

FIFTH ANNUAL TIFF NEXT WAVE FILM FESTIVAL INVITES YOUTH TO DISCOVER AND EXPERIENCE THE BEST IN WORLD CINEMA

The festival returns with a diverse selection of thought-provoking films and insightful documentaries, including the latest from Michel Gondry and the popular events Battle of the Scores, Talent Lab and 24-Hour Film Challenge

TORONTO — The next generation of movie lovers takes over TIFF Bell Lightbox for the fifth annual TIFF Next Wave Film Festival™. **Youth aged 14 to 18** will have the opportunity to delve into the world of cinema, view some of the best films from first-time and well-known filmmakers, and participate in a variety of engaging film-related events. This year's film lineup includes selections from Sweden, South Africa, France, United States, Ireland, Germany, Palestine, Qatar, and Netherlands. Running **February 12 to 14**, the festival is steered by the TIFF Next Wave Committee, a voluntary advisory team of 12 young film enthusiasts dedicated to bringing quality film programming to youth across the city.

"What makes TIFF Next Wave so special is it allows us to work with teens directly to ensure their voices, interests and experiences are reflected on the big screen," said Elizabeth Muskala, Director, TIFF Kids and Youth Learning. "It's so rewarding to see a new generation find different ways to connect with such a diverse selection of films and develop a passion for them."

"I joined Next Wave because it provides opportunities that no other place in the world offers," said TIFF Next Wave's newest Committee member Macy Armstrong, age 17. "We get to watch incredible films, learn about ourselves and the world, and interact with the fascinating and complex film industry while acting as representatives for our peers."

"Events like Battle of the Scores and the 24-Hour Film Challenge help bring together different art forms that are all closely related to film production," added 16-year-old Dasola Dina, returning TIFF Next Wave Committee member.

Opening Night (**Friday, February 12**) kicks off once again with the popular **Battle of the Scores**, a high-profile showcase for young musical talent. Six high-school bands perform their original soundtrack for a short film scene from *High Score Hang* directed by Sam Hughes and Adam Bovoletis, finalists of the 2014 TIFF Next Wave Jump Cuts Young Filmmakers Showcase. Prizes will be awarded by the audience and a panel of professional judges from the Toronto music and film community, including Justin Small, composer for *HURT* (a Canada's Top Ten Film Festival selection) and guitarist/keyboardist of post-rock band *Do Make Say Think*; and Chloe Rose, actress, *Hellions*, *Degrassi: The Next Generation*. The grand jury prize winner receives studio time with Oak Recording Studios, plus Canadian director Pat Mills will offer a spot in the soundtrack of his upcoming feature *Don't Talk to Irene*.

This year's film highlights include ***Ayanda*** (2015) from Ava DuVernay's film distribution company ARRAY, which tells the story of a young woman (played by newcomer Fulu Moguvhani) who is willing to do anything to keep her father's legacy alive; ***Microbe & Gasoline*** (2015) from acclaimed director Michel Gondry (*Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*), which follows two teen boys on a road trip of a lifetime where they discover more than just the open road along the way; and ***Sing Street*** (2015), a semi-autobiographical tale from Irish director John Carney (*Once*), which follows a 14-year-old misfit in 1980s Dublin as he finds confidence (and new friends) by forming a rock band and making his own videos.

Other highlights include Chloé Zhao's debut feature ***Songs My Brothers Taught Me*** (2015), which is nominated for three 2016 Film Independent Spirit Awards and explores the bond between a brother and his younger sister on a Pine Ridge Reservation; and Hany Abu-Assad's ***The Idol*** (2015), which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2015 and features Mohammad Assaf's quest to become the next *Arab Idol* singing sensation.

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Special guests include *Flocking's* (2015) director Beata Gárdeler, winner of the Berlin Film Festival's Crystal Bear prize, and *Takin' Place's* (2015) first-time feature director Cyrus Dowlatshahi.

The festival presents a special **Breakouts: Awkward and Angsty Movie Marathon** on **Saturday, February 13** with back-to-back coming-of-age classics: Wes Anderson's criminally funny *Bottle Rocket* (1996); Terry Zwigoff's satirical take on Daniel Clowes' comic book *Ghost World* (2001); David Fincher's biographical drama *The Social Network* (2010); Scott Kalvert's dark and twisted *The Basketball Diaries* (1995); and Nick Cassavetes' adaptation of Nicholas Sparks' heart-wrenching, romantic classic *The Notebook* (2004).

For all film synopses, see below.

