



DURANGO FILM
DURANGO INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL

19th Annual Durango Independent Film Festival
February 28-March 3

2024 PRESS KIT

For high res images or other information, please contact Cindy Coleman
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FEATURES

End of the Rope

Director: Charlie Griak

charliegriak@gmail.com | (612) 986-8101

Trailer: <https://www.endoftheropefilm.com/>

End of the Rope is a crime thriller set in McKenzie County, ND, in 1931. Based on the infamous Charles Bannon case, it follows Sheriff CA Jacobson and States Attorney Sam Taylor as they try to find out what happened to the Haven Family. When accusations turn to the Haven's troubled farmhand, Charles Bannon, the two not only have to solve a potential murder but try to hold a whole town together that seems dangerously set on vengeance.

Other Features:

Loren & Rose

Scarlet Winter

Two Lives in Pittsburgh

Upon Waking



For When You Get Lost

Director: Michelle Steffes

msteffes@me.com | (818) 419-1905

Trailer: <https://youtu.be/33JVisbUKbM>

In this coming-of-middle-age dark comedy, June Stevenson drags her estranged sisters on a road trip up the Pacific Coast in order to make amends with their difficult father before he dies. Along the way, she distracts herself with picturesque landmarks, craft breweries, and picturesque men in craft breweries, but ultimately, she must face the fact that there's more to her family's fractures than she thought. Inspired by a real road trip.



Writer/Producer/Actor Jennifer Sorenson is a returning filmmaker; she was here in 2016 with her film "Orphan is the New Orange". She will be attending the Festival. Alethea Root (see below) is also a producer on this film.

Good Side Of Bad

Director: Alethea Root

gsobfilm@gmail.com | (323) 497-6309

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=emxxx7OwdSs>

Three adult siblings are brought back together after a shocking diagnosis forces them to confront harsh future realities regarding the mental state of one of their own. A raw and intimate look into what it means to be a family navigating the waters of mental illness, *Good Side Of Bad* film dives into humanity's dark places while illuminating the love, laughter, and light discovered when you reconnect with those closest to you. Based on the bestselling book *The Good Side of Bad*.

Alethea is a returning filmmaker; she was here in 2012 with her film "Part Time Fabulous". She will be attending the Festival and is the spotlight director in Profiles of Independent Film. Actor Jules Bruff will also be in attendance.



DOCUMENTARIES

Feature Documentaries:

Fracking the System: Colorado's Oil and Gas Wars
The Humbler - Danny Gatton
LOVELY JACKSON
Mom & Dad's Nipple Factory
UNDIVIDE US

Showing Together
Translators | Town Destroyer

Showing Together
Soñadora | Midnight Monument

Beyond Prison Bars Doc Shorts
Andrew After Angola
Baseball Behind Barbed Wire
Seeds of Change

Environmental Warriors Doc Shorts
Earthbound: Nzambi Matee
The Bear Coast
Abundance: The Farmlink Story

Get by with a Little Help from Your Friends Doc Shorts
BY MY SIDE | Why Not Us
Astor Place, The American Dream
Dumpster Archeology | OMEN

Earthbound: Nzambi Matee

Environmental Warriors Doc Shorts

Director: Farhoud Meybodi
farhoud@ritualarts.co | (310) 497-9977
Trailer: <https://www.ritualarts.co/>

Earthbound follows the life and achievements of Nzambi Matee, a Kenyan innovator and entrepreneur who is tackling the plastic waste epidemic in her hometown of Nairobi.

Filmmaker in attendance



The Humbler - Danny Gatton

Director: Virginia Quesada
vq@video-culture.org | (301) 706-7933
Trailer: <https://youtu.be/jiDRYIHSjw0>

Who is Danny Gatton? If you are a guitarist you probably already know. Danny's mastery of blues, jazz, rock, country, bluegrass and rockabilly so overwhelmed other guitarists, they called him "The Humbler." He synthesized all genres of American music and then spoke that music back in his own singular voice. Our film is the first in-depth exploration of the life, music and legacy of a troubled genius. Though he never got the accolades he deserved during his short life, Danny was often called "The World's Greatest Unknown Guitarist".

Filmmaker in attendance



UNDIVIDE US

Director: Kristi Kendall
kristi@kristikendall.com | (347) 853-3621
Trailer: <https://youtu.be/ss8xKhxk9Gw>

America is at a crossroads where politicians, traditional media, and social media fan the flames of toxic partisanship and division. Through the intimate lens of six focus groups across three American cities, *UNDIVIDE US* explores the potential for healing conversation and the rediscovery of the values of local community, mutual respect, and democracy. Aiming to awaken the silenced majority that seeks solutions rather than strife, *UNDIVIDE US* is not just a documentary; it's a timely and urgent plea to reclaim the power of open discourse and community.

