

2026 PROGRAM

FEATURING
**FILMS WORTH
BRAVING THE COLD.**



**INTERNATIONAL
FESTIVAL *of*
WINTER
CINEMA**

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FESTIVAL DATES



February 6 - 8 and 13 - 15, 2026



Sir Wilfrid Laurier Park

13221 Beuna Vista Rd NW
Picnic Site #2



FIND US



@ifwintercinema



ifwc.ca



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

IFWC is held every year on Indigenous land in Treaty 6 territory. This place – Amiskwacîwâskahikan, on the banks of the river kisiskâciwani-sîpiy – is a traditional meeting ground, gathering place, and travelling route of the Nêhiyawak, Anishinaabe, Niitsitapi, Métis, Dene, and Nakota Sioux. These peoples whose histories, languages, and cultures are the basis of our connection to this land.

This is land settled, travelled, and cared for by Indigenous Peoples since time immemorial to the present day. Treaties have been affirmed. Treaties have been broken. We acknowledge these truths as a reminder that we are all Treaty People bound to one another by the spirit and intent of Treaty.



THANK YOU TO OUR 2026 SPONSORS



ABOUT IFWC

The International Festival of Winter Cinema (IFWC) was founded in 2017 in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. We are the world's only completely free outdoor winter film festival.

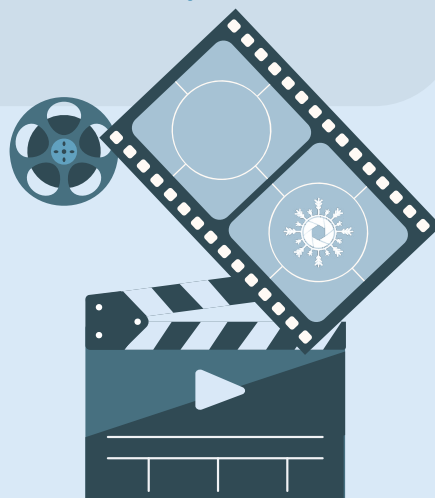
We aim to be the premier international juried and competitive film festival featuring unique perspectives and experiences presented through winter-themed cinema and audiovisual art.

IFWC provides an opportunity to see and experience a curated program of the best winter films from around the world. We screen outside on our giant Snow Screen!



Our Volunteers

At IFWC, our volunteers are the heart of the festival. Their time, energy, and enthusiasm make everything possible. We are deeply grateful for their dedication, flexibility, and passion for film and community. Thank you for helping bring IFWC to life and for being such an essential part of our festival experience.



IFWC Team

At IFWC, we are a passionate group of individuals united by our love for cinema and commitment to celebrating diverse voices in film. Our team is a dynamic blend of filmmakers, creatives, and industry professionals, all working together to curate a festival experience that inspires and connects audiences.



Festival Team

Adam Bentley

Festival Director

Anne Billingsley

Marketing

Courtney Nguyen

Communication & Design

Nooshin Firoozbakhsh

Fund Development

Diana Mejia

Programmer

Yana Alfaro

Site Coordinator

Lucia Ortiz

Volunteer Coordinator



Board of Directors



Adam Bentley
Alexander Sorochan
Bar Lavy
Courtney Nguyen
Janita Frantsi

Natalie Ovics
Rochelle Harasimov
Sarah Von Gertzen
Tammy Salzl



TIPS FOR ENJOYING THE FESTIVAL



IFWC Tent

Escape the winter chill and step into the warmth of our cozy (and did we mention heated) festival tent! Browse our exciting silent auction, featuring various items, experiences, and local gems. Need some movie snacks? Treat yourself to items from our delicious concession with all items for purchase by donation.

Whether you're warming up from the cold or simply soaking in the lively atmosphere, our heated tent is the perfect place to recharge and connect with fellow film lovers.



Festival Tips



Stay Warm: While our heated tent and cozy firepits will warm you up, be sure to dress in layers and wear your warmest winter gear to fully enjoy our screenings at the Snow Screen.

Watch Your Step: The festival grounds can be ICY so please use caution when walking around the site! We recommend using crampons and/or wearing winter boots with good grip.



