

Doc Fortnight 2025
February 20 - March 7, 2025

We Want the Funk! 2025. USA. Directed by Stanley Nelson. 84 min. World premiere

Featuring explosive performances by James Brown, Parliament Funkadelic, Fela Kuti, Labelle, and many others, Stanley Nelson's syncopated history of the worldwide cultural phenomenon is of a piece with all his films, among them *Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution* and *Miles Davis: Birth of the Cool*, interrogating the intersection between culture and politics. Tracing the roots of this underappreciated music genre to West Africa and American folk, gospel, and jazz, and quite significantly to the Black Power movement, Nelson finds a powerful strain of Black independence that sets funk apart from more assimilationist traditions like doo-wop and Motown soul. Indeed, had it not been for funk's infectiously danceable, bass-driven rhythms and intricate chord changes—to say nothing of the spellbindingly sweat-inducing, occasionally even otherworldly onstage presence of a George Clinton or a Sly Stone—we may well not have had Prince, David Byrne, Rakim, or entire musical movements since.

Thu. Feb. 20 7:00 T1

Šedá zóna (Grey Zone). 2024. Slovakia. Directed by Daniela Meressa Rusnoková. In Slovak; English subtitles. 75 min. North American premiere

In *Grey Zone*, the Slovakian filmmaker and photographer Daniela Meressa Rusnoková transmutes the unspokenly common and often traumatic reality of premature birth into a deeply poetic work of art. Interweaving her own experiences of fear, shame, despair, and hope with those of other mothers in similarly anguished circumstances, Rusnoková offers a complex, even wrenching meditation on a woman's right to privacy and bodily autonomy, and on the pervasive fear and neglect in society of children born prematurely or with special needs or disabilities.

preceded by

Contractions. 2024. USA. Directed by Lynne Sachs. 12 min.

Fourteen women and their male allies, their backs to the camera, stand in full force outside a Memphis health clinic that can no longer provide abortion services following the Supreme Court's reversal of *Roe v. Wade*. On the soundtrack, an expert obstetrician-gynecologist and an anonymous activist bear witness to the fearsome uncertainties and dangers that lie ahead.

Fri. Feb. 21, 4:00 T2; Thu. Feb. 27, 6:30 T2

Monólogo colectivo (Collective Monologue). 2024. Argentina/UK. Directed by Jessica Sarah Rinland. With Macarena Santa María Lloyd, María Jose Micale, Alicia Delgado. Courtesy Grasshopper Films. In Spanish; English subtitles. 104 min. US premiere

Jessica Sarah Rinland's *Collective Monologue* is that rarest of breeds, humble yet imaginative, as it depicts the kinship between caregivers and animals in Argentina's zoos and wildlife sanctuaries. Using a variety of technologies—16mm, surveillance, and infrared cameras; a symphony of animal and industrial sounds; and historical ephemera—Rinland creates a tactile experience of a cloistered world beset by rapid change. *Collective Monologue* is also a portrait of the workers who toil in

anonymity yet allow themselves to feel all the love, anguish, and responsibility that goes into any meaningful relationship. The history of cinema is littered with attempts to anthropomorphize animals, either by rationalizing their behavior as projections of our own or even by putting words in their mouths. Rinland makes no such arrogant claims to dominion or certitude. Small wonder, then, that *Collective Monologue* has been a standout at recent festivals, including Locarno, the Viennale, London, and TIFF's Wavelength section.

Fri. Feb. 21, 7:00 T2; Wed. Feb. 26, 4:00 T2

Opt ilustre din Lumea Ideală (Eight Postcards from Utopia). 2024. Romania. Directed by Radu Jude, Christian Ferencz-Flatz. In Romanian; English subtitles. 71 min. US premiere

What happens after the decline and fall of a civilization? In their wickedly satirical montage of Romanian television commercials that were broadcast in the years following Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu's 1989 executions by firing squad, Radu Jude (*Do Not Expect Too Much from the End of the World, Bad Luck Banging, or Loony Porn*) and the philosopher Christian Ferencz-Flatz have created a rhapsody of materialist kitsch. Consumers in the post-communist era, sold on visions of Romania's glorious empirical past and gilded capitalist future, are thrown into a Wild West of get-rich-quick schemes, shiny new toys, and economic shock therapy.

Sleep #2. 2024. Romania. Directed by Radu Jude. No dialogue. 62 min. US premiere

Long obsessed with Andy Warhol as a filmmaker, Conceptual artist, and pop-culture phenom, Radu Jude—in his customary irreverent fashion—gathered up a year's worth of webcam footage from Warhol's gravesite to create this threnody of mourning in America. The film is a brilliant Warholian experiment like no other, tapping into the artist's voyeuristic fascination with life caught unawares (*Sleep*), transcendence (*Blow Job*), and death at its most sensational or ignominious (*Electric Chair, Tunafish Disaster*), while also finding new currents of vicariousness and paranoia in our age of ubiquitous social media and surveillance.

