



# Artis—Naples Naples International Film Festival

Home of The Baker Museum & Naples Philharmonic

## ***For Immediate Release***

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## **Artis—Naples announces official selections for 17th annual Naples International Film Festival (October 23-26, 2025)**

**NIFF presents a celebration of  
short films on Opening Night and closes with  
*The Princess Bride*, accompanied live by  
Jack Everly and the Naples Philharmonic**

**Juried competitions include the  
Narrative Feature Prize, Documentary Feature Prize  
and the inaugural Short Film Prize**

**Naples, FL (September 26, 2025)** – Artis—Naples announced today the film lineup for the 17th annual Naples International Film Festival (NIFF), to be held October 23-26, 2025.

The festival opens on Thursday, October 23, with *Opening Night Shorts: Unexpected Outcomes*, featuring all seven creative short films participating in NIFF's inaugural Short Film Juried Competition, screened in Hayes Hall. This celebration of short film highlights the imaginative power and condensed storytelling that have long made shorts a cornerstone of cinema. The festival will close on Sunday, October 26, with a special presentation of *The Princess Bride* in Concert, featuring a live performance of Mark Knopfler's iconic score by the Naples Philharmonic, conducted by Principal Pops Conductor Jack Everly.

This year's festival includes 60 films, selected from among nearly 1,000 submitted films: 10 narrative features, 12 documentary features and 38 short films, representing 17 countries and including 47 premieres (five world, one U.S., five east coast and 36 Florida premieres). Select filmmakers will participate in post-screening Q&A conversations as well as panel discussions during the festival. Screenings and other film festival events will take place across the Artis—Naples Kimberly K. Querrey and Louis A. Simpson Cultural Campus—Hayes Hall, Daniels Pavilion and Norris Garden—and at Alamo Drafthouse Cinema at Mercato.

"Each year, the Naples International Film Festival affirms the role of film as a vital art form within our multidisciplinary mission," said Artis—Naples CEO and President Kathleen van Bergen. "This year's lineup offers stories and perspectives that cross cultures and experiences, reminding us of the many ways the arts can deepen our understanding of ourselves and each other. NIFF continues to be a place for filmmakers and film lovers to come together in meaningful dialogue, sparking conversations that continue long after the festival ends."

“Our team has spent the past several months shaping a lineup that reflects the rich and varied spirit of independent cinema,” said David Filner, executive vice president, artistic operations. “From powerful documentaries to inventive narrative features and short films, these selections invite audiences into an experience that is as engaging as it is diverse. NIFF remains a space where filmmakers and film lovers share in the discovery and excitement that only cinema can inspire.”

“NIFF is more than a festival,” added Festival Producer Shannon Franklin. “It has earned a reputation as a welcoming destination for both emerging and established filmmakers who know their work will be embraced and celebrated here. The warmth of the Southwest Florida community makes the experience truly special for everyone, and we look forward to the energy and sense of celebration this year’s festival will bring.”

On Thursday, October 23, NIFF’s Opening Night Shorts program will screen seven inventive short films in Hayes Hall (5833 Pelican Bay Blvd), all participating in the festival’s inaugural Short Film Juried Competition. The lineup includes Kathy Meng’s ***Willow and Wu***, a lyrical story of friendship between two outsiders navigating shifting cultural identities; John Kelly’s ***Retirement Plan***, a darkly comic take on aging and unexpected second acts; and Tyler Cunningham’s ***Learning How to Drive***, a coming-of-age tale that blends humor and poignancy as a young woman wrestles with newfound independence.

Also screening are Herman Karlsson’s ***Xmas Tree***, a darkly comedic meditation on family holiday traditions; Ric Serena’s ***Drop Off***, a tightly drawn comedy about family; and Lee Knight’s ***A Friend of Dorothy***, an affectionate look at loneliness in old age and intergenerational friendship. The evening concludes with ***The Singers***, directed by Sam Davis, a musical narrative capturing the joy and vulnerability of live performance.

NIFF’s Closing Night on Sunday, October 25, will feature a beloved classic in a format unique to NIFF as Principal Pops Conductor Jack Everly and the Naples Philharmonic present ***The Princess Bride*** in Concert, performing Mark Knopfler’s enchanting score live. This special event continues NIFF’s tradition of pairing film with live orchestral performance for a memorable finale.