FILM SCHEDULE



WHY WE DO IT

FEBRUARY 6, 2026

Runtime

Beauty in a Fall * * * * * 27:00

Swabber * * * * * 15:03

300 * * * * * 20:26

Trans-Taiga * * * * * 29:56



PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

FEBRUARY 7, 2026

Runtime

Niitsitapi * * * * * 14:00

Shaped by Land * * * * * 16:23

Numb Fingers * * * * * 20:00

Consecution * * * * * 02:47

**Shackleton: The
Greatest Story** * * * * * 44:04



FAMILY TIES

FEBRUARY 8, 2026

Runtime

M. L'Esperance * * * * * 09:00

Buddy Check for Jesse * * * * 29:24

Straight and in a Circle * * * * 04:24

The Shape thats Left Behind * 13:04

The Land Keeps Watch * * * * 07:52

Call Your Dad * * * * * 26:58



SERIOUSLY SPORTY

FEBRUARY 13, 2026

Runtime

Sin Bin: Third Study * * * * * **06:13**

Skeletons Serious Kids * * * **1:50:00**



OH CANADA

FEBRUARY 14, 2026

Runtime

Preserve Our Culture * * * * **05:38**

Healing Dolls * * * * * * * * **06:52**

Fragmentation * * * * * * * * **09:00**

Ice & Iron * * * * * * * * * * **29:10**

The Space We Create * * * * **34:58**

Beyond the Image * * * * * * **22:00**



FEMALE FILMMAKERS

FEBRUARY 15, 2026

Runtime

Elevate * * * * * * * * * * **17:23**

Quiet and Still-Or? * * * * * * **03:11**

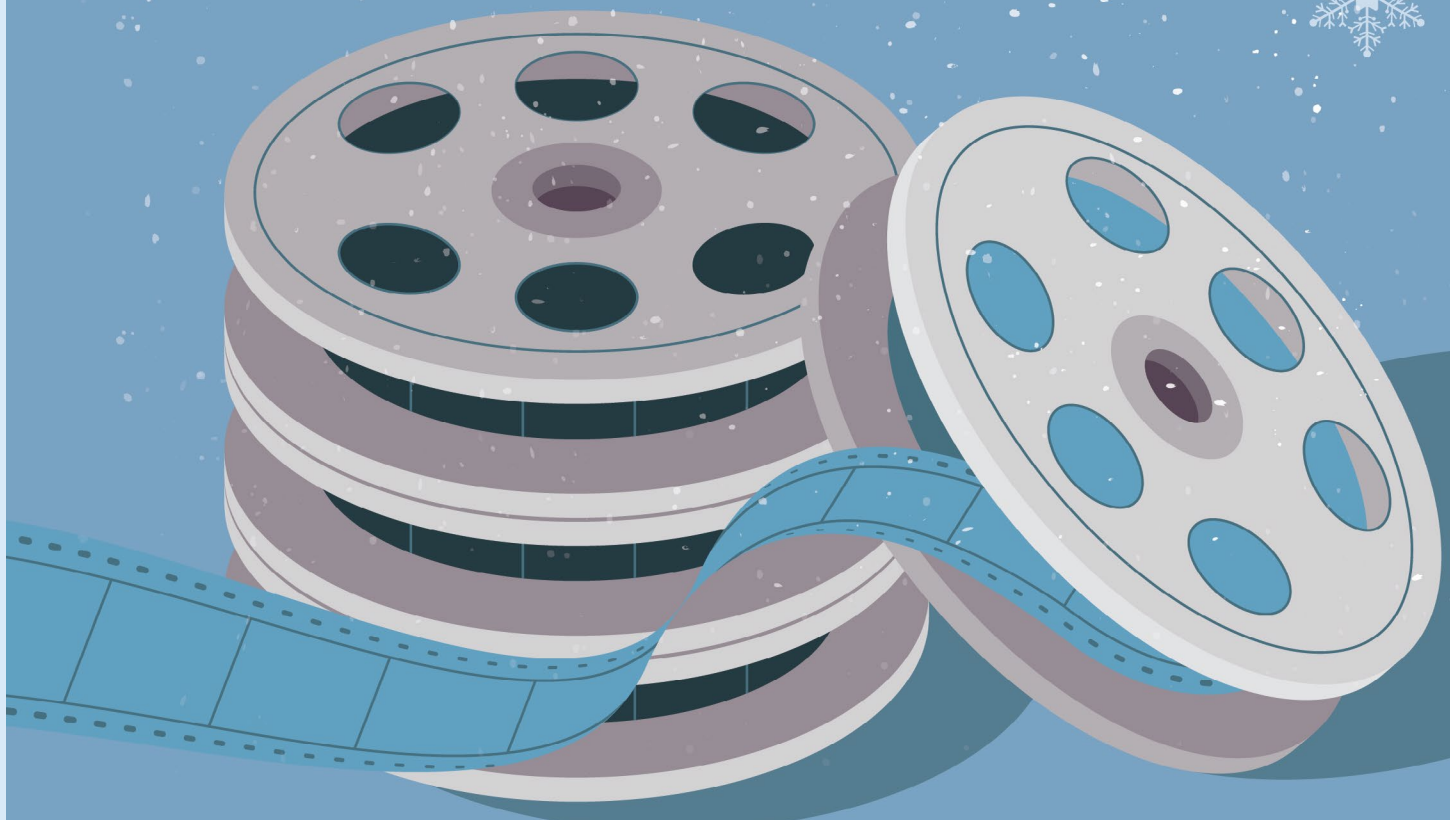
To All Who are Concerned * * **04:38**

Beauty in a Fall * * * * * * * **27:00**

Antarctica Unearthed * * * **1:03:01**



FILM SYNOPSSES





300

DIRECTED BY LIAM ABBOTT

Miles Clark has always lived for the mountains. At 46 years old, he's carved out a life as a pro skier and mountain guide, chasing peaks and purpose across the globe. But for over a decade, one goal still loomed over him: ski 300 days in a single year. Weather, injuries, and life always got in the way. Until everything changed.

In January 2023, Miles lost his beloved mother, the person who gave him his grit, stubbornness, and fire. In the wake of overwhelming grief, he turned to the only place that ever made sense: the mountains. That winter brought record-breaking snow and a chance.

What began as a personal challenge became something deeper: a journey of healing, reflection, and rediscovery. From California to Antarctica, Argentina to Alaska, Miles skied through pain, joy, exhaustion, and awe. He found that the mountains weren't just his playground, they were his sanctuary. And this wasn't the first time they had saved him... 300 is the story of a man who refused to let grief define him. It's about chasing a dream, not for accolades, but for meaning. And it's about how skiing, day after day, turn after turn, can stitch a broken heart back together.



