

VAA PRESENTS

VIET FILM FEST

10

11-13

19

SCREENING GUIDE

AMC ORANGE 30, CALIFORNIA
www.VietFilmFest.com

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11	11:00 am - 12:30 pm	SET 1: SEARCHING FOR A PLACE *High School Screening (Students with ID get in for FREE)
	12:30 pm - 12:50 pm	Kai Lee Hague/ USA/ 2019/ 8 min Journey of Wanderers ----- Huynh Anh Duy/ Vietnam/ 2019/ 16 min Push ----- Trilina Mai/ USA/ 2019/ 4 min Tiger Child ----- Brian Nguyen & Oran Zegman/ USA/ 2019/ 4 min Table Stakes ----- Khai Nguyen/ USA/ 2019/ 23 min Ramadan ----- Joseph Mills, Abdulgani Mohamad, Samir Nguyen & Yuhanz Aly/ USA/ 2018/ 32 min
	11:00 am - 12:40 pm	SET 1 Q&A
	12:40 pm - 1:10 pm	SET 2: LONGING TO CONNECT *Senior Screening (Seniors Age 60+ get in for FREE)
	7:00 pm - 9:00 pm	The Garden of Mr. Vong ----- Dieu Hao/ Germany/ 2017/ 18 min Walk Run Cha Cha ----- Laura Nix/ USA/ 2019/ 20 min Blue Noise ----- Kevin Manh/ USA/ 2018/ 2 min Finding the Virgo ----- Barre Fong/ USA/ 2019/ 49 min The Undeniable Force of Kho Khanh ----- Cindy Nguyen/ Portugal, USA/ 2018/ 10 min
	9:00 pm - 9:30 pm	SET 2 Q&A
	10:00 pm - 12:00 am	OPENING NIGHT RECEPTION at Saddle Ranch Chop House at The Outlets at Orange [Ticketed Event]
	11:00 am - 12:30 pm	SET 3: MY MR. WIFE (OPENING NIGHT)
	12:30 pm - 12:50 pm	My Mr. Wife (Chàng Vợ Của Em) ----- Charlie Nguyen/ Vietnam/ 2018/ 120 min
	12:00 pm - 1:50 pm	SET 3 Q&A
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12	1:50 pm - 2:10 pm	SET 4: YOUTH IN MOTION *FREE and open to the public
	1:00 pm - 2:40 pm	Youth in Motion is a series of skills-based workshops led by filmmaking mentors and professionals to support youth voices, stories, and perspectives in the community through the art of digital films.
	2:40 pm - 3:00 pm	SET 4 Q&A
	3:00 pm - 4:30 pm	SET 5: LE VAN KHOA: A LIFETIME OF ARTS
	4:30 pm - 4:50 pm	Ephemeral (Một thoáng qua) ----- Phuc Khang Nguyen/ USA/ 2019/ 16 min The Bridge Between Vietnam Traditional Music and the World (Cầu Nối Cả Âm Nhạc Dân Tộc Việt Nam Với Thế Giới) ----- Hung Nguyen/ Vietnam - USA/ 2018/ 13 min Le Van Khoa: A Lifetime of Arts ----- Thu Tran/ USA/ 2018/ 77 min
	5:00 pm - 6:00 pm	SET 5 Q&A
	3:30 pm - 5:50 pm	SET 6: LIKE AN OLD HOUSE (Cô Căn Nhà Năm Nghe Nắng Mưa)
	5:50 pm - 6:20 pm	American Girl ----- Martin Tran/ USA/ 2018/ 3 min Like an Old House (Cô Căn Nhà Năm Nghe Nắng Mưa) ----- Mai The Hiep/ Vietnam/ 2017/ 92 min
	7:00 pm - 8:40 pm	SET 6 Q&A
	8:40 pm - 9:10 pm	SET 8: HANGING ON, LETTING GO
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13	10:00 pm - 12:00 am	Tundra ----- Carol Nguyen/ Canada/ 2018/ 10 min In Full Bloom ----- Maegan Houang/ USA/ 2019/ 11 min Jasmine Lane ----- Stéphane Ly-Cuong/ France/ 2018/ 21 min Little Father (Petit Père) ----- Thomas Appolaire/ France/ 2017/ 6 min An American Family ----- Kieu-Anh Truong/ USA-Vietnam/ 2018/ 19 min No More Than This ----- Hai Di Nguyen/ United Kingdom/ 2019/ 20 min
	11:00 am - 12:30 pm	SET 8 Q&A
	12:30 pm - 12:50 pm	FILM-MAKING PANEL *FREE and open to the public
	11:00 am - 12:20 pm	SET 9: HEAVEN AND EARTH *Free Screening
	12:20 pm - 12:50 pm	Heaven and Earth ----- Oliver Stone/ USA/ 1993/ 140 min
	1:00 pm - 2:30 pm	SET 9 Q&A
	2:30 pm - 2:50 pm	SET 10: SONG LANG
	3:15 pm - 3:35 pm	Song Lang ----- Leon Le/ Vietnam/ 2018/ 100 min
	3:30 pm - 5:30 pm	SET 10 Q&A
	5:30 PM - 5:50 PM	SET 11: THE HAPPINESS OF MOTHER (Hạnh Phúc Của Mẹ)
MONDAY, OCTOBER 14	5:30 PM - 5:50 PM	The Happiness of Mother (Hạnh Phúc Của Mẹ) ----- Huynh Dong/ Vietnam/ 2019/ 87 min
	6:00 PM - 6:20 PM	SET 11 Q&A and Short panel about Autism
	6:30 PM - 7:00 PM	SET 12: WHILE I BREATHE, I HOPE
	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM	Flagged ----- Mimi Nguyen/ Canada/ 2017/ 10 min While I Breathe, I Hope ----- Emily Harrod/ USA/ 2018/ 72 min
	7:30 PM - 8:00 PM	SET 12 Q&A
	8:00 PM - 8:30 PM	SET 13: MAKING LOVE VISIBLE
	8:30 PM - 9:00 PM	Searching for the None ----- Jean-Louis Droulers/ USA/ 2018/ 12 min Picking Things Up (Nợ Lại Tình Xưa) ----- Celine Tsai/ Canada/ 2019/ 13 min Hiếu ----- Richard Van/ USA/ 2018/ 24 min Thanksgiving ----- Van Nguyen/ USA/ 2018/ 11 min Red Thread ----- Yijun Pan/ USA/ 2019/ 3 min Pelvicachromis ----- Jasmin Luu/ Germany/ 2018/ 12 min Little Sunny (Em Thấy Gi Khí Trời Tắt Nắng) ----- Tran Lam Phuoc Tai/ Vietnam/ 2018/ 18 min
	9:00 PM - 9:30 PM	SET 13 Q&A
	10:00 PM - 11:00 PM	SET 14: MADE IN VIETNAM
	11:00 PM - 12:00 AM	Made in Vietnam ----- Thi Vo/ Canada/ 2017/ 104 min
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15	11:00 PM - 12:00 AM	SET 14 Q&A
	12:00 AM - 1:00 AM	SET 15: THE BLOODY HAND (Bàn Tay Máu)
	1:00 AM - 2:00 AM	The Kite Under the Rain (Cánh Diều Mưa) ----- Cuong Ngo/ Thailand/ 2018/ 27 min The Bloody Hand (Bàn Tay Máu) ----- Quoc Vo/ USA/ 2019/ 95 min
	2:00 AM - 3:00 AM	SET 15 Q&A
	3:00 AM - 4:00 AM	SET 16: SEADRIFT
	4:00 AM - 5:00 AM	Hoài (Ongoing, Memory) ----- Quyên Nguyen-Le/ USA/ 2018/ 12 min Seadrift ----- Tim Tsai/ USA/ 2019/ 69 min
	5:00 AM - 6:00 AM	SET 16 Q&A
	6:00 AM - 7:00 AM	PANEL *FREE and open to the public
	7:00 AM - 8:00 AM	SET 17: THE IMMORTAL (Người Bất Tử)
	8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	The Immortal (Người Bất Tử) ----- Victor Vu/ Vietnam/ 2018/ 126 min
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16	9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	SET 17 Q&A/Audience Choice Awards