Also on **Saturday, February 13**, in celebration of *Space Jam's* 20th anniversary and the NBA All-Star Game in Toronto on February 14, TIFF Next Wave presents a live read of this Looney Tunes/live-action mashup with an exciting lineup of talent from the sports and entertainment worlds. Stay "tooned" via social media for the cast announcement.

Starting the weekend before the festival, the highly anticipated **TIFF Next Wave 24-Hour Film Challenge**, which welcomes teams of youth aged 14 through 18 to make an original short film in 24 hours, takes place from **Saturday, February 6 at 10 a.m.** to **Sunday, February 7 at 10 a.m.**, with the final films screening on **Sunday, February 14** during the TIFF Next Wave Film Festival. The TIFF Next Wave 24-Hour Film Challenge jury includes Nate Wilson, grand prize winner of the 2014 TIFF Next Wave Jump Cuts Young Filmmakers Showcase and the 2013 TIFF Next Wave 24-Hour Film Challenge; director and writer Heyishi Zhang; Sabaa Quao, co-founder of Filminute; and Katie Boland, actress, *Born to Be Blue* (a 2015 Toronto International Film Festival selection) and *The Master*. The winning team receives \$500 and up to five TIFF Memberships, courtesy of TIFF. Registration opens today for TIFF Members and January 27 for the public. Up to three members from each team receive a free spot in the **TIFF Next Wave Talent Lab**, a series of interactive workshops, networking opportunities, screenings and Q&As, that will provide hands-on demonstrations and tips on technical, story, and production elements of filmmaking from industry professionals and filmmakers to emerging film lovers.

Until **March 18**, TIFF Next Wave is accepting submissions for the **Jump Cuts Young Filmmakers Showcase** (taking place in May), which presents short films created for young people by young people.

Tickets for the TIFF Next Wave Film Festival go on sale **today** to TIFF Members and to the public on **January 27 at 10 a.m.** Pricing as follows: Regular film screenings and the Breakouts: Awkward & Angsty Movie Marathon are FREE to high-school students with valid student identification (Battle of the Scores and After Party, *Space Jam* Live Read and *Sing Street* premium screening \$10.50); adults \$13, students/seniors \$10.50 and children (13 and under) \$9. TIFF Next Wave 24-Hour Film Challenge and TIFF Next Wave Talent Lab, \$40. For more information on screenings and activities or to purchase tickets, please visit tiff.net/nextwave, call 416.599.TIFF (8433) or 1.888.599.8433 or visit the box office at TIFF Bell Lightbox.

FILM SYNOPSES

Ayanda Sara Blecher, South Africa, 2015, English, Sotho, Zulu with English Subtitles Toronto Premiere
In this uplifting film set in the colourful Johannesburg neighbourhood of Yeoville, 21-year-old Ayanda works to keep the memory of her late father alive by preventing his auto-repair shop from closing. In the process, she finds love and figures out both who her real friends are and who she truly is.
Sunday, February 14 at 1 p.m.

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Flocking (Flocken) Beata Gårdeler, Sweden, 2015, Swedish with English subtitles Canadian Premiere
Winner of the Berlin Film Festival's Crystal Bear prize, Beata Gårdeler's haunting film, about a 14-year-old girl ostracized by her tight-knit community after accusing a classmate of rape, combines modern themes of consent and social media with a traditional witch-hunt tale to explore how truth can be exposed or silenced.
Sunday, February 14 at 3:15 p.m.

I Am Thalente Natalie Johns, South Africa/USA, 2015, English, Zulu with English subtitles Canadian Premiere
A realistic examination of the highs and lows of chasing your dreams, this beautiful and heartwarming documentary follows local legend Thalente Biyale — a young skateboarder living on the streets (and in the skate parks) of Durban, South Africa — as he moves to Los Angeles with the hope of turning pro.
Sunday, February 14 at 4 p.m.

The Idol Hany Abu-Assad, United Kingdom/Palestine/Qatar/Netherlands, 2015, Arabic with English subtitles
Toronto International Film Festival 2015
Acclaimed Palestinian filmmaker Hany Abu-Assad (*Paradise Now*, *Omar*) directs this biopic about Mohammad Assaf, the young Gazan wedding singer who, with unflinching support from his older sister, overcame desperate odds to become a worldwide sensation after winning the *Arab Idol* competition in 2013.
Sunday, February 14 at 4:15 p.m.

Los Angeles Damian John Harper, Germany, 2014, Zapotec, Spanish with English Subtitles Canadian Premiere
Hoping for a better life, 17-year-old Mateo plans to leave his tiny Zapotec village in rural Mexico. A local gang promises to help him establish a new life in California if Mateo can prove his loyalty — but at what cost?
Saturday, February 13 at 1 p.m.