Sat. Feb. 22, 1:00 T2; Wed. Feb. 26, 4:30 T1

Blum: Gospodari svoje budućnosti (Blum: Masters of Their Own Destiny). 2024. Bosnia/Herzegovina. Directed by Jasmila Žbanić. In Bosnian, English; English subtitles. 76 min. North American premiere

Having illuminated Serbian war crimes committed during the breakup of Yugoslavia between 1991 and 2001 in such dramatic fiction films as *Grbavica* (2006) and her Academy Award-nominated *Quo Vadis, Aida?* (2020), Jasmila Žbanić now turns to the documentary form to shed light on an extraordinary historical figure, Emerik Blum. A Bosnian Jew of Hungarian descent, Blum managed in 1944 to escape two of the most notorious concentration camps run by the Croatian fascist Ustaše. He thrived during the early postwar years of Marshal Tito's Yugoslavia by ascending to top ministerial positions in the power sector, leading him to become the founding director of Energoinvest, one of Europe's largest (and still-preeminent) engineering conglomerates. Fascinating archival footage and contemporary testimonials in Žbanić's film reveal Blum to have been a humane boss and a shrewd diplomat, bringing technological advancements and efficiencies together with a considerably profitable understanding of how Yugoslavia's non-alignment policies

could serve his company's international success. In doing so, Blum also helped open to the world a nation that was caught in the geopolitical rivalries of the Cold War. Shortly before his death in 1984, Blum was elected mayor of Sarajevo, and his reputation as an influential philanthropist succeeds him.

Sat. Feb. 22, 4:30 T2; Thu. Feb. 27, 4:30 T2

An Unfinished Film. 2024. Singapore/Germany. Directed by Lou Ye. In Mandarin; English subtitles. Courtesy Film Movement. 105 min. New York premiere

The most radically ambitious feature to come out of Cannes this past year, Lou Ye's *An Unfinished Film* is nothing less than a reinvention of all the Chinese filmmaker's work to date, his response to a world suddenly suspended in time by the outbreak of COVID and increasingly mediated through digital interfaces. Ostensibly the story of a movie crew trapped in a hotel in Wuhan during the earliest days of the pandemic—the images of the phantom city under siege are hauntingly unnerving, to be sure—*An Unfinished Film* creates multiple meanings through layer upon layer of reality (films within films within films). It draws on cell phone, CCTV, and news footage; outtakes and on-set documentary material from Lou Ye's *Sozhou River* (2000), *Spring Fever* (2009), *Mystery* (2012), and *The Shadow Play* (2018); and real-time responses to the unfolding global health crisis, to become a meditation—sometimes playful, sometimes unsettling, always subversive—on invention, improvisation, and chance both in the creative process and in life.

Sat. Feb 22, 6:30 T1

Doc Fortnight Shorts 1: Abstraction as Apprehension

This program, which takes its title from a new animated film by the artist Amy Sillman, shows us that acts of protest and resistance can take many forms. Abstraction, for example, can be a powerful means of persuasion, whether through a disembodied voice (Elisabeth Subrin's *Manal Issa*, 2024) or a mapping of historical erasure (Antoine Chapon's *The Orchards*), an apocalyptic vision of war (Arshia Shakiba's *Who Loves the Sun*), or more distillate evocations of sexual and political violence (Alina Orlov's *The Cavalry* and Helin Çelik's *HABĀ*).

Abstraction as Apprehension. 2025. USA. Directed by Amy Sillman. 1 min.

Published in the *Washington Post* on August 9, 2024—just three months before the presidential election—this animation, made from cut-up ink drawings by the painter Amy Sillman and set to a foreboding score by Marina Rosenfeld, imagines summer as a time of “apprehension,” a time when, as Sillman observes, “roses bloom but their thorns also prick.”

***Manal Issa*, 2024**. 2025. Lebanon/USA. Directed by Elisabeth Subrin. 10 min. World premiere Reuniting Elisabeth Subrin with the Lebanese-French actress Manal Issa (a collaborator on Subrin's award-winning short film *Maria Schneider*, 1983 and gallery installation *The Listening Takes*), this pendant work thrums with tension and political urgency as the artists react to the devastating crisis of the Middle East and to the experience of being silenced.

Al Basateen (The Orchards). 2025. France. Directed by Antoine Chapon. 24 min. North American premiere

Ten years after the civil war in Syria, in the face of a new urban project built on historical erasure, two displaced Syrian residents recall the vibrant community and orchards of Basateen al-Razi, a

Damascus neighborhood that was destroyed by armed forces in 2015 as punishment for the community's uprising against the Assad regime.

The Cavalry. 2024. Canada/USA/Israel. Directed by Alina Orlov. 17 min. New York premiere
Intending to document public protests against the Israeli government in September 2023, Alina Orlov discovers a facility for the training of Israeli police horses, and out of this creates a subtly layered, provocative meditation on obedience and subjugation.

Who Loves the Sun. 2024. Canada. Directed by Arshia Shakiba. 19 min. New York premiere
In northern Syria, a land laid waste by civil war, Mahmood oversees a dangerous makeshift refinery operation that generates fuel and income for the displaced population, providing transportation, heating, and cooking.

HABĀ. 2024. Austria/Spain. Directed by Helin Çelik. 23 min. New York premiere
HABĀ opens in darkness, a darkness pierced by the agitated voice of a young woman, Sahar, who fears for her life. Suddenly, as the recorded phone conversation cuts off, we are led to understand that Sahar has disappeared. Searching for the traces she has left behind, Helin Çelik, a Kurdish artist based in Austria, honors Sahar's memory, and that of so many other victims of femicide and honor killings, in her stirring, poetic essay.

Program 94 min.

