



9th Annual

Footcandle

FILM FESTIVAL

Welcome!

Welcome to the 2023 Footcandle Film Festival! We are happy to be holding this year's festival both in-person with film screenings at the Hickory Community Theatre again as well as offering the films virtually for others across the state of North Carolina.

This year's festival contains a total of forty-six films, all carefully selected after a screening process that took place between November 2022 and June 2023. Our festival received over 400 film submissions to review from around the world! Thank you to both of our screening committees for their hard work in watching and reviewing all of these films so we could work the list down to the 46 you will see this weekend.

This festival wouldn't happen without the hard work of our festival planning committee, our screening committee, the numerous dedicated volunteers, and the film-loving community of the Footcandle Film Society.

Thanks to everyone joining us this weekend... enjoy the shows!



Chris Frye
Co-Festival Director



Alan Jackson
Co-Festival Director

2023 Footcandle Trophies

Continuing in our tradition of providing our winners with a true **FOOTCANDLE** to take home with them, we have another version of our award for this year's festival created by a regional artist.

Our awards were designed and handcrafted by **Chris Tullar**. Chris graduated from Lenoir-Rhyne College in 1996. He has since lived in various places across North Carolina occupying his time by painting a mural for a Lexus dealership in Raleigh, creating an articulated model of an owl's claw for a Wake Forest biology professor, and programming a system for monitoring the humidity at the National Archive in our nation's capitol. He currently resides with his wife, chickens, and a cat in Swannanoa where he creates art (like this year's trophy) and plays gigs in the Asheville area with his band Carpal Tullar.



Schedule

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16TH

Carolina Theater, Downtown Hickory

7:00pm Spotlight Screening - The Last of the Mohicans

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18TH

Drendel Auditorium at the SALT Block

7:00pm "Coming Attractions" Opening Night Event • Free Event

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19TH

Carolina Theater, Downtown Hickory

7:00pm Footcandle Presents: Short Film Collection • Free Event
(Gabriella, A Twistful of Dollars, Santuario & Sister)

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20TH

Carolina Theater, Downtown Hickory

7:00pm Footcandle Presents: Feature Film Grant Recipient • Free Event
(The Problem of the Hero)

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21ST

Hickory Community Theatre

4:30pm & 7:00pm Youth International Film Showcase • Free Event

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22ND

Hickory Community Theatre

11:00am Trapped Balloon (Narrative, Japan, subtitled, 103 mins.)
1:30pm King Coal (Documentary, United States, 85 mins.)
3:30pm B-Side: For Taylor (Narrative, United States, 99 mins.)
7:00pm Short Film Showcase & Night Gallery
includes a Short Film Showcase followed by a reception and a Night Gallery of late-night short film selections starting at approximately 10pm

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23RD

Hickory Community Theatre

10:00am Love & Irony (Narrative, United States, 111 mins.)
1:00pm A Binding Truth (Documentary, United States, 110 mins.)
3:30pm Hundreds of Beavers (Narrative, United States, 108 mins.)
7:00pm Stage & Screen Event @ the Hum
featuring a live musical performance from **The Local Boys** • followed by an outdoor screening of **O Brother, Where Art Thou?**

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24TH

Hickory Community Theatre

10:00am Sunday Morning Shorts (mixture of narrative & documentary shorts, 92 mins.)
12:30pm Subject (Documentary, United States, 93 mins.)
2:30pm Dusty & Stones (Documentary, United States, 83 mins.)
4:30pm Shadow of a Wheel (Documentary, United States, 132 mins.)
8:00pm Festival Award Ceremony • Free Event

Sponsors & Supporters

Many special organizations have provided enormous support for this year's film festival. Thanks to their financial support, we were able to use the beautiful Hickory Community Theatre for our screenings and provide travel stipends and hotel accommodations to our visiting filmmakers, among many other things. Please join us in saying **thank you** to our supporting organizations!

United Arts Council OF CATAWBA COUNTY

This project was supported by the United Arts Council of Catawba County through the North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, with funding from the State of North Carolina from the National Endowment for the Arts.



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MARTIN ♦ STARNES
& ASSOCIATES, CPAs, P.A.