Runtime

20:26





Antarctica Unearthed

DIRECTED BY ARIEL WALDMAN

If you think you know Antarctica as a barren and lifeless place, except for a few penguins, think again. Dive into “Antarctica Unearthed”, where National Geographic Explorer Ariel Waldman takes you on a breathtaking journey to the most extreme and alien landscape on Earth—the Dry Valleys of Antarctica. Once called “the valley of the dead” by early explorers, this stunning documentary peels back the icy layers of the planet’s harshest ecosystem, revealing the ingenious survival tactics of its tiny, elusive animal inhabitants. The documentary follows Ariel’s two-month expedition into the continent’s most remote areas—so remote that she must attempt to film it, and its microscopic wildlife, entirely by herself. By combining majestic aerial views and groundbreaking microscopic imagery, the series highlights the paradox of Antarctica as a frozen desert teeming with life, a true testament to the tenacity of nature.

Runtime

1:03:01





Beauty in a Fall

DIRECTED BY NAT SEGAL

From a young age Julianna didn't feel like she belonged. However, upon finding the weird and wonderful world of rock climbing, she dedicated her life to mountain sports and becoming an IFMGA guide. Despite her love for the work, existing in the mountain guiding industry led her to feel unsafe publicly expressing her true gender identity. It was only after a life changing accident and a series of serious wake up calls that she took time off guiding and started to seek support and therapy for cPTSD.

Join Julianna on her journey to self-discovery in the face of an industry that struggles to accept folks who currently fall into the margins of mountain culture. Visiting the mountain-scapes that were her livelihood, she confronts her past experiences and her journey's cost.

After having taken a step back from her role in the mountain community, Julianna is now ready to share her story and use her experience to advocate for an inclusive future for the guiding community.