Sat. Feb. 22, 7:00 T2; Fri. Feb. 28, 4:30 T1

Doc Fortnight Shorts 2: The Music of Sound

This program brings together some of the most imaginative artists working today—Ephraim Asili (*The Inheritance*), Lila Avilés (*Tótem*), Martí Madaula Esquirol (*The Living Wardrobe*) and a grassroots organization known as the Little Egypt Collective—as they explore the manifold powers of sound and music in film, from Alice Coltrane's jazz harp to a "furious" wind in northern Spain, and from the aural traces of Pyramid Courts, a once-vibrant African American housing project in Cairo, Illinois, to the brassy exuberance of an all-female band from 60 different Indigenous Mexican communities.

Isis & Osiris. 2024. USA. Directed by Ephraim Asili. 18 min. New York premiere
Commissioned for the Hammer Museum's new exhibition *Alice Coltrane, Monument Eternal*, Ephraim Asili's *Isis & Osiris* reimagines the jazz legend's experimentations with harp, the instrument that her husband, John Coltrane, bequeathed to her upon his death in 1967 and that became essential to her spiritual and musical evolution. Alice Coltrane's legacy, and her recently restored concert grand crowned harp, live on in the work of the award-winning contemporary musician Brandee Younger.

On the Battlefield. 2024. USA. Directed by Little Egypt Collective, Theresa Delsoin, Lisa Marie Malloy, J. P. Sniadecki, Ray Whitaker. Courtesy Cinema Guild. 13 min.
"In the southern Illinois region of Little Egypt, a sound recordist revisits the flat fields where once stood Pyramid Courts, the housing projects that formed the heart of the Black community of his hometown, Cairo. His mic gathers sonic ephemera of past, present and future within the grasses, trees and skies.... *On the Battlefield* is an overture celebrating the joy and power of Cairo, a town famous for confluences and collisions: between the North and South, the Mississippi and the Ohio rivers, and Black liberation and white supremacy" (Little Egypt Collective).

Tramuntana. 2025. Spain/USA. Directed by Martí Madaula Esquirol. 18 min. World premiere

“In a remote area of northern Spain, the wind has a name: Tramuntana. Tramuntana takes what it wants—clothes, trees, boats, and the people of the landscape who live with the endless threat of being carried away by its force. This film is a lyrical portrait of this furious wind, woven from the stories passed down by local villagers” (Martí Madaula Esquirol).

MÚSICAS. 2025. Mexico. Directed by Lila Avilés. Courtesy RIMOWA and GEWA. 31 min. World premiere

Lila Avilés, the award-winning writer-director of *Tótem* and *The Chambermaid*, follows Leticia Gallardo and her all-female band Mujeres del Viento Florido, musicians from more than 60 Indigenous communities across Mexico who travel from the mountainous region of Tlahuitoltepec to Oaxaca and Mexico City bringing joyous popular music and a kind of brassy defiance of centuries of persecution.

Program 82 min.

Sun. Feb. 23, 1:30 T2; Wed. Feb. 26, 2:00 T2

Henry Fonda for President. 2024. Austria/Germany. Directed by Alexander Horwath. In English, German; English subtitles. 184 min. Courtesy The Film Desk. New York premiere

The story of Henry Fonda, both on screen and off, is the story of the United States. It’s a story of democratic yearnings and violent shortcomings, traceable not only in the actor’s legendary portrayals of pioneering settler (*Drums Along the Mohawk*), migrant sharecropper (*The Grapes of Wrath*), gullible heir (*The Lady Eve*), and president (*Young Mr. Lincoln*, *Fail-Safe*), but also in his own life as the descendant of a Dutch family in pre-colonial New York, and as a witness to watershed events of the 20th century: the Omaha Race Riots of 1919, the war in the Pacific, the civil rights struggle, and the ascendance of another actor, Ronald Reagan, at the climax of the Cold War. “His face is a picture of opposites in conflict,” John Steinbeck once remarked, and indeed Fonda, perhaps more than any other actor of his generation, brought a sense of moral anguish to nearly every role he played, whether victims of injustice (*You Only Live Once*, *The Wrong Man*), or messengers of salvation (*My Darling Clementine*, *12 Angry Men*) and terror (*The Ox-Bow Incident*, *Once Upon a Time in the West*). Tracing the entwined, complex trajectories of an actor and his nation in Hollywood movie clips, recorded interviews, and a cross-country pilgrimage to significant landmarks, Alexander Horwath—together with Michael Palm and Regina Schlagnitweit—has created a magisterial work of cultural history.

Sun. Feb. 23, 4:00 T2

Doc Fortnight Shorts 3: Manifest

Cauleen Smith’s *Volcano Manifesto* is but one of several contemporary works in this program that use artistically imaginative forms, even humorous ones, to investigate themes of exile, liberation, the erasure of Indigenous societies and cultures, and the legacy of colonialism.

Night Fishing with Ancestors. 2023. Australia. Directed by Karrabing Film Collective. 24 min. US premiere

The artists of Karrabing, a grassroots media group operating out of Belyuen, an Indigenous community in Australia’s Northern Territory, bring a kind of knowing and defiant irreverence to their retelling and refashioning of historical narratives. In *Night Fishing with Ancestors*, they relate a tale

of first encounters, when in the early-mid 18th century Makassar traders set sail from Indonesia to the shores of northern Australia in search of trepang (sea cucumbers), a coveted delicacy, and there made contact with Aboriginal peoples, a momentous and relatively peaceful encounter that left both cultures forever changed. What if history ended there, the film asks, before Captain Cook's arrival in 1770 brought the cruelties of European colonialism in his wake?