Audiences will also enjoy NIFF’s signature “Cinema Under the Stars” in Norris Garden, located on the Artis—Naples cultural campus. On Friday, October 24, the festival will present director Patrick Creadon’s ***The Pantone Guy***, a colorful documentary about Lawrence Herbert, the visionary behind the Pantone Matching System, whose obsession with standardizing color transformed the way the world communicates and creates. And on Saturday, October 25, audiences will experience Isabel Hagen’s ***On a String***, a narrative feature following a gifted violist torn between artistic ambition and the often-depressing life of a professional musician.

More than \$15,000 in cash prizes will be awarded at this year’s Closing Night Awards Ceremony in Daniels Pavilion on Sunday, October 26. NIFF will once again present the Audience Awards for Best Narrative Feature, Best Documentary Feature and Best Short Film, as well as the Focus on the Arts Awards, the impact Award, the Indie Spirit Award, the Programmers’ Choice Awards, Best First Feature, the Rising Star Award and the Florida Film Award. Additionally, 2025 marks the sixth consecutive year NIFF presents juried awards in Narrative Feature and Documentary Feature categories, and it is the first year the festival will present a juried award in the Short Films category.

The Narrative Feature Juried Competition slate includes Hugo André’s ***Happy as Larry***, a heartfelt drama about an unlikely friendship that blossoms into something deeper as two men walk the tightrope between despair and delight; Ricardo de Montreuil’s ***Mistura***, which intertwines food, memory and tradition in a cross-cultural tale of identity and transformation; and Isabel Hagen’s ***On a String***.

The Documentary Feature Juried Competition includes Mark Craig’s ***Apollo 1***, a riveting exploration of NASA’s early tragedy that reshaped the space program and the lives of the astronauts’ families; Ben Hethcoat and Keita Ideno’s ***Coroner to the Stars***, an insider’s look at the work and life of a medical examiner in Los Angeles whose high-profile cases helped shape headlines and cultural conversation; and

Cindy Meehl's ***Jimmy & The Demons***, which follows 79-year-old sculptor Jimmy Grashow over four years as he devotes himself to a towering magnum opus.

Beyond the juried slate, NIFF audiences will discover a range of compelling narrative features that bring humor and heart to the screen. Reed Arnold's ***Do Us Part*** spins a witty tale of wedding-day chaos when long-buried secrets resurface between three college friends, testing loyalty and love in equal measure. In Katy Chevigny's ***The Easy Kind***, acclaimed country singer Elizabeth Cook plays a fictionalized version of herself in a genre-bending story that blurs documentary and drama, tracing one woman's fight to define her own artistic identity in the Nashville spotlight. Meanwhile, Amy Landecker's ***For Worse*** follows a newly divorced, sober mother who stumbles through the highs and lows of midlife reinvention, delivering a heartfelt romantic comedy headlined by real-life couple Amy Landecker and Bradley Whitford.

The festival's nonfiction highlights extend beyond the juried competition as well, showcasing portraits of resilience and discovery. Wendy Lobel's ***Anxiety Club*** uses humor and candor to examine mental health through the lens of today's most self-aware comedians, including Marc Maron and Aparna Nancherla. Jenna Naranjo Winters' ***Dream Touch Believe*** profiles blind, Indigenous sculptor Michael Naranjo, whose extraordinary artistry and perseverance have inspired collectors and admirers worldwide. And returning NIFF alum Sean Cisterna's ***Silver Screemers*** presents a joyous chronicle of senior citizens who defy stereotypes by creating their very own horror film—finding camaraderie, empowerment and a few jump scares along the way.

Themes for the Naples International Film Festival's curated short film programs include **A Family Affair**, **Twists and Turns**, **The International Art of Animation**, **Florida Stories** and the recurring **Student Filmmaker Showcase**.

Tickets for all screenings and activities at Alamo Drafthouse go on sale September 26. Tickets for the Opening Night Film and Party; the Closing Night Awards Ceremony, Film and Wrap Party; and *The Princess Bride* in Concert are on sale now. For more information, visit [artisnaples.org/niff](http://artisnaples.org/niff).

