

INDEPENDENT FILMS | SPEAKERS & PANELS | GRAND WINE TASTING & MORE

# VERO BEACH FILM FESTIVAL 2026

CELEBRATING



YEARS OF CINEMATIC  
STORYTELLING

[vbfilmfest.org](http://vbfilmfest.org)



A Life Illuminated  
DIRECTED BY TASHA VAHRA

Peace, Quiet & A Little Diva  
It's the first day in the life of a new town.

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RULE NUMBER 2

BONDING  
Some secrets are hard to hold.

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**2** *Vero Beach Film Festival*

## THE DIRECTOR'S CORNER



"We see what we want to see."

It's a phrase that has been rattling around in my head lately — and the more I sit with it, the more I believe it may be the most important idea we can explore together this year.

Think about the last time you watched a film with someone you love and walked out to discover you had each witnessed something entirely different. One of you was moved to tears. The other was unmoved. One saw a hero. The other saw a villain. Same screen. Same story. Two completely different experiences.

We don't just watch with our eyes. We watch with our histories, our fears, our hopes, and our wounds. A scene about a father and a son lands differently depending on the father you had — or the one you wished for. This is not a flaw in how we experience art. That is the whole point. And it is precisely why gathering together — in book clubs, in film clubs, in festival audiences — matters so profoundly right now.

When we share the same story and turn to one another to compare what we saw, we are not just talking about a film. We are offering each other a window into a life we might never have encountered on our own. In a world increasingly determined to show us only what we already agree with, a film festival is almost a radical act.

My hope for this, our 10th anniversary, is that you let these films surprise you — and let the person sitting next to you see something you missed. The most extraordinary thing cinema offers us is not escapism. It is empathy.

Come. Watch. Listen. And then — please — talk to each other.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Yakir".

-David Yakir, Executive Director,  
Vero Beach Film Festival

## **EXECUTIVE TEAM**

David Yakir – Executive Director  
Susan Keller Horn – Film Programming  
Jenn Kite – Volunteers, Logistics & Events Operations  
Gary Mastro – Outreach & Sponsorship  
Elli Courtney – Film & Festival Operations

## **PRODUCING TEAM**

Herb Stratford – Guest Programming Director  
Barry Shapiro – Film Jury Chair  
Doris Kwek – Festival Concierge  
Paul Seldes | Doug Wright – Technology  
Paula Lerner – Volunteers  
Paula Lerner | Joanne Montgomery – Community Outreach  
Doug Cochran – Box Office  
Dan Culbert – Venues & Logistics  
Mary Lou Calhoun – Bookkeeping  
Gregg Casalino – Legal | Steve Goff – Accountant

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Indian River Charter High School

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Jenn Kite – Board Chair  
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# GOOD TO KNOW AND ENJOY THE SHOW!

## SCHEDULE CHANGES

Check our website. [vbfilmfest.org](http://vbfilmfest.org), regularly for schedule updates and changes. We will post updates as soon as possible at the venues and online.

## REFUND POLICY – ALL SALES ARE FINAL

If there is any circumstance which prevents the live festival, we will transfer to an online platform, if possible.

## PRIORITY SEATING

Patrons, Sponsors, and Premier Passholders will be seated first, up to 15 minutes before a film starts.

## PLEASE SILENCE PHONES

Quiet all communication devices during film screenings to ensure a quality viewing experience for everyone.

**NO RECORDINGS** of the presented films are permitted.

## FILMMAKER Q&A

Many of our filmmakers will be at their screenings to answer your questions about their films and share their film vision.

## FILMMAKER AWARDS

Please vote! In fairness to filmmakers, please complete and return your ballot immediately following each screening that is eligible for an audience award.

## BE SOCIAL

We encourage you to share your Festival experience on social media. Follow us and tag us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. [#vbfilmfest](https://twitter.com/vbfilmfest)

## FESTIVAL VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers help make the Vero Beach Film Festival possible by donating their time. Please be patient, and don't forget to thank them for their efforts. Join our team by contacting us at [volunteer@vbfilmfest.org](mailto:volunteer@vbfilmfest.org)

*We are inclusive and respectful of people of every race, ethnicity, gender identity/expression, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, age, physical appearance, body size, language spoken, and economic status.*

**Film Vero (producer of the Vero Beach Film Festival) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.**

# VENUE LOCATIONS & FESTIVAL MAP

**1 Indian River Distillery**

3308 Aviation Blvd

**2 Walking Tree Brewery**

3209 Dodger Road

**3 Vero Beach Theatre Guild & Box Office**

2020 San Juan Avenue

**4 Community Church of Vero Beach**

1901 23rd Street

**5 Women's Club of Vero Beach**

1534 21st Street

**6 Heritage Center**

2140 14th Avenue

**7 Curfew**

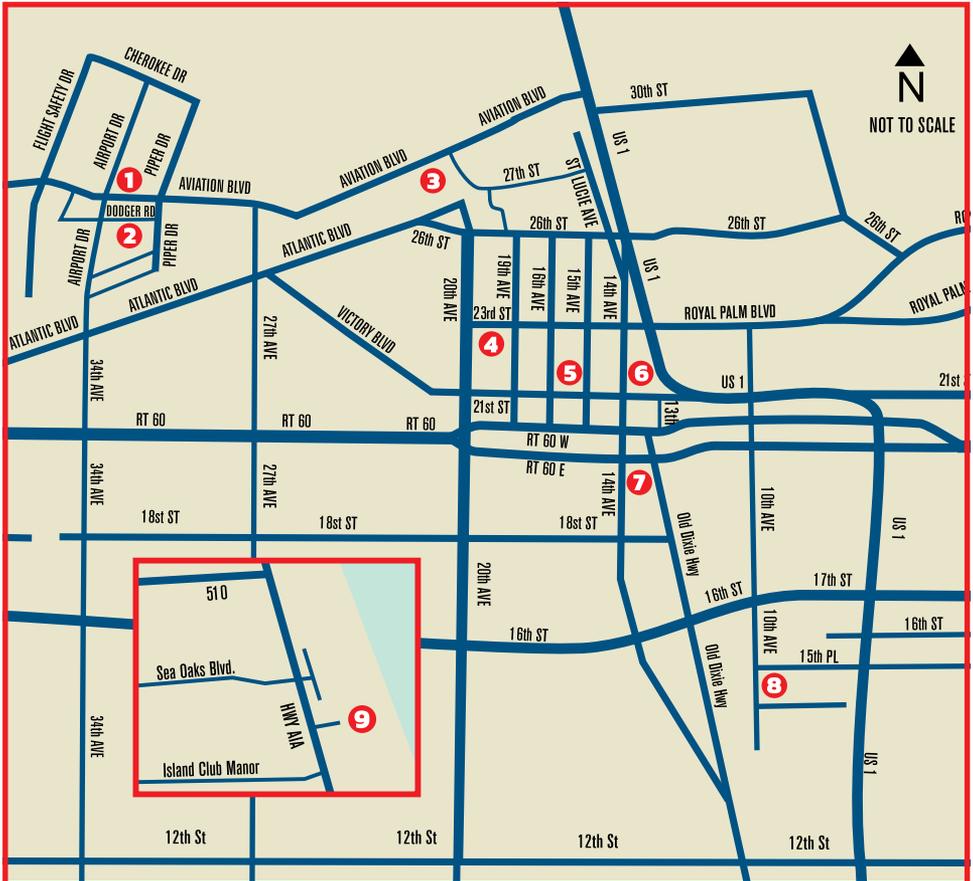
1932 14th Ave

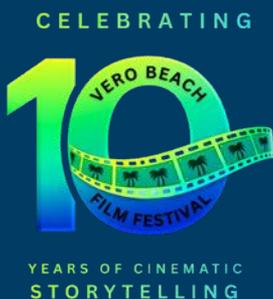
**8 Majestic 11 Theater**

940 14th Lane

**9 Grand Harbor Beach Club**

8500 Highway A1A





# OPENING NIGHT VBFF 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

As the festival day winds down, the celebration begins. Join us for an unforgettable Opening Night honoring the **10th Anniversary of the Vero Beach Film Festival**—an evening of film, awards, and a lively tiki celebration

