



DIFF Announces Line-up for 20th Dallas International Film Festival 2026

Cinépolis Victory Park to host Academy Award® Qualifying Festival April 23 – 30, 2026

DALLAS (March 2026) – **DIFF** has announced the line-up for the 20th edition of the annual **Dallas International Film Festival**, Thursday, April 23 – Thursday, April 30, 2026. The Festival is an **Oscar® Qualifying Festival**, and will feature screenings of more than 120 films, Q&A sessions, and panels with filmmakers and actors, nightly DIFF Red Carpets, and special events.

Cinépolis Luxury Cinemas Victory Park, located steps away from American Airlines Center at 2365 Victory Park Lane, returns as the host venue. Additional screenings and events will be held at the historic **Texas Theatre** and the artful **Virgin Hotels Dallas** – which returns for the fourth year as the Premier Sponsor of the Festival – among other world-class Dallas destinations to be announced.

The lineup of feature films for DIFF 2026 to-date includes:

FEATURE FILMS:

40 SECONDS (Narrative Feature) (Italy)

Director: Vincenzo Alfieri

Inspired by the tragic event of Willy Monteiro's death, 40 SECONDS explores the dark side of provincial life, the small and medium ambitions, the generational conflicts, the unpredictability and insignificance of violence. Six young adults, six different stories, which in the span of 24 hours will touch and intertwine through a series of casual encounters, rivalries, and latent tensions.

AMERICAN BABY (Narrative Feature) (United States)

Director: Ellen Rodnianski

AMERICAN BABY follows Oli as she navigates the repercussions of being very young and very pregnant in small town Texas. As she seeks out the suddenly absent teenage father-to-be of her child, Oli confronts growing isolation from her community.

AMERICAN PACHUCO: THE LEGEND OF LUIS VALDEZ (Documentary Feature) (United States)

Director: David Alvarado

A California farmworker's son rose from the fields in the turbulent 1960s to create El Teatro Campesino, a revolutionary artistic movement that gave voice to the Chicano experience. Defying overwhelming odds, Luis Valdez's journey from migrant camps to Broadway with "Zoot Suit" and Hollywood with "La Bamba" forever transformed American theater, film, and our collective cultural landscape.

BLOOD BEHIND US (Narrative Feature) (Texas) – World Premiere

Director: Brendan Gabriel Murphy

When a battle-scarred ex-soldier reluctantly bonds with an abandoned pit bull, his fight for redemption and fatherhood takes a deadly turn as a psychotic contract killer hunts him down—forcing him to confront a violent past to protect the family he thought he'd lost forever. This was Michael Madsen's last film, who became a dear friend to the film team that is honored to show it with his family's blessing.

BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE SUNDANCE KID (Narrative Feature) (United States)

Director: George Roy Hill

In 1890s Wyoming, Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid lead a band of outlaws. When a train robbery goes wrong, they find themselves on the run with a posse hard on their heels. This classic 1969 tale starring Paul Newman, Robert Redford, and Katherine Ross will screen as the 19th annual Stodghill Classic Movie Night film.

\$10 COWBOY (Documentary Feature) (United States)

Director: Patrick Heaphy

\$10 COWBOY takes viewers on-the-road and front row for Charley Crockett's record kickoff tour at home in Texas. First stop, Austin, followed by Helotes, Dallas and Houston. Director Patrick Heaphy's intimate on-the-fly interviews capture Charley's vision of his brand of Texas, his view of the music industry and what it means to be a Texan with a mix of live concert and behind-the-scenes interviews that offer a revealing portrait of a man who rose from panhandling in New York City subways to 2025 Best Americana Album Grammy Nomination.

COOKIE QUEENS (Documentary Feature) (United States)

Director: Alysa Nahmias

A celebration of girlhood and the complexities that come with it, COOKIE QUEENS is a coming-of-age story about the joys, pressures, and pain points woven into one of America's most cherished rituals: Girl Scout Cookie season. Captivating, candid, and full of heart, the film follows four girls as they navigate the annual whirlwind of selling, striving, and succeeding.

