

DocLands Documentary Film Festival
Thursday, May 2 – Sunday, May 5, 2024
Location: **Smith Rafael Film Center** • 1118 4th Street, San Rafael, CA

FESTIVAL STATS and PREMIERES

Festival Stats:

30 Films // 25 Feature Length + 5 Short Films over a four-days.

49 Filmmakers and Film Protagonists attending

26 Premieres // 4 World, 1 North American, 2 US, 3 West Coast, 4 California, and 12 Bay Area Premieres

WORLD PREMIERES

FROM HERE/FROM THERE (DE AQUÍ/DE ALLÁ) – World Premiere

Screening: **Friday, May 3 @ 7:00 PM**

Writer/Director: Marlene “Mo” Morris | US 2024 • 66 Minutes | Strand: Art of Impact

In Person: Writer/Director **Marlene “Mo” Gale Morris**; Producers **Jed Riffe, Nicole Solis-Sison**;

Protagonist **Luis Cortes Romero** + Live performance by Bay Area Rapper **Deuce ECLIPSE**, the creative force behind the film’s closing song.

When the Trump administration abruptly threatens to deport 700,000 fellow Dreamers, charismatic attorney Luis Cortes Romero fights back, co-piloting an A-Team of lawyers who take their case all the way to the Supreme Court, making the tattooed homeboy, raised in Redwood City, CA, the first undocumented immigrant to argue before the nation’s highest court. Accompanied by vibrant animation and an original score reflecting Luis’s code-switching identity, *From Here/From There (De Aquí De Allá)* interweaves the journey of the case with the remarkable story of Cortes Romero and his close-knit family. Their ties nearly snap under the stains of personal tragedies, but they survive to rejoice together when Luis triumphs at the Supreme Court. Set for release amidst this volatile election year and ongoing DACA threats, this timely documentary is more urgent than ever, serving as a poignant reminder of the pressing need for immigration reform. Luis's narrative, marked by family resilience and unwavering determination, promises to inspire audiences to stand up for justice in the face of adversity.

I HOPE THIS HELPS! – World Premiere

Screening: **Saturday, May 4 @ 4:45 PM**

Director: Daniel M. Freed | US 2023 • 51 Minutes | Strand: Art of Impact

In Person: Director **Daniel Freed**, DP **Brendan Hubbard**, Editor **Josh Bowen**

Daniel Freed is a man who is convinced that artificial intelligence is going to destroy humanity. He attempts to finance, recruit, and train an army to defeat AI in the coming human-machine war. Ironically, he uses AI to help him do all this. *I Hope This Helps!* will be preceded by the short film *The Shit-thropocene*.

MAKE A CIRCLE – World Premiere

Screening: **Sunday, May 5 @ 3:30 PM**

Directors: Jen Bradwell, Todd Boekelheid | US 2024 • 90 Minutes | Strand: Art of Impact

In Person: Director **Jen Bradwell, Todd Boekelheid**, Producer **Rebekah Fergusson**, Film Participants/Early Childhood Educators **Patricia Moran, Charlotte Guinn**, and **Anne Bauer**

MAKE A CIRCLE is a character-driven documentary that follows the directors and teachers at three childcare centers in California over several years. Emerging from the pandemic, this ensemble of educators is determined to change how society values the education of its youngest citizens. MAKE A CIRCLE captures the unfolding stories of Patricia, a leader of the California child care workers union, as she fights on behalf of a mostly immigrant workforce; Charlotte, another union member who tirelessly lifts up the low-income families in her care; and Anne, the director of a large preschool, who finds novel ways to value and support her teachers when jobs at Starbucks are offering higher pay. The film culminates as thousands of childcare union members march on the California state capitol demanding better working conditions resulting in an unlikely, inspiring victory for the providers on the day their contract is set to expire. Weaving together the magic they create in the classroom, the struggles they endure at home, and their drive to change the system for the better, MAKE A CIRCLE is a moving portrait of life as an early childhood educator and a rallying cry for a childcare system in crisis.

