



9th Annual Whitaker St. Louis International Film Festival November 16- 22

November 16 2020 2:28 PM



Below are the films and events that will only be available on select dates and times this week.

[Dramarama](#) – only available Nov 21

[The Dark Divide](#) – only available Nov 22

- Q&A with director Tom Putnam.
- Narrative
- Based on the true story of renowned butterfly expert and nature writer Dr. Robert Pyle (David Cross), “The Dark Divide” recounts his perilous 1995 journey across one of America’s largest undeveloped wildlands. Pyle is struggling to finish his next book and help his wife, Thea (Debra Messing), navigate a relapse of her ovarian cancer. He’s a quiet introvert, and she’s a daredevil, and Thea pushes her husband to get out of the classroom and into the forests he writes about but seldom visits. After Thea’s death, Pyle finally accepts her challenge and spends a month hiking across Washington’s Gifford Pinchot National Forest — known as the Dark Divide — in search of new species of butterflies. The area also houses a rare species of spotted owl among its old-growth timber, creating a heated battle between environmentalists and big-business concerns. Between encounters with the warring factions and other forest-dwellers, Pyle glimpses something else in the wilderness, which is infamous for its many Bigfoot sightings. Turning his considerable skills toward solving the mystery of whether Sasquatch truly exists, Pyle finds out a few things about the notorious creature but discovers a lot more about the need for wilderness in our lives. The Hollywood Reporter writes: “For a movie about a lepidopterist, ‘The Dark Divide’ is awfully entertaining. The gorgeous and often forbidding scenery (there’s a harrowing episode set in an underground lava tunnel) should provide a visual balm to those suffering the claustrophobic effects of quarantining.”

[And I Was There](#) – available through Nov 22

[Omar and Us](#) – available through Nov 22

[Paper Spiders](#) – available through Nov 22

[Sapelo](#)

- Q&A with director Nick Brandestini, moderated by documentary filmmaker Alison Carrick (“The First Secret City”).
- Documentary
- On the Georgia barrier island of Sapelo — accessible only by boat — preteen brothers JerMarkest and Johnathan are growing up in the last remaining enclave of the Saltwater Geechee people, African-Americans who developed a unique creole language and culture in the coastal regions of the South. Their greatest joy is exploring the island in the same way that their adoptive mother, Cornelia Walker Bailey, did as a child. As Sapelo’s storyteller and elder matriarch, Cornelia works

to preserve what remains of this unique community established by her ancestors. Reflecting on the complicated splendor of her youth, she strives to shepherd her sons through theirs. At the dawn of adolescence, the brothers inherit her hope, but begin to clash with each other and the wider world.

Thou Shalt Not Hate – available Nov 20-22

New Filmmakers Forum Roundtable

- Saturday, Nov 21 at 11:00am
- As part of the New Filmmakers Forum (NFF), SLIFF holds a conversation with the participating directors: Carlos R. Betancourt & Oscar Ernesto Ortega (“The Last Rafter”), Niav Conty (“Small Time”), Zoë Kennison (“Easy-Bake”), Aimee Long (“A Shot Through the Wall”), and Rich Newey (“Killing Eleanor”). The event is hosted by Andrea Sporcic Klund, the film commissioner at the Missouri Division of Tourism, who leads the discussion of both the directors’ five films and general issues related to American-independent filmmaking.

Master Class - Screenwriting with Beau Willimon

- Nov 21 at 1:00pm
- Former St. Louisan Beau Willimon — a former Cinema St. Louis Award honoree — will offer a master class on screenwriting. Willimon made a memorable film debut in 2011, when he earned his first screen credit as co-writer of “The Ides of March,” based on his play “Farragut North.”

Master Class - Documentary Filmmaking with Anne de Mare and Jeff Truesdell

- Nov 22 at 1:00pm
- Anne de Mare explores the process of making a documentary film, focusing on the use of character as a means of exploring complex issues and offering practical advice on interview strategy, vérité filmmaking techniques, and documentary story structure. Joining de Mare for the class will be Jeff Truesdell, executive producer of the St. Louis-set “For Ahkeem” (SLIFF 2017) and a writer for People magazine, who will both ask questions and offer his own insights.

- Q&A with director Alex Winter, moderated by music critic Daniel Durchholz, author of “Rock 'n' Roll Myths: The True Stories Behind the Most Infamous Legends,” “Neil Young: Long May You Run — The Illustrated History,” and “MusicHound Rock: The Essential Album Guide”; and former editor at Replay and Request magazines, STLtoday.com, and The Riverfront Times.
- Documentary
- Far from a typical music doc, “Zappa” is a multifaceted narrative that brings a complex artist to vibrant life, providing a nuanced look at visionary iconoclast Frank Zappa and the environment that formed him. A simultaneously intimate and expansive look into the iconic musician’s innovative career, the film had unfettered access to the Zappa family trust and its vast trove of archival footage. Exploring the private life behind a musical career that never shied away from the political turbulence of its time, “Zappa” features revealing interviews with Frank’s widow, the late Gail Zappa, and such collaborators as Mike Keneally, Ian Underwood, Steve Vai, Pamela Des Barres, Bunk Gardner, David Harrington, Scott Thunes, Ruth Underwood, and Ray White. “Zappa” is directed by former St. Louisan Alex Winter — a Cinema St. Louis honoree in 2015 — who recently returned to acting in “Bill and Ted Face the Music” but who has spent the last decade helming a string of impressive documentaries, including “Downloaded,” “Deep Web,” “The Panama Papers,” and “Showbiz Kids.”

Sunday, Nov. 22, 7:30 PM: Closing-Night Awards Presentation Livestream

- The festival comes to a conclusion with a free closing-night awards presentation. SLIFF first presents its juried-competition awards: the Interfaith Awards for Best Documentary and Best Narrative; the Shorts Awards; the St. Louis Film Critics’ Joe Pollack Award (for Best Narrative) and Joe Williams Award (for Best Documentary); the New Filmmakers Forum Emerging Director Award (“The Bobbie”), which has a \$500 cash prize; and the inaugural Essie Award for the best film with St. Louis roots, which also includes a \$500 cash prize. The juried awards are capped by the presentation of the Spotlight on Inspiration Documentary Award, which features a \$5,000 cash prize. The awards presentations conclude with SLIFF’s audience-choice awards: the Leon Award for Best Documentary, the TV5MONDE Award for Best International Film, and the Best Film Award.

Special Events (opening-night event, closing-night awards presentation, New Filmmakers Forum roundtable, and master classes) will be offered as livestreams at specific times/dates and weekly reminders will be sent for these.

The following 18 films have limited time windows of availability:

“9to5: The Story of a Movement,” “9,75,” “And I Was There,” “Asia,” “The Crossing,” “The Dark Divide,” “Dramarama,” “Here We Are,” “Mayor,” “Omar and Us,” “On Broadway,” “Paper Spiders,” “The Reunited States,” “Sapelo,” “The Sign Painter,” “Thou Shalt Not Hate,” “Transhood,” and “Zappa”