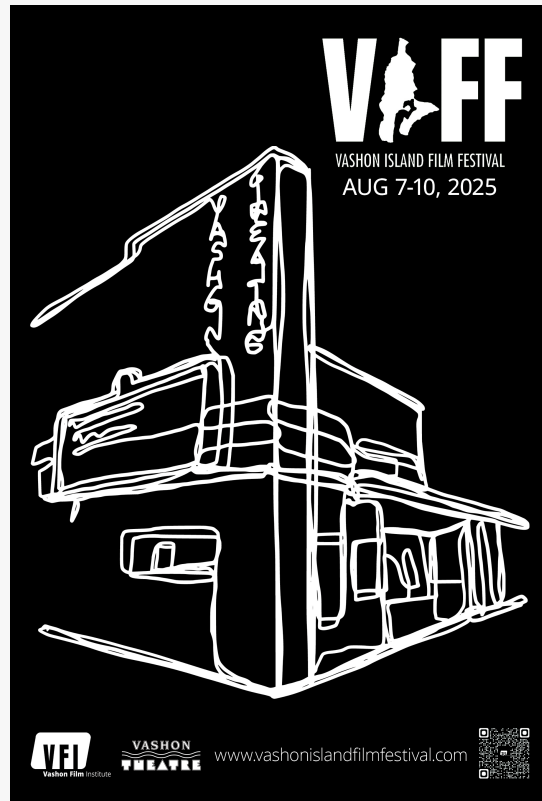


Vashon Film Institute Announces Film Slate for Fourth Annual Vashon Island Film Festival, August 7-10

*Festival Unspools Nine Features and Fifteen Shorts at the Historic Vashon Theatre on Beautiful Island; Opening Night Film is Noémie Merlant's **The Balconettes***

VASHON ISLAND, WA, UNITED STATES, July 14, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Vashon Film Institute](https://www.vashonfilm.org/) (VFI), the non-profit organization dedicated to fostering independent filmmaking in the Pacific Northwest, has announced the film slate for its fourth annual [Vashon Island Film Festival](https://www.vashonislandfilmfestival.com/) (VIFF), set for August 7-10. VIFF will screen nine features and fifteen shorts, plus the Opening Night Film **The Balconettes**, from the current festival circuit at family-operated cultural landmark the Vashon Theatre. VIFF will also feature a selection of events for patrons to experience, including the Red Bicycle Awards.

Founded by VFI President and longtime islander Mark Mathias Sayre, who also serves as the CEO of motion picture distributor The Forge, VIFF will screen an array of features and shorts curated by the VFI programming team, headed by Lead Programmer Stacey Oristano (*Friday Night Lights*, *Bunheads*, *Shameless*).



VIFF Commemorative 2025 Poster



The Balconettes

The festivities kick-off with the Opening Night Film *The Balconettes*, from Cannes 2024, which is screening out of competition. The horror comedy film features an ensemble cast starring Souheila Yacoub, Sanda Codreanu, Noémie Merlant, and Lucas Bravo, with Merlant also writing and directing. It follows three women who get stuck in a Marseille apartment during a heat wave, finding themselves trapped in a terrifying affair and longing for freedom.



Ari Gold, Ethan Gold, in *Brother Verses Brother*

VIFF will then screen six narrative and three documentary features. The narrative features include:

“

Our 4th year continues the tradition of showcasing many films honored on the festival circuit, offering audiences who come to our island highly anticipated local, national and international releases”

Mark Mathias Sayre

Laurent Slama’s *A Second Life*, Tribeca 2025. During the Olympic Games, an unexpected bond forms between a hearing-impaired American and a free-spirited wanderer in the vibrant streets of Paris.

Ari Gold’s *Brother Verses Brother*, SXSW 2025. One-shot “improvised” musical following twin brothers on a night in San Francisco, searching for their missing father on an urgent journey through the city.

Ernesto Martinez Bucio’s *The Devil Smokes (and Saves the Burnt Matches in the Same Box)*, Berlinale 2025 Best First Feature Award Winner. Five siblings abandoned by their parents mimic the fears of their schizophrenic grandmother, dissolving the barriers between what is real and imaginary as they try to stay together.

Georgi M. Unkovski’s *DJ Ahmet*, Sundance 2025 World Cinema Dramatic Audience Award and World Cinema Dramatic Special Jury Award for Creative Vision Winner. A 15-year-old Yuruk boy from a remote North Macedonian village escapes into music amidst parental expectations, societal conservatism, and forbidden love for a promised girl.

