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For Immediate Release: Aug 21, 2018

**THE 54TH CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL,
OCTOBER 10 – 21, ANNOUNCES FIRST WAVE OF OFFICIAL
SELECTIONS**

Initial lineup includes highly anticipated titles including Joel Edgerton’s Boy Erased starring Nicole Kidman and Russell Crowe; Elizabeth Chomko’s Chicago-set feature debut What They Had starring Michael Shannon and Hilary Swank; Mike Leigh’s epic drama Peterloo and Hirokazu Kore-eda’s Cannes Palme d’Or winner Shoplifters

CHICAGO - **Mimi Plauché, Artistic Director** of the **Chicago International Film Festival**, today announced the first 25 films that will be shown at the 54th Chicago International Film Festival, running Oct. 10 – 21, 2018 at AMC River East, 322 E. Illinois St. The longest-running competitive film festival in North America, the Festival will feature more than 150 films from across the globe and bring legendary actors, master filmmakers, and exciting, emerging talents from around the world to Chicago.

The initial roster of films demonstrates the Festival’s commitment to selecting the best feature films, documentaries, and short films of the year, including notable Oscar contenders and top award winners from the Cannes and Berlin Film Festivals. This year, the Festival will also present two special programs: a spotlight on Italian cinema and a focus on international comedy.

“We are very excited to be showcasing new films from some of the most impressive directors in the world, whether returning veterans, such as past Gold Hugo-winners Mike Leigh and Hirokazu Kore-eda, or up-and-coming filmmakers with distinctive visions,” said Plauché. “For the last several years, the Festival has been proud to present Best Picture winners *The Shape of Water* (2017), *Moonlight* (2016), and *Spotlight* (2015), and we look forward to sharing this year’s incredible slate of movies with our audiences.”

The films announced today are:

Birds of Passage

Pájaros de verano

Directors: **Cristina Gallego and Ciro Guerra**

Colombia, Mexico, Denmark

A Colombian *Mean Streets*, this gripping drama chronicles the rise of the drug trade and its cataclysmic impact on the local indigenous community. The Wayuu people had long held tight onto their traditions, living in close-knit tribes. When two friends begin selling marijuana to visiting Americans, however, their actions set in motion a series of events that pit factions against each other, inciting a cycle of avarice-inspired vengeance. *Wayuunaiki*, Spanish, and English with subtitles.

Border

Gräns

Director: **Ali Abbasi**

Sweden

Fantastic in every sense of the word, this idiosyncratic thriller centers on a Swedish customs officer with a special talent for detecting contraband who must ultimately choose between good and evil. This exciting, intelligent mix of romance, Nordic noir, social realism, and supernatural horror defies and subverts genre conventions and is destined to be a cult classic. Winner, Un Certain Regard, Cannes Film Festival. *Swedish with subtitles.*

Boy Erased

Director: **Joel Edgerton**

U.S.

Boy Erased tells the story of Jared (Lucas Hedges), the son of a Baptist pastor in a small American town, who is outed to his parents (Nicole Kidman and Russell Crowe) at age 19. Jared is faced with an ultimatum: attend a conversion therapy program—or be permanently exiled and shunned by his family, friends, and faith. *Boy Erased* is the true story of one young man's struggle to find himself while being forced to question every aspect of his identity.

Cold War

Zimna wojna

Director: **Pawel Pawlikowski**

Poland

A passionate love story between two people of different backgrounds and temperaments, who are fatefully mismatched and yet condemned to each other. Set against the background of the Cold War in the 1950s in Poland, Berlin, Yugoslavia and Paris, the film depicts an impossible love story in impossible times. *Polish with subtitles.*

Dogman

Director: **Matteo Garrone**

Italy

In a run-down Italian coastal town, Marcello, a gentle dog groomer, sees his life turned upside down when Simone, a brutish former boxer and ex-con, bullies him into becoming his criminal accomplice. But for how long can the “dogman” be subservient to his master before he bites back? From the acclaimed director of *Gomorra* comes another unflinching urban western treading the fine line between civility and savagery. *Italian with subtitles.*

Friedkin Uncut

Director: Francesco Zippel

Italy

Oscar®-winning, Chicago-born director William Friedkin achieved fame with his 1973 horror blockbuster *The Exorcist*. But this illuminating documentary shows the director's unwavering commitment to rawness and realism across his entire career, from *The French Connection* (1972) to *Killer Joe* (2011). Featuring interviews with Ellen Burstyn, Willem Dafoe, and Quentin Tarantino, among others, *Friedkin Uncut* reveals a savvy craftsman who is unapologetic about his no-nonsense approach to moviemaking.

