

The 25 Coolest FILM FESTIVALS in the World 2022

Our panelists traveled the world to find the best festivals for watching movies, making friends and throwing hatchets

BY TIM MOLLOY

HAVE YOU EVER been to one of those film festivals where everything is happening all at once, and there's that movie you *need* to see and that person you *need* to meet and that one panel you just can't miss, and you realize that even though you've been looking forward to the energy and hustle for months... you aren't actually enjoying yourself? That this event, which was supposed to be fun and spiritually enriching, is turning out to be a lot of work?

The following festivals are nothing like that.

For our latest list of the 25 Coolest Film Festivals in the World, we turned to a panel of cool (see inset) who focused on unforgettable experiences they couldn't have had anywhere else. Yes, the festivals served their careers, getting them exposure and accolades and helping them form important relationships. But they were also cool — fun, affirming, validating. A reminder that they were doing things they truly love and find endlessly cool. Enjoy.

Aspen Shortsfest Aspen, Colorado / 2023

"I love that this festival focuses on short films and treats short filmmakers like royalty," says Clint Bentley. "That's a rarity. The lineup is always incredible but it's the mentors they bring in that really set this festival apart. Not to mention, you can ski between screenings." Adds his moviemaking partner, Greg Kwedar: "The shorts are the marquee event — each block of films plays in the storied Wheeler Opera House in front of a full house and the festival creates several opportunities for the filmmakers to gather and form friendships." Among their best memories are meeting friend and mentor Laurence Andries (*Superstition*) when he served on a jury, and meeting Jason Reitman when he delivered a masterclass and "hung with the filmmakers all weekend," Kwedar recalls. Lexi Tannenholtz, whose film "We Should Get Dinner!" screened at this year's edition, in April, says the festival was "beyond fun... Everyone was so kind and generous," adding, "The filmmaker lounge is so friendly. Everyone genuinely wanted to get to know you and your work."

And Olive Nwosu, whose film "Egúngún (Masquerade)" also

screened this year, notes that "spending time with other emerging filmmakers in such an intimate space was so important... I've made new friends that I'm excited to continue growing with."

Austin Film Festival Austin, Texas / October 27-November 3

No matter how big it gets — and this festival has gotten very big — Austin stays cool.

"This isn't a controversial choice, but I love this film festival," says Bentley. "I appreciate the focus they put on writers (of both features and shorts) and they always send out a 'producer's packet' with contact information for all the filmmakers that want to share it."



PHOTO COURTESY OF ASPEN SHORTSFEST

It's an amazing festival for discovering new filmmakers to collaborate with." Austin is also one of our 50 Film Festivals Worth the Entry Fee and one of our 15 Submission-Worthy Screenplay Competitions, so consider this a triple endorsement. Its laid-back atmosphere makes it one of the best networking festivals on earth.

Busan International Film Festival

Busan, South Korea / October 5-14

South Korean film is having a moment — a moment that's lasted years and doesn't look likely to end any time soon. You can chalk it up in part to audiences' indefatigable love of films and support for take-no-prisoners filmmaking. Greg Kwedar has enjoyed that passion firsthand, living out pretty much every moviemaker's fantasy: "Our film *Transpecos* played in the midnight section and we arrived directly from the airport to the screening at 11:59 to a packed screening of cinephiles. They were about to watch a marathon of three films back-to-back ALL NIGHT LONG. The audiences there have stamina for movies that I can't even fathom."

Chattanooga Film Festival

Chattanooga, Tennessee / 2023

"The fest formed in 2009 as a double feature presentation of *Repo Man* and *Return of the Living Dead* — say no more," says Noel Taylor. We agree, but let's maybe say a *little* more — Chattanooga combines a giddy reverence for lost classics with a discerning eye for the next wave of great filmmakers. Screenings at the latest edition in June included 21-year-old Avalon Fast's hypnotic homemade horror debut *Honeycomb*, as well as the documentary *Mike Mignola: Drawing Monsters*, a look at the comics mastermind behind *Hellboy*. Other highlights included the resurrection of the delirious and deliciously weird *Thrilling Bloody Sword*, a Taiwanese, very 1981 retelling of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, and a Screenplay Pitch Competition with Rustic Films producer David Lawson Jr. (*She Dies Tomorrow*). "The Chattanooga Film Festival is an impressive DIY effort that has grown into a marvelously impressive showcase of inspiring, punk and original programming," Taylor adds.

