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## **54TH CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL UNVEILS MASTERS AND SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMS**

*Asghar Farhadi's Everybody Knows, Peter Bogdanovich's The Great Buster, Alice Rohrwacher's Happy as Lazzaro and Hirokazu Kore-eda's Palme D'Or winner Shoplifters among the highlights*

CHICAGO – The **54th Chicago International Film Festival**, presented by Cinema/Chicago, today announced its Masters and Spotlight programs for this year's Festival: **Masters**, featuring the newest films from acclaimed writers, directors and actors; **Spotlight: Comedy**, which turns the bright lights to laughing matters; and **Spotlight: Italy**, a celebration of the vivacity and variety of cinema on the Italian peninsula.

**Masters** showcases nine films, with wide-ranging topics and directorial styles, from today's most accomplished filmmakers. The productions range from Academy-Award® -winning Iranian director Asghar Farhadi's thrilling personal drama, *Everybody Knows (Todos Lo Saben)*, starring Penélope Cruz, Javier Bardem and Ricardo Darín, to Japanese director Hirokazu Kore-eda's Cannes-top-prize-winning *Shoplifters (Manbiki Kazoku)*, about an unconventional Japanese family.

Two American classics, to be included in special tributes, are also featured in the Masters program. **William Friedkin**, whom the Festival is honoring with a Career Achievement Award, presents Vincent Minnelli's 1953 musical *The Band Wagon*. Additionally, *The Power and the Glory* will be screened as part of a tribute to **Colleen Moore**, co-founder of the Chicago International Film Festival and co-star of the 1933 film.

**Spotlight: Comedy** showcases films from across the world that will leave audiences in stitches. The program, made up of ten features and a program of seven shorts, extends from the chaotic journey of a Chinese ostrich farmer mixed up with the mob in *The Road Not Taken* to family hi-jinks in the Australian suburbs in *Flammable Children*, all the way to the travails of an aspiring

comedienne in 1970s Northern England in *Funny Cow*. Cultural support provided by the Harold Ramis Film School at Second City.

**Spotlight: Italy** takes audiences on a tour of contemporary Italian cinema including: Gold Hugo-winner Matteo Garrone's (*Gomorra*) thrilling nail-biter *Dogman*; Alice Rohrwacher's stunning, fantastical parable *Happy as Lazzaro*; *My Home, In Libya*, Martina Melilli's personal documentary about her attempts to reconnect with her Libyan heritage, and much more (including Francesco Zippel's *Friedman Uncut* on the Film Festival honoree). Cultural support provided by the Consulate General of Italy and the Italian Cultural Institute of Chicago.

### **Masters**

***The Band Wagon*** – Dir. Vincent Minnelli, U.S.

Oscar-winning director William Friedkin (*The Exorcist*), who will be honored Monday, Oct. 14 with a documentary about his career, presents one of his favorite films, this classic backstage musical comedy starring Fred Astaire as a struggling Hollywood movie actor who returns to the Broadway theater. With Cyd Charisse and the classic song “Dancing in the Dark,” audiences will want to jump onboard *The Band Wagon* for this special event. *112 min.*

***Cold War (Zimna wojna)*** – Dir. Pawel Pawlikowski, Poland, France, U.K.

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. Pawlikowski's first film since the Academy Award®-winning *Ida* proves well worth the wait. *Polish with subtitles. 90 min.*

***Dogman*** – Dir. Matteo Garrone, Italy, France

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. 102 min.*

***Everybody Knows (Todos lo Saben)*** – Dir. Asghar Farhadi, France, Spain, Italy

Penélope Cruz, Javier Bardem, and Ricardo Darín star in the new psychological thriller from Academy Award®-winning Iranian director Asghar Farhadi (*A Separation, The Salesman*). Cruz plays Laura, a woman traveling from Argentina to her Spanish hometown to attend her sister's wedding, her two children in tow. Amid the joyful festivities, her daughter is abducted. In the days that follow, family and community tensions surface and hidden secrets are revealed. *Spanish with subtitles. 133 min.*

***Haider*** – Dir. Vishal Bhardwaj, India

Filmmaker Vishal Bhardwaj is famous for his epic Shakespeare adaptations, translating the violence and politics of the Bard's plays to modern India. His third (after variations on *Macbeth*

and *Othello*) is this intense version of *Hamlet* set in the turbulent state of Kashmir. But in Bhardwaj's hands, the fateful story becomes a beautifully crafted drama about a troubled mother (Bollywood star Tabu) and her vengeful son. *With post-screening panel. Hindi with subtitles. 160 min.*

***The Other Story*** (*Sipur acher*) – Dir. Avi Nesher, 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 Nesher (*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. 117 min.*

***Peterloo*** – Dir. 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. *154 min.*

***The Power and the Glory*** – Dir. William K. Howard, U.S.

This 1933 pre-code classic written by Preston Sturges stars Spencer Tracy as railroad tycoon Tom Garner, and Colleen Moore, co-founder of the Chicago International Film Festival, as the wife who pushed his ambitions. After Garner commits suicide, his friend Henry (Ralph Morgan) reflects on the experiences that shaped the industrialist, a man whose great drive took a private toll. *With Tribute to Colleen Moore featuring special guest Billy Hargrave, Moore's grandson. 76 min.*

