



THE 2026 CEDAR RAPIDS
INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL

OFFICIAL PROGRAM

APRIL 9-12, 2026

The Olympic South Side & The Ideal Theaters

Thursday 4/9

Collins Road Theatres

Friday-Sunday 4/10-12

CRIFM.org





CRIFF's parent organization, **Cedar Rapids Independent Filmmakers**, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Our Mission is to encourage independent filmmakers with Iowa ties to continue improving their craft, provide venues to showcase their films, present unique cultural events to the community, grow the Iowa filmmaking industry, and offer opportunities for networking between Iowa-connected filmmakers everywhere.

From the board, to the festival director, to the event staff, our events are organized and run by a completely volunteer group of film enthusiasts, filmmakers, students, popcorn connoisseurs, and people who just enjoy the creative energy and storytelling atmosphere!

Ask a staff member how you can become involved or make a tax-deductible contribution!



IT'S OUR 25TH ANNIVERSARY!

The first Cedar Rapids Independent Film Festival was held April 21, 2001 at Mount Mercy University's McAuley Auditorium. Eight films. Thirty-five audience members.

Since then, we've showcased **941 films across 23 events** (we took a break in 2017, and 2020's fest wasn't held until 2022) and grew into a vibrant platform where filmmakers share their work, connect with audiences, and celebrate the power of storytelling!



This past year was marked by momentum! **CRIFF2025** welcomed record attendance, reflecting a growing community that believes in what this festival represents. We were selected for the IEDA's 2-year **Iowa Cultural Leadership Cohort**, and are learning new strategies and gaining a wealth of tools to strengthen our vision, expand our reach, and build a more sustainable future.

In November, CRIFm launched the first **IF Workshop**, helping aspiring creators take the next step from "what if" to actually making their films. It's just the beginning of how we aim to support filmmakers year-round. At the same time, **new team members** brought fresh energy, perspectives, and ideas, helping us reimagine what we can be and who we can serve.

The judges' selection of a record number of films created a programming challenge. We turned that into an opportunity for the largest expansion to our schedule and footprint in over two decades. **We're excited to add Thursday night screenings at the Olympic South Side Theater and Ideal Theater & Bar in the historic NewBo neighborhood!**

The need for storytelling has never been greater. New voices are ready to be heard, and we are committed to creating opportunities for them. But we can't do it alone. If you believe in the power of film, in the importance of storytelling, and in building a creative community, there's a place for you here.

Get involved at crifm.org or talk to an organizer today.

CRIFF is thankful for the support of the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation, and McGrath Automotive Donor-Advised Fund.

Thank you also to: The Iowa Economic Development Authority, Collins Road Theatres, ImOn Communications, and Wired Production Group

In-kind donors: Sweetopia, R&D Events, Atlantic Coca-Cola Bottling Company, Willie Ray's Q Shack, and Fiddle Sticks

Promotion Partners: Sioux City International Film Festival, Julien Dubuque International Film Festival, Iowa Independent Film Festival, Farm to Film Fest, Oneota Film Festival, Ottumwa International Film Festival and Refocus Film Festival.

WELCOME TO THE 2026 CEDAR RAPIDS INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL!

This year we'll show a record 65 films with Iowa connections from around the world!

Judges reviewed 121 entries; over 53 hours of high-quality storytelling, diverse perspectives, and standout performances. It was no easy task narrowing it down, and we sincerely thank all filmmakers for sharing their work.

The **Eddy Awards Ceremony** follows Saturday night's screenings. Films compete for **GOLD** and **SILVER EDDYS** in **Professional, Hobbyist, and Student** categories, spanning **Features, Shorts, Documentaries, and Freestyle** (experimental, music video, video art). The **AUDIENCE CHOICE EDDY** is in your hands—cast your vote!

The **IOWA CONNECTION EDDY** is awarded to the film that tells the world WHO is making films in Iowa, WHY they're doing it in Iowa, and WHAT stories come from Iowa. **We celebrate the fact that people with Iowa ties are in the production industry EVERYWHERE.** Whether it's a crew or cast member who lived, worked or went to school in Iowa; a film produced, at least in part, in Iowa; or a story featuring an Iowa subject or Iowan (present or former, real or fictional), we've had films submitted from around the world! To skeptics, we say that if you don't think your film qualifies, ask around... *you just might have an Iowan on set!*

Saturday afternoon, we're jumping into **A.I.** (no, not the Spielberg film) **Evolution & Ethics in Filmmaking.** What's generative AI's place in current and future filmmaking?

Celebrating Student Filmmakers

Student filmmakers are an essential part of our community, and we're proud to give them the red-carpet treatment.

STUDENT CINEMA SUNDAY presents the work of tomorrow's stars. We believe there should be no barriers to achieving your filmmaking dreams; free and reduced-price student tickets are offered for this session.

The **COLLINS ROAD THEATRES \$1000 SCHOLARSHIP**, is awarded to a student filmmaker in support of their filmmaking education and future career.

Bring your curiosity, questions and concerns about life after school to our **STUDENT FORUM: Should I Stay or Should I Go?** Sunday afternoon.

We'll wrap up the weekend with the **STUDENT AUDIENCE CHOICE EDDY AWARD!** Be sure to cast your vote!

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THURSDAY, APRIL 9

IDEAL THEATER & BAR

Time	Film	Runtime
6:00p	CRIFF WELCOME!	
6:10p	NO CANS	4m:45s
6:15p	Do You Understand Me?	10m:43s
6:26p	Self-Portrait (Mirroring)	5m:28s
6:32p	Do Androids Dream?	5m:30s
6:38p	Cake in an Elevator	8m:30s
6:47p	The Mouse	3m:05s
6:51p	Dryland	8m:42s
7:00p	Iron Dad	5m:25s
7:05p	Q&A / Break	
7:15p	Track Guy Movie	1h:6m:20s
8:21p	Q&A / Break <i>(Switch venues if you like)</i>	
8:40p	A Civil Civil Servant	36m:42s
9:17p	On Our Way	1h:12m:50s
10:30p	Q&A	

OLYMPIC SOUTH SIDE THEATER

Time	Film	Runtime
6:00p	CRIFF WELCOME!	
6:10p	Saving Sihouettes	7m:30s
6:18p	Outro	16m:52s
6:35p	How I Became a Goose	5m:45s
6:42p	Still Life	17m:07s
6:58p	Q&A / Break	
7:10p	Whale Math	9m:28s
7:20p	Paw Paw & Dayja	58m:41s
8:19p	Q&A / Break <i>(Switch venues if you like)</i>	
8:40p	From Iowa and Back - The Vietnam Era	1h:46m:21s
10:26p	Q&A	

Iowa...the Film Festival State?

