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NEW FILMS FROM CANADA
MARCH 22-25, 2018 IFC CENTER

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CANADA NOW

If you thought that Canada was just an exporting nation of cinematic natural resources like the two Ryans (Gosling and Reynolds), Denis Villeneuve, Jean-Marc Vallée, and even Margaret Atwood (with a pair of series, *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Alias Grace*) think again. Yes, there is a long, distinguished history of Canadians working south of our border, but just wait until you see what's being made by Canadian film artists on their own northern terra firma. If you're curious about what's going on up there above the 49th parallel, here are eight excellent examples to help you find out.

After all, so we've been told, the world needs more Canada. Proudly but modestly echoing those sentiments, we are thrilled to present Canada Now 2018: a diverse, engaging, decidedly entertaining selection of the best in contemporary Canadian cinema. From time-travel adventure to comedy to psychological drama to politically charged personal cinema, this Canadian cinematic octet reveals the seismic shifts underway in Canada (and globally) in relation to such potent, urgently relevant issues as the history of indigenous peoples, the immigrant experience, race relations, and gender politics.

In this Canada Now showcase you'll find impressive new works by veteran filmmakers and rookie directors alike. As always, the Canada Now showcase celebrates the independent spirit that has always been a hallmark of Canadian cinema.

CANADA NOW is presented by Telefilm Canada in partnership with the Consulate General of Canada in New York City and with the support of Air Canada.



Thursday, March 22, 7:00PM

HOCHELAGA, LAND OF SOULS/ HOCHELAGA, TERRE DES ÂMES

2017, 99 MINUTES

FRANÇOIS GIRARD

The latest from internationally acclaimed director François Girard (*Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould*, *The Red Violin*), *Hochelaga, Land of Souls* is a mesmerizing time travel drama spanning eight centuries of layered indigenous, colonial, and contemporary histories. When a sinkhole suddenly opens up on the field of a downtown Montreal football stadium during a game, the city's past and present begin to intersect. As part of the investigation of the event, an archaeological dig is set up on the site, believed to have been at one time the Iroquois village of Hochelaga. Uncovering artefacts and clues to Montreal's extraordinary past, Baptiste Asigny, a young archaeologist of Mohawk heritage, embarks on an incredible journey of discovery through the tangled history of his at once modern and ancient city. Girard's film moves seamlessly between pre-European times, the age of the French explorer Jacques Cartier and his first contact with the Iroquois people, as well as the subsequent convulsive political and social events that occurred in this very space over the centuries right up to Asigny's own contemporary Montreal. It is an imaginative cinematic weave, a stunning tapestry of time and space, memory and identity.

François Girard's remarkable career has spanned video art, television, contemporary dance, music, and cinema, and has yielded such diverse works as *Le dortoir* (1991), *Peter Gabriel's Secret World Live* (1994), and *Bach Cello Suite #2: The Sound of Carceri* (1997). His feature films include: *Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould* (1993), *The Red Violin* (1998), *Silk* (2007), and *Boychoir* (2014). Girard has also directed operas at international venues, including most recently his critically acclaimed *Parsifal* in New York.

"*Hochelaga, Land of Souls* proves a worthy return to the strengths and ambitions of *Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould* and *The Red Violin*. Like those two earlier art-house successes, *Hochelaga*... rewards with a rich cinematic banquet." *Variety*

Canada's Official Submission for the Foreign Language Film Competition for the 90th Academy Awards®

François Girard will attend the screening to introduce and discuss his film.



Friday, March 23, 7:00PM

VENUS

2017, 95 MINUTES

EISHA MARJARA

At once hilarious and serious, smart and sassy, Eisha Marjara's articulate, absorbing, and lively gender shifting comedy, *Venus*, is the witty tale of Sid (featuring New York-based actor Debargo Sanyal in a brilliant performance), a transitioning woman whose life takes a surprising turn when a 14-year-old boy named Ralph arrives at her door with the surprising announcement that he is her son. It seems that back in his youth, before Sid's gender identity was clear to him, he and his girlfriend did what young people do; and now the result of that earlier life has sought out his biological father. While Sid is stunned by this news, Ralph meanwhile is as surprised to discover he has a trans 'father' as he is intrigued at the sheer coolness of it. Suddenly, Sid must ponder the consequences of this profound news and share it with her Indo-Canadian parents and with Daniel, the love of her life. Just when she thought transitioning was complicated, Sid quickly learns that she ain't seen nothing yet!

Eisha Marjara is a Montreal-based filmmaker, photographer, and novelist. Her earlier films include the satirical *The Incredible Shrinking Woman* (1994), the multiple award winning feature docudrama, *Desperately Seeking Helen* (1999), the shorts *House For Sale* (2012), and *The Tourist* (2016). In addition to her film and photography work, Marjara also wrote the critically acclaimed novel, *Faerie* (2016). *Venus* is her first fiction feature.