Give It Back: Stage Theory. 2023. USA. Directed by New Red Order. 6 min. New York premiere
First presented in the St. Louis art triennial *Counterpublic*, a civically minded exercise in historical and cultural consciousness raising, the Indigenous public secret society New Red Order's *Give It Back: Stage Theory* draws on the panoramic paintings of 19th-century exhibition dioramas and on efforts to restore what remains of Sugarloaf Mount, the last intact Native American mound in the region, much of which was razed to clear space for the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition (St. Louis World's Fair) and its wildly popular Igorot Village, where "savage natives" from the Philippines were put on view.

Volcano Manifesto. 2025. USA. Directed by Cauleen Smith. 50 min. World premiere
Presented as a trilogy for the first time, Cauleen Smith's *Volcano Manifesto* brings together three recent films—*My Caldera* (2022), *Mines to Caves* (2023), and *The Deep West Assembly* (2024)—in an astonishingly ambitious, densely woven meditation on geological and cinematic time, on the wild abyss of volcanoes and the womb of mines and caves (pregnant with meaning!), and on the prelapsarian and the postdiluvian (Deluzian?).

Program 80 min.

Mon. Feb. 24, 4:00 T1; Fri. Feb. 28, 7:30 T1

Endless Cookie. 2025. Canada. Directed by Seth Scriver, Peter Scriver. 97 min. New York premiere

A marvelously inventive throwback to underground comix of Kim Deitch and the antic handdrawn animation of Sally Cruikshank and Suzan Pitt, *Endless Cookie* takes us on a wild ride with the half-brothers Scriver—Peter is the Indigenous kid, Seth the white one—as they journey back to 1980s Toronto and the icily remote regions of Shamattawa, a First Nations community in northern Manitoba, in search of family ties and divides. The hilarious tales, many of them involving chaotic menageries of caribou, dogs, and kids, come fast and furious. But don't be fooled by the Scrivers' candy-coated, polymorphous cartooning and "aw shucks" narration, original though they may be, for *Endless Cookie* is a pretty damning indictment of the way Canada treats its Indigenous peoples.

Mon. Feb. 24, 6:30 T1; Mon. Mar. 3, 4:00 T1

Debut, or Objects of the Field of Debris as Currently Catalogued. 2025. USA. Directed by Julian Castronovo. In English, French; English subtitles. 78 min. North American premiere

One of *Filmmaker* magazine's 25 New Faces of Independent Film in 2024, Julian Castronovo has come out of the gates hot. A graduate of CalArts and Brown (where he graduated from the same semiotics program as Todd Haynes), the Wisconsin-born writer and director turned \$900 and a dream into this globetrotting metafiction that's equal parts Sebald, Pynchon, Welles and Chandler—all while surfing on a computer in his bedroom. The real-life case of Eli Sakhai, a New York gallerist imprisoned for masterminding an elaborate art forgery scheme, is merely the springboard for

Castronovo's own flights of fancy, which involve a doppelgänger, a Chinese performance artist, plenty of red herrings, and a rather ingenious questioning of signs and signifiers, what's real and what's fake, as the filmmaker forges meaning through appropriation, reenactment, invention, and "other forms of duplicity."

preceded by

历历如画(14 Paintings). 2023. China. Directed by Dongnan Chen. In Chinese; English subtitles. 24 min.

Responding to the latest fads in the contemporary art market, China refashioned the village of Dafen, once the go-to place for convincing replicas and forgeries of Western masterpieces produced on an industrial scale, into a hothouse of artistic originality, selling aspiring collectors on custom-made paintings to suit their every need, whether for boardroom, living room, or laundromat. Dongnan Chen documents this remarkable trend in a series of 14 tableaux, questioning the freedoms of Chinese artists and consumers alike.

Mon. Feb. 24, 7:00 T2; Thu. Feb. 27, 4:00 T1

Algo viejo, algo nuevo, algo prestado (Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed). 2024. Argentina/Portugal/Spain. Directed by Hernán Rosselli. In Spanish; English subtitles. 100 min. New York premiere

"I come from a vertiginous country, where the lottery is a major part of reality," the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges once observed. Few are untouched by the *quinela*, the clandestine lottery system, which has operated as a shadow economy since Argentina's very founding, lining the pockets of politicians and police and lifting some families out of poverty while throwing others deeply into debt. Director Hernán Rosselli's own mother, like so many divorcées and widows with young children, once worked in this lottery system, and this experience was the spur to his portrait of one influential family, the Felpetos, who are riven by paranoia and recrimination amid rumors of an imminent raid on their underground sports-betting operation. The best true-crime stories are always told by unreliable narrators—the self-aggrandizing criminals themselves—and Rosselli has woven together these embellishments with home movie and CCTV footage to create a darkling vision of Borgesian delusion.