*NIFF extends deep appreciation to Festival Presenting Sponsors Richard and Christine Lublin. Generous support is also provided by the Collier County Tourist Development Council.*

*Sincere thanks to Opening Night Film and Party Sponsor The Woodruff Institute; Closing Night Awards Ceremony, Film and Wrap Party Sponsor Scott Meloun; Friday and Saturday Night Norris Garden Screening Sponsors Vincent and Debra Maffeo; and Theater Sponsors Entech, Bobbi and David Drobis, FisherBroyles and Tes and Brian Manley. NIFF is pleased to partner with Gulfshore Life and The Naples Press as exclusive Media Sponsors.*

### **The 2025 Naples International Film Festival (NIFF) Official Selections:**

#### **OPENING NIGHT SHORT FILMS**

##### ***A Friend of Dorothy***

Director: Lee Knight

Country: U.K. | Running time: 21 minutes

A lonely widow's quiet life is upended when a teenage boy accidentally kicks a ball into her garden, leading to a blossoming friendship neither could have imagined.

##### **EAST COAST PREMIERE**

##### ***Drop Off***

Director: Rick Serena

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 3 minutes

A couple unravels as parenting takes its toll, leading to a debate about unloading their children at a nearby fire station.

***Learning How to Drive*****FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Tyler Cunningham

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 10 minutes

A recent L.A. transplant and struggling actress-turned-babysitter must chauffeur a precocious preteen to a birthday party in Laurel Canyon. There's just one problem: She barely knows how to drive.

***Retirement Plan*****FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: John Kelly

Country: Ireland | Running Time: 7 minutes

Lacking enthusiasm in his overstimulated midlife, Ray (Domhnall Gleeson) dreams of the beauty and joy he will find in retirement.

***The Singers***

Director: Sam Davis

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 18 minutes

*The Singers* explores the complexities of masculinity and the power of vulnerability through art as a pub of downtrodden patrons unexpectedly connects through an impromptu sing-off.

***Willow and Wu*****FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Kathy Meng

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 14 minutes

On her day off—and fresh off a breakup—Willow, a young, overworked assistant, is assigned to help her high-powered boss' husband with a bizarre task that's clearly beyond her job duties.

***Xmas Tree*****EAST COAST PREMIERE**

Director: Herman Karlsson

Country: Finland | Running Time: 15 minutes

When someone steals the expensive Christmas tree Marco purchased, he refuses to buy another one. Instead, he decides to steal one from a nearby property owned by a neighbor. Unfortunately, his plan goes awry.

**CLOSING NIGHT FILM PRESENTATION*****The Princess Bride***

Director: Rob Reiner

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 98 minutes

A fairy tale adventure about a beautiful young woman and her one true love who must find her after a long separation and save her from the evils of the mythical kingdom of Florin.

**NARRATIVE COMPETITION FEATURES*****Happy As Larry*****FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Hugo André

Country: U.K. | Running Time: 87 minutes

Unsatisfied with life after years of writing novels more interesting than his own life, Larry goes on one last adventure before his scheduled demise. But Dale, an uninvited companion, disrupts his final chapter.

***Mistura***

Director: Ricardo de Montreuil

Country: Peru | Running Time: 97 minutes

A prejudiced woman's life unravels after her husband leaves her. Out of necessity, she opens a restaurant, where a diverse team slowly transforms her, leading her to discover Peru's remarkable cuisine and people.

***On a String*****FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Isabel Hagen

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 78 minutes

A Juilliard-trained violist still living at home with her parents in New York City makes money playing gigs with friends until her toxic ex reappears and informs her of an opening for a violist in a prestigious orchestra.

## DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION FEATURES

### ***Apollo 1***

**FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Mark Craig

Countries: U.K./Germany | Running Time: 102 minutes

As a new generation readies a return to the moon, *Apollo 1* looks back at the tragedy that killed astronauts Gus Grissom, Ed White and Roger Chaffee on January 27, 1967, in Cape Canaveral, Florida.

### ***Coroner to the Stars***

**FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Directors: Ben Hethcoat, Keita Ideno

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 83 minutes

Learn about Dr. Thomas Noguchi, the former Los Angeles County chief medical examiner-coroner, whose groundbreaking autopsies from Marilyn Monroe to John Belushi forever shaped American culture.

### ***Jimmy & The Demons***

**FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Cindy Meehl

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 93 minutes

Go inside the mind of celebrated sculptor James Grashow, age 79, as he pours time, labor, creativity, passion and his health into his magnum opus: a towering sculpture of Jesus and demons.

## ADDITIONAL NARRATIVE FEATURES

### ***Do Us Part***

**EAST COAST PREMIERE**

Director: Reed Arnold

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 93 minutes

When Rose, Ryan's never-quite-requted love and best friend from college, shows up to his wedding unannounced, determined to rectify her greatest mistake, Ryan's best man, Mark, must navigate a minefield of secrets to prevent the past from rewriting the future.

