



THE THOMAS EDISON BLACK MARIA FILM FESTIVAL
A project of the Thomas A. Edison Media Arts Consortium
Celebrating our 40th Anniversary and "fueling the independent spirit since 1981"
c/o Hoboken Historical Museum, 1301 Hudson Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030
PO Box 3426, Hoboken, NJ 070030, 201-856-6565

The 40th Annual Thomas Edison Black Maria Film Festival Collection - 2021

Director's Choice Awards

***Alder* – Experimental**

9 min. by Vanda Ladeira, London, UK

"Alder" is a magical realist short drama set in an imaginary and eerie forest. The guardian spirit of the forest faces a dilemma between following its heart or its mind. The film looks at the power struggle we all face when duty and love, pulls us in opposite directions. "Alder" has an ecological message conveyed through visual metaphors and inspired by folk and fairy tales.

***A Poem in Bamboo* – Animation**

5 min. by Chun-Yao Chang and XuFei Wu, Jersey City, NJ, US

When bad things happen in life, some people are lucky enough to move on, but not the lady A-Yuan. A-Yuan is trapped in the past after the death of her lover. Her big house contains many memories. This film is a glimpse of a traditional and silent woman who doesn't speak but has many secrets locked in her mind.

***Broken Relationship* – Experimental**

4 min. by Wrik Mead, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

"Broken Relationship" moves through a kaleidoscope of colour and pixels to fragments of embracing bodies. Using glitched video footage from classic porn,

the broken and distorted imagery speaks to the difficulty that LGBTQ youth often encounter when trying to navigate through their sexuality and relationships.

Concerning the Way of Describing Places – Documentary

14 min. by Sean Hanley, Brooklyn, NY, US

In 1817, a surveyor's line was inscribed through Bergen County, New Jersey and became one of the foundational measurements in the mapping of the United States. The film retraces the line 200 years later and along the way considers the consequences of precision, place names, and viewing from a distance.

Covid-19: A Portrait of NYC – Documentary

7 min. by Duda Penteado, Jersey City, NJ

A documentary short that explores NYC through the lense of seasoned photographer and Daily News editor, Luiz C. Ribeiro. In the midst of an unfolding global pandemic, the images captured are often rare and unexpected. Isolation, frustration, and tension spill over into the streets as images move from iconic empty spaces to the Black Lives Matter protest scenes and police confrontations.

Dancing is an Old Friend - Experimental

12 min. by Marta Renzi, Nyack, NY, US

Two old friends re-connect virtually. One still dances professionally, the other only for pleasure. Like their friendship, their dancing manages to transcend time and distance.

Holly – Animation

9 min. by Chris Carboni, Brooklyn, NY, US

“Holly” tells the story of a woman coping with a new reality after enduring a life-altering medical procedure that leaves her unable to speak. She must learn how to navigate the world anew and come to terms with how each facet of her life has changed.

JamieSonShine – Experimental

5 min. by Phoebe Jane Hart and Jamison Hart, US

“JamieSonShine” is an experimental documentary that explores the effect of mental illness on the younger sibling of a person with schizophrenia. A collaborative reimagining that uses animation and home videos, the film is a testament to the complex and powerful bond between a brother and sister and the line between fantasy and reality. A diagnosis is never the whole story.

Kapaemahu - Animation

8 min. by Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu, Dean Hamer, and Joe Wilson, Honolulu, HI, US

Long ago, four extraordinary individuals of both male and female spirit brought the healing arts from Tahiti to Hawaii. Beloved by the people for their gentle ways and miraculous cures, they imbued four giant boulders with their powers. The stones still stand on what is now Waikiki Beach, but the true story behind them has been hidden – until now. Narrated in an ancient Hawaiian dialect, “Kapaemahu” brings this powerful legend back to life in vivid animation, seen through the eyes of a curious child.

***Lazarus* – Experimental**

8 min. by Tuixén Benet Coscolluela, Barcelona, Spain; and LA, CA, US

Through a dialogue between movement and landscape, “Lazarus” reflects on the objectification of the woman body in film. The famous quote by Edgar Allan Poe “the death of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world” triggers a succession of falls and recoveries that escape the poetic by trying too hard to find it.