Tue. Feb. 25, 6:30 T1; Thu. Feb. 27, 2:00 T2

John Lilly and the Earth Coincidence Control Office. 2025. USA. Directed by Michael Almereyda, Courtney Stephens. Narrated by Chloë Sevigny. 90 min. North American premiere

The French director Georges Franju, creator of fascinating, surreal hybrids of science and fiction like *Blood of the Beasts*, once remarked, "I have always been attracted by emanations of strangeness." Michael Almereyda (*Tesla, Experimenter, Hamlet*) and Courtney Stephens (*Invention, Terra Femme, Mixed Signals*) prove worthy heirs to this seductively elusive form of cinema as they delve into the weird and mysterious world of John Lilly through historical footage, home movies, pop culture, and interviews with his contemporaries in science and art. An iconoclastic scientist whose experiments with dolphins and hallucinogens (LSD and ketamine) opened new pathways to

consciousness as well as an understanding of the rights of cetaceans as sentient beings, Lilly also had a penchant for showmanship and fantasy that would lead, later in life, to episodes of self-destruction and folly. In his search for novel forms of communication and otherworldly experience, Lilly invented the isolation tank and, partnering with the anthropologist Gregory Bateson, famously presided over experiments involving a female researcher with a young male dolphin in a partially flooded house—investigations that inspired two very different Hollywood movies, *The Day of the Dolphin* and *Altered States*, as well as more serious inquiries into neurobiology and linguistics. Through Almereyda and Stephens’s own meeting of the minds—and against the “shifting backdrops of 1950s Cold War military science, the drug-infused counterculture of the ’60s, and the environmental vanguard of the ’70s”—we come to recognize in John Lilly’s life and legacy a collective dreamscape of the 20th century.

Tue. Feb. 25, 7:00 T2; Tue. Mar. 4, 4:30 T2

B. F. Skinner Plays Himself. 2025. USA. Directed by Ted Kennedy. 75 min. World premiere.

In his speculative fiction (the 1948 novel *Walden Two*), his scientific research, and his use of television as a bully pulpit, the influential behavioral psychologist B. F. Skinner warned the world of a dystopia, a clockwork orange, in which humans, lacking true free will, could be conditioned to do evil. In *B. F. Skinner Plays Himself*, filmmaker Ted Kennedy turns unseen raw footage from a 1975 documentary profile—a documentary that Skinner himself, appearing rather imperious and evasive, derailed by imposing a set of impossible demands—into an ingenious inquiry into what the scientist meant when he said, “If I am right about human behavior, I have written the autobiography of a nonperson.” By the 1950s, the significance of the “Skinner box”—a colloquialism that seemed to induce nausea in the inventor himself—made its way from the Harvard science labs into widespread consciousness: an operant conditioning chamber used to control the behavior of pigeons through a system of rewards and punishments was taken up in popular culture as a catch-all for our own unwitting enslavement to unseen, nefarious puppetmasters who manipulate our beliefs, loyalties, shopping habits, and even the way we raise our children. Was that paranoia...or prophecy?

Wed. Feb. 26, 7:30 T1; Sun. Mar. 2, 4:00 T1

Bestiari, Erbari, Lapidari (Bestiaries, Herbaria, Lapidaries). 2024. Italy/Switzerland. Directed by Massimo d’Anolfi, Martina Parenti. In English, German, Italian; English subtitles. 206 min. North American premiere

Like some modern-day Linnaeus, the Italian filmmaking duo Massimo d’Anolfi and Martina Parenti have created a breathtaking inquiry into humanity’s relationship with the natural world—animals, plants, and minerals—through three distinct storytelling techniques: *Bestiaries: Cinema Invents New Cages* is a found-footage taxonomy of animals and their treatment throughout the history of cinema; *Herbaria: The Cure* is an observational documentary about the world’s oldest botanical garden, founded in Padua in 1545, that becomes a hymn to the restorative beauty of plants; and *Lapidaries: The Fossils of the Future* is a reflection on the role of stones in war, destruction, and memorialization. Some lines of Wordsworth’s poetry come to mind: “The world is too much with us; late and soon,/Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;—/Little we see in Nature that is ours;/We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!”

Wed. Feb. 26, 6:30 T2; Wed. Mar. 5, 1:00 T2

Middletown. 2025. USA. Directed by Jesse Moss, Amanda McBaine. 113 min. New York premiere

Fresh from Sundance and the centerpiece of *Doc Fortnight 2025*, this latest documentary by the award-winning creators of *Boys State* (2020) and *Girls State* (2024) follows a group of muckraking high school students who uncovered a toxic waste scandal in Upstate New York in the early 1990s and made national news with their DIY video exposé *Garbage, Gangsters, and Greed*. Led by Fred Issek, the teacher who put a powerful new investigative tool—the camcorder—in their hands, the students tenaciously followed leads, coaxed whistleblowers, and confronted stonewalling officials into revealing a corrupt criminal pact between local government and organized crime. Miraculously, Issek safeguarded the raw (and sometimes raucous) footage from *Garbage, Gangsters, and Greed* in his basement, inspiring Jesse Moss and Amanda McBaine (who were themselves teenagers discovering documentary filmmaking in the early 1990s) to reunite the students some 30 years later.

Thu. Feb. 27, 7:00 T1

So Close, So Far. 2025. China. Directed by Zhu Yudi. In Mandarin; English subtitles. 98 min. World premiere

Produced by Ying Liang (*Taking Father Home*) and Richard Liang (*The Road*), Zhu Yudi's almost painfully riveting debut feature chronicles the life of a gambler—the filmmaker's own father—as he casts his family into spiraling debt with each new “can't fail” investment in Chinese building construction. Zhu's documentary project holds the promise of forgiveness and reconciliation, but as his father's estrangement from his wife and sons grows increasingly acrimonious and desperate, one is left wondering about the countless other families who have become casualties of China's real estate bubble.

preceded by

Field Recording. 2024. USA. Written and directed by Quinne Larsen. In English, Chinuk Wawa. 2 min. New York premiere

“A meandering joke about three dreams” involving seashells, uncertainty, and the Chinuk language, this collaboration between two LA-based cartoonists, musicians, and animation filmmakers just made its debut at Sundance.

