IN HARLEM, directed by David Greaves & William Greaves (United States)

A decade after his death, William Greaves' final work reveals a remarkable 1972 reunion of Harlem Renaissance artists and intellectuals. *Alberta Premiere.*

REHEARSALS FOR A REVOLUTION, directed by Pegah Ahangarani (Iran, Spain, Czechia)

Actress-turned-documentary director Pegah Ahangarani surveys her own and her family's involvement in Iran's many civil uprisings in this Cannes prizewinner. *Alberta Premiere.*

SCHOOL FOR DEFECTORS, directed by Jeremy Workman (United States, Korea)

In an industrial corner of Busan, South Korea, stands the tiny Jangdaehyun School. It is home to 20 students, all of whom are North Korean defectors. *Canadian Premiere.*

THEYDREAM, directed by William Caballero (United States) *

A filmmaker and his mother look back on twenty years of family life, love and death, weaving animation, home recordings, and memory into a shared act of healing. *Alberta Premiere.*

TO HOLD A MOUNTAIN, directed by Biljana Tutorov, Petar Glomazić (Montenegro, Serbia, Croatia, France, Slovenia)

In Montenegro's highlands, a shepherdess and her daughter defend their traditional pasture lands from plans to turn them into a training ground for NATO troops. *Alberta Premiere.*

ALBERTA SPOTLIGHT FEATURES

GAIL, directed by Michael Maxxis (Canada)

A superfan of the Canadian band Our Lady Peace follows them on their 30th anniversary tour across Canada. *Alberta Premiere.*

INVISIBLE IMAGINATION, directed by Anna Cooley & Sarah Taylor (Canada)

How can you be a creator without a visual imagination? Film editor Sarah Taylor is among the 3% with aphantasia. She sets out to understand how her brain works. *World Premiere.*

LUMI, directed by Jen Walden (Canada)

A young northerner must brave the dangerous and vast tundra of the post-apocalyptic north in search of life-saving plasma for her humanoid A.I. mother-figure. *Alberta Premiere.*

WWW: THE WOMEN'S GROUP, directed by Wendy Hill-Tout (Canada) *

An in-depth and entertaining documentary about aging, grief, loneliness, friendship, community and one extraordinary group of women. *World Premiere.*

X-COMMUNICADO, directed by Brian King (Canada) *

A mute emissary with a mysterious past must shepherd a damaged soul to salvation before demons can claim it as one of their own. *North American Premiere.*

AFTER DARK FEATURES

AMERICAN DOLLHOUSE, directed by John Valley (United States)

Caught between a grotesque Christmas fantasy and her own childhood trauma, a woman's search for a fresh start in her hometown is violently interrupted by a psychopathic neighbour. *Canadian Premiere.*

ATTACK ON PARADISE, directed by Bob Colaers (Belgium)

Returning home after a seven-year prison sentence, Suleyman finds his apartment block seized by drug dealers, and he must protect his mother at all costs. *Alberta Premiere.*

JIM QUEEN, directed by Nicolas Athane & Marco Nguyen (France)

In the heart of Paris's gay scene, a bizarre virus called Heterosis starts turning gay men straight, as Jim and his trusty sidekick race to find a cure. *Alberta Premiere.*

MUM, I'M ALIEN PREGNANT, directed by Thunderlips (New Zealand)

When an underachiever accidentally gets alien-pregnant, she must overcome skeptical doctors, a useless baby-daddy, and her oversharing mum in order to survive. *Alberta Premiere.*

NEVER AFTER DARK, directed by Dave Boyle (Japan)

A travelling psychic who helps lost souls cross over encounters a powerful entity and faces a deadly threat from an unexpected source. *Alberta Premiere.*

SICKO, directed by Aitore Zholdaskali (Kazakhstan)

A cash-strapped couple hatch a plan to solve their money troubles but soon become embroiled in a toxic web of social media, violent criminality, and spiraling greed. *Alberta Premiere.*

MUSIC ON SCREEN

THE BEST SUMMER, directed by Tamra Davis (Thailand, United States, Indonesia, Australia) *

Live performances, candid interviews, and behind-the-scenes footage of a 1995 concert tour with Beastie Boys, Sonic Youth, Foo Fighters, Beck, and Bikini Kill. *Canadian Premiere.*

CALIFORNIA SCHEMIN', directed by James McAvoy (United Kingdom, United States)

Two Scottish lads from Dundee conned the music industry by pretending to be an established Californian rap duo, bagging a record deal and appearing on MTV - until their scam unravelled. *Alberta Premiere.*

DARLENE LOVE: I KNOW WHERE I'VE BEEN, directed by Barry Avrich (Canada)

A cavalcade of stars sing the praises of an underappreciated musical icon, Darlene Love, best known for "Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)." *Alberta Premiere.*

LOS LOBOS: NATIVE SONS, directed by Douglas Blush & Piero F. Giunti (United States)

The definitive, authorized chronicle of one of America's most enduring, genre-defying bands, Los Lobos. *Canadian Premiere.*

SUMMER 2000: THE X-CETERA STORY, directed by Ayden Mayeri (United States)

Four childhood friends recorded an album in 2000, then drifted apart. When their forgotten music resurfaces online 20 years later, it unexpectedly goes viral. *Canadian Premiere.*

WE ARE THE SHAGGS, directed by Ken William Kwapis (United States)

The incredible story of The Shaggs, the all-girl band that created one of the most provocative and misunderstood albums of all time. *Alberta Premiere.*

CLOSING NIGHT FILM

SMUDGE THE BLADES, directed by Cody Lightning (Canada)

When the Treaty 6 Blades are kicked out of their hockey league, the arena's zamboni driver must coach this underdog team back into the top level. *Calgary Premiere.*

SHORT FILMS 2026

With more than 100 shorts screening across the festival, the Shorts Film Program offers an exciting showcase of varied filmmaking styles, international perspectives, and diverse stories

from around the world, thoughtfully curated into accessible programming sections. This year's lineup features an especially strong selection of Alberta shorts, reflecting the incredible depth of talent emerging from the province's filmmaking community. Alongside these homegrown voices, the program boasts a remarkable collection of acclaimed shorts that have earned major honours and recognition at prestigious festivals, including Cannes, Sundance, Regard, Palm Springs International ShortFest, and SXSW. From emerging Alberta filmmakers to internationally celebrated voices, the 2026 Shorts Film Program offers audiences a chance to discover some of the most compelling short-form cinema being made today. [Find the Short Film titles here.](#)

Single tickets are on sale August 28, 2026, at 10 a.m. MST. For more information, please visit <https://www.ciffcalgary.ca/>

MEDIA IMAGES - <https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1tabRiLjx5TrPP-EO8dqlJjq9Dopwn1>

MEDIA CALL - Join Brian Owens, CIFF's Artistic Director, and special guests on the red carpet at 5:30 p.m. at Globe Cinema on **Thursday August 27, 2026.**

-30-

For Media Inquiries, please contact:

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CIFF | Calgary International Film Festival

September 24 - October 4, 2026

ciffcalgary.ca | @CIFFcalgary

About the Calgary International Film Festival

Founded in 2000, the Calgary International Film Festival (CIFF) is a not-for-profit charitable organization that brings films and filmmakers from around the world to Calgary for its annual Fall festival and year-round programming. CIFF is now the largest event of its kind in Alberta and the sixth-largest film festival in Canada, bringing audiences together for remarkable and engaging cinematic experiences. CIFF is proud to present its 27th festival from September 24 – October 4, 2026, with in-cinema screenings, celebrating standout stories, and offering once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

CIFF Thanks their Presenting Partner



CIFF Thanks their 2026 Public Funders