CRYSTAL CROSS (Narrative Feature) (United States)

Director: Richie James Follin

Dotty, a Christian singer in trouble, believes she's received a sign from God when she meets James, a man who looks strikingly like Jesus. For Dotty, James is her ride out of town and a chance to reverse her fate. For James, however, the journey has a darker purpose. Broken by the loss of his daughter and after several failed suicide attempts, he is driving cross-country to California to finally end his life.

THE FURIOUS (Narrative Feature) (Hong Kong SAR China)

Director: Kenji Tanigaki

When his daughter Rainy is abducted, humble tradesman Wang Wei is thrust into a deadly underworld of corruption and violence. His only ally is Navin, a relentless journalist haunted by his own past. Together, they fight their way through an international criminal network in a desperate bid to save Rainy and uncover the truth.

GASLIT (Documentary Feature) (United States)

Director: Katie Camosy

As the world teeters on the brink of irreversible climate disaster, actor and activist Jane Fonda ventures deep into the oil and gas country, meeting the people who are exposing the fossil fuel industry's lies.

IF I GO WILL THEY MISS ME (Narrative Feature) (United States)

Director: Walter Thompson-Hernandez

A boy sees ghostly figures of other boys in his neighborhood while grappling with his father's distance, and the visions uncover hidden connections between them and their shared heritage.

KEEP QUIET (Narrative Feature) (United States) – North American Premiere

Director: Vincent Grshaw

A weathered tribal cop and his new trainee must find a ruthless fugitive, whose return to their rural Indigenous reservation has exposed its darkest secrets and could ignite a violent gang war.

KENNY LOGGINS: CONVICTION OF THE HEART (Documentary Feature) (United States) – Closing Night Film and US Premiere

Director: Dori Berinstein

Kenny Loggins was a shy, gawky, unpopular, big-eared kid with low self-esteem, who thought he had to create a persona to do the rock star thing. Loggins spent the subsequent 50 years reinventing himself over and over, and his career has been a journey into being himself.

KIM NOVAK'S VERTIGO (Documentary Feature) (United States)

Director: Alexandre O. Philippe

Exploring Kim Novak's life, this film highlights her role in Alfred Hitchcock's VERTIGO, and her journey from stardom to a reclusive life as an artist, using rare archival footage and Novak's own reflections.

MANTIS (Narrative Feature) (United States) – World Premiere

Director: Justice Hardy

In denial after the death of her husband, Rana finds out that her precinct is partnering with a tech company to pilot a new technology, The Mantis Project is based on neuroscience suggesting that, after a person dies, there's still electricity in the human brain for an average of 36 hours. Rana knows the tech is unethical, but it may also be her only way to catch the killer she's been hunting for 10 years.

MISPER (Narrative Feature) (United Kingdom)

Director: Harry Sherriff

The employees of a dying seaside hotel have their lives upended when their colleague, Elle, vanishes. Instead of focusing on the police investigation or Elle's close family, the story delves into the psychological impact on her co-workers.

A MOSQUITO IN THE EAR (Narrative Feature) (India, Italy, United States)

Director: Nicola Rinciari

Andrew and Daniela travel to Goa, India, to meet their newly adopted four-year-old daughter, Sarvari, and bring her back to the US. However, their world begins to crumble when Sarvari refuses to leave the orphanage that she calls home. The couple's attempts to welcome their child into her new family and travel back with her prove to be a chaotic challenge that not only tests their patience but also profoundly reshapes their ideas of family, parenthood, and their relationship as a couple.

OBSESSION (Narrative Feature) (United States)

Director: Curry Barker

After breaking the mysterious "One Wish Willow" to win his crush's heart, a hopeless romantic finds himself getting exactly what he asked for but soon discovers that some desires come at a dark, sinister price.

ONE IN A MILLION (Narrative Feature) (United States) – World Premiere

Director: Tanner Beard

The film follows the Kassis family as they battle to save their young son's life after he is suddenly stricken with HLH, a rare and deadly blood disorder.