Eastern Oregon Film Festival

La Grande, Oregon / October 20-22

Every film festival has films, but how many can offer an experience like this? "The programming team took us all out to the woods to drink White Russians and throw hatchets and shoot BB guns," says Jim Cummings. "We ended up attaching an inflatable canoe to a 4-Wheeler and sledding with all of the filmmakers. There are moments from Eastern Oregon that are seared into my memory as the high-water mark of how fun a festival can be." This year's 13th annual edition aims to open at the historic Liberty Theater and include

Panel of Cool

We're deeply indebted to the following experts who joined us in assembling this year's list:

Miriam Bale

Miriam Bale is the artistic director of the Indie Memphis Film Festival and a former film critic who has written for publications including *The New York Times*, *Sight and Sound* and *Film Comment*. She has also organized film programs for the Anthology Film Archives, Bamcinématek and more, and founded the La Di Da Film Festival in New York City.

Clint Bentley / Greg Kwedar

Clint Bentley is the director of *Jockey*, which he wrote and produced with Greg Kwedar. The film, Bentley's directorial debut, is based on the life of his father and premiered in competition at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival, where it won a Special Jury Prize for Best Actor for Clifton Collins Jr. and was acquired by Sony Pictures Classics. Clint also wrote and produced *Transpecos* with Kwedar.

Tranpecos was Greg Kwedar's debut as a feature director. The film premiered at the 2016 SXSW Film Festival, where it won the Audience Award. In addition to writing and producing *Transpecos* and *Jockey* with Bentley, he has spoken to thousands of students nationwide and taken part on panels about his work at SXSW, Sundance, UNESCO, the United Nations and more.

Jim Cummings

Jim Cummings is a Sundance and SXSW-winning filmmaker from New Orleans. He is a champion of the digital independent filmmaking renaissance and is very vocal at film festival happy hours and on social media about DIY filmmaking. His films *Thunder Road* and *The Wolf of Snow Hollow* have been showcased and praised around the world for their genre-fluid aesthetics and his new film, *The Beta Test*, is no different. He lives in Los Angeles and treats his home like a film studio.

Micah Gottlieb

Micah Gottlieb is the founder and curator of Mezzanine, an independent and arthouse revival film series based in Los Angeles that offers programs created in collaboration with local artists, filmmakers, curators and other luminaries. He is formerly the assistant programmer at the Quad Cinema and previously worked in independent film distribution in New York. He currently works as an archivist in Los Angeles.

Noel Taylor

Noel David Taylor is an English-American film director, screenwriter, producer, actor, and production designer. Taylor has created over 40 accomplished shorts and experimental films. Through this body of work, Taylor has created an inimitable aesthetic universe: a unique alchemy of homemade nightmare comedy and an absurdist sense of tragedy. His screenplays have won several awards. His feature film directorial debut, *Man Under Table*, premiered at Slamdance 2021.

Iman Zawahry

Iman Zawahry is one of the first hijabi American-Muslim filmmakers in the nation and has worked on films that have played at over 100 venues worldwide. She's an Emmy award winner, Princess Grace Award recipient, Lincoln Center Artist Academy Fellow, and Sundance Momentum Fellow. She is also the co-creator of the first American Muslim film grant with Islamic Scholarship Fund, where she currently serves as director of Film Programs. Her debut film, *Americanish*, is now on the festival circuit and has won more than 20 awards, including best director and best film. She is currently faculty of film production at the University of Florida.

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virtual presentations and satellite screenings throughout the rural Grande Ronde Valley. “This year’s hybrid event will see to it that hot spring huddles, hatchet throwing and Albino Bumblebees are, again, key components for the visiting filmmaker experience,” says festival director Christopher Jennings. (An Albino Bumblebee is the festival’s signature drink, made with whiskey, raw honey and fresh warm goat’s milk.)

