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**MEDIA ALERT**

**DOCLANDS DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL**

**A Celebration of Documentary Filmmaking**

**Wednesday, April 30 – Sunday, May 4, 2024**

Location for all Screenings: **Smith Rafael Film Center** • 1118 4<sup>th</sup> Street, San Rafael, CA

**DOCLANDS PREMIERE STATUS**

**Feature Films**

**THE INVISIBLE MAMMAL – WORLD PREMIERE**

Screening: **Saturday, May 3 @ 12:00 PM**

Director: Kristin Tièche | US 2025 • 122 Minutes | Strand: The Great Outdoors

*Expected Guest(s):* Director [Kristin Tièche](#); Executive Producer [Windy Borman](#); Producer [Matthew Podolsky](#); Editor [Heidi Zimmerman](#)

In stunning slow-motion cinematography, *The Invisible Mammal* brings bats into the limelight and quickly debunks the unsavory reputation that unfairly besmirch these fascinating creatures.

**FROZEN IN TIME – WORLD PREMIERE**

Screening: **Saturday, May 3 @ 2:00 PM**

Director: Niobe Thompson | Canada 2025 • 127 Minutes | Strand: The Great Outdoors

*Expected Guest:* Director [Niobe Thompson](#)

Discover the amazing creatures of Canada's prehistoric Arctic, through the astonishing story of a groundbreaking scientist.

*Frozen in Time* will be preceded by two short films, [Usugilix Awakun](#) and [The Last Observers](#).

**Thaw – WORLD PREMIERE**

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

Director: Robin Hauser | US 2025 • 88 Minutes | Strand: Art of Impact

*Expected Guest(s):* Director [Robin Hauser](#); Producers [Joanne Esser](#) and [Annie Marr](#); Editor [Jennifer Steinman Sternin](#); Film Protagonists [Kathleen](#) and [Shirin](#) (last names withheld); Expert [Claire Tomkins](#)

Egg freezing is now a global phenomenon, used by women all over the world. But its outcomes can't be known until years later when the eggs are thawed and fertilized. Thaw follows three American women navigating difficult choices about their biological clocks and questioning what "choice" actually means in this new era of eggs on ice.

**THE RENAISSANCE PRINCE** (Renessanseprinsen) – **NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE**

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

Director: Emily Louisa Millan Eide | Norway 2024 • 111 Minutes | Strand: Wonderlands

*Expected Guest: Director Emily Louisa Millan Eide*

15-year-old painter William Heimdal rejects the artistic trends of the 21st century - his aim is to recreate the figurative compositions made by the great masters of the past. But William has to go to school with his peers that are preoccupied with TikTok and climate change activism. Is there a place in the modern world for an old soul?

*The Renaissance Prince will be preceded by the short film Old Girl in a Tutu: Susan Rennie Disrupts Art History.*

**YOU NEED THIS** – **NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE**

Screening: **Saturday, May 3 @ 5:00 PM**

Director: Ryan Andrej Lough | US 2024 • 82 Minutes | Strand: Art of Impact

*Expected Guest: Director Ryan Andrej Lough*

An immersive saga about the individual and social effects of consumerism and hyper-capitalism, examining propaganda, the notion of Self, and ideas to prevent the prevailing economic system from hurtling the world into a sixth extinction.

**GHOSTS OF THE SEA** (LES ENFANTS DU LARGE) – **US PREMIERE**

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

Director: Virginia Tangvald | Canada, France 2024 • 122 Minutes | Strand: The Great Outdoors

**Language:** In English and French with English Subtitles

*Expected Guest: Director Virginia Tangvald*

While searching for clues about the death of her brother, who was lost at sea, Virginia Tangvald embarks on a fascinating investigation into her family's dark secrets. Calling into question the idyllic life of her father, legendary sailor Peter Tangvald, her quest dismantles the myth of absolute freedom and offers the hope that a toxic cycle has been broken.

**SONS** – **US PREMIERE**

Screening: **Saturday, May 3 @ 12:30 PM**

Director(s): Justin Simms | Canada 2024 • 70 Minutes | Strand: Art of Impact

How do we teach our boys to become better men? Set against the backdrop of his son's first five years of life—from cooing infant to hurricane of a boy—filmmaker Justin Simms looks at modern masculinity through the lens of fatherhood as he asks an increasingly urgent question: How do we teach our boys to be better men?

