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**BEST OF THE FEST PROGRAM FOR 53RD CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL FEATURES HUGO-WINNERS AND
AUDIENCE FAVORITES OCTOBER 25-26**

*International Feature Competition Gold Hugo Winner, A Sort of Family, to be Screened
Thursday, October 25 at 8:15 p.m., Founder's Award-Winner The Shape of Water
directed by Guillermo del Toro to Close the Film Festival that Same Evening.*

CHICAGO – **Mimi Plauché**, the Artistic Director of the 53rd **Chicago International Film Festival**, today announced the line-up for the **Best of the Fest** program, featuring several of the Festival's award-winning films, including the Festival's top winner, *A Sort of Family*, (Gold Hugo, International Feature Competition), *No Date, No Signature* (Gold Hugo, New Directors Competition), *Birds are Singing in Kigali* (Silver Hugo, Best Director and Silver Hugo Best Actresses), *Killing Jesús* (Roger Ebert Award winner), *The Other Side of the Wall* (Gold Hugo, International Documentary Competition) and *BPM* (Gold Q-Hugo). Several audience favorites are also part of the line-up, including Israeli comedy *Maktub*, documentary *Sammy Davis Jr: I Gotta Be Me* and Slovak-Ukrainian hit *The Line* (which was also awarded a Silver Plaque for Best Art Direction). A program of award-winning and audience-favorite live action, animated and documentary shorts will also be shown.

The films will be screened **October 25-26** at the AMC River East 21, [322 E. Illinois St.](http://www.amc.com) Tickets to the screenings are now on sale. For the full schedule, see below.

The 53rd Chicago International Film Festival closes on **Thursday, October 26** with Founder's Award-winning film *The Shape of Water* directed by Guillermo del Toro, with a special tribute to star **Michael Shannon**, an actor with deep Chicago roots. **The event begins at 6:30 p.m. with a press line, followed by a guest presentation at 7 p.m., the screening of *The Shape of Water* at 7:30 p.m., and an after party at 9:30 p.m.** (\$30 member/\$35 non-member film ticket; \$40 after party ticket). The Founder's Award is personally presented by **Festival Founder Michael Kutza** to the single film he feels best embodies the spirit of curiosity, optimism and love of film that led to his starting the Chicago International Film Festival 53 years ago.

The schedule for the Best of the Fest screenings is below:

Wednesday, October 25

BEST OF FEST SHORTS

Screening: 3:15 p.m.

Featuring the following Festival award-winning shorts:

- *Night Shift* (Live Action Shorts Competition Winner, U.S.): A man working as a bathroom attendant in a Los Angeles night club attempts to get his life back on track. Disrespected by patrons and adrift at his station, he ponders the ways in which he can win back the respect of the people around him.
- *Drop by Drop* (Animated Shorts Competition Runner-Up, Portugal): A small village on the brink of oblivion asserts the importance of their culture and traditions as the modern world threatens their existence. Documented with care and poetically animated, Drop by Drop ruminates on a community threatened by “progress.”
- *The Rabbit Hunt* (Documentary Shorts Competition Winner, U.S.): The sugarcane harvest in Florida leaves a slew of collateral damage to the surrounding wildlife. On weekends, a young 17-year old boy hunts the rabbits in a tension-filled right-of-passage.
- *Airport* (Animated Shorts Competition Winner, Switzerland/Croatia): Airports – the pinnacle of modern society, places where the limits of borders, security, and tolerance are constantly tested. While for some the journey starts, for others it suddenly ends. This film details the various ways in which people experience airports through the use of sumptuous painted portraits.
- *Fish Story* (Audience Favorite, United Kingdom): A man takes up a hilarious quest into the fishy origins of his friend’s last name. The investigation twists and turns amusingly as details from the past bubble to the surface.
- *A Gentle Night* (Live Action Shorts Competition Runner-Up, China): In a small Chinese city, a woman’s daughter has gone missing. Still making sense of the absence, she persistently searches late into the night. Determination and parental instincts take over when she refuses to give up her quest.
- *The Burden* (Audience Favorite, Sweden): A variety of animals living in a small town situated next to a freeway hold dead-end jobs and feel restless and bored. *The Burden* is an animated vision of existential dread told with dancing puppets and cheerful musical numbers.

The Other Side of the Wall (El otro lado del muro)

Gold Hugo-Documentary Competition

Countries: Spain/Mexico

Director: Pau Ortiz

Screening: 3:30 p.m.

Rocío and her big brother, Alejandro, came to Mexico from Honduras with their mom and younger siblings looking for a better life. When their mother ends up in prison, tensions between the two older children bubble to the surface as they struggle to keep their family afloat. As Rocio touchingly confesses, "I love my brother with all of my heart, but I hate him, too." This top documentary prize-winner roots its timely story about dislocation and migration in a deeply intimate and emotional domestic drama.

Birds are Singing in Kigali (Ptaki Spiewaja w Kigali)

Silver Hugo-Best Director

Silver Hugo-Best Actresses**Country: Poland****Directors: Joanna Koz-Krauze and Krzysztof Krauze****Screening: 3:45 p.m.**

Polish ornithologist Anna saves a colleague's daughter from being swept up in the Rwandan genocide and brings her back to Europe, where 23-year-old Claudine hopes to build a new life. But the lure of Africa proves too strong—only there can either woman come to terms with the tragedies they witnessed. With rich, nuanced performances and evocative storytelling, Kos-Krauze crafts a bittersweet story about the circuitous routes of healing.