Microbe & Gasoline (Microbe et Gasoil) Michel Gondry, France, 2015, French with English Subtitles Canadian Premiere
The latest cinematic adventure from Michel Gondry (*Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, *Be Kind Rewind*) follows two teen outcasts who hit the road in a car they built themselves. As the boys' quest for independence hits some potholes, so too does their friendship and Gondry's whimsical take on the buddy comedy gives way to a touching celebration of individuality.
Saturday, February 13 at 6 p.m.

Sing Street John Carney, Ireland, 2015, English Canadian Premiere
Set in 1980s Dublin, the new film from John Carney (*Once*, *Begin Again*) follows 14-year-old Cosmo as he deals with being the new kid in school while trying to ignore mounting discord at home. A fledgling musician, he forms a band, starts writing songs and making DIY videos, and, with a growing confidence and swagger that emulates the best rock heroes of his era, takes a swift turn toward a future full of possibility alongside a lively crew of collaborators.
Sunday, February 14 at 7 p.m.

Songs My Brothers Taught Me Chloé Zhao, USA, 2015, English Toronto Premiere
The lyrical feature debut from director Chloé Zhao captures life in the starkly beautiful plains of the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, where an Oglala brother and sister struggle to find their way while maintaining their deep connection to each other and the complicated place they're from.
Sunday, February 14 at 6:30 p.m.

Takin' Place Cyrus Dowlatshahi, USA, 2015, English International Premiere
Chicago-born documentary filmmaker Cyrus Dowlatshahi slips into neighbourhood living rooms and hair salons to capture a heartfelt and eye-opening picture of real life in this legendary but largely misunderstood community.
Saturday February 13 at 3:30 p.m.

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BREAKOUTS: AWKWARD & ANGSTY MOVIE MARATHON (in screening order)

Bottle Rocket Wes Anderson, USA, 1996

First released in 1996, the modest but formative first feature by Wes Anderson, which also marked the screen debuts of Luke Wilson and co-writer Owen Wilson, earned glowing critical praise for its idiosyncratic (read: Andersonian) style, its offbeat crime-caper story, its deadpan humour, and its sweet nature.

Saturday, February 13 at 12 p.m.

Ghost World Terry Zwigoff, USA, 2001

This 2001 adaptation of Daniel Clowes' graphic novel is a sardonic yet sympathetic tribute to smart young misfits, namely best friends Enid (Thora Birch) and Rebecca (Scarlett Johansson) as they grow up and apart during their aimless first summer after high school.

Saturday, February 13 at 2 p.m.

The Social Network David Fincher, USA, 2010

Director David Fincher and screenwriter Aaron Sorkin's critically acclaimed 2010 biographical drama traces the start up of Facebook through a not-entirely-flattering portrayal of its founder, Mark Zuckerberg, as he goes from disgruntled 19-year-old Harvard student to social-media game changer and billionaire.

Saturday, February 13 at 4:45 p.m.

The Notebook Nick Cassavetes, USA, 2004

"It wasn't over. It still isn't over." It's never over. TIFF's gift to you this Valentine's Day weekend: indelible screen couple Rachel McAdams and Ryan Gosling in the most romantic (and rain-soaked) star-making performances of the 2000s. Warning: may cause swooning.

Saturday, February 13 at 7:30 p.m.

The Basketball Diaries Scott Kalvert, USA, 1995

Leonardo DiCaprio completed his breakthrough into serious drama (and movie stardom) in this adaptation of the memoir by Jim Carroll, the author, poet and musician whose teenage diaries as a Catholic schoolboy, basketball star, drug addict and street hustler became a legendary chronicle of New York City street life.

Saturday, February 13 at 10 p.m.

TIFF prefers Visa.

Social:

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About TIFF

TIFF is a charitable cultural organization whose mission is to transform the way people see the world through film. An international leader in film culture, TIFF projects include the annual Toronto International Film Festival in September; TIFF Bell Lightbox, which features five cinemas, major exhibitions, and learning and entertainment facilities; and innovative national distribution program Film Circuit. The organization generates an annual economic impact of \$189 million CAD. TIFF Bell Lightbox is generously supported by contributors including Founding Sponsor Bell, the Province of Ontario, the Government of Canada, the City of Toronto, the Reitman family (Ivan Reitman, Agi Mandel and Susan Michaels), The Daniels Corporation and RBC. For more information, visit tiff.net.

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For images, visit the media site at tiff.net/press.

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