**THE LAST EXPEDITION** (Ostatnia Wyprawa) – **US PREMIERE**

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

Director: Eliza Kubarska | Poland, Switzerland 2024 • 90 Minutes | Strand: The Great Outdoors

Pioneering Polish mountain climber Wanda Rutkiewicz disappeared in the Himalayas in 1992. What happened on that final climb? Filmmaker and mountaineer Eliza Kubarska traces Wanda's footsteps on the world's highest peaks in a journey into the mystery surrounding the fate of the first woman to summit K2. Could Wanda be still alive, in a monastery in Tibet? Weaving together Wanda's own, previously unseen diaries, audio and video archives from her Himalayan expeditions, interviews with legendary climbers, Sherpas, Buddhist nuns and monks, this is a riveting account of the emotional struggles and aspirations of a woman who rose above a world that often sought to limit her and charted her own path to freedom.

### **DANGEROUS GAMES: ROBLOX AND THE METAVERSE EXPOSED – US PREMIERE**

Screening: **Sunday, May 4 @ 5:30 PM**

Director: Ann Shin | Canada 2024 • 103 Minutes | Strand: Art of Impact

*Expected Guest(s): Director [Ann Shin](#); Local Metaverse Expert [Kavya Perlman](#)*

When Alex discovers a dark side of the metaverse, where predators, extremists, and hate groups exploit platforms like Roblox and Minecraft, she teams up with a group of young investigators to expose the truth. Their search leads them to a predator with hundreds of victims—and a kidnapped child—revealing the devastating consequences of a system failing to protect its most vulnerable users.

### **STARMAN – WEST COAST PREMIERE**

Screening: **Thursday, May 1 @ 6:30 PM**

Director: Robert Stone | US 2025 • 85 Minutes | Strand: Wonderlands

*Expected Guest(s): Director [Robert Stone](#); Executive Producer [Shelby Stone](#); Film Protagonist [Gentry Lee](#)*

Are we alone in the universe? For over half a century, legendary NASA engineer and best-selling science fiction author, Gentry Lee, has explored every aspect of this question in the realms of space science, robotic exploration and the human imagination. At age 82, he has come to a revelatory conclusion...

### **FLIGHT 149: HOSTAGE OF WAR – CALIFORNIA PREMIERE**

Screening: **Friday, May 2 @ 4:30 PM**

Director: Jenny Ash | UK 2024 • 129 Minutes | Strand: Art of Impact

**Language:** In Arabic and English with English Subtitles

*Expected Guest: Director [Jenny Ash](#)*

When Flight 149 landed in the middle of a warzone, the passengers and crew became human shields for Saddam Hussein. Thirty years later, the hostages are launching a legal case to discover the truth about why the plane landed in the first place.

*The feature will be preceded by the short film [We Were the Scenery](#).*

### **REMAINING NATIVE – CALIFORNIA PREMIERE**

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

Director: Paige Bethmann | US 2024 111 Minutes | Strand: Art of Impact

*Expected Guest: Advisor [Dawn Valdez](#)*

Remaining Native is a coming-of-age documentary told from the perspective of Kutoven (Ku) Stevens, a 17-year-old Native American runner, struggling to navigate his dream of becoming a collegiate athlete as the memory of his great-grandfather's escape from an Indian boarding school begins to connect past, present, and future.

### **THE INVISIBLE DOCTRINE: THE SECRET HISTORY OF NEOLIBERALISM (& HOW IT CAME TO CONTROL YOUR LIFE) – CALIFORNIA PREMIERE**

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

Director(s): Peter D. Hutchison, Lucas Sabeau | US, UK 2025 • 100 Minutes | Strand: Art of Impact

*Expected Guest(s): Director [Peter D. Hutchison](#) and [Lucas Sabeau](#)*

Neoliberalism reshaped our world—but do we even know what it is? Journalist George Monbiot reveals its secret history, its dire consequences, and how we can reclaim our future.

### **I NEED YOU: 53 YEARS OF THE BAND AMERICA – BAY AREA PREMIERE**

Screening: **Saturday, May 3 @ 6:00 PM**

Director(s): Dustin Elm, David Breschel | US 2024 • 129 Minutes | Strand: Wonderlands

*Expected Guest:* Director(s) [Dustin Elm](#), [David Breschel](#); Executive Producer, [Frank Pollifrone](#); Producer [Jack Piatt](#)

After 53 consecutive years of touring and over 5,000 electrifying performances, the iconic duo of America reflect on their past as they privately say goodbye to a lifetime together on the road.