GENERAL INFORMATION

All programs are subject to change and/or cancellation without prior notice. For the most updated program and general information, please visit our website at www.vietfilmfest.com.

All works presented in the festival are unrated. Please consult program synopsis contained herein. Parental guidance is strongly recommended for films noted with "Viewer discretion is advised."

Community Screenings

Free for all students with ID and Seniors (60+)

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11, 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM: "Set 1: Searching for a Place"

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11, 11:00 AM - 12:40 PM: "Set 2: Longing to Connect"

Free and open to the public

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2019 11:00AM-12:30PM: "Set 4: Youth in Motion"

Location

AMC Orange 30 (The Outlets at Orange)
20 City Blvd., West Suite E
Orange, CA 92683

Ticket Information

All-Access Badges: \$350

Opening/Closing Night Screenings: \$15

General Screening: \$13

Senior Citizens and Students: \$11

Group Discount (10+): \$11 (except Opening/Closing screenings)

Opening Night Reception at Saddle Ranch Chop House: \$65

Saturday Night Party & Awards Ceremony at Water Grill South Coast Plaza: \$80

T-shirts: \$10

All tickets can be bought online at www.VietFilmFest.com
OR in person at the theater

ABOUT VAALA

Founded in 1991 by a group of Vietnamese American journalists, artists and friends, the Vietnamese American Arts & Letters Association (VAALA) is a community-based, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to connect and enrich communities through Vietnamese art and culture.

For over 25 years, VAALA has organized numerous cultural events and programming such as art exhibitions, book signings, performances, lectures, festivals and art classes, at little to no cost, for the community. Programs such as Gallery Beyond Walls engage community members through non-traditional mediums and facilitate dialogue and storytelling with the support of professional artists.

VAALA's premier program is the annual Viet Film Fest, the largest and only film festival in the world that celebrates Vietnamese stories and voices in cinema. Starting in 2003 with an audience of several hundred in auditoriums at the UCI and UCLA, Viet Film Fest (VFF) now draws an annual onsite audience of over 5,000 people. It is the only international film festival with the mission of celebrating Vietnamese voices in cinema. Situated in the largest Vietnamese community outside of Vietnam, the festival features films by persons of Vietnamese descent or productions that focus on the Vietnamese experience. Viet Film Fest has drawn Academy Award nominated directors from France and Canada, as well as films from Israel, South Korea, Japan, Brazil, and Germany.

