



## VIFF ANNOUNCES CANADIAN FILM AWARDS

42nd Vancouver International Film Festival  
September 28 – October 8, 2023

**VANCOUVER, BC (OCTOBER 5, 2023)** Vancouver International Film Festival (VIFF) announced the winners of this year's juried Canadian film awards in a ceremony at the False Creek Yacht Club yesterday. The categories were: Best Canadian Film, Emerging Canadian Director, Best Canadian Documentary, Best BC Film, and Best Canadian Short.

"Given the exceptional talent we have at the festival this year, our juries had the considerable task of selecting winners for the Canadian film awards. We thank them for the careful consideration that they gave each film," says Kyle Fostner, Executive Director. "We are excited to celebrate the winning films, while recognizing the masterful storytelling demonstrated by every official selection this year. It's an honour to be able to share VIFF's award laurels with these films that have been warmly embraced by our juries and audiences."

The Vanguard Award will be announced at the closing gala of *The Pot-au-Feu* on Oct. 7. The winners of the VIFF Audience Awards will be announced post-festival.

### **BEST CANADIAN FILM**

\$15,000 award presented by the Directors Guild of Canada

Jury: Zoe Hopkins, Sophie Jarvis, and Mina Shum

#### **Winner: *Fitting In*, dir. Molly McGlynn**

Jury statement: "The Best Canadian Film award goes to a film whose strength lies in the specificity and authentic voice of the director, balancing the trials of growing up different with the necessary sense of humour to cope. This film sparks a hopeful and necessary conversation about breaking binaries within society, and we wish we could have seen it as teenagers. This is a must-watch for audiences of all ages, expanding our understanding of the gender and sexual spectrum. We are thrilled to present the Best Canadian Film award to *Fitting In*, by Molly McGlynn."

#### **Honourable Mention: *Gamodi*, dir. Felix Kalmenson**

Jury statement: "We want to award an Honourable Mention to a film that rejects all narrative conventions to give us a truly cinematic experience. We were mesmerized by the cast of characters who drift beside, yet apart from one another. The film made us reflect on the state of society as a whole. The translation of the title of this film is

'Coming Out,' which captures the absurdity of the in-between state of the characters and the world they inhabit, filmed during a time when we were all urged to stay in. We want to recognize Felix Kalmenson's beautiful film, *Gamodi*."

### **EMERGING CANADIAN DIRECTOR**

\$3,000 award presented by the Directors Guild of Canada

Jury: Charlie Hidalgo, Dan Montgomery, and Nisha Platzer

#### **Winner: Director Anna Fahr, *Valley of Exile***

Jury statement: "The Emerging Canadian Director award is presented to Anna Fahr for *Valley of Exile*. Stemming from her work as a documentarian and delicately shot within a refugee camp in Lebanon, Fahr's remarkable film captivates with profound compassion, unwavering strength and tenacious perseverance. The jury recognizes Fahr's unique ability to craft a film that is both deeply empathetic and globally relevant, while remaining firmly rooted in its geographical and communal context."

#### **Honourable Mention: Director Pier-Philippe Chevigny, *Richelieu***

Jury statement: "We are pleased to award an honourable mention to Pier-Philippe Chevigny for *Richelieu*, a poignant and thought-provoking depiction of the harrowing and overlooked abuse faced by migrant workers in Canada."

### **BEST CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY**

\$15,000 award presented by the Rogers Group of Funds

Jury: John Bolton, Kier-La Janisse, and Elad Tzadok

#### **Winner: *Someone Lives Here*, dir. Zachary Russell**

Jury statement: "For its deceptively simple storytelling, its wintry aesthetic, its empathy, and its humanity, the award for Best Canadian Documentary goes to *Someone Lives Here*, a new classic of Toronto cinema that has much to say about the North American housing crisis. Director Zach Russell subtly sidesteps the pitfalls of extractive filmmaking by focusing on two truly unforgettable characters: the formerly unhoused Khaleel, who's in almost every scene in the film until he suddenly, stunningly isn't; and the currently unhoused Taka, who asserts her autonomy by refusing to appear on screen at all, instead narrating her own story, as well as the film's. They're the heart and the soul of a film that both builds toward, and goes beyond, recent headlines, showing the power of documentary cinema to do things that journalism can't, or won't. By turns comic and tragic, inspiring and infuriating, *Someone Lives Here* is a film filled with warmth that offers decidedly cold comfort."