Backcountry Film Festival

Iowa City/Cedar Rapids - January

Crossroads Film Festival *(welcome!)*

DeWitt - Feb. 26-27, 2027

Oneota Film Festival*

Decorah - First weekend in March

Iowa-Nebraska Heartland Film Festival

Corning - March

Ottumwa International Film Festival*

Ottumwa - March

Iowa Disability Film Festival*

Iowa City - March

Des Moines Latino Film Festival*

Des Moines - April

Farm to Film Fest*

Washington - April 17-18, 2026

Julien Dubuque

International Film Festival*

Dubuque - April 18-25, 2026

Iowa City International

Documentary Film Festival

Iowa City - April

IMPA Awards Gala & Film Festival

Des Moines - Last week of May

Pulling Focus African American Film Festival*

Quad Cities - June

Interrobang Film Festival*

Des Moines - June 26-28, 2026

Snake Alley Festival of Film*

Burlington - July 9-12, 2026

712 Film Festival

Ida Grove - July 18, 2026

Des Moines 48 Hour Film Project

Des Moines - July

International ScreenDance Festival

Iowa City - August

Alternating Currents

Davenport - August 13-16, 2026

*Iowa Certified Film Festival

The Iowa Economic Development Authority CFF program recognizes Iowa film festivals that maintain a level of professionalism and community impact and prioritize filmmaker and film enthusiast experiences. As part of a statewide network, CFFs also receive promotional support and technical assistance in addition to funding opportunities, with the goal to elevate film festival programming and contribute to a more robust, diverse and sustainable creative ecosystem in Iowa. **CRIFF is proud to be an Iowa Certified Film Festival!**

Iowa Independent Film Festival*

Mason City & Clear Lake - Sept. 10-12, 2026

Ames Doc Film Fest *(welcome!)*

Ames - Sept. 27, 2026

Sioux City International Film Festival*

Sioux City - Oct. 1-4, 2026

Halloweenapalooza*

Ottumwa - October 9-10, 2026

Refocus Film Festival*

Iowa City - Oct. 22-25, 2026

Cedar River Film Festival*

Cedar Falls - Oct. 31-Nov. 1, 2026

Siouxland Inspirational

& Historical Short Film Fest

Nov. 8, 2026



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FRIDAY, APRIL 10 – AFTERNOON

THEATRE 1

Time	Film	Runtime
12:30p	Healing Through Hope	8m:04s
12:38p	D.P.O.S.	8m
12:47p	Whale Math	9m:28s
12:57p	Moshe's Song (Prelude)	15m:58s
1:13p	Still Life	17m:07s
1:31p	Si Raya at Ang Himpapawid (Raya Among the Clouds)	19m:48s
1:51p	Q&A / Break	
2:00p	Seeds of Sovereignty	51m:15s
2:51p	Q&A / Break	
3:05p	Song & Dance	1h:41m:45s
4:47p	Q&A	

THEATRE 2

Time	Film	Runtime
12:30p	From Iowa and Back - The Vietnam Era	1h:46m:21s
2:16p	Q&A / Break	
2:25p	Relax	4m:44s
2:30p	Hit It Off	10m:01s
2:41p	Fly Over	16m:30s
2:58p	Ride On: The Story of Gwen Maiers	14m:30s
3:12p	Q&A / Break	
3:25p	Dryland	8m:42s
3:34p	Ellie and Xavier	1h:20m:46s
4:55p	Q&A	

FRIDAY, APRIL 10 – EVENING

THEATRE 1

Time	Film	Runtime
5:15p	WELCOME!	
5:25p	Quantum Flux	1h:52m:43s
7:18p	Q&A / Break	
7:30p	The Red String	7m:04s
7:38p	Cornered	6m:32s
7:45p	Hey, Lucy?	6m:01s
7:52p	Meat Printer	8m:12s
8:01p	The Dream Catcher	8m:55s
8:10p	The Oldest	9m:48s
8:21p	Secret Ingredient	11m:47s
8:33p	Hit It Off	10m:01s
8:43p	Q&A / Break	
8:55p	Inner Child	3m:47s
8:59p	Ellie and Xavier	1h:20m:46s
10:20p	Q&A	

THEATRE 2

Time	Film	Runtime
5:15p	WELCOME!	
5:25p	The Turkey Kings	37m:31s
6:03p	The Collins Story - The Internet Connection	59m:59s
7:03p	Q&A / Break	
7:15p	My Adoring Husband	8m:30s
7:24p	Tenderloin	18m:34s
7:43p	ACORN, IOWA	17m:15s
8:00p	Life After Life	34m:45s
8:35p	Q&A / Break	
8:45p	Your Lips Never Left Mine	1h:30m:35s
10:16p	Q&A	

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SATURDAY, APRIL 11 – MORNING

THEATRE 1

Time	Film	Runtime
9:00a	PSYCLE	13m:47s
9:14a	Track Guy Movie	1h:6m:20s
10:21a	Q&A / Break	
10:30a	Seeds of Sovereignty	51m:15s
11:21a	The Butterfly Effect	53m:27s
12:15p	Q&A / Break	

THEATRE 3

Time	Film	Runtime
9:00a	Quantum Flux	1h:52m:43s
10:53a	Q&A / Break	
11:05a	Garden of Des Moines: ONE YEAR LATER	25m:47s
11:31a	The Turkey Kings	37m:31s
12:09p	Q&A	

THEATRE 5

Time	Film	Runtime
9:00a	Jury of Her Peers	1h:32m:40s
10:33a	Q&A / Break	
10:45a	The Oldest	9m:48s
10:55a	Silent Riff	12m:16s
11:08a	The Valley of the Devil	15m
11:24a	Alien: Lost Transmission Fan Film	28m:05s
11:52a	Q&A	

THEATRE 2

Time	Film	Runtime
9:00a	OUTRO	16m:52s
9:17a	Paw Paw & Dayja	58m:41s
10:16a	Q&A / Break	
10:25a	Little's	43m:42s
11:09a	On Our Way	1h:12m:50s
12:22p	Q&A / Break	

THEATRE 4

Time	Film	Runtime
9:00a	Song & Dance	1h:41m:45s
10:42a	Q&A / Break	
10:55a	The Collins Story - The Internet Connection	59m:59s
11:55a	Q&A	



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SATURDAY, APRIL 11 – AFTERNOON

THEATRE 1

Time	Film	Runtime
12:50p	Waverly 217	6m:07s
12:57p	Cornered	6m:32s
1:04p	Hey, Lucy?	6m:01s
1:11p	Saving Silhouettes	7m:30s
1:19p	My Adoring Husband	8m:30s
1:28p	Meat Printer	8m:12s
1:37p	Dress Like A Lady	10m:43s
1:48p	Q&A / Break	
2:00p	The Dream Catcher	8m:55s
2:09p	Secret Ingredient	11m:47s
2:22p	Buried Treasure	16m:20s
2:39p	A Civil Civil Servant	36m:42s
3:15p	Q&A / Break	
3:25p	An Untitled Love Story	14m:44s
3:35p	Cake in an Elevator	8m:30s
3:44p	Littles	43m:42s
4:27p	Q&A	

THEATRE 2

Time	Film	Runtime
12:50p	Hell's Hollow	4m:52s
12:55p	Projection	5m:02s
1:01p	Do Androids Dream?	5m:30s
1:07p	The Ex-Boxer	7m:03s
1:14p	CON	13m:10s
1:28p	Detour	18m:50s
1:47p	Q&A / Break	
2:00p	Your Lips Never Left Mine	1h:30m:35s
3:31p	Q&A / Break	
3:40p	Discussion Forum: Artificial Intelligence: Evolution & Ethics in Filmmaking (pg. 16)	

SATURDAY, APRIL 11 – EVENING

THEATRE 1

Time	Film	Runtime
5:25p	Relax	4m:44s
5:30p	Hell's Hollow	4m:52s
5:36p	Projection	5m:02s
5:41p	CON	13m:10s
5:55p	Fly Over	16m:30s
6:12p	Detour	18m:50s
6:31p	Alien: Lost Transmission Fan Film	28m:05s
6:59p	Q&A / Break	
7:10p	The Valley of the Devil	15m
7:25p	Jury of Her Peers	1h:32m:40s
8:58p	Q&A / Break	
9:25p	(Overflow if necessary) The Eddy Awards Ceremony	