Please consider donating at www.vaala.org to support our mission.
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PANELS AT VIET FILM FEST 2019

All panels are free and open to the public.

Saturday, October 12

5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

From Script to Screen: Pathways and Possibilities for Vietnamese Filmmakers

Panelists: Leon Le (Director, *Song Lang*), Maegan Houang (Director, *In Full Bloom*), Thien A. Pham (Producer, *Actress Wanted*), and Van Nguyen (Director, *Thanksgiving*).

Moderator: Quyên Nguyen-Le.

How does a movie get made? In the age of digital media and global distribution, the pathways are numerous - yet Vietnamese filmmakers remain largely underrepresented within the pantheon of filmmakers making films about Vietnam or with Vietnamese subjects. Join us for a panel of multidisciplinary Vietnamese American filmmakers, discussing their ongoing professional journeys and the various processes behind the huge endeavor of making movies intergenerationally, transnationally, and across art forms.

Sunday, October 13

12:30 pm - 1:00 pm

Autism: Building a Community of Supporters and Advocates

Panelists: TBA.

Moderator: Thuy Vo-Dang

This panel addresses the underlying challenge presented in the film, *The Happiness of Mother*, by bringing together a group of advocates whose experiences demonstrate the impact we can make when we address autism through education, therapy, and community programs. Join us for an informative session and learn how to build a safety net for not only individuals on the autism spectrum, but their families and caregivers as well.

5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Reconciling Homelands: The Search for Belonging Among Refugee Communities

Panelists: Quyên Nguyen-Le (Director, *Hoài*), Tim Tsai (Director, *Seadrift*), Dr. Thao Ha (Adviser/Associate Producer, *Seadrift*), Allison Vo (Youth Organizing Coordinator, VietRISE).

Moderator: Yvonne Tran

Using *Seadrift* and *Hoài (Ongoing, Memory)* to frame our discussion, we will examine the past and present experiences of refugee and immigrant communities and how they reconcile their identities, cultures, and lives in a new home that doesn't fully accept them. We will also hear about the current state of immigration policies and the work to empower these communities in Orange County by VietRISE in order to chart a path forward.

SET 1 SEARCHING FOR A PLACE

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm

*High School Screening (Students with ID get in for FREE)



Embarko

Kai Lee Hague/ USA/ 2019/ 8 min

When two delivery dogs on a job discover buried treasure in the mountains, their conflicting interests lead to dire consequences.



Journey of Wanderers

Huynh Anh Duy/ Vietnam/ 2019/ 16 min

After an accident, Alon & Hung, two poor students, are locked outside their apartment. The situation forces them to take a journey filled with detours to another friend's house. Through their fun, action packed adventures, they meet friends and foes, and form a stronger friendship.



Push

Trilina Mai/ USA/ 2019/ 4 min

This short animation explores a grandfather and his grandson's fun and touching adventures through life.

Tiger Child

Brian Nguyen & Oran Zegman/ USA/ 2019/ 4 min

Tony, an Asian American teen, seeks solace and comfort in his repressed life.



Table Stakes

Khai Nguyen/ USA/ 2019/ 23 min

Resourceful African American comic book creators, Joe Thompson and Chris Adams of "Fracture Comics," confront challenges and stereotypes while pursuing their dreams. They risk their personal lives and health to pursue their passion, while also transforming the manga comic book industry.



Ramadan

Joseph Mills, Abdulgani Mohamad,
Samir Nguyen & Yuhaniz Aly/ USA/ 2018/ 32 min

Three Cham American high school students chronicle their experiences as Asian American Muslims and share how they celebrate Ramadan, the Muslim Holy Month.



SET 2 LONGING TO CONNECT

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11, 11:00 am - 12:40 pm

*Senior Screening (Seniors Age 60+ get in for FREE)



The Garden of Mr. Vong

Dieu Hao Do/ Germany/ 2017/ 18 min

The end of the Vietnam War in 1975 saw more than 1.6 million people flee the country by sea. One of these so-called boat people was Chuon Sam Vong, who now lives in Bückeburg, Germany. Gardening is his way to reclaim his old homeland.



Walk Run Cha Cha

Laura Nix/ USA/ 2019/ 20 min

Paul and Millie Cao reunited in Los Angeles after being separated by the Vietnam War. Forty years later, they become ballroom dancers to reconnect and make up for lost time.



Blue Noise

Kevin Manh/ USA/ 2018/ 2 min

A personal piece that deals with Asian American introspection, it is framed by a voicemail by the director for a cousin he never met.

Finding the Virgo

Barre Fong/ USA/ 2019/ 49 min

Vietnamese boat refugees were rescued at sea by the U.S.-based cargo ship LNG Virgo in 1980. Once settled in the United States, one family of survivors embarks on a decades-long search for the captain and crew of the ship that gave them new life.