### **Speak. – BAY AREA PREMIERE**

Screening: **Saturday, May 3 @ 6:30 PM**

Director: Jennifer Tiexiera, Co-Director: Guy Mossman | US 2025 • 104 Minutes | Strand: Art of Impact

*Expected Guest:* Co-Director [Guy Mossman](#)

Five American teens spend a year crafting spoken word performances with the dream of winning the world's largest and most intense public speaking competition, the NSDA Nationals.

### **THE SECRET OF ME – BAY AREA PREMIERE**

Screening: **Sunday, May 4 @ 11:30 AM**

Director: Grace Hughes-Halett | UK 2025 • 110 Minutes | Strand: Art of Impact

19 year old Kristi discovers a secret her doctor and parents have kept from her all her life. Her search for truth uncovers a radical psychology experiment on a pair of identical twins that led to a global medical scandal.

### **CHAMPIONS OF THE GOLDEN VALLEY – BAY AREA PREMIERE**

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

Director: Ben Sturgulewski | US 2024 • 106 Minutes | Strand: The Great Outdoors

**Language:** In English and Persian with English Subtitles

Young Afghan athletes from rival villages build makeshift wooden skis and convene for a mountain race that unites the community in a moment of peace and triumph just before many of the skiers are displaced.

### **A RADICAL THREAD – BAY AREA PREMIERE**

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

Director: Jeanne C. Finley | US 2025 • 120 Minutes | Strand: Wonderlands

*Expected Guest(s):* Director [Jeanne C. Finley](#); Director of Photography [Yumeng Gho](#); Film Protagonist [Jennifer Rain Crosby](#)

In the face of climate-fueled wildfire, a Sierra Foothills community passes 50 years of innovative sustainability to the next generation while collectively stitching their stories of challenge and celebration into an 83-foot tapestry, one tiny stitch at a time.

*A RADICAL THREAD will be preceded by the short film [Good Enough Ancestor](#).*

### **SONO LINO – BAY AREA PREMIERE**

Screening: **Sunday, May 4 @ 2:15 PM**

Director: Jacob Patrick | US 2024 • 101 Minutes | Strand: Wonderlands

*Expected Guest:* Director [Jacob Patrick](#)

Famed Italian artist and craftsman, Lino Tagliapietra, is widely held as the greatest master glassblower in history. He began his journey with glass at the age of 11 as a factory worker in Murano, Italy, and now at 88, he prepares for his final hot shop session while grappling with age, identity and the struggle of watching his protégés continue his legacy as his famed career comes to a close. A master amongst masters and one of one artist in history.

### MIDDLETOWN – BAY AREA PREMIERE

Screening: **Sunday, May 4 @ 2:45 PM**

Director(s): Jesse Moss, Amanda McBaine | US 2025 • 110 Minutes | Strand: **x**

*Expected Guest(s): Directors Jesse Moss, Amanda McBaine; Film Protagonist Fred Isseks*

Inspired by an unconventional teacher, a group of teenagers in upstate New York in the early 1990s make a student film and uncover a vast conspiracy that is poisoning their community. Thirty years later, they revisit their film and confront the legacy of this transformative experience.

### INCANDESCENCE – BAY AREA PREMIERE

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

Director(s): Nova Ami, Velcrow Ripper | Canada 2024 • 110 Minutes | Strand: The Great Outdoors

An immersive cinematic experience that weaves together on-the-ground footage with extraordinary stories of survival and adaptation that transform our understanding of wildfire.

### Short Films

#### THE LAST OBSERVERS – BAY AREA PREMIERE

Screening: **Saturday, May 3 @ 2:00 PM**

Director: Maja K Mikkelsen | Country Year • 24 Minutes | Strand: The Great Outdoors

**Language:** In Swedish with English Subtitles

A Swedish couple tag migrating birds while working a day job at the last manual weather station, recording the weather day and night, seven days a week, for 36 years.

*The Last Observers will proceed the feature film Frozen in Time.*

#### PERFECTLY A STRANGENESS – BAY AREA PREMIERE

Screening: **Saturday, May 3 @ 11:30 AM**

Director: Alison McAlpine | Canada 2024 • 15 Minutes | Strand: The Great Outdoors

In the dazzling incandescence of an unknown desert, three donkeys discover an abandoned astronomical observatory and the universe. A sensorial, cinematic exploration of what a story can be.