"Heartwarming and an absolute delight to watch, *Venus* also presents us with the hopeful notion that if a kid can embrace one's gender identity, anyone can." *Georgia Straight*

Eisha Marjara will attend the screening to introduce and discuss her film.

Friday, March 23, 9:15PM

CARDINALS

2017, 84 MINUTES

GRAYSON MOORE, AIDAN SHIPLEY

When Valerie Walker (portrayed in a towering performance by *I've Heard The Mermaids Singing's* Sheila McCarthy) returns from prison after serving her sentence for killing her neighbour in an apparent drunk driving accident, she wants nothing more than to move on, reconnect with her daughters, and reconstruct her life. When the deceased man's son Mark shows up at her door, however, it becomes clear that the past will not easily be forgotten. Despite being given her version of the tragic events, Mark wants to push further into what he believes really happened, whatever the consequences. An austere and tautly constructed psychological drama, as well as a thoughtful exploration of the challenges of both surviving and living with the many-sided after effects of trauma, *Cardinals* is an assured directorial debut for Moore and Shipley.

Grayson Moore studied film production at Ryerson University in Toronto. His short films include *Running Season* (2014) and *Boxing* (2015), which he co-directed with Aidan Shipley.

Aidan Shipley is a Toronto-based filmmaker. After acting in Atom Egoyan's *The Captive* (2014) he went on to study directing at Ryerson University. His shorts include *Dorsal* (2014), and *Boxing* (2015). *Cardinals* is Moore's and Shipley's feature debut.

"From its opening scenes, *Cardinals* sets a standard of no-holds-barred storytelling." *Cinemascope*

Grayson Moore and Aidan Shipley will attend the screening to introduce and discuss their film.



Saturday, March 24, 5:00PM

UNARMED VERSES

2017, 86 MINUTES

CHARLES OFFICER

Winner of the Best Canadian Feature Documentary Award (Hot Docs 2017), *Unarmed Verses* follows the precociously talented Francine Valentine, a 12-year-old girl who is, along with her family and community, facing eviction from their low-income housing block in Toronto. 'Armed' with a luminous, undaunted creative spirit and a restless, generous intelligence, Francine turns to artistic expression, as she and her friends prepare to record music and poetry together. Meanwhile, as the community struggles to come to terms with the threat to its cultural richness and very real human wealth, the wrecking ball looms and the City's plans for relocation are issued. Officer's is a striking, sensitive, and incisive film about the actual human costs of such high-minded notions as 'progress,' 'development,' and 'gentrification.'

Charles Officer is a Toronto filmmaker, writer, and actor who studied at Cambridge University and the Ontario College of Art and Design. His award-winning films include the short *Short Hymn_Silent War* (2002), his feature debut, *Nurse.Fighter.Boy* (2008), as well as his Emmy Award winning documentary debut, *Mighty Jerome* (2012). Officer recently completed directing multiple episodes of the dramatic series *21 Thunder* that premieres internationally on Netflix in 2018.

"A poignant, blossoming 86-minute experience about the power of art ... "
Globe and Mail

Charles Officer will attend the screening to introduce and discuss his film.

Saturday, March 24, 7:00PM

MEDITATION PARK

2017, 94 MINUTES

MINA SHUM

Mina Shum's new film is a touching, amusing, and finely observed tale of Maria, an Asian-Canadian grandmother who arrives at her own declaration of personal independence after discovering that her longstanding husband may not be as worthy of her reverential treatment as she once believed. A dedicated homebody utterly devoted to her husband, Maria's life is tossed into disarray when she finds another woman's underwear in amongst her husband's clothes. Her initial shock, sadness, and fear propel her life in unexpected directions involving her daughter, her neighbours, and the world beyond the confines of her own home. Facing her fears, Maria soon discovers that these new life directions just might make things better. Deftly directed and brilliantly acted, *Meditation Park* stars Cheng Pei Pei and Sandra Oh.

Mina Shum is a Hong Kong-born, Vancouver-raised filmmaker who studied theatre and film production at the University of British Columbia. Her impressive career includes the award-winning films, *Me, Mom and Mona* (1993), *Double Happiness* (1994), *Drive, She Said* (1997), *Long Life, Happiness and Prosperity* (2002), and *The Ninth Floor* (2015).

"Shum mines her favourite theme - immigrant experience in Canada - in what seems at first to be a gentle slice of life but eventually develops a powerful emotional force."
Now Magazine

Mohamad El Masri, one of the producers of Meditation Park, will attend the screening to introduce and discuss the film.



Saturday, March 24, 9:15PM

BLACK COP

2017, 91 MINUTES

CORY BOWLES

An explosive examination of race relations in Canada, Nova Scotia director Cory Bowles' incendiary debut feature film follows an African-Canadian cop who is racially profiled (by his own police force!) while off duty in his home city of Halifax. His growing frustration and indignation with Canadian society's racial divide soon leads him to take justice into his own hands. Despite his justifiable and intense frustrations, what will be the consequences of his actions? Moreover, can he himself justify them? Bowles' film combines a gritty street realism with more stylish passages filled with a startling poetry of anguish and anger, and features a powerful performance by Ronnie Rowe Jr. *Black Cop's* bold confrontation with some not too appealing truths about today's society makes for hard-hitting drama. A multiple award-winner (Best Film, Best Director at the 2017 Atlantic Film Festival; Best Canadian Feature, 2017 Vancouver International Film Festival), *Black Cop* announces the arrival of a potent, provocative new voice in contemporary Canadian cinema.