ONE IN A MILLION (Documentary Feature) (United States, United Kingdom, Germany)

Director: Itab Azzam, Jack Macinnes

A Syrian girl's decade-long journey to Germany and back is portrayed as she and her family face the challenges of war and life as refugees, showing both the hardships and hopes of starting anew.

PALYANYTSIA (Documentary Feature) (Ukraine) – US Premiere

Director: Kadim Tarasov, Julia Bolshynska

An immersion into the consciousness of two artists, Bandyt and Johnny, who have always viewed the world through the prism of their art. Their paint was an expression of freedom, a protest against the system, and they believed they understood the world — but the war tears that illusion apart.

PINCH (Narrative Feature) (India)

Director: Uttera Singh

A darkly comedic drama during the Navratri festival in India, the film explores societal dynamics, secrets, and familial relationships within an apartment complex. Maitri Singh is an aspiring travel blogger who has a strained relationship with her mother, and in trying to create content for her YouTube channel, her life takes a dramatic turn when she becomes involved in a violent altercation.

POETIC LICENSE (Narrative Feature) (United States)

Director: Maude Apatow

Two inseparable best friends, Sam and Ari, start to unravel as they compete for the affection of Liz, the middle-aged mom auditing their college poetry workshop.

POWER BALLAD (Narrative Feature) (Ireland/United States)

Director: John Carney

When Rick (Paul Rudd), a past-his-prime wedding singer, meets fading boy-band star Danny (Nick Jonas) during a gig, the two bond over music and a late-night jam session. But, when Danny turns one of Rick's songs into the hit that reignites his career, Rick sets out to reclaim the recognition he believes he deserves.

REVOLUTION'S DAUGHTER (Documentary Feature) (Texas)

Director: Thaddeus D. Matula

A powerful documentary portrait of identity, legacy, and the price of dissent, the film follows Alina as she confronts the myth of her father and the reality of the revolution he led. The film explores the deep scars of displacement, the complexity of heritage, and the enduring spirit of a people divided by politics but united by culture, memory, and the hope for change.

STAGES (Narrative Feature) (United States)

Director: Ryan Booth

It's make or break for Ben Garza as he embarks on his first solo tour after the collapse of his band with Rita, his former tour, and Parker, who joins as a utility player. Rita also secures Jessie Ramos as the opening act, a rising star whose surge in popularity will completely destabilize Ben. By the tour's end, Ben must decide whether to keep chasing the life he once had—or chart a new path forward.

STAY FORTE (Narrative Feature) (Israel, United States)

Director: Doron Wran

Based on true events, the film explores the harrowing journey of Alon Shimiriz, Yotam Chaim, and Samer Tallaka, three innocent Israeli hostages who were plucked from their homes and held captive in the terror tunnels of Gaza. They were tragically killed escaping captivity and attempting to find their way home, and their story resonates as a reminder of resilience, humanity, and indomitable will.

THE THREE URNS (Narrative Feature) (Ireland) – North American Premiere

Director: John-Paul Davidson, Stephen Warbeck

Back in his home country to spread the ashes of his beloved wife, a man races to his destination in a milk float, while chased by a beautiful French woman in a Smartcar plagued with battery issues.

TOMORROW'S TOO LATE (Documentary Feature) (United Kingdom)

Director: Terry Loane

In a never before seen way, we are invited to see up close and intimately the changes a transgender person may experience during a medical transition. Having carved out a successful career as 'Lots' Holloway (his previous name and artist's alias), will Dylan Holloway be accepted by his fans who fell in love with his music in the same way?

TOOTOO (Documentary Feature) (Canada)

Director: Michael Hamilton

Jordin John Kudl United Kingdom Tootoo is of Inuit and Ukrainian descent, and his path to the NHL defied the odds in more than one way. Raised in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, Tootoo learned a traditional Inuit lifestyle including hunting, fishing, and camping. Despite facing mental and physical abuse as a child, Tootoo became both the first Inuk player, and the first player to grow up in Nunavut, to play for Team Canada and play in the NHL.

