



## VIFF ANNOUNCES AUDIENCE AND VANGUARD AWARDS

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

**VANCOUVER, BC (OCTOBER 12, 2023)** The Vancouver International Film Festival (VIFF) announces Audience Awards following the successful close of its 42nd edition on Sunday, October 8. The awards recognize fan favorites across the nine film series, with winners selected by the nearly 40,000 ballots cast throughout the 11 days of the festival. VIFF saw a total of 80,834 attendees and 113 out of 313 screenings were sold-out — more than one-third of festival screenings. The winner of the second annual Vanguard Award was also announced over the closing weekend, going to *Animal* by director Sofia Exarchou.

“This year’s festival underlined VIFF’s deep connection with the city. Vancouver’s response to our program, from screenings to symphonic live scores, has been overwhelmingly positive,” says Executive Director Kyle Fostner. “We’re immensely grateful to our audiences, industry professionals, and community members for making this the most exciting and well-attended VIFF in years.”

Board Chair Lucille Pacey adds: “As always, we are grateful to the team who help us put on such an incredible festival: the hard-working VIFF staff, the tireless volunteers, and the passionate filmgoers. VIFF is a chance to spotlight the Canadian film industry but also an opportunity to put Vancouver and all of its offerings on the map.”

### VIFF AUDIENCE AWARDS

#### Galas & Special Presentations

***Monster*, dir. Hirokazu Kore-eda**

#### Showcase

***The Monk and the Gun*, dir. Pawo Choyning Dorji**

#### Panorama

***Irena’s Vow*, dir. Louise Archambault**

#### Vanguard

***Let Me Go*, dir. Maxime Rappaz**

#### Northern Lights

***Aitamaako’tamisskapi Natosi: Before the Sun*, dir. Banchi Hanuse**

### Insights

***Physician, Heal Thyself*, dir. Asher Penn**

### Spectrum

***Asog*, dir. Seán Devlin**

### Portraits

***Call Me Dancer*, dirs. Leslie Shampaine, Pip Gilmour**

### Altered States

***Humanist Vampire Seeking Consenting Suicidal Person*, dir. Ariane Louis-Seize**

Also announced at the end of the festival:

### **VANGUARD AWARD**

\$5,000 award presented by the Lochmaddy Foundation

Jury: Shaun Inouye, Nadia Shihab, and Clement Virgo

### **Winner: *Animal*, dir. Sofia Exarchou**

Jury statement: "The 2023 Vanguard Award goes to Sofia Exarchou's exceptional sophomore feature, *Animal*. Anchored by an extraordinary performance from Dimitra Vlagopoulou, *Animal* won over our jury with its hyper-immersive and intimate portrayal of a ragtag troupe of seasonal entertainers, whose livelihoods depend, night after night, on keeping the mood euphoric and the party going at a vacation resort in Greece. Writer-director Exarchou subtly balances the exploitation of labour with the physical tolls of that labour, while never losing sight of the film's emotional heartbeat in the character of Kalia, the group's de facto leader whose years stuck in a holding pattern of dancing for tourists has witnessed her dreams and self-worth slowly decay. Pulsing with music, sweaty bodies, and a formal sensibility perfectly calibrated to both, *Animal* is our uncontested winner of the Vanguard award this year."

### **Honourable Mention: *Octopus Skin*, dir. Ana Cristina Barragán**

Jury statement: "We'd also like to recognize, as our Honourable Mention, Ana Cristina Barragán's *Octopus Skin*, an Ecuadorian fable of three teenaged siblings siloed from the world, rendered in a distinct visual palette that prioritizes tactility, sensuality, and hauntingly evocative images."

Visit [viff.org](https://viff.org) for all of this year's award winners or for information about year-round programming.

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#VIFF2023

## Press Kit

[bit.ly/VIFF2023](https://bit.ly/VIFF2023)

## 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 sə́lilwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

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