



Minneapolis St Paul International Film Festival **37**

APRIL 12-28, 2018

mspfilm.org | info@mspfilm.org | 612.331.7563 | @mspfilm | #mspiff
125 SE Main Street, Suite 341, Minneapolis, MN 55414

FILM SOCIETY ANNOUNCES OPENING NIGHT FILM, AND SELECT WOMEN & FILM AND CHASMS & BRIDGES TITLES at the 37th MINNEAPOLIS ST. PAUL INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

MINNEAPOLIS – March 1, 2018. The Film Society of Minneapolis St. Paul today announced the Opening Night film and selected Women & Film and Spotlight on the World: Chasms and Bridges titles. This is a sample preview of the 250+ cinematic works from emerging and veteran filmmakers from around the world to be included in the 37th Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival (MSPIFF). The Festival returns April 12-28, 2018, bringing over 150 new feature films and 100 shorts representing 70+ countries to audiences throughout the Upper Midwest.

This year, MSPIFF maintains its hub at the St. Anthony Main Theatre, expanding to include select screenings at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, with additional screenings at the Capri Theater in Minneapolis, the Uptown Theatre, Metropolitan State University's Film Space in St. Paul and the Marcus Wehrenberg 14 Theatre in Rochester.

OPENING NIGHT FILM

The 37th MSPIFF opens with **RBG**, the acclaimed documentary celebrating the life and lasting influence of **Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg**. Director **Betsy West** will be in attendance, and director **Julie Cohen** and other special guests have been invited to attend. The film and opening night reception and party will take place at St. Anthony Main on **Thursday, April 12**.

WOMEN & FILM

MSPIFF's showcase of female directors from around the globe continues to grow every year, and 2018 is no different, featuring a wide variety of outstanding narratives and documentaries from around the world. MSPIFF programmers have brought in women-directed films that are in the vanguard of global contemporary cinema. A short list of the many titles includes: **Sofia Djama's *The Blessed*** (from Algeria; Ms. Djama will be in attendance), **Vivian Qu's *Angels Wear White*** (China) and **Rungano Nyoni's *I Am Not A Witch*** (Zambia).

"The #MeToo movement has underscored the inequalities in the film industry like never before," says Susan Smoluchowski, Executive Director of the Film Society. "Our Women & Film and Chasms and

Bridges programs examine the chaotic and divisive world we live in today, as well as the resistance movements that seek to affect change, and we have sought out films that invite discourse and understanding.”

CHASMS AND BRIDGES: CINEMA AND THE SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND

With this in mind, the 2018 MSPIFF Spotlight on the World is ***Chasms and Bridges: Cinema and the Search for Common Ground***. Tackling the lines that divide us and the dramatic potential for reconciliation and compassion, this special series of titles and related panel discussions and workshops, are designed to open up conversations on the social and ideological divides and shifting social order shaping our world today.

Such stories can be found in fiction: A Syrian outsider finds both love and bigotry in Finland (***A Moment in the Reeds***); a powerful business woman comes face-to-face with the glass ceiling (***Number One***); upper and middle classes collide in Iran as a minor accident turns into major tragedy (***No Date, No Signature***). And non-fiction: Delve into the day-to-day life of radical Islamist family (***Of Father and Sons***); see the 2016 US election from the Russian perspective (***Our New President***); take a frustrating look at the corruption inside the NYPD (***Crime + Punishment***).

Highlighting the distinct identities of and commonalities among diverse cultures, these films will take us on a journey across geography, history, age, gender, social and political issues and the complexities of human relationships, bridging differences to find common ground.

Screeners will be provided upon request (if available), as well as more in-depth summaries, director bios, images, etc. The full lineup will be announced in early March. Please contact Publicity Manager Peter Schilling (peter@mspfilm.org) or Festival Publicist Connie Shaver (connieshaver@outlook.com).

RBG

Charting Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s life through growing up in Brooklyn, *RBG* shows Ginsburg pursuing her education, falling in love, her friendship with the late Justice Antonin Scalia and eventual appointment as Justice of the Supreme Court. A fighting force, Ginsburg’s determination throughout her life and career has earned her the title of “notorious” both in politics and the wider public discourse. As a history-making public figure, Ginsburg has become “notorious” through her championing of women, her ever-persistent work ethic, and her commitment to democracy. Program: Special Presentation, Women & Film. Directed by Julie Cohen, Betsy West. USA. 2018. English. 97 min. Documentary Feature.

ANGELS WEAR WHITE (JIA NIAN HUA)

Xiaomi, a motel cleaner, watches as a district-commissioner checks in alongside two girls, Xiaowen and Xin Xin. On the surveillance monitor, Xiaomi sees the commissioner push his way into the girls’ room, and she decides to record the event with her smartphone. In the wake of the assault, Xiaomi’s story does little good for the girls as they face their unconcerned families and a society that would rather put the blame on them than offend their attacker. Program: Asian Frontiers, Women & Film. Directed by Vivian Qu. China, France. 2018. Chinese (Mandarin) w/English subtitles. 107 min. Narrative Feature.