NOT JUST A GOOF – World Premiere

Screening: **Saturday, May 4 @ 11:15 AM**

Directors: Christopher Ninness, Eric Kimelton | US 2024 • 88 Minutes | Strand: Wonderlands

In Person: Directors **Christopher Ninness, Eric Kimelton**, Subject **Kevin Lima**, Producer **Scott Seibold**, Writer **Mason Trueblood**, Composer **Cameron Chambers**

“Not Just A Goof” unveils the untold story of Disney’s “A Goofy Movie,” tracing the underdog team’s journey from initial disappointment to a surprising comeback two decades later. Through interviews and rare footage, the film showcases the behind-the-scenes challenges and victories that led to making it a cult classic for Disney fans and millennials alike.

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

LIVING WITH WOLVES (Vivre avec les loups) – North American Premiere

Screening: **Sunday, May 4 @ 12:00 PM**

Directors: Jean-Michel Bertrand | France 2023 • 89 Minutes | Strand: The Great Outdoors

Language: In French with English subtitles

After disappearing for almost 80 years, wolves are gradually repopulating Europe. Man will have to learn to live and cohabit with these mysterious yet dangerous animals.

After living alongside a community of wolves, Jean-Michel Bertrand embarks on a fascinating cinematic quest through European forests, during which he’ll make some surprising encounters.

A sensitive and naturalistic reflection that leads us to perceive differently both the nature that surrounds us and the cohabitation between humans and the wild animals that inhabit it, which has become a worldwide concern. *Living with Wolves will be preceded by the short film Way of the Shepherd*

US PREMIERES

500 DAYS IN THE WILD – US Premiere (Closing Night Film)

Screening: **Saturday, May 4 @ 6:00 PM**

Director: Dianne Whelan | Canada 2023 • 120 Minutes | Strand: The Great Outdoors

In Person: Director **Dianne Whelan**, Subjects **Louisa Robinson, Jenica Vanelli**

In August 2021, after a 6-year journey, filmmaker **Dianne Whelan** became the first person to travel the 24,000 km of the Trans Canada Trail—the longest trail in the world. *500 Days in the Wild* weaves adventure, personal reflections, and stunning captures of wildlife and landscapes.

HUNT FOR THE OLDEST DNA – US Premiere

Screening: **Sunday, May 5 @ 2:30 PM**

Director: Niobe Thompson | Canada 2024 • 90 Minutes | Strand: The Great Outdoors

In Person: Executive Producer **John Rubin**

For decades, scientists have tried to unlock the secrets of ancient DNA. But life's genetic blueprint is incredibly fragile, and researchers have struggled to find DNA in fossils that could survive millions of years. Then, one maverick scientist had the controversial idea to look for DNA not in fossils or frozen ancient tissue – but in dirt. Join the hunt as scientists decipher the oldest DNA ever found and reveal for the first time the genes of long-extinct creatures that once thrived in a warm, lush Arctic.

WEST COAST PREMIERES

7 BEATS PER MINUTE – West Coast Premiere

Screening: **Sunday, May 5 @ 5:45 PM**

Director: Yuqi Kang | Canada 2024 • 100 Minutes | Strand: Wonderlands

In Person: Director **Yuqi Kang**

During a world-record attempt, freediving champion Jessea Lu blacked out and was lifeless for four minutes. Director Yuqi Kang's documentary captures the descent of a lifetime, when Jessea returns to the site of her near-death experience to face the traumas of her past and find a way back to connection.

399: QUEEN OF THE TETONS – West Coast Premiere

Screening: **Friday, May 3 @ 4:15 PM**

Director: Elizabeth Leiter | US 2023 • 87 Minutes | Strand: The Great Outdoors

In Person: Director **Elizabeth Leiter**

Known only by her research number, Grizzly 399 has captivated photographers since 2007, becoming the most famous — and photographed — mother bear in the world. The film follows 399 as she struggles to raise an unusually large litter in the face of human encroachment, a rapidly changing climate, and disputes over her Endangered Species protections.

