



Media Release // FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 30, 2023

CIFF's 2023 LINEUP IS HERE!

CALGARY, AB - The Calgary International Film Festival, presented by connectFirst Credit Union, is thrilled to announce its exciting 2023 Festival lineup, featuring the year's most groundbreaking and must-see films from around the world!

This year's festival will kick off with the opening night film, **GEOFF MCFETRIDGE: DRAWING A LIFE**, directed by Dan Covert. It's a documentary feature film about the Calgary-born and raised artist who has worked with Sophia Coppola and Spike Jonze, to name a few, and recently won the Audience Award for Best Documentary at SXSW. "I don't know who I would be if I hadn't grown up in Calgary. I am so grateful to be able to open the film in a place I owe so much to," said Geoff McFetridge.

The festival will close with **HEY, VIKTOR!**, directed by Cody Lightning, coming to CIFF after screening at Tribeca and TIFF, where an Indigenous child star sets out to recapture his former glory by making the sequel to the film that made him famous, twenty years later.

"When you look at the lineup as a whole, you see an incredibly bold and diverse selection of films. From World Premiere short films and Award-winning features from Cannes, Toronto and other world-class film festivals, there is something anyone and everyone can enjoy," said Brian Owens, CIFF's Artistic Director.

The lineup this year includes 16 World, North American and International Premieres and 20 Canadian feature Premieres. CIFF 2023 runs from **September 21 to October 1, 2023**, and in addition to a thrilling film lineup, will also include Special Experiences such as the World Premiere Screening of **HEARTLAND'S 250th Episode**, Virtual Reality and Video Games, with more announcements coming prior to the festival.

"At connectFirst, we're passionate about supporting Albertans to help make their dreams come true. We know there's nothing quite like the feeling you get when your passion, hard work, and dedication are brought to life. We're incredibly excited to be back as presenting partner for CIFF; supporting local filmmakers and artists in the creative industries to tell their stories, and celebrating their passions," said Bob Webb, Chief People and Brand Officer of connectFirst Credit Union.

“As one of Canada’s largest credit unions that is based right here in Calgary, we are so proud to be welcoming the world to our local stage and paving the way for our homegrown talent to shine as brightly as we know they can. We can’t wait to see everyone at the theatre to enjoy these amazing films.”

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

ANATOMY OF A FALL, Directed by Justine Triet (France)

In Justine Triet's riveting Palme d'Or winner, a writer becomes the prime suspect when her husband is found dead near their chalet. *Alberta Premiere.*

ANSLEM (3D), Directed by Wim Wenders (Germany)

Presented in stunning 3D, this cinematic experience blurs the line between film and painting, exploring the life and work of artist Anselm Kiefer. *Alberta Premiere.*

A DIFFICULT YEAR, Directed by Olivier Nakache and Éric Toledano (France)

Writer-directors Olivier Nakache and Éric Toledano (CIFF2019 Audience Award winners with THE SPECIALS) return with this comedy about finding your place in a world that’s falling apart. *Alberta Premiere.*

DUMB MONEY, Directed by Craig Gillespie (United States)

The insane true story of the everyday people who flipped the script on Wall Street and got rich by turning GameStop into the world’s hottest company. *Alberta Premiere.* [Trailer](#)

EVIL DOES NOT EXIST, Directed by Ryūsuke Hamaguchi (Japan)

A family and their bucolic village's sense of peace is threatened by cynical developers in this pensive drama from Ryūsuke Hamaguchi, the Oscar®-nominated creator of DRIVE MY CAR (CIFF2021). *Alberta Premiere.*

GEOFF MCFETRIDGE: DRAWING A LIFE, Directed by Dan Covert (United States)

An intimate look into the life and work of a Calgary native who is one of the most visionary artists of his time. *Canadian Premiere. (OPENING NIGHT FILM)*

HEY, VIKTOR! Directed by Cody Lightning (Canada)

Twenty years after SMOKE SIGNALS, Little Viktor decides it’s time to make his masterpiece SMOKE SIGNALS 2: STILL SMOKING. *Calgary Premiere. (CLOSING NIGHT FILM)*