## CABALI AND THE TIKI OBSESSION – OPENING FILM

**Thursday, April 9, 5:00 PM**

**Location:** Theatre Guild Mainstage



Kick off the festival with collector Fini Finical as he builds a bar for his extraordinary tiki mug collection. Stay for an exclusive Q&A with Fini and the filmmakers, moderated by Herb Stratford.

*Included in all passes – Counts as one film.*

## WELCOME & JURY AWARDS

**Thursday, April 9, 7:20 PM**

**Location:** Theatre Guild Mainstage

Celebrate the year's standout films as our Jury presents trophies to the 2026 VBFF award-winning filmmakers.

*Does not count as a film scan. All are welcome.*

## TIKI AT THE TENT

**Thursday, April 9, 8:00 PM**

**Location:** The Tent At Theatre Guild



Kick off VBFF's 10th Anniversary at our festive **Tiki at the Tent party**. Step into a lively tiki setting featuring a **7-foot Tiki statue** brought by the filmmakers, **carved Tikis by local artists Skip and Saskia Fuller of Edgewood Art Village**, and the vibrant sounds of **reggae/island vibes band Ubae Groove**.

Mingle with filmmakers and friends, and celebrate the start of the festival in true island style. **This is the ultimate opening night experience.**

**Individual Ticket: \$45**

*Included with Director's Pass & Producer's Pass.*

# MORE 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

## 10TH ANNIVERSARY FRIENDS OF THE FESTIVAL DINNER

**Monday, April 6, 6:00 PM**

**Location:** Grand Harbor Beach Club

Step into an elegant oceanfront celebration marking 10 years of the Vero Beach Film Festival. Against the backdrop of sparkling waters and a sunset sky, savor gourmet cuisine, hand-selected wines, and artfully crafted cocktails while mingling with the festival's most passionate supporters and friends of independent film.

This intimate, exclusive evening limited to 100 guests sets the stage for a weekend of film, fun and celebration.

**Individual Ticket:** \$195

*This event is not included in any pass level.*

## AFTER DARK HANGOUTS

Keep the festival vibes going after the credits roll and the parties have ended! Join us for casual meetups, drinks, and great company at two local spots:

### Curfew – Bar & Restaurant

Thursday, April 9, 8:00 PM – 11 PM | Saturday, April 11, 8:00 PM – 1 AM

### Indian River Distillery – Distillery

Friday, April 10, 8:00 PM – 11:00 PM | VBFF badge holders get 10% off!

### 3 Bite Tacos

*(Right Next to Indian River Distillery)*

Open for Eat In & Take Out Thursday, 11-8 / Friday & Saturday 11-9  
Will deliver to the Distillery – VBFF badge holders get 10% off!

**Sip cocktails, sample small-batch rum, and mingle with fellow filmmakers and film lovers — no tickets, just fun!**

## THE FILMMAKERS LOUNGE

*Brought to you by Varietals and More*

**Friday, April 10 & Saturday, April 11, 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM**

**Location:** Women's Club of Vero Beach

Settle into the charm of the Historic Women's Club and discover the Filmmaker's Lounge—a welcoming space to recharge between screenings. **Enjoy thoughtfully selected wines from Rob and Michele of Varietals and More, a generous spread of savory and sweet offerings,** and easy conversation with filmmakers and fellow festivalgoers.

It's the perfect relaxed space to connect with filmmakers and fellow festival goers.

**Individual Ticket:** \$100 to enjoy both days in the lounge

*Included with the Producer's Pass.*

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Scan to Learn More



# THE ENGEL & VÖLKERS GRAND WINE TASTING

**Friday, April 10, 6:00 PM**

**Location:** The Heritage Center



KYMANI AUSTIN

Raise a glass and join the celebration! Sample an exciting lineup of standout wines—from an **extraordinary array of wines—award winners, rare vintages, and hard-to-find cellar selections**—all curated by *Varietals and More*. Discover new favorites, mingle with fellow wine lovers, and take advantage of **exclusive festival pricing on bottles you'll want to bring home**.

**Individual Ticket:** \$85

*Included with Producer's Pass.*

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## A TOAST TO "10" – COCKTAIL PARTY

**Saturday, April 11, 8:00 PM**

**Location:** Tent at the Theatre Guild

Raise your glass, savor every bite, and celebrate 10 years of cinematic magic with us!

Experience an evening of flavor, fun, and festivity! Sip creative cocktails, enjoy fine wines, and nosh on delicious light bites as you mingle with filmmakers and friends. Set under the charming Theatre Guild tent, this exclusive party is full of surprises, laughter, and a toast (or two!) to a decade of unforgettable films and memories.

**Individual Ticket:** \$75

*Included with Producer's Pass.*

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## AUDIENCE AWARDS & FESTIVAL WRAP PARTY

**Sunday, April 12, 5:30 PM**

**Location:** Walking Tree Brewery

Cap off the Vero Beach Film Festival with good drinks, great vibes, and even better company at the Audience Awards & Wrap Party! Toast the weekend's standout films, cheer on our incredible filmmakers, and relive a festival full of storytelling.

But before we go, we will present the Audience Award—chosen by YOU, the viewers. It is a true honor for independent filmmakers and a highlight of the weekend. Grab a craft brew, raise a glass, and celebrate films, friends, and all the festival fun as we wrap up 2026 and look forward to 2027!

**Individual Ticket:** \$45

*Included with the Producer's Pass.*

# EMPOWERING FILMMAKER LECTURE AND PANEL SERIES

## DIGITAL CREATOR – CONVERSATIONS IN ALL MEDIA

Presented by WalkerFitzgibbon TV & Film

Friday, April 10, 8:30 – 10:15 AM

Location: Theatre Guild Main Stage

Morning Nosh served at 8:30 in the Breezeway at the Theatre Guild. Program starts at 8:45 AM in the Theatre Guild Mainstage.

Included in all passes – Counts as one film.



**MODERATOR MO FITZGIBBON** Writer/Producer/Director, Walker Fitzgibbon TV Film: Persistence and dedication, and hard work have helped shape Fitzgibbon into being knowledgeable, professional and a creative force amongst her peers. Fitzgibbon's company, Walker Fitzgibbon TV Film, located in South Florida, and Los Angeles is considered one of the most diversified and creative production companies. Known for the critically acclaimed Investigation Discovery crime series "Real Vice Miami", and Lifetimes Television Intimate Portrait life story of Gloria Estefan, and the Grammy nominated "Gloria Estefan Don't Stop" Film.