***Liberate* - Experimental**

5 min. by Karen Lavender, Beverly Hills, CA, US

Have you ever felt that the world only sees you as sliver of who you really are? In this performance art piece, Ingrid Rogers, a woman of color, expresses her desire to be fully seen and heard. “Liberate” is a call to action to step into your light and create unapologetically.

***Listen to Us* - Documentary**

15 min. by Juliana Henao, Savannah, GA, US

“Listen to Us” is a documentary that highlights the many contributions of women in sound within the American film industry. It addresses women's underrepresentation in the industry and explores what the future holds for them. “Listen to Us” is a celebration of women in sound.

***Metamorphosis* – Animation**

4 min. by Wang Xi, LA, CA, US

A butterfly is resurrected from a rare specimen collection and explores the ruins of an ancient civilization that leads to a mysterious underground frozen cave. In the cave, the butterfly meets the Butterfly Man, who is an amalgamation of many other butterflies. The film explores philosophical ideas about life forms decomposing and then transforming into new organisms, between dreams and reality, and between humans and non-human creatures.

Miracle on Central Park West - Animation

5 min. by Candy Kugel, NY, NY, US

A random act of kindness leads to a real New York miracle!

Mutiny! – Narrative

17 min. by Matthew Gratzner, US

A swashbuckling, action-adventure comedy that deals with gender inequality and the lack of self-awareness of overt masculinity... but all seen through the eyes of 17th Century Pirates.

Phantasmagoria, 1945 – Experimental

11 min. by Karl Nussbaum, Brooklyn, NY, US

“Phantasmagoria, 1945” is the story told by Nazi Propaganda Minister, Joseph Goebbels, to his six young children while presenting an after-dinner slide show. It is a children’s ghost story about propaganda and the media; a meditation on the past as a warning to the present.

Radical Care: The Auntie Sewing Squad

8 min. by Valerie Soe, San Francisco, CA, US

This documentary short looks at the Auntie Sewing Squad, a group of mostly women of color volunteers who came together following the U.S. government’s botched response to the COVID-19 crisis. The Aunties sew masks for farmworkers, day laborers, unhoused people, refugee and immigrant groups, First Nations tribes, recently incarcerated people, Black Lives Matter demonstrators, and others in need in the U.S. Using images, voices and sounds primarily generated by the Aunties themselves, in tandem with Kronos Quartet’s performance of Susie Ibarra’s “Pulsation,” the film seeks to inspire others to work toward radical care in the time of Covid-19.

Roberto Lugo: Without Wax - Documentary

11 min. by Edward Columbia, Charlestown, MA, and Cyrus Duff, US

After escaping the hard knocks of Kensington, Philadelphia, to become a world-renowned ceramics artist, Roberto Lugo returns to the ‘hood’ to pay his inspiration forward. While Roberto was working his way through art school, his older brother was imprisoned and wrongfully placed in solitary confinement. Roberto cites this event as his single greatest inspiration to make art that addresses issues of social injustice and prejudice.

Russ Johnson: The Fork King - Documentary

5 min. by Eugene Lehnert and Elizabeth Niles, Brooklyn, NY, US
NYC-based artist, Russ Johnson, brings forks to life in his graffiti. He uses forks to be critical of our consumer-society, to promote tolerance, to comment on other social issues and to simply be amusing.

Salvage – Documentary

10 min. by Christopher Boulton, Tampa, FL, US

Salvage questions the allure of old objects by reimagining obsolete tools as reliquaries haunted by the souls of disgruntled workers who resent their new jobs. This hybrid intersectional documentary uses magic realism to critique the inequities of gender, ethnicity, and class that underpin consumer capitalism.

Sonnie - Documentary

11 min. by Samuel Mirpoorian, Indianapolis, IN, US

For Deon “Sonnie” Casey, life has not gone according to plan. Raised by his grandmother after the death of his parents, Deon is now a single parent himself, working over 60 hours a week. Despite setbacks, Deon is determined to provide a better life for his son. Finding strength and solace in competitive weightlifting and his work at the YMCA, Deon pushes onward in hope that things will get better. SONNIE is an intimate, verité documentary short that illuminates determination, redemption, and fatherhood.