Friends of the Festival

The Footcandle Film Society is made up of over 500 individuals passionate about arts and cultural activities in our area and that have been strong supporters of the organization since its inception. Please help us in thanking these individuals for providing additional support to this year's Footcandle Film Festival:

Jeanne Abbott
Christine Almeida
Rick Berry
John & Connie Bools
Lynn Carlton
Cavelle Davolio & Elizabeth Davolio
Jeremy & Katie Fisher
Randy Fritz
Boyd & Elin George

Sandra & David Hood
Erin & Rob Hooks
Louise Humphrey
Kent Kerley & Thom Hutchins
Margaret & Tony Jackson
David & Pam Leonetti
Laura Levinson
Paul & Marie Martino
Ellen & Ron Sellers
Gwen Veazey

To those that have contributed more recently and are not listed above, and all others that supported us this year, please accept our thanks!

Special Thanks

The festival co-directors would like to pass along special thanks to the following individuals for helping make this year's event a reality:

Our **Footcandle Film Festival Planning Committee**: Lynn Carlton, Candi Ford-Snow, Bryna Frye, Kelley Hurley, Kent Kerley, and Cathy Wells.

Our **Screening Committee**, for watching over 400 film submissions in helping us determine this year's selections: Harry Andrews, Nick Carlton, Flavia Dietrich, Chris Frye, Delene Huggins, Thom Hutchens, Dave Leonetti, and Melinda Wallrichs.

Our judges for the fifth year of our **Scriptwriting Competition**: Jeanne Abbott, Chris Frye, Michael Frye, Sue Ellen Frye, Bryce Reese, and Emily Sengupta.

Our many **Festival Volunteers**, for helping throughout the weekend.

The **Hickory Farmers Market, Conover Farmers Market** and **Morganton Farmers Market** for providing us with booth space to set up and talk with visitors about the film festival.

All the vendors that provided food for our **Filmmaker Lounge**: Krispy Kreme, Crescent Moon, Cafe Gouda, the Hickory Tavern, Chick-Fil-A, and others!

And, of course, our **film society members** for your ongoing excitement and enthusiasm over the past fourteen years!

“Coming Attractions” Opening Night Event

Monday, Sept. 18th, 7:00pm • Drendel Auditorium, SALT Block

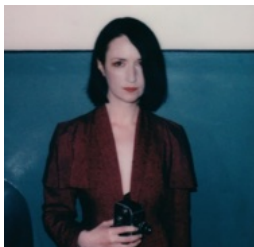
In an effort to help recognize the writing aspect of the filmmaking process, the Footcandle Film Festival conducted a Scriptwriting Competition.

Script submissions from filmmakers around the world were accepted earlier in the year, and a committee reviewed all applications and selected the two winners for this year’s award. The script submissions were for feature-length films, with all submissions being scripts for films that have yet to be produced at this time.

The two winners of this year’s competition will receive their awards at the “**Coming Attractions**” event on Monday, **September 18th, at 7:00pm** at the Drendel Auditorium on the SALT Block. The event will consist of the authors discussing their work and a live performance of a portion of their scripts.

In addition, contestants of the first-ever **FilmLAB** 48-Hour Filmmaking Contents will premier their work during this event.

2023 Scriptwriting Winners



Sarah Daly for her script, DANCING BEYOND

Sarah Daly AKA Metaphorest is a prolific Irish musician and screenwriter whose work has been performed by Gary Oldman, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Anne Hathaway and Channing Tatum.

Sarah is behind the unique language featured in the Morgan M. Morgansen short films and has gained recognition for her supernatural and fantastical stories. Lord of Tears is her second produced feature film and she has three further features in development.



Alicia Dutton for her script, BOUND FOR THE OUTER BANKS

Alicia Dutton is the award-winning author of plays “Southern Sirens,” “Belles Take the Big Easy,” “Bound for the Outer Banks,” and musicals, “Parading Crazy on the Porch,” “Derby Girls,” “Going Home to Dixie,” “Strippers,” “Wedding Belles,” and “A Carolina Christmas” (also known as Christmas in Dixie.) She is a proud member of the Dramatists Guild. In addition to her plays and musicals, she has also authored several books and screenplays. She has won numerous awards for her screenplays in many festivals including The Charleston International Film Festival, The Gullah International Film Festival, The Austin Revolution Film Festival, Broad Humor in Los Angeles, The Lindsey Film Festival, The Boomtown Music and Film Festival, and the Beverly Hills Film Festival. Her screenplay Southern Sirens received a reading by The Bechdel Group in New York City.

Footcandle Presents: Short Film Collection

Tuesday, Sept. 19th, 7:00pm • Carolina Theater

Over the past several years of the festival, ticket proceeds have been used to create a Filmmaker Grant Fund to assist Carolinas-based filmmakers on their upcoming projects. On Tuesday, September 19th, we are pleased to share four short films that were all produced using either funds and/or promotional efforts from the Footcandle Film Society. This event is free and open to the public, and a chance to meet these emerging filmmakers.