Fri. Feb. 28, 4:00 T2; Tue. Mar. 4, 6:30 T1

Europe's New Faces. 2025. France/Italy/Switzerland/USA. Directed by Sam Abbas. In English, French, Italian, Arabic, Bengali; English subtitles. 159 min. World premiere

Sam Abbas's extraordinarily moving *Europe's New Faces* confronts the humanitarian crisis of African and South Asian refugees and asylum seekers adrift both in the Mediterranean Sea and in the legal limbo of the EU's broken immigration system. Four years in the making and woven together with music by Bertrand Bonello (*Beast, Nocturama*), the film relates intimate stories of

tragedy and hope as Abbas charts the migrants' flight from Libya (and from the horrors of torture, rape, and slavery), across dangerous waters on a makeshift boat (where they risk drowning or detention), to forge a fragile but vibrant new community in a Paris squat (where they face eviction or worse).

Fri. Feb. 28, 7:00 T2; Sun. Mar 2, 4:30 T2

The Triptych of Mondongo

From the great fabulist Mariano Llinas, the Argentine writer-director-producer-actor who brought us a pair of heroically ambitious mashups of popular movie and literary genres in *Extraordinary Stories* (2008) and *La Flor* (2018), comes this equally sly, inventive experiment in epistemological uncertainty. It is a trilogy of films about creativity, friendship, power, kitsch, mythmaking, portraiture, failure, delusion, egos, and alter-egos. Invited by Mondongo, an iconoclastic Argentine art collective named after a colonial-era tripe stew, to document their creation of a baptistry out of colorful plasticine (in *The Tightrope Walker*), Llinas grows restless, and the collaboration begins to go off the rails as he tries to beat the artists at their own game (in *Portrait of Mondongo*), taking Johannes Itten's seminal study of color theory from 1961, the source of Mondongo's work *Baptisterio de los colores*, as the inspiration for his own poetic and comedic flights of fancy (in *Kunst der Farbe*).

Part 1: *The Tightrope Walker*. 2024. Argentina. Directed by Mariano Llinás. In Spanish; English subtitles. 73 min. North American premiere

Sat. Mar. 1, 1:00 T1

Part 2: *Portrait of Mondongo*. 2024. Argentina. Directed by Mariano Llinás. In Spanish; English subtitles. 124 min. North American premiere

Sat. Mar. 1, 3:30 T1

Part 3: *Kunst der Farbe*. 2024. Argentina. Directed by Mariano Llinás. In Spanish, German; English subtitles. 90 min. North American premiere

Sat. Mar. 1, 7:00 T1

Doc Fortnight Shorts 4: Memory and Desire, Stirring

Desire, like memory, can be a fickle thing, subject to quicksilver changes in mood and taste or even the chemical transformations brought on by illness and aging. The short films in this program, about love and loss, fear and rejection, are hybrids of fiction and nonfiction because, well, that's life.

Prelude. 2025. USA. Directed by Jen DeNike. 6 min. World premiere

An elegy told in the written letters of three women, family photographs, and images of the lush Scottish landscape, *Prelude* fixes in celluloid what is lost in memory. Facing her mother's worsening dementia, the artist Jen DeNike performs a tender mercy by reuniting her, in spirit, with the queer lover with whom she spent an erotic afternoon so long ago.

Blue. 2024. Romania/Portugal/Hungary/Belgium. Directed by Ana Vîjdea. In Romanian, French; and English subtitles. 20 min. North American premiere

Before she became one of *Filmmaker* magazine's 25 New Faces of Independent Cinema in 2017, Ana Vîjdea was a student of the Romanian documentarian Andrei Ujică (*TWST: Things We Said Today*), who turned her on to making nonfiction and hybrid cinema. Vîjdea's latest short, *Blue*, is the

claustrophobic portrait of a family smothered by love, featuring Rodica, a Romanian mother who struggles to make ends meet in Belgium and who always knows what's best for her teenage children.

Marlow Fazon Featuring Yesterday. 2025. USA. Directed by Isaiah Davis. 13 min. World premiere
In the paintings, sculptures, and video projections of his first solo exhibition, *I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream*, at Participant Inc. in 2021, Isaiah Davis used leather, metal, and reclaimed wood, as well as tropes from horrorcore and post punk, to explore themes of machismo, violence, and fetishism. A study on Black masculinity in the Bronx, *Marlow Fazon Featuring Yesterday* is his new theatrical reworking of two installations from that show, *White American Flag* and *Yesterday by Boyz II Men, Performed by C.L.I.T.*

Freak. 2024. USA. Directed by Claire Barnett. 14 min. US premiere
Shot in a faux vérité camcorder style that seems to tremble with unease, *Freak* peers in on a pair of young lovers as they test their faithfulness with an almost religious intensity. What goes on in the privacy of someone else's bedroom should perhaps be left to the imagination, but Claire Barnett's voyeuristic camera lets us in on some dirty little secrets.