THEATRE 2

Time	Film	Runtime
5:25p	FREEDOM on Trial: Rights and Responsibilities in Island Trees Board of Ed. v. Pico	10m:04s
5:36p	Si Raya at Ang Himpapawid (Raya Among The Clouds)	19m:48s
5:56p	The Butterfly Effect	53m:27s
6:50p	Q&A / Break	
7:00p	Mystery Cave Underground: Mapping for the Future	15m:19s
7:16p	Garden of Des Moines: ONE YEAR LATER	25m:47s
7:42p	Midnight Metro: A Fashion Story	1h:08m:28s
8:51p	Q&A / Break	

9:25p The Eddy Awards Ceremony

STUDENT CINEMA SUNDAY, APRIL 12

THEATRE 1

Time	Film	Runtime
12:20p	Student Cinema Sunday Welcome	
12:35p	Inner Child	3m:47s
12:39p	Self-Portrait (Mirroring)	5m:28s
12:45p	D.P.O.S.	8m
12:54p	Buried Treasure	16m:20s
1:11p	Moshe's Song (Prelude)	15m:58s
1:27p	The Red String	7m:04s
1:35p	Healing Through Hope	8m:04s
1:43p	Do You Understand Me?	10m:43s
1:54p	Q&A / Break	

THEATRE 2

Time	Film	Runtime
12:20p	Student Cinema Sunday Welcome	
12:35p	Silent Riff	12m:16s
12:48p	Dress Like A Lady	10m:43s
12:59p	How I Became a Goose	5m:45s
1:05p	The Mouse	3m:05s
1:09p	PSYCLE	13m:47s
1:23p	Waverly 217	6m:07s
1:30p	NO CANS	4m:45s
1:35p	Iron Dad	5m:25s
1:41p	Ride On: The Story of Gwen Maiers	14m:30s
1:55p	Q&A / Break	

2:05p Student Forum: *Should I Stay Or Should I Go?*

So you're getting a degree...congratulations. Now what? Can you build a career in Iowa or do you need to move to literally anywhere else? Are you ok doing corporate work as a stepping stone...or is that too "sellout"? Do you need a "real" job, while chasing your dreams on the side? From staying local to chasing opportunities, from side gigs to full-time filmmaking, this discussion dives into the real-world choices facing emerging filmmakers. Hear honest perspectives on how to navigate the industry, make a living, and define success on your own terms.

3:00p	An Untitled Love Story	14m:44s
3:15p	ACORN, IOWA	17m:15s
3:33p	The Ex-Boxer	7m:03s
3:41p	Life After Life	34m:45s
4:16p	Tenderloin	18m:34s
4:34p	Q&A / Break	

4:50p (Overflow if necessary)
Student Recognitions and Audience Choice Eddy Presentation

3:00p	FREEDOM on Trial: Rights and Responsibilities in Island Trees Board of Ed. v. Pico	10m:04s
3:11p	Mystery Cave Underground: Mapping for the Future	15m:19s
3:26p	Midnight Metro: A Fashion Story	1h:08m:28s
4:35p	Q&A / Break	

4:50p Student Recognitions and Student Audience Choice Eddy Presentation



The Eddy Awards are named after Thomas Alva Edison who, among many other pursuits, was a pioneer in motion picture technology. The term eddy is also defined as "a current moving contrary to the direction of the main current," which is a suitable description for independent filmmakers, who often go against the current trends in mainstream cinema.

Our handsome Eddy trophies are custom-fabricated in Hiawatha by Fiddle Sticks.



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FILMS, FILMMAKERS AND IOWA CONNECTIONS

ACORN, IOWA

Student Narrative Short-Form | 17m:15s

Fri 7:43 pm, Theatre 2 | Sun 3:15 pm, Theatre 1

Madison Taylor Wolfe - Writer/Producer/Director
Loyola University - New Orleans, Louisiana

Olivia is a few weeks into camp at a religious mental health organization for young girls in a made up, middle of nowhere city called Acorn, Iowa. When Maria, Olivia's long term best friend and deranged business partner, unexpectedly shows up and causes chaos in the camp, Olivia is forced to either fall back into her old ways- assisting Maria in completing mischievous "favors" for the other campers to make some cash- or attempt to put a stop to their business and relationship all together, risking the consequences of standing up to Maria head on. *(language)*

This film takes place in a fictional town in the state of Iowa.

Alien: Lost Transmission Fan Film

Professional Narrative Short | 28m:05s

Sat 11:24 am, Theatre 5 | Sat 6:31 pm, Theatre 1

Connor Andrew Botts, Ben Mayer, Kevin Shepherd - Directors

Ben Mayer, Malcom Bodon, Jake Daniels, Jared Kellar - Producers
Mediaverse Studios - Marengo

Aboard a secret Weyland-Yutani vessel, Colin and Naomi are trapped in a small maintenance room, hiding from a terrifying organism that has torn through the crew. Their only chance at survival is to escape confinement and reach the escape bay before it's too late. But something is hunting them... and it's not human. *(language, violence)*

This entire film was shot in Marengo at Mediaverse Studios.

Buried Treasure

Student Narrative Short-Form | 16m:20s

Sat 2:22 pm, Theatre 1 | Sun 12:54 pm, Theatre 1

Jacob C McCauley - Writer/Producer/Director
Wayne State College - Wayne, Nebraska

When two clowns overhear from a friend that the Lee's, the richest family in town is having a birthday party and need some clowns for the event. When it is revealed that there is also some treasure in their backyard, the clowns scheme up a heist that will make them rich. *(language)*

Jacob is an Iowa Resident & goes to school at Wayne State College.

The Butterfly Effect

Hobbyist Documentary | 53m:27s

Sat 11:21 am, Theatre 1 | Sat 5:56 pm, Theatre 2

Deb Wallwork, Janet Bayliss - Directors
Minneapolis, Minnesota

A delightful film combining animation, narration, individual stories, puppetry and experimental film. It is about a diversity of people, artists, scientists and farmers, making a difference for monarchs, one milkweed at a time.

Deb's husband grew up in Spencer. He has been a long time advocate for people growing native plants to help pollinators.

Cake in an Elevator

Hobbyist Short | 8m:30s

Thu 6:38 pm, Ideal | Sat 3:35 pm, Theatre 1

Haydon Paul Bailey - Director
Jorey Kent Bailey, Lauren Wilson Bailey - Producers
Kalona

When a man and a woman meet in an elevator, their ensuing discussion dramatically shifts their respective perspectives on... cake?

The film was conceived, shot, and edited in Kalona. All crew and actors involved are Iowa-based performers.

A Civil Civil Servant

Professional Narrative Short | 36m:42s

Thu 8:40 pm, Ideal | Sat 2:39 pm, Theatre 1

Jonah Manibusan - Director
Emilee Hayward - Producer
Elliott Bales - Writer
Arlington, Virginia

A veteran civil servant takes on greater and greater roles as his colleagues are terminated leading him to a final confrontation with the occupant of the Oval Office.

Actor Elliott Bales is a graduate of Cedar Rapids Washington HS, is a member of the CR Washington Performing Arts Hall of Fame, and has frequently appeared in productions at Riverside Theater in Iowa City.





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The Collins Story - The Internet Connection

Professional Documentary | 59m:59s

Fri 6:03 pm, Theatre 2 | Sat 10:55 am, Theatre 4

Annette Juergens Busbee - Writer/Producer/Director
Cedar Rapids

It's very likely that you are one of over five billion people using the internet on nearly 20 billion devices to shop, stream, research and communicate. But how many of us are aware of the technologies and people that made these connections possible? This film explores the stories of brilliant engineers and groundbreaking mobile technologies from Collins Radio, headquartered in Iowa, that helped shape the foundations of the modern internet.

