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MEDIA RELEASE

Mill Valley Film Festival
Showcasing the Best in Independent and World Cinema
Thursday, October 5-15, 2023

**MILL VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL
UNVEILS INITIAL SELECTION OF DOCUMENTARIES**

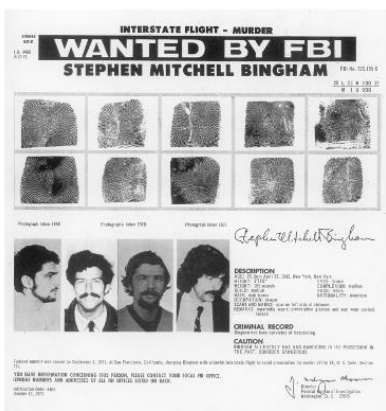


Photo Courtesy *A Double Life*



Photo Courtesy *Adrift*

**SHOWCASING PREMIERES BY LOCAL DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKERS
AND FILMS WITH STRONG LOCAL TIES**

SAN RAFAEL, CA (August 25, 2023) – The Mill Valley Film Festival (MVFF), presented by the California Film Institute (CAFILM), is delighted to reveal the initial lineup of films set to debut at this year's Festival, returning to Marin County October 5 – 15, 2023. Among the impressive titles, MVFF is proud to introduce the latest works from acclaimed Bay Area filmmakers, underscoring the Festival's commitment to spotlighting established and up-and-coming talents within the region.

The California Film Institute is thrilled to announce the following documentary films officially confirmed to screen at the 46th Mill Valley Film Festival. The complete schedule will be announced and available online at www.mvff.com on Friday, September 8, 2023.

Early Confirmed **Documentaries** with **Local Connections** include:

The 9 Lives of Barbara Dane (US, documentary feature, dir. Maureen Gosling) Celebrates the life of singer Barbara Dane, a woman whose stellar voice supported justice movements in the Bay Area and beyond for decades, garnering an impressive FBI file along the way. Deeply respected by fellow luminaries in folk, blues, and jazz, Dane built a far reaching legacy with music, activism, and love. *In English & Spanish with English subtitles* – **World Premiere**

The Disappearance of Shere Hite (US, documentary feature, dir. Nicole Newnham) Shere Hite's 1976 bestselling book, *The Hite Report*, liberated the female orgasm by revealing the most private experiences of thousands of anonymous survey respondents. Her findings rocked the American establishment and presaged current conversations about gender, sexuality, and bodily autonomy. So, how did Shere Hite disappear?

A Double Life (US, documentary feature, dir. Catherine Masud) Catherine Masud's documentary unravels the mystery of Stephen Bingham, a civil rights activist lawyer and political fugitive, and his alleged involvement in a 1971 San Quentin prison rebellion that left six people dead.

Farming While Black (US, documentary feature, dir. Mark Decena) In 1910, Black farmers owned 14 percent of all American farmland. Over the intervening decades, that number fell to two percent, the result of racism, discrimination, and dispossession. Director Mark Decena adapts Leah Penniman's 2018 book into a visually eloquent documentary that chronicles Penniman and two other Black farmers' efforts to reclaim their agricultural heritage. – **World Premiere**

I Am Hope (US, documentary feature, dir. ShakaJamal) Through fly-on-the-wall footage and insightful interviews, director ShakaJamal chronicles the effort to create a first-of-its-kind yoga and mindfulness program for Oakland Unified School District middle schools. Through a challenging school year, students are engaged in a range of mindfulness activities that transform them from mindful learners to mindful leaders. – **Bay Area Premiere**

Música! (US, documentary feature, dirs. Rob Epstein, Jeffrey Friedman) Since 2011, US musicians and artisans have traveled to Cuba as volunteers to gift badly needed supplies and help repair instruments in that isolated nation. Bay Area documentarians Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman's latest celebrates not just a collaborative effort but the rich sonic traditions of budding young performers it helps sustain.

The Pigeon Tunnel (US, documentary feature, dir. Errol Morris) Academy Award®-winning documentarian Errol Morris pulls back the curtain on the storied life and career of former British spy David Cornwell – better known as John le Carré, author of such classic espionage novels as *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, and *The Constant Gardener*. Set against the turbulent backdrop of the Cold War leading into present day, the film spans six decades as le Carré delivers his final and most candid interview, punctuated with rare archival footage and dramatized vignettes. *The Pigeon Tunnel* is a deeply human and engaging exploration of le Carré's extraordinary journey and the paper-thin membrane between fact and fiction.