Projects, include creative writing, feature film, broadcast television, scripted, reality, variety, biographies, documentaries, animation, national commercials, and music specials both in English and Spanish. Fitzgibbon', Credits: Apple, Netflix, Amazon Prime, LifetimeTV, Paramount TV, HBO, NBC Universal, Universal Kids, Telemundo, Univision, Twentieth Century Fox, Discovery Channel, Food Network and Sony Entertainment and many others.



**GUEST SPEAKER DOMINIC GIANNETTI** Giannetti Films Producer/Director/Founder, Vertical Festival: Dominic is an award-winning producer and director and a dedicated filmmaker with over 35 years of experience in the film and television industry. Throughout his career, he has produced dozens of independent films and projects across theatrical, broadcast, and streaming platforms, while also working professionally within major studio environments - including MGM, Warner Bros., Sony Pictures, Columbia Pictures, and Lionsgate - collaborating with major studios and A-list talent across a wide range of scripted productions. His recent project "Family Pride" has premiered to large audiences in theaters in NY and Miami and has grown in popularity due to its sensitive and controversial subject matter that has touched the hearts of many movie goers. He is the founder of Vertical Festival, a festival and expo dedicated to vertical filmmaking and mobile-first storytelling. Passionate about the future of the format, Dominic is actively involved in the Vertical industry, collaborating with creators, platforms, and brands while mentoring the next generation of storytellers entering the space.



**GUEST SPEAKER DANA PELLERIN** Universal Studios Florida Production Group (USFPG) - Universal Studios: Dana is an accomplished professional in the film and television industry, with over 15 years of experience in various roles, from writing to producing. He currently steers the Universal Studios Florida Production Group (USFPG) sales team, productions and events, at Universal Studios Orlando. Dana is responsible for managing the producers and all client relations for the sound stages, backlots, and support spaces at the studio. At Universal, Dana has played a key role in expanding production opportunities, contributing to significant revenue growth and helping position the studio and Florida as a competitive destination for the production industry. Dana's career in the industry began with his work at film festivals, after which he went on to freelance on commercials and series television. He, also serves on the Board of Women in Film & Television Florida and on the Industry Council of Film Florida, supporting initiatives that strengthen the production community and its future talent pipeline.

Universal Studios Florida Production Group - Universal Studios, Orlando, Florida (USFPG) World Class sound stages state of the art production support facilities, access to unique backlot locations, and exemplary productions management and administrative services for all media platforms.



**GUEST SPEAKER MIKE L. GERMAINE** Starlight Films Producer/Director/Music Creator: Known for his exceptional work on major films and TV shows, as well as his feature film company projects. His career spans decades, Germaine has worked on major productions such as the superhero films "Venom" and "Blue Beetle" as well as Magic City, and the Fast and Furious franchise and many more in various technical capacities. He has ninety-two IMDBPRO Instant Movie Data Base credits, in motion picture - feature film, television, and streaming. As his career grew as the number one, Head Gaffer on features, he took a major turn as he went onto, direct, write, and produce his first series "Van Goatee's Crib," which featured many filmmakers, artists + bands. For his directorial debut on his first feature-length film "Church of Darkness" has been released worldwide. Once the transition from lighting to directing was taking shape, he went on to direct numerous music videos and short films, including "Anyhow" and "Paradise" (starring rising stars Ella Grace Helton and Luke Speakman).



**GUEST SPEAKER ROBERT W. WALKER** Path3 Creative- Writer, Producer, Director, Editor, FX Designer, Concept Originator: Over thirty years of production rooms, recording studios, stage sets, edit bays, and voice booths. Grammy nominations, HBO specials, NBC Olympic broadcasts, and a long run of national campaigns for names you know. From radio programmer to television executive to creating two award-winning production companies, Walkersound and WalkerFitzgibbon TVFilm, Rob is now founder and Chief Creative Officer of the frontier-pushing Path3 Creative. It's a long way from the early days of him mastering the science that allowed the art to flourish - stalwart tools like Avid, After Effects, Premiere Pro, C4D, all of which he speaks as fluently as he does English. Now the assistants include the LLM turbo-boosted technology that is revolutionizing the world in the creative realm.

## OFF THE STAGE: MEET THE PROS

**Friday, April 10, 10:30 – 11:45 AM**

**Location:** Filmmakers Lounge, Women's Club

The conversation doesn't stop when the panel ends. Keep it going at the Filmmakers Lounge at the Women's Club—where the vibe is relaxed, the energy is high, and the conversation flows. Meet the panelists, ask questions, swap ideas, and connect with fellow creators and industry pros.

## NOW WHAT? NEXT STEPS FOR FILMMAKERS WITH AGENT KATHERINE CONNORS

**Friday, April 10, 12:45 – 2:15 PM**

**Location:** Theatre Guild Black Box

Sure, you've got your film playing in film festivals, but what's next? A look at paths forward with your films, career and more with talent agent Katherine Connors and VBFF's Herb Stratford talking about next moves, industry trends and more.

*Included in all passes - Counts as one film.*



**KATHERINE CONNORS** had a passion for Musical Theatre has since she started performing at the NJ State Art Center at the age of 10. She went on to study at the American Musical Dramatic Academy in NY. She persuaded an acting career in city over the next 10 years starring in Off Broadway Shows. She became the CEO and Founder of Made Worldwide Agency where she was able to help book work for other talented actors and models that wanted to work alongside her. It is now a full-service agency in NY, LA and FL too. She went back to school for business during that time and graduated from the Goldman Sachs 10,000 small business program for entrepreneur women on a full scholarship from Tory Burch. Now a days she more so sits back and runs the show along with her team of agents while she grooms her 3 yr old son for the world of entertainment. She even teaches a class called Broadway Babies to introduce musical theatre to 0-4yr olds. You can find out more about her at IMDB or on the company website [mwatalent.com](http://mwatalent.com).

# INDIE FILMMAKING DEEP DIVE - DOCUMENTARIES AND NARRATIVES

**Saturday, April 11, 9:00 AM**

**Location:** Theatre Guild Black Box

VBFF Guest Program Director Herb Stratford in conversation with “Cabali and the Tiki Mug Obsession” director Josh Dragotta and “House of Abraham” director Lisa Belcher.

*Morning Nosh served at 8:30 in the Breezeway at the Theatre Guild. Program starts at 8:00am in the Theatre Guild Black Box.*

*Included in all passes - Counts as one film.*



**HERB STRATFORD** is a Documentary Filmmaker (*Gustav Stickley: American Craftsman*), Writer, Educator, Film Critic, Historic Theater Consultant - Restorer, Unscripted Television Development Consultant, Film Festival management, operations and programming - Vero Beach, Napa Valley, Mendocino, Sonoma, Film Festivals, and more. Co-Founder and Director of Film Fest Tucson.



**JOSH DRAGOTTA** has been directing and editing films over the past two decades. His films have been selected in festivals both nationally and internationally and his editorial work has garnered him Clio Awards in theatrical advertising. His editorial career started in short form documentaries including for such titles as *Murder On The Orient*, *The Magnificent Seven*, and *La La Land*. His theatrical and Television marking has included such titles as *Percey Jackson* and *The Olympians*, *Bullet Train*, and *Severance*. His Last Film *Satan's Angel: Queen of The Fire Tassels* was an official selection of Outfest.