Gabriela

Director: Evelyn Lorena

Narrative • USA • 18 min.

A young undocumented Guatemalan woman dreams of joining a Country Club swim team in the American South.



Twistful of Dollars

Director: Kevin Murray

Narrative • USA • 18 min.

In this visually rich short film, two rival balloon twisters engage in an epic duel at a kid's birthday party, with hilarious and magical results. It's like high noon — with balloons!



Santaurio

Directors: Pilar Timpone & Christine Delp

Documentary • USA • 26 min.

In Greensboro, NC, a small church community offers sanctuary to Juana Ortega, a Guatemalan grandmother threatened with deportation after 25 years of living and working in the United States.



Sister

Director: Shane Andries

Narrative • USA • 15 min.

“sister” is an inspired story based on the life and death of Meg Jenkins Locke’s sister, Mary Mallette Jenkins Wood, who battled breast cancer and died in 2021. Mary Mallette’s diagnosis, surgery, and treatments were in Catawba County, and she loved this community of healthcare professionals, friends, and caretakers.

Footcandle Presents: Feature Film

Wednesday, Sept. 20th, 7:00pm • Carolina Theater

Over the past several years of the festival, ticket proceeds have been used to create a Filmmaker Grant Fund to assist Carolinas-based filmmakers on their upcoming projects. On Wednesday, September 20th, we are pleased to share a feature-length film that was produced using funds from the Footcandle Film Society. This event is free and open to the public, and a chance to meet the filmmakers afterwards.

The Problem of the Hero

Wednesday, Sept. 20th, 7:00pm



Director: Shaun Dozier

Narrative • United States • 108 minutes

March, 1941, the St. James Theatre in New York. On the eve of opening night, a difference of opinion over a single page of the script threatens an impasse between two literary giants of the 20th Century. As rehearsal continues around Richard Wright and Paul Green, led by the mercurial Orson Welles, the ensuing argument - delving into race, class, politics, and personal story - seems destined to dissolve the writers' friendship.

Intended for Mature Audiences (contains some adult language and themes).

Festival Requests

- * Please arrive early for your film, as any open seats may be sold to the general public starting 15 minutes before the film's start time.
- * Please silence your mobile phones and devices. Please refrain from using those devices while films are playing.
- * Please, no talking during film screenings.
- * Please stay through the credits of the film when it is done. We like to make sure everyone involved in the production of a film is recognized, not just the names listed in the opening credits.

Youth International Film Showcase

Thurs, Sept. 21st, 4:30pm and 7:00pm • Hickory Community Theatre

We are happy to be featuring a special event during this year's Footcandle Film Festival for the second year... The **Youth International Film Showcase**, hosted by the Footcandle Film Society and the **Greater Hickory International Council**!



This festival, formally known as the Children's International Film Festival, had served as a showcase of short films from around the world presented throughout the school systems in Catawba County. This year, this special collection of films is to be shown at the Hickory Community Theatre as part of a free and public event.



The 2023 Youth International Film Showcase is designed to help expose school-age children to short films from around the world.

The films selected for this year's Youth International Film Showcase were chosen from over 100 submissions from both new and career filmmakers from a variety of countries. The films were to be no more than 15 minutes in length and should cater to an audience of approximately 9 to 14 year olds and their families.

There will be two awards presented as part of this year's Youth International Film Festival:

- One film will receive an award for **BEST YOUTH SHORT FILM** as determined by a panel of judges consisting of members of the Greater Hickory International Council.
- Another will receive the **AUDIENCE FAVORITE YOUTH SHORT FILM** award as determined by audience voting during the event.

Both awards will be presented during the Closing Awards Ceremony on Sunday, September 24th at the Hickory Community Theatre.



**GREATER HICKORY
INTERNATIONAL
COUNCIL**

We want to thank the Greater Hickory International Council for their partnership and support of this year's Youth International Film Showcase!

Youth International Film Showcase

Thursday, Sept. 21st, 4:30pm and 7:00pm



Adventure in Other Seas

Directors: Diego López & Daniel Anaya • Spain • 5 minutes

Timy, a little fish from the North Sea, decided to run away from home looking for adventure to the Coral Sea, where he had to adapt quickly and to learn what he really needed to be happy.



Andy & Kaliope

Directors: Crystal Arnette & Catriona Rubenis-Stevens • United States • 6 minutes

When Andy must move to yet another foster home, his case worker helps him connect to his inner superhero.