Runtime

27:00



Beyond the Image

DIRECTED BY JEFF THOMAS,
RYAN REGEHR



Canada

Runtime

22:00

"Beyond the Image" explores the powerful role photography plays in shaping the identity of skiing and its surrounding culture. Following seven Whistler-based photographers throughout the 2025 season, the film delves into the intricate connection between photography, the sport, and the mountain environment. Through documentary-style "day-in-the-life" sequences, we follow these photographers navigating Whistler Blackcomb's varied terrain—chasing light through alpine and forest landscapes, capturing storm days, and documenting dream moments from the park to the backcountry. Each vignette highlights how photography shapes not just the past and present but continues to evolve and inspire the future of the sport.

Photography has long played a pivotal role in marketing, experiencing, and remembering skiing. Iconic images don't merely document the sport - they help build legacies, inspire dreams, and elevate athletes to legendary status. "Beyond the Image" explores this influence, showing how photographers drive the storytelling that underpins winter sports culture. In a world where powerful imagery is essential for evoking freedom, adventure, and connection with nature, these photos, and the photographers behind them continue to inspire future generations.

Whistler stands at the heart of this narrative, evolving into a Mecca for ski photography. With 60 years of history as its backdrop, the region has grown into a proving ground for skiers and photographers alike. The film reflects on Whistler's vital role in the evolution of winter sports photography, from early analog prints to today's digital innovations and honours the generations of iconic photographers, game-changing events (such as the Pro Photographer Showdown), and hungry young talents that have helped shape the sport's visual identity.

With an eye on the future, "Beyond the Image" highlights how Whistler continues to drive the evolution of skiing and photography, offering a glimpse into the ever-changing frontier of both industries.

Buddy Check for Jesse

DIRECTED BY MICHAEL ANTHONY

After losing his incredible son, Jesse Short-Gershman, at age 22 to suicide, Dr. Stu Gershman made a decision: to talk openly about mental health in an unlikely place — the locker room.

Through Buddy Check for Jesse, Stu encourages coaches to raise mental health awareness through the power of sport. Today, Jesse's impact stretches across the country, changing the lives of countless young athletes from Victoria to Manitoba and sparking a national dialogue on Hockey Day in Canada.

This production was supported by Telus StoryHive, CreativeBC, and the NSI. It is not available online or to stream until after Festival consideration.



Runtime

29:24

Call Your Dad

DIRECTED BY JULIAN FIGUEROA



Runtime

26:58

Filmmaker Julian Figueroa joins his 78-year-old father on a return to the remote Northwest Territories village where he once taught school. Crossing frozen lakes and ice roads, they arrive in a place suspended between worlds: hunting camps shadowed by cell towers, ancestral traditions pressed against the edges of modern life. Each reunion peels back layers of myth and memory, revealing that to revisit the past is to risk rewriting it—and to confront the truth about the people we love most.



Edmonton, Canada

Consecution

DIRECTED BY SCOTT PORTINGALE

Consecution is an experimental natural history film that captures the intricate world of ice formation. Crystallographic patterns emerge as water transitions into elegant structures that are rarely experienced by our unaided senses.

Runtime

02:47



Elevate

DIRECTED BY ANNA SEGAL,
JEFF THOMAS

In a sport traditionally dominated by men, ski movies have long celebrated their prowess. But as the snow settles, a new wave of skiers is redefining the scene. Welcome to Elevate: The HEAD Freeskiing Women, where we spotlight the fearless women of HEAD and Tyrolia who are reshaping the slopes and inspiring their peers. Elevate is a tribute to the HEAD freeskiing women, celebrating their skill, personality, and bold spirit as they elevate the sport to new heights. This is the all female version of HEAD - This is Elevate: The HEAD Freeskiing Women.



Austria, Canada

Runtime

17:23

Fragmentation

DIRECTED BY BAPTISTE GRISON

On an ice floe at the bottom of a fjord, a strange choreography is played out: scientists take measurements and place instruments, before launching an icebreaker at full speed to break everything up... and see what happens. An intense and unique sensory experience.



