

# IFFNY

INTERNATIONAL FILMMAKER FESTIVAL OF NEW YORK

# 7

EDITION

INTERNATIONAL FILMMAKER FESTIVAL  
OF NEW YORK PRESENTS:

## WORLD CINEMA IN NYC

MAY 25/FRIDAY/KAUFMAN ASTORIA STUDIOS (34-12 36th St, Astoria, NY 11106)

7:00 pm: Red Carpet/Black Tie Event

8:00 pm: Opening Ceremony

MAY 26, 27 and 28/PRODUCERS CLUB THEATER (358 W 44th St, New York, NY 10036)

2:00 pm to 10:00 pm - Competition program

MAY 29/TUESDAY/KAUFMAN ASTORIA STUDIO (34-12 36th St, Astoria, NY 11106)

4:00 pm: Special Screenings Program/Non-competition:

9:00 pm: Awards Ceremony

[www.iffny.com](http://www.iffny.com)

May 2018





## THE WINNERS OF INTERNATIONAL SCREENWRITING COMPETITION 2018

### CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS OF ISC!

We would like to say a big thank you to everyone for participating! It has been a great pleasure receiving your screenplays, they were all amazing!

#### AND THE WINNERS ARE:

##### *Feature film:*

• Bruce Gordon	Composition	\$6,000.00
• Christen Kimball	Dirty Nights	\$5,000.00
• Felicia Tann	Napoli	\$4,000.00
• Violeta Bulic	Visitor X	\$3,000.00
• Justin Bamfour	Her Sister	\$2,000.00
• Mike Middelton	All about you	\$1,000.00

##### *Short film:*

• Louis Cohen	It's Time	\$5,000.00
• Afia Frimpong	Pasadena	\$4,000.00
• Jamila Vance	Amigos	\$3,000.00
• Neil Kurt	Elona	\$2,000.00
• Rohit Lokhil	I'll forgive you	\$1,000.00
• Sarfaz Hassan	Suspected	\$500.00

Congratulations to the winners of International Screenwriting Competition!  
Thanks to everyone who participated and helped make this competition a success!  
Stay tuned. Our next competition starts on **June 1, 2018!**  
In case you missed it, you can check out the competition here:  
[www.nilproduction.net](http://www.nilproduction.net)



I am honored to create a global platform through IFFNY that promotes the world's most artistic and creative films. As we continue to celebrate our 7th festival success, we strive to provide New York with unique film and arts programming each year.

We are thrilled to announce an incredible line-up for the 2018 International Filmmaker Festival of New York, which brings together local, national and international filmmakers. We received over 500 world-wide submissions, and our official program includes a selection of documentary, short and feature films. The five-day festival is dedicated to our Top 40 chosen films representing US, UK, Israel, France, Brazil, Argentina, Spain, India, Japan, Kosovo, Albania, Italy, Norway, Macedonia, Netherlands, Czech Republic, Belgium and Qatar.

We are excited you joined us in our celebration this year for the prestigious IFFNY film festival. We value the hard work and dedication from each filmmaker. Let us grow together as we make history and leave a legacy for generations to come.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to all our Special Guests, the honorable dignitaries and the VIPs who joined us for the Red Carpet, film screenings, discussion panel, Q&A, Awards Gala, after parties and many exciting activities we have planned for the festival. 2018 is set to be the biggest year yet! Let us experience film in the most magical way – World Cinema in NYC! Let's celebrate creativity and excellence for many years to come!

**Mrika Krasniqi, Executive Director & Founder  
International Filmmaker Festival of New York**



The International Filmmaker Festival of New York is a global industry event held annually in the world's most iconic center of arts, New York City. Each year, the IFFNY festival brings to New York world premieres of films from around the globe and gives the American audience unique opportunities to discover international cinema.

The mission of IFFNY Festival is to promote and aid the development of the international cinema and film authors. Our goal is to act as the main meeting point where international cinema converges in a spirit of cooperation and cultural exchange through the presentation of the finest and most recent achievements in world cinema.

IFFNY began in 2012 as Albanian Film Week (AFW) and has grown each year, becoming one of the most respected festivals in New York for its commitment to advancing the film culture. Its popularity and success are due to the hard work and enthusiasm of the festival team and its organizer **Mrika Krasniqi**, who is passionate about arts and culture.

IFFNY Executive Director Mrika Krasniqi has earned numerous awards and accolades, for her accomplishments as a successful Female Role Model that inspires corporate leadership.