Bo and Trash

Director: Tatiana Skorlupkina • Spain • 11 minutes

Our planet is choking in garbage. That garbage is transforming into a live embodied force that is invading and upsetting the delicate balance of life on Earth. Bo the dog, a brave chemist, invents a magical solution which can overcome this dreadful monster.



Deaf Giants

Director: Peter Hoffman Kimball • United States • 10 minutes

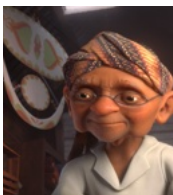
In 1901 there were at least four deaf major league baseball players. And yet, in the last hundred years there have only been a total of two deaf players. This film explores what was so different about the situation of deaf baseball players at the turn of the century.



Fly

Director: Joe Quesada • United States • 18 minutes

Seventeen-year-old Maria Carbonell loves to make up stories of extraordinary characters, astonishing adventures, and unimaginable worlds. Her latest may be her most fantastical... Her own.



Kaghati

Directors: Stanley Soendoro & Amanda Phoebe Jayapurna • Indonesia • 3 minutes

A young girl visits her grandfather's home in rural Indonesia for the first time, and through exploring the kitemaker's craft, she dives into her cultural roots and discovers a new, exciting way to connect.



Life

Director: Murshidul Alam Bhuiyan • Bangladesh • 3 minutes

It's easy to sustain life, but it's difficult to do so with beauty and safety. To have a beautiful and safe life, everything should be pure. So water, which is another name for life, should also be pure.



Meet Cute

Director: Shawn Patrick Tilling • Canada • 3 minutes

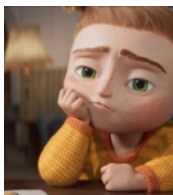
Inspired by the silent films of the 1920s, Meet Cute tells the story of a fateful day between two people waiting for the bus.



My Little Caregiver

Directors: Sam Solomon & Goldmond Fong • USA • 15 min.

A reflection on the power of a loving mother-son relationship through tough circumstances, blending the memories of harsh reality with childlike fantasy through the lens of a 10 year old boy.



The Most Boring Granny in the Whole World

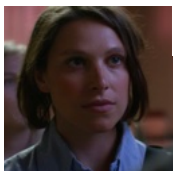
Director: Damaris Zielke • Germany • 7 minutes

Greta has the most boring grandma in the whole world. When she falls asleep on the sofa, Greta gets the idea to play “funeral” with her grandma. This confronts them with some questions they didn’t ask themselves before.

Short Film Showcase

Friday, Sept. 22nd, 7:00pm

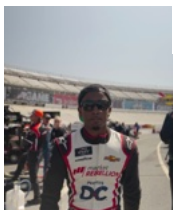
NOTE: The early evening short films are intended for ages Teen and older.



Census

Director: James Mackenzie • Narrative • USA • 9 min.

In the near future, a woman secures a freelance job as a government surveyor. Is her experience good, bad, or neutral?



Outside Line

Director: Jack Gordon • Documentary • USA • 17 minutes

As one of the only Black drivers and having no connections in the sport, Rajah Caruth is a relative outsider in NASCAR. Nevertheless, he has forged an unlikely path from virtual racing to the sport's penultimate series, building stardom on the way.

Short Film Showcase (continued)



Kafka's Doll

Director: Bruno Simões • **Narrative** • **Portugal** • **11 minutes**

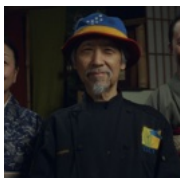
Inspired by an unproven myth, Kafka's Doll is an animated short film that blends factual research, fiction, fantasy and myth into a single heart-warming story about loss.



Sammy Without Strings

Director: Ralph Parker, III • **Narrative** • **USA** • **16 min.**

When a Black puppet named Sammy, performing at the hands of his malevolent Puppeteer, falls in love with a Woman in his audience, he sets his sights on freedom from his strings to live a life of dignity and humanity with her.



Becoming Yamazushi

Director: George Yamazawa • **Documentary** • **USA** • **14 min.**

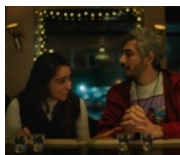
A son honoring family legacy discovers how art can be a champion for healing, lost history, and cultural liberation, as he takes us on the poetic journey of Yamazushi.



The Record

Director: Jonathan Laskar • **Narrative** • **Switzerland** • **9 min.**

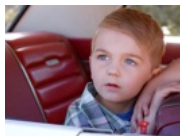
An antique musical instrument dealer obsessively plays a magical vinyl record that “reads your mind and plays your lost memories.” Even the forgotten ones.



