

11th Annual Silicon Valley Asian Pacific FilmFest Returns Oct. 17–26 with Transformative Stories by AANHPI Voices

The film festival celebrates its 11th year with over 70 films, one-third of which are directed by local Bay Area filmmakers.

SAN JOSE, CA, UNITED STATES, October 1, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Silicon Valley Asian Pacific FilmFest (SVAPFF) returns for its 11th year. The in-person festival is Oct. 17–19 at AMC Dine-In Sunnyvale 12; the virtual festival runs Oct. 20–26. This year's film festival showcases over 70 films and filmmakers, highlighting stories of resistance, resilience, intergenerational legacies, healing, and the diverse voices of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) storytelling.



The 2025 Silicon Valley Asian Pacific Film Festival showcases over 70 films October 17–19 in person at AMC Dine-In Theatres in Sunnyvale, CA, and online October 20–26.

The 2025 theme, “The Transformative Power of Art: Voices That Heal, Connect, and Inspire,” underscores SVAPFF’s dedication to uplifting AANHPI voices through cinema. Produced by Contemporary Asian Theater Scene (CATS), the festival spotlights stories often absent from classrooms and mainstream media, reinforcing the importance of AAPI history and representation.

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Our 11th year brings over 70 films, challenging audiences to see themselves and their communities through new perspectives, while honoring the artistic excellence of AAPI filmmakers.”

Cindy Toy, director, Silicon Valley Asian Pacific FilmFest

The festival opens on Friday, Oct. 17, at 6 p.m. with a film screening of “Third Act,” Tadashi Nakamura’s deeply personal tribute to his father, Bob Nakamura—known as the “Godfather of Asian American Media”—and his battle with Parkinson’s disease. Following the screening is a Q&A with Nakamura, moderated by NBC Bay Area News Anchor

Janelle Wang.

“This year’s program shows storytelling’s transformative power, from Tadashi Nakamura’s intimate portrait of his legendary father to narratives about identity, healing, and resilience,” said Cindy Toy, SVAPFF director. “Our 11th year brings over 70 films challenging audiences to see themselves and their communities through new perspectives, while honoring AAPI filmmakers’ artistic excellence.”

Friday evening also honors Adrienne Reiko Iwanaga as CATS’ 2025 Image Hero Award recipient. She is a 2025 recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) National Heritage Fellowship, the nation’s highest honor in folk and traditional arts, and was celebrated at the awards ceremony in September. Her fellowship honors her family’s groundbreaking introduction of Bon Odori dance to America over 50 years ago and her ongoing work in teaching and preserving this traditional art form nationwide.

Saturday’s diverse program explores healing and identity through multiple lenses. The “Vietnam Healing” segment features “The Empathizer,” exploring Vietnamese immigrants who return to Vietnam, while “MĀHŪ: A Trans-Pacific Love Letter” includes a film screening and a special live performance by the transgender Hawaiian community. Saturday night concludes with the documentary “New Wave,” followed by a Q&A with Director Elizabeth Ai, moderated by Robert Handa, NBC Bay Area reporter and host of Asian Pacific America.

The in-person festival concludes Sunday, Oct. 19, with a free community screening of “Making Waves: The Rise of Asian America,” which celebrates the broader AAPI movement and its



A full house at the Silicon Valley Asian Pacific Film Festival 2024, as audiences cheer alongside artist Nobuko Miyamoto and filmmaker Tadashi Nakamura. Photo Credit: Anthony Lê



Moderator Mike Inouye, NBC Bay Area weekday morning traffic anchor, leads a filmmaker panel at the 2024 Silicon Valley Asian Pacific Film Festival, sparking insightful conversations on storytelling and representation. Photo Credit: Anthony Lê

ongoing impact on American culture and society. Sunday's program also includes an Arts in Action segment, moderated by veteran journalist David Louie, and featuring the film "Along Comes Larry, the Larry Ramos Story," directed by two-time Emmy award-winning broadcaster Rick Quan, along with short films highlighting three themes: courage, art in action, and the blend of comedy and animation.

"As we celebrate 11 years of bringing transformative AAPI stories to Silicon Valley, we're proud to provide a space for filmmakers and audiences to connect through shared experiences and diverse perspectives," stated Leianne Wong Lamb, board chair of CATS. "This festival continues to demonstrate that when art transforms us, we begin to transform the world around us, fostering understanding and strengthening our entire community."

2025 SVAPFF Notable Highlights

- Youth Engagement Initiatives: Creating pathways for high school and college students through internships and media literacy workshops, building the next generation of storytellers
- Youth Recognition: Honoring winners of the 5th Annual Dr. Jerry Hiura Artistic and Inspirational Award Contest, showcasing the creativity of young Bay Area AAPI artists
- Community Recognition: Voted one of the Best Film Festivals in Silicon Valley by Metro Silicon Valley readers for three consecutive years
- Impressive Reach: Engaged 1,300+ audience members across in-person and virtual festivals in 2024, with 95% recommending the festival to friends and family
- Community Commitment: At least 90% of films directed by AAPI filmmakers, with strong representation of women and local storytellers
- Volunteer Power: A dedicated board and 40+ volunteers contributed over 1,500 hours in 2024
- Local Spotlight: Showcasing Bay Area filmmakers alongside national award-winning directors
- Educational Access: Complimentary tickets for educators, veterans, students, and underserved audiences

The 2025 festival highlights the creativity and perspectives of AANHPI filmmakers. Post-film discussions with filmmakers and cast are moderated by NBC Bay Area reporters and community leaders to keep conversations engaging and impactful.

For complimentary tickets for educators, students, veterans, and underserved audiences, [contact CATS](#). For the film festival lineup and tickets, visit svapfilmfest.org.

ABOUT SILICON VALLEY ASIAN PACIFIC FILMFEST (SVAPFF)

The Silicon Valley Asian Pacific FilmFest, a project of the Contemporary Asian Theater Scene, is an eagerly anticipated event that celebrates the vibrant and diverse perspectives of Asian American filmmaking. As an annual showcase of breathtaking cinematography, compelling storytelling, and thought-provoking subjects, the film festival serves as a platform to highlight the rich cultural tapestry and the unique experiences of Asian Americans on the silver screen. It attracts seasoned filmmakers and emerging talents alike, fostering a sense of community and providing a space for meaningful conversations about identity, belonging, and the Asian American experience. Visit svapfilmfest.org.

ABOUT CONTEMPORARY ASIAN THEATER SCENE (CATS)

Founded in 1995 by the late Dr. Jerry Hiura, the late Steve Yamaguma, and Miki Hirabayashi Bellon, CATS has championed AANHPI artists in Silicon Valley for three decades. The organization supports and presents talent through staged readings, comedy, music, film screenings, and its AAPI Playwright Festival, while also producing the annual Silicon Valley Asian Pacific FilmFest. Located in San Jose's Japantown, CATS carries forward its founders' vision of enriching the Bay Area's cultural landscape by amplifying AANHPI voices and stories. CATS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Visit CatsAsianTheaterScene.org.

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