### ***The Easy Kind***

**FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Katy Chevigny

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 98 minutes

In this genre-bending debut narrative feature, veteran documentary filmmaker Katy Chevigny follows a rising middle-aged country music singer as she navigates the music industry while trying to free herself from the everyday issues holding her back.

### ***For Worse***

**FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Amy Landecker

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 85 minutes

Fresh off a messy divorce, a 50-year-old sober mom tries to rebuild her life and stumbles into a new beginning after finding herself at a Gen Z wedding behaving like a drunk 25-year-old bridesmaid.

### ***Group – The Schopenhauer Project***

**WORLD PREMIERE**

Director: Alexis Lloyd

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 119 minutes

The members of a therapy group deal with its dissolution after a newcomer reveals his intentions to write a TV series based on his experience in this world premiere from French filmmaker Alexis Lloyd (*30 Beats*) that's been called "the closest representation of what group feels like."

### ***Omaha***

Director: Cole Webley

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 83 minutes

Following a tragedy, two children embark on a cross-country journey with their father, encountering an unfamiliar world. As their adventure unfolds, one child discovers things might not be what they seem.

### ***Pilgrim***

**FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Directors: Scout Purdy and Doug Purdy

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 111 minutes

An overachieving teen and her man-child father decide to hike the California coast in this heartwarming story of connection and discovery.

***Seems Like Love*****FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Yana Klimova-Yusupova

Country: Russia | Running Time: 92 minutes

When you travel to an unfamiliar place, you never know what or who you'll love. As Liza explores Saint Petersburg for the first time, she becomes smitten with the city's sights, bohemian parties and two new friends.

**ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTARY FEATURES*****Anxiety Club***

Director: Wendy Lobel

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 86 minutes

*Anxiety Club* takes the audience backstage to meet with some of today's most brilliant (and anxious) comedians as they candidly share their personal struggles with the world's most prevalent mental health condition: anxiety.

***Dream Touch Believe*****EAST COAST PREMIERE**

Director: Jenna Naranjo Winters

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 85 minutes

This film explores the inspiring life story of blind, Indigenous sculptor Michael Naranjo. With no eyes and the use of one hand, Naranjo, a veteran who suffered his injuries in a Vietnam grenade attack, creates sculptures coveted by collectors worldwide.

***The Pantone Guy***

Director: Patrick Creadon

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 80 minutes

At age 96, Palm Beach resident Larry Herbert reflects on his life, from his Depression-era Brooklyn upbringing to creating the Pantone Matching System, which revolutionized the worldwide use of color, enhancing artistic expression and commercial production.

***Rebel With a Clause***

Director: Brandt Johnson

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 86 minutes

A grammar guru takes her pop-up grammar advice on a road trip across all 50 states to show that comma fights can bring us closer together in a divided time.

***Remembering Big: Juan "Chi Chi" Rodriguez Story*****FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Directors: Marisol Gonzalez, Alina Mogollon-Volk

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 84 minutes

From the sugarcane plantation to the PGA Hall of Fame, this documentary feature follows the stunning rise of a poor Puerto Rican kid to becoming one of professional golf's most popular players in history.

***Silver Screammers*****FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Sean Cisterna

Country: Canada | Running Time: 94 minutes

A group of seniors living in a retirement community band together on an extraordinary adventure—making a horror film. Along the way, the seniors challenge stereotypes, defy expectations and discover how the timeless power of creativity can build lasting friendships.

***Thaw*****FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Robin Hauser

Countries: U.S./Barbados | Running Time: 86 minutes

Egg freezing is a billion-dollar industry that gives women the freedom to pause their biological clocks and extend their reproductive choices. *Thaw* follows three American women as they navigate their options and question what "choice" means in this new era of eggs on ice.

***The Stamp Thief***

Director: Dan Sturman

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 103 minutes

Part detective story, part heist film and part untold history, *The Stamp Thief* investigates a Holocaust-era rumor that a mysterious Nazi stole priceless stamp collections from concentration camp victims and buried them in a Polish town.

## ***The True Story of Tamara de Lempicka & The Art of Survival***

Director: Julie Rubio

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 96 minutes

From her rise in the world of art in 1920s Paris and fleeing fascism in the 1940s, this documentary traces the turbulent and decadent life and career of one of the 20th century's most revered female artists, the preeminent Art Deco painter Tamara de Lempicka.