The Right to Read (US, documentary feature, dir. Jenny Mackenzie) Executive produced by LaVar Burton, Emmy winner Jenny Mackenzie's inspiring documentary introduces us to two families, a Bay Area Activist and an Oakland teacher, all taking action to reverse the disturbing trend of plummeting literacy – and give our children a brighter future full of appreciation for the written word. – **Bay Area Premiere**

Water For Life (US, documentary feature, dir. Will Parrinello) Bay Area documentarian Will Parrinello (*The New Environmentalists: From Accra to Eleuthera Island*, MVFF 2022) captures the efforts of three environmental defenders in Chile, El Salvador, and Honduras, all fighting for clean water. Facing down powerful global corporations and their government backers, the trio persists, despite the danger, the costs nearly always exacted in blood. *In English & Spanish with English subtitles* – **World Premiere**

Additional early confirmed Documentaries include:

Adrift (US, documentary feature, dir. Rory Kennedy) Veteran filmmaker Rory Kennedy launches a welcome intervention into the ongoing global refugee crisis. Adopting personal and historical perspectives as well as testimonies from experts and relevant stakeholders, *Adrift* is a passionate and evidence-driven appeal for compassion and respect for the rights of refugees. *In English, Rohingya, Russian, & Spanish with English subtitles* – **World Premiere**

Another Body (United Kingdom/US, documentary feature, dirs. Sophie Compton, Reuben Hamlyn) Directors Sophie Compton and Reuben Hamlyn follow a college student's search for answers and justice after she discovers deepfake pornography of herself circulating online. Through a combination of candid video diaries, synthetic media, and 2D and 3D animation, the film takes viewers on a journey through online and offline worlds, highlighting the devastating impact of deepfakes on the individual. – **West Coast Premiere**

Demon Mineral (US, documentary feature, dir. Hadley Austin) A penetrating look at the effects of radiation poisoning on Navajo land after decades of uranium mining, Hadley Austin's fascinating documentary uses well-sourced data, coupled with archival and on-the-ground footage, to paint a devastating portrait of bureaucratic inaction and its long term impact on human life. *In Spoken Navajo with English subtitles & Spoken English with Navajo subtitles* – **US Premiere**

Feast Your Ears: The Story of WHFS 102.3 (US, documentary feature, dir. Jay Schlossberg) Broadcasting from "high atop the Triangle Towers" near Washington, DC the legendary & beloved WHFS was more than just a local radio station – it was a keystone, and center point, for the music and culture of the ear. Hear from local, national, and international musicians, the WHFS deejays, record label veterans, journalists, historians, fans, and more as they reflect on a time when the music united a tribe who spoke out via the radio waves about war, equality, and a time of great social, cultural, and political upheaval. – **California Premiere**

Invisible Nation (US, documentary feature, dir. Vanessa Hope) With unprecedented access to Taiwan's sitting head of state, director Vanessa Hope investigates the election and tenure of Tsai Ing-wen, the first female president of Taiwan. Thorough, incisive, and bristling with tension *Invisible Nation* is a living account of Tsai's tightrope walk as she balances the hopes and dreams of her nation between the colossal geopolitical forces of the U.S. and China. Hope's restrained observational style captures Tsai at work in her country's vibrant democracy at home while seeking full international recognition of Taiwan's right to exist. At a time when Russia's invasion of Ukraine has demonstrated the ever-present threat of authoritarian aggression, *Invisible Nation* brings punctual focus to the struggle of Taiwan as it fights for autonomy and freedom from fear. *In English & Chinese with English subtitles* – **West Coast Premiere**

One With the Whale (United Kingdom/US, documentary feature, dirs. Pete Chelkowski, Jim Wickens) Hunting whales is a matter of life or death for residents of St. Lawrence, a tiny island in the Bering Sea. So, when Chris Apassingok becomes the youngest person to ever harpoon a whale for his Alaskan village, his mother proudly shares the news on Facebook. To her surprise, thousands of keyboard activists brutally attack Chris without fully understanding the scope of his accomplishment. *One With the Whale* is a heartwarming yet thrilling story of one family's struggle to rebuild their shattered identities and regain a new foothold in both the ancient and modern world.