Mrika Krasniqi is the winner of "Woman of the Year" by U.S. Congress, "Best Human Artist" by the European Community of Jewish Artists in Paris, France, "Best Director" in Germany, "Best Production" in Poland, "Best Social Documentary" by NYIFF; "Best Historical Documentary" by Los Angeles Film Festival, "Best Organizer" by One World, and "Ambassador for Peace" by the Universal Peace Federation.

The International Filmmaker Festival of New York (IFFNY) is one of the leading platforms of international cinema, dedicated to artists who embody diversity, innovation and creativity.

[www.iffny.com](http://www.iffny.com)  
FB/Instagram:  
[@iffnyfestival](https://www.instagram.com/iffnyfestival)

## IFFNY PRESENTERS

*"It's an honor to once again host this inspiring festival that celebrates creative expression and recognizes diverse talent of current filmmakers. IFFNY is leaving behind incredible legacies, igniting a spark in the next generation." – Ermira Babamusta, Ph.D.*



**Ermira Babamusta** is a former Obama Administration presidential campaign director. Prior to her leadership position for President Obama, Ms. Babamusta began her career in

foreign affairs at the U.S. Congress with Senator Tom Harkin and Congressman Mark Kennedy in Washington DC, followed by her work at the Peace-keeping department at United Nations Headquarters in New York. Ermira is the founder of the two-year initiative "Peace Action Foundation" in support of U.S. military and veterans.

Ermira Babamusta holds two MA degrees in Political Science and Public Administration, with Summa Cum Laude Honors; a mastery program from Harvard University in "National Defense & Security"; University of Strasbourg & WVU Program "Comparative Law and Institutions: Europe and the European Union" in France; and an advanced graduate program in United Nations Diplomacy from LIU. Ermira is a Doctoral candidate for Political Science/ International Relations.

Ermira Babamusta is the recipient of numerous awards and honors, in recognition of her professional achievements, leadership in politics, and community building,

namely: The White House President's Award by President Obama, Distinguished Humanitarian Award by US Congress, House Majority Leader Harry Reid, Inaugural 10 Under 10 Award, Woman of the Year, Woman of Courage Award, etc.



**Giorgio Kolaj** established his reputation as a successful entrepreneur, Co-founder and the Executive Vice President of Famous Famiglia, the leading global brand in US,

Europe and Africa. Prior to re-joining the family business in 2004, Giorgio enjoyed a successful career in the high-tech industry, where he worked at IBM Global Services and later helped launch a successful security software company.

Giorgio holds a bachelor's degree in Computer Science and Business, with Latin Honors. Giorgio serves on the boards of: D.A.R.E. America; Boy Scouts – Queens Council; President's Advisory Council – Vaughn College; and In Arms Reach.

In 2018 Giorgio Kolaj starred as lead actor in the short film "Red Rose" written and directed by Julian Biba, True Venture Films. Giorgio is dedicated to the world of art and culture. He is very passionate about arts and has contributed in support of culture and the creative community.



# INTERNATIONAL FILMMAKER FESTIVAL OF NEW YORK (IFFNY)

7<sup>th</sup> Edition, May 25 to 29, 2018

## 2018 FESTIVAL PROGRAM

**MAY 25/FRIDAY/KAUFMAN ASTORIA  
STUDIO (34-12 36th St, Astoria, NY 11106)**

7:00 pm: **Red Carpet/Black Tie Event**

8:00 pm: **Opening Ceremony**

### COMPETITION PROGRAM

**8:30pm: - *The Kiss*/ Murilo Benicio/ BRAZIL /  
Feature. 01:38:00.**

**Synopsis:** Based on the text "The Kiss on the Asphalt", a play written by Brazilian famous writer Nelson Rodrigues, first staged in 1961, the film tells the story of Arandir, a man who, in a banal gesture, attends the request for a kiss on the mouth made by a guy about to die and who had just been run over by a bus. The act is witnessed by Amado, a sensationalist reporter who explores the kiss between two men as a top headline on his newspaper in order to increase sales, as well as inciting police to investigate a supposed connection between Arandir and the dead man. 'The Kiss' focuses on the discussion about the power of the conspiracy and the destruction in the life of an anonymous man. In the plot, Arandir is involved in the accusations made by his father-in-law, Aprígio, who insists on the idea that he witnessed the kiss, even though he didn't, and the doubt that the police and the



reporter set in the head of his wife, Selminha.  
**Director & Writer:** Murilo Benício, **Producer:** Marcello Ludwig Maia & Murilo Benício.  
**Cast:** Lázaro Ramos, Débora Falabella, Fernanda Montenegro, Stenio Garcia, Otávio Muller.