THE BLESSED (LES BIENHEUREUX)

In postwar Algiers, Amal and Samir are a middle-aged couple hoping to celebrate their twentieth wedding anniversary. Drifting through their day, they eventually find themselves at a restaurant. Here, they confront their differences and disillusionment, threaded with the unsettled atmosphere of postwar society. Outside, their teenaged son Fahim and his friends, Ferial and Reda, spend their day on the streets of Algiers. They too reveal ideological differences among them, their banter soon leading to the reveal of hidden wounds left by the Algerian Civil War that shaped their current world. Program: Images of Africa, Women & Film. Directed by Sofia Djama. Algeria, Belgium, France. 2018. Arabic, French w/English subtitles. 102 min. Narrative Feature.

CRIME + PUNISHMENT

Shocking and true, *Crime + Punishment* explores the internal corruption of the New York City Police Department and the undeniably racist system that has persisted well past early revelations. Back in 2013, a group of 12 police officers had dared to take the NYPD to court for the corruption, but the case's federal hearing did not lead to reform. Cut to 2017, and director Stephen Maing reconnects with the police officers who first took a stand, to find them more determined than ever to speak out against the continued injustice. Program: New American Visions, Spotlight. Directed by Stephen Maing. USA. 2018. English. 112 min. Documentary Feature.

I AM NOT A WITCH

Shula is young woman accused by an older woman of being a witch. Adorned with a spindle to "tether" her to the ground and carted off to a camp for witches that bares little difference to your standard zoo, Shula is then forced to perform her "magic" for a corrupt official. Rungano Nyoni's debut feature-film renders Shula's journey by exploring themes of femininity, superstition and acceptance, while also keeping Shula herself a mystery to all the spectators that attempt to control her world. Program: Images of Africa, Women & Film. Directed by Rungano Nyoni. Zambia, UK, France. 2017. English. 90 min. Narrative Feature.

A MOMENT IN THE REEDS (TÄMÄ HETKI KAISLIKOSSA)

After moving to Paris for university, handsome literature student Leevi returns to his native Finland for the summer to help his estranged father renovate the family lake house so it can be sold. Tareq, a recent asylum seeker from Syria, has been hired to help with the work, and when Leevi's father has to return to town on business, the two young men establish a connection and spend a few days discovering one another during the Finnish midsummer. Program: Midnight Sun, LGBTQ Currents, Spotlight. Directed by Mikko Makela. Finland, UK. 2017. English, Finnish w/English subtitles. 108 min. Narrative Feature.

NO DATE NO SIGNATURE (BEDOONE TARIKH, BEDOONE EMZA)

While on his way home from work, forensics doctor Dr. Kaveh Nariman is nearly hit by a reckless driver and in the chaos hits a motorcycle carrying Moosa, Leila, and their children. Moosa and Leila are uninjured, along with their daughter, but their young son, Amir Ali, appears to have a concussion. Brushing off a hospital visit, Kaveh and the family go their separate ways, only for the latter to discover the next day that one of the incoming bodies at the morgue where he works is Amir. Fellow colleague Dr. Sayeh Behbahani deduces that the boy's death was due to botulism caused by eating cheap chicken, but Nariman remains convinced that it was the motorcycle accident that ultimately caused it. Program: World Cinema, Spotlight. Directed by Vahid Jalilvand. Iran. 2017. Farsi w/English subtitles. 100

min. Narrative Feature.

NUMBER ONE (NUMÉRO UNE)

When Emmanuelle, an executive in a French energy firm, reaches the glass ceiling, but refuses to recognize her limited options. For years she has refused to acknowledge the sexism inherent in her workplace, but when chauvinistic male colleagues work to undermine her rise in the ranks, Emmanuelle pulls out all the stops in an attempt to capture what is rightly hers. Program: World Cinema, Women & Film, Spotlight. Directed by Tonie Marshall. France. 2017. French w/English subtitles. 110 min. Narrative Feature.

OF FATHERS AND SONS

The roots of home run deep in Talal Derki's latest eye-opening feature. Returning to his homeland of Syria, documentary filmmaker Derki encounters Abu Osama and his family. Masquaring as a jihadist sympathizer, Derki integrates himself into the household of Osama, an Al-Nusra Front member. Program: World Cinema, Spotlight. Directed by Talal Derki. Germany, Syria, Lebanon, Qatar. 2018. Arabic w/English subtitles. 99 min. Documentary Feature.

OUR NEW PRESIDENT

In this era of fake news v. real news, acclaimed documentarian Maxim Pozdorovkin has crafted a startling cine-essay, pulling together footage from the 2016 election from YouTube, Russian-government run RT, and other sources to dig deep into the propaganda machine that may ultimately have altered the U.S. Presidential election. Program: World Cinema, Spotlight. Directed by Maxim Pozdorovkin. Russia, USA. 2017. English, Russian w/English subtitles. 77 min. Documentary Feature.

MSPIFF is presented by the Film Society of Minneapolis St. Paul, a dynamic 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to fostering a knowledgeable and vibrant appreciation of the art of film and its power to inform and transform individuals and communities.

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