EDMONTON SHORT FILM FESTIVAL 2026

SHORT FILMS. *Big Impact.*

HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

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Edmonton Griesbach

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It's my pleasure to welcome you to the 2026 Edmonton Short Film Festival!

As the Member of Parliament for Edmonton Griesbach, I'm proud to recognize a festival that brings together talented filmmakers, artists, professionals, and film lovers while showcasing the creativity we have here in Edmonton.

As a long-time journalist and writer, I've always been a fan of the short-film medium and its ability to tell powerful stories in a unique and compelling way. A few years ago, my staff and I had the opportunity to enter a short film into this very festival, interviewing people who had suffered and lived under Communism. It gave me an even greater appreciation for the work, creativity, and thought that goes into bringing these stories to the screen.

The Edmonton Short Film Festival provides an important platform for filmmakers to share their work, connect with audiences, and celebrate this creative form of storytelling. I look forward to attending this year's festival and joining you in recognizing the tremendous talent of everyone involved.

Congratulations to the organizers, filmmakers, and participants who make this festival possible. I wish you another successful and memorable Edmonton Short Film Festival!

Sincerely,

Kerry Diotte

Kerry Diotte, M.P.
Member of Parliament
Edmonton Griesbach

Message from His Worship Mayor Andrew Knack

On behalf of City Council and the people of Edmonton, welcome to the Red Carpet Gala for the 2026 Edmonton Short Film Festival!

This Gala brings together the artists, professionals and patrons shaping the future of cinema in our city and beyond. Congratulations to each of you on your accomplishments and for sharing your remarkable talents with Edmontonians. I hope you truly enjoy this celebration of your hard work and all you've accomplished.

Our variety of landscapes, buildings and cultures have made Edmonton a popular backdrop for memorable shorts, full-length films, ads and television shows. But our city's versatility would not be known without the organizations shining a light on the immense possibilities of what can be created here.

I want to acknowledge the Edmonton Short Film Festival's positive impact on our reputation as a hub for artistic expression. Your efforts to support local artists have helped elevate our city as a popular filming destination and a place where diverse art is appreciated and embraced.

Congratulations once again, and have a magical evening!

Andrew Knack

Andrew Knack
MAYOR, CITY OF EDMONTON

Gala Films

Fort Macbeth	*Aviva Zimmerman*
BolBol	*Lili Yas Tayefi*
Double-Edged Dagger	*Yunica Taboso*
Refuge	*Aleisha Anderson*
Bluebird	*Toby Duska* *Damon Orcherton* *Jack Hornecker*
The Countdown	*Spencer Shortt*
Date And Time*	*Angus Crawford* *Yemayá Azania-Merchant*
Eyes In The Woods: Pilot	*Morgan Ermter*
The Night Time Show	*Tegan Dobrich*
Midwest Superstardom - St.Arnaud	*Colin Waugh*

15 Minute

Intermission

Social Justice Warrior	*Dylan Wertz* *Daniel Ennett* *Frederick Kroetsch*
Never Come Home Again	*Kaeley Jade Wiebe*
Cold Running Water	*C.H. Baradoy*
More Than Convenience	*Rew Jones*
Good Morning?	*Abdullah Al-Nono*

Vote!

Ballot Collection

What Happened to the Men?	*Daniel Foreman*
If I Knew	*Rew Jones*
Water My Soul	*Justin David Wiesinger* *Eric Kane Cherrington*

Awards Ceremony

**WINNER OF 48 HOUR MOBILE DEVICE FILMMAKING CHALLENGE*

In Memoriam

Dan McDougall

The Old White Van

Georgina Lightning

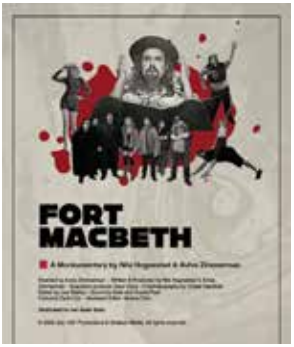
Tribute Video

Treaty 6 Acknowledgement

ESFF respectfully acknowledges that we gather on Treaty 6 territory and within the Métis homelands. We honour the First Nations and Métis peoples whose histories, cultures, and enduring relationships with this land continue to shape our community.