Through archival images and firsthand interviews, we trace the evolution of computing, networking, and radio communications through the mid to late 20th century. Ride along with the engineers on November 22, 1977, as the first internet message is sent using Collins technology—a breakthrough that paved the way for today's mobile networks. Pioneers including Bob Kahn and Vint Cerf, the "fathers" of TCP/IP, join Collins and Stanford Research Institute engineers to recall how curiosity, collaboration, a beer garden, a bread truck, a little luck and lots of determination laid the foundation for global connectivity.

The film explores Collins Radio, based in Cedar Rapids. Most members of the documentary team live and work in the Cedar Rapids area.

CON

Hobbyist Short | 13m:10s

Sat 1:14 pm, Theatre 2 | Sat 5:41 pm, Theatre 1

Brandon Lynch - Writer/Producer/Director
Ben Neessen - Writer/Producer
Des Moines

A hardened crime ringleader must confront his deceptive young confidante after the murder of his nephew. *(language, violence)*

This film was entirely produced in Iowa by Iowa talent and crew. Shot in Des Moines, Waterloo and Cedar Falls.

Cornered

Professional Freestyle | 6m:32s

Fri 7:38 pm, Theatre 1 | Sat 12:57 pm, Theatre 1

Kristopher J. Gathercoal - Writer/Director
Caleb Brinsfield - Writer/Producer
Tyler Gene Gathercoal - Producer
Grand Junction

A relationship is strained due to a man's inability to let go of the past.

The director's company is based in Iowa and crew/cast other involved are from Iowa, other than the artist/band.

Detour

Professional Narrative Short | 18m:50s

Sat 1:28 pm, Theatre 2 | Sat 6:12 pm, Theatre 1

Beth Ann Hinde - Writer/Producer
Demian Alan Mancino - Director
Cedar Rapids

Detour is a tense, emotional drama about a young woman trapped in the shadows of abuse while working at a high-pressure corporate job. She hides the truth behind polite smiles and late nights, but her friends begin to notice cracks in her carefully built façade. As her boss piles on pressure and hostility, the walls close in, leaving her questioning if she'll ever find a way out—or if the road she's on will end in ruin. *(language, mature themes)*

Beth Hinde is the screenwriter and executive producer. The project was filmed by Mediaverse from Marengo. The majority of the actors are Iowans.

Do Androids Dream?

Professional Freestyle | 5m:30s

Thu 6:32 pm, Ideal | Sat 1:01 pm, Theatre 2

Scott Marczewski - Writer/Producer/Director

The year is 2037. Detective Nandez hunts a killer targeting androids in the foggy fallout of San Francisco. As the bodies pile up, the city divides between two powers, Wilbur Mercer's religion of empathy and Buster Friendly's empire of entertainment. When a young Niander Wallace enters the picture, faith, technology, and humanity collide in a storm of neon and rain. A Blade Runner fan film exploring what it truly means to be human.

Do Androids Dream? was filmed entirely in Iowa, powered by Iowa talent from top to bottom. Iowan actors in front of the camera, Iowan artists and technicians behind it, and local studios supporting production, audio, and post work.

Do You Understand Me?

Student Documentary | 10m:43s

Thu 6:15 pm, Ideal | Sun 1:43 pm, Theatre 1

Paige Guthrie - Writer/Producer/Director
University of Northern Iowa - Cedar Falls

Follow the story of a Deaf immigrant living in America, and how she navigates her life with her daughter.

Filmed in Cedar Rapids, subjects are Iowa residents. The filmmaker is also from Cedar Rapids.



D.P.O.S.

Student Narrative Short-Form | 8 mins

Fri 12:38 pm, Theatre 1 | Sun 12:45 pm Theatre 1

Edison Geiler - Writer/Producer/Director
Marley Hewitt - Producer
University of Nebraska-Lincoln - Lincoln, Nebraska

As he races to prepare for a surprise first date, an anxious young man's mind spirals with surreal visions of his date's reaction to his disability. *(language)*

One of the producers of the film is Marley Hewitt, who is from Ida Grove.

The Dream Catcher

Professional Narrative Short | 8m:55s

Fri 8:01 pm, Theatre 1 | Sat 2:00 pm, Theatre 1

Ethan Marth - Writer/Producer/Director
Bobbie Marth - Writer/Director
Wallingford

On a pleasant overcast day, a solitary fisherman goes for a relaxing morning of fishing off a lakeside dock. However, while casting his first couple lures, frustration builds as he reels in only an old pop can, a rubber boot, and a large crayfish. Discouraged and let down by his usual bait, he eventually - with some reluctance - demonstrates his

capacity to change by trying a new style of lure. This leads him to a rather unusual approach: a colorful, glittery, and sparkly lure. Little does he realize, this strange bait catches the eye of one of the most alluring aquatic creatures this side of the Mississippi: a freshwater mermaid.

The whole production process for the film was completed in Iowa, and the entire cast and crew are Iowa residents. Filming took place on a lake near Wallingford, and the lead actor, Garrett Gray, is a native Iowan.

Dress Like A Lady

Student Narrative Short-Form | 10m:43s

Sat 1:37 pm, Theatre 1 | Sun 12:48 pm, Theatre 2

Daniela Bernal, Patrick Louscher - Writers/Producers/Directors
Loras College Creative Media - Dubuque

A young woman struggles to conform to gender norms of what it means to "dress like a lady".

This short film was produced by students at Loras College in Dubuque.

Dryland

Professional Narrative Short | 8m:42s

Thu 6:51 pm, Ideal | Fri 3:25 pm, Theatre 2

Marissa Vonn - Writer/Director

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Kalena Clarkson, Aaron Bandy - Producers Des Moines

Dennie, a swim coach grappling with PTSD and struggling to connect with her team, must overcome her biggest trigger as the team dives into their crucial first meet of the season.

This film was shot in Des Moines with an all Iowa (or Iowa raised) crew and a mostly Iowa cast.

Ellie and Xavier

Hobbyist Feature | 1h:20m:46s

Sat 3:34 pm, Theatre 2 | Sat 8:59 pm, Theatre 1

Benjamin Schmidt - Writer/Producer/Director
Matty Weiland - Producer
Iowa City

On a quiet Friday night, college students Ellie and Xavier meet by chance at a party, and the only thing they have in common is they would rather be anywhere else. After the party gets busted, Ellie and Xavier end up on an adventure across their small college town. As the night progresses, Ellie and Xavier try to figure out their feelings about college, the future, and how they feel about each other. (*language, mature themes*)

The film was shot in Dubuque, Waterloo, and Des Moines with an entirely Iowa crew and the majority of the actors are based in Iowa.

The Ex-Boxer

Student Narrative Short-Form - 7m:03s

Sat 1:07 pm, Theatre 2 | Sun 3:33 pm, Theatre 1

Joshua William Fiser - Writer/Producer/Director
Ryder Bates - Director of Photography
University of Northern Iowa - Cedar Falls

Colin is a former heavyweight who, after a bad experience in the ring, lets guys punch him in the face for beer money. After a rough night, he suddenly gets confronted with his past. (*language*)

This film is a student production through the University of Northern Iowa. All the crew are UNI students, and the cast are Cedar Falls locals. The director/producer is a native born Iowan.

Fly Over

Professional Narrative Short | 16m:30s

Fri 2:41 pm, Theatre 2 | Sat 5:55 pm, Theatre 1

Max Ward - Writer/Director
Hannah Rosalie Wright, Ben Mayer, Will Butters - Producers

On a cold winter night in rural Iowa, Tom's life changes with a single impact on an empty, star-lit road. As he seeks refuge at his Grandma's house during a seemingly cheerful Christmas gathering, an unsettling silence hangs over the small town.