As an editor his most recent work includes short films for The Carter Center celebrating the late president's 100th birthday, The Kennedy Center Honors honoring Barry Gibb, Renée Flemming, and The Grateful Dead as well as The Mark Twain Prize For Comedy honoring Kevin Hart and Conan O'Brien. As a filmmaker that is both an editor and a director Josh approaches his storytelling from a unique audio and visual experience, for him it is escapism. "I enjoy telling stories that entertain, that take you on a journey. The idea that I can transport someone to another place through pictures and sound is so exciting."



**LISA BELCHER** is an award-winning director, actor, writer, and producer working through her production company, Jump Rock Pictures. She directed the feature thriller *House of Abraham*, starring Natasha Henstridge and Lin Shaye, which received a theatrical run and is now available on streaming, with Blu-ray and DVD releases forthcoming.

Her short films have screened internationally, winning multiple awards including Best Director, and have secured distribution. Lisa is currently developing her next feature, the romantic comedy *Dirty Words*, scheduled to shoot in Austin, Texas this fall. She is passionate about telling character-driven stories that explore human connection and linger with audiences long after the screen goes dark.

# SHORT FILMS-WHAT'S NEXT? A CONVERSATION WITH SOME VBFF 2026 SHORT FILMMAKERS

**Sunday, April 12, 9:00 - 10:00 AM**

**Location:** Theatre Guild Black Box

Round table discussion with some of our 2026 short filmmakers.

*Morning Nosh served at 8:30 in the Breezeway at the Theatre Guild. Program starts at 9:00am in the Theatre Guild Black Box.*

*Included in all passes - Counts as one film.*



TYLER CALL



TYLER CALL



KYMANI AUSTIN

# SPECIAL FILM EVENTS

## PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S SHORT PICKS

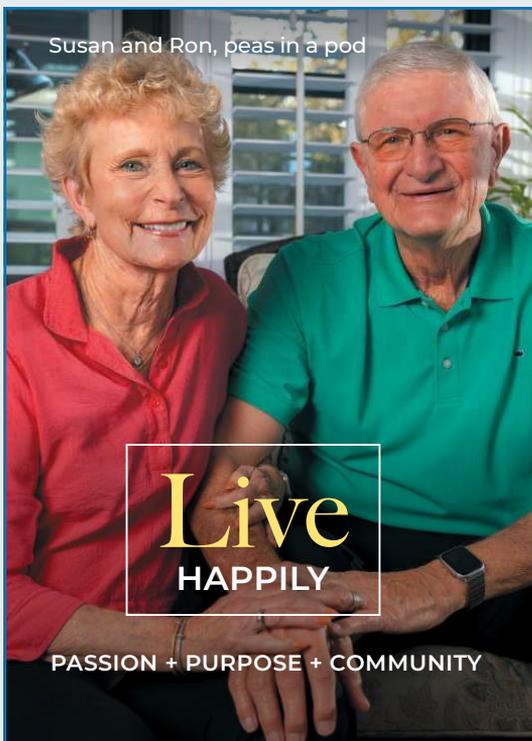
Thursday, April 9, 10:15 AM

Location: Theatre Guild Mainstage



Guest Program Director, Herb Stratford, curates this collection of some of his favorite short films in the 2026 VBFF Festival. Herb programs and consults for major U.S. film festivals. He's a member of the Critics Choice Association, founder/director/programmer of Film Fest Tucson and a historic theater preservationist.

**Aisle Of Man | How To Sleep In The Cold | Mookie, Mo And Me  
Nona's Nude | Over Again | Peace, Quiet & A Little Dirt**



Susan and Ron, peas in a pod

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## THRILLER & SUSPENSE SPOTLIGHT

Edge-of-your-seat viewing happens here—these gripping psychological thrillers are built to keep you guessing until the very last frame.

### BONDING

**Friday, April 10, 2:45 PM**

**Location:** Theatre Guild Black Box

**Saturday, April 11, 12:30 PM**

**Location:** Majestic Theater

Three siblings. One ranch.  
Secrets that won't stay buried.



### House Of Abraham

**Saturday, April 11, 8:00 PM**

**Location:** Vero Beach Theatre  
Guild Mainstage

She came for healing. She found  
a cult. Now she has to get out.

Plus, the music video for *Lucy*, featuring music from *House of Abraham*.



# CURFEW

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*Curfew proudly supports the Vero Beach Film Festival*

# THE MOONSHOT STORY

Director: Connor Martin -  
Children's Literacy Project  
Presented by the Learning Alliance

**Friday, April 10, 1:00 PM**

**Location:** Vero Beach Theatre Guild,  
Mainstage



This is what happens when a community refuses to accept the status quo.

*The Moonshot Story*—an uplifting documentary produced by the Children's Literacy Project is presented in a special Director's Cut — the film takes you inside one of the most ambitious literacy turnarounds in the country. In just a few years, our own Indian River County has surged to be tied for 2nd in the state for 3rd-grade reading, powered by the bold, relentless work of the School District of Indian River County and public-private partnerships with The Learning Alliance and the Moonshot Community Action Network.

Part of a 10 part series, this 23-minute film is fast-moving, eye-opening, and deeply inspiring—a front-row seat to a movement that's changing outcomes for an entire generation.

Following the film, stay for a dynamic, no-holds-barred conversation with the local leaders behind the results—what worked, what didn't, and what's next.

*All are welcome. Free event.*



**THE COMMUNITY  
CHURCH  
OF VERO BEACH**

**Worship With Us  
Sundays at:**

8:30 a.m.  
in Grace Chapel

9:30 a.m.  
C2 in Community  
Hall & Online

10:30 a.m.  
in the Sanctuary  
& Online

Founded in 1924 on the belief that *"There is more that binds us together than separates us in the worship of God."*

## **JOIN THE CONVERSATION Wednesday Bible Studies**

7:30 a.m. Men in Community Hall & Zoom  
10:30 a.m. Women in Community Hall & Zoom  
Get the Zoom Link: 772-562-3633

## **Community @ Community April 15**

5:00 p.m. Supper | 6:00 p.m. EARTH CARE  
R.S.V.P. for Supper: 772-562-3633

## **MUSIC & FINE ARTS MINISTRY CONCERT SERIES Atlantica Trio April 26 at 3 p.m. in Grace Chapel**

Featuring Brahm's B-Major Piano Trio  
with Adriana Stenvik, cello;  
Sasha Korczynski, violin; John Korczynski, piano  
Tickets \$10 at the door

1901 23rd St. Vero Beach, FL | 772-562-3633 | info@ccovb.org  
www.ccovb.org | facebook.com/TheCCOVb

## LOVE & KARMA — TASTE THE STORY!

**Saturday, April 11, 9:45 AM, with Tasting Following the Film**

**Location:** Majestic Theater & Rick's Cafe (in lobby)



A worldly and successful woman reconnects with her 4th grade crush at her school reunion in the Philippines.

The story doesn't end at the credits... join us at Rick's Cafe in the Majestic Lobby for a reception with Filipino-inspired bites and Q&A with producer Celeste Friedman.

*Included in all passes -- The film with tasting count as one film.*

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## HOW TO KILL A MERMAID - THE LINNEA MILLS STORY

**Sunday, April 12, 10:00 AM**

**Location:** Majestic Theater



A devastating loss. A story that won't rest.

