

MILL VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL⁴⁸

OCT. 2-12 2025

MEDIA ALERT

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EMBARGOED UNTIL: Wednesday, September 3, 11:30 AM PT

MVFF48 TO OPEN WITH *HAMNET* Director Chloé Zhao and Star Jessie Buckley to Attend Jessie Buckley to Receive MVFF Award



Jessie Buckley stars as Agnes and Joe Alwyn as Bartholomew in director Chloé Zhao's *HAMNET*, a Focus Features release. Credit: Agata Grzybowska / © 2025 FOCUS FEATURES LLC

The 48th Mill Valley Film Festival (MVFF), presented by the California Film Institute (CAFILM), is excited to announce that Opening Night will feature the highly anticipated Focus Features film *Hamnet*, directed by Academy Award® winner **Chloé Zhao** (*Nomadland*, *Eternals*) and starring Academy Award nominee **Jessie Buckley** (*Women Talking*, *The Lost Daughter*, *Wild Rose*) and **Paul Mescal** (*Gladiator*, *Aftersun*). *Hamnet* is a powerful story of love and loss that inspired the creation of Shakespeare's timeless masterpiece, *Hamlet*. Both Zhao and Buckley will be in attendance.

MVFF48 will host two major programs showcasing the film:

Opening Night: Thursday, October 2

A premiere screening of *Hamnet*, followed by an on-stage conversation with director **Chloé Zhao** and star **Jessie Buckley**.

Spotlight Program: Friday, October 3

An encore matinee screening of *Hamnet* and the presentation of the **Mill Valley Film Festival Award to Jessie Buckley**, recognizing her outstanding work in *Hamnet* and her contributions to contemporary cinema. An on-stage conversation with Chloé Zhao and Jessie Buckley, moderated by MVFF Program Director Zoë Elton, will follow the award presentation.

"It was 2020, during the height of the pandemic, and I'll never forget the excitement at the drive-in we created for that year's Mill Valley Film Festival. One of the special programs at the Frank Lloyd Wright–designed Marin County Civic Center featured Chloé Zhao's then-new film, and the anticipation was palpable," said MVFF Director/Founder **Mark Fishkin**. "It's been five years since *Nomadland* went on to win three Academy Awards, including Best Picture. Now, five years later, Zhao returns with *Hamnet*, a film that exceeds those high expectations. Poignant and powerful, this adaptation of Maggie O'Farrell's novel will captivate her readers and anyone unfamiliar with the story alike."

"I'm so excited to be opening this year's MVFF with *Hamnet*," added **Zoë Elton**, MVFF Director of Programming. "It's like being in the company of great artists across time, from the imagined lives of Agnes Hathaway and William Shakespeare in sixteenth-century England via Maggie O'Farrell's excellent book, to Chloé Zhao's exquisite filmmaking and the extraordinary performances of Jessie Buckley and Paul Mescal, plus a wonderful ensemble. The story and characters feel remarkably contemporary, a testament to the power of the actor-director collaboration. From the woods of rural England to the boards of The Globe Theatre, it's beautiful work!"

Fishkin concurs, "We are proud to present *Hamnet* as our Opening Night film for MVFF48. It is a film that will spark many conversations throughout awards season."



Chloé Zhao is a writer, director, editor, and producer from Beijing. Her third feature, *Nomadland*, earned acclaim, including the Golden Lion at the 2020 Venice Film Festival, Golden Globe®, BAFTA, DGA, PGA Awards, and three Oscars®, including Best Director, Best Actress, and Best Picture. Chloé co-wrote and directed Marvel Studios' *Eternals*. In 2023, she launched Book of Shadows, a production company, with producing partner Nic Gonda.



Jessie Buckley first drew international attention in Michael Pearce's *Beast* (2018) and has since earned acclaim for *Wild Rose*, *Judy*, *Chernobyl*, and *I'm Thinking of Ending Things*. She received an Academy Award nomination for *The Lost Daughter* (2022) and won the Olivier Award for *Cabaret*. Her recent work includes *Women Talking*, *Men*, and the upcoming *The Bride* with Christian Bale. A RADA graduate from Killarney, Ireland, Buckley has appeared on stage in *Cabaret*, *A Little Night Music*, *Henry V*, and *Amadeus*.