Cousins

Director: Karina Dandashi • **Narrative** • **USA** • **13 min.**

Two cousins born in separate countries reunite in Brooklyn when a run-in with an ex turns the night into a mission of revenge.



First Memory

Director: Chip Hackler • **Narrative** • **USA** • **1 min.**

Memory's a funny thing.



Take Me Home

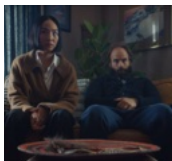
Director: Liz Sargent • **Narrative** • **USA** • **16 min.**

After their mother's death, a cognitively disabled woman and her estranged sister must learn to communicate in order to move forward.

Night Gallery

Friday, Sept. 22nd, approximately 10:00pm

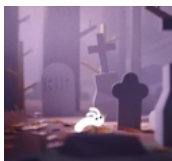
These late-night shorts are intended for Mature Audiences (contains adult language and situations).



The Breakthrough

Director: Daniel Sinclair • Narrative • USA • 14 min.

Jane and Teddy are on the brink of divorce – but when their marital problems come to a sticking point, they have an unexpected breakthrough.



Regular Rabbit

Director: Eoin Duffy • Narrative • Ireland • 8 min.

A Regular Rabbit battles a comically absurd onslaught of disinformation. He is not the nightmare being told. He is as shown, a regular ol' stupid rabbit doing his usual rabbit stuff!



Legs

Director: Celine Cotran • Narrative • United Kingdom • 16 min.

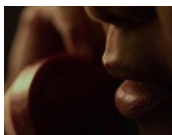
Joy and Harry are trying to have a baby. After swallowing a spider in her sleep, Joy develops an insatiable appetite for flies. It dawns on her that there may be more than one way of becoming a mother.



Letter to a Pig

Director: Tal Kantor • Narrative • France • 17 min.

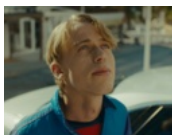
A Holocaust survivor reads a letter he wrote to the pig who saved his life. A young schoolgirl hears his testimony in class and sinks into a twisted dream.



Scam

Director: Julie Sharbutt • Narrative • USA • 8 min.

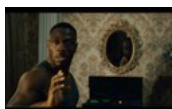
When a phone scammer makes one last late night call, the woman on the other end gives her much more than she bargained for.



Ben

Director: Miki Durán • Narrative • Spain • 11 min.

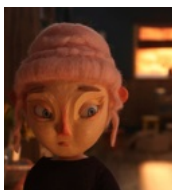
Ben has been training all year for the most important competition of his life.



Incomplete

Director: Zoey Martinson • Narrative • USA • 10 mins.

Evan is on house arrest in a haunted house. Or so he thinks?



Curiosa

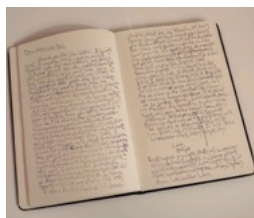
Directors: Tessa Moulton-Milewska • Narrative • United Kingdom • 10 mins.

The story of overly curious Mary, who visits her boyfriend's flat for the first time, just to discover it's been stripped bare of all personal belongings. After being denied an explanation, she climbs into his head.

Sunday Morning Shorts

Sunday, Sept. 24th, 10:00am

This round of short films is intended for Mature Audiences (contains adult language and situations).

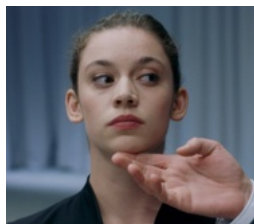


Wilderness Therapy

Director: Nate Wiggins

Documentary • USA • 28 min.

Venturing into the controversial world of wilderness therapy programs, this film explores the delicate balance between the beneficial power of nature and the negative encounters experienced by participants during their time in camp.



Made of Flesh

Directors: Florence Rochat & S  r  na Robin

Narrative • France • 15 min.

Lucie is getting ready to start her training day to become a hostess at a motor show, with hopes of being noticed by a prestigious brand. However, she is unaware that the training has only one true goal: to make her into a premium woman.



Island

Director: Michael Faust

Documentary • Israel • 8 min.

This film recounts the history of a small secluded island over the course of several millennia to reveal a telling lesson about human nature. From the island's rise to riches to its ultimate fall into ruins, the film explores the island's different chapters over time.



The Father, The Son and The Rav Kalmenson

Director: Dayan D. Oualid

Narrative • France • 15 min.