Filmfort

Boise, Idaho / March 22-26, 2023

“A must if you are a weirdo like me,” says Noel Taylor, who notes that this offshoot of the Treefort Music Festival is celebrated for “a ton of panels, Q+As and quirky cool junk.” Treefort holds several more or less simultaneous events like Filmfort, Skatefort, Foodfort and Yogaft, so you can combine your love of film with your other passions, getting all your senses stimulated in one glorious trip to Boise. Treefort’s latest edition this past March included musical acts like Kim Gordon, Snail Mail and Boise’s own Magic Sword and Built to Spill, and a Treefort pass included all screenings. But people who only wanted to watch movies, for whatever reason, could just pick up a pass for Filmfort. The film lineup included a daring array of shorts and features, including the crowd-pleasing doc *We Intend to Cause Havoc*, which followed the 1970s formation and recent rediscovery of the psychedelic band, WITCH, a group considered The Beatles of Zambia.

Frameline Film Festival

San Francisco, California / 2023

Billed as “the world’s longest-running and largest showcase of queer cinema,” Frameline marked its 46th edition in June by showing over 125 films from more than 30 countries. It celebrated the return of in-person screenings by expanding to a record number of theaters and venues across the Bay Area, including the famed

Castro Theatre. This year’s very cool lineup included Andrew Ahn’s *Fire Island*, Eva Vitija’s documentary *Loving Highsmith*, drawn from the diaries of the *Carol* and *Talented Mr. Ripley* author, and *Framing Agnes*, director Chase Joynt’s deep dive into interviews with transgender people from the 1950s that were discovered in a rusted-shut UCLA filing cabinet. “As we return to an in-person festival, we are reminded of the importance of LGBTQ+ cinema to help transform viewpoints, create dialogue, and, most importantly, expand representation of marginalized communities,” says executive director James Woolley. “We are excited to share the stories and voices of the LGBTQ+ community that are sure to resonate long after the credits have rolled.”

FILMMAKER H. NELSON TRACEY THROWS A HATCHET IN THE FOOTHILLS OF MT. EMILY AT THE EASTERN OREGON FILM FESTIVAL



Il Cinema Ritrovato

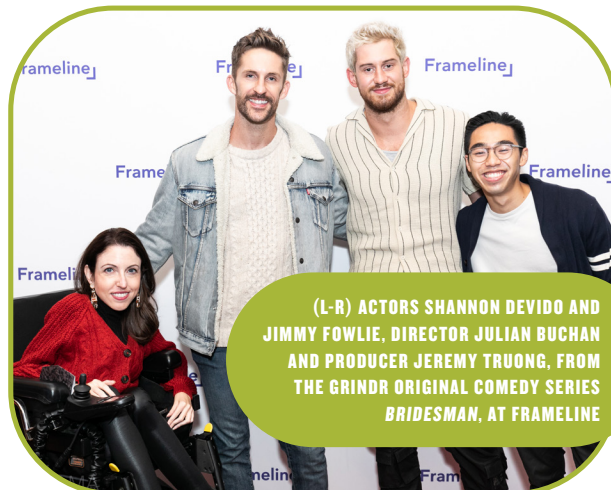
Bologna, Italy / 2023

“Imagine MoMA’s To Save and Project, but multiplied tenfold,” says Micah Gottlieb, who describes Il Cinema Ritrovato as “a massive festival of preservation that runs the gamut of international cinema: silents, New Hollywood, African, Turkish and Egyptian cinema, and more—with seemingly none of the institutional pressures (i.e. advertising, networking events) that are usually found at film festivals.” The festival is best known for the massive outdoor screenings in the town square of Piazza Maggiore, adjacent to the massive Basilica of San Petronio, where seemingly everyone in town gathers to watch films ranging from the famous to the obscure. “If anything makes me believe that film history is forever, it’s this festival,” says Gottlieb.

Key West Film Festival

Key West, Florida / November 16-20

“What other film festival takes the filmmakers on a sunset sail?” asks Clint Bentley, who also praises Key West’s “amazing blend of marquee films of the year and discoveries,” and “great panels.” It’s also known for excellent taste: Last year’s 10th annual festival, which showed more than 75 films over five days, awarded Best Narrative Film to Pedro Almodovar’s *Parallel Mothers*, and the KWFF’s Annual Critics Award to Sean Baker’s *Red Rocket*. Its tagline sums things up nicely: “Where passion meets paradise.”