This gripping true-crime documentary reexamines the 2020 death of 18-year-old Linnea Mills during a cold-water dive in Glacier National Park, drawing on never-before-seen footage to uncover new layers of a deeply troubling case.

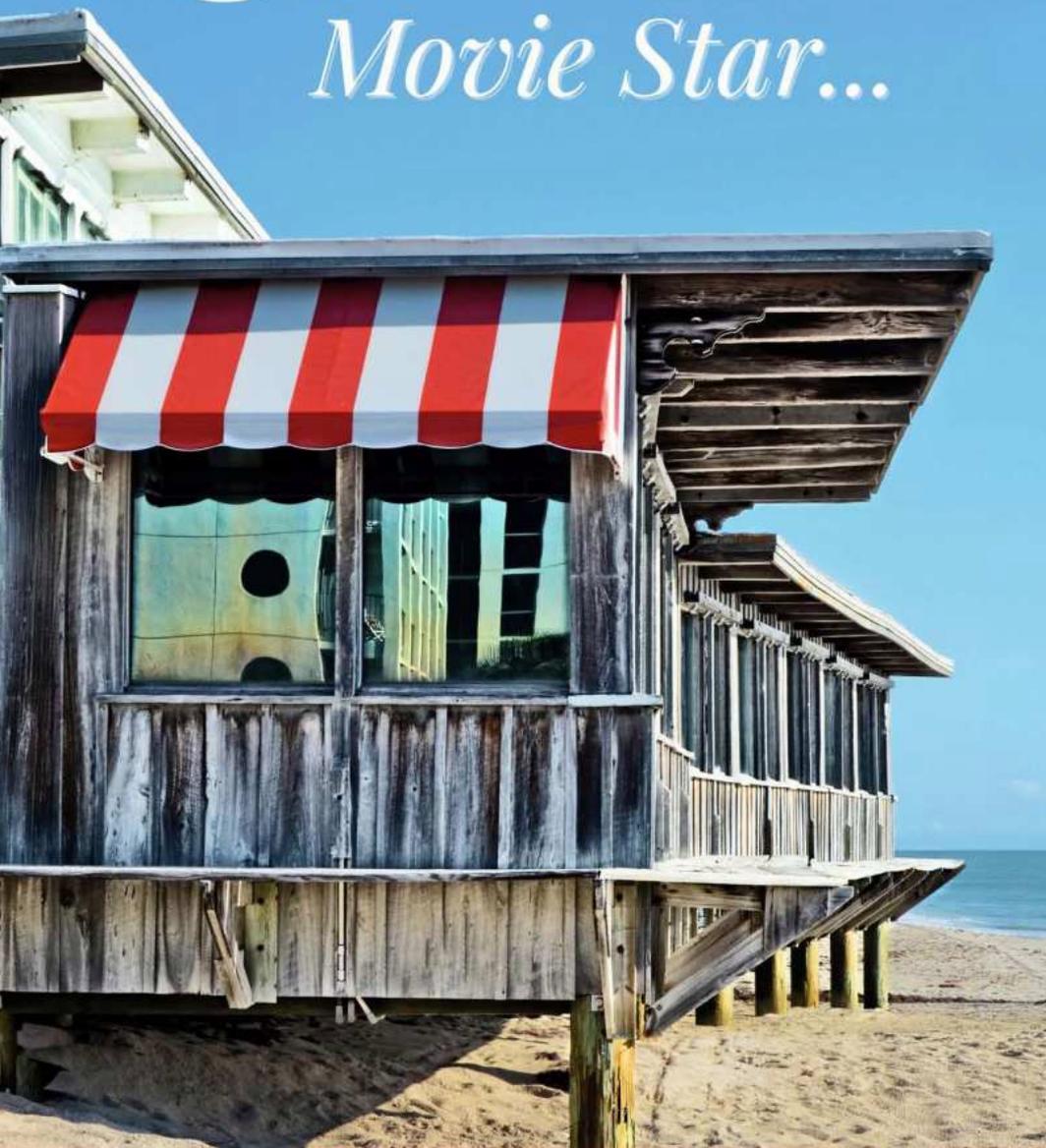
More than an investigation, it's a portrait of a family's relentless pursuit of truth—and the resilience it takes to keep going when answers remain out of reach.

Join Linnea's family, the filmmaker, and the attorney for a powerful post-screening conversation and audience Q&A.

*Included in all passes - Counts as one film.*



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# A LIFE ILLUMINATED – INTRODUCING ORCA FOUNDER DR. EDIE WIDDER

**Sunday, April 12, 3:00 PM**

**Location:** Theater Guild – Mainstage & Black Box



“A life of discovery—on and beneath the surface.” Trailblazing marine biologist, ORCA Founder and local icon Dr. Edie Widder joins us in person for A Life Illuminated—More than a story of scientific discovery, the film, A Life Illuminated follows her pioneering career and her breathtaking journey into the ocean’s twilight zone, revealing a hidden world of light—and how she changed what we know about life on Earth.

Experience the film alongside Dr. Widder herself, followed by a live panel discussion and audience Q&A, moderated by former NBC reporter Tiffany Simons Corr.

Due to high demand, a simultaneous overflow screening will be available in the Blackbox. Arrive early.

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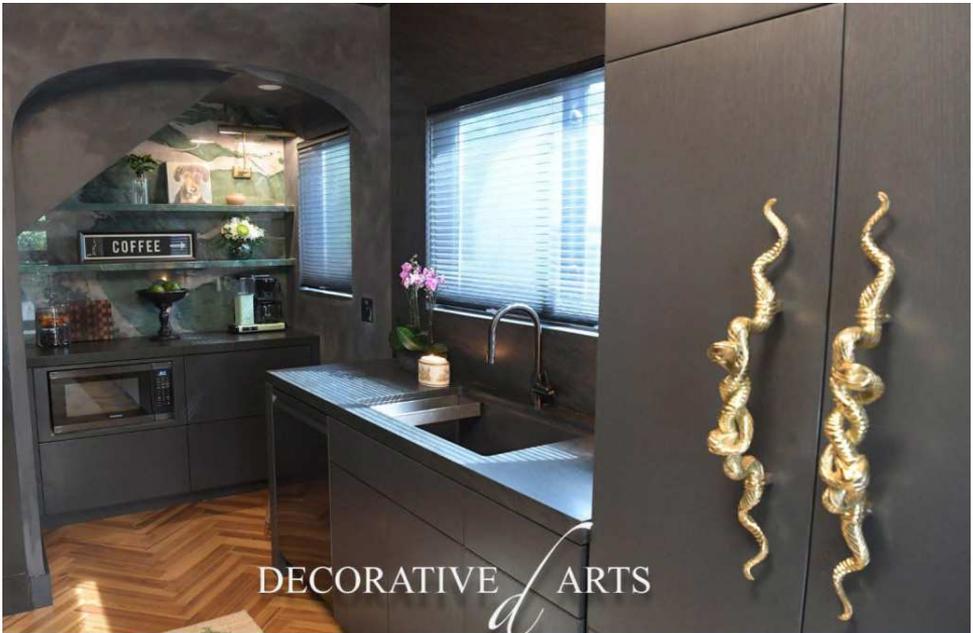
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# DOCUMENTARY FEATURES



## 96 lbs. Of Dynamite

Diagnosed at birth with a rare condition that was expected to kill him, Chad McDaniel embraces humor, grit, and a competitive spirit to live the life others said he would never have.