Yoel is an Orthodox Jew that takes his son to honor Shabbat in the synagogue. The rabbi, Rav Kalmenson, will challenge Yoel by announcing to him that his son "is lighting up".



In Her Absence

Director: Clarke Phillips

Documentary • USA • 22 min.

When a federal agent who worked on stopping the opioid epidemic loses his wife to an overdose, he and his family must learn to live in her absence.

Feature Films

Trapped Balloon

Friday, Sept 22nd, 11:00am



Director: Hiroyuki Miyagawa

Narrative • Japan • Subtitled • 104 minutes

A young woman heads to an island to see her father whom she's been estranged from since her mother's death. A mysterious man living on the island holds the key to understanding her father & her past. **Intended for Teen Audiences (contains mild adult language and situations).**

King Coal

Friday, Sept 22nd, 1:30pm



Director: Elaine Sheldon

Documentary • United States • 80 minutes

A lyrical tapestry of a place and people, KING COAL, meditates on the complex history and future of the coal industry, the communities it has shaped, and the myths it has created. **Intended for Mature Audiences (contains adult themes).**

B-Side: For Taylor

Friday, Sept 22nd, 3:30pm



Director: Christina YR Lim

Narrative • United States • 100 minutes

A year after the sudden death of her mother, Taylor, a 14-year-old adoptee has secretly grown obsessed with finding her birth family in Korea. **Intended for Teen Audiences (contain some adult language and themes).**

Feature Films *(continued)*

Love & Irony

Saturday, Sept 23rd, 10:00am



Director: John A. Biesack

Narrative • United States • 111 minutes

The search for an authentic life leads an existential bike mechanic to discover the universal truths and transformative powers of love in this clever romantic comedy.

Intended for Teen Audiences (contains some adult language and situations).

A Binding Truth

Saturday, Sept 23rd, 1:00pm



Director: Louise A. Woehrle

Documentary • United States • 92 minutes

They were high school classmates in Charlotte, NC in 1965. One black, one white, who shared a last name but little else. Their story is America's story - one of slavery's legacy and our current racial divide. It's a story of healing and shows a way forward as the two former classmates explore their binding truth. **Intended for Teen audiences (for some adult themes.)**

Hundreds of Beavers

Saturday, Sept 23rd, 3:30pm



Director: Mike Cheslik

Narrative • United States • 108 minutes

In this comedic, quirky B&W tale told with no dialog set in the 19th-century, a failed applejack salesman must go from zero to hero to find love and become the greatest fur trapper by defeating hundreds of beavers. **Intended for Mature Audiences (contains violence & adult situations).**

Subject

Sunday, Sept 24th, 12:30pm



Directors: Jennifer Tiexiera and Camilla Hall

Documentary • United States • 90 minutes

A film that explores the life-altering experience of sharing one's life on screen through the participants of five acclaimed documentaries. **Intended for Mature Audiences (contains adult language and themes).**

Dusty & Stones

Sunday, Sept 24th, 2:30pm



Director: Jesse Rudoy

Documentary • United States • 83 minutes

A chronicle of the remarkable ride of cousins Gazi “Dusty” Simelane & Linda “Stones” Msibi, a determined duo of struggling country singers from the tiny African Kingdom of Eswatini, who long for their big break. **Intended for Teen Audiences (contains some adult language and themes).**

Shadow of a Wheel

Sunday, Sept 24th, 4:30pm



Director: Paul Bonesteel

Documentary • United States • 132 minutes

In the summer of 1982, 31 teenagers from North Carolina attempted a daunting coast-to-coast 3,600 mile bicycle journey across the U.S. to raise money and awareness for Multiple Sclerosis. An ensemble cast tells this poignant and powerful story, encapsulating the era, the adventure and life itself. **Intended for Teen Audiences or older (contains some adult language and themes).**

Awards

There will be five officially judged awards presented at this year's Footcandle Film Festival:

- Best Narrative Feature Film**
- Best Narrative Short Film**
- Best Documentary Feature Film**
- Best Documentary Short Film**
- Best Youth Short Film**



A group of judges were invited to evaluate films for each award category. Judges were asked to watch and review all of the selections for their category and to provide their ratings for each film to the festival directors. The ratings were averaged across the panel of judges to determine a winner for each award category. Short films are considered any film 40 minutes in length or less; all films over 40 minutes are considered features.

