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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 CELEBRATES  
8TH YEAR OF GENDER EQUITY INITIATIVE  
MIND THE GAP: CINEMA'S NEXT ACT: ART & BUSINESS**

San Rafael, CA (September 19, 2023) In the midst of an extraordinary year of transformation, uncertainty, and hope, the Mill Valley Film Festival is proud to honor the artists who continue to shape and invigorate the world of cinema. The Mind the Gap initiative remains steadfast in its commitment to championing female and marginalized filmmakers. This year, we are thrilled to announce the return of the Mind the Gap Summit, a platform for discussions on the future of cinema, and an occasion to share in the joy of community. Our lineup of films and programs showcases bold female perspectives that promise to challenge, empower, and inspire audiences. We extend a warm invitation to join us in this celebration.

We found no shortage of extraordinary women creating outstanding films, and incredible female-forward storytelling for this year's Festival: MVFF46 features films directed by women accounting for an impressive 45% of the lineup.

**2023 MIND THE GAP AWARDS AT MVFF46**



**DR. JIMMEKA ANDERSON**  
VISION IN FILM



**EMERALD FENNEL**  
FILMMAKER OF THE YEAR



**LYNN HERSHMAN LEESON**  
VISIONARY ARTIST/LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENTS

The Mind the Gap Award honors creatives, leaders, and craftswomen whose work has helped close the gender gap in the film industry and in our lives. Recognizing talents above and below the line, the Award celebrates their groundbreaking achievements and acknowledges their importance as role models. Previous Mind the Gap Award recipients include Chinonye Chukwu, Danielle Deadwyler, Nina Yang Bongiovi, Jane Campion, Viola Davis, Dawn Porter, Céline Sciamma, Maggie Gyllenhaal, and Carrie Mulligan, to name a few.

**VISION IN FILM EDUCATION | [DR. JIMMEKA ANDERSON](#)**  
**Saturday, October 7 | 12:20pm | Outdoor Art Club Redwood Grove**

A celebration of the impactful work of Dr. Jimmeka Anderson, founder of Black Girls Film Camp and recipient of the Mind the Gap Award for Vision in Film Education.

**VISIONARY ARTIST/LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENTS | [LYNN HERSHMAN LEESON](#)**  
**Sunday, October 8 | 4:00pm | Smith Rafael Film Center**

The program features a screening of the complete Cyborgian Rhapsody series, consisting of four captivating short films, a presentation of the Mind the Gap Award, honoring Hershman Leeson for her visionary contributions to the arts and lifetime achievements, and an engaging conversation with SF Chronicle writer Tony Bravo delving into Hershman Leeson's groundbreaking innovations in film and art, offering attendees valuable insights into her exploration of crucial societal themes, particularly the intriguing dynamics between human and technology.

**FILMMAKER OF THE YEAR | EMERALD FENNEL**  
**Tuesday, October 10 | 7:00pm | Smith Rafael Film Center**

The Spotlight program will feature an onstage conversation with Oscar®-winning filmmaker Emerald Fennell (Promising Young Woman, MVFF43), a screening of *Saltburn*, and the presentation of the Mind the Gap Filmmaker of the Year Award.

**MIND THE GAP DAY**

**Saturday, October 7 | All Day | Outdoor Art Club, Sequoia Theater & Rafael Theater**

Join us for a day celebrating the incredible work of female filmmakers from around the world. Mind the Gap Day offers a curated selection of programming, including the Mind the Gap Summit & Networking Lunch, screenings, happy hour, and more!

**MIND THE GAP SUMMIT & NETWORKING LUNCH**

**Saturday, October 7 | 9am-12pm | Outdoor Art Club, Redwood Grove | Keynote and All Conversations are Free however an RSVP is required. The Networking Lunch is \$25.00 per guest.**

The Mind the Gap Summit has returned! Featuring dynamic panels and conversations reflecting on storytelling in animation, the filmmaking process, and the future of cinema. The summit culminates in a networking lunch for all participants.

**Keynote Speech by Dr. Jimmeka Anderson**

**Saturday, October 7 | 9:30am | Outdoor Art Club, Redwood Grove | Free, RSVP required.**

The Mind the Gap Summit will kick off with an inspiring opening keynote speech from Dr. Jimmeka Anderson, founder of Black Girls Film Camp.

**Moving Mountains in Cinema: The Creative Process**

**Saturday, October 7 | 9:45am | Outdoor Art Club, Redwood Grove | Free, RSVP required.**

A conversation with Monica Sorelle, director of the intimate portrait film *Mountains*, exploring her artistic process and the film's significance for the future of cinema.

Guest | Monica Sorelle, *Mountains*

Moderator | Osinachi Ibe, Mind the Gap Manager

**Animation in the Trenches: How Stories Get Off the Ground**

**Saturday, 7 October | 10:35am | Outdoor Art Club, Redwood Grove | Free, RSVP required.**

Two animation veterans share insights into the challenges and intricacies of creating animated features and series. They'll delve into the unique dynamics of animation production from Pixar to Disney Animation and beyond, explore the distinctions from live action, tech's impact, and the interplay of art and story. Get insightful answers in this engaging discussion.