Director: Loren Goldfarb

1:19:00



## Cabali And The Tiki Mug Obsession

A vibrant dive into tiki culture, following collector Fini Finical as he builds a one-of-a-kind bar to showcase his obsession: an extraordinary collection of handcrafted tiki mugs.

Director: Josh Dragotta

1:37:00



**A Culinary Uprising: The Story Of Bloodroot** Meet Selma Miriam and Noel Furie, founders of a pioneering feminist, vegan restaurant and bookstore in Connecticut. Explore its 48-year legacy, cultural impact, enduring community and why Bloodroot is more than just a restaurant.

Director: Annie Laurie Medonis

1:18:00



## Cracking The Code: Phil Sharp And The Biotech Revolution

Narrated by Mark Ruffalo, Cracking the Code follows Phil Sharp's journey from Kentucky farm boy to Nobel laureate, whose RNA discovery ignited the biotechnology revolution, transforming biology, medicine, and millions of lives worldwide.

Director: Bill Haney

1:37:00



## A Life Illuminated

A Life Illuminated follows the life of trailblazing marine biologist Edith Widder who journeys into the ocean's twilight zone to uncover the glowing secrets of bioluminescence and reveal a hidden world of light beneath the sea.

Director: Tasha Van Zandt

1:29:00



## Dad Genes

A former sperm donor's discovery that he's fathered dozens of children thrusts him into the global spotlight and transforms him from anonymous donor to unconventional family man.

Director: Craig Downing

1:02:00

## DOCUMENTARY FEATURES



### Grains Of Sand

Shot across eight years, the film captures a group of remarkable women entering their nineties—revealing creativity, resilience, and visibility where society often looks away.

Director: Sarah Anne Gross

1:25:00



### If These Walls Could Rock

Rock stars checked in, trashed rooms, and made history at the Sunset Marquis—the story behind rock 'n' roll's most infamous hideaway.

Directors: Tyler Measom

1:30:00

Craig Williams



### How To Kill A Mermaid: The Linnea Mills Story

A true-crime documentary exploring the death of 18-year-old Linnea Mills during a 2020 cold-water scuba dive in Montana's Glacier National Park. Using never-before-seen footage, it reexamines the fatal dive and investigation, offering an intimate portrait of a life cut short.

Director: Damon Ristau

2:15:00



### Jimmy & The Demons

Celebrated artist 80-year-old Jimmy Grashow tackles the biggest commission of his life, navigating obsession, surprises, and self-discovery with humor, heart and angst as he seeks meaning and truth within his extraordinary masterpiece.

Director: Cindy Meehl

1:32:00



### Road To Liberty- Through Their Eyes

"Road to Liberty-Through Their Eyes" captures the Patriots' struggle for Independence against the mightiest nation in the world in the months leading up to Christmas 1776. It's a truly remarkable story of perseverance, survival, and triumph.

Director: Jill A. Hargrave

0:58:00

## DOCUMENTARY FEATURES



### Summer Of '83

The most star-studded edition of the College World Series pitted a juggernaut Texas team loaded with future major league pitchers against an upstart Alabama team with no pedigree, but the best hitter in the country.

Directors: Gaspar González 0:51:00  
Castor Fernandez



### The Slave In Your Backyard: The Local Reality Of Human Trafficking

The Slave in Your Backyard exposes the hidden reality of human trafficking in everyday communities.

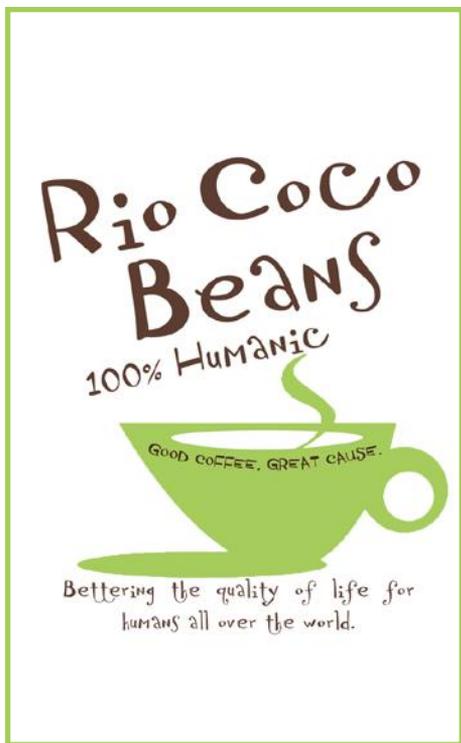
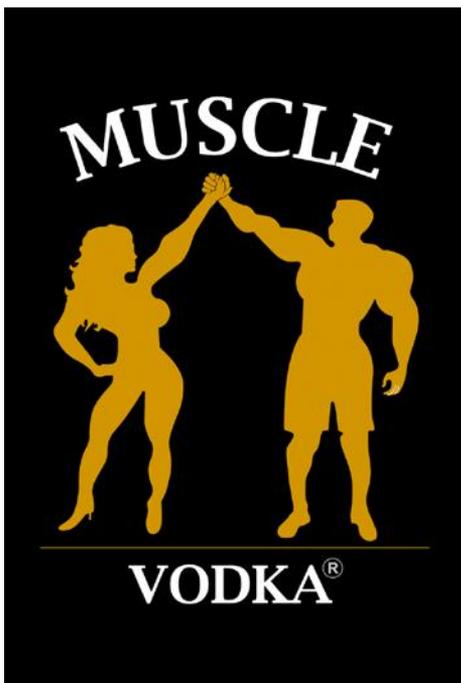
Directors: Daniel Fisher 1:16:00  
T. Scott Reeves



### Yonsei

Rachel explores her Japanese American family history, uncovering a WWII incarceration camp love story while questioning the ethics of turning family trauma into art.

Directors: Jeff Mizushima 0:36:00  
Rachel Michiko Whitney



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## NARRATIVE FEATURE



### **A Book Of Freedom: The Confessions Of Francisco Menéndez**

Escaping slavery in colonial Carolina, Francisco Menéndez becomes a leader in Spanish Florida, founding North America's first sanctioned free Black settlement and emerging as a hero against the British. Part of a Double Feature, shown with the documentary, Florida's Forgotten Fort.

Directors: H. James Gilmore      0:49:00  
and the Students of the Cinematic Arts major at Flagler College



### **BONDING**

Three estranged siblings reunite at a remote Colorado ranch, each hiding a secret agenda. As tensions rise under the sway of a powerful tech billionaire, buried wounds resurface and loyalties begin to fracture.

Director: Victoria Trofimenko      1:35:00



### **Florida's Forgotten Fort**

*Florida's Forgotten Fort* chronicles the legacy of Fort Mose-- America's first free Black community and the final destination of the original underground railroad, where those escaping the horrors of British slavery ran south to Saint Augustine. Documentary short shown as a double feature along with A Book Of Freedom.

Director: H. James Gilmore      0:22:00



### **Guardian Of The Field**

When six-year-old Yasna vanishes, retired environmentalist Ahmad Piran leads a search that unravels secrets and tensions within the village. A suspenseful, cinematic exploration of choice, consequence, and the human heart.

Director: Mohamadreza Kheradmandan      1:44:00



### **House Of Abraham**

Haunted by her mother's death, Dee checks into a secluded retreat that is home to a mysterious cult that promises a way out. All is not what it seems and she must plan an escape before it is too late. Special Screening of music video, Lucy, follows the film.