Canada

Runtime

09:00

Healing Dolls

DIRECTED BY COMITÉ DE FEMMES PUAKUTEU

Testimonials from the women's group at Mashteuiatsh Puakuteu fill this intimate short film about grief and healing. In doll-making workshops, the women share their doubts and hopes and, in doing so, build a space of strength and solidarity.



Canada

Runtime

06:52

Ice & Iron

DIRECTED BY DARRYL HAUGEN



Alberta, Canada

Runtime

29:10

Since 1985, the Numb Bum 24-hour motorcycle endurance ice race has tested the limits of motorcyclists as they race against time and the elements. What started as a fundraiser for a local children's summer camp in Grande Prairie, Alberta, has grown into a globally renowned competition.

Holding the world record for the longest and coldest race, the event has attracted legends like Evel Knievel and riders from all corners of the globe.

In 2024, the torch has been passed to the Wapiti Off-Road Association, who are bringing the race back to its original home, ensuring that this iconic tradition continues. The Numb Bum is more than just a race—it's a way of life.

Niitsitapi

DIRECTED BY BRYAN GUNNAR COLE

The Blackfoot Confederacy is an ancient and modern alliance among Blackfoot peoples who are today separated into four nations – the Kainai, Siksika, and Piikani nations are in Canada and the Blackfeet Nation in Montana. These four tribes share a common language, culture, and ancestral territory – a land base roughly the size of Texas. Through voices from both elders and youth, this short documentary film explores the past, present and future these Nations share around the protection of their way of life.



United States

Runtime

14:00

Numb Fingers

DIRECTED BY JUSTIN WRIGHT

Cellist and composer Justin Wright travels to Svalbard, an archipelago close to the North Pole, to serenade the dying glaciers with the most northerly outdoor cello performances in history.



Runtime

20:00

United States



Canada

M. L'Espérance

DIRECTED BY CHANTALE BOULIANNE

A storm is brewing next door. Mr. L'espérance hopes to breathe a little sweetness into her life by making her a gift. As he works, the old man is assailed by a flood of resurfacing memories. Images and sounds jostle in his head, deconstructing and amalgamating to form never-before-seen images. He relives snatches of his childhood as a sailor's son.

Runtime

09:00





Canada

Runtime

05:38

Preserve Our Culture

DIRECTED BY EDOUARD
KALTUSH

For Edouard Kaltush, the Innu culture is a remedy that must be practised and preserved. To pass on his traditional skills, he teaches three children in his community how to weave snowshoes and fish for lobster at low tide.

Quiet and Still-Or?

DIRECTED BY JANITA FRANTSI,
LYDIA SOKOL

What happens when we take a closer look? A winter dance film where nature plays the main role. We tend to see winter as quiet, still, and bare – but is there more to the season than we think?

quiet and still – or? explores the balance between stillness and movement, quiet and bold, nature and human. The dancing in the film was shot over two days, one extremely cold day and one exceptionally warm one, which made us reflect on the way(s) the climate is changing. What will we miss about winter as it changes too?



Canada

Runtime

03:11

Sin Bin: Third Study

DIRECTED BY SHANE EASON

"SIN BIN | THIRD STUDY | TIGER" is the third film in a series of experimental shorts investigating and deconstructing professional ice hockey players branded as "journeymen," "pests," and "enforcers." Although these types of players may not be the most skilled and often assigned to the "Checking Line" or "4th Line" for the duration of their careers, they remain pivotal to their teams, maintaining important responsibilities that include tactics of intimidation against opposing teams; enticing and receiving penalties (infractions via the rulebook); and shifting the momentum within the gameplay. Using found footage, including 16 mm educational films and archival television and radio broadcasts, the "SIN BIN" film series looks to embellish the sport's structured intersections of violence, culture, and masculinity.

This third film in the series focuses on NHL Dave "Tiger" Williams, one of the all-time leaders in PIMs.



United States

Runtime

06:13



Shackleton: The Greatest Story

DIRECTED BY K2
COMMUNICATIONS



Australia

Runtime

44:04

In 1913 Sir Ernest Shackleton set sail with 27 men to attempt to cross the frozen continent of Antarctica on foot. His vessel became trapped in sea ice. After nearly a year locked in the ice, the ship was crushed, forcing the crew into a desperate battle to survive and find their way back to civilization.

