

CINEQUEST™

create, innovate, empower

Cinequest Film & VR Festival Showcases the Storytelling Talent of Silicon Valley with Extraordinary Work from Bay Area Artists, Technologists

Taking place in the mecca of innovation, creativity and technology, the Cinequest Film & VR Festival 2018 spotlights the 'tinsel-town' talent rooted in the Silicon Valley with a phenomenal line up of presenting Bay Area-based and connected artists.

At its 28th annual event, February 27th - March 11th, the feature films, shorts and virtual reality (VR) experiences of these Bay Area artists will be shown, along with work from artists representing 45 countries, at cinemas in downtown San Jose, as well as a satellite theatre in Redwood City. Over the 13 day festival, Cinequest will host 510 screenings, events, parties and experiences.

To learn more about the full festival lineup, and to purchase festival passes, tickets to screenings and special events, visit www.cinequest.org.

Highlights of Bay Area Artists at CQ2018:

FEATURE FILMS

Adios Amor: The Search for Maria Moreno (Directed by Laurie Coyle; World Premiere)

Over 50 years ago, before Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez, there was Maria Moreno. In *Adios Amor*, the discovery of forgotten photographs prompts a search for this unsung heroine, a tenacious woman who sacrificed everything except her 12 kids, to organize California's migrant farm workers half a century ago. From Bay Area filmmaker Laurie Coyle, this remarkable story about the migrant workers who put food on all our tables explores enduring questions about whose lives we remember, record, and recognize. Presented by Bank of America in a special event, *Courageous Conversation*.

The Ashram (Directed by Ben Rheki; World Premiere)

From former Mountain View resident Ben Rheki, Academy Award-winner Melissa Leo (*The Fighter*) stars in the story of a Jamie, an American skeptic, following the trail of his lost girlfriend to a mystical Himalayan community. His quest to find Sophie leads him to an ashram where an evocative cast of characters, including Kal Penn (*Harold & Kumar*), awaits. Will their universal consciousness bind them in nurturing relationships, or will the evil, lurking beneath the calm, destroy them all?

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From Baghdad to the Bay (Directed by Erin Palmquist; US Premiere)

Ghazwan Alshari had his dream job – translating for the U.S. forces in Iraq. But when he was accused of being a double agent by the same people he was aiding, with his life and the safety of his family in jeopardy, Ghazwan fled Iraq and settled in San Francisco to begin anew. Struggling and alone, Ghazwan reveals another secret in his life– he is gay. Ghazwan's turbulent and ultimately joyous journey is nothing less than a testament to the human spirit.

Locating Silver Lake (Directed by Eric Billitch; World premiere)

Daniel, the naïve and earnest college grad seeks answers and inspiration in his move to Los Angeles. When Daniel encounters Ella, a friend from his past, and Ella's dreamy and alluring sister Talya, his life in L. A. takes an unexpected turn. Featuring Bay area actor, Zelda Williams, this superbly acted story will mesmerize and surprise you as the secrets unfold.

Pick of the Litter (Directed by Dana Nachman)

Following her previous Cinequest screenings of the heartwarming ***Batkid Begins*** and harrowing ***Witch Hunt***, Bay Area filmmaker Dana Nachman returns to Cinequest with her latest triumph. Being a boisterous and playful puppy is easy. But learning to behave and save someone's life is another matter. Follow the journey of Patriot, Potomac, Phil, Primrose and Poppet, a litter of Labradors from birth to working service, where only the best make the cut. After monitoring the puppies for temperament, health, and suitability for work, Guide Dogs for the Blind choose the top dogs for careers in service to their human partners who anxiously wait months for a match.

Snapshots (Directed by Melanie Mayron; World premiere)

Written and produced by the Bay Area Cinequest alum, Jan Corran Miller, when a grandmother's secret past collides with her granddaughter's secret future and her daughter's angry present, can the love of three generations be enough to accept decades of deceit? Sometimes an event as simple as fishing lessons is all it takes to splash away the façade society has painted upon our hearts. *Snapshots* shows the dimensionality of love across three generations, providing solace through a series of ambiguous photographs. Three time Academy Award-nominee and acting legend Piper Laurie (*Carrie*, *Twin Peaks*) plays the family matron.

Status Pending (Directed by Ben Zolno; US premiere)

Lizzie Conley is a social-media obsessed baker living in New Zealand who has spent the past six months dating her Tinder match, Ryan. While Ryan wants more from the relationship, Lizzie wants to keep her options open. From New Zealand by-way-of-Bay Area Director Ben Zolno, this biting romantic comedy is full of hilarious scenes as we watch two unique millennials navigate a world where the power and influence of social media is so overwhelmingly surreal.

You Can't Say No (Directed by Paul Kramer; World premiere)

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Two kids in, and pushing deep into forty, Hank and Alexandria Murphy can't wait for their divorce papers to come. When Hank decides to embark on a weekend getaway, Alexandria does the same, to find Hank stranded on the side of the road. They decide to finally get to know each other by playing a game. The only rule? You can't say no. Shot on location in Santa Rosa and starring Academy Award and Cinequest Maverick Spirit winner, legend Peter Fonda (*Easy Rider*), Marguerite Moreau, Hamish Linklater (*Fargo*) and Hus Miller, *You Can't Say No* takes you on a fun and poignant ride.

VR EXPERIENCES

Hutong In Live (Directed by Weiman Zhang)

From award-winning filmmaker and San Francisco State University Professor Weiman Zhang, this compelling reflection recaptures the traditional courtyard residences of Hutong life in Beijing.

Visit www.cinequest.org for the full program of Cinequest Film & VR Festival 2018, and to purchase passes and tickets to screenings and events.

More than 105,000 attendees will experience the work of internationally renowned and emerging artists and technologists, representing a spectrum of genres, genders, ethnicities, orientations, and viewpoints. Honoring the careers of icons, legends and risk takers in film, Cinequest will present its coveted Maverick Spirit Award to **Nicolas Cage** (*Leaving Las Vegas, Raising Arizona*), **Andie MacDowell** (*Sex, Lies & Videotape, Four Weddings and a Funeral*), **Tatiana Maslany** (*Orphan Black, Stronger*) and **Tom Cullen** (*Downtown Abbey, Black Mirror*). Director, producer, tech entrepreneur **Travis Cloyd** will be honored with this year's VR Visionary Award, recognizing his work in immersive entertainment. Additionally, this year's Media Legacy Award will be presented to **Ben Mankiewicz**, Primetime Host Turner Classic Movies (TCM) celebrating his incredible life and impact on the industry, as a writer, journalist and co-founder of *The Young Turks*.

This year's program includes 74 World and 55 U.S. premiering films, starring award winning actors including past Maverick Spirit Award winners William H. Macy, Rosario Dawson and Peter Fonda, as well as Kal Penn, Michelle Pfeiffer, James McAvoy, Hilary Swank and Stanley Tucci. Visit www.cinequest.org for the full Cinequest Film & VR Festival 2018 program.

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About Cinequest

A vanguard organization set in the Silicon Valley, Cinequest's uniqueness and impact result from being ahead of the curve in the powerful integration of creativity and technology. Cinequest fuses the world of the filmed arts with that of Silicon Valley's innovation to empower youth, artists, and innovators to create and connect – driving transformations and a better tomorrow. Cinequest does this through Cinequest Film & VR Festival, Picture The Possibilities (PTP), and its sister company Cinequest Mavericks Studio. (Voted **Best Film Festival** by *USA Today* Readers.)

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CONTACT:

Dana Whitney

Cinequest

dana.whitney@cinequest.org

(408) 995-5033