### **SHORT FILM PACKAGE: A FAMILY AFFAIR**

#### ***Baby Blues***

**FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Helen Komini Knudsen

Country: Norway | Running Time: 10 minutes

What goes on in the mind of a sleep-deprived mother as she takes her napping baby on a walk? Follow Marte on her stroll to a nearby coffee shop as she tries to avoid the threats that may awaken her newborn.

#### ***The Frame***

**U.S. PREMIERE**

Director: Óskar Þór Ámundason

Country: Iceland | Running Time: 17 minutes

Eva and Halldór's mother stopped speaking since falling ill. Eva has been taking care of her with the help of nurse Védís, but when Halldór visits, the household balance is disrupted with unforeseen consequences.

#### ***Hāfu***

**FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Josh Wolff

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 16 minutes

Emi, a Japanese American and bride-to-be, reconnects with her recently relocated grandmother. As the two learn about each other, Emi begins to embrace a side of her she never knew, opening a door that can never be closed.

#### ***Mildred 4 a Million***

**FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Kimmie P. Callaway

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 21 minutes

A gregarious great-grandmother who desperately wants the attention of her tech-obsessed great-granddaughter sets out on a quest to get a million followers on TikTok.

#### ***Timeless***

**WORLD PREMIERE**

Directors: Stevo Chang, Rachel Mathieu

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 11 minutes

When an overworked woman encounters a freak accident that leaves time frozen, she thinks she's finally found the freedom to explore Paris, her dream city, alone.

### **SHORTS PACKAGE: TWISTS AND TURNS**

#### ***Halfway Haunted***

**FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Sam Rudykoff

Country: Canada | Running Time: 17 minutes

Jess, a tenant living in a haunted house (because she can't afford anything else), teams up with a ghost to stop a real estate developer from demolishing the home they share.

#### ***The Protagonist Gene***

**FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Kyle Leland Cullerton

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 8 minutes

When the timid Lisa meets with her physician and is medically diagnosed as a supporting character, she takes matters into her own hands, swallowing an experimental serum to attain main character energy.

#### ***Remote Strutting***

**EAST COAST PREMIERE**

Director: Lorna Fitzsimons

Country: Ireland | Running Time: 12 minutes

Mia, a deaf, talented young IT professional, navigates the complexities of her career and personal life by shifting between real and imaginary worlds. In the real world, she works remotely, daydreaming about working in a vibrant office with fun colleagues.



***Rolling Film, Rocking History, Al Maysles Captures the Beatle***

**FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Bart Weiss

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 11 minutes

Al and David Maysles directed some of the greatest documentary films ever (*Gimme Shelter/Grey Gardens*), but their work capturing intimate moments of the Beatles' arrival in New York City in 1964 hasn't been told until now.

***The Second Time Around***

**FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Jack Howard

Country: U.K. | Running Time: 12 minutes

Left alone closing a café on a stormy night, a young waitress opens the door to let a mysterious older woman inside, while also opening her mind to the belief that this moment matters more than she knows.

***Wilhelm Scream***

**FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Anna Quinlan

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 12 minutes

Besides making movies, the one thing Steven Spielberg, Peter Jackson, Quentin Tarantino and hundreds of other filmmakers have in common is that they all used a sound effect called the "Wilhelm Scream," the most infamous inside joke in cinema history.

**SHORTS PACKAGE: INTERNATIONAL ART OF ANIMATION**

***Éiru***

**FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Giovanna Ferrari

Country: Ireland | Running Time: 13 minutes

Determined to be a warrior, the smallest child of an Iron Age clan is thrust into action after a well runs dry. With no one smaller, she descends into it, hoping to bring water back to her people and become the village's most unlikely hero.

***Hurikán***

**FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Jan Saska

Countries: Czech Republic, France, Slovakia, Bosnia and Herzegovina | Running Time: 13 minutes

In one of Prague's wildest districts, Hurikán faces robbers, cops and his own thirst as he rushes to find a new keg to save his favorite beer stand from closing while also impressing an attractive bartender.

***Line 12***

**FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Directors: Sarah Schulz, Christopher Schmier

Country: Germany | Running Time: 8 minutes

The meticulous and dependable train conductor on Line 12 has his carefully planned day upended when he finds a stowaway and carefree musician hiding in his machine room. Then catastrophe strikes, and the two must overcome their differences to save the train from derailment.