The Undeniable Force of Khó Khăn

Cindy Nguyen/ Portugal, USA/ 2018/ 10 min

The Undeniable Force of Khó Khăn dwells on translation – that universal human yearning to understand and be understood. The symbolic actions and conversations between a mother and daughter reveal the secret language of refugee and immigrant survival: hy sinh (sacrifice), khó khăn (suffering), perseverance (chiếu khó), and success (thành công).



SET 3

MY MR. WIFE (Chàng Vợ Của Em)

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Opening Night



My Mr. Wife (Chàng Vợ Của Em)

Charlie Nguyen/ Vietnam/ 2018/ 120 min

In *My Mr. Wife*, a drama filled with comedic twists, seasoned director Charlie Nguyen skillfully captures parallel, but interconnecting, stories about chance encounters. Inspired by the English novel *Busy Woman Seeks Wife* by Annie Sanders, it has been cleverly adapted into a timely Vietnamese story. Phuong Anh Dao, who also starred in Viet Film Fest 2018 opening night film *Summer in Closed Eyes*, shines as Mai, a competitive career woman. She hides the fact that she is the daughter of a famous singer and is intent on proving she can succeed on her own merits. As a workaholic, Mai realizes she needs help organizing her domestic affairs and hires a caring housekeeper who turns out to be more than she imagines. An annoying man she keeps running into during her jogs in the park turns out to be another surprise. Meanwhile, after their parents pass away, Hung, a sensitive bookstore owner played by one of Vietnam's most famous and versatile actors, Thai Hoa, is a doting, but overbearing, brother to his teenage sister, Ngoc. Desiring independence from Hung, she inadvertently pushes him to overcome a past trauma and confront his fears by working to fulfill his own dreams.

The film artfully plays with role reversal and contrasts images of a slower paced nostalgic city that values traditions compared to a rapidly modernizing metropolis driven by capitalist rewards. Talented in their own productions, director Charlie Nguyen and actor Thai Hoa are also known as the magical duo that have transformed Vietnamese cinema with other blockbuster hits. Phuong Anh Dao holds her own adding luminescence to their creative powers, which translates well in any language. Ultimately this film, which won the 2018 Golden Kite Award for Best Feature Film, is a remarkably heartwarming narrative about intertwined relationships and a belief that it's possible to find affirmation and solace when we least expect it. - Linda Trinh Vo

SET 4

YOUTH IN MOTION

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm

*FREE and open to the public

Youth in Motion is a series of skills-based workshops led by filmmaking mentors and professionals to support youth voices, stories, and perspectives in the community through the art of digital films.



Hard

Avery Trinh-Tran/ USA/ 2019/ 3 min

A desperate hypebeast thug tries to put an innocent teen's life at risk.



Growing Home

Jenny Tan/ USA/ 2019/ 4 min

Home is not a place, it is a feeling. But sometimes, it is a place.



Returning

Chey Yen/ USA/ 2019/ 8 min

Jamie, an Asian American transmasculine person, attempts to come out again to their mother for the second time, years after the tumultuous aftermath from the first attempt.



Love Your People (Thương Dân)

Stevie Vu/ USA/ 2019/ 17 min

For decades, Vietnamese people have made homes for themselves in Little Saigon. Now, they're fighting to keep it.



Come Again

Jennellee Samkhem/ USA/ 2019/ 5 min

Breaking language barriers can be a difficult and daunting task; however, with just enough motivation, a grandson can do just that to reconnect with his grandmother.

LE VAN KHOA: A LIFETIME OF ARTS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 12:00 pm - 1:50 pm



Ephemeral (Một Thoáng Qua)

Phuc Khang Nguyen/ USA/ 2019/ 16 min

Employing a splitscreen juxtaposition of images throughout, *Ephemeral* is cinéma vérité reflecting on the experience that many refugees and undocumented immigrants go through because of war and bloodshed.

The Bridge Between Vietnam Traditional Music and the World

(Cầu Nối Của Âm Nhạc Dân Tộc Việt Nam Với Thế Giới)

Hung Nguyen/ Vietnam - USA/ 2018/ 13 min

This documentary is about artist Ngo Hong Quang's challenging journey to bring Vietnamese traditional music to the world and how it is received. It all starts with Ngo Hong Quang's passion for music. After years of hard practice, Quang not only mastered Dan Nhi or Viet-



namese two-string fiddle that is often thought to be a simple and monotonous traditional instrument, but also creates rich and complex music with it.

Ngo Hong Quang became a lecturer of Traditional Music at the Vietnam National Academy of Music after he graduated from the same school. However, he did not want to limit himself as a music teacher; he dreamed of doing something different with Dan Nhi as well as other Vietnamese traditional music instruments in order to showcase unique Vietnamese arts and culture to both domestic and international audiences. The summers of 2006 and 2007

were his most memorable ones when he had two European tours that last from three to five months in Ireland, Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands. During these tours, he played various traditional instruments and sang folk songs for audiences made up of overseas Vietnamese and local foreigners. Music became the bridge to connect people together with love.

The local audience was astonished at the Vietnamese traditional music. They attentively listened during the course of his ninety-minute show and later asked him a lot of interesting questions that excited and inspired him to explore more in his musical journey later.