Director: Lisa Belcher      1:30:00



### **Love & Karma**

A worldly and successful woman reconnects with her 4th grade crush at her school reunion in the Philippines. The story doesn't end at the credits... join us for a reception with Filipino-inspired bites and Q&A with producer Celeste Friedman at Rick's Cafe in the Lobby.

Director: Giovannie Espiritu      1:32:00

## NARRATIVE FEATURE



### Lucy

The music video accompaniment to the film House of Abraham.

Director: Lisa Belcher

0:06:00



### The Legend Of Juan Jose Mundo

Based on a true story. Suburban New York, 1984. When Julie's family hosts a magnetic Spanish exchange student, she falls hard for his charm — only to question whether what she feels is truly love.

Director: Michael Walker

1:34:00



### Mr. Burton

British biographical drama film about the early life of Welsh actor Richard Burton and his relationship with his mentor Philip Burton.

Director: Mark Evans

2:04:00



### Tinā

A woman, grieving her daughter's death in the Christchurch earthquakes, becomes a substitute teacher at an elite school.

Director: Miki Magasiva

2:05:00



### Old Heart

Sixty years after World War 2, American Army Veteran Tom Johnson skips out on his family's plan to send him to assisted living and flies back to the Netherlands to rediscover the love of his life, Jewish translator Sarah van Praag.

Directors: Kirk Wahamaki  
Leslye Witt

1:32:00



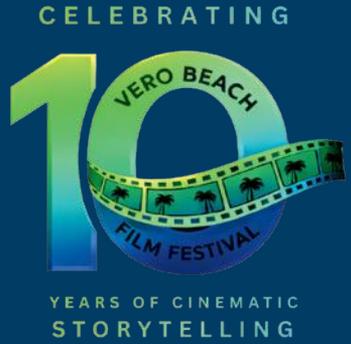
### WHITE IRISH DRINKERS

In 1975 working-class Brooklyn, brothers Danny and Brian survive an abusive home by drifting into petty crime. As Danny plans a bold theft amid a Rolling Stones concert, Brian must choose loyalty—or his secret desire to be an artist.

Director: John Gray

1:56:00

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## DOCUMENTARY SHORTS – ENDURING



### A Legacy Of Sound

At 95, an Englishman sets out to leave something meaningful behind. Through memory, faith, and sound, A Legacy of Sound listens for what endures—and how one life echoes across generations.

Director: Anne-Marie Michel 0:08:00



### Dragon Mom

Follow Laura and her son Alden as they face ableism, challenge limits, and discover courage, joy, and connection, showing how love and resilience redefine what it means to be truly inclusive.

Director: Harrison Buck 0:26:00



TYLER CALL



### Lines Of Determination | The David Wagner Story

After a surfing accident left him paralyzed at 21, David Wagner rebuilt his athletic identity through wheelchair tennis, becoming a world champion, mentor, and advocate who transforms loss into legacy, community, and purpose worldwide impact.

Director: Alex de Montbel 0:28:00



### Mookie, Mo, And Me

A visually striking documentary following a man and his dog on their routine 600-meter open-ocean swim, blending serene imagery with a reflective, philosophical meditation on trauma, loss, nature, and love.

Director: Ryan McInerney 0:28:00



### No Such Thing As Perfect

Kirsta Sendziak is a generous and kind instructor who uses ballet to teach kids life lessons at the School of Classical Ballet in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Director: Susan Young 0:08:00

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## DOCUMENTARY SHORTS - LAND & SEA



### A Vineyard Cinderella

The Cinderella of the Vineyard follows a Greek winemaker's quest to revive the nearly lost Malagousiá grape, a fairytale story of perseverance, heritage, and the magic of restoring a forgotten treasure.

Director: Vassilis Loules 0:10:00



### Return Of The Flamingos

While flamingos have long stood as an iconic symbol of Florida, few remain in the wild within the state. When a small flock appears in Central Florida, believed to be displaced by a recent hurricane, their presence creates wonder and excitement.

Director: Makayla Wheeler 0:03:00



### Born From The Reef

In the remote reaches of Laamu Atoll, a young conservationist races to restore his island's vanishing coral reefs. As warming seas and time slip away his team confronts the devastating question; can paradise be saved before its too late?

Director: Owen Bornhorst 0:20:00



### Shark Kingdom

Dive into the kingdom of sharks with conservationists Jess Cramp, Liv Rose, and Cristina Zenato as they reveal the beauty, power, and vital role these misunderstood predators play in our shared oceans.

Director: Matt Tomaszewski 0:25:00



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# VERO BEACH FILM FESTIVAL



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## COMEDY SHORTS



### AN ANONYMOUS DONATION

A trio of digital vigilantes confront a seemingly ordinary man for his online misdeeds, escalating from subtle intimidation to outrageous stunts, delivering darkly comic consequences, proving that virtual sins can have very real and unexpected results.

Director: Conor McAdam 0:09:00



### Pumpkin Pie

A bakery owner finds her coveted solitude interrupted by a frantic customer seeking a last-minute pie on Thanksgiving morning.

Director: Karin Trachtenberg 0:11:00



### Nonna's Nude

After the death of their grandmother, Lisa and her brothers discover a painting of their aging Nonna. Their bickering forces Lisa to consider the value we place on women's bodies in art and in real life.

Director: Courtney Ulrich 0:07:00



### Roach Trip

An unlikely friendship forms on the road when a woman fleeing her heartbreak unwittingly picks up a 6-legged hitchhiker.

Director: Clare McNulty 0:12:00



### Peace, Quiet & A Little Dirt

A chance encounter between a veteran and rookie leads to an unexpected passing of the torch.

Director: Kevin Samar 0:13:00



### Rule Number 2

A Nantucket realtor makes a potentially catastrophic mistake just minutes before a showing.

Director: Mark Kiefer 0:10:00

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## COMEDY SHORTS



### Tacocunr

One woman's valiant attempt to log into her email.

Director: Erin Brown Thomas 0:02:00



### The Rug

Elderly Edna discovers a discarded throw rug that devours anything left beneath it. After consuming her landlord and a nosy cop, the ever-hungrier rug traps her in her home.

Director: Sean Cisterna 0:11:00



### The Rewrite

Darkly comic noir, set in Hollywood in the late 1940s. A British screenwriter asks his estranged writing partner to read a letter that turns out to be a suicide note. But tempers flare and old wounds re-surface when the estranged partner insists on a major rewrite.

Director: Ken Aguado 0:09:00



### The Summer I Turned...

A young man's entire world changes after an accident in ways no one could have imagined.

Director: Matt Dearborn 0:12:00



### Together Forever

A newly married couple's vows are put to the test in this quirky dark musical comedy, revealing that "forever" may be far more complicated—and hilariously twisted—than they ever imagined.

Director: Lauren Butterfield 0:09:00



## DRAMATIC SHORTS – PERSPECTIVES



### Cascades

On their 30th anniversary, Marcus and Denise confront the challenge of loving differently, struggling to balance devotion to their adult child with the need to let go—testing their marriage at a pivotal crossroads.

Director: Brian Russell

0:14:00



### Over Again

Sparks ignite between a singer-songwriter and a captivated spectator at a music club, blurring the line between destiny and déjà vu—are they meant for a future together, or a past that echoes in time?