School of the Dead. 2025. USA. Directed by Hannah Gross. 33 min. World premiere
Actor and theater artist Hannah Gross (*The Mountain, Mindhunter*) makes her directing debut with this intimate, elliptical hybrid film starring the documentarian Sierra Pettengill (*RIOTSVILLE, USA*). About their collaboration they observe, "'We Need a Dead(wo)man to Begin.' Thus opens the first section of Helene Cixous' guide to writing. It is an injunction heeded in *School of the Dead: a story taught by Sierra's mother, Hannah's grandmother, the writer Clarice Lispector, performance artist Mary Overlie, and one of the world's largest reserves of precambrian fossils. School of the Dead* was written and filmed collaboratively in Special Areas 2, Alberta, Canada. Sierra is an outsider here. Her presence explained through loss; grief's liminal space made literal."
Program 86 min.

Sat. Mar. 1, 1:30 T2; Mon. Mar. 3 4:30 T2

Who Cares. 2024. Belgium/France/Switzerland. Directed by Alexe Poukine. In French; English subtitles. 98 min. US premiere
Can "bedside manner" be taught? Certainly it's in increasingly short supply these days, as overworked and underpaid doctors, nurses, and hospital staff are pressured to prioritize profits and efficiency over compassionate care. But while the quaint image of the country doctor may be a thing of the past, an innovative public hospital in Lausanne, Switzerland, has embarked on an ambitious training program involving the kinds of role-playing scenarios one usually finds in acting rehearsals on stage. Simply by observing these encounters, in the best tradition of documentarians like Frederick Wiseman, Allan King, and Nicolas Phillibert, Alexis Poukine has created drama of the highest order, finding the whole of human emotion in this refreshingly new kind of talking cure.

Sat. Mar. 1, 4:00 T2; Wed. Mar. 5, 4:00 T1

GEN_. 2025. France/Switzerland/Italy. Directed by Gianluca Matarrese. In Italian, English; English subtitles. 104 min. New York premiere

At a Milanese public hospital for gender transition and infertility assistance, one of the few of its kind in Italy, Dr. Maurizio Bini presides over a team of medical professionals who provide humane, ethically responsible care in brave defiance of a conservative government and a profiteering

pharmaceutical industry. Filmmaker Gianluca Matarrese makes all-too-human the abstractions of in-vitro fertilization and gender-affirming therapies as the women and men who pass through Dr. Bini's clinic, seen at their most vulnerable and resilient, seek the fullness of life in their wish to have a child or realize their true identity.

Sat. Mar. 1, 7:30 T2; Thu. Mar. 6, 4:00 T1

The Stimming Pool. 2024. UK. Directed by the Neurocultures Collective, Steven Eastwood. 70 min. New York premiere

What, really, is magic realism? What is “an autistic camera”? In their chimerical film—a mash up of various movie genres that takes on a logic of its own—the Neurocultures Collective (Sam Chown-Ahern, Georgia Bradburn, Benjamin Brown, Robin Elliott-Knowles, and Lucy Walker), in collaboration with the artist-filmmaker Steven Eastwood, have worked with a cast of autistic actors and non-actors and the cinematographer Greg Oke (*Aftersun*) to create a shimmering composite portrait of how they perceive and experience the world. “The curiosity of this [autistic] camera,” they explain, “discovers a relay of subjects who stray through the world, revealing environments often hostile to autistic experience—such as a hectic workplace and a crowded pub—and quiet spaces that offer respite from them. Sometimes the camera wanders off without any guide, finding an ancient woodland, an abandoned testing center, even a fragment from an animated zombie film set in the American Civil War....”

Sun. Mar. 2, 1:00 T1; Tue. Mar. 4, 4:00 T1

Görünür Görünmez: Bir (Oto)Sansür Antolojisi (Seen Unseen: An Anthology of [Auto]Censorship). 2024. Netherlands/Turkey. Directed by Fırat Yücel, Erhan Örs, Hakan Bozyurt, Can Memiş, Sibil Çekmen, Serra Akcan, Nadir Sönmez, belit sağ. In Turkish, English, Kurdish; English subtitles. 66 min. North American premiere

It's a dangerous time to be a journalist, activist, historian, or artist in Turkey. In this politically courageous anthology film, an eight member collective formed by Altyazı Fasikül from Turkey recounts stories of journalistic and artistic repression in contemporary Turkey, questioning the limits of free expression and the risks of (self-)censorship, lawsuits, violence, and imprisonment. Using an arsenal of material—clandestine footage, encrypted communications, eyewitness testimonials, reenactments, and long-suppressed documentation—the filmmakers bear witness to the Gezi protests of 2013, the Armenian genocide, the violation of the rights of political prisoners, and the secret cruising spots of Istanbul where the gay scene is still mostly underground.

Jericho Walk. 2025. USA. Directed by Jim McKay, Jeff Reichert, Fariyah Zaman. In English, Spanish, Arabic, Kreyòl, Tamil, Nahuatl, Kiswahili; no subtitles. 47 min. World premiere

Following a tradition of protest and silent prayer that goes back some 3,000 years, the religious and secular volunteers of the New Sanctuary Coalition make seven revolutions around the New York Immigration Court at 26 Federal Plaza, expressing their solidarity with migrants whose fates hang in the balance. Subjected to myriad indignities and the trauma of knowing they can be separated from their families or deported at any time, these are the victims of an increasingly cruel and unjust immigration system in the United States. Award-winning filmmakers Jim McKay, Jeff Reichert, and

Farihah Zaman, working with the brilliant sound designer Ernst Karel, document a political action that took place in December 2019.