Thanks to that encouragement, Quang has been performing traditional musical instruments for foreign audiences. On Tet (Vietnamese lunar new year holiday) 2008, Quang was greatly honored to have a fifteen-minute performance at Amsterdam's Royal Theatre Carré.

Translated by Thai Ha.



Le Van Khoa: A Lifetime of Arts

Thu Tran/ USA/ 2018/ 77 min

Lê Văn Khoa, a composer, photographer and educator, came to the United States as a war refugee from Vietnam in May 1975. This documentary movie highlights over 65 years of his journey and devotion to preserve Vietnamese culture, music and arts; his nurturing of younger generations to become music performers and composers; and his lifelong commitment to transcend Vietnamese music beyond the borders of a country to reach the whole world.

SET 6

LIKE AN OLD HOUSE (Có Căn Nhà Năm Nghe Nắng Mưa)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1:00 pm - 2:40 pm

American Girl

Martin Tran/ USA/ 2018/ 3 min

When the time comes to put away childish things...



Like an Old House (Có Căn Nhà Năm Nghe Nắng Mưa)

Mai The Hiep/ Vietnam/ 2017/ 92 min

Directed by Mai The Hiep with a screenplay written with Tram Nguyen Binh Nguyen, *Like an Old House* spins a crazy tale of crisscrossed fates. When a young man named Son gets into a car accident with an old woman, he is transported back to a time of unresolved deaths. Awakening from this coma dream, Son believes Mrs. Tu is his long-lost mom and she thinks he is Nam, her son missing for 30 years. One must guess if this is a ghost story, a murder mystery, or a case of mistaken identity. Actress Kim Xuan delivers a knockout performance for a mother mad for the truth. - Long Bui



SET 8 HANGING ON, LETTING GO

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm



Tundra

Carol Nguyen/ Canada/ 2018/ 10 min

Trying to cope with her loss, a mother dreams and hallucinates about her daughter, while also contending with her emotionally distant son.



Little Father (Petit Père)

Thomas Appolaire/ France/ 2017/ 6 min

A 30-year-old divorced father returns home to live with his father. Their unstable relationship is revealed through their perspectives on each other's personal lives. What would happen if we told our loved ones everything on our minds?

In Full Bloom

Maegan Houang/ USA/ 2019/ 11 min



In Full Bloom is a surrealist short film about Cecile, played by Kieu Chinh (*The Joy Luck Club*), who is overcoming the loss of a partner while living within the parameters of a female, Vietnamese immigrant. Cecile is an agoraphobic hoarder, paradoxically practicing what she loves – gardening – indoors without the help of direct sunlight. Her gardening and hoarding habits force her to make an unnerving, life-changing decision.



An American Family

Kieu-Anh Truong/ USA-Vietnam/ 2018/ 19 min

An African American mother, her teenage son, and their expecting Filipina tenant form an unorthodox family over quiet moments in a shared kitchen.



Jasmine Lane (Allée des Jasmins)

Stéphane Ly-Cuong/ France/ 2018/ 21 min

In the early 1960s, Loan, a young Vietnamese woman, and Pierre, her Eurasian husband, are relocated to a village in Auvergne, under a resettlement program for French nationals from Indochina. Loan believes that the situation is only temporary and that she will return soon to Vietnam.



No More Than This

Hai Di Nguyen/ United Kingdom/ 2019/ 20 min

No More Than This is a surrealist film about Nam Nguyen, a 57-year-old Vietnamese man who lives alone and works as a museum guard. Nam has a daughter from a failed marriage that he seldom sees and is socially isolated. Though he has called Britain his home for years, he feels invisible and does not feel he belongs in society. One day his worst nightmare appears to have become reality – that he no longer exists.

SET 9 HEAVEN AND EARTH

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 3:30 pm - 5:50 pm

*Free Screening

Heaven & Earth

Oliver Stone/ USA/ 1993/ 140 min

Viet Film Fest 2019 retrospective film is *Heaven and Earth*, which was originally released in 1993. It is the third trilogy on the Vietnam War directed by Academy Award winner Oliver Stone and based on two memoirs by Le Ly Hayslip, *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places* (1989) and *Child of War, Woman of Peace* (1993). With an all-star cast, it features famed actor Joan Chen playing Hayslip's mother, Academy Award winner Haing S. Ngor as her father, Academy Award winner Tommy Lee Jones as her husband, and legendary Debbie Reynolds as her mother-in-law. Cast in the strenuous lead role was Hiep Thi Le, an unknown actor who was a UC Davis student at the time, but connected to the story because she was a refugee who escaped Vietnam by boat. This special showing honors Le (1971-2017), who is one of the first Vietnamese Americans to play a leading role in a Hollywood film. The film includes a list of other Vietnamese American actors, including favorites Dustin Nguyen and Long Nguyen.