Missing persons, power cuts, and strange movements in the woods hint that something unnatural is drawing closer. When a terrifying presence breaches the safety of Grandma's home, Tom must confront forces far darker than his own guilt.

The film was shot in Iowa, with an Iowan crew, and is set in Iowa. They wanted to make a film that felt really grounded in Iowa, using real places and familiar Iowan faces.

FREEDOM on Trial: Rights and Responsibilities in Island Trees Board of Education v. Pico

Student Documentary | 10m:04s

Sat 5:25 pm, Theatre 2 | Sun 3:00 pm, Theatre 2

Adrian Gillette - Writer/Producer/Director
Bettendorf Middle School - Bettendorf

Island Trees School District v. Pico is the only court case about school book banning to reach the Supreme Court. In 1982, the court ruled in a plurality decision that while books could be removed for pervasive vulgarity and age-inappropriateness, they could not be removed for ideas as this infringed on students' first amendment rights. While free speech advocates have praised the ruling, others have exploited its loopholes to restrict books in schools.

The documentary addresses Iowa Senate File 496, passed in 2023, which prohibits schools from providing books that include or describe sex acts.

FORUM: Artificial Intelligence: Evolution & Ethics in Filmmaking

Saturday, 3:40 pm, Theatre 2

Is AI-assisted filmmaking...still filmmaking?

AI is here, and it's already changing every step from writing to delivery. Is AI expanding creativity, or replacing it? Does it lower barriers and empower new voices, or just flood the space with low-effort content?

Some people see opportunity. Some see existential threat. Whose roles are most at risk? Will AI replace jobs, or just shift skillsets? And, what does it mean for independent filmmakers vs. big studios?

From "talkies" to color to CGI, technological advances have evolved the filmmaking process time and time again. Is AI just another tool...or something fundamentally different? What do we stand to lose, and what might we gain; and how do we ensure our seat at the table in the coming years?

From Iowa and Back - The Vietnam Era

Professional Documentary | 1h:46m:21s

Thu 8:40 pm, Olympic | Friday 12:30 pm, Theatre 2

Jeremy Glazier - Producer/Director
Gerard Estella, Megan Turner - Writers
Cedar Rapids

The Vietnam War defined a generation in the United States, and that era left an impression on the country's psyche that resonates yet still today. This film by Jeremy Glazier is not about battles, politics, or an overview of the era but focuses on the men and women from Iowa, who served their country during that era. After many years of silence, these veterans are now beginning to share their stories and experiences. Hear what they have to say about living in Iowa, leaving, being elsewhere, and coming home. A personal tour of that era. ([language](#))

The Iowa connections are multiple, but they fall into these three categories: The director & film maker is an Iowa native, and currently resides in Iowa. The topic of the film, as a documentary, features only persons on camera that are Iowans. They were born and raised in Iowa, served, and returned to Iowa. The third connection is that Bruce More, while a site for the National Trust of Historic Preservation, is the only national site located in the state of Iowa.

Garden of Des Moines: ONE YEAR LATER

Hobbyist Documentary | 25m:47s

Sat 11:05 am, Theatre 1 | Sat 7:16 pm, Theatre 2

Teri Underhill - Producer/Director
Des Moines

Garden of Des Moines: ONE YEAR LATER revisits Iowa's drag performers as they navigate a harsher reality. Since the first documentary, new anti-LGBTQ+ laws in Iowa have reshaped daily life by tightening restrictions, heightening fear, and forcing many in the queer community to question their place in the state they call home.

Through intimate, in-depth interviews, some with returning performers, others with new voices, the film captures how the drag community continues to adapt, resist, and create in the face of escalating hostility. Teri Underhill, from outside the drag world, helps guide these conversations, offering space for reflection, solidarity, and understanding through these interviews.

Garden of Des Moines: ONE YEAR LATER is a continuation and a reckoning, a portrait of resilience, grief, and defiant joy as queer artists fight to preserve their art, community, and sense of self under increasing pressure. ([language](#))

The film is based on the politics in Iowa. Filmed in Des Moines. Interviewing queer Iowans.



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Healing Through Hope

Student Documentary | 1h:32m

Fri 12:30 pm, Theatre 1 | Sun 1:35 pm, Theatre 1

Anna Tallman, Hunter Jones, Emily Delamora - Producers/Directors
Loras College Creative Media - Dubuque

Documentary featuring Koral, a young mother who found support from Mary's Inn during a difficult time in her life.

This short documentary was produced by students at Loras College in Dubuque.

Hell's Hollow

Professional Narrative Short | 4m:52s

Sat 12:50 pm, Theatre 2 | Sat 5:30 pm, Theatre 1

Connor A Botts - Writer/Director
Jake Daniels - Writer/Producer
Marengo

In this chilling horror short film for the Jacob Owens Horror Film Contest, we uncover the terrifying secrets of a government operation gone wrong. In 1998, a classified group discovered a portal to a new world. A place they now call Hell's Hollow. Six missions were sent inside. No one ever returned... until two days ago. Blending a combination of handheld style tension with cinematic horror, Hell's Hollow takes viewers deep into the unknown, where survival is no longer guaranteed, and the real terror is what waits on the other side.

The entire film was made at Mediaverse Studios in Marengo.

Hey, Lucy?

Hobbyist Short | 6m:01s

Fri 7:45 pm, Theatre 1 | Sat 1:04 pm, Theatre 1

Serena Fath - Writer/Producer/Director
Amy Wonderlin, Lizzie White, Cece Gray, Victoria Jackson - Writers
Ashley Long - Producer/Director of Photography
Des Moines

With all the world's misinformation in the palm of your hand, what could possibly go wrong? Life is simpler with Lucy.

This film was made entirely in Des Moines by an entirely Iowan cast and crew.

Hit It Off

Hobbyist Short | 10m:01s

Fri 2:30 pm, Theatre 2 | Fri 8:33 pm, Theatre 1

Chris Veninga- Writer/Producer/Director
Mithi Sivaprakash - Director/Cinematographer
Eden Prairie, Minnesota

A reluctant school teacher goes on a blind date that turns into a night to remember.

Director Mithi Sivaprakash and Camera Operator/

Composer were both born and raised in Cedar Rapids. Both directors graduated from Drake University.

How I Became a Goose

Student Narrative Short-Form | 5m:45s

Thu 6:35 pm, Olympic | Sun 12:59 pm, Theatre 2

Sam Madson - Writer/Producer/Director
Hawkeye Community College - Waterloo

Man finds a statue of a goose and things get interesting. *(language)*

All involved in the production are students in the Digital Mass Media program at Hawkeye Community College.

Inner Child

Student Narrative Short-Form | 3m:47s

Fri 8:55 pm, Theatre 1 | Sun 12:35 pm Theatre 1

Carly Liggett - Director
Grace Birkland - Writer/Producer
University of Nebraska-Lincoln - Lincoln, NE
Los Angeles, CA

Stella is stuck in a dead-end marketing job. After a long day at work, she comes home to find that her past self, or "Inner Child", has appeared as a teddy bear. Stella's Inner Child convinces her to pursue her lifelong dream of becoming an illustrator for children's books once again.

Grace Birkland was born and raised in Spirit Lake. After she graduated from Spirit Lake High School in 2020, she relocated to Lincoln, NE to attend college at the University of Nebraska. This project was a part of her thesis for the Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts. However, she still cheers for the Iowa Hawkeyes at every Iowa vs Nebraska football game.

Iron Dad

Student Narrative Short-Form | 5m:25s

Thu 7:00 pm, Ideal | Sun 1:35 pm, Theatre 2

Sam Madson - Writer/Director/Cinematographer
Hawkeye Community College - Waterloo

A tri-athlete tells the story of how he became involved in Iron Man triathlons and details the work involved and how that may change now that he is a father.