TUNER (Narrative Feature) (Canada/United States)

Director: Daniel Roher

A talented piano tuner's meticulous skills for tuning pianos lead him to discover an unexpected aptitude for cracking safes, turning his life upside down.

VALENTINA (Narrative Feature) (Mexico/United States)

Director: Tatti Ribeiro

Valentina is a young woman caught between the small debts and daily pressures of life in a border town. After receiving parking tickets she cannot afford, she sets out to pay them, believing it will be a quick task. What begins as an attempt to settle fines grows into an honest portrait of life in El Paso.

THE WEREWOLF IN THE WAVES (Documentary Feature) (United States)

Director: Soleil Moon Frye

From award-winning director Soleil Moon Frye, this film is a deeply personal and poignant documentary that explores the complicated dynamics of love and addiction. Told through Moon Frye's empathetic lens, we follow the reunion of her with her childhood friend, Seth Binzer, aka Shifty Shellshock, of the band Crazy Town, largely known for their hit song "Butterfly", an anthem for the early 2000's. She quickly sets out to document Crazy Town's comeback tour, during which the connection between Moon Frye and Binzer quickly evolves into a love story, shot 90% on Soleil's iPhone.

A WOMAN'S WORK (Narrative Feature) (United States)

Director: A.R. Ephraim

A young woman in rural Kentucky works as a coal miner to provide for her two younger sisters after losing her parents to the opioid epidemic.

SHORT FILMS:

ADDICTED TO IT — Nigel W. Tierney and Federico Heller (Argentina, Ireland, United States)

BELLY HOP — Dave Hill (United States)

BUS — Andre Balbuena (Peru)
CANDY BAR — Nash Edgerton (Australia)
COSMIC CRASH — James Smith (Germany)
DISTURBIA — Mira Yankova (Bulgaria)
ECHOES UNDER SKIN — John C. Christian and Gabriella Katsourpoulou (Brazil)
FELLOW – Martha Rivière, Laura Darras, Théo Bergougoux, Gaspard Keller de Schleithem, Johanne Coppier, Romane Casha (France)
FLESH & BLOOD — Nathan Presley (United States)
GUTTED — Kat Lynch (United States)
HAND — Jing Wang (Japan)
I TURN GIRLS ON – Lizzy De Vita (United States)
IN THE STILL OF THE NIGHT — Aristides Mantilla (Mexico)
JUST MY LUCK — Nicholas Pitts (United States)
K-9INE! — Elliott Power (United Kingdom)
LES FORCENÉS — Guillaume Chevalier (France)
LIFE GOES ON — Kat Butterfield and Daniel Audritt (United Kingdom)
LIVING WITH A VISIONARY — Stephen P. Neary (United States)
MAKE NO MISTAKE: THESE ARE THE GLORY DAYS — Texas Smith (United States)
MEETING YOUR MAKER — Gregory J.M. Kasunich (United States)
OLIVER —Andrew Strickland (Canada)
ONE-WAY CYCLE — Alicia Núñez Puerto (Portugal, Spain)
POSTER BOY — India Opzoomer (Canada)
REPLICON — Sophia Rossetti (United States)
RESPITE — Martin Geisler (France)
SHIFT — Lucca Vieira (United States)
SOMEWHERE TO BE — Christy Chan (United States)
STATIC — Attila Tayefeh Ghalehbegi (United States)
STILL STANDING — Victor Tadashi Suarez and Livia Albeck-Ripka (United States)
STOKED BETWEEN HANDLEBARS — Markus Miarka (Spain)
SWIM SISTAS — Catherine Joy White (United Kingdom)
THANK YOU FOR LISTENING — Gene Gallerano and Bob Ray (United States)
THE APOLLOS — Andrew Valentine (United States)
THE BADDEST SPEECHWRITER OF ALL — Ben Proudfoot and Stephen Curry (United States)
THE FIRST LAST WORD – Hannah Dougherty (Australia)
THE SHORN LAMB – Emily Rolen (United States)