(L-R) ACTORS SHANNON DEVIDO AND JIMMY FOWLIE, DIRECTOR JULIAN BUCHAN AND PRODUCER JEREMY TRUONG, FROM THE GRINDR ORIGINAL COMEDY SERIES BRIDESMAN, AT FRAMELINE

PHOTOS BY LILA STRECHER, COURTESY OF THE EASTERN OREGON FILM FESTIVAL / PHOTO BY BARAK SHRAMA, COURTESY OF FRAMELINE

Luxembourg City Film Festival

Luxembourg City, Luxembourg / March 2-12, 2023

“One of the most charming film festivals out there,” says Clint Bentley. “The people who run it are so kind and passionate about film. And the people of Luxembourg are just as wonderful. Despite being a small country, it seems to be packed with great filmmakers. Filmmakers who will happily drive you out of the city to a vineyard on your off day. It’s a magical festival.” This year’s 12th annual festival, held in March, ended with Yuri Ancarani’s *Atlantide* — a hyper-stylized look at young people and motorboats on the Venetian Lagoon — earning the Grand Prix. Guests included *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* director Ana Lily Amirpour. The festival has grown fast in recent years, and offers significant prizes, including a €10,000 prize for the best in international cinema winner.

Mammoth Lakes Film Festival

Mammoth Lakes, California / 2023

A regular on our annual list of 50 Film Festivals Worth the Entry Fee, MLFF welcomes highly anticipated films while keeping up a strong commitment to discovering new talent. You can chalk up its adventurous spirit to festival director Shira Dubrovner and programming director Paul Sbrizzi coming of age in 1980s Los Angeles, where art, music and film felt exciting, magical and subversive. In 2015, the pair took their love of risk-taking and provocation to an Eastern Sierra paradise equidistant to L.A. and San Francisco. “A truly curated assemblage of innovative and evocative films seem to make their way to Mammoth Lakes Film Fest every year,” says Noel Taylor. “A tightly packed fest with top-notch weirdness and intrigue nestled in the beautiful northern California town of the same name.” Making the five-hour drive from LAX? The festival just might pair you up

with another filmmaker doing the same, so your festival experience can start with the kind of road trip where lifelong loyalties are born. Past honorees have included John Sayles, Melissa Leo, Joe Dante and The Groundlings, who were represented by Cheri Oteri, Ryan Gaul, Jordan Black, Mindy Sterling and Julia Sweeney. The latest edition was held this past Memorial Day weekend.

FILMMAKERS IN THE HOT SPRINGS AT MAMMOTH LAKES



Marrakech International Film Festival

Marrakech, Morocco / November 11-19

“One of the last in-person editions of the Marrakech International Film Festival was an excuse for Martin Scorsese and Robert De Niro to celebrate Agnès Varda (a few months before her death) in Moroccan luxury, while an audience including Julian Schnabel was lucky enough to witness,” says Miriam Bale. “With a recent programming staff shift and the new Atlas Workshop (online the last two years), the festival now intends to shift focus on to Arab and African filmmakers rather than on Morocco’s former colonizer.” The latest edition, the festival’s 19th, will again be held in person after the pandemic precluded that possibility in 2020 and 2021. The 18th edition, held in 2019, closed with Nicolás Rincón Gil’s *Valley of Souls*

receiving the Étoile d’Or from a jury headed by Scottish actress Tilda Swinton.

NewFilmmakers Los Angeles

Los Angeles, California / Monthly

Now in its 15th year, NFMLA is a year-round affair that highlights a wide range of filmmakers from all backgrounds with monthly, themed festivals limited to a small number of selections each month — usually less than 20. The festival’s curation is exquisite, and filmmakers chosen for NFMLA have gone on to impressive festival runs, distribution deals, Oscar nominations, and an Oscar win: Rayka Zehtabchi’s “Period. End of Sentence” screened at the festival prior to its Oscar win for Best Documentary Short Subject. Each festival includes an InFocus initiative that highlights the contributions of underrepresented filmmakers, with themes like Indigenous, disability, LGBTQ+ and military cinema. The smaller number of accepted entries means the festival can give every film and filmmaker their due, and even host in-depth discussions with the creatives that appear on NFMLA’s vibrant Youtube page and at MovieMaker.com. This year alone, it has committed over \$250,000 in cash grants, partly through partners like the Anthony Rhulen Film Fund. And it draws attention from the biggest players in the industry, including Sony Pictures Entertainment, Amazon Studios, Showtime, Netflix, Warner Bros., United Talent Agency, NBCUniversal, HBO, NEON, Endeavor, Starz, Bad Robot, Creative Artists Agency, Management 360, AMC Studios, MGM, FilmNation, ICM Partners, Lionsgate, Magnolia Pictures, Paramount, Circle of Confusion, MACRO, Skydance and Blumhouse.