All involved in the production are students in the Digital Mass Media program at Hawkeye Community College.



Jury of Her Peers

Professional Narrative Feature | 1h:32m:40s

Sat 9:00 am, Theatre 5 | Sat 7:25 pm, Theatre 1

William Rock - Writer/Producer/Director

Amy Nigg - Producer

John Hansen - Cinematographer

Des Moines

When her best friend is accused of murder, a pioneer farmwife launches her own investigation but finds the only other possible suspect is her own husband. *(language)*

Filmed in Iowa. ~95% of the cast and crew is based in Iowa.

Life After Life

Student Narrative Long-Form | 34m:45s

Fri 8:00 pm, Theatre 2 | Sun 3:41 pm, Theatre 1

Ava Bertram, Tyler Dintaman, Jacob Olmstead - Writers

Daniel Nierling - Producer

Josian Turner, Noah Elgatian, JP Smith, Brenda

Severson - Directors

Hawkeye Community College - Waterloo

A disgruntled girlfriend tries to leave her boyfriend but he proves hard to shake...even after he dies.

All involved in the production are students in the Digital Mass Media program at Hawkeye Community College.

Littles

Hobbyist Short | 43m:42s

Sat 10:25 am, Theatre 2 | Sat 3:44 pm, Theatre 1

Tiffany Ketcham - Writer/Director

Cody McKinney - Producer

Newton

Everyone in Janie's life—from the CEO to her husband—is a literal ten-year-old. Trapped in a pint-sized world of big emotions, endless deadlines, and zero logic, she's ready for a break. She'd give anything just to be... a kid again.

Littles was filmed in Newton, Marengo, and Oskaloosa. The cast features 32 kids from Jasper County and surrounding areas. The crew is all Iowa based. Writer/director, producer, musicians, and both cinematographers all reside in Newton.

Meat Printer

Professional Narrative Short | 08m:12s

Fri 7:52 pm, Theatre 1 | Sat 1:28 pm, Theatre 1

Jake Daniels - Writer/Director

Mediaverse Studios - Marengo

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After the passing of his creator, Monty seeks a best friend with the use of his brand new invention.

This film was written, produced, and distributed by an entirely Iowa team - Des Moines 48 Hour horror film best of city winner.

Midnight Metro: A Fashion Story

Student Documentary | 1h:08m:28s

Sat 7:42 pm, Theatre 2 | Sun 3:26 pm, Theatre 2

Madeline Carlton - Writer/Producer/Director

Hannah Carlton - Writer

Des Moines Area Community College - Des Moines

In a place better known for cornfields than catwalks, a determined group of students redefines what fashion looks like in the heart of the Midwest. *Midnight Metro: A Fashion Story* goes behind the scenes of the tenth annual fashion show at Des Moines Area Community College in Ankeny, Iowa, spotlighting the passion, pressure, and purpose that drive the students and faculty of the DMACC Fashion Institute (DFI). The documentary follows the journey and preparation for the 2024 fashion show, from the first sketch to the final runway walk. Fueled by ambition and heart, *Midnight Metro: A Fashion Story* is a celebration of ten years of transformation—of garments, of lives, and of what's possible when artistry meets opportunity in unexpected places.

This documentary was directed and produced by Iowans from the greater Des Moines area. The story is also set in the town of Ankeny.

Moshe's Song (Prelude)

Student Narrative Short-Form | 15m:58s

Fri 12:57 pm, Theatre 1 | Sun 1:11 pm, Theatre 1

Charles Matthew Chezum - Writer/Producer/Director

Jackie McGinnis - Producer

Augustana College - Rock Island, Illinois

Set during the Nazi's rise to power in 1930's Germany, "Moshe's Song" is a testament to the sacrifices that a mother makes for her child and the choices that must be made in the face of adversity.

The director was born in Davenport and is a Quad Cities native.

The Mouse

Student Freestyle | 3m:05s

Thu 6:47 pm, Ideal | Sun 1:05 pm, Theatre 2

Lucas John Gregory - Director

University of Iowa - Iowa City

When a mouse is left behind and no one deemed as "normal" wants it, where does it go?

The director is from Iowa, and the film is shot in Iowa.

My Adoring Husband

Hobbyist Short | 8m:30s

Fri 7:15 pm, Theatre 2 | Sat 1:19 pm, Theatre 1

Tyson Stock - Writer/Director

Minneapolis, Minnesota

An adored but constrained wife considers her options to break free of her supposedly charmed life.

Director/Writer/Actor Tyson Stock, Lead Actor Emma Jerndal, and Composer Brian Cavanagh-Strong are all alumni of Grinnell College. Director Tyson Stock also co-wrote the 2018 feature, *SAINTS REST*, set in Grinnell.

Mystery Cave Underground: Mapping for the Future

Student Documentary | 15m:19s

Sat 7:00 pm, Theatre 2 | Sun 3:11 pm, Theatre 2

Ryder Bates - Director

Francesca Soans, Joshua Sebree - Producers

University of Northern Iowa - Cedar Falls

Student researchers from the University of Northern Iowa make new discoveries while mapping portions of the Mystery Cave State Park underground cave network in southern Minnesota.

This film was produced by the University of Northern Iowa and features research being performed by UNI students. Both students on the production team are also UNI students and are from Iowa.

NO CANS

Student Documentary | 4m:45s

Thu 6:10 pm, Ideal | Sun 1:30 pm, Theatre 2

Abbie McLaren - Writer/Producer/Director

University of Iowa - Iowa City

NO CANS explores the lines between the oral and physical history of a recipe through my grandmother's retelling of a Czech family recipe for cabbage rolls. conceived as a visual recipe, this project combines still digital images, digital video, and paper scans.

I have lived in Iowa my whole life (as has the subject of the film) and the film was produced at the University of Iowa last year.





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The Oldest

Professional Narrative Short | 9m:48s

Fri 8:10 pm, Theatre 1 | Sat 10:45 am, Theatre 5

Cathlin McCullough - Writer/Producer/Director
Kristian Day, Allison Wallace, Chris Maddox,
Yasmeen Magar - Producers
Austin, Texas

12-year-old Kate longs to escape her lonely reality as the oldest of 5 under the shadow of her father's addiction in this coming-of-age story set in late 80s rural Iowa. "The Oldest" focuses on the inner life of a girl forced to grow up too fast and highlights the gulf of difference between the heaviness of home life and the freedom of just being a kid. *(language)*

I am from Sac City and went to the University of Iowa. The story is set in rural Iowa and loosely based on my childhood there. Everything was filmed in Iowa using an all-Iowa cast and crew (except for me, 1 producer, and the post-production team, everyone lives and works in Iowa).

On Our Way

Hobbyist Feature | 1h:12m:50s

Thu 9:17 pm, Ideal | Sat 11:09 am, Theatre 2

Dillon Jacobson - Writer/Producer/Director
Lucas Halverson, Cole Scafferri - Producers
Grant Gale - Director of Photography

As a winter storm jeopardizes the annual Christmas Eve gathering of five friends, unresolved conflicts surface, forcing them to confront their differences.

Everyone involved in the film is from Iowa, and the film garnered great support from the community of Conrad.

OUTRO

Hobbyist Short | 16m:52s

Thu 6:18 pm, Olympic | Sat 9:00 am, Theatre 2

Wes Worthing - Director/Writer
Mike Pace- Writer
Gary DeSomber - Producer
Grimes

Just minutes before going on-air, a retiring radio DJ has an unexpected conversation that will inspire the tone of his last show.