In contrast to the Vietnam War films from Hollywood that often take the viewpoint of the American soldier, *Heaven and Earth* shows the impact of the war from the perspective of Vietnamese civilians, particularly a woman from a rural village. The film shows that as in most civil wars shaped by foreign intervention, it is not only soldiers on the front line who carry the burden of warfare, but also civilians who are affected by its legacies. This heart-wrenching film chronicles Hayslip's journey of survival in Vietnam and her struggle to rebuild a new life in Southern California. It is a testament that from the ashes of war, it's possible to find peace and forgiveness. This FREE film showing will be followed by a Q&A with author and humanitarian Le Ly Hayslip. - Linda Trinh Vo



SET 10 SONG LANG

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 7:00 pm - 8:40 pm



Song Lang

Leon Le/ Vietnam/ 2018/ 100 min

Song Lang showcases director Leon Le's vivid imagination as a nuanced filmmaker who has keen sensibilities, enabling him to captivate an audience with a haunting story, exquisite music, and mesmerizing visuals. Masterfully played by newcomer Lien Binh Phat, Dung works for an underground loan shark as a debt collector and is jaded by his task of inflicting pain to extract payments. Eager to please, cải lương (modern Vietnamese folk opera) performer Linh Phung, played by popular V-pop singer Isaac, has yet to experience profound love or heartbreak, which his mentor informs him is needed to give a genuinely great performance. Their lives intersect when Dung threatens Linh Phung's cải lương troupe, which is heavily in debt. Dung's ruthless, brooding demeanor is juxtaposed to Linh Phuong's hopeful innocence. Whereas Dung has suppressed his emotions to avoid confronting his tortured past, Linh Phuong is refreshingly sentimental and expressive. Their smoldering attraction is undeniable and in their tender moments roaming the city, they learn of common threads in their disparate lives. These unforgettable encounters are set against the gritty, but alluring backdrop of 1980's Saigon, which is the perfect staging for forging unfathomable bonds.

As a child, Leon Le dreamt of being a cải lương performer, but his hopes were dashed when he immigrated as a teen with his parents to Orange County. Instead he became a successful Broadway musical dancer, but he never forgot his aspirations, which he affectionately interwove into *Song Lang*, his first feature film. Le's utmost devotion and respect to this lyrical art form is evident with the meticulousness in which he revitalizes beloved melodies as well as crafting new lyrics for pivotal scenes in the narrative. *Song Lang* has received rave reviews from international film critics and won prestigious awards at international film festivals and this poetic film is destined to be an iconic classic elevating Vietnamese cinema. - Linda Trinh Vo

SET 11**THE HAPPINESS OF MOTHER**

(Hạnh Phúc Của Mẹ)

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm

The Happiness of Mother (Hạnh Phúc Của Mẹ)

Huynh Dong/ Vietnam/ 2019/ 87 min

The Happiness of Mother depicts the story of a widow with an autistic son. Tue's love for her boy, Tim, is rivaled only by Giang, a close friend who pursues the single mother with total devotion. Yet, she can only think of how to protect the child, especially after learning she is terminally ill. When a television producer offers to showcase the mother-son pair to boost ratings, Tue questions how much the public should know about their situation. What is the difference between entertainment and exploitation? Directed by Huynh Dong with an unforgettable cast, the movie reminds us the love of a mother is never an act. - Long Bui

**SET 12****WHILE I BREATHE, I HOPE**

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 11:00 am - 12:20 pm

Flagged

Mimi Nguyen/ Canada/ 2017/ 10 min

Flagged is a short documentary illustrating the social fragmentation of Vancouver's Vietnamese community, especially the younger generation. Interviewees offer their perspective on the controversial "freedom and heritage" flag (the flag of South Vietnam) that has been used to represent Vietnamese diasporic groups – confronting an unspoken political tension that could divide generations if the issue remains unaddressed.

**While I Breathe, I Hope**

Emily Harrold/ USA/ 2018/ 72 min

"While I breathe, I hope" is a paraphrase from a Latin idiom and the state motto of South Carolina. As the title of director Emily L. Harrold's documentary about politician Bakari Sellers of South Carolina, it reflects a steadfast belief that, even when the legacies of human injustice loom large, sociopolitical justice can be achieved. *While I Breathe, I Hope*, co-produced by Xuan Vu, follows Sellers, an African American, in his 2014 campaign to become South Carolina's Lieutenant Governor. While on the campaign trail, Sellers confronts the racial dynamics of being a black politician in the American South.

During production in June 2015, while this film was originally envisioned to end with the conclusion of Sellers' campaign, a white supremacist murdered nine African Americans at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. As a self-described "child of the Civil Rights movement," Sellers responded to the massacre and the horrific mindset behind it with gravity and eloquence. How he viewed and reacted to other racially-tinged events stems from his education and his upbringing. White supremacy, present before the United States' founding, has been emboldened in recent years. Through the life of one politician, *While I Breathe, I Hope* showcases a deeply personal response to these momentous changes. - Eric Nong

SET 13

MAKING LOVE VISIBLE

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm



Searching for the None

Jean-Louis Droulers/ USA/ 2018/ 12 min

A glance seems to be all it takes for Hunter to dream about spending the rest of his life with someone, despite already having a girlfriend. Plagued by vivid daydreams of finding "the one," he enlists the help of Allie, a certified hypnotherapist, to hypnotize him into believing that he will never find the love of his life. Allie must help him come to the revelation that his idealized version of love does not exist.