Sun. Mar. 2, 1:30 T2; Wed. Mar. 5, 5:00 T2

Bogancloch. 2024. UK/Germany/Iceland. Directed by Ben Rivers. 86 min. US premiere

Like some long-lost calotype of the pioneering 19th-century Scottish photographers David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson, Ben Rivers's *Bogancloch* is an almost transcendentalist portrait of man and nature, witnessing (and staging) Jake Williams, a forest dweller, as he weathers the Scottish wilds with quiet dignity and rugged self-reliance. A bewitching alchemy exists between the filmmaker and his protagonist—reflected in Rivers's coruscating 16mm celluloid cinematography—as the man we've observed for more than a decade in previous collaborations like *This Land Is My Land*, *More Than Just a Dram*, and *Two Years at Sea* now faces down his own mortality.

Wed. Mar. 5, 7:30 T2; Thu. Mar. 6, 2:00 T2

La Quinta del Sordo. 2022. Spain/Switzerland. Directed by Philippe Parreno. 39 min. US premiere

A special screening bracketed by a live cello performance, Philippe Parreno's *La Quinta del Sordo* imagines an "invisible space": the house outside Madrid, now destroyed, where Francisco Goya created his "Black Paintings" between 1819 and 1824. Using cutting-edge technologies in collaboration with the cinematographer Darius Khondji, editor Ael Dallier Vega, sound designer Nicolas Becker, and pioneering DJ and music producer Lexx, Parreno observes the Black Paintings (now at the Prado museum) in hypnotic, luminous detail, and evokes the aural and spatial environment in which Goya created them as a man in his seventies, when he was ill, deaf, and living in seclusion from the royal court. It was, as Parreno conveys in this work of uncanny science fiction, an "apocalyptic time," one that had recently witnessed the publication of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and the massive eruption of an Indonesian volcano that triggered a change in the global climate.

Mon. Mar. 3, 7:00 T2

Dad's Lullaby. 2024. Ukraine/Romania/Croatia. Directed by Lesia Diak. In Ukrainian; English subtitles. 78 min. US premiere

In her debut feature documentary, Lesia Diak observes 45-year-old Serihy Zinchuk, a Ukrainian soldier who returns from three harrowing years on the Eastern front to a fragile peace with his wife and young sons. In between moments of intimacy, tension, and loneliness, the filmmaker suddenly has the soldier turn the camera on her, and as she opens up about her own childhood experiences and her recent relationship with a war veteran, the emotional complexities of *Dad's Lullaby* deepen further. "Maybe that's one of the reasons why I have such deep empathy for male characters in my film—and for men in general," Diak recalls, "because I witnessed it so closely, and it really broke my heart. When I witnessed similar experiences in the Zinchuk family, for instance why they are not more understanding of each other after this long separation, how they need to learn from scratch how to live their lives together again, it reminded me of many cases of separation, not least the case of my own family."

Mon. Mar. 3, 6:30 T1; Thu. Mar. 6, 4:30 T2

Night Has Come. 2024. Peru. Directed by Paolo Tizón. In Spanish; English subtitles. 95 min. US premiere

The process of converting pimply faced teenagers into killers, so disturbingly depicted in Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket* and Frederick Wiseman's *Basic Training*, is also the theme of Paolo Tizón's portrait of an elite military unit in Peru, a powerful meditation on innocence and experience, and fragility and brutality. Callow young men, escaping girlfriend problems and estranged parents back home, are subjected to grueling physical and mental tests to determine their preparedness for surveillance, counterinsurgency, and combat missions in the VRAEM, Peru's "cocaine valley," a hotbed of drug trafficking and violence. Shot in a sulfurous chiaroscuro, a fog of war, that seems to enshroud the men in moral uncertainty, *Night Has Come* has perhaps quite fittingly earned the admiration of the Portuguese filmmaker Pedro Costa.

preceded by

E-Four Specialist. 2025. USA. Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. 16mm. 3 min. World premiere

Pleas Everson, Jr., a cousin of the award-winning filmmaker and artist Kevin Jerome Everson, recounts his experiences as an armored tank operator during Operation Desert Storm.

Tue. Mar. 4, 7:00 T2; Fri. Mar. 7, 2:00 T2

CHAOS: The Manson Murders. 2025. USA. Directed by Errol Morris. 96 min. Courtesy Netflix. World premiere

Doc Fortnight 2025 comes to a close with the world premiere of Errol Morris's *CHAOS: The Manson Murders*, which posits new theories, and discredits old ones, about the notoriously savage slayings. *Helter Skelter*, *Once upon a Time in Hollywood*, *Charlie Says*, *The Girls*—countless attempts have been made to fictionalize, romanticize, and capitalize on the 1969 killing spree, so much so that from the very start it became almost impossible to separate fact from fantasy about what really happened. Enter Errol Morris, cinema's greatest epistemologist, a detective manqué who reopened cold cases and speculated on coverups in films like *The Thin Blue Line* and *Wormwood*. Here Morris casts doubt on the official story of the Tate-LaBianca murders, spinning a web of conspiracy involving the CIA, LSD, Jack Ruby, the Manson Family, and Vincent Bugliosi.

Thu. Mar. 6, 7:00 T1