As we come together for this gala, we recognize the contributions of Indigenous artists, storytellers, and communities, past and present. We embrace our shared responsibility to listen, learn, and build relationships grounded in respect, understanding, and reconciliation.

2026 Gala Films



Fort Macbeth

Directed By: Aviva Zimmerman

Fort McMurray

FORT MACBETH is a mockumentary following a disgraced Toronto actor who relocates to the remote oil town of Fort McMurray to direct an “oil-positive” community theatre production of Macbeth. Armed with delusions of grandeur and a cast of amateur actors, he hopes to salvage his career and pay off his Beanie Baby debt.

BolBol

Directed By: Lili Yas Tayefi

Calgary

Bolbol is a poetic exploration of resilience, creativity, and daily survival in Tehran through the eyes of three women whose lives embody Iran’s vibrant yet constrained artistic cultural landscape. Based on true stories and interviews with at least ten women in Iran and across the diaspora in 2025, the film unfolds against a backdrop of economic hardship, social repression, and the mass expulsion of Afghan refugees.

Double-Edged Dagger

Directed By: Yunica Taboso

Edmonton

A 1-minute short animation about “time for a change,” where a dagger becomes a symbol of transformation, shifting from a tool of violence into something meaningful for someone you care about.

Refuge

Directed By: Aleisha Anderson

Calgary

June is navigating life in a makeshift safe house constructed by her father as the world outside grows increasingly perilous. When June faces a life-threatening reaction, she defies her father's rules and ventures outside in search of help, revealing a truth much sinister.

Bluebird

Directed By: Toby Duska, Damon Orcherton & Jack Hornecke

Calgary

We are Team Grease Pencil, a group of three student animators who came together during one crazy long weekend in May 2026 for the 19th annual Animation Lockdown, a 72-hour short animation contest hosted by the Quickdraw Animation Society in Calgary. The resulting stop-motion short Bluebird (2026) stands as our first collaborative production effort.

The Countdown

Directed By: Spencer Shortt

Edmonton

For over 30 years, Bettesu, tucked along Liberia's eastern border, lived without reliable power. When Better Together Liberia and Greenamp Solar arrive with a solar array and Starlink connection, everything begins to change. What starts as an installation becomes a transformation. Lighting homes, connecting families, and unlocking possibilities the village has never had before.

Date And Time

Directed By: Angus Crawford & Yemayá Azania-Merchant

Calgary

Winner of the 48hr Mobile Device Filmmaking Challenge

On his way to his date, Remy is inconvenienced as he gets splashed by an oncoming vehicle. Looking at his soaked clothes and ruined bouquet, Remy has to improvise his way to Amy.

Eyes In The Woods: Pilot

Directed By: Morgan Ermter

Calgary

Deep in the woods, Sam and Brooklyn grapple with two vastly different secrets. One that feels inevitable. One that is too strange to ignore. As fractured histories, park rangers, and the pull of the unknown converge, they must decide whether to fear what waits in the dark unknown, or embrace it as the only truth left to trust.

The Night Time Show

Directed By: Tegan Dobrich

Edmonton

Unable to sleep, a young girl becomes the unwilling guest on a strange late-night talk show. Surrounded by a crow-headed audience and an unsettling host, she is pressured to reveal the truth behind her sleepless nights.

Gala Videographer:

Midwest Superstardom - St.Arnaud

Directed By: Colin Waugh

Edmonton

‘Midwest Superstardom’ dives into the bittersweet life of a road warrior teetering between delusion and self-awareness, chasing the fading glow of a forgettable career while maintaining a grin. “What if the best we can hope for is to be the local touring band? Is that so bad?”

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Intermission

Musical performance from Coco Eidem

Coco is an up-and-coming pianist from Red Deer, Alberta. She is currently pursuing her Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance at MacEwan University. Her repertoire includes music from Jazz, Classical and Pop genres

ESFF's New Executive Director Tracy DesLaurier

Tracy DesLaurier brings decades of non-profit leadership and broad business experience to his role as Executive Director of the Edmonton Short Film Festival.