Patrol (Nicaragua, documentary feature, dirs. Camilo de Castro, Brad Allgood) Illegal cattle ranching poses an existential threat to Nicaragua's Indio Maíz Biological Reserve, one of the most biodiverse regions in Central America. This stirring documentary follows the Rama-Kriol peoples – the rainforest's rightful stewards – as they gather evidence against the ranchers in hopes of saving this precious ecosystem before it's too late. *In English & Spanish with English subtitles* – **California Premiere**

Periodical (US, documentary feature, dir. Lina Lyte Plioplyte) An eye-opening documentary that examines science, politics, and the mystery of the menstrual cycle, through the experiences of doctors, athletes, movie stars, journalists, activists, and everyday people. – **Bay Area Premiere**

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For more information: mvff.com

About Mill Valley Film Festival

Presented by the California Film Institute (CAFILM), the 46th Mill Valley Film Festival runs October 5-15, 2023. MVFF is a significant cultural cinema event in the San Francisco Bay Area. It has gained international recognition for its commitment to showcasing exceptional films, supporting emerging talent, and fostering creative dialogue. Over the years, it has hosted renowned filmmakers, actors, and industry professionals, further establishing its reputation as the West Coast launch pad for many Academy Award-winning films and a hub for cinematic excellence.

About California Film Institute

The California Film Institute (CAFILM) is a non-profit organization that celebrates and promotes film and media arts through its renowned programs, which include the Mill Valley Film Festival and DocLands Documentary Film Festival. CAFILM fosters the next generation of filmmakers and film lovers through CAFILM Education, offering a wide range of activities, including screenings, Q&A sessions, seminars, and a rich program of classes and hands-on workshops led by international & local filmmakers and industry professionals. The Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center, one of the leading non-profit independent theaters in the country, serves as a year-round hub for cinema-centric programming. CAFILM utilizes the power of storytelling through film to entertain and address social, environmental, and cultural issues, reaching 275,000 guests annually. Additionally, CAFILM is the majority owner of the Sequoia Theater in downtown Mill Valley. The organization relies on the generosity of its community; the invaluable support from our sponsors, foundations, individual donors, and members ensures our ability to sustain these vital programs. For more information, visit cafilm.org.

The California Film Institute and Mill Valley Film Festival are in Marin County, California, on the traditional, ancestral, and contemporary homelands of the Coast Miwok, Pomo, and Wappo peoples. This includes the Southern Pomo and Graton Rancheria Tribes. These tribes were removed or displaced from their lands. We recognize this history and the harm to present-day Coast Miwok, Pomo, and Wappo peoples and to their ancestors. The California Film Institute commits to moving forward from a place of authenticity and working with present-day tribes to elevate their stories, history, and present-day legacy through film.

Supporters

The California Film Institute is once again proud to acknowledge the leadership support of the Christopher B. Smith Family, Jennifer Coslett MacCreedy, Nancy P. and Richard K. Robbins Family Foundation, and Vickie Soulier, and the continued major support of Marin Community Foundation, The Bernard Osher Foundation, and The Gruber Family Foundation. We are also fortunate to have the contributions of the following Signature and Major Sponsors of the Mill Valley Film Festival: Jackson Square Partners, Lucasfilm, Ltd., Wareham Development, and Bellam Self Storage and Boxes.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS

46th Mill Valley Film Festival

Celebrating the best of independent and world cinema alongside high-profile and prestigious award contenders.

Thursday, October 5 to Sunday, October 15, 2023

Ticket On-Sale Dates

Advance Ticket Packages and Passes on sale Monday, August 7, 2023

General Public Single Tickets on sale Tuesday, September 12, 2023

CFI members can purchase single tickets in advance of the public beginning Friday, September 8, 2023

MVFF46 Bay Area Screening Venues:

San Rafael: Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center – October 5 – 15, 2023

Mill Valley: CinéArts Sequoia – October 5 – 15, 2023

Larkspur: Lark Theater – October 13 -15, 2023

Berkeley: Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive – October 6, 7, & 8 and October 13 & 14, 2023

San Francisco: The Roxie Theater – October 9 & 10, 2023