



VIFF ANNOUNCES SOPHY ROMVARI AS GUEST CURATOR; UNVEILS FIRST OFFICIAL SELECTIONS AND INDUSTRY SESSIONS

45th Vancouver International Film Festival
October 1–11, 2026

VANCOUVER, B.C. (AUGUST 6, 2026) — The Vancouver International Film Festival (VIFF) announces critically acclaimed Canadian director Sophy Romvari (*Blue Heron*) as this year's guest curator of the Leading Lights program, and unveils five films making their Canadian premiere alongside highlights from the Artist & Industry Program. Festival passes and ticket packs are on sale to the general public tomorrow, August 7 from 12pm.

For each edition of VIFF, a celebrated Canadian filmmaker is invited to curate and present four international features that influenced their creative journey. Having scored major awards at Locarno, Toronto International Film Festival and VIFF last fall, Romvari's *Blue Heron* has enjoyed a highly successful theatrical that's seen it hailed by *The Hollywood Reporter* as "the most acclaimed film of 2026."

"On the heels of *Blue Heron*'s triumphant run at art houses, we are thrilled to welcome Sophy Romvari back to VIFF as our guest curator for this year's Leading Lights program," says Curtis Woloschuk, Director of Programming. "Sophy is a singular talent with an innate understanding of cinema's complexities and possibilities. We can't wait to have her back in Vancouver to present her curated selection of films by Abbas Kiarostami, Terrence Malick, and Michael Roemer."

"All of the films I've selected hold a special place in my cinematic soul and it's an honour to be able to present them to my hometown community at VIFF," says Romvari.

The first five official selections are: Tribeca Viewpoints winner ***Crocodile*** by The Critics and Pietra Brettkelly; Hong Sangsoo's latest film ***Nowhere to Lay My Eyes***; ***Rose*** by Markus Schleinzer, which earned actress Sandra Hüller the Silver Bear for Best Lead Performance at the Berlinale; ***The Story of Documentary Film: The 2000s*** by Mark Cousins; and Liz Sargent's

Take Me Home, an outstanding drama dealing with disability, adoption, and shifting family dynamics.

"As our exceptional team of curators puts the finishing touches on this year's film program, we couldn't be more excited to unveil our first five official selections. We're honoured to host the Canadian premieres of these outstanding films, many of which have already earned accolades at major festivals," says Woloschuk. "In championing vital, progressive narrative filmmaking, we're platforming both icons and iconoclasts, and inviting rising talents to be presented alongside venerable directors who've served as cinema's standard bearers for decades. In turn, our documentary selections honour the form's landmark works, while also exploring the possibilities presented by the nonfiction form."

With the launch of the Institute for the Moving Image earlier this year, VIFF Industry enters a new chapter, creating a dynamic framework that connects creators with collaborators, mentors, financiers, and decision makers.

"Cinema does not exist in isolation. At a time when the world can often feel uncertain, VIFF reminds us that meaningful stories emerge through connection, exchange, and collective imagination," says Ana Belén Asfura, Director of the Institute for the Moving Image at VIFF.

Among the highlights of this year's industry programming is the launch of the VIFF Business Hub, a strategic platform anchored by the Co-Production Forum, Works-in-Progress, and VIFF Slate.

Also featured is a masterclass with Matïss Kaža, Academy Award-winning co-writer and producer of *Flow* (2024), offering valuable insight into the creative and production journey behind one of the most internationally acclaimed animated films of recent years.

VIFF Amp's Music in Media Summit continues its mission to champion both emerging and established music professionals. This year's edition of Stages-to-Screens featured speakers include Meg Remy (*U.S. Girls, Dead Lovers*), Peter Peter (*Heated Rivalry*), and Matthew Rogers (*The Harpoonist & the Axe Murderer*), who will share their experiences navigating the creative landscape between music and film.

Artist & Industry Passes go on sale Thursday, August 6, granting access to Industry programming, VIFF Amp's Music in Media Summit, Swapcard (VIFF's Industry App), and a range of hospitality and networking events at VIFF's Hospitality House.

The Artist & Industry Premium Pass takes the festival experience to the next level with access to over 300+ screenings, including Special Presentations, as well as the opportunity to attend VIFF Talks. This pass is available at an early bird price through August 26.

The remainder of the programming for VIFF's 45th edition will be announced on Wednesday, August 26, 2026. VIFF+ Members will have access to advance single ticket sales from August 26 at 12pm. General sales to the public will begin on August 27 at 12pm.

FIRST OFFICIAL SELECTIONS

Crocodile dirs. The Critics, Pietra Brettkelly | Canadian Premiere
Winner: Viewpoints Award, Tribeca 2026

In *Crocodile*, a group of young, self-taught filmmakers turn the streets, homes, and residents of Kaduna, Nigeria into the raw materials of sci-fi cinema. This Tribeca Viewpoints winner examines filmmaking as a means to overcome a city's constraints.

Nowhere to Lay My Eyes dir. Hong Sangsoo | Canadian Premiere
South Korea's leading auteur crafts an intricately calibrated fractured family drama about an estranged daughter reuniting with her mother, only to encounter her stepfather (a documentarian) and stepsister (an aspiring painter) for the first time.

Rose dir. Markus Schleinzer | Canadian Premiere
Winner: Silver Bear for Best Leading Performance, Berlinale 2026
Sandra Hüller delivers a deft and deeply affecting performance in this visually arresting, exquisitely suspenseful period piece concerning an enigmatic soldier employing deception to earn hard-won acceptance from a cloistered farming community.

The Story of Documentary Film: The 2000s dir. Mark Cousins | Canadian Premiere
Mark Cousins' intrepid exploration of the history of nonfiction filmmaking culminates with an incisive look at the aesthetics, approaches, and indelible works of the 21st Century, an era in which reality is increasingly open to interpretation.

Take Me Home dir. Liz Sargent | Canadian Premiere
Winner: Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award, Sundance 2026
Drawing from her lived experience, Liz Sargent delivers a remarkably intimate drama about a disabled Korean woman (Sargent's sister, Anna) striving for independence, caring for her ageing adoptive parents, and encountering healthcare's systemic failures.

FESTIVAL PASSES

Pass Type	Regular	VIFF+ Members	VIFF+ Premium
Festival	\$495	\$445	\$396
Platinum	\$1,300	\$1,170	\$1,040
Artist & Industry	\$255	N/A	N/A
Artist & Industry Premium Early Bird, through Aug. 27	\$450	N/A	N/A
Artist & Industry Premium	\$525	N/A	N/A

FILM TICKET PACKS

Pack Type	Regular	VIFF+ Members	VIFF+ Premium
6 Pack	\$126	\$113	\$101
10 Pack	\$200	\$18060	\$160

More ticket details at viff.org/ticket-info/#festival.

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The Vancouver International Film Festival (VIFF) is one of Canada's leading film organizations and an internationally recognized cultural institution. VIFF presents the annual Vancouver International Film Festival, operates the VIFF Centre, Vancouver's premier arthouse cinema, and leads artist development initiatives through the Institute for the Moving Image. Together, these initiatives nurture filmmakers, strengthen the screen-based arts sector, and bring the joy of bold, original cinema to audiences year-round. Learn more at viff.org.

Founded in 1982, the Greater Vancouver International Film Festival Society is a not-for-profit cultural society and federally registered charitable organization. VIFF is presented on the traditional and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓ y̓ əm (Musqueam), Skwx̱x̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səɫ ɬ ɬwəʔɬ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations

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