Filmmaker in attendance



SHORTS

Shorts Showing with Features

I Drum To A Different Puzzle
The Visitor

BECAUSE I LOVE YOU

Ups & Downs Shorts

Director: Bob Celli
delano.celli@gmail.com | (212) 289-7287
Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/836581818>

Life is turned upside for a passionate couple when jealousy leads them down a road of no return.

This will be Bob's third time attending the Festival; he was here in 2020 with his film "The Keeper" and in 2023 with "MY OVER THERE."

Ghost Town

Ups & Downs Shorts

Director: Molly Muse
mollymuse2019@gmail.com | (503) 267-0132
Trailer: <https://filmfreeway.com/GhostTown23>

Two friends lumber into a ghost town to break a curse.

Filmmaker in attendance; edited by John Eckenrode, former Durangatang, who will also be attending

It Was Up There

For "Mature" Audiences Shorts

Director: Jesse Willmon
jesse.willmon@gmail.com | (646) 285-8947
<http://itwasupthere.com/>

The true story of a couple who see something unexplainable in the night sky.

Also playing in the REEL Learning Intermediate Program

True story from northern New Mexico; filmmaker in attendance.

Flights of Fancy Shorts

Afungus Amongus | Dial Up | CLONE | nubbinwood | Night Light
Picture Day | Aikāne | I'm Hip | Homologies | Pour Generation

For "Mature" Audiences Shorts

It Was Up There | Not the Same Clarence | The Life of Lester Wink
Past Prologue | HOPE | Barney & Herb

Ups & Downs Shorts

Proof of Concept | Tina | Ghost Town | Service Me | 1201
BECAUSE I LOVE YOU | Blue Hour



ADVENTURE

Showing Together

Tread Setters | My Alaskan Journey

Perseverance Adventure Program

Emergence: An Alaska Film | Body of a Line
Letting Go of the Grade | Dreama Team

Reaching New Heights Adventure Shorts

El Valle Del Silencio | Still Alive | The Polar Star

Dreama Team

Perseverance Adventure Program

Directors: Chad Weber & Steve Vanderheide

info@dreamateamfilm.com | (309) 264-2132

Trailer: <https://youtu.be/ahjxHY7jlws>

A film about mom and amateur runner, Dreama Walton, as she competes in America's biggest ultra-marathon: The Western States 100. As she pushes to finish the historic race in under 24 hours, she draws inspiration from painful experiences in her youth, and the positive influence of others in the present. Dreama is determined to prove to her daughter the value of doing hard things.



The Polar Star

Reaching New Heights Adventure Shorts

Director: Cody Townsend

codytownsend@gmail.com | (831) 818-1045

<https://skithefifty.com/>

The most remote classic of The FIFTY, The Polar Star is an iconic ski line. Though the goal of the journey is to ski The Polar Star, a plethora of steep, challenging and beautiful ski lines await in Baffin...and a lesson in just what makes Vivian Bruchez one of the world's best ski mountaineers and steep skiers comes to light.



Tread Setters

Director: Louis Arévalo

louis@scenicbylines.com | (801) 884-3905

Four individuals push past the stereotypes and expectations of disability by embracing who they are, focusing on the abilities they have, and growing an inclusive and supportive community to achieve great things. Follow along as they set out to ride the entire White Rim Trail in a single day to encourage a more inclusive cycling community.



NATIVE CINEMA

Cultural Conservation Native Cinema Shorts

Meow Loses a Button | They Call Me Water
Footprints of Our Ancestors: Mesa Verde Foundation
Coming Home: A Story of Seeds | Paatuwaqatsi Water is Life
Indigenous Resistance: Now and Then | Keepers of the Land

Traditional Challenges & Resilience

Native Cinema Program

Dating Indian | I AM HOME | Rabbit Stories ᐃᓄᓂ ᑕᑭᓂᑦᑕᑭᑦ
The Electric Indian

Bones of Crows

Director: Marie Clements
michele@mcm2.ca | (250) 888-8944
Trailer: <https://youtu.be/qFbvLYFZbxM>

Removed from their family home and forced into Canada's residential school system, Cree musical prodigy, Aline, and her siblings are plunged into a struggle for survival. *Bones of Crows* is Aline's journey from child to matriarch, a moving multi-generational epic of resilience, survival and the pursuit of justice.



The Electric Indian

Traditional Challenges & Resilience

Native Cinema Program

Director: Leya Hale
lhale@tpt.org | (612) 987-2002
Trailer: <https://www.tpt.org/the-electric-indian/video/the-electric-indian-trailer-zvzziq/>

A documentary from filmmaker Leya Hale, *The Electric Indian* follows Ojibwe hockey legend, Henry Boucha. A stand-out hockey star from Warroad, Minnesota, Boucha impressed on the ice from the 1969 Minnesota High School Hockey Tournament to the 1972 Olympics to the NHL, but an on-ice assault and injury ended his athletic career and unexpectedly led to a journey of healing and cultural reclamation.