Followed by Q&A  
(After party: George's at Kaufman Astoria Studio)

**MAY 26/SATURDAY/PC THEATRE  
(358 W 44th St, New York, NY  
10036)**

**12:00: Round Table Discussion: Social Issues  
in Motion Pictures**

A round table discussion with filmmakers and experts about the portrayal of social problems, violence, family, gender equality/ gender pay gap in films.

Location: Paul's on Times Square (136 W42nd Street, between Broadway/Ave of Americas, New York NY, 10036). **Floor HL.** Inside the Hilton Garden Inn.

**2:00pm: - *Bill Viola the Road to St Paul's*/  
Gerald Fox/ UK /Doc. 01:23:00.**

**Synopsis:** A film which follows the world's pre-eminent video artist Bill Viola and his wife and partner Kira Perov over twelve years as they create two permanent video

installations Mary and Martyrs on either side of the High Altar in St Paul's Cathedral in London. We observe them making the works in locations around California and also look back over Bill's long career in video art. We finally see the works being installed in the Cathedral, a testament to their determination and creativity.

**Director, Writer, Producer:** Gerald Fox.

**Cast:** Bill Viola.



**4:00pm:** - *Avec L'amour* /Ilija Cvetkovski / MACEDONIA/Doc. 01:06:00.

**Synopsis:** 115 rotten vintage cars, a young wife, students that adore him – Dionis, a biology teacher with love for life, or just another reason to keep on buying useless vehicles. A love Story.

**Director:** Ilija

Cvetkovski, **Writer:** Atanas Georgiev,

**Producer:** Atanas Georgiev.

**Cast:** Dionis Paslavkov.



**6:00pm:** - *Save* / Iván Sáinz-Pardo / SPAIN / Short.3:54.

**Synopsis:** Dawns. A baby breaks the silence. "54 International Awards. More than 300 official selections."

**Director:** Iván Sáinz-



**Pardo, Writer:** Iván Sáinz-Pardo, **Producer:** Iván Sáinz-Pardo.

**Music:** Philipp Fabian Kölmel.

**Cast:** Josephine Ehlert, Roland Von Kummant, Mia Von Kummant.

**- Time /Alon Daniel /ISRAEL /Short. 8:30.**

**Synopsis:** Amit tries to manipulate the complicated life and tries to make it all in one day, but in the end disappoints the most precious of all, his father.

**Director:** Alon Daniel,

**Writer:** Alon Daniel,

**Producer:** Noah

Ackerman & Alon

Daniel.

**Cast:** Alon Lior, Shmoel Eidelman, Naveh Tzur.



**- Battle Fields** /Anouar H. Smaine/US /Short. 19:46.

**Synopsis:** A US Veteran of Iraq whose life spirals out of control because of PTSD, is given a ride by an Iraqi driver who lives in Los Angeles as a refugee. As the two men begin discovering each other's backgrounds, tensions mount.

**Director:** Anouar H. Smaine, **Writer:**

Anouar H. Smaine, **Producer:** Jonathan

Angelier & Anouar H. Smaine, **Associate**

**Producer:** Amina Zhaman.

**Cast:** Anouar H. Smaine, Sean Stone, Emily Debinie, Nikki McCauley.



**- fiSOlofia / Nicola Palmeri / ITALY / Short. 16:25.**

**Synopsis:** Three retired friends love to talk in a bar in their country. They do not talk about politics, sports or local gossip but are questioning on philosophical themes that will bring them to life in an animated way. The flashbacks of a more erudite narrator than others will open up surreal moments that trigger these new questions. Between doubts and certainties, between faith and reason, friends will reflect on the fundamental questions of existence.

**Director:** Nicola Palmeri, **Writer:** Nicola Palmeri, **Producer:** Sergio Francesco Distefano

**Cast:** Antonello Puglisi, Domenico Centamore, Stefano Chiodaroli.



**- Calling Home / Megan K. Fox / UK / Short. 19:40.**

**Synopsis:** Dorota moves to London with dreams of becoming a fashion designer, but her path is altered by an abusive relationship. This film was funded through the Reel Homes Competition by Inside Housing, supported by leading UK homeless charities to develop a modern day narrative about homelessness to mark the 50th anniversary of Ken Loach's "Cathy Come Home".

**Director & Writer:** Megan K. Fox,

**Producer:** Paul Romero Méndez.

**Cast:** Natalia Kostrzewa, Aaron Taylor.



**- The last dance of Walter Vintorp/ Neuray Claude /BELGIUM/Feature. 15:00.**

**Synopsis:** Walter Vintorp belongs to a family of hitmen. He wants to quit this line of work and dedicate himself fully to his ultimate passion: dance. His father doesn't agree and decide to kill him. Walter accepts his destiny and makes his way to the place where he will perform his last dance.

**Director & Writer:** Neuray Claude,

**Producