

The 19th Annual MV International Film Festival Comes to the MV Film Society

Vineyard Haven, MA—The Martha's Vineyard Film Society is delighted to announce the 19th annual MV International Film Festival. It will be held from Tuesday, September 3rd, through Sunday, September 8th, at The Film Center in Vineyard Haven. The festival will feature 12 films from over ten different countries and a short program of nine international films.

We extend a heartfelt thank you to our sponsors: Vineyard Wind, Mass Cultural Council, Tilton Tents, Cape Air, and Island Housing Trust.

The MV International Film Festival's theme is "Other Places, Other People" to encourage attendees to think broadly and deeply about universal concerns that can unite people. About 90% of the films at the festival are non-US productions, which helps fulfill the goal of promoting cross-cultural understanding through film.

The festival opens on Tuesday, September 8th, with "Mighty Afrin: In the Time of the Floods" at 4:00 pm. 12-year-old Afrin is coming of age on a flood-ravaged island in Bangladesh. Director and cinematographer Angelos Rallis filmed over five years in the disappearing islands along the Brahmaputra River, capturing Afrin's refusal to surrender to the deadly tides. With her home flooded, Afrin travels to Dhaka to find her estranged father. Afrin faces the impossible in a city teeming with danger and mystery as she hopes for a better future.

Opening day ends with "Sabbath Queen" at 7:30 pm and a Q&A with director and producer Sandi DuBowski afterward. This documentary, filmed over 21 years, follows Rabbi Amichai Lau-Lavie, the dynastic heir of 38 generations of Orthodox rabbis and a rebel drag queen. Torn between rejecting or embracing his destiny, he begins a lifelong quest to reinvent religion, champion love, challenge the patriarchy, and stand for peace. The film interrogates what Jewish survival means in the 21st century.

Wednesday at 4:00 pm is "Crossing," acclaimed director Levan Atkin's third feature about identity, acceptance, and overcoming the degrees of separation that divide us. When Lia, a retired teacher living in Georgia, hears that her long-lost niece, Tekla, a transgender woman, has crossed the border into Turkey, she and her young, unpredictable neighbor journey to find her. Exploring the city, they cross paths with Evrim, a transgender lawyer who helps them in their search.

Wednesday evening, "Jokes and Cigarettes" will play at 7:30 pm. Nominated for 11 Goya awards, this biographical drama film tells the true story of Catalan humorist Eugenio Jofra. In the late 1960s in Barcelona, a young Eugenio meets and falls in love with Conchita, a musician. The two begin to play together, but when Conchita leaves for two weeks, she convinces Eugenio to perform solo. Soon, he becomes a phenomenon in stand-up comedy, gaining unexpected success in a depressed Spain desperate to laugh.

The opening night party and film, “Lucky Winners,” will be on Thursday. The party will start at 5:30 pm, and the film will begin at 7:30 pm. The party will be on the beautiful waterfront lawn of Lagoon Pond at the Tisbury Marketplace. Enjoy meeting fellow festival attendees and special guests as you listen to the Eric Johnson jazz quartet, sip on drinks, and enjoy food from Goldie’s Rotisserie Truck and ice cream from Mad Martha’s.

Did you know the chance of winning the lottery is one in 19 million? For the characters in “Lucky Winners,” this dream becomes a nightmare as they quickly learn the consequences of their sudden fortune. In this hilariously dark comedy with many twists and turns, Directors Maxime Govare and Romain Choay explore social dynamics and the reversals of fortunes.

The Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner “Sujo” will play on Friday at 4:00 pm. After his father is murdered by his own cartel, four-year-old Sujo is taken in and protected by his aunt in the isolated countryside. Now a teenager, Sujo moves to Mexico City, where he is tempted to join the local cartel and is forced to face his father’s legacy.

Friday concludes at 7:30 with the Short Film Juried Competition. From more than 250 entries, the festival selection committee has chosen nine finalists from five different countries. We will screen each short film, and our jury will select the “Best Overall” film at the end of the festival. The jury consists of Diana Barrett (founder, Fledgling Fund), Sarah Kernochan (two-time Oscar-winner for short documentary), David Helpern (producer, director, screenwriter), and Liam LoPinto 2023 Short Film Jury Prize, “The Old Young Crow.”

Saturday starts with the award-winning film “Agent of Happiness” at 1:00 pm. How can you measure happiness? Bhutan invented Gross National Happiness to do just that. Follow two happiness agents as they travel the Bhutanese Himalayas, surveying citizens to see if they are happy. As they meet people from all walks of life, the agents begin to discover what happiness means to the people to the people of Bhutan and what it means for themselves.

“The Quiet Maid” from Spain continues the festival Saturday at 4:00 pm. Ana, a Colombian maid, starts working at a luxurious mansion in Costa Brava for a family of art collectors. She works day and night, hoping for a continued contract beyond the summer. But when those hopes are dashed, Ana decides to enjoy the summer and broaden her horizons with the help of a maid from the neighboring house.

Saturday closes with “Gondola” at 7:30 pm. Director Viet Helmer, known for his no-dialogue style, tells a beautiful love story set in the Georgian mountains. Two female cable car operators fall in love as they pass each other in their gondolas each day. Helmer previously attended the 2019 International Film Festival with his film “The Bra.” Cineurope says the film “comes together to create a highly accomplished, light-hearted, joyful, timeless ode to freedom.”

The festival’s final day begins with “Aidos Buenos Aires” at 12:00 pm. It’s 2001 in Argentina, and Julio Farber, a shoe salesman and bandoneon player, is trying to keep his head above water. He earns less and less every month, so he decides to leave Buenos Aires forever. But before he

can book a plane ticket, the government freezes every bank account in the country, sparking violent protests. Julio gets hit by a car, and his last possession of value is damaged by a foul-mouthed taxi driver who may just steal his heart. A film not just about a specific historical event in Argentina but “the ache of yearning, the weight of societal failings, and the contradictory beauty that persists even amidst struggle,” says *Loud and Clear Reviews*.

Sunday continues with Senegal’s 2024 Oscar submission for best international feature, “Banal & Adama,” at 2:15 pm. In a remote village in northern Senegal, Banal and Adama are in love. However, duty dictates that Adama must accept the role of chief despite not wanting responsibility, and Banal doesn’t want children with the ongoing drought and hardships. The couple must contend with the village’s disapproval as strange and supernatural events begin to occur.

The festival ends with the closing night film “Sidonie in Japan” at 4:30 and a party at Fish MV immediately afterward. In this feature, the eponymous Sidonie, played by Isabelle Huppert, was a once highly acclaimed French writer who travels to Japan to celebrate the translation of her debut novel. Much of her time in Japan is spent with her publisher. As they grow closer, Sidonie’s feelings become complicated when the ghost of her recently deceased husband begins visiting her. A sly comedy about letting go of grief and finding a new lease on life.

The closing night party will be on the Fish MV porch immediately following the film to celebrate the end of another wonderful festival. Enjoy food, drinks, and live music from the John O’Toole band!

Visit mvfilmsociety.com for more information and to purchase tickets or a festival pass for the Martha’s Vineyard International Film Festival at the MV Film Center.

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