TODD & THE TOAD – Julia Mücke (Germany)
TO-GO — Bryan Poyser (United States)
TRACES — Brandon Vasquez (Mexico)
TRADING CARDS — Radheya Jang (Australia)
VALUE — Sidney Mallari (United States)
WATER COOLER — Emma V.F. (United States)

MUSIC VIDEOS:

99 PROBLEMS – Ori Evans
Au/Ra - CRACK! – Andy Mihov
BAR MAID – Braden Barton
BROTHER – Aryna Tsyltsyna
DEACON - JAPAN. – Grey Smoley, Michael Colombos
DIE SPITZ - PUNISHERS – Justin Wilson
DON'T JUDGE MY WAY – Kayla McHaney
FEVER – Reagan Elkins
IDEAL DISTANCE – Danny Chandia
MAKE BELIEVE – David Wells, Jimmy Lindsey, ASC, Ruthie Craft
MOVE WITH ME – Jordie, Sophie Powers
ROCKET – Jahsoulii Blain
ROLL THE DICE – SeungMin Cho

DIFF concurrently announced the winners and finalists of the screenplay competition, presented in collaboration with Event Horizon Films. The winning scripts will be performed live by trained actors from Dallas-based Sherrill Actors Studio during the table read sessions during the Festival. Event Horizon Films is the event host, while Michelle Sherrill, owner of Sherrill Actors Studio, will cast and direct the table reads. This marks the third season that DIFF has collaborated with Event Horizon Films and Sherrill Actors Studio for the table reads at the Festival.

WHY NOT HER? – Feature Winner

Writer: Taylor Bartczak

A woman leads an NFL expansion team, the Orlando Stars, through its first season as the first female head coach of the NFL.

Feature Finalists

GOLD MINE

Writer: Andrzej Ciesielski

BROTHERS' COVER

Writer: Hugo André

THE BLACK ABBEY

Writers: Michael Consiglio, Alex Klein

NO WATER FOR WALK-ONS

Writer: Michael Cutler

SEX IS WORK – Pilot Winner

Writer: Tracee Darcelle

By day, Chloe sells aspiration to the masses. By night, she sells her time to the rich and powerful. When an anonymous blackmailer threatens to expose her secret life as a luxury escort, the high-achieving Atlanta ad executive must outmaneuver someone who understands money, secrecy, and leverage as well as she does or lose everything she's built.

Pilot Finalists

THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE WORLD

Writer: Renn Tan

POUR INTO ME

Writer: Taelor Turner

TWEED

Writer: John Eden Heather

ON THE ROCKS

Writer: Marcus Durham

STRANGE, BUT PERFECT – Texas Winner

Writer: Carlo Lorenzo Garcia

In the isolating chaos of 2020, a tightly wound Chicago marketing assistant quarantines at his grandmother's rural Texas home, where he clashes with her foul-mouthed caretaker forcing two strangers to confront grief, guilt, and the possibility of unexpected connection.

Texas Finalists

LONG DEAD

Writer: Chad Jackson

BLACK SHROUD

Writer: Timothy Shane Stevens

THE BASEMENT

Writer: J.D. Elliby

MICHAEL HUNG HIMSELF

Writer: Matthew Kingston

MISSED CONNECTION – Short Script Winner

Writer: Marion Trent

A withdrawn artist and a reflective writer form a quiet, anonymous bond through sketches and Post-it notes on a cafe bulletin board—each helping the other heal in ways that could never have happened if they'd met face-to-face.