No one knows this story better than Tim Jarvis. In 2013, Tim repeated Shackleton's incredible feat using the same limited equipment available to Shackleton. Join explorer Tim Jarvis as he relives Shackleton's harrowing journey while crossing the perilous landscapes of the great Antarctica and South Georgia, and find out what Shackleton's heroism could mean for us today.



Skeletons Serious Kids

DIRECTED BY DANIEL TORRES
VERGE, JAIME BALLADA,
LARRASA

Fighting against a lack of tradition and a hostile environment, the only Spanish Skeleton athlete Ander Mirambell trains nine young athletes to become the first Spanish Skeleton team ever, for most of them it is the first contact with ice.



Runtime

1:50:00



Straight and in a Circle

DIRECTED BY PALINA RAMASHKA

It is a touching story of a refugee forced to leave his home in search of safety, healing, and a new sense of belonging.



Runtime

04:24





Shaped by Land

DIRECTED BY EMILY SULLIVAN

Adam Kjeldsen is one of the only Inuit ski guides operating in Greenland, a destination dominated by foreign operators. *Shaped by Land* follows his pursuit of a more sustainable vision for ski tourism—rooted in deep connection to land, community, and culture.

Runtime

16:23

Swabber

DIRECTED BY JACKIE ATKINS

At 82, Bobby “Swabber” Swan carves through Kootenay race courses alongside ski racers seven decades his junior. Every Tuesday, this two-time Olympian transforms Whitewater slopes with his homemade “swabber sticks,” setting slalom courses that have become his personal training ground. Though time has tempered his speed, it hasn’t touched his dedication. *Swabber* approaches each run with the meticulous focus of someone who understands that mastery is found in the journey itself, not just the finish line.



Runtime

15:03

The Land Keeps Watch

DIRECTED BY IRYNA TANASIICHUK

Runtime

07:52



The living Mountain makes friends with the Hiker following his act of kindness towards it, but not before long, a war breaks out and tears them apart. We see the war through the eyes of a living landscape as it suffers like humans do, and rises up to defend itself.

The Shape that's Left Behind

DIRECTED BY EVA CEH



Runtime

13:04

Rada (43), a Bulgarian expat and single mother, lives with her son, Darin (15), in Brussels. During a hot December, while talking about Darin's "snow angel", a clay Christmas decoration, Rada realises that her son has no idea how snow angels are made.

The memory of the snow angel stirs grief in Rada, not only for the vanished winters, but also for her late husband, as her last memory of him is them playing in the snow, making snow angels.

Determined to hold onto nostalgia, Rada believes that remembering snow might be the key to reviving her son's memories of their lost lives. Her attempts to reconnect him with the past clash with the reality of a changed world. On the one hand, disasters have become part of daily life; on the other, people prefer to indulge in warm, festive Christmas celebrations.

Darin, however, just not about snow, a thing of the older generation. His love for nature is rooted in the present. By letting go of what is lost, Rada begins to discover a new way to connect with both her son and the natural world during a walk in the forest.