THE BODY POLITIC – West Coast Premiere

Screening: **Saturday, May 4 @ 3:30 PM**

Director: Gabriel Francis Paz Goodenough | US 2023 • 90 Minutes | Strand: Art of Impact

In Person: Director **Gabriel Francis Paz Goodenough**, Subject **Erricka Bridgeford**

Like many areas in the United States, the City of Baltimore has been plagued by gun violence. Amid the George Floyd uprising, Brandon Scott, a young reform-minded leader, is elected mayor. His hope is to lower violence in the city with a new public health-focused approach rather than relying only on policing as he feels others have done. With unfettered access, cameras follow him and his team of young leaders throughout their first year in city hall, unveiling an ambitious plan to lower the city's murder rate. When opposition mounts, his commitment to his principles puts his political future in jeopardy. *Will his holistic approach lead to healing and serve as a blueprint for the rest of the nation?*

CALIFORNIA PREMIERES

DAUGHTERS – California Premiere

Screening: **Friday, May 3 @ 6:15 PM**

Directors: Angela Patton and Natalie Rae | US 2024 • 102 Minutes | Strand: Art of Impact

In Person: Director **Natalie Rae**

A moving lesson in empathy and forgiveness, *Daughters* is a result of an eight-year documentary journey that filmmaker Natalie Rae and Angela Patton, an activist advocating for “at-promise” girls, embarked upon. As Aubrey, Santana, Raziah, and Ja’Ana get ready for the special event, they speak candidly about their hopes, dreams, and disappointments. There is an innate wisdom and honesty to what they share about their dads’ inconsistent presence; an awareness far beyond their years. *Daughters* meaningfully challenges many stereotypes around incarceration and serves as a poignant reminder that maintaining

family bonds can be both healing and empowering. We get to witness a lot of joy, but in keeping with the film's vérité style, Rae and Patton don't shy away from more challenging moments, including heartbreak, skepticism, reluctance to engage, and anger. But then comes a classic dad joke, and the mood shifts again.

MARRIED TO COMICS – California Premiere

Screening: **Saturday, May 4 @ 6:30 PM**

Director: John KINHART | US 2023 • 114 Minutes | Strand: Wonderlands

In Person: Director **John KINHART**

A rare glimpse into the life and art of two giants of autobiographical comics, who are also married. Laying their personal lives to bare in comics, including the intimate details of their troubled marriage, Justin Green and Carol Tyler pioneered and set the bar for one of comics' most important genres. In 1972, during the height of the Underground Comix movement in San Francisco, Justin changed the course of comics with his magnum opus, *Binky Brown Meets The Holy Virgin Mary*, about growing up Catholic with OCD. It was one of the earliest examples of an autobiographical comic and immediately influenced Art Spiegelman and Robert Crumb to create their own autobiographical work, inspiring thousands more. After reading *Binky*, Carol was drawn to San Francisco and to Justin, sparking a romance and marriage. For years Carol worked to distinguish herself in comics and to get out of her husband's shadow. But when their marriage is put to the ultimate test, they separate, and Carol forges a path to her own comic masterpiece, *Soldier's Heart*. But can the marriage survive their troubled past? *Married to Comics* is a riveting documentary that is a testament to the power of autobiographical comics and the resilience of love.

SHAKING IT UP: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF LIZ CARPENTER – California Premiere

Screening: **Sunday, May 5 @ 12:00 PM**

Directors: Abby Ginzberg, Christy Carpenter | US 2024 • 78 Minutes | Strand: Wonderlands

In Person: Directors **Abby Ginzberg, Christy Carpenter**

A captivating story of an extraordinary woman, *SHAKING IT UP: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF LIZ CARPENTER* provides an intimate look at the trailblazing career and influential life of journalist, author, humorist, political activist, and proud Texan Liz Carpenter. Carpenter served as chief of staff/press secretary for Lady Bird Johnson and was an inspirational leader for the women's movement. From the JFK assassination to campaigning for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, Liz Carpenter experienced and helped shape some of the most vivid moments and movements of the 20th century. Directors Christy Carpenter and Abby Ginzberg weave candid modern-day interviews with Dan Rather, Bill Moyers, Gloria Steinem, Luci Johnson, and more, with archival footage that reveals Liz's enduring passion for shaking things up in the battle for equal rights and human progress.