Jumpman

Podbrosy

Director: **Ivan I. Tverdovskiy**

Russia, Ireland, Lithuania, France

An abandoned infant grows into a likeable lad with a rare disorder—he can feel no physical pain. When he becomes a teen, his feckless mother returns to his life to exploit his condition by enlisting him in an insurance fraud scam. A taut thriller, *Jumpman* puts an outsider at the center of a harsh indictment of corruption and hypocrisy in contemporary Russia. *Russian with subtitles*.

Mr. Soul!

Director: **Melissa Haizlip**

U.S.

The brainchild of pioneering producer Ellis Haizlip, *SOUL!* was the first ever national TV series made by and for African-Americans. The groundbreaking program aired from 1968 to 1973 and featured a dazzling array of guests from Stevie Wonder to Maya Angelou. *Mr. Soul!* takes viewers behind the scenes of the show, chronicling its inception and its struggles to stay on the air. It turns out the revolution really was televised.

Olympia

Director: **Gregory Dixon**

U.S.

Chicago writer-actor McKenzie Chinn stars as a struggling artist, navigating work and romance in the Windy City. When her boyfriend asks her to drop everything and move cross-country, she soon discovers that she might be the biggest obstacle to her own happiness. Featuring quirky animation and a revelatory central performance, *Olympia* is a sensitive and humorous look at the challenges of embracing adulthood.

The Other Story

Director: **Avi Neshet**

Israel

Family disputes and conspiracies take center stage in this lively drama, which even-handedly explores the divide between Israel's secular Jews and the ultra-Orthodox from director Avi Neshet (*The Matchmaker*). Sasson Gabai (*The Band's Visit*) plays a renowned psychologist and rationalist who falls out with his strong-willed granddaughter when she enters a Haredi community and plans to marry a musician previously known for his wild ways. *Hebrew with subtitles*.

Peterloo

Director: **Mike Leigh**

U.K.

An epic portrayal of the events surrounding the infamous 1819 Peterloo Massacre, which saw British forces charge into a crowd of over 60,000 that had gathered to protest rising levels of poverty and demand reform. Many were killed and hundreds more injured, sparking a nationwide outcry but also further government suppression. A defining moment in British democracy, the massacre also played a significant role in the founding of *The Guardian* newspaper.

Piercing

Director: **Nicolas Pesce**

U.S.

Pesce's gleefully wicked S&M black comedy centers on Reed (Christopher Abbot), a new father looking to channel his homicidal impulses away from his infant daughter. He heads to a hotel, hires an escort (Mia Wasikowska), then begins to rehearse her murder. But once she arrives, the balance of power shifts. Based on the novel by Ryu Murakami, *Piercing's* incredibly dark premise constantly surprises—it might just be taken for a wildly subversive love story.

A Private War

Director: **Matthew Heineman**

U.S.

In a world where journalism is under attack, Marie Colvin (Academy Award®-nominee Rosamund Pike) is one of the most celebrated war correspondents of our time. Her mission to show the true cost of conflict leads her—along with renowned photographer Paul Conroy (Jamie

Dornan)—to embark on the most dangerous assignment of their lives in the besieged Syrian city of Homs.

Rafiki

Director: **Wanuri Kahiu**

Kenya

A tender tale of forbidden first love told in an electric, colorful Afropop style, *Rafiki* tells the story of the tender but illegal and taboo romance between Kena, a skateboarding tomboy blessed with great grades and soccer skills, and Ziki, the charismatic daughter of a conservative local politician. When rumors begin to swirl about the nature of their relationship, the young lovers find themselves in great jeopardy. *Swahili, English with subtitles.*

Ruben Brandt, Collector

Ruben Brandt, a gyűjtő

Director: **Milorad Krstic**

Hungary

“Possess your problems to conquer them,” is the credo that psychotherapist Ruben Brandt preaches to his criminally-inclined clients in this stylish, animated thriller for adults. But when Brandt’s patients help him to apply his own advice, he becomes “Ruben Brandt, Collector,” ringleader of a gang responsible for the theft of 13 of the world’s most famous paintings. This entertaining romp literally puts the “art” into “arthouse.”