***Shoplifters*** (*Manbiki Kazoku*) – Dir. Hirokazu Kore-eda, Japan

Winner of Cannes' top prize, the Palme d'Or, *Shoplifters* centers on an unconventional Japanese family of miscreants who take in an abandoned five-year-old girl they name Juri. Despite their strained circumstances, the tight-knit unit of petty thieves and social outsiders comes together around the girl—until an unforeseen incident shatters the life they have built together. From the great Japanese filmmaker comes another devastating and humanist film about people living on the margins. *Japanese with subtitles. 121 min.*

**Spotlight: Comedy**

***The Extraordinary Journey of Celeste García*** (*El viaje extraordinario de Celeste García*)

Dir. Arturo Infante, Cuba, Germany

In this absurdist send-up of contemporary Cuban society, retiree Celeste works part-time at the Havana planetarium. When the government announces that aliens, who have been living among them hidden in plain sight, have invited their hosts to visit their own planet, Celeste

jumps at the opportunity for an intergalactic voyage. In preparation, she and her fellow travelers must run a physical and bureaucratic gauntlet—making them consider what they are seeking far, far away. *Spanish with subtitles. 92 min.*

***Flammable Children*** – Dir. Stephan Elliott, Australia

From the director of *The Adventures of Priscilla: Queen of the Desert* comes a raucous and raunchy yet heartfelt ode to growing up in the Australian suburbs in the 1970s. Three neighboring couples and their children feud and reconcile while sharing adventures at the beach, barbecues, and even an ill-advised game of Swinging Safari. Starring Guy Pearce and Kylie Minogue. *97 min.*

***Florianópolis Dream (Sueño Florianópolis)*** – Dir. Ana Katz, Argentina/Brazil

This breezy, sensuous road-trip comedy follows an Argentine middle-class family of four on their vacation to the exotic Brazilian beaches of Florianópolis, where sexual flings and free flowing booze abound. The usual domestic frictions and teenage antics begin to reveal deeper fissures in the fabric of the family. An authentic, thoughtful and warm-hearted portrait of the fortitude and fragility of familial bonds. *Spanish, Portuguese with subtitles. 106 min.*

***Funny Cow*** – Dir. Adrian Shergold, U.K.

In this searing portrait of life in 1970s working class Northern England, Maxine Peake delivers a tour-de-force performance as a deeply troubled aspiring comedian who channels the pain of her private life into unvarnished material for her stand-up routine. Touring the local men's club circuit, "Funny Cow" faces pervasive sexism, but her passion propels her forward—the stage is the one place where she can truly express herself. *105 min.*

***The Great Buster*** – Dir. Peter Bogdanovich, U.S.

Buster Keaton is one of the most iconic comic geniuses of all time, and a true visionary—of hilarious pratfalls, brilliant sight-gags, and cinematic storytelling. Filled with restored clips from such classics as *The General* and *Sherlock, Jr.*, this celebration of Keaton by the famed director of *The Last Picture Show* also includes witty commentary from such contemporary fans as Mel Brooks, Werner Herzog, and Dick Van Dyke. *101 min.*

***The Guest (L'Ospite)*** – Dir. Duccio Chiarini, Italy

Dumped by his long-term girlfriend, 38-year-old Guido loses his moorings completely and is set adrift on a sea of heartbreak and homelessness, surfing from friends' couch to couch. A struggling writer, Guido's prospects for a fulfilling professional and personal future seem increasingly grim. Will he be able to find his footing again? This bittersweet comedy deftly dissects the vagaries of modern love with humor and grace. *Italian with subtitles. 94 min.*

***Neurotic Quest for Serenity (TOC: Transtornada Obsessiva Compulsiva)***

Dir. Paulinho Caruso, Teodoro Poppovic, Brazil

The hyperactive imagination of manic telenovela star Kika K is beginning to affect her waking life, where a stalker, suicidal ghost writer, and venomous rival are aggravating her already

all-consuming OCD. As her reality continues to unravel, Kika must embark on a trippy adventure to self-enlightenment, or whatever, to end her hilarious yet personally disastrous self-sabotaging ways. A darkly whimsical, tragicomic take on the cult of celebrity. *Portuguese with subtitles. 105 min.*

***The Road Not Taken*** – Dir. Tang Gaopeng, China

Indebted to the local mob, a bumbling ostrich farmer agrees to take care of a sullen kidnapped boy until his father pays his ransom. The odd pair impulsively hits the road, and antics abound as they link up with other transient souls who inhabit the expansive plains of China's Gobi Desert. This poetic, wry, and melancholic road movie won top honors at the Shanghai Film Festival. *Mandarin with subtitles. 113 min.*