Director: Jeffrey Scott Brack

0:15:00



### Marina

Deaf nine-year-old Lucho tests his friendship with a free-spirited kitchen worker after he makes a mistake that sets off a chain of unintended consequences. A tender story of trust, forgiveness, and being truly seen.

Director: Luis Garcia

0:17:00



### Selfie, Please

Two sisters, one with Down Syndrome, clash over love, attention, and dreams. A single mishap shatters their family's balance, ultimately teaching lessons in acceptance, reconciliation, and the profound bonds that hold them together.

Director: Anu Singh Choudhary

0:22:00



### Never Too Late

When Cliff's only companion—a virtual assistant—shuts down in a future where the air itself is unbreathable, a 70-year-old man's cry for help to a faraway support desk becomes a haunting search for meaning and human connection.

Director: Colleen Davie Janes

0:18:00



### We Need To Talk

Married couple Tom and Claire sit in yet another session with a counselor. But this one is going to be different...

Director: Andrea M. Catinella

0:07:00

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## DRAMATIC SHORTS – THE UNEXPECTED



### A GUEST IN MY COUNTRY

An immigrant Uber driver takes an upscale couple across town, and the drama that unfolds among them reveals truths they all would have preferred stayed hidden.

Director: John Gray

0:16:00



### Glass Eyes

After a night gone wrong with the undead, a man is left to confront grief, guilt, and loss, reflecting on love, mortality, and the lingering shadows of a life forever changed.

Director: Daniel Meyers

0:08:00



### Fortune

In this Southern Gothic tale of greed, a blue-collar timber yard worker miraculously wins a massive lottery jackpot.

Director: Matthew Perkins

0:28:00



### How To Sleep In The Cold

What begins as a chance encounter between a rich, grumpy old man and a young, resilient homeless woman, becomes a story about survival – for both of them.

Director: Fred Zara

0:18:00



TYLER CALL



### My HbYJOPK [New York]

Tanya and Tony, Macedonian immigrants in New York City, face a fateful encounter that forces high-stakes decisions, threatening their safety, their dreams, and the lives of those they love.

Director: Alrick Brown

0:17:00



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# NEXTUP! STUDENT FILMS - K-12



## He Follows

A stranger follows Natalie to school one morning, putting both her and her friend Tai in danger.

Director: Keira Acevedo

0:01:00



## Striped

A relationship is threatened when a freak allergy gets in the way.

Director: Aidyn-Lucia Smith

0:04:00



## Lost Time

A school girl reminisces on lost times by rewatching the videos her film class made together a long time ago.

Director: Layla English

0:03:00



## The Fight

A man must defend himself against a crazy guy with unnatural powers.

Director: Peter Coyne

0:01:00



KYMANI AUSTIN



## The Warning

A man lost in the woods and is warned by a stranger about a cult worshipping the wendigo

Director: Logan Smith

0:03:00



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# NEXTUP! STUDENT FILMS - UNIVERSITY



## Aisle Of Man

After realizing the book they both need has missing pages, two rival students venture through the library halls to find them, only to discover a lost love letter and an unexpected connection.

Director: Briana Rivera

0:17:00



## Paper Warriors

When a pair of scissors sundered their home, two paper samurai—a reckless pupil and his tempered sensei—must reconcile their differences and learn to rely on one another if they wish to survive.

Directors: Aisa Uchimura  
Brianna Salazar

0:06:00

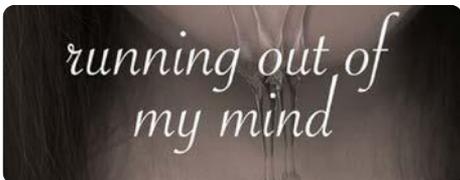


## Little Dark Rooms

When a 35-year-old missing child case resurfaces, forensic FBI artist Joseph Vernet becomes consumed by uncovering the truth. As buried secrets emerge, his relentless pursuit threatens to unravel both the mystery — and his family life.

Director: Nico Wilcox Cano

0:16:00



## running out of my mind

Trapped in a cycle of abuse, a woman's fractured psyche blurs the line between reality and hallucination as she fights to reclaim her body and sanity from her controlling boyfriend.

Director: Abby Bryan

0:05:00



## Love You More

Fueled by her love for her son, a struggling young mom makes the difficult decision to uproot her life to escape her overbearing mother.

Director: Lauren Mulé

0:09:00



## There Is Always Tomorrow

Maria Giglio, trapped in a Miami apartment by agoraphobia, shuts out the world. When a delivery worker slips polaroid glimpses under her door, a fragile connection sparks, challenging her fears.

Directors: Jonathan Arredondo  
Alessandra Greco

0:15:00

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# VERO VISIONS



## A Tale of Two Tails

Malibu liked quiet mornings... until a new voice changed everything. *A Tale Of Two Tails* is the heartwarming beginning of Malibu & Roxie's friendship — where big hearts and small heroes' shine.

Director: Camy De Mario 0:02:00



## Change For A Hundred

The bank robbery of a lifetime leads the Kelly twins on a hilarious mission to cash in on an absurd haul.

Director: Oswmer Louis 0:14:00



## Auschwitz Explained: Inside History's Most Notorious Death Camp

Commemorating 80 years since liberation, this documentary traces Auschwitz's evolution from forced labor camp to Holocaust epicenter, preserving survivor testimony and original footage to honor over 1.1 million victims and ensure history is never forgotten.

Director: Bruno Soltic 0:10:00



## Job Trial

Fresh out of prison, Santos seeks a new job and a second chance with his son—but a tense interview forces him to confront the past he's trying to leave behind.

Director: Daniel Hagler 0:10:00



## Blowing Up

She's grieving. She's hollow. And on her birthday, everything finally bursts.

Director: A.J. Fitzgerald 0:25:00



## Orange Blossom Summer

Rising 15-year-old artist Bella Delilah debuts *Orange Blossom Summer*, a heartfelt ballad by her father, inspired by Florida's Treasure Coast. Her moving performance and cinematic video capture youthful emotion, natural beauty, and a deep sense of place.

Directors: Adriel Perera, Moses Cantu 0:04:00

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# VERO VISIONS



## Scarlet Reckoning

After the suspicious death of a theater director's wife, he begins spiraling into madness. Is Scarlet's apparition stalking him? Are the police close to finding out the truth? Is there escape from a final reckoning?

Director: Rod Costner

0:14:00



## The Mission

Throughout life we encounter a spectrum of challenges and triumphs that shape who we are. It is our mission to navigate through each moment, celebrating the highs, and overcoming the lows.

Director: Lance Glenn

0:06:00

A STRONG & TRUE  
FLORIDA RUM  
PRODUCTION

PROUD TO BE PART OF  
THE VERO BEACH FILM FESTIVAL

**NOXX  
& DUNN**  
★ FLORIDA RUM ★

AVAILABLE AT MAWK WINE & SPIRITS



## To Have & To Fold

When later in life, love at first sight, goes to the movies.

Director: Mike L. Germaine

0:05:00



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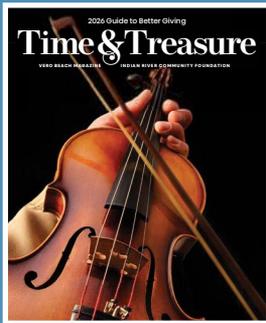
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