***Ovary-Acting***

**FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Ida Melum

Country: U.K. | Running Time: 12 minutes

While stuck at her sister's baby shower, a 30-something woman is forced to decide whether she wants to have kids or not after unexpectedly giving birth to her reproductive organs.

***Patterns***

**FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Alex Glawion

Country: Germany | Running Time: 8 minutes

A traveler's positive mindset goes awry after encountering a barrage of noise and rude people during his morning commute, forcing him to put on his headphones and escape into a vibrant, patterned world where he briefly meets a lively woman before returning to real life.

***Scars We Love***

**FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Raphaël Jouzeau

Country: France | Running Time: 15 minutes

Despite breaking up, Gaspard is still in love with Leïla. When the two meet in a café to find some closure, they delve into their past and begin to understand what led to their demise.



### ***Vinny***

**Director:** Declan Boyle

Country: Ireland | Running Time: 3 minutes

A vinyl record named Vinny takes viewers on a nostalgic journey as he struggles to remain relevant despite changes in style and formats, positioning him as a relic of the past. Is he destined for a life of collecting dust on a shelf, or will he somehow make a comeback?

## **SHORTS PACKAGE: FLORIDA STORIES**

### ***George V***

**Directors:** Dennis Scholl, Dia Kontaxis

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 12 minutes

When a Ukrainian immigrant retires to 1970s South Beach, he discovers a hidden talent for fine art. Decades later, a young friend's devotion to preserving his work results in a celebrated museum exhibition.

### ***The Little Brown Bird***

**Director:** KT Bryden

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 33 minutes

Once down to 80 in the wild, the Florida grasshopper sparrow is at risk of extinction. Biologist Fabiola 'Fabby' Baeza-Tarin and an unexpected team work together to protect the sparrows, their shrinking habitat and the headwaters of the Everglades.

### ***Lynda Fay Braun***

**WORLD PREMIERE**

**Director:** Jacopo Fantastichini

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 6 minutes

In the wake of Hurricane Ian, Naples-based abstract painter Lynda Braun transforms destruction into inspiration, revealing how resilience and creativity can uncover beauty in the overlooked patterns of everyday life.

### ***Parker & Sammy***

**FLORIDA PREMIERE**

**Directors:** Guto Barra, Peter DiMario

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 33 minutes

Naples residents Parker Seward and Sammy Callari take over the silver screen in this film about a friendship that develops between a young man with Down syndrome and an ex-cage fighter.

## **SHORTS PACKAGE: STUDENT FILMMAKER SHOWCASE**

### ***Holy Cow*** (College)

**WORLD PREMIERE**

**Director:** Karthik Swaminathan

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 2 minutes

A young boy in India becomes frustrated by cows in the road impeding his way to school. But after he rejects the sacred animal, a holy cow shows up to teach him a lesson.

### ***Irrational Geographic*** (College)

**FLORIDA PREMIERE**

**Director:** Katie Gibbs

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 2 minutes

Despite their ability to converse like humans, two animals on the set of a wildlife documentary are not being cooperative. Join the film crew as they attempt to capture an intense chase scene between the two.

### ***The Lonely Life of Lint*** (College)

**FLORIDA PREMIERE**

**Director:** Sarah Sklar

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 4 minutes

A lint creature in the dryer vent of a corner laundromat becomes aware of its isolation and loneliness and sets out to make a friend.

### ***Midnight Monsters*** (College)

**WORLD PREMIERE**

**Director:** Lauren Best

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 2 minutes

A baby bunny must overcome her fear of the dark to confront a sinister wolf made entirely of shadows after she believes the big, bad wolf stole her beloved carrot plushie while she slept.

***Pulpitum* (K-12)****FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Caleb Reese Paul

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 15 minutes

Determined to find her missing sister, Claire investigates the mysterious church rituals of her small town and battles fragmented visions, cryptic encounters, ever-present surveillance, and a dangerously unorthodox society.

***Veil of Valor* (College)**

Director: Emily Rice

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 8 minutes

The quiet resilience of a military spouse is tested after her husband deploys, leaving her to care for their young daughter and face her own battle with loneliness.

***What the Heaven!* (College)****FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Richard Yan

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 13 minutes

When a Chinese American film student is visited by the ghost of his recently deceased father, the student is not only forced to confront the supernatural but is enlisted by the ghost to resolve unfinished business before he can pass on to the afterlife.