Shorts Finalists

VIRGIN MARGOT

Writer: Jennifer Prediger

DEAD ROOTS

Writer: Keenan Dunn

I DID EVERYTHING RIGHT

Writer: Phoebe Cleghorn

EPILOGUE

Writers: Laura Katherine Winter, Nathaniel Davis, Bob Dodd

New to this year's offerings at the Festival will be the first-time **DIFF Industry Conference**, presented in collaboration with **Dallas Film Commission**. The conference will feature panels focusing on filmmaking, television production, and how to thrive in an ever-changing industry, according to **Katie**

Schuck, the Dallas Film Commissioner, and **Austin Flores**, who is the Location Specialist for Dallas Film Commission and will serve as Conference Director.

The Dallas International Film Festival is a global adventure featuring more than 125 film screenings, panels, Q&As with filmmakers and actors, nightly Red Carpets, live screenplay table reads, awards, and other events and activations where filmmakers, screenwriters, film industry leaders, celebrities, sponsors, and audiences come together to experience and discuss film. Films are curated from submissions received by filmmakers from 100+ countries worldwide, across Texas, and the United States, and include narrative features, documentaries, and short films of all genres from studios and independent filmmakers. Festival information is available at <https://diffdallas.org/diff>.

The Dallas International Film Festival is one of only 59 film festivals in the United States and only 181 film festivals worldwide to earn the designation of Oscar® Qualifying Festival by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Oscar® Qualifying short film awards at the Dallas International Film Festival are: Grand Jury Prize - Best Animated Short Film; Grand Jury Prize - Best Documentary Short Film; and Grand Jury Prize - Best Narrative Short Film.

Films that win qualified awards may be qualified to enter the 99th Academy Awards®, provided that the films meet all the requirements set forth in the official rules for that season. See <https://www.oscars.org/oscars/rules-eligibility> for details.

Virgin Hotels Dallas is the Premier Sponsor of the 2026 Dallas International Film Festival. Additional Sponsors as of March 22 include: AdChat DFW, Akin, AllGood Cafe, Asana Partners, BestofGuide.com, Burned to Light Media, Cinépolis Luxury Cinemas Victory Park, City of Dallas Office of Arts & Culture, Commerce House, Lisa Cooley, Dallas County Historical Commission, Dallas Film Commission, Dallas Tourism Public Improvement District, DFW MSP, DGN Entertainment News, Eatly Dallas, Edgemere, Event Horizon Films, Filmfrog, Fons PR, Fort Worth Film Commission, Tanya Foster, Linda and Jon Halbert, Mary Hatcher, Harwood District, H-E-B, History Undressed, Susan Kandell, KERA, Keurig Dr Pepper, Lakewood Brewing Co., Lynn Lewis, Sarah Losinger, Lynn McBee, Moody Fund for the Arts, Ruth Mutch, Nowadays Orange Productions, Jim Nugent, OneBar USA, Panavision, SAG-AFTRA, Sherrill Actors Studio, ShotDeck, Anne and Steve Stodghill, TACA, Texas Commission on the Arts, Texas Film Commission, Victory Park, Virgin Hotels Dallas, Virgin Rewards Card.

For sponsorship information, please contact Beth Wilbins, CEO, bwilbins@dallasfilm.org.

About DIFF Dallas | Dallas International Film Festival

DIFF Dallas is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit arts and culture organization established as Dallas Film Society, Inc. in 2006. Through year-round screenings and events, film series, educational programs, community partnerships, and film festivals, DIFF Dallas builds community and raises awareness of the world's most approachable and inclusive art form.

Named by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences as an Oscar® Qualifying Festival, The Dallas International Film Festival is the signature presentation of the organization. Through curation of the broadest range of expression through film, the Dallas International Film Festival serves as the region's most powerfully inclusive and equitable platform for diverse, emerging and underrepresented voices. Since its founding, the Festival has screened more than 2,500 widely diverse new films from 60 countries, provided more than \$1.1 million in awards and hosted more than 100,000 filmgoers and filmmakers.

DIFF Dallas is committed to celebrating films and their impact on society, honoring filmmakers and recognizing their contribution enhancing both the creative community and the city of Dallas, providing leadership in film education, and celebrating excellence in the art of film. More information is available at <https://diffdallas.org/>.

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