Picking Things Up (Nối Lại Tình Xưa)

Celine Tsai/ Canada/ 2019/ 13 min

Picking Things Up takes an introspective look at the quandary between former lovers Mike (Phi Huynh) and Sophie (Christine Nguyen). When Sophie resurfaces six months after leaving Mike for another man, a trial ensues as the two deliberate the prospects of picking up where they left off.



Hiếu

Richard Van/ USA/ 2018/ 24 min

This powerful drama reveals what happens when a Vietnamese American household receives a surprise visit from a long-lost patriarch after he fails at a get-rich-quick scheme.

Thanksgiving

Van Nguyen/ USA/ 2018/ 11 min

A traditional Vietnamese American couple prepares for Thanksgiving dinner. When their son brings home his boyfriend, they consider how to face a situation they never expected.



Red Thread

Yijun Pan/ USA/ 2019/ 3 min

In this artistic short film, a red thread sometimes is not tied only to one person. People leave, that's what they do. After the last goodbye, we will never be the same. This is what love teaches us.



Pelvicachromis

Jasmin Luu/ Germany/ 2018/ 12 min

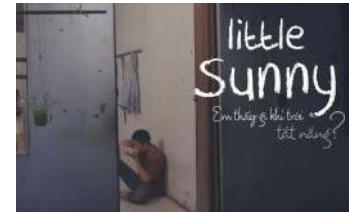
In this experimental short film, Jakob and Melissa are a couple, even though they don't act like lovers. What's going on between Melissa and Jakob?



Little Sunny (Em Thấy Gì Khi Trời Tắt Nắng)

Tran Lam Phuoc Tai/ Vietnam/ 2018/ 18 min

Little Sunny is the story of a blind, young girl living with her brother in a slum. She relies on her brother, who has a temporary job at a car wash, for her well-being. One day, her brother realizes that he has a chance to escape the fatiguing routine of caring for his sister.



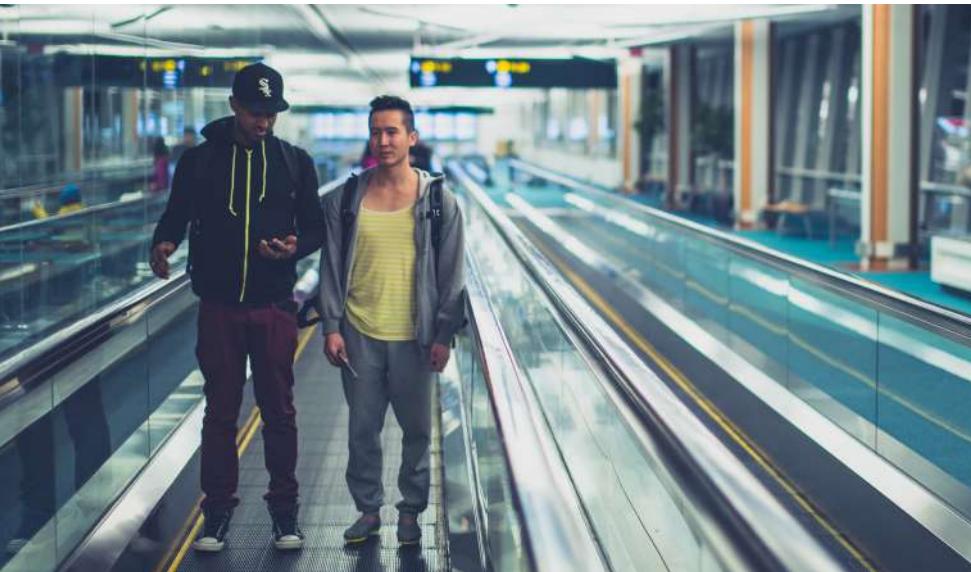
SET 14 MADE IN VIETNAM

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1:30 PM - 3:15 PM

Made in Vietnam

Thi Vo/ Canada/ 2017/ 104 min

Made in Vietnam documents the personal journey of a young Canadian Vietnamese filmmaker, Thi Vo, who searches for his father in Vietnam. He came to Canada as a refugee with his mom, but has not seen his father since escaping the country. Now, he wants to reconnect with his father, but lacks information about his whereabouts. Thi's mother provides his only clue, a contact of a family friend. Thi travels to Vietnam with his friends, who are part of the film crew, with high expectations. Formed as a narrative feature with a three-act structure, *Made in Vietnam* reveals Thi's day-by-day heartfelt journey in Vietnam and the difficulty of reliving his memories. In the process, Thi learns a tremendous amount about his emotional resiliency as he experiences the positive and negative aspects of his search. Viewers can relate to his feelings of desperation as he attempts to find clues about his father's situation as well as those moments of hope when he reconnects with relatives. Through his father's friends who are involved in Vovinam, a Vietnamese martial arts, he realizes where he comes from and his family's place in history. As a filmmaker, Thi has a sharp sense of visuals, which shows in his photography and editing, and is a skilled storyteller. This is a heartwarming documentary about one family's journey and conveys an important story about the Vietnamese people. - Phan Gia Nhat Linh



SET 15 THE BLOODY HAND (Bàn Tay Máu)

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 3:30 pm - 5:30 pm

The Kite Under the Rain (Cánh Diều Mưa)

Cuong Ngo/ Thailand/ 2018/ 27 min

A stuntman finds himself in trouble when a mysterious man suddenly stands between him and his girlfriend in Bangkok.