Shoplifters

Manbiki kazoku

Director: **Hirokazu Kore-eda**

Japan

The winner of Cannes’ top prize, the Palme d’Or, centers on an eccentric troupe of miscreants who take in a neglected five-year-old. Despite their strained circumstances, the tight-knit unit of petty thieves and social outcasts comes together to raise the girl. But how long can this unconventional family survive against the normalizing forces around them? From the Japanese master of humanism comes another affecting and astute film about people living on the margins. *Japanese with subtitles.*

Sorry Angel

Plaire, aimer et courir vite

Director: **Christophe Honoré**

France

It’s 1993. Jacques is a successful, novelist from Paris living with what was still a terminal diagnosis of HIV positive. Arthur is an open-minded student ready to embrace life. They meet in Rennes and fall in love, but navigating an intergenerational romance has its challenges. Honoré (*Love Songs*) chronicles their lives, together and apart, with nuance and subtlety, allowing their love story to unfold in patient, novelistic fashion. *French with subtitles.*

Transit

Director: **Christian Petzold**

Germany

In this Kafkaesque cinematic puzzle, a man is trapped in limbo as he tries to flee fascist-occupied France. Hoping to escape to Mexico, Georg poses as a dead author but becomes stuck in Marseilles. There, he encounters a woman searching for her missing husband—the man whose identity he has assumed. Petzold's surreal film merges past, present and future in its trenchant exploration of the plight of refugees. *German with subtitles.*

United Skates

Directors: **Dyana Winkler and Tina Brown**

U.S.

A rousing chronicle of roller-skating's pivotal role in African-American communities, *United Skates* careens around the country, offering an intimate look at a lively subculture that's under threat. Facing discriminatory policies and building closures, committed skaters from around the country—including Chicago's own Buddy Love—fight to preserve a space for people to come together and express themselves in sliding, bouncing, snapping glory.

What They Had

Director: **Elizabeth Chomko**

U.S.

From first-time writer/director Elizabeth Chomko, *What They Had* centers on a family in crisis. Bridget (Hilary Swank) returns home to Chicago at her brother's (Michael Shannon) urging to deal with her ailing mother (Blythe Danner) and her father's (Robert Forster) reluctance to let go of their life together.

SHORTS

Accidence

Directors: **Guy Maddin, Evan Johnson, Galen Johnson**

Canada

A grisly murder on an apartment balcony becomes a small piece in a frenzied puzzle of strange occurrences.

Accident, MD

Director: **Dan Rybicky**

U.S.

A survey of attitudes about America's healthcare crisis filmed in the small town of Accident, Maryland.

Optimism

Director: **Deborah Stratman**

U.S.

A portrait of Dawson City Canada's far North that reveals a rich history of a town looking for gold while enveloped in shadow.

Solar Walk

Director: **Réka Bucsi**

Denmark

A sumptuously animated cosmic journey through space, time, and creation.

Tourneur

Director: **Yalda Afsah**

Germany

A foam-filled ring in the south of France becomes the site of an absurd spectacle as young men face off against a bull.

Festival and Ticket Information

The 54th Chicago International Film Festival runs Oct. 10-21, 2018 at the AMC River East, and features more than 150 films, with a vast diversity of offerings, with numerous competitive categories and several highlight programs such as Black Perspectives, Cinemas of the Americas, International Comedy, Spotlight: Italy, Women in Cinema, Out-Look, After Dark and the City & State program (showcasing films made in Chicago and throughout Illinois.)

The complete Festival schedule will be announced September 17, 2018. Early Bird Festival passes (\$105 - \$260) are currently on sale. Individual tickets (\$8 to \$20) and Gala Presentation tickets (\$20 to \$150) will go on sale Sept. 18 for Cinema/Chicago Members and Sept. 21 for the general public. Discounted parking is available at AMC River East 21 (322 E. Illinois Street). For more information, visit www.chicagofilmfestival.com or call 312-683-0121.

Festival Sponsors and Partners

The 54th Chicago International Film Festival's sponsors include Premiere Sponsors: Bloomberg Philanthropies, Wintrust Community Banks; Education Sponsor: HBO; Event Partner: AMC Theaters; Special support provided by the National Endowment of the Arts, the Illinois Arts Council Agency, Illinois Film Office, Chicago Film Office, and the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE).

About Cinema/Chicago

Cinema/Chicago, the presenting organization of the Chicago International Film Festival, is a year-round nonprofit arts and education organization dedicated to fostering better communication between people of diverse cultures through the art of film and the moving image. Cinema/Chicago's programs include the Chicago International Film Festival, International Screenings Program, Chicago International Television Festival, CineYouth Festival, and year-round Education Program. Celebrating its 54th edition October 10-21, 2018, the Chicago International Film Festival is North America's longest-running competitive film festival. For more information, please visit www.chicagofilmfestival.com or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Vimeo](#) and [Twitter](#).

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