TICKET



New Orleans Film Festival

New Orleans, Louisiana / November 3-13

Jim Cummings notes that artistic director Clint Bowie and his team “run an amazing show... the opening night party is such a free and happy love letter to movies and the new south.” He adds: “You feel special at the New Orleans Film Festival.” Cummings notes that he’s from New Orleans, “so I might be biased,” but we don’t think so: The festival has appeared repeatedly on this list, and is also a regular on our list of 50 Film Festivals Worth the Entry Fee.

Since NOFF started asking filmmakers who submit through FilmFreeway about the inclusivity of their teams and their personal connections to the stories they tell, submission numbers have gone down a bit. And the festival is totally cool with that.

New York Asian Film Festival

New York City, New York / July 15-31

Iman Zawahry says she is “particularly biased to this festival” because it hosted the New York premiere of her film

Boat People. In-person screenings for the festival will be held at both the SVA Theatre and Film at Lincoln Center, and online screenings will take place via Film at Lincoln Center’s Virtual Cinema.

Nitrate Picture Show

Rochester, New York / 2023

“A three-day extravaganza of nitrate film projection at the George Eastman Museum in Rochester, with a secret lineup that is never revealed until the first day of the festival,” says Micah Gottlieb. This past year’s edition was held in June, and included an opening night screening of William Dieterle’s 1948 *Portrait of Jennie*. Attending the festival is a great opportunity to also explore the museum, which preserves and promotes moving pictures ranging from the mainstream to the avant-garde. Its treasures include the largest collection of original Technicolor negatives, including those of *Gone With the Wind* and *The Wizard of Oz*, as well as personal collections from directors including Kathryn Bigelow, Ken Burns, Cecil B. DeMille, Norman Jewison, Spike Lee and Martin Scorsese.

Odesa International Film Festival

Odesa, Ukraine / July 23-30

“This is one of the wildest and coolest film fest experiences I’ve ever had,” says Jim Cummings. “Their programming was super dark and brutal and the audiences and team were all so supportive and kind and lovely and the screenings were often in giant palaces like the historic Odesa opera house. Every evening we partied at an outdoor nightclub on the Black Sea called Caletón — the dancing started at 10 p.m. and when the sun came up at 5:30, the bouncers turned into lifeguards and the whole dance floor got into their underwear and swam with each other. It was the most free and fun week I’ve spent traveling with cinephiles. Keep Ukraine Free.” As of press time, this festival is still happening, despite Russia’s invasion. As you may have noticed, the people of Ukraine don’t give up easily.

Over-The-Rhine International Film Festival

Cincinnati, Ohio / July 7-10

“This is a newer festival but it is mighty. Highlighting disability filmmakers and marginalized filmmakers, this festival works hard to promote the films, and had events and amazing accommodations for filmmakers,” says Iman Zawahry. It’s all part of an effort to promote not just film and moviemakers, but also Cincinnati itself, says tt stern-enzi, the artistic director of the festival, who uses all lower-case letters in his name. “The OTR community in downtown Cincinnati is a diverse and exciting space with a strong and vibrant arts scene,” he says, noting that film production has contributed to the scene significantly, and that he is “honored that the festival has now risen up as a complement to that effort.” He adds: “I believe we are in position to inspire filmmakers to see and appreciate themselves and their work as a necessary part of our arts community.” This year’s edition may be taking place — or have just ended — as you read this.

Philadelphia Asian American Film Festival

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania / November 3-November 13

Founded in 2008 by Asian Americans who recognized the need for more festivals focused on Asian and Pacific Islander moviemaking, this festival boosts AAPI creatives year-round. Last year’s festival opened with *Americanish*, and Iman Zawahry notes that the festival “really did a great job taking care of the filmmakers and the details.” Other highlights included a screening of director Yung Chan’s documentary *Wuhan Wuhan*, which told five stories of the pandemic lockdown, as well as an Asian Music Showcase and an interactive screening of Ang Lee’s *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* entitled “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Memories” in which multimedia artist Chantal Vorobei

Thieves invited audience members to share their own memories over the film’s astonishing action sequences. Its social media accounts are very worth following for well-curated film recommendations.