In addition to the five judged award categories, the Footcandle Film Festival is letting all attendees play a part in five additional awards:

- Audience Favorite Narrative Feature**
- Audience Favorite Narrative Short**
- Audience Favorite Documentary Feature**
- Audience Favorite Documentary Short**
- Audience Favorite Youth Short Film**

At each screening of a film in contention throughout the festival weekend attendees will have a chance to provide a rating for the film afterwards. Ratings will be collected throughout the festival and the highest average scored films in each category will receive awards.

All ten awards will be presented at the Closing Awards Ceremony on Sunday evening. We hope to see you at the Sunday night ceremony, as it will be a special ending to the festival and a time to recognize all of the filmmakers from the weekend.

Judges

Each film category has a three-person panel of judges that reviewed each finalist and rated it on various qualities and criteria. These judges are made up of filmmakers, producers, writers, and creative community leaders, with several of them being former Footcandle Film Festival winners.

Narrative Feature Film Judges



Lindsey Dunn is a film critic from Durham, NC. She believes in the power of stories to change hearts and minds better than any logical argument. She still pinches herself daily that her dream of being a film critic finally came true. In addition to reviewing films, she enjoys interviewing filmmakers and curating movie recommendations for others. Although she enjoys many types of movies, her wheelhouse is classic movies (or those that pay homage to them), suspense, and films in which characters wrestle with faith. Her other interests include mixology, midcentury modern design and architecture, eating homemade popcorn, and listening to podcasts about faith and culture.



Manning Franks has always loved and cherished the medium of film since he could check-out VHS tapes at his local library. Cut to years later, Manning now works as an Emmy-nominated photojournalist and critic for WFMY News 2 in Greensboro, N.C. — his hometown. In his spare time, he hosts an Oscars-themed podcast for Take 3 Productions called “Gone With The Win.”



Ted Stenson is a writer and filmmaker based out of Calgary, Alberta. He graduated from the MFA Theatre program at the University of Calgary with a degree in Playwriting. His movies and plays have been screened and staged across Canada and the United States. His film “Events Transpiring Before, During, And After A High School Basketball Game” played the 2021 Footcandle Film Festival.

Judges (continued)

Documentary Feature Films Judges



Dave Simonds directed the documentaries "The Hoy Boys," (which won the Audience Favorite Feature Award at the Footcandle Film Festival in 2022) "Cherry Cottage: the Story of an American House," and "Confronting Climate Change" with Elizabeth Kolbert. As an actor, Simonds worked extensively in New York, and regionally at the Williamstown Theatre Festival, The Long Wharf Theatre, and The Portland Stage Company. He was a familiar face in the indie-film renaissance of the late 80s and early 90s. His screen credits include Amateur, The Book of Life, Signs and Wonders, The Fish in a Bathtub, Henry Fool, B Movie, among many others.

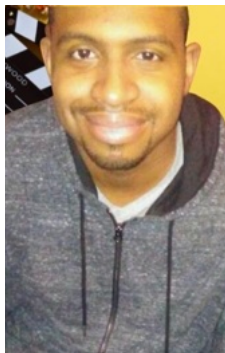


Noel Manning's love of cinema transcends genre, culture and language. Film, television, music and pop culture journalist since 1989. Member of the Critics' Choice Association, Online Film and Television Association, Southeastern Film Critics Association, and the NC Film Critics Association. Founder and member of film festival boards and host for entertainment shows for TV, radio and online audiences. Manning has over two-decades of experience as an adjunct professor of film, communications & new media studies. His favorite goof-out celebrity experience was mugging it up with Oscar-winner Taika Waititi at a Critics Choice Awards ceremony.



As a Black woman with a complex family history related to race, **Rachael DeCruz's** work centers on how race impacts people's ability to navigate systems. Nine, her feature film debut, will examine the deep bond between two men who met in prison and how their love gives them the strength to fight for justice. The film was an official selection of the 2021 Big Sky Pitch and received a development grant from the Ford Foundation. DeCruz is the director of The Panola Project, a short film illuminating how an often-overlooked rural Black community comes together in creative ways to survive. The film was released with The New Yorker, featured on MSNBC's The Last Word and Morning Joe and written about in numerous publications including USA Today, The Los Angeles Times, and People. The Panola Project won the Audience Favorite Short Award at the 2022 Footcandle Film Festival.