LA CHIMERA, Directed by Alice Rohrwacher (Italy/Switzerland/France)

Fresh off of her first Oscar® nomination for the short film LE PUPILLE, Alice Rohrwacher brings us this dream-like romp through Italy’s archaeological and cinematic past. *Alberta Premiere.* [Trailer](#)

MONSTER, Directed by Hirokazu Kore-Eda (Japan)

When a boy starts displaying disturbing behaviour, his mother suspects that his teacher is the source of the problem. However, the truth is more complex than expected. *Alberta Premiere.* [Trailer](#)

THE OLD OAK, Directed by Ken Loach (United Kingdom/France/Belgium)

The latest (and possibly last) from British director Ken Loach, THE OLD OAK centres around the last pub in a dying English town and the changes brought on by incoming Syrian refugees. *Alberta Premiere.* [Trailer](#)

PERFECT DAYS, Directed by Wim Wenders (Japan/Germany)

Hirayama seems utterly content with his simple life as a cleaner in Tokyo, in this Cannes award-winning film from legendary director Wim Wenders. *Alberta Premiere.* [Trailer](#)

THE POT AU FEU, Directed by Trần Anh Hùng (France)

Juliette Binoche and Benoît Magimel star in this lush romance centred around the kitchen table from director Trần Anh Hùng (THE SCENT OF GREEN PAPAYA). *Alberta Premiere.*

SEVEN VEILS, Directed by Atom Egoyan (Canada)

A young theatre director (Amanda Seyfried) revives her mentor's opera, facing resurfaced trauma that blurs past and present in an enthralling dance of darkness, from Canada's own Atom Egoyan. *Alberta Premiere.*

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

A range of out-of-competition films from around the world in a bold mix of Canadian and International fare. These films range from local stories from our own backyard to world premieres, award-winning titles hot off the festival circuit to new discoveries for our audience.

ABOUT DRY GRASSES, Directed by Nuri Bilge Ceylan (Turkey/France/Germany/Sweden)

A young teacher hopes to be appointed to Istanbul after mandatory duty in a small village. After a long wait, losing all hope, a colleague helps him to regain perspective. *Alberta Premiere.*

BIG BOYS, Directed by Corey Sherman (United States)

A teenage boy's unexpected crush turns a camping trip into a weekend of self-discovery in this heartwarming coming-of-age comedy. *Canadian Premiere.*

THE DELINQUENTS, Directed by Rodrigo Moreno (Argentina/Brazil/Chile/Luxembourg)

Morán and Román are looking for freedom and adventure. One commits a robbery, the other hides money that doesn't belong to him. Their destiny as new criminals brings them together. *Alberta Premiere.* [Trailer](#)

FALLEN LEAVES, Directed by Aki Kaurismäki (Finland/Germany)

Two lonely people who meet each other by chance in the Helsinki night try to find the first love of their lives. *Alberta Premiere*. [Trailer](#)

HOW TO HAVE SEX, Directed by Molly Manning Walker (United Kingdom)

Three British teenage girls go on a rites-of-passage holiday, drinking, clubbing and hooking up, in what should be the best summer of their lives. *Alberta Premiere*.

IF ONLY I COULD HIBERNATE, Directed by Zoljargal Purevdash (France/Mongolia)

Ulzii, a teenager from a poor neighbourhood in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, is determined to win a physics competition to obtain a scholarship. *Alberta Premiere*.

INSIDE THE YELLOW COCOON SHELL, Directed by Pham Thien An (Vietnam/Singapore/France/Spain)

Thien must take responsibility when a family tragedy pushes him to search for his long-lost brother in the mystical landscape of Vietnam. *Alberta Premiere*. [Trailer](#)

ISLE OF HOPE, Directed by Damian Romay (United States)

A university professor with a grudge against her self-absorbed mother tries to figure out where her life went off track. *International Premiere*. [Trailer](#)

JERICHO RIDGE, Directed by Will Gilbey (United Kingdom)

Trapped and without backup, a small-town cop fights for her life when her remote sheriff's office is targeted by murderous attackers. *Canadian Premiere*. [Trailer](#)

KIDNAPPED, Directed by Marco Bellocchio (France/Germany/Italy)

In 1858, in the Jewish quarter of Bologna, the Pope's soldiers burst into the home of the Mortara family. By order of the cardinal, they have come to take Edgardo, their seven-year-old son. *Alberta Premiere*.