Sammy Davis, Jr.: I've Gotta Be Me**Audience Favorite****Country: U.S.****Director: Sam Pollard****Screening: 6 p.m.**

Singer, dancer, and actor; “Rat Pack” legend; civil rights activist; Jewish convert; and Nixon supporter—the life of Sammy Davis, Jr. defies expectations and easy categorization. Charting the performer’s surprising journey across the major flashpoints of contemporary American history, Oscar-nominated filmmaker Sam Pollard interviews such luminaries as Billy Crystal, Jerry Lewis, and Whoopi Goldberg and culls together an array of electric performances for this captivating exploration of the man, his talents and the struggle for identity.

Killing Jesus (Matar a Jesús)**Roger Ebert Award Winner****Countries: Colombia/Argentina****Director: Laura Mora****Screening: 6 p.m.**

Two men on a motorcycle; shots are fired; another man is left dead on the ground: Paula's father has been assassinated. She is a typical, dreamy college student; he was an admired professor. The authorities offer no answers. With revenge in her sights, Paula desperately sets out to find her father's killer. By chance, she meets him—dancing, smiling—at a nightclub. The two grow closer. His name is Jesús. He wants to be with her. She wants to kill him.

The Line (Čiara)**Silver Plaque-Best Art Direction/Back by Popular Demand****Countries: Slovakia/Ukraine****Director: Peter Bebjak****Screening: 8 p.m.**

Cigarette smuggler Adam is squeezed from all sides in this entertaining, fast-paced thriller. His eldest, unmarried daughter is pregnant, and his gang is pushing him to expand into the narcotics trade—cargo Adam steadfastly refuses to transport. Featuring muscular direction, a savvy screenplay, spectacularly photographed locations, and a propulsive score, *The Line* is an exemplary crime drama that never lets up.

BPM (120 battements par minute)

Gold Q-Hugo

Country: France

Director: Robin Campillo

Screening: 8:15 p.m.

In 1990s Paris, Act Up activists go to extraordinary lengths to urge the French government to address the AIDS epidemic. Amid the political strife, a tentative romance blossoms between HIV positive Sean and negative Nathan. *BPM* (its title is taken from electronic dance music lingo) hums with richly detailed life as writer-director Campillo crafts a candid and compelling look at this tumultuous historical moment in the early gay rights movement.

Maktub

Back by Popular Demand

Country: Israel

Director: Oded Raz

Screening: 8:30 p.m.

Guy Amir and Hanan Savyon, the acclaimed writers and stars behind Israeli TV mega-hits such as *Scarred*, *Asfur* and *Ma Bakarish*, play partners in crime in this hilarious, politically incorrect caper. *Maktub* means fate, and certainly the destiny of these two small-time enforcers for a Jerusalem mob protection racket irrevocably changes when they survive a suicide bombing and wind up fulfilling the wishes of those who leave notes at the Wailing Wall.

Thursday, October 26

***No Date, No Signature* (Bedoune Tarikh, Bedoune Emza)**

Gold Hugo, New Directors Competition

Country: Iran

Director: Vahid Jalilvand

Screening: 6 p.m.

A seemingly minor traffic collision has far-reaching consequences in this story of a well-meaning medical examiner haunted by the death of a child he might have prevented. As the story unfolds, his fate becomes inextricably bound up with that of the grieving family. In only his second feature, Jalilvand coaxes brilliantly understated performances from a superb cast for this compelling, considered meditation on guilt and grief.

A Sort of Family (Una especie de familia)

Gold Hugo, International Feature Competition

Country: Argentina

Director: Diego Lerman

Screening: 8 p.m.

A doctor desperate to experience motherhood, Malena journeys to a remote province in northern Argentina to adopt a baby illicitly. An outsider in this isolated community where many live hand to mouth, Malena is emotionally unprepared for the additional financial demands made by the child's biological family. But she is determined to take home the newborn, whatever the

cost. Lerman skillfully lays bare the social, psychological and ethical complexities at the heart of his harrowing drama.

Ticket and Event Information

The 53rd Chicago International Film Festival is October 12-26. Screenings take place at the AMC River East 21 (322 E. Illinois). The complete lineup and schedule is available at chicagofilmfestival.com. Tickets are now on sale. Tickets are available by calling 312-332-FILM (3456), online at chicagofilmfestival.com, at the Festival Box Office at AMC River East at 322 E. Illinois Street, and at the Festival Pop-Up Box Office at 400 S. Dearborn.

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About Cinema/Chicago

Cinema/Chicago, the presenting organization of the Chicago International Film Festival, is a year-round non-profit arts and education organization dedicated to fostering better communication between people of diverse cultures through the art form of the moving image. In addition to the Chicago International Film Festival, Cinema/Chicago's programs include: International Screenings Program, Chicago International Television Festival, CineYouth Festival, and year-round Education Program. Celebrating its 53rd edition October 12-26, 2017, the Chicago International Film Festival is North America's longest-running competitive film festival.

Festival Sponsors and Partners

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