Philip K. Dick Film Festival

New York City, New York / September 23-25

“Celebrating the worlds created by the author, The Philip K. Dick Film Festival is a lovely showcase of works directly inspired by or loosely connected to my favorite writers,” says Noel Taylor, who recommends this to fans of “sci-fi, paranoia and the metaphysical.” Sounds like all of us, right? The author whose work inspired

genetic engineering, and what it means to be human. The founder and director of the festival, Daniel Abella, promises an event where “ideas can flourish, and the imagination is unleashed.” He adds: “Science fiction is the science of the future. Reality has caught up with sci-fi and the genre is a sneak preview of what is to come.”

Prismatic Ground

New York City, New York / 2023

“The debut online version—almost entirely moderated by Inney Prakash’s smart questions and cool glasses—was the most exciting ‘virtual’ festival of the



PERFORMER EVAN RUGGIERO AT THE OVER-THE-RHINE LAUNCH PARTY IN MAY

With its breathtaking blend of cultures, music, architecture and food, New Orleans is one of the coolest places on earth, even on a slow night. But add an ambitiously curated film festival and surprises galore (one year included a DJ set by Arcade Fire’s Win Butler) and you have an experience hard to rival.

Americanish at its edition last August. “The festival directors made sure they literally rolled out the red carpet particularly during the pandemic,” she says. “They uplift Asian cinema and added Asian-American cinema as well.” This year the festival celebrates its 20th year, kicking things off by hosting the in-person international premiere of Ryoo Seung-wan’s *Escape from Mogadishu*, starring Kim Yoon-seok, NYAFF’s Star Asia winner in 2018. This year the festival will honor Hong Kong New Wave filmmaker Ann Hui and screen her films *The Story of Woo Viet* — starring Chow Yun-fat — and



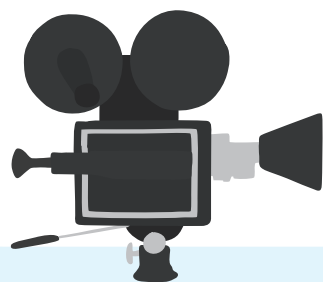
GETTING READY TO WATCH FILMS THAT PREDICT THE FUTURE

Blade Runner, *Minority Report*, *Total Recall* and *A Scanner Darkly* — among other film and TV adaptations — would have to smile at categories like “The Singularity, The Eschaton and Beyond” and “Isolation in Sci-Fi, Psychological and Supernatural.” This year’s event will reflect the ecological, scientific, and technological aspects of Dick’s writing, dealing with subjects like UFOs, artificial intelligence,

pandemic, leaning towards innovative rather than strictly experimental new films as well as honoring independent film heroes,” says Miriam Bale. This is a new festival, which just held its second edition — and first hybrid edition — in May. It’s co-hosted by Maysles Documentary Center (named for Albert and David Maysles, the brothers behind the classics *Salesman*, *Gimme Shelter* and *Grey Gardens*) and

PHOTO COURTESY OF OVER-THE-RHINE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

PHOTO BY ED SHIN, COURTESY OF THE PHILIP K. DICK FILM FESTIVAL



The 25 Coolest FILM FESTIVALS IN THE WORLD



media partner Screen Slate. The May fest opened with Charlie Shackleton's 2021 *The Afterlight*, a found-footage film that culls hundreds of films from around the world to assemble a cast of actors with one thing in common: not being alive. As the festival's notes explained: "*The Afterlight* itself exists as a single 35mm film print. Further eroding every time it screens, the film is a living document of its life in circulation. Eventually it will disappear entirely."

