



VIFF ANNOUNCES THE INAUGURAL LUMINARY AWARDS

**Honouring Carrie Coon, Markus Schleinzner, and Leah Nelson for
Excellence and Dedication to the Art of the Moving Image**

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

VANCOUVER, BC (SEPTEMBER 29, 2026) The Vancouver International Film Festival (VIFF) is proud to announce the launch of the VIFF Luminary Awards, a brand new honour that recognizes excellence and dedication to the art of the moving image. The inaugural winners are: Carrie Coon, Markus Schleinzner, and Leah Nelson.

"The VIFF Luminary Awards celebrate the most exciting artists contributing to film culture, those who are dedicated to the form, strengthening cinema with their uncompromising vision," says Kyle Fostner, Executive Director of VIFF. "Carrie Coon brings a rare, fearless intelligence and emotional resonance to every role. Markus Schleinzner works with remarkable precision and restraint. And, Leah Nelson proves that Vancouver's talent is nothing short of world class. Each of these artists are exemplary contributors to contemporary film culture, and we are honoured to recognize them in this inaugural year."

The VIFF Luminary Awards will be presented to their recipients at the following events:

Carrie Coon

The Close-Up: In Conversation with Carrie Coon

Sunday, October 4, 1:15pm, Lindsay Family Stage at Granville Island

Carrie Coon has established herself as one of stage and screen's most formidable acting talents. Her riveting performance in *The Nest* demonstrated her uncanny capability of oscillating between fierceness and fragility, and the ensemble *His Three Daughters* served as a showcase for her deftness and generosity in playing off other performers. Her acclaimed work in *The Leftovers*, *Fargo*, *The Gilded Age*, and *The White Lotus* proves she is one of the industry's most captivating talents. Her stage credits include lauded Broadway productions of *Bug* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*. *The Liberation*, screening at this year's VIFF, finds Coon delivering a powerhouse performance that will factor into the awards conversation and be talked about for years to come.

VIFF is honoured to present Carrie Coon with a VIFF Luminary Award, recognizing her tremendous contributions to the art of the moving image. In the wide-ranging conversation that will follow the screening, Coon will discuss the collaborative spirit and conviction she developed in acclaimed regional theatre companies and now brings to her work with visionary film and television directors.

Markus Schleinzner***Rose* (Canadian Premiere)****Monday, October 5, 6pm, Lindsay Family Stage at Granville Island (Q&A to follow)**

Markus Schleinzner is an Austrian filmmaker whose work is defined by an unflinching precision and an extraordinary economy of means. Best known internationally as the long-time casting director for Michael Haneke, Schleinzner made a striking directorial debut with *Michael*, which premiered in competition at Cannes and announced him as a filmmaker of rare and unsettling conviction. His follow-up, *Angelo*, further cemented his reputation for work that is formally rigorous, morally complex, and deeply humane. *Rose*, screening at this year's VIFF and already generating significant awards conversation following its celebrated run at Berlin — where it won Best Performance — represents the fullest expression yet of a singular cinematic vision that demands attention.

VIFF is honoured to present Markus Schleinzner with a VIFF Luminary Award, recognizing his approach to character, restraint, and the moral weight he brings to every frame.

Leah Nelson***Tangles*****Friday, October 9, 5:45pm, Vancouver Playhouse (Q&A to follow)**

Leah Nelson is a Vancouver-based filmmaker and co-founder of Giant Ant, the Emmy Award-winning animation studio whose clients span some of the world's most celebrated brands and broadcasters. With *Tangles*, her debut animated feature adapted from Sarah Leavitt's beloved graphic novel, Nelson has announced herself as a filmmaker possessing exceptional sensitivity and depth, crafting a story about memory, caregiving, and the bonds between mothers and daughters with a tenderness and precision. Having premiered at Cannes 2026 to widespread critical acclaim, *Tangles* is now resonating with audiences around the world.

VIFF is honoured to present Leah Nelson with a VIFF Luminary Award, recognizing her helming of a visually accomplished and emotionally rich film that also represents a landmark achievement for Vancouver's animation industry and community.

For more details, visit viff.org/talks.

RELATED PROGRAMMING***The Liberation* film screening**

Sunday, Oct. 4 at 10:30am

Venue: Lindsay Family Stage at Granville Island

Tickets: \$22

The Close-Up: In Conversation with Carrie Coon

Sunday, Oct. 4, 1:15pm

Venue: Lindsay Family Stage at Granville Island

Tickets: \$58

***Rose* film screening (Canadian premiere)**

Monday, Oct 5 at 6pm

Venue: Lindsay Family Stage at Granville Island

Tickets: \$22

***Rose* film screening**

Wednesday, Oct. 7 at 6:30pm

Venue: The Park Theatre

Tickets: \$22

Rose film screening

Friday, Oct. 9 at 3pm

Venue: Rio Theatre

Tickets: \$22

Tangles film screening

Friday, Oct. 9 at 5:45pm

Venue: Vancouver Playhouse

Tickets: \$22

Tangles film screening

Sunday, Oct. 11 at 3pm

Venue: The Park Theatre

Tickets: \$22

Tangles film screening

Sunday, Oct. 11 at 9:30pm

Venue: Rio Theatre

Tickets: \$22

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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 xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

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