His connection to short film began in junior high school, when a stop-motion film he created was entered into a film festival—so things have come full circle. Having travelled to more than 70 countries, Tracy has a deep appreciation for people, culture, and storytelling. His eclectic film favourites range from Star Wars and Pulp Fiction to A Clockwork Orange, Eraserhead, and the original Rocky Horror Picture Show.

The Future of Storytelling is Vertical!

During the intermission of our Long Shorts program, Edmonton-born actor Travis DesLaurier will deliver a special 30-minute presentation exploring how vertical storytelling is changing filmmaking, from framing and performance to capturing audiences in seconds. Aspiring actors, filmmakers and digital creators will gain firsthand insights into the creative techniques and emerging career opportunities from an Edmonton success story making his mark in Hollywood.

Film Career Development Program (FCDP)

Building Alberta's Next Generation of Filmmakers

The Edmonton Short Film Festival's Film Career Development Program (FCDP) provides emerging filmmakers with hands-on training, paid professional mentorship, and real-world production experience. Running from November 2026 to March 2027, participants work alongside experienced industry professionals to create a short film, earning valuable production credits while developing essential skills and industry connections.

Building on the success of its inaugural program, FCDP champions emerging talent from underrepresented communities, removes barriers to entry, and creates pathways to sustainable careers in Alberta's growing screen industry.

Social Justice Warrior

Directed By: Dylan Wertz, Daniel Ennett & Frederick Kroetsch

Edmonton

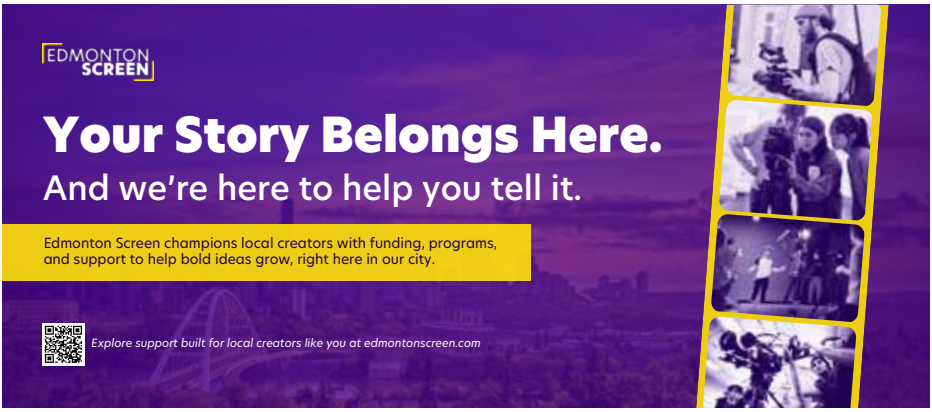
In a post-apocalyptic wasteland where micro-aggressions are punishable by death, vigilante Daniel Ennett patrols the forbidden zones with a futuristic bow, hunting down offenders one politically incorrect remark at a time.

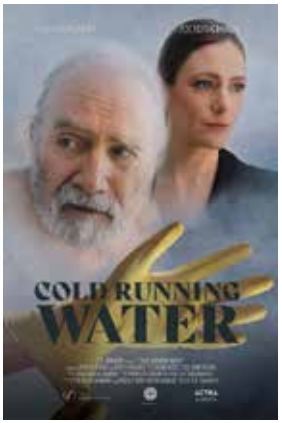
Never Come Home Again

Directed By: Kaeley Jade Wiebe

Edmonton

Loss and liberation can coexist. The story opens at the end of a relationship: one character sets off into the great unknown on a journey of self-discovery, and the other is left reeling in the aftermath of the separation. As the traveller moves deeper into the backcountry, however, strange and unsettling occurrences begin to unfold, revealing that the woods are not quite what they seem.