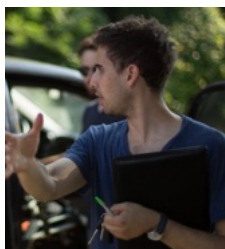
Narrative Short Film Judges



Anthony Holden is a Detroit-transplant cinephile/tv junkie who loves to watch films, write them and write about them. His favorite film of all time is Kill Bill - don't ask which one, he can't watch them separately! Anthony's film and TV reviews can be found on 8bitwaffles.com. In his spare time he's an avid podcaster, currently serving as the co-creator/co-host of two shows: "Double Feature: Versus" (doublefeaturevs.com), a show where two cinephiles clash heads on two competing films with a single connection or theme and "The Vault" (goldtelevision.net/thevault), a Detroit-stationed podcast discussing the A-Z's of cinema, from filmmaking to film reviews to industry updates.



A publicist by trade, **Susan Béjar** has always liked short and seductive stories. After studying a lot of screenwriting and a little of direction, she has written and directed 5 short films. "Joselyn" and "Chicas Day", have won around 50 awards and have been selected by more than 100 festivals. Her most widely seen film "21 con 40" has over 19 million views on YouTube. Her short film "Distances" won the Best Narrative Short Film at the 2022 Footcandle Film Festival.



Ivan Kander works as a freelance filmmaker, writer, motion designer, and video producer based out of Washington, DC, where he runs Lucky 9 Studios. Kander past clients include: Vox, the Verge, Discovery, GE & the Washington Post, the Smithsonian and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. His film "Minyan Duty" played the 2022 Footcandle Film Festival.

Judges (continued)

Documentary Short Films Judges



Nicole Ackman is a writer and podcaster based in Raleigh, NC. She is a Staff Writer at AwardsWatch, a regular contributor to FF2 Media and Ready Steady Cut and runs a history-themed Substack newsletter. Her previous bylines include Next Best Picture, Oscars Central, Wealth of Geeks, and Culturess. Additionally, she is a theatre critic for BroadwayWorld Raleigh, having previously written for BroadwayWorld UK. She is also the co-host of Petticoats & Poppies: History Girls at the Movies, a podcast in which she and her co-host examine period dramas from the perspective of people who have worked in both history and film.



Chihiro Wimbush is an award-winning, Emmy-nominated documentary filmmaker. He is a former Bay Area Video Coalition Fellow, Sundance Creative Producing Institute Fellow, Big Tell storyteller, and a participant in the Oakland Hatchlab, and the inaugural On Being Gathering hosted by Krista Tippett. His film "Ricochet" won the Best Documentary Feature Film at the 2022 Footcandle Film Festival.



Brian Gersten is an award-winning documentary filmmaker, editor, and teacher originally from Chicago. His films have gone on to screen in ten different countries and at dozens of notable film festivals around the globe. Much of Brian's work can be seen on the likes of PBS, Amazon Prime, Kanopy, and The Atlantic. His films have been written about in Forbes, Film Inquiry, and The AV Club. Gersten also works as a freelance editor. In 2019, Brian edited the feature documentary "Searching for Mr. Rugoff", which premiered at DOC NYC. Currently, Brian is editing the feature documentary, "Radical Wolfe", which is about the life and work of author Tom Wolfe.

The Footcandle Film Society

In 2008, Chris Frye and Alan Jackson decided they were tired of standing in the parking lot of the local multiplex to have a discussion of the film they just saw... so they formed the Footcandle Film Society to help promote unique film screening experiences and discussions.

The film society has grown from its humble beginnings, showing *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND* to a crowd of 25 people in February 2008, to currently boasting over 500 members.

The society holds monthly screenings of award-nominated, independent, foreign language and documentary films for its members, with a discussion of each film immediately afterwards. The membership also enjoys an annual Oscar Party to watch the Academy Award telecast and have a friendly contest to see who can guess the most awards correctly.

Over the past thirteen years the film society has had the privilege of partnering with many outstanding community organizations — such as the Lenoir-Rhyne Visiting Writers Series, Catawba County Co-Op Extension, the Greater Hickory International Council, OUTRight Youth of Catawba Valley, and the Hickory Community Theatre, among others — to arrange collaborative film screenings or special film-related events that are meant to educate, inform, and prompt discussion in our community.

In addition to the annual Footcandle Film Festival, the film society also partnered with the Greater Hickory International Council for the **Children's International Film Festival** from 2018 to 2021. This festival collected selections of short films from various countries around the world and provided them, along with notes and talking points on each film, to all three school systems, private schools and homeschool groups in Catawba County. This has now become the Youth International Film Showcase and is an important part of the 2023 festival.



For more information about the Footcandle Film Society, please visit the website at [**www.footcandle.org**](http://www.footcandle.org).

FOOTCANDLE
FILM SOCIETY



**The Footcandle Film Festival will return.
September 20th-29th, 2024.**