#### THE BIRD IN MY BACKYARD – BAY AREA PREMIERE (19 Min)

Screening: **Saturday, May 3 @ 11:30 AM**

Director: Ryan Wilkes | Canada 2024 • 19 Minutes | Strand: The Great Outdoors

In an urban backyard on Canada's West Coast, a window salesman has created a living laboratory for investigating hummingbird behavior. *The Bird in My Backyard* follows citizen scientist, Eric Pittman, as he documents the journeys of two female Anna's hummingbirds as they attempt to raise their young in his urban garden. It's a story about the childlike curiosity in all of us, the wonders it can reveal and the doors it can open if we just lean in a bit closer.

#### THE BIRDS – BAY AREA PREMIERE

Screening: **Saturday, May 3 @ 11:30 AM**

Director(s): David Allen, Martin Dohrn (A Film By) | UK 2024 • 40 Minutes | Strand: The Great Outdoors

Told through the cinematic experience of wildlife filmmaker Martin Dohrn, THE BIRDS finds meaning and pathos as it gets up close to one of England's little-known wonders of the natural world. As Martin chases down the twisting and turning of giant flocks of shore birds on England's Wash estuary, he attempts to literally record evolution in action as a peregrine falcon scythes through the mind-blowing murmurations – astonishingly large numbers of birds flying in synchronized patterns and creating shapes in the air. Ultimately, this feature short reveals important insights not only into the hidden mechanisms of nature, but also into the psyche of a man facing up to the end of his career.

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### **About DocLands Documentary Film Festival**

DocLands Documentary Film Festival, presented by the California Film Institute, is a vibrant celebration of nonfiction storytelling held annually in Marin County, California. Expanding upon the exchange of ideas and inspiration through captivating screenings, networking, and engaging conversations, DocLands strives to foster dialogue, inspire connections, and build an inclusive community around the art of documentary filmmaking. DocLands aims to illuminate filmmakers' diverse perspectives and ignite a passion for exploring real-world issues by showcasing compelling stories and the thought-provoking insights behind them. Through screenings, discussions, and networking opportunities, DocLands continues to highlight the artistry and impact of documentary cinema.

### **DocLands Sections**

- **Art of Impact:** Experience stories illuminating the diverse cultures, politics, and personal narratives shaping our global community.
- **The Great Outdoors:** Journey outside to explore and appreciate the beauty of our environment, compelling us to protect and conserve our planet's natural wonders.
- **WonderLands:** Discover stories of joy, wonder, and possibility that uplift and inspire audiences.

### **About DocPitch**

DocPitch, an annual event presented by the California Film Institute, connects independent documentary filmmakers with industry professionals and funders, providing a platform to showcase compelling unfinished projects that need financial backing. Selected projects are presented to a panel of industry experts and a public audience, offering opportunities to secure funding through jury and audience awards. With support from the Nancy P. & Richard K. Robbins Family Foundation and Resonance Philanthropies, DocPitch awards \$100,000 in cash to assist feature documentary projects in development or production. DocPitch plays a vital role in bringing powerful documentaries to life by fostering connections and advocating for bold, original storytelling.

For additional information about the DocLands Documentary Film Festival and DocPitch, please visit <https://www.doclands.com/> or contact [press@cafilm.org](mailto:press@cafilm.org).

### **About the California Film Institute**

The California Film Institute (CAFILM) is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing film and media arts through acclaimed programs like the Mill Valley Film Festival and the DocLands Documentary Film Festival. CAFILM Education provides students of all ages with opportunities to learn about the world through the art of film and filmmaking. Our premier independent theater, the Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center, engages over 275,000 guests annually with compelling cinema and storytelling focused on important social, environmental, and cultural issues. Additionally, CAFILM now owns and operates the Sequoia Cinema, reinforcing our commitment to preserving cinematic heritage and ensuring access to fine films in the local community. The organization thrives on the generosity of its community—sponsors, foundations, donors, and members—whose support sustains and expands our programs. Join us in celebrating, exploring, and championing the art of film. For more information, visit [cafilm.org](http://cafilm.org).

### **Supporters | DocLands**

CAFILM is proud to acknowledge the Nancy P. and Richard K. Robbins Family Foundation, Jennifer Coslett MacCready, Vickie Soulier, Resonance Philanthropies, Bellam Self Storage and Boxes, Francis Ford Coppola Winery, AC Marriott, Jim Boyce Trust and Kris Otis, Get Well Foundation, and the Downtown San Rafael Arts District for their generous support of DOCLANDS. We are also fortunate to have the contributions of the following DocPitch supporters: Nancy P. & Richard K. Robbins Family Foundation and Resonance Philanthropies.