#### **Honourable Mention: *Asog*, dir. Seán Devlin**

Jury statement: "As a jury, we felt compelled to give an honourable mention to *Asog*. In *Asog*, director Seán Devlin bends the documentary form, and arguably breaks it. Using reenactment in place of oral testimony, this journey through a typhoon-devastated landscape is infused with magic, music, and melodrama. Devlin deftly employs the framework of artifice to capture the authenticity of the characters and their environment, at the center of which is Jaya, a vivacious protagonist who refuses to capitulate to turbulent circumstances, offering healing and humour to their makeshift community in the face of all of their hardships."

### **BEST BC FILM**

\$10,000 award presented by Creative BC and \$15,000 in post-production services credit supplied by Company 3

Jury: Dr. Joseph Clark, Jason Karman, and Chandler Levack

#### **Winner: *WaaPaKe*, dir. Jules Arita Koostachin**

Jury statement: "The Jury would like to award the Best BC Film Award to *WaaPaKe* by Jules Arita Koostachin. *WaaPaKe* is at once moving, earnest, cathartic, and self-reflexive. What begins as a poignant reflection on the devastation of the residential school system turns into a deeply personal portrayal of 'intergenerational trauma and intergenerational healing.' Koostachin's thoughtful and empathetic direction speaks to the power of people telling their own stories without artifice, elaborate staging, or performance. In *WaaPaKe* the audience encounters a film willing to dwell in its own silences, and a filmmaker allowing herself to be vulnerable in order to imagine cinema as a space for testimony and ceremony."

### **Honourable Mention: *Asog*, dir. Seán Devlin**

Jury statement: "The jury would like to give an honourable mention to *Asog* by Seán Devlin. This ambitious hybrid documentary combines a sensitive exploration of grief, sexuality, and gender identity with its critical account of disaster capitalism and community resistance in the aftermath of super typhoon Yolanda. Deftly combining documentary and magical realism, Devlin manages the unlikely feat of creating a surreal dreamscape while remaining firmly grounded in the real lives of his protagonists. At the heart of the film are the wonderful performances by both of the film's lead actors (and co-writers). Jaya's performance as a non-binary school teacher, former TV star, and wannabe beauty pageant winner is especially revelatory — at once sweet, vulnerable, determined, hilarious, and sexy! Devlin's playful direction uses humour and charm to centre these performances within a powerful story of resilience."

### **BEST CANADIAN SHORT**

\$2,000 cash award from VIFF

Jury: Liz Cairns, Pawan Deol, and Brendan Prost

### **Winner: *Katshinau*, dirs. Julien G. Marcotte, Jani Bellefleur-Kaltush**

Jury statement: "The winning film is a brilliantly acted and directed film vividly evoking the past with enduring contemporary resonance. The craft and restraint of the storytelling stand out. It offers an authentic, powerful message and is anchored by a harrowing lead performance. The cinematography was compelling. There was so much richness in each frame; every shot was a portrait, a painting. The jury awards Best Canadian Short to *Katshinau* by directors Julien G. Marcotte and Jani Bellefleur-Kaltush."

### **Honourable Mention: *Our Grandmother the Inlet*, dirs. Jaime Leigh Gianopoulos, Kayah George**

Jury statement: "This is a stunning work. A story that is compelling, a story that takes you along and makes you feel. The intimate voice, paired with an exciting form, culminated in a moving and deeply affecting piece. The beauty was in its resounding power — an unforgettable film."

### **Tickets and Information**

Adult Ticket	\$18
Senior Ticket	\$16
Student/Youth	\$14
Accessible	\$13
VIFF+ Members	\$15
VIFF+ Premium/Patron/U25	\$13
VIFF Talks	\$22
VIFF Live Tickets	\$15–\$38
Signals	\$15

More ticket details at [viff.org/ticket-info](https://viff.org/ticket-info).

To explore VIFF's complete 2023 programming, visit [viff.org](https://viff.org).

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**Press Kit**

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**About VIFF | [viff.org](https://viff.org)**

Beyond film exhibitions, VIFF strives to engage and empower communities, encourage dialogue and champion local artists. With decades of experience and an unwavering commitment to creating exceptional programs, VIFF has transformed into a highly esteemed annual festival and a premier arthouse cinema.

Founded in 1982, the Greater Vancouver International Film Festival Society is a not-for-profit cultural society and federally registered charitable organization that operates the internationally acclaimed Vancouver International Film Festival (VIFF) and the year-round programming at the VIFF Centre. All year, VIFF produces screenings, talks, conferences and events that act as a catalyst for the community to discover the creativity and craft of storytelling on screen.

VIFF is presented on the traditional and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətaʔt/Selilwitulh (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.

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