***The Trouble with You (En liberté!)*** – Dir. Pierre Salvadori, France

Set in the French Riviera, this enjoyable romp focuses on policewoman Yvonne, a widow, who learns that her much-honored, recently deceased detective husband was, in fact, a crooked cop. As Yvonne surreptitiously tries to right the wrongs her hubby committed, she winds up playing guardian angel to the unjustly imprisoned and newly-released Antoine. Part rollicking screwball romance, part caper comedy, Salvadori's (*Priceless*) film was a favorite at Cannes, winning awards in the Director's Fortnight program. *French with subtitles. 107 min.*

***Wolkenbruch's Wondrous Journey into the Arms of a Shiksa (Wolkenbruch's wunderliche Reise in die Arme einer Schickse)*** – Dir. Michael Steiner, Switzerland

Motti Wolkenbruch, a Geneva-based, Jewish college student, strays from the expectations of his mother and his Orthodox upbringing when he falls for a non-Jewish classmate, a "shiksa." Adapting his own best-selling novel, screenwriter Thomas Meyer breaks the fourth wall with Yiddish lessons and commentary from his likeable protagonist. Encompassing a liberating trip to sexually free Tel Aviv, Motti's journey to self-determination is full of heartache and humor. *German, Yiddish, Hebrew with subtitles. 90 min.*

**Spotlight: Italy**

***Boys Cry (La terra dell'abbastanza)*** – Dirs. Damiano D'Innocenzo, Fabio D'Innocenzo, Italy

A nighttime hit-and-run sends a pair of working class teens from the outskirts of Rome down a criminal path in this muscular drama from twin filmmakers, the D'Innocenzo brothers. After accidentally killing a pedestrian, pals Manolo and Mirko find themselves welcomed into the gangland underworld—their victim was wanted by the mob. But the friends' appetite for dark deeds exacts a heavy psychological toll on their families and on their own relationship. *Italian with subtitles. 96 min.*

***Couch Potatoes (Gli Sdraiati)*** – Dir. Francesca Archibugi, Italy

Contemporary Milan is the backdrop for this comedic examination of the strained relationship between a father and son. Giorgio is a successful television host; Tito is his layabout teenage son who enjoys nothing more than hanging out with his friends, biking through the streets, playing video games. The tension between them is heightened further when a woman from

Giorgio's past resurfaces with surprising news that could upend Tito's romantic life. *Italian with subtitles. 102 min.*

***Daughter of Mine (Figlia mia)*** – Dir. Laura Bispuri, Italy

The intricacies of motherhood are explored in this sundappled Italian melodrama. For 10 years, Tina and her husband Umberto have raised young Vittoria as their own daughter. Despite a happy home life, the child is drawn to the vivacious but deeply troubled Angelica, not realizing their shared connection. As the truth comes to the fore, the relationships among the women in small-town Sardinia are forever shaken. *Italian with subtitles. 97 min.*

***Dogman*** – Dir. Matteo Garrone, Italy, France (see synopsis under **Masters**)

***Friedkin Uncut*** – Dir. 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 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. *With in-person tribute to William Friedkin. 106 min.*

***The Guest (L'Ospite)*** – Dir. Duccio Chiarini, Italy (see synopsis under **Spotlight: Comedy**)

***Happy as Lazzaro (Lazzaro felice)***

Dir. Alice Rohrwacher, Italy, Switzerland, France, Germany

Winner of Best Screenplay at this year's Cannes Film Festival, *Happy as Lazzaro* follows the adventures of a man living on the margins of his society who can seemingly travel through time. With poetry, wit, and imagination, Rohrwacher creates a sublime story that's equal parts picaresque journey and pointed social parable about goodness and exploitation. *Italian with subtitles. 128 min.*

***My Home, in Libya*** – Dir. Martina Melilli, Italy

To reconnect with her Libyan heritage, Italian artist Martina Melilli befriends a young Tripoli man named Mahmoud on social media. She asks for his help to gather and send images of her grandparents' former neighborhood and home—which they left after the country's 1970 military coup. As Mahmoud and Melilli exchange pictures, videos and texts, a deep cross-border friendship grows—until war interrupts yet again. A poignant portrait of politics' enduring impact on personal lives. *Italian with subtitles. 66 min.*

***Naples in Veils (Napoli velata)*** – Dir. Ferzan Ozpetek, Italy

A respected medical examiner spends a torrid night with a younger man—who turns up dead the following day. Once police begin to suspect her involvement in his murder, she undertakes her own investigation into the violent circumstances of his demise and finds herself haunted by

ghosts of the past. Director Ferzan Ozpetek skillfully crafts a sensuous, erotic mystery that makes glorious use of its sumptuous Neopolitan setting. *Italian with subtitles. 104 min.*

### **Festival and Ticket Information**

The 54th Chicago International Film Festival runs Oct. 10-21, 2018 at the AMC River East 21, 322 E. Illinois St., and features more than 150 films, including 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.) Festival passes (\$110 - \$270) 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](http://www.chicagofilmfestival.com) or call 312-683-0121.

### **Festival Sponsors and Partners**

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### **About Cinema/Chicago**

[Cinema/Chicago](http://www.chicagofilmfestival.com), 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 54<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.chicagofilmfestival.com) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Vimeo](#) and [Twitter](#).

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