Provincetown International Film Festival

Provincetown, Massachusetts / 2023

Located on the outermost point of Cape Cod, this newly Oscar-qualifying fest in one of the most charming and LGBTQ+-friendly towns in America is consistently innovative and damn fun, thanks in no small part to resident artist John Waters, who regularly hosts daring and delightful events: Earlier this year, he announced a formal fundraising dinner to be held at the local dump. And we'll always be grateful for the drive-in screening of the preposterous killer-rabbit epic *Night of the Lepus* that Waters hosted at the Wellfleet Drive-In during the summer



JOHN WATERS AND CHRISTINE VACHON AT THE PROVINCETOWN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

of 2020, when fun events were in short supply due to pandemic lockdowns. Most PIFF events, to be clear, are decidedly un-dumpy. The latest edition took place in June, with a phenomenal lineup that included *Call Me By Your Name* director Luca Guadagnino, who received

the "Filmmaker on the Edge" Award and chatted with Waters, as well as "Next Wave" Award recipients Jenny Slate (*Marcel the Shell With Shoes On*) and Bowen Yang (*Fire Island*). This year also marked a return to the indoor Waters Edge theater after two long years away from the oceanside venue. It opened with the Emma Thompson sex dramedy *Good Luck to You, Leo Grande*, and featured a screening of the 4K Criterion restoration of Waters' astonishing *Pink Flamingos*, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

UCLA Festival of Preservation

Los Angeles, California / 2024

"UCLA is arguably the most essential archive and a beacon of film history in Los Angeles, whose work is not appreciated nearly enough," says Micah Gottlieb. "It is not always easy to get a big audience for the latest restorations in L.A., but at the Billy Wilder Theater at the Hammer Museum, films like Bill Duke's *The Killing Floor* and brand new 35mm prints of Frank Borzage's *The Mortal Storm* play to packed houses." This year's edition, held in May, included archived and restored gems ranging from Golden Age comedies to film noir to socially conscious documentaries to rare TV programs featuring Betty White and Rod Serling. UCLA Film & Television Archive director May Hong HaDuong explained in a welcoming note that the year's theme of "See the Bigger Picture" encompassed "what we hope to share collaboratively—a view that art is deepened by being in a collective space. After two years of isolation from these shared spaces, we offer these tremendous programs as a place to gather for community, solace and connection." And it was all free with an RSVP, thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor. The festival is held every other year as a biennial celebration, so you have plenty of time to make plans for the next one.



Urbanworld Film Festival

New York City, New York / October 26-30

"Being partnered with Warner Media and HBO, this festival really opens doors for filmmakers and truly uplifts the BIPOC voice," says Iman Zawahry. Founded in 1997 by Stacy Spikes, the festival has drawn a stellar guest list over the years, including Chadwick Boseman, Jennifer Lopez, Halle Berry, Tom Cruise, Jamie Foxx, Jada Pinkett Smith, Samuel L. Jackson, Kerry Washington, Kate Hudson, Viola Davis and Rosie Perez. Ava DuVernay, David Oyelowo, Queen Latifah, Melvin and Mario Van Peebles, Justin Simien, Gina Prince-Bythewood, Larenz Tate, Reginald Hudlin, Kasi Lemmons and Tyrese Gibson have all served as Festival Ambassadors. It enjoys its reputation as both a filmmakers' festival and a people's festival, and notes: "We fight tirelessly to expand the definition of 'urban' beyond ethnicity to include sensibility, culture, and proximity, as we highlight undiscovered storytellers." The festival recently named Sharese Bullock-Bailey, an Emmy-nominated producer and strategist who was previously the chief strategist and partnership officer at Ghetto Film School, as its new director and first-ever chief innovation officer.

Zurich Film Festival

Zurich, Switzerland / September 22-October 2

"Phenomenal programming in a stunning city on the shores of Lake Zurich," says Greg Kwedar. "If you're brave enough, go jump in the frigid and magical waters of the lake." This year's festival will celebrate cinema from the Iberian Peninsula, and dedicate its "New World View" section to young Spanish filmmaking. It also marks the anniversary of the festival's 10-year collaboration with the Spanish film festival San Sebastian. "San Sebastian is one of the world's leading festivals and takes place at the same time of the year as the ZFF. Rather than competing against them, we began instead closely cooperating with the Spaniards ten years ago," explains ZIFF artistic director Christian Jungen. This year's festival will take place at the 1,300-seat Zurich Convention Center. Oh, and one more thing: "Shout out to the amazing team behind the German film *Ich Ich Ich* who became my Zurich movie watching buddies," adds Kwedar. Here's to finding new movie-watching buddies, wherever you are in the world. **MM**

PHOTO COURTESY