LITTLE BROTHER, Directed by Sheridan O'Donnell (United States)

After a recent suicide attempt, Jake drives his neurodivergent older brother across the American West while the two reconcile with the traumas of their past in order to forge a new bond. *International Premiere*. [Trailer](#)

A LITTLE PRAYER, Directed by Angus MacLachlan (United States)

A man tries to protect his daughter-in-law when he discovers his son is having an affair, touching upon a variety of hot-button issues in a changing modern South. *Alberta Premiere*.

PEAK SEASON, Directed by Steven Kanter & Henry Loevner (United States)

Feeling ignored during a getaway with her fiancé to the wealthy town of Jackson Hole, Wyoming, New York yuppie Amy finds herself drawn to a free-spirited local wilderness guide. *Alberta Premiere*.

THE PROMISED LAND, Directed by Nikolaj Arcel (Denmark/Germany/Sweden)

The story of Captain Ludvig Kahlen, a 17th-century soldier who sets out on an impossible mission: to clear and cultivate the wild Jutland heath for the Danish crown. *Alberta Premiere.* [Trailer](#)

ROBOT DREAMS, Directed by Pablo Berger (Spain/France)

Based on Sara Varon's popular graphic novel, ROBOT DREAMS tells the adventures and misfortunes of Dog & Robot in 1980s New York, from Spanish director Pablo Berger. *Alberta Premiere.* [Trailer](#)

THE TEACHERS' LOUNGE, Directed by Ilker Çatak (Germany)

When one of her students is suspected of theft, teacher Carla Nowak decides to find out what happened, getting caught between her ideals and the school system. *Alberta Premiere.*

TELLING OUR STORY, Directed by Kim O'Bomsawin (Canada)

Episodes 1 - 4

For the first time, the 11 First Peoples in Quebec are telling us who they are, in their own way, and from their point of view. *Alberta Premiere.* [Trailer](#)

THEY SHOT THE PIANO PLAYER, Directed by Fernando Trueba & Javier Mariscal (Spain/France)

A New York music journalist goes on a quest to uncover the truth behind the mysterious disappearance of young Brazilian piano virtuoso Tenório Jr. *Alberta Premiere.* [Trailer](#)

INTERNATIONAL NARRATIVE COMPETITION

A captivating world of rich stories from beyond our borders. Twelve vibrant and independent films with an emphasis on under-the-radar and cutting-edge style and story. Films in this section will compete for a \$1000 juried cash prize.

20,000 SPECIES OF BEES, Directed by Estibaliz Urresola Solaguren (Spain)

An eight-year-old and her mother experience revelations about their identity that will change their lives forever during a summer trip to the Basque Country. *Canadian Premiere.* [Trailer](#)

ANIMALIA, Directed by Sofia Alaoui (France/Morocco/Qatar)

A young, pregnant woman finds emancipation as aliens land in Morocco. *Canadian Premiere.* [Trailer](#)

BENJI'S HOUR, Directed by Gabriel Kahane (United States)

A law-breaking teenager befriends an unstable cancer patient who irreversibly alters the course of his life. *World Premiere.* [Trailer](#)

BLAGA'S LESSONS, Directed by Stephan Komandarev (Bulgaria/Germany)

When a 70-year-old retired teacher and widower falls victim to a phone scam, she faces a difficult choice, embarking on an enthralling journey of deception. *North American Premiere*. [Trailer](#)

CLOSE TO YOU, Directed by Dominic Savage (Canada/United Kingdom)

Sam (Elliot Page) has a chance encounter with an old friend on his way back home to a dreaded family reunion, forcing him to confront long-buried memories. *Alberta Premiere*.