The Space We Create

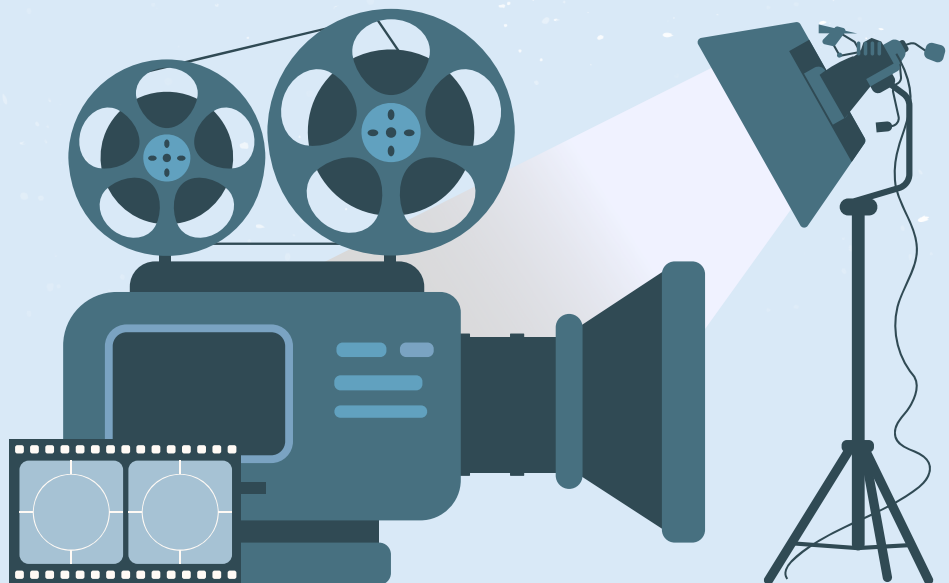
DIRECTED BY BRYCE BAKER,
BRENDAN KANE

Alberta, Canada

Runtime

34:58

The Space We Create is a 35-minute documentary about the making of the Aster, a community-driven housing project in Banff, Alberta. Told through the voices of designers, builders, residents, and local leaders the film explores what it means to build with care in a place where housing is scarce, land is protected, and the stakes are personal. Through labour shortages, frayed supply chains, lockdowns, and a few long winters, it documents the creative decisions, physical work, and emotional investment that brought the project to life. From salvaging a century-old cabin to shaping a courtyard inspired by forest trails, this is a story about finding balance between beauty and necessity, and about the people who make meaningful housing possible.





Canada

Runtime

04:38



To All Who Are Concerned

DIRECTED BY PAULA KIRMAN

"To All Who Are Concerned" is a music video written, directed, produced, and performed by Paula E. Kirman. The song appears on her EP *Losstenders*.

During March and April of 2021, I took part in "Soloss," a community care network developed through a partnership between REACH Edmonton, InWithForward (a Vancouver social design agency), and the City of Edmonton's RECOVER Wellbeing initiative. The team was prototyping the "Losstender" position in Edmonton, based on ethnographic and other research by all of the partners over the previous three years with street-involved Edmontonians.

"Losstenders" are a constellation of folks who open up spaces for moments of grief to also be moments for connection. Basically, we are artists who sat with and spoke to "Sharers" who told us their stories of life and loss. Thought of another way, a "Losstender" is kind of like the friendly bartender to whom people bare their souls. Three unique people chose to share their stories with me (via Zoom, due to pandemic precautions), but I was there to do more than sit and listen. I created a song for each of them as a lasting artifact of our encounters and to help them on their healing journeys, through feeling heard and helping to address unmet needs through song.

During my time as a Losstender, I met a transgender woman who shared her experiences being part of the Sixties Scoop, adopted by a white, religious Christian family. She was very specific about what she wanted her song to capture about her, almost like an anthem for her now being able to live authentically. What struck me the most about her, was her positive energy despite having a very hard life. She radiated confidence and pride.

I decided to create a video for the song, and used existing footage as well as items I was able to film in isolation or with safety precautions.

Trans-Taïga

DIRECTED BY ALEX CÔTÉ

In a world saturated with noise and pressure, wildlife photographer Jean-Simon Bégin chooses emptiness, cold, and stillness. Trans-Taïga is an intimate and sensory journey, a film that lies between poetic essay and expedition journal, where solitude, obsession, and raw beauty converge in the vast wilderness of northern Quebec.

For years, Jean-Simon has returned to the Eeyou Istchee region, hoping to catch the elusive gaze of the grey wolves. Each winter, he sets out again with the same hope, even if the true encounter always slips through his fingers. The film tells the story of this patient obsession, this quest marked by cold, silence, and distance.

But Trans-Taïga goes beyond the pursuit of wildlife. It is a reflection on a shifting landscape, on a North that is slowly moving south, and on the fragility of natural balance. It is also an inner journey, where painting becomes a refuge. In his studio, Jean-Simon reconstructs what the wild denies him: a visible wolf, a controlled world, a perfect light.

Through minimalist visuals, introspective narration, and breathtaking landscapes, the film captures the tension between the desire for connection and the need for distance. Jean-Simon has seen wolves, finally, but not as he had dreamed. Perhaps the essence lies there – in the waiting, the unreachable, the eternal return.

Trans-Taïga is a tribute to untamed nature and to the things we pursue without ever fully capturing.



Runtime

29:56



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