Cold Running Water

Directed By: C.H. Baradoy

Calgary

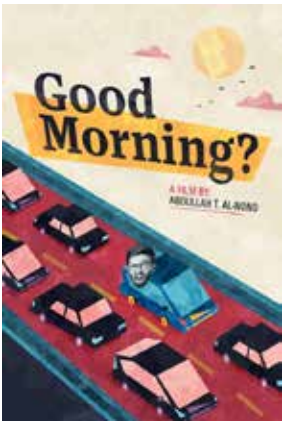
What happens when an endearing old man is left in the shower at a profit-driven retirement home? Nothing good for poor Walter whose money's run out.

More Than Convenience

Directed By: Rew Jones

Strathmore

In 1902, The Alberta Corner Store opened it's doors as the primary grocery store in the Ramsay district of Calgary. It survived for over a century as a common space for the community. However, Mrs. Kim is now in her 80s and needs to retire.



Good Morning?

Directed By: Abdullah Al-Nono

Calgary

A man's morning unravels in spectacular fashion — dead phone, torn clothes, a dead car, and a bag that refuses to stay closed — as he races to catch his flight. He makes it to the airport. Just not on the right day.

Vote!

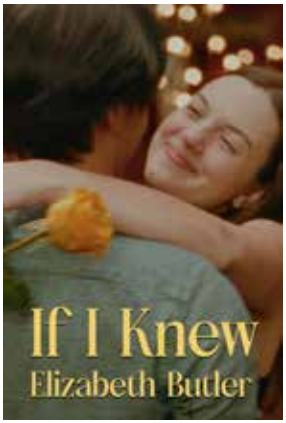
For your favourite film on the back of your ticket!

What Happened to the Men?

Directed By: Daniel Foreman

Edmonton

A young Métis man travels through Indigenous communities searching for what it means to be a man today. Through encounters with fathers, Elders, artists and mentors, Spencer discovers that the answers may have been in community all along.



If I Knew

Directed By: Rew Jones

Strathmore

Filmed on Super 16mm at the Calgary Farmers' Market, "If I Knew" is a celebration of that which is deeply human and connects us. A simple love story about finding our person.

Water My Soul

Directed By: Justin David Wiesinger & Eric Kane Cherrington

Gunn

The recording artist Eric Kane is trying to film content for his new song while struggling to keep away from a lakefront heckler all summer.

Long Shorts| International

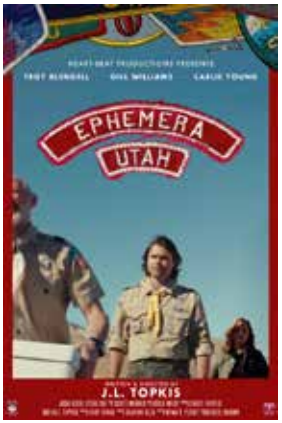
Ephemera, UT	*J.L. Topkis • U.S.A.*
PLAYBACK*	*Gabriel Manabo • Canada*
Vital	*Amir Zargara • Canada*
The Tomato	*Pauline Tessadri • Canada*
Lateral	*Loken Charon • Canada*
L'homme qui collectionne les élastiques - L'uomo che raccoglie gli elastici	*Carlito Ghioni • Canada*
Please Fix Me	*Colby Conrad • Canada*
The Lowly Juggler*	*Landon Kiltz, Brady Drefs & Carter Bigam • Canada*

Intermission

Last Stand at Butte City	*Natalie Schwan • U.S.A.*
Beautiful dishes for beautiful people*	*Riley Anne Larente & Silas Engen • Canada*
Choice	*Naddine Madell • Canada*
The Stranger That Left	*Travis DesLaurier • U.S.A.*
LAY LEFTY DOWN	*Traven Rice • U.S.A.*

**WINNER OF 48 HOUR MOBILE DEVICE FILMMAKING CHALLENGE*

Long Shorts | International



Ephemera, UT

Directed By: J.L. Topkis

Los Angeles, U.S.A.

Tensions erupt between an eccentric father and his son as they navigate the sale of a high-end Boy Scout collection.

PLAYBACK

Directed By: Gabriel Manabo

Edmonton, Canada

Winner of the 48hr Mobile Device Filmmaking Challenge

After a traumatic accident, a young man begins experiencing memory loss, vivid dreams, and disturbing hallucinations tied to a mysterious figure. When he is encouraged to revisit old footage from his past, he uncovers something that should not be there.