MVFF48 takes place **October 2–12, 2025**, in Marin County, California. The Festival's Opening and Spotlight programs set the stage for eleven days of innovative, global cinema and engaging conversation.

Press materials and assets will be available soon.

Stay connected:
X (formerly Twitter): [@MVFFilmFestival](#)
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Instagram: [@millvalleyfilmfest](#)
YouTube: [@CaliforniaFilmInstitute](#)
Letterboxd: [@CAFILM](#)
For more information: [mvff.com](#)

About Mill Valley Film Festival

Presented by the California Film Institute (CAFILM), the 47th Mill Valley Film Festival runs October 3-13, 2024. 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 MVFF Spotlight Program

The MVFF Spotlight program honors and celebrates outstanding work by film artists in their latest projects. Honorees may be at any stage of their career—early, middle, or late. Over the years, MVFF has spotlighted such remarkable talents as Mikey Madison, Danielle Deadwyler, Amy Adams, Paolo Sorrentino, Denis Villeneuve, Regina King, Delroy Lindo, Robert Pattinson, Richard E. Grant, Karyn Kusama, Joel Edgerton, Amandla Stenberg, Dee Rees, Alejandro González Iñárritu, Eddie Redmayne, Ewan McGregor, Brie Larson, Steve McQueen, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Michelle Yeoh, Elle Fanning, and Jared Leto, among others.

About the MVFF Award

Inaugurated in 2007, the Mill Valley Film Festival Award is a specially designed bronze sculpture created by Mill Valley artist Alice Corning, each one individually cast for the recipient and a numbered, limited edition. The MVFF Award is presented to the recipients of Tributes and Spotlights, MVFF's special programs honoring and celebrating the work of distinguished artists and innovators in the filmmaking community. Corning says of her artwork, "The purpose is to show the power and dignity of a human being...as it is with great work in film."

About the California Film Institute

The California Film Institute (CAFILM) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing film and media arts through acclaimed programs, including the Mill Valley Film Festival and DocLands Documentary Film Festival. CAFILM Education offers students of all ages opportunities to explore 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 on pressing social, environmental, and cultural issues. Additionally, CAFILM now owns and operates the Sequoia Cinema, reinforcing our commitment to preserving cinematic heritage and access to fine films locally. The organization relies on the generosity of its community; the invaluable support from our sponsors, foundations, donors, and members ensures our ability to continue expanding and sustaining our vital programs. Join us in celebrating, exploring, and championing the art of film. For more information, visit [cafilm.org](#).

Supporters | Mill Valley Film Festival

The California Film Institute is once again proud to recognize the leadership support of the Christopher B. and Jeannie Meg Smith, Vickie Soulier, Jennifer Coslett MacCready, Nancy P. and Richard K. Robbins Family Foundation, Daniel Kenyon and Michelle Marchetta Kenyon, along with the continued major support from The Bernard Osher Foundation and The Gruber Family Foundation. We are also grateful for the contributions from the following sponsors of the Mill Valley Film Festival: Raymond James, Delta Air Lines, Jackson Square Partners, Lucasfilm, Ltd., Wareham Development, and Bellam Self Storage and Boxes.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS

48th Mill Valley Film Festival

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

Thursday, October 2 to Sunday, October 12, 2025

Ticket On-Sale Dates

Early Bird Tickets and Passes are on sale now

General Public Single Tickets on sale September 18, 2025

CAFILM members can purchase single tickets in advance of the public beginning in mid-September

MVFF48 Bay Area Screening Venues:

San Rafael: Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center – Thurs, Oct. 3 – Sun, Oct. 13, 2024

Mill Valley: Sequoia Cinema – Thurs, Oct. 3 – Sun, Oct. 13, 2024

Larkspur: Lark Theater – Sat, Oct 5 & Sun, Oct 6 + Fri, Oct 11, Sat, Oct 12 & Sun, Oct 13, 2024

Berkeley: Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive – Sat, Oct 5 & Sun, Oct 6 + Thurs, Oct 10 – Sun, Oct 13, 2024

General Admission Information:

General \$18.50 | CafilM Members \$16.00 | Seniors (65+) \$17.00 | Students with ID and Youth (12 & under) \$9.00 | Shorts Programs: \$11.50