BAY AREA PREMIERES

GIANTS RISING – Bay Area Premiere

Screening: **Saturday, May 4 @ 3:00 PM // Rafael • Auditorium #1**

Director: Lisa Landers | US 2023 • 80 Minutes | Strand: The Great Outdoors

In Person: Director **Lisa Landers**; Subject(s): **Rosie Clayburn** (Yurok Tribe), **Zane Moore** (Redwood Geneticist), and **Sarah Bird** (Photographer)

Telling the epic tale of California's majestic redwoods, *Giants Rising* transports viewers into the heart of some of the most rare and remote forests. The tallest and among the oldest living beings on Earth, these trees are a gateway to experiencing an unparalleled sense of awe and connection. Living links to the past, redwoods also hold superpowers that may play a key role in our future – including their ability to withstand fire and capture carbon, to offer clues about resilience and longevity, and to enhance our physical and emotional well-being. Through the voices of scientists, artists, Native communities and others, the film reveals the wonder and plight of these awe-inspiring forests, offering insights that could help sustain us all. *Giants Rising will be preceded by the short film Fire Poppy*

HAPPY CLOTHES: A FILM ABOUT PATRICIA FIELD – Bay Area Premiere

Screening: **Friday, May 3 @ 7:30 PM**

Director: Michael Selditch | US 2023 • 100 Minutes | Strand: Wonderlands

In Person: Director **Michael Selditch**

Carrie Bradshaw's tutu. Miranda Priestly's hair. Betty Suarez's red-framed glasses. Even if you haven't heard of Patricia Field, there is no doubt you're deeply familiar with her legendary designs. *Happy Clothes: A Film About Patricia Field* takes a deep dive into the storied life of this iconic costume designer. Take a walk down memory lane with Field and her endless list of friends, team members, and collaborators to see how some of the most memorable film and television costumes came to life. Featuring interviews with television fan favorites Lily Collins (*Emily in Paris*), Kim Cattrall (*Sex and the City*), Michael Urie (*Ugly Betty*), Darren Star (creator of *Sex and the City* and *Emily in Paris*), and more, this film delves behind the scenes with Field and uncovers the thought process behind her designs. Watch as she recalls incredible stories, from employing Daphne Rubin-Vega, Laverne Cox, and other NYC nightlife stars in the retail store she operated for 50 years; to her early patronage of Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat, who sold their designs in the back of her store; to receiving an Oscar nomination as the costume designer for *The Devil Wears Prada*.

HOMEcomings (Máhccan) – Bay Area Premiere

Screening: **Sunday, May 4 @ 12:30 PM**

Directors: Suvi West and Anssi Kömi | Finland 2023 • 77 Minutes | Strand: Art of Impact

Language: In Finnish with English subtitles

The film is set in the Museum world in a turning point, where the national museums have to deal with their colonialistic history. The National Museum of Finland returned thousands of everyday objects taken from the indigenous Sámi people back to them. Filmmaker Suvi West takes the audience behind the scenes of the museum world, revealing a visual, philosophical, and spiritual realm. She seeks a connection with ancestors through old museum objects, eventually arriving at the collective pain points of the Sámi people. How can the damage caused by outsiders be repaired so that collective pains can be left behind? *Homecomings will be preceded by the short film Ellavut Cimirtuq (Our World is Changing)*

MAYA AND THE WAVE – Bay Area Premiere

Screening: **Sunday, May 5 @ 12:30 PM**

Director: Stephanie Johnes | US 2022 • 100 Minutes | Strand: The Great Outdoors

Language: In English and Portuguese with English subtitles

In Person: Director **Stephanie Johnes**, Executive Producer **Julian Cautherley**

Maya Gabeira, from Rio de Janeiro, is the #1 female big wave surfer in the world. She's the first woman to attempt to surf the infamous big wave in Nazaré, Portugal, and nearly drowns. In the following years, Maya undergoes three spine surgeries and weathers a psychological breakdown. Maya has the blood of a rebel. Her father is legendary activist and politician, Fernando Gabeira. With the same radical spirit, Maya endures - and succeeds. On January 18, 2018 an unprecedented storm approaches Nazaré and Maya surfs the biggest wave a woman has ever surfed. She fights for recognition and becomes the first female surfer honored with a Guinness Book World Record. Two years later, Maya is the first woman to compete in the men's division of a big wave competition. She surfs the biggest wave of the year (73.5 feet), breaking her previous world record. In the footsteps of Billie Jean King, Maya has achieved a rare moment in sports – outperforming all men to show the world that women are capable of anything.