***Where We Left Off* (K-12)****FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Hunter Nickless

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 10 minutes

Childhood sweethearts Vivian and Grant grew up believing they had their future all planned out. But when a secret comes to life, their plans to attend the same college—and live out their happily ever after—are upended.

***Wrestle-Off* (College)****FLORIDA PREMIERE**

Director: Sabatino Ciatti Jr.

Country: U.S. | Running Time: 19 minutes

High school wrestler Alex battles with the grief of her father's passing and the hostility of her teammates as she competes for a varsity spot on an all-male wrestling team.

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**ARTIS—NAPLES**

Artis—Naples, home of The Baker Museum and Naples Philharmonic, creates and presents world-class visual and performing arts. Through our multidisciplinary offerings, we inspire, educate and entertain to engage and enrich the growing and diversifying community.

**KIMBERLY K. QUERREY and LOUIS A. SIMPSON CULTURAL CAMPUS**

Led by CEO and President Kathleen van Bergen and Artistic and Music Director Alexander Shelley, Artis—Naples offers more than 800 performing and visual arts experiences annually across its 8.5-acre Kimberly K. Querrey and Louis A. Simpson Cultural Campus and throughout the community.

Artis—Naples welcomes hundreds of thousands of visitors each year for a broad array of artistic and educational opportunities perfect for audiences of all backgrounds and interests. The cultural campus is home to five buildings, including two performance halls (Frances Pew Hayes Hall and Myra J. Daniels Pavilion), The Baker Museum, the Toni Stabile Education Building and the Kohan Administration Building.

**NAPLES PHILHARMONIC**

The Naples Philharmonic has long been recognized as one of the cornerstones of Southwest Florida's arts community. As part of Artis—Naples, the Naples Philharmonic performs more than 140 orchestral and chamber music concerts, as well as opera and ballet, education, community and special event concerts annually between September and June in the 1,477-seat Hayes Hall, the 283-seat Daniels Pavilion and around Southwest Florida. The Naples Philharmonic has enjoyed a history of working with world-class music directors. Following a successful inaugural season in 2024-25, Alexander Shelley commences his second season as artistic and music director in 2025-26. Renowned violinist James Ehnes continues as artistic partner through the 2025-26 season, working with Naples Philharmonic musicians in a variety of settings with a focus on inspiring and embodying a high level of artistry. Podium leadership also includes

Principal Pops Conductor Jack Everly, celebrating 16 years in this role in the 2025-26 season and bringing pops performances that celebrate music across genres.

## **THE BAKER MUSEUM**

The Baker Museum is the foremost fine art museum in Southwest Florida, presenting an ambitious slate of exhibitions annually to complement installations of works from its permanent collection. Comprising more than 3,000 objects, the museum's broad holdings of 20th- and 21st-century art reflect particular strengths in modern art of the United States and Mexico. The Baker Museum's collection demonstrates the generosity and commitment of area collectors, including significant gifts from the collection of the late Olga Hirshhorn.

In 2025, The Baker Museum was accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, the highest national recognition for museums in the United States, affirming the museum's commitment to excellence, accountability and public service.

With more than two decades of collecting and exhibiting, the museum is committed to the stewardship and scholarship of its collections and to fostering inspiring and transformative experiences with the visual arts. At the same time, The Baker Museum partners with the world's leading arts institutions to make extraordinary exhibitions accessible to the Southwest Florida community—including recently the National Portrait Gallery, London and the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation. In 2020, Artis—Naples celebrated the renovation and expansion of The Baker Museum and adjoining Norris Garden, designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architecture/Landscape/Urbanism, which created new spaces for multidisciplinary exploration and social interaction.

## **EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY**

In addition to creating and presenting visual and performing arts, Artis—Naples provides robust education and community activities for students of all ages in Collier and Lee counties. Each season, thousands of Collier County Public School students interact with Artis—Naples education programming, both on our cultural campus and in their classrooms. Beyond our commitment to youth education, the Lifelong Learning program provides informative lectures and study opportunities for adults seeking to engage more deeply with the arts.

The Friends of Artis—Naples, comprised of more than 3,500 donor households, offers activities, travel experiences and events designed to foster a deeper relationship between patrons and the arts.

In 2017, Artis—Naples acquired the Naples International Film Festival (NIFF), expanding its film offerings and providing a platform for the festival's continued excellence and growth. In 2023, the festival's 15th anniversary year, NIFF was named one of *MovieMaker* Magazine's "20 Great Film Festivals in Vacation Destinations."

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