Guest | Carrie Hobson, Co-director of *Win or Lose*

Moderator | Osnat Shurer, Film Producer

*Co-presented by Women in Animation*

**Directors Forum**

**Saturday, October 7 | 11:25am | Outdoor Art Club, Redwood Grove | Free, RSVP required.**

While 2023 may go down as a pivotal year for the film industry, it's also notable as a year of extraordinary, confident films by directors who are women. Their bold storytelling and assured artistry explore stories that delve into subjects sometimes transgressive, sometimes transcendent—and always compelling. All share an astuteness and curiosity about what it is to be human, whether via fiction or nonfiction. This year's Forum promises to be a compelling conversation that will examine the art and craft of filmmaking and insights and concerns on the state of the film industry.

Invited guests:

- Chloe Domont, *Fair Play*
- Nicole Newnham, *The Disappearance of Shere Hite*
- Celine Song, *Past Lives*

Moderator | Zoë Elton, MVFF + Mind The Gap Director of Programming

### **Mind the Gap Award Presentation**

**Saturday, October 7 | 12:20pm | Outdoor Art Club Redwood Grove | Free, RSVP required.**

A celebration of the work of Dr. Jimmeka Anderson, founder of Black Girls Film Camp and recipient of the Mind the Gap Award for Vision in Film Education.

### **Mind the Gap Day Networking Lunch**

**Saturday, October 7 | 2:35pm | Outdoor Art Club, Front Patio | Ticketed: \$25.00 per Guest.**

Join us on the beautiful Outdoor Art Club Front Patio to connect, share a meal, and engage in meaningful conversations, a perfect follow-up to the morning's insightful panels.

### **Mind the Gap Happy Hour**

**Saturday, October 7 | 5:00-7:00pm | Mill Valley, Outdoor Art Club | Free, RSVP required.**

Mind the Gap Day participants will settle in for drinks, appetizers, and lively conversation with fellow participants, filmmakers, and festival guests.

## **MIND THE GAP DAY FILM SCREENINGS**



Photos (L-R) *The Persian Version*, *Adrift*, *Anatomy of a Fall*, *Mountains*, *The Disappearance of Shere Hite*

***The Persian Version*** (US, narrative feature, dir. Maryam Keshavarz)

3:00pm | Mill Valley, Sequoia Theater 1

Coming from two countries at odds with each other, Iranian-American Leila (Layla Mohammadi) strives to find balance and embrace her opposing cultures, while boldly challenging the labels society is so quick to project upon her. When her family reunites in New York City for her father's heart transplant, Leila navigates her relationships from arm's length in an effort to keep her "real" life separate from her family life. However, when her secret is unceremoniously revealed, so are the distinct parallels between her life and that of her mother, Shireen (Niusha Noor). Winner of the U.S. Dramatic Audience Award and Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award at the 2023 Sundance Film Festival. – **West Coast Premiere**

***Adrift*** (US, documentary feature, dir. Rory Kennedy)

3:30pm | San Rafael, Rafael Theater 3

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*

***Anatomy of a Fall*** (France, narrative feature, dir. Justine Triet)

7:00pm | Mill Valley, Sequoia Theater 1

For the past year, Sandra (Sandra Hüller), her husband Samuel (Swann Arlaud), and their eleven-year-old son Daniel have lived a secluded life in a remote town in the French Alps. When Samuel is found dead in the snow below their chalet, the police question whether he was murdered or committed suicide. Samuel's suspicious death is presumed murder, and Sandra becomes the main suspect. What follows is not just an investigation into the circumstances of Samuel's death but an unsettling psychological journey into the depths of Sandra and Samuel's conflicted relationship. Winner of the Palme d'Or at the 2023 Cannes Film Festival. *In French, English, & German with English subtitles*

***Mountains*** (US, narrative feature, dir. Morgan Sorelle)

8:00pm | San Rafael, Rafael Theater 2

Monica Sorelle's breathtaking first feature, a Haitian demolition worker is faced with the realities of redevelopment as he is tasked with dismantling his rapidly gentrifying neighborhood. *In English, Haitian Creole, & Spanish with English subtitles* – **West Coast Premiere**

***The Disappearance of Shere Hite*** (US, documentary feature, dir. Nicole Newnham)  
8:00pm | Mill Valley, Sequoia Theater 2

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?

Additional Mind the Gap films screening throughout the festival can be found [here](#).

Complete press materials are available here:

[MVFF46 Press Kit](#)

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#### **About Mind the Gap**

Films represent one of our greatest opportunities to impact society. Films break through language barriers and highlight common values and shared experiences. Movies change the way we think and operate in society. Which is why it's so important for films to reflect the totality of the world. Every race, every age, every religion, every sexual orientation. And every gender. We have a long way to go on all counts, but the Mill Valley Film Festival (MVFF) is focusing on where we can have the greatest immediate impact: Gender. After decades of supporting the work of women filmmakers, CFI formally launched Mind the Gap in 2015, an initiative dedicated to achieving gender equity in the film industry.

The **Mind the Gap Award** honors creatives, leaders, and craftswomen whose work has helped close the gender gap in the film industry and in our lives. Recognizing talents above and below the line, the Award celebrates their groundbreaking achievements and acknowledges their importance as role models. Previous Mind the Gap Award recipients include Chinonye Chukwu, Danielle Deadwyler, Nina Yang Bongiovi, Jane Campion, Viola Davis, Dawn Porter, Céline Sciamma, Maggie Gyllenhaal, and Carrie Mulligan, to name a few.

We are grateful for the support of our Mind the Gap sponsors: Christine A. Schantz, Marin Community Foundation, and Netflix.

#### **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 cinematic 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.