The Descent – Narrative

9 min. by Brandon Mercer, Brooklyn, NY, US

The Descent is a complex and fantastical tale that traverses the precarious aftermath of trauma, how these events shape us and our realities. Follow a sister as she dives headfirst into the distorted mind of her lost brother and the world he has created.

The Moviegoer – Narrative

17 min. by Leif Larson, Brooklyn, NY, US

With cinemas closed throughout the city, a moviegoer creates a film experience at home.

The Winter – Animation

5 min. by Xin Li, Melbourne, Australia

Walking in a snowy forest, a peasant sees an unusual deer and goes to follow it. The deer is alluring, and the peasant wants to catch it.

Three – Animation

2 min. by Soyeon Kim, Lake Balboa, CA, US

“Three” is an experimental film that visualizes the relationships with one another. The film's concept was originated from a phase in 'Walden' by Henry David Thoreau: "I had three chairs in my house; one for solitude, two for friendship, three for society." Using the chairs as metaphors, the abstract imagery symbolizes how our relationship evolves among us and allow us to re-evaluate ourselves in current days. The film was created using an object stop-motion and traditional & digital drawing techniques.

Tides – Experimental

8 min. by Andre Silva, Wilmington, NC, US

Filmed at Masonboro Island, an undeveloped barrier island in southeastern North Carolina, “Tides” contemplates the liminal space between the modern technological world and that more ecological dimension we label as “nature” or “the environment.”

Tumbling Towards Home – Documentary

14 min. by Imelda O'Reilly, Kildare, Ireland

“Tumbling Towards Home” is a coming-of-age story about Malcolm Adams, an Irish immigrant who moves to New York in 1989 to study acting under Alan Langdon. He works through the grief from the loss of his mother and his friend Philip Seymour Hoffman. This leads to his decision of where to put his hat down and call it home.

Twinkle Twinkle Little Star - Narrative

12 min. by Shiyue Xu, Tianjin, China; Glendale, CA, US

“Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” is the story of a boy’s pursuit to achieve his dream of becoming a pianist but having to give up his dream when reality sets in. The song of the same name was used and adapted into various compositions to mirror the stages and challenges of his life from boy to man.

We, the Slow – Animation

5 min. by Jeanne Waltz, Lisbon, Portugal

An animated essay film about time and the different representations we have of it, following two main metaphors - the movements of water and competitive running.

Whirlwind – Animation

2 min. by Adolfo Ruiz, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

“Whirlwind” is a hand-drawn animation, consisting of over 700 ink drawings, rendered during the early stages (from March to July) of the 2020 global pandemic. The film’s visuals were elicited by unfolding events during these months. The process of drawing this film, frame by frame, coincided with a unique sense of time and space that emerged during the pandemic. Influenced by early twentieth century animation, this film attempts to visualize new rhythms of life emerging during a time of rapid sociocultural change—shifting away from carefully controlled perspectives and vanishing points, while depicting a constant sense of movement and transformation.

Wild Eyes – Animation

6 min. by Nina Prange, Ludwigsburg, Germany

With a classic look and experimental perspectives, "Wild Eyes" takes us into the dark world of the blind girl Kitana. Through her eyes, we can see again and understand how big the sacrifice was. A 2d animated short about friendship and guilt.

Willingboro: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow - Documentary

16 min. by Kelvin Z Phillips, NY, NY, US

A short documentary that exemplifies how America ignores its dying suburbs. These beloved hometowns are the canaries in the coal mine when measuring the true economic and racial health of communities, and of America.

Wolf Call – Documentary

9 min. by Ramey Newell, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

John Ramer has worked in animal sanctuaries most of his adult life, often without pay, and feels this is his life’s calling. John's experiences working with captive wolves have left him deeply changed, driving him to share his knowledge and passion with others in the hope that wild wolves might one day return to Colorado's open lands. Filmed entirely at a remote wolf sanctuary in the Wet Mountains of southern Colorado, “Wolf Call” asks us to rethink our relationship to wild and captive animals, as well as the world we inhabit together.

For further information regarding the films and/or programming, please contact:

Jane Steuerwald, Executive Director

Thomas Edison Black Maria Film Festival

www.blackmaria.org

jane@blackmariafilmfestival.org
office: 201-856-6565