OUTRO was produced by an Iowa cast & crew, and all locations on Iowa soil in Des Moines.

Paw Paw & Dayja

Professional Narrative Feature | 58m:41s

Thu 7:20 pm, Olympic | Sat 9:17 am, Theatre 2

Gregory Alan Williams - Writer/Director
Richard Tavernaro, Dawson Williams- Producers
Stockbridge, Georgia

PAW PAW and DAYJA follows the adventures of a Bigfoot obsessed ten-year old who, with the help of her widowed grandfather, learns that each of us sees the world a little differently and that everyone's view has value.

Born and raised in Des Moines. Attended Coe College (Freshman Year) before joining the Marine Corps.

Projection

Hobbyist Short | 5m:02s

Sat 12:55 pm, Theatre 2 | Sat 5:36 pm, Theatre 1

Bauston Van Sickle - Writer/Producer/Director/DP
Jobe Fee - Writer/Producer/Director
Wayne D. Barrett - Producer
Newton

After years in prison, Kyle kidnaps his daughter Kaylee to relive their "perfect" family memories through his home movies-- but as the reels roll, his attempt to rekindle and prove his love turns into a nightmarish projection of guilt, obsession, and denial. BvM Productions presents "Projection" - a film made for the Jakob Owens horror film contest 2025. *(language, mature themes)*

Directors and cast/crew are all from Iowa.

PSYCLE

Student Freestyle | 13m:47s

Sat 9:00 am, Theatre 1 | Sun 1:09 pm, Theatre 2

Than San - Writer/Producer/Director
Loras College Creative Media - Dubuque

Than San is a student at Loras College in Dubuque.

Quantum Flux

Professional Narrative Feature | 1h:52m:43s

Fri 5:25 pm, Theatre 1 | Sat 9:00 am, Theatre 3

Joshua Bishop Hall - Writer/Producer/Director
Ryan Brown - Executive Producer
Will Perls, Aaron Klisman, Adam Bussell - Producers
Eagle Mountain, Utah

After losing his fiancé, an ex-marine is recruited into a top-secret experiment to remove consciousness from physical bodies. *(language, mature themes, violence)*

My name is Josh Hall, and I grew up in Iowa City and went to City High School, where I did theater, performing arts, and made a ton of student films! There were several newspaper articles about my films when I was in high school. I still tell people I'm from Iowa when they ask--I'm as proud an Iowan as you'll find!

The Red String

Student Freestyle | 7m:04s

Fri 7:30 pm, Theatre 1 | Sun 1:27 pm, Theatre 1

Carter Soyer - Writer/Producer/Director
Buena Vista University - Storm Lake

Not wanting to be discovered by their family, a renegade adolescent leaves behind a red string for their best friend to follow, hoping it will keep them tied together.

Filmmaker is a resident of Iowa and goes to Buena Vista University in Storm Lake.

Relax

Hobbyist Short | 4m:44s

Fri 2:25 pm, Theatre 2 | Sat 5:25 pm, Theatre 1

Alannah Swenka - Writer/Producer/Director
Benjamin Schmidt - Producers
Coralville

Five college kids go to a mysterious cabin for spring break. (*gore*)

This was filmed in Iowa at one of our great state parks and was made with an all-Iowan cast and crew!

Ride On: The Story of Gwen Maiers

Student Documentary | 14m:30s

Fri 2:58 pm, Theatre 2 | Sun 1:41 pm, Theatre 2

Ryan Haywood, Lucas Schoaf - Producers/Directors
Loras College Creative Media - Dubuque

A documentary about a Dubuque teenager, Gwen Maiers, who has a hobby so unique, that people often question...“is this a real thing?”

Lucas Schoaf and Ryan Haywood produced this project for their Senior Capstone project as students at Loras College in Dubuque. The documentary subject/person is a Dubuque resident.

Saving Silhouettes

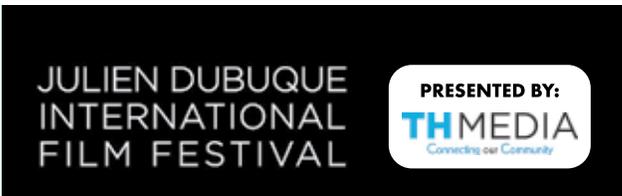
Professional Freestyle | 7m:30s

Thu 6:10 pm, Olympic | Sat 1:11 pm, Theatre 1

Kristopher J. Gathercoal - Writer/Producer/Director
Tyler Gene Gathercoal, Tollef Sorenson - Producers
Grand Junction

A boy investigates the woods south of town where he once met a girl who claimed to live there.

Everything was filmed in Iowa over a six month period with everyone involved being an Iowa native.



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Secret Ingredient

Hobbyist Short | 11m:47s

Fri 8:21 pm, Theatre 1 | Sat 2:09 pm, Theatre 1

Lewayne L White - Director/Writer
Butter Cow Writing Team - Producers
Grimes

A cookbook author attempts to learn the ways of a reclusive cook in the hope she'll learn the secret ingredient to his award-winning chili.

The film is an all-Iowa production. The cast and crew all live in central Iowa

Seeds of Sovereignty

Professional Documentary | 51m:15s

Fri 2:00 pm, Theatre 1 | Sat 10:30 am, Theatre 1

Stuart J Tanner - Producer/Director
Cody Olivas - Director of Photography
Amine Kouider - Audio
Fairfield / Mexico

Seeds of Sovereignty is a thought-provoking documentary that explores Mexico's growing struggle with the United States to protect its biodiversity and food sovereignty. At the center of the conflict is U.S. pressure on Mexico to adopt GMO corn and industrial farming practices, posing a serious threat to the country's traditional agriculture and environmental health.

Through striking visuals and compelling narratives, Seeds of Sovereignty exposes the harmful effects of industrial farming in both nations and challenges viewers to reflect on a country's right to provide its people with safe, nutritious food while preserving its environment and cultural heritage.

The documentary explores issues of broad public interest to Iowans. It investigates the industrial farming model widely used in Iowa, focusing on environmental degradation and the health concerns linked to heavy pesticide use. The production team responsible for the creation of the documentary are all based in Iowa.

Self-Portrait (Mirroring)

Student Freestyle | 5m:28s

Thu 6:26 pm, Ideal | Sun 12:39 pm, Theatre 1

Negar Soufi - Writer/Producer/Director/Editor
Timothy Ryssemus - Sound Designer
The University of Iowa - Iowa City

A woman traces her life across shifting images—phone clips, hand-drawn frames, fleeting shadows. In these fragments, she gathers memories of migration and belonging, shaping a self-portrait that is both fragile and whole.

This self-portrait film was conceived and created in Iowa City, where I am currently pursuing my MFA in Film & Video Production at the University of Iowa and teaching as a graduate instructor. All stages of the project—development, shooting, and editing—were carried out

in Iowa, using resources, mentorship, and community connections found here. The work embodies the state's supportive artistic culture, where experimentation and storytelling can flourish side by side.

Si Raya at Ang Himpapawid (Raya Among The Clouds)

Hobbyist Short | 19m:48s

Fri 1:31 pm, Theatre 1 | Sat 5:36 pm, Theatre 2

Iane Nicole Artillaga - Writer/Producer/Director
Victoria Nicole "Vinnie" Japlit - Editor/Producer
Justine Dominado - Producer/Director of Photography
Sioux City / Philippines

Set in 2005, follows third-grader Raya Carpio as she struggles with stage fright and societal judgment during a school family showcase. When questions arise about her unconventional family, Raya hesitates to invite her mother, Sabel, to an upcoming Family Day. With the help of her friend Makoy, Raya sends heartfelt messages via paper airplanes, hoping to bridge their emotional gap. Though the plan falters, a heartfelt trip brings mother and daughter closer, revealing the depth of their bond. This poignant tale celebrates acceptance, resilience, and the enduring love between parent and child.