ELAHA, Directed by Milena Aboyan (Germany)

A young Kurdish-German woman believes she must restore her virginity before marriage, in this sensitive exploration of cultural pressure and bodily autonomy. *Canadian Premiere*. [Trailer](#)

MARTÍNEZ, Directed by Lorena Padilla (Mexico)

Martinez, a lonely bureaucrat, receives a surprise gift from a deceased neighbour and begins to enjoy life through her old belongings. *Canadian Premiere*. [Trailer](#)

THE MATTACHINE FAMILY, Directed by Andy Vallentine (United States)

Thomas and Oscar are a couple very much in love, but after their foster child returns to his birth mother, they find they have different ideas about what it means to make a family. *Alberta Premiere*. [Trailer](#)

THE OTHER WIDOW, Directed by Ma'ayan Rypp (Israel/France)

A dark comedic drama about Ella, a 34-year-old theatre dresser and mistress, who experiences the sudden death of her lover and demands her legitimate right to mourn. *Canadian Premiere*. [Trailer](#)

THE PERSIAN VERSION, Directed by Maryam Keshavarz (Turkey/United States)

Coming from two countries at odds, Iranian-American Leila strives to find balance and embrace her opposing cultures, while boldly challenging the labels society is quick to project upon her. *Alberta Premiere*. [Trailer](#)

RILEY, Directed by Benjamin Howard (United States)

The life of a disciplined high school athlete begins to unravel when his queer identity competes against the idea of who he was supposed to be. *World Premiere*.

TÓTEM, Directed by Lila Avilés (Mexico/Denmark/France)

Seven-year-old Sol spends the day at her grandfather's home, helping with the preparations for a surprise party for her father. Chaos slowly takes over, fracturing the family's foundations. *Alberta Premiere*. [Trailer](#)

INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION

An uncensored view of the world showcasing gripping, entertaining, and enlightening stories from around the globe. This section features twelve documentaries from all parts of the

globe exploring politics, arts, nature, people, and history's icons. Films in this section will compete for a \$1000 juried cash prize.

BETWEEN THE RAINS, Directed by Moses Thuranira & Andrew H. Brown (Kenya/United Kingdom)

Filmed over four years of record drought in northern Kenya, BETWEEN THE RAINS reveals the experiences of a childhood caught within a traditional culture suffering the casualties of climate change. *Canadian Premiere.* [Trailer](#)

BREAK THE GAME, Directed by Jane M. Wagner (United States)

When a live-streaming, trans-identifying gamer finds the opportunity for love and adventure in the real world, will she embrace it, or be seduced again by the glow of the screen? *Canadian Premiere.*

FANTASTIC MACHINE, Directed by Axel Danielson & Maximilien Van Aertryck (Sweden/Denmark)

Axel Danielson & Maximilien Van Aertryck trace the history of photography and videography as they explore, explain and expose how our unchecked obsession with image has grown to change our behaviour. *Canadian Premiere.* [Trailer](#)

FOUR DAUGHTERS, Directed by Kaouther Ben Hania (France/Tunisia/Germany/Saudi Arabia)

In this Palme d'Or-nominated film, Kaouther Ben Hania blends documentary and drama to explore the case of two missing sisters in Tunisia and the family that mourns them. *Alberta Premiere.* [Trailer](#)

GOING VARSITY IN MARIACHI, Directed by Alejandra Vasquez & Sam Osborn (United States)

Coach Abel Acuña and the teenage captains of Edinburg North High try to turn a shoestring budget and a diverse crew of inexperienced musicians into Texas State Mariachi Champions. *Canadian Premiere.* [Trailer](#)

GREAT PHOTO, LOVELY LIFE, Directed by Amanda Mustard & Rachel Beth Anderson (United States)

Photojournalist Amanda Mustard returns home to Pennsylvania to investigate the sexual abuse crimes committed by her grandfather. *Canadian Premiere.*

JESSZILLA, Directed by Emily Sheskin (United States)

Jesselyn Silva has her sights set on becoming a boxing champion. On the cusp of making the US Olympic team, she faces her toughest battle. *Canadian Premiere.* [Trailer](#)

ON THE ADAMANT, Directed by Nicolas Philibert (France)

Nicolas Philibert profiles the patients and caregivers at a unique psychiatric centre which floats in the middle of the Seine River in central Paris. *Alberta Premiere.* [Trailer](#)

SILVER DOLLAR ROAD, Directed by Raoul Peck (United States)

A Black family in North Carolina battles decades of harassment by land developers trying to seize their waterfront property, in this searing documentary by Oscar-nominated director Raoul Peck. *Alberta Premiere*.