The Bloody Hand (Bàn Tay Máu)

Quoc Vo/ USA/ 2019/ 95 min

The horror film, *The Bloody Hand*, is directed by Quốc Võ, a local Vietnamese American filmmaker who has made films both in the U.S. and Việt Nam. What makes this film so interesting is its regional appeal. Shot on location in Little Saigon, where a dominant majority of Vietnamese Americans presently live in the U.S., the film is full of references about Vietnamese American life. One of these details is the migration of recent Vietnamese immigrants like the female character by the name of Hiền who has come to the U.S. as a student. Renting a room from a woman whose daughter (Liên) has just passed away, Hiền encounters strange goings-on soon after she moves in. What she sees are nightmarish visions and hallucinations of murder, rape, and revenge. Primarily a horror film, the film also features a budding love story between Hiền and Sơn, a photographer and detective who helps with a case involving the murders of some notorious gangsters in the area. Alongside this story is a more fraught one with police officer Hùng, who is investigating the case of the Blue Dragon Gang and has problems in his marriage. A father of two, Hùng (played by Đức Tiến, an actor primarily of Vietnamese films and television) is married to Hằng (played by Thúy Nga singer Quỳnh Mai). The couple's marriage is suffering because of the demands made by his job. The stories of all of these characters come together through the character of Hiền, who holds the key to solving the murder mysteries and is herself in danger of being possessed by Liêm's vengeful ghost. The film poses the question: Will Hiền be saved or will she be condemned to be a wandering ghost forever? - Lan Duong

SET 16 SEADRIFT

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 3:30 pm - 4:50 pm

Hoài (Ongoing, Memory)

Quyen Nguyen-Le/ USA/ 2018/ 12 min

Centering on the story of a queer second-generation Vietnamese American woman, this film explores the collapsing and intersecting realities of heartbreak: from romantic partnerships, to families, to nation states.



Seadrift

Tim Tsai/ USA/ 2019/ 69 min

Seadrift is a small town located on Texas' Gulf Coast, a few hours drive from San Antonio and Houston. In 1979, the previously unassuming crab fishing community was thrust into the national spotlight. The controversy that ensued is examined in Tim Tsai's documentary feature *Seadrift* (Tsai's directorial feature debut). Before that unwanted attention, Seadrift saw many Vietnamese refugees move into town, hoping to restart their lives catching crab. The Vietnamese fishermen – unfamiliar in Seadrift's fishing customs and local fishing territory – attracted the xenophobic ire of many white fishermen and their neighbors. The situation between the white and Vietnamese fishermen escalated, culminating into a fatal incident that attracted the attention of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK).

The Klan's presence – intended to intimidate the Vietnamese residents, influenced by disturbingly contemporary racist rhetoric, and condemned by Seadrift's residents (the Klan had stoked fear among the Vietnamese and forced the non-Vietnamese to reckon with their attitudes towards the town's newest residents) – sets in motion a process of cultural communication, forgiveness despite unthinkable loss, and acceptance. Tsai's film relies on numerous interviews with Seadrift residents, who were initially reluctant to speak on-camera. Yet in his persistence, Tsai unpacks both the Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese perspectives. Today, Seadrift is not looking to forget the violence and intimidation that occurred, but to embody the empathy and compassion absent forty years ago. - Eric Nong

SET 17 THE IMMORTAL (Người Bất Tử)

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Closing Night

The Immortal (Người Bất Tử)

Victor Vu/ Vietnam/ 2018/ 126 min

Combining mythology and modernity in *The Immortal* (Người Bất Tử), director Victor Vu creates a suspenseful, action-packed film. Dinh Ngoc Diep plays An, a mother haunted by horrific dreams that she believes can unlock the secret to saving her sick daughter's life. Overcoming her fears, An is forced to make conflicting choices and relies on her instinctive survival skills. Hung, played by Quach Ngoc Ngoan, once dreamed of an idyllic life devoted to his fiancé, only to be faced with betrayal and an obsession of what could have been. Forever changed, Hung becomes a formidable figure who is motivated by wealth and invincibility, finding it hard to resist the temptation for eternal life. Their past and present lives intersect as their vulnerabilities are revealed and in their quest for the truth, they realize their physical and mental capacities for good and evil. They also learn that protecting their loved ones and avenging their enemies comes with unforeseen risks and irreversible consequences.

Known for his epic sagas, award winning director Victor Vu again shows his versatility in crafting an ambitious narrative that spans three centuries. In addition to the accomplished cast, this film seamlessly combines fantasy and realism with impressive special effects and the noteworthy cinematography captures the stunningly beautiful, Vietnamese countryside. *The Immortal* tells a compelling story of the supernatural and the afterlife, but it also generates provocative questions about the value of meaningful relationships and human interconnections. – Linda Trinh Vo



The human spirit rises with every screening



Movies make us laugh and cry, go back in time, travel to the future, and take a deeper look at the world around us. We salute the artists who make films with the power to move us.

Let's join together in celebrating Vietnamese stories and voices in cinema.

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Together we'll go far