REVIVAL69: THE CONCERT THAT ROCKED THE WORLD – Bay Area Premiere

Screening: **Sunday, May 5 @ 6:30 PM**

Directors: Ron Chapman | Canada, France 2022 • 97 Minutes | Strand: Wonderlands

In Person: Director **Ron Chapman**

REVIVAL69: The Concert That Rocked the World, is the remarkable, behind-the-scenes story of how a little known, but life-altering music festival came together — against all odds. Young, scrappy concert promoter John Brower puts his life on the line (literally) to turn his failing Toronto Rock n Roll Revival into a one-day event, later coined in rock mythology as “the second most important event in rock n’roll

history.” And it almost didn't happen. The festival united rock legends and the most famous, but it was the 11th-hour arrival of John Lennon and the Plastic Ono Band that ignited a truly seminal moment for the 20,000 fans at Toronto's Varsity Stadium, triggering Lennon's final decision to leave the Beatles forever.

SEND KELP! – Bay Area Premiere

Screening: **Sunday, May 5 @ 3:45 PM**

Directors: Blake McWilliam | Canada 2024 • 90 Minutes | Strand: The Great Outdoors

Frances Ward, a self-professed “Seaweed Nerd” and adventurer, is about to give up everything she's built in her life to start a kelp farm off the west coast of Canada. *Send Kelp!* follows Frances on an odyssey that brings her into the vast oceans of the Pacific where she intends to build one of the first farms of its kind in British Columbia. But to coax a crop from the wild Pacific, she'll need help from scientists, wild harvesters, and entrepreneurs who know the challenges and astonishing potential of this miraculous organism. And along the way, she'll find a glimmer of the hope that seaweed might provide not only for our planet, but for her, too. Combining breathtaking underwater cinematography (think, *My Octopus Teacher*) with a fun, quirky cast of characters, *Send Kelp!* explores many remarkable surprises about this game-changing organism and how it, along with the efforts of entrepreneurs like Frances, just might help change the world.

SKYWALKERS: A LOVE STORY – Bay Area Premiere (Opening Night)

Screening: **Thursday, May 2 @ 6:30 PM**

Directors: Jeff Zimbalist, Maria Bukhonina | US 2023 • 99 Minutes | Strand: Wonderlands

In Person: Directors **Jeff Zimbalist, Maria Bukhonina**

To save their career and their relationship in wartime, a Russian couple endeavor to illegally climb the world's last super skyscraper and perform a daring acrobatic stunt on the spire. Filmed over six years across six countries, *SKYWALKERS* uses extreme climbing as a metaphor for romantic relationships, ultimately compelling us to choose love on the most epic scale.

THE STRIKE – Bay Area Premiere

Screening: **Saturday, May 4 @ 7:15 PM**

Directors: Lucas Guilkey, JoeBill Muñoz | US 2024 • 86 Minutes | Strand: Art of Impact

In Person: Directors **Lucas Guilkey, JoeBill Muñoz**

The Strike is a feature documentary that tells the story of a generation of California men who endured decades of solitary confinement and, against all odds, launched the largest hunger strike in U.S. history.

THIS WORLD IS NOT MY OWN – Bay Area Premiere

Screening: **Saturday, May 4 @ 2:00 PM**

Directors: Peter Ringbom, Marquise Stillwell | US, Sweden 2023 • 97 Minutes | Strand: Wonderlands

Chewing-gum sculptures, a wealthy gallerist, a firebrand wrestler, a notorious murder case and the segregated south – it's all part of Nellie Mae Rowe's boundless universe. *This World is Not My Own* reimagines this self-taught artist's world and her life spanning the 20th century.

WILDING – Bay Area Premiere

Screening: **Sunday, May 5 @ 5:30 PM**

Directors: David Allen | UK 2023 • 75 Minutes | Strand: Art of Impact

Based on Isabella Tree's best-selling book by the same title, *Wilding* tells the story of a young couple that bets on nature for the future of their failing, four-hundred-year-old estate. The young couple battles entrenched tradition and dares to place the fate of their farm in the hands of nature. Ripping down the fences, they set the land back to the wild and entrust its recovery to a motley mix of animals both tame and wild. It is the beginning of a grand experiment that will become one of the most significant rewilding experiments in Europe. *Wilding will be preceded by the short film A Symphony of Tiny Lights*