SMOKE SAUNA SISTERHOOD, Directed by Anna Hints (Estonia/France/Iceland)

In the darkness of the sauna, women share their innermost secrets and intimate experiences, washing off the shame trapped in their bodies and regaining strength through a sense of communion. *Alberta Premiere*. [Trailer](#)

WERNER HERZOG - RADICAL DREAMER, Directed by Thomas von Steinaecker (Germany/United Kingdom)

Master filmmaker, auteur, poet, truth seeker, pith-helmeted explorer, brand, meme, actor, lauded voice artist, doomsayer, legend...Werner Herzog. *Alberta Premiere*. [Trailer](#)

YOU CAN CALL ME BILL, Directed by Alexandre O. Philippe (United States)

Maverick thespian, electrifying performer, and cultural treasure, William Shatner (now 91 years young) is the living embodiment of his classic line: "to boldly go where no man has gone before." *Alberta Premiere*.

LATE SHIFT

The very best in genre film and things that go bump in the night! Dark, twisted, outrageous, and downright daring late-night selections ranging from sci-fi to horror, thriller and fantasy from around the world. There's no shortage of high-intensity suspense, shock, gore, and action. In this six-film section, there's no such thing as overdoing it.

ANIMAL KINGDOM, Directed by Thomas Cailey (France)

An adventure between a father and his son, in a world where some humans have started mutating into other animal species. *Alberta Premiere*.

HUMANIST VAMPIRE SEEKING CONSENTING SUICIDAL PERSON, Directed by Ariane Louis-Seize (Canada)

Sasha, an empathetic vampire, partners with suicidal teen Paul to fulfill his wishes before dawn, forging an unexpected bond in their race against time.

MAYHEM! (FARANG), Directed by Xavier Gens (France/Thailand)

A professional boxer's past catches up with him while out on parole, and he has no choice but to flee. In Thailand, five-years later and blackmailed, Sam's purpose - merciless vengeance! *Alberta Premiere*. [Trailer](#)

THE PUPPETMAN, Directed by Brandon Christensen (United States)

You're not in control. *Canadian Premiere*.

THE SACRIFICE GAME, Directed by Jenn Wexler (United States/Canada)

Samantha and Clara, two students who are staying behind for the holidays at their boarding school, must survive the night against uninvited visitors. *Alberta Premiere.*

SLEEP, Directed by Jason Yu (South Korea)

A pregnant wife becomes worried about her husband's sleeping habits. What starts out as some light sleep-talking soon escalates to unexpectedly grotesque behaviour. *Alberta Premiere.*

VINCENT MUST DIE, Directed by Stéphan Castang (France)

Vincent finds himself under attack for no apparent reason overnight. When the phenomenon intensifies, he must run and change his way of life completely.

WHEN EVIL LURKS, Directed by Demián Rugna (Argentina)

The residents of a small rural town discover that a demon is about to be born among them. They desperately try to escape, but it may be too late. *Alberta Premiere.*

2023 SHORTS LINEUP

PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED FILMS & SPECIAL EXPERIENCES

[Alberta Spotlight, Music on Screen and Chad VanGalen](#)

[Canadian Titles in Competition](#)

[HEARTLAND - World Premiere of Season 17 & the 250th Episode](#)

Single tickets for all films go on sale September 7, 2023.

<https://ciff2023.eventive.org/welcome>

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CIFF | Calgary International Film Festival

September 21 - October 1, 2023

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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, bringing audiences together for remarkable and engaging cinematic experiences. CIFF is proud to present its festival from September 21 - October 1, 2023, with in-cinema screenings, celebrating stand-out stories and offering once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

CIFF's Presenting Partner is



CIFF Thanks Their 2023 Public Funders

