



HEARTWORM SoCal Premiere at the 29th Annual Dances With Films: LA

"Hold on to what's Real"

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, June 16, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Normandie Films announces the SoCal Premiere of HEARTWORM, the debut feature film written and directed by Miriam Louise Arens and Mitchell Arens, at the 29th Annual Dances With Films: LA on Sunday, June 21, 2026 at 4:00 PM at the TCL Chinese Theatres in Hollywood.

Set in a near future where virtual reality has become a refuge for the grieving, HEARTWORM follows Avena (Amber Gray), a bereaved mother battling to pull her family back from the edge of disappearance. Her husband Mark (Juan Riedinger) has retreated into NeuraLife — a fully immersive AI world that promises comfort, continuity, and escape from unbearable loss. Drawn into a disorienting journey through memory, technology, and longing, Avena must face a haunting question for our time: when comfort is infinite, what becomes of being human? At a time when AI is advancing at a dizzying pace, HEARTWORM reminds us that the most complicated questions will never belong to technology, but to the human heart.

The film features a striking breakout performance by Tony Award–nominated Broadway star Amber Gray (Persephone in the Tony Award–winning Hadestown; Rocky Horror Show currently on Broadway), alongside Juan Riedinger (Narcos; Claws), Lillias White (Tony Award winner, The Life; Hercules), Ellie Reine (Run the World, And Just Like That...), and Derrick Baskin (The Offer on Paramount+).

HEARTWORM has earned Official Selection laurels from Cinequest 2026, Dances With Films: LA 2026, Martha's Vineyard Film Festival, Julien Dubuque International Film Festival, and Woods Hole Film Festival. Critics have praised the film as "tour de force acting" (CINAPSE) and "brilliantly constructed debut feature" (Movie Gourmet).

Miriam and Mitchell Arens are NYU Tisch Asia alumni whose work has screened at Sundance, Cannes, Venice, SXSW, TIFF, IDFA, and Berlinale. HEARTWORM marks their feature directorial debut, produced by Normandie Films.

SCREENING DETAILS

Sunday, June 21, 2026 | 4:00 PM

TCL Chinese Theatres | Hollywood, CA

Tickets: \$20 (available at danceswithfilms.com/2026-heartworm)

Trailer: vimeo.com/normandiefilms/heartwormtrailer2026

Film Site: heartwormthefilm.com

ABOUT THE FILM

Title: HEARTWORM | Genre: Sci-fi / Drama | Runtime: 106 min

Written & Directed by: Miriam Louise Arens & Mitchell Arens

Cast: Amber Gray, Juan Riedinger, Lillias White, Ellie Reine, Derrick Baskin

Website: heartwormthefilm.com

Trailer: vimeo.com/normandiefilms/heartwormtrailer2026

Press Kit (EPK): Download stills, trailer & press notes

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