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55TH CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES COMPETITION JURIES

CHICAGO – Mimi Plauché, artistic director of the 55th **Chicago International Film Festival**, today announced the jury members for its competitions, featuring a host of acclaimed filmmakers and film professionals from across the globe. Juries will review films competing for prizes in the following categories: International Competition; New Directors Competition; International Documentary Competition; Out-Look; The Chicago Award; and Short Film Competitions.

The International Competition Jury includes **Gabor Greiner**, producer, COO of the French-German sales company Films Boutique and member of the European Film Academy; **Tatiana Leite**, prolific filmmaker, former International Adviser of the Rio de Janeiro State Secretariat of Culture and former programmer at Rio Film Festival; and award-winning Japanese director **Tetsuya Mariko**, whose *Destruction Babies* (2016) won Locarno's Golden Leopard for Best New Director; Cannes Film Festival Best Actress award winner **Cosmina Stratan** (*Beyond the Hills*); and filmmaker **Jennifer Reeder**, whose latest film *Knives and Skin* premiered at the Berlin Film Festival and will screen at this year's Chicago International Film Festival.

The New Directors Competition Jury includes filmmaker **Melika Bass**, whose films have screened at the Chicago International Film Festival, BAMcinemaFest, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Torino Film Festival and Film Society of Lincoln Center, among others; **Miriam J. Petty**, Assistant Professor at Northwestern University; and **Sonia Smith-Evans**, Senior Vice President of development and production for The Ebert Company. The New Directors Competition Jury annually presents the **Roger Ebert Award**, presented by Chaz Ebert, honoring emerging filmmakers with innovative and forward-looking perspectives.

The International Documentary Competition Jury includes **Christy LeMaster**, founder of Chicago's The Nightingale and assistant curator at Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art; Emmy nominee **Abby Davis**, head of originals and business development at Breakwater Studios; and Italian filmmaker, visual artist and curator, **Martina Melilli**, director of *My Home, In Libya*, which was in competition at last year's Festival.

The Out-Look Jury includes **Matthieu Dupas**, assistant professor of French at Northwestern University; filmmaker **Morgan Jon Fox**, director of *Blue Citrus Hearts*, and award-winners *OMG/HaHaHa* and *This Is What Love In Action Looks Like*; and **Kara Keeling**, associate professor of cinema and media studies at The University of Chicago and author of *Queer Times*, *Black Futures*.

The Chicago Award Jury includes actress and producer **McKenzie Chinn** whose film *Olympia* (2018) was featured at the 54th Chicago International Film Festival; producer, director and writer **Michael Paulucci**, whose film *Hashtag Perfect Life* received the Chicago Award at last year's Festival; and writer, producer and educator **Risé Sanders-Weir**, director of production at Kartemquin Films.

The Shorts Competition is divided into Narrative, Documentary and Animation competitions. The Narrative Shorts Jury includes **Kathleen Sachs**, **Christopher Rejano** and **James Choi**. Serving on the Animated Shorts Jury are **Ozge Samanci**, **Shelley Lynn Dodson** and **Jim Vendiola**. The Documentary Shorts Jury is comprised of **Emily Eddy**, **Jake Zalutsky** and **Kevin Shaw**.

Featuring more than 150 films from around the world as well as appearances from top directors, producers, actors, designers, and more, the 55th Chicago International Film Festival continues to be the premier destination for film enthusiasts and experts alike. The longest running competitive film festival in North America, the Chicago International Film Festival is committed to selecting the world's most exciting, compelling and groundbreaking feature films, documentaries and short films, including multiple Oscar contenders and winners, year after year. For the past five years, the Festival has been proud to showcase the Academy Award Winner for Best Picture.

Festival Information

The 55th Chicago International Film Festival runs Oct. 16-27, 2019 at the AMC River East, 322 E. Illinois St., and features more than 150 films, with a vast diversity of offerings, including numerous competitive categories and several highlight programs such as Black Perspectives, Cinemas of the Americas, International Comedy, Women in Cinema, Out-Look, After Dark and the City & State program (showcasing films made in Chicago and throughout Illinois.)

Festival Sponsors and Partners

The 55th Chicago International Film Festival's sponsors include Major Festival Sponsors: Bloomberg Philanthropies, Chloe Wine Collection, Citi, Columbia College Chicago, Xfinity; Festival Sponsors: Aberlour, Baker Tilly, Blue Cross Blue Shield, British International School of Chicago, South Loop, Cinespace Chicago Film Studios, DePaul University, Goose Island, Hamilton Watch, Panavision, SAGindie, Swanson, Martin & Bell, LLP, William Blair; Official Agency: Ogilvy; Headquarter Hotel: St. Jane; Host Hotel: Ambassador Chicago; Participating Hotels: EMC2, The Whitehall Hotel; Airline Partner: LOT Polish Airlines; Festival Supporters: National Endowment for the Arts, Illinois Arts Council Agency, Illinois Film Office, Chicago Film Office, Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), The Academy of Motion

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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](#), [Summer Screenings Program](#), [CineYouth Festival](#), and year-round [Education Program](#). Celebrating its 55th edition October 16-27, 2019, 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](#), [YouTube](#) and [Twitter](#).

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