Cory Bowles is a multidisciplinary artist from Nova Scotia. Over the course of a diverse, prolific career, he has been a writer, actor, choreographer, and director. Bowles wrote and directed several award winning short films *The Scavengers* (2008), *Heart of Rhyme* (2011), *Anatomy of Assistance* (2013) and *Righteous* (2014). In addition, he has been both a longtime cast member and director in the popular TV series, *Trailer Park Boys*. *Black Cop* is his first feature film.

"A nervy, queasy combination of jet-black satire and stylized psychodrama, *Black Cop* lands smack in the middle of the Black Lives Matter debate. The timing couldn't be more opportune - and better still, the movie genuinely engages with the issue of racial profiling and police violence." *Now Magazine*

Cory Bowles will attend the screening to introduce and discuss his film.

Sunday, March 25, 5:00PM

ALL YOU CAN EAT BUDDHA

2017, 84 MINUTES

IAN LAGARDE

At the Palacio, a rather forlorn all-inclusive resort somewhere in the Caribbean, there arrives an unusual guest, a gentle French-Canadian behemoth named Mike. After his arrival, unexpected and unusual events begin to take place in this quiet, shabby, sundrenched sanctuary. His voracious appetite, mysterious magnetism, and otherworldly talents (one of which is as an 'octopus whisperer'), combine to attract resort staff and tourists alike. Regarded as some kind of spiritual healer, Mike soon finds himself receiving the many and varied affections of those staying at the peculiar resort. His strange, saintly status will eventually complicate not only the operations of the resort itself, but also the intimate personal lives of its staff and guests. Absurdist in some places, magic realist in others, and reminiscent of the deadpan drollery of Aki Kaurismaki and Ulrich Seidl, Ian Lagarde's arresting debut feature gives new meaning to north-south relations. Enigmatic, eccentric, unforgettable.

Ian Lagarde is a Montreal-based filmmaker. He studied film production at Concordia University in that city, and his early works include the TV documentary *The American Savannah* (2009), the short films *Solar Wind* (2011), *Board* (2012), and *Daybreak* (2013). He was also the cinematographer for Denis Côté's *Vic + Flo Saw a Bear* (2013). *All You Can Eat Buddha* is Ian Lagarde's first feature.

"...Lagarde's talent for crafting arresting and macabre visual imagery is undeniable."
Screen International

Ian Lagarde will attend the screening to introduce and discuss his film.



Sunday, March 25, 7:00PM

MARY GOES ROUND

2017, 86 MINUTES

MOLLY MCGLYNN

Thoughtful and self-assured, Mary is an intelligent and compassionate substance abuse counsellor. Trouble is, she has a serious drinking problem that she struggles mightily to conceal. She's also got a tangled family history and her romantic life is, well, not very romantic at all these days. After getting charged for drunk driving and subsequently leaving her job, Mary finds herself alone and adrift. Returning to her hometown of Niagara Falls in order to attempt to rebuild her shattered life, she instead discovers that her estranged father Walt is dying of cancer and that she has a teenage half-sister she's never met. Needless to say, these are not the best of times for Mary. Or are they? With its finely calibrated blend of humour and pathos, McGlynn's semi-autobiographical first feature is a surprising, insightful exploration of addiction, sisterhood, and the possibilities of redemption.

Molly McGlynn is a Montreal-born filmmaker who was raised in New Jersey. A graduate of the Writer's Lab at the Canadian Film Centre in Toronto, her short films include *I Am Not a Weird Person* (2012), *Shoes* (2013), and *3 Way (Not Calling)* (2016). *Mary Goes Round* is her debut feature.

"*Mary Goes Round* handles its story beats with a canny mixture of rueful humor, warmth and realism." *Variety*

Molly McGlynn will attend the screening to introduce and discuss her film.

Program notes by Tom McSorley, Executive Director, Canadian Film Institute.

SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, MARCH 22	7:00PM	HOCHELAGA, LAND OF SOULS
FRIDAY, MARCH 23	7:00PM	VENUS
FRIDAY, MARCH 23	9:15PM	CARDINALS
SATURDAY, MARCH 24	5:00PM	UNARMED VERSES
SATURDAY, MARCH 24	7:00PM	MEDITATION PARK
SATURDAY, MARCH 24	9:15PM	BLACK COP
SUNDAY, MARCH 25	5:00PM	ALL YOU CAN EAT BUDDHA
SUNDAY, MARCH 25	7:00PM	MARY GOES ROUND