Master editor, "Vinnie" Japlit, is from Sioux City.

Silent Riff

Student Narrative Short-Form | 12m:16s

Sat 10:55 am, Theatre 5 | Sun 12:35 pm, Theatre 2

Maya Pierce, Patrick Louscher - Writers
Ryan Haywood - Director
Nora Bruxvoort - Assistant Director/
Cinematographer
Loras College Creative Media - Dubuque

Mockumentary featuring aspiring professional air guitarist, Jerry 'Van Halen' Goldstein.

This short film was produced by students at Loras College in Dubuque.



Song & Dance

Professional Documentary | 1h:41m:45s

Fri 3:05 pm, Theatre 1 | Sat 9:00 am, Theatre 4

Kristofer J Keltgen - Writer/Producer/Director

Zak Rivers - Director of Photography

Justin Bruellman - Cinematographer

Madison Lake, Minnesota

"Song & Dance" is an upbeat and heartwarming music documentary that weaves together two powerful stories: the personal journey of Evelyn Keltgen—a girl born with a rare, life-threatening disease who grows up to become a musician—and the rich cultural history of old-time dance bands in the Midwest. Featuring the band Kris and the Riverbend Dutchmen, the film explores legendary ballrooms, unique instruments like the Hengel concertina, and the enduring spirit of polka fans and dancers. With a hopeful eye toward the next generation, Song & Dance is a joyful celebration of family, music, and traditions that refuse to fade.

Key cast member (Crystal Malek), who was interviewed in the film, and who performed on much of the music in the film is from Meservey. Additionally, there is footage and a performance by the "Malek's Fishermen Band" that was featured in the film. Malek's Fishermen Band is a well known band from Garner. Several people interviewed during the film mention performances, events, and venues that are located in Iowa as being important to the film subject.

Still Life

Professional Narrative Short | 17m:07s

Thu 6:42 pm, Olympic | Fri 1:13 pm, Theatre 1

Hannah Rosalie Wright - Writer/Producer/Director

Joe Olson - Producer

Des Moines

Gareth, a man struggling to reconnect with himself and his son after a significant loss, revisits an old hobby.

Every single crew and cast member works and lives in Iowa.

Tenderloin

Student Narrative Short-Form | 18m:34s

Fri 7:24 pm, Theatre 2 | Sun 4:16 pm, Theatre 1

Andrew Sloth - Writer/Director

Amber Combs - Producer

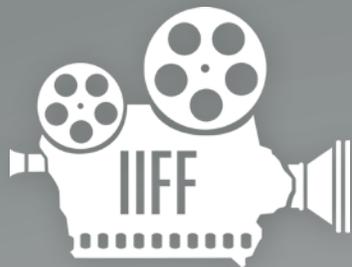
University of Georgia - Atlanta, Georgia

Tenderloin, a puppet pig down on his luck, finds himself at the center of a high-profile murder case.

The writer and director, Andrew Sloth, was born and raised in Iowa. The film also takes place in Iowa.

Track Guy Movie

Professional Documentary | 1h:6m:20s



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Thu 7:15 pm, Ideal | Sat 9:14 am, Theatre 1

Andrew Snyder - Writer/Producer/Director
Nichole Wandrey - Writer
Iowa City

For over 30 years, Mike Jay's voice has echoed through track and field stadiums across Iowa and the United States, from the Iowa High School State Meet to the Drake Relays and beyond. But his impact goes far beyond the mic. Through the Track Guy Foundation, Mike, his family, and foundation supporters have helped advance the sports of track and field and cross country by supporting athletes and building community across the state. Follow the high school track season through Mike's eyes and witness the profound influence he and the foundation have had on generations of athletes. Don't miss this inspiring story of passion, purpose, and the power of sport.

All crew members except one were born and raised in Iowa and have been making art here since birth! The story tells the story of an influential Iowan using an Iowa high school track and field season as a narrative frame.

The Turkey Kings

Professional Documentary | 37m:31s

Fri 5:25 pm, Theatre 2 | Sat 11:31 am, Theatre 3

Adam Rich - Writer/Producer/Director
Mark Mostad - Cinematographer
Jennifer Losch - Editor
Los Angeles, California

The Turkey Kings is a heartwarming story about 2 brothers who made turkey an everyday food in America. It's a history that highlights the Jewish immigrant experience, innovation in America's heartland, and an incredible sibling relationship.

After growing up across the river in Moline, my grandfather and his brother grew their business out of West Liberty and raised their families in Davenport.

An Untitled Love Story

Student Narrative Short-Form | 14m:44s

Sat 3:25 pm, Theatre 1 | Sun 3:00 pm, Theatre 1

Devesh Desai - Writer/Producer/Director
University of Northern Iowa - Cedar Falls, Osceola

An Untitled Love Story follows Logan, a college student wrapping up finals and counting down the days until he sees his girlfriend, Olivia. They've been together for years, dreaming about their future and supporting each other's passions, especially this book that Olivia has finally finished after working on for over the past year. But as Logan gets ready to surprise her with something big, he starts to sense that something isn't right. What follows is a story about love, distance, and all the things we don't usually expect.

"An Untitled Love Story" was shot & produced entirely in Cedar Falls, and with post-production taking place at the University of Northern Iowa. The cast and crew were primarily UNI students and faculty members, with Hawkeye Community College students also being a part of this film.

The Valley of the Devil

Professional Narrative Short | 15m

Sat 11:08 am, Theatre 5 | Sat 7:10 pm, Theatre 1

Chase Stine - Writer/Producer/Director
Jacob Daniels - Producer
Bruce Bales - Director of Photography
Des Moines

In 1897 Texas, two brothers come home to find their father has been taken by a bounty hunter. [\(language\)](#)

I've been an Iowan all my life. Everyone on the crew and the cast has lived or currently lives in Iowa. This is a movie made from the heart in the heartland.

Waverly 217

Student Freestyle | 6m:07s

Sat 12:50 pm, Theatre 1 | Sun 1:23 pm, Theatre 2

Grace Potratz - Director
The University of Iowa - Iowa City

An experimental short film that explores the idea of "home".

This film explores my own experiences moving to Iowa City, Iowa for university. I moved from my childhood home in Illinois to an apartment in Iowa City. The film explores the idea of what makes a home "home". It features shots of both my apartment in Iowa City and my childhood home in Illinois. This film was also made while I was attending the University of Iowa.

Whale Math

Professional Narrative Short | 9m:28s

Thu 7:10 pm, Olympic | Fri 12:47 pm, Theatre 1

D. Andrew Hartfield - Writer/Producer/Director
Tillie Hartfield - Writer
Laura Benjamin - Producer

When an adopted daughter shares with her father a fun fact about whales, they come to realize that some math problems just can't be solved.

I (writer, producer, director Andrew Hartfield) grew up and graduated from ALHS in Council Bluffs.

Your Lips Never Left Mine

Professional Narrative Feature | 1h:30m:35s

Fri 8:45 pm, Theatre 2 | Sat 2:00 pm, Theatre 2

Matthew Kozlark - Director/Writer
Felicia Ricci - Producer
Ridgefield, Connecticut

A young woman is hired by a finance couple to tutor their son at their summer lake house, and finds herself increasingly enmeshed in the undisclosed darkness of their past. [\(language, mature themes, violence\)](#)

The director, Matthew Kozlark, attended the Iowa Writer's Workshop.

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