Vital

Directed By: Amir Zargara

Ottawa, Canada

A mother in Iran, considers selling her organs to save her daughter, while in the United States, a doctor faces ethical dilemmas to save his daughter, revealing the complexities of organ trade.

The Tomato

Directed By: Pauline Tessadri

Montreal, Canada

During a night shift in a supermarket, a new employee learns the rules of shelf stocking. His attention is drawn to a tomato that is not quite like the others.

Lateral

Directed By: Loken Charon

Vancouver, Canada

When a mixed Asian writer gets the chance to possibly have their film made, their pitch goes awry when they're shunted to a darker dimension where people's real natures come to light.

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L'homme qui collectionne les élastiques - L'uomo che raccoglie gli elastici

Directed By: Carlito Ghioni

Mayne Island, Canada

A lonely child grows up playing in the yard and notices an old Man's fear for life outside their house. He attracts his attention by passing him elastics. The Old-man is unable to be thankful and distances him. They are going to challenge one another in a duel to the last note.

Please Fix Me

Directed By: Colby Conrad

Halifax, Canada

Leah wants to be fixed, but she'd rather be buried alive in another woman's perfect fleece skin than sit with her own feelings in therapy.

The Lowly Juggler

Directed By: Landon Kiltz, Brady Drefs & Carter Bigam

St. Albert, Canada

Winner of the 48hr Mobile Device Filmmaking Challenge

Gaby's plans to cheat at the Edmonton Short Film Festival 48-hour short film contest are foiled when she receives the secret elements, which make her short film impossible to submit.

Intermission

Last Stand at Butte City

Directed By: Natalie Schwan

Los Angeles, U.S.A.

Fifty-eight-year-old Charlotte has lived on her homestead for over thirty years, preferring self-imposed isolation to the bustle of town life. That fragile sense of safety is threatened when the Northern Pacific Railway informs her she has 30 days to vacate her property. As the ultimatum approaches, Charlotte spirals from denial into panic-fueled determination.

Beautiful dishes for beautiful people

Directed By: Riley Anne Larente & Silas Engen

Leduc County, Canada

Winner of the 48hr Filmmaking Challenge

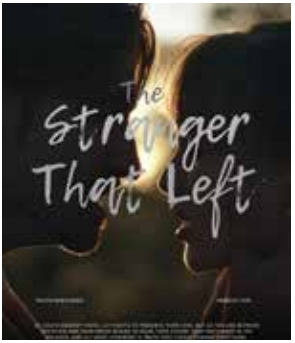
Beautiful Dishes for Beautiful People is a playful introduction to entomophagy, an unconventional approach to dieting.

Choice

Directed By: Naddine Madell

Calgary, Canada

On the eve of his 33rd year of service, a solitary Priest wanders into a quiet diner. The waitress, Dolores, lends her ear to hear his story and offers him something a little stronger than coffee. They discuss choice, free will and consequences.



The Stranger That Left

Directed By: Travis DesLaurier

Los Angeles, U.S.A.

As Cole's memory fades, Lily fights to preserve their love. But as the line between devotion and heartbreak begins to blur, their future together hangs in the balance, and Lily must confront a truth that could change everything.

LAY LEFTY DOWN

Directed By: Traven Rice

New York, U.S.A.

Two women unexpectedly unite through stories of grief and laughter, after their family throws a surprise memorial for a left breast.

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ESFF People's Choice Award

Vote for your favourite film on the back of your ticket. Ushers will collect and count ballots after the films have screened, before the awards ceremony. The film that recieves the most votes will be awarded the Edmonton Short Film Festival People's Choice Award!

Our Thanks

Thank you to all our patrons who support and attend our events and to the filmmakers who share their work with us!

Volunteers

Alan Naranin	Jim Moses	Rebekah Borst
Becky Riddell	Kade Wilson	Samuel Iwelu
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Bee Janzen · Chad Lewis · Gabe Anderson
Jamaal Mohamed · Leah Mackie · Will Watcharavitsakun
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Vote!

FOR YOUR FAVOURITE ALBERTA FILM ON THE BACK OF YOUR GALA TICKET