Keepers of the Land

(Cxlax kinua qnts waxvwisiqv / Balbaalm áa laxyuup)

Cultural Conservation Native Cinema Shorts

Directors: Deirdre Leowinata & Douglas Neasloss
deirdre.leowinata@gmail.com | (250) 957-7644
Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/803754586>

One small First Nation on Canada's West Coast is taking big steps to reclaim power in a territory still rich with life by reviving their stories and the laws within them.



Filmmaker in attendance

FAMILY PROGRAM

Family Program:

No Place Is Home | The Rainbow Dung Beetle
SWING TO THE MOON | Brave Girl | The Astronaut
Career Day | nubbinwood | MANNY | A Tree Once Grew Here
23.4 Degrees

A Tree Once Grew Here

Director: John Semerad

johnnie@quietman.com | (914) 582-2908

We are reminded that we must rebalance harmony and nurture our planet, because we can no longer afford not to.

Also playing in the REEL Learning Middle School Program



Career Day

Directors: Jason Robinson & Chris Hooper

robinsonjason@mac.com | (310) 384-6296

A former '90s pop star reunites and performs with his old boy band for his daughter's elementary school Career Day.



No Place Is Home

Directors: Gabi Faye & Dina Laura

dina.laura@gmail.com | (917) 602-6733

Trailer: <https://youtu.be/B6dnCyG9wtY>

An estranged father and son take a camping trip in an attempt to reconcile their relationship and come to terms with their grief.



Filmmaker in attendance



Other Films in the Reel Learning Program:

A Tree Once Grew Here | The Astronaut | Brave Girl
I AM HOME | I Drum To A Different Puzzle | I'm Hip
It Was Up There | MANNY | Meow Loses a Button | Night Light
Pour Generation | Soñadora | SWING TO THE MOON
They Call Me Water | The Visitor | Why Not Us

I Drum To A Different Puzzle

Director: Lisa Dunning

write2bryan@yahoo.com | (703) 932-9803

Noah's friend, Faith, has some personal feelings related to her autism spectrum disorder. Faith overhears her mother say something to a neighbor, then Faith makes a request to Noah.

Also showing with "Two Lives in Pittsburgh"



Meow Loses a Button

Director: Melissa Henry

melissa.henry@gmail.com | (505) 870-1126

Where could my button be?

Also playing in Cultural Conservation Native Cinema Shorts



The Visitor

Director: Bahram Pourghadiri

bahram@seeplaydream.com | (796) 879-8786

A mysterious young woman tries to convince a middle-aged man to pay attention to an important issue.

Also showing with Loren & Rose





Durango Arts Center | Friday 3pm



“Profiles of Independent Film” was created to view and discuss the bodies of work of up-and-coming independent filmmakers past, present, and future. Through interviews and viewing films we discover the different paths of being an independent filmmaker.

Join Festival Programming Director Cornelius Hurley as he sits down with Director Alethea Root for an in-depth look into her extensive body of work. Extended Q&A.

Alethea Root is an award-winning director and producer. Alethea got her start in film production as a production designer. She is best known for her work on the Academy Award-winning short film, “West Bank Story,” and the Emmy-winning web show, “Dr. Horrible’s Sing-Along Blog.” Her recent feature film, *Good Side Of Bad*, was the opening night film at the prestigious Dance with Films Festival in Los Angeles and has gone on to win several awards. Her first feature film, *Part Time Fabulous*, was featured at DIFF in 2012. Alethea is part of the production team for *For When You Get Lost*, which is also screening at DIFF this year. She has several features in development and is committed to telling paradigm-shifting stories that help elevate the human condition.



Native Lens Media Fellowship Film Exposure Program Showcase

Durango Arts Center | Sat 5pm | Free
**Reception preceding the screening, 3pm at Sorrel Sky Gallery,
free and open to the public**

Native Lens, Vision Maker Media, and the Durango Independent Film Festival welcome the 2024 Native Lens Media Fellows: Jules Joe, Nika Arce, Eva Bear, Ellyse Fredericks, Evan Smith, Sommer Lopez, Tonya Tolino, Sierra Buffalohead, Tyler Socé.

The Native Lens Media Fellowship is a month-long series of workshops for American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians aged 18-24 who are interested in learning the crafts of video production and digital storytelling. Join the Fellows for the premiere of their short films followed by a screening of Indigenous documentaries from Native Lens and the Colorado Office of Film, Television and Media's Film Exposure Program.

The Film Exposure Program is a workforce development program that trains high school students to write, produce, film and edit a short film. "A Place to Explore" was created by Southern Ute youth filmmakers Elliott Hendren, DeWayne Hendren and Nathan Hendren in the summer of 2023.