Henry Bernadet’s *Gamma Rays*, Slamdance 2025 Best Narrative Feature Grand Jury Prize Winner. Abdel’s summer is upended by the arrival of his cousin. Fatima craves a stable life while she begins a new job as a supermarket cashier. Toussaint finds a bottle washed up on the shore while fishing, and there’s a message inside.

Phil Moniz and Kevin Claydon's *Racewalkers*, Slamdance 2025 Best Unstoppable Feature Grand Jury Prize Winner. A failing racewalking coach joins forces with a former baseball pro who shows natural walking talent, starring Robbie Amell.

The documentary features include:

Ben Hethcoat and Keita Ideno's *Coroner To The Stars*, Slamdance 2025 Best Documentary Feature Audience Award Winner. Chronicles the journey of former Los Angeles Chief Coroner Dr. Noguchi from Marilyn Monroe and Robert Kennedy to Sharon Tate and Natalie Wood, as his expertise pushes forensic science forward while political elites try to silence him.

Brittany Shyne's *Seeds*, Sundance 2025 U.S. Documentary Grand Jury Prize Winner. A look into the lives of Black generational farmers, unveiling the challenges of maintaining legacy and the value of land ownership.

Benjamin Flaherty's *Shuffle*, SXSW 2025 Documentary Feature Grand Jury Award Winner. Shot over 3 years, this film follows three people navigating a dangerous treatment industry rife with insurance fraud as they try to get out alive.

VIFF will screen five narrative, five documentary, and five animated shorts.

The narrative shorts include: Alex Thompson's *Em & Selma Go Griffin Hunting*, Sundance 2025; Chi Thai's *Lullaby*, Diversity in Cannes 2025 Short Film Showcase Winner; Aisling Byrne's *Turnaround*, IFTA 2025; Daisy Friedman's *Unholy*, Sundance 2025 and SXSW 2025; and Bianca Politti's *Video Barn*, SXSW 2025.

The documentary shorts include: Mark Shapiro's *The Invisible Enemy*, Santa Fe Film Festival 2025 Best Short Documentary Jury Award Winner; Lesley Loksi Chan's *Lloyd Wong, Unfinished*, Berlinale 2025 Teddy Award for Best Short Film Winner and Golden Bear for Best Short Film Winner; Charles Frank's *Shanti Rides Shotgun*, SXSW 2025; Loren Waters' *Tiger*, Sundance 2025 Short Film Special Jury Award for Directing Winner; and Christopher Radcliff's *We Were the Scenery*, Sundance 2025 Nonfiction Short Film Jury Award Winner.

The animated shorts include: Natalia León's *As If the Earth Had Swallowed Them Up (Como si la tierra se las hubiera tragado)*, Sundance 2025 Animation Short Film Jury Award Winner; Olivia Marie Valdez' *Dormilón*, SIFF 2025; John Kelly's *Retirement Plan*, SXSW 2025 Animated Short Grand Jury Prize and Animated Short Competition Audience Award Winner; Calleen Koh's *My Wonderful Live*, SXSW 2025 Animated Short Special Jury Award Winner; and Emerson Tenney's *Vibrantea*, Manchester Film Festival 2025 Best Animated Short Award Winner.

Features compete for the Quartermaster Award and the Audience Award for Best Feature, as well as Red Bicycle Awards in each category, as determined by the VFI's programming team;

shorts compete for the Burton Award and the Audience Award for Best Short. The awards ceremony takes place on Sunday, August 10.

Quartermaster and Burton Award winners are selected by VIFF's jury in an anonymous voting process. This year's jury consists of VIFF alumni: Jury President Jewel Keats Ross (Sujo, VIFF24), Olivia Blue (Juniper, VIFF22), Jonathan Hsu (Starring Jerry as Himself, VIFF23), and Nick Richey (1-800-HOT-NITE, VIFF22). Audience Awards are determined by festival attendees.

General admission to VIFF is available through [Single Screening Tickets or the All-Access Pass](#). Single Screening Tickets are valid for one individual screening and are subject to availability. For guests attending multiple screenings, the All-Access Pass grants access to all VIFF screenings throughout the festival. Please note: a ticket or pass does not guarantee entry if a screening exceeds venue capacity, so guests are encouraged to arrive at least 15 minutes before showtime. Alternatively, those looking for additional perks—particularly local supporters—may become VFI Members for \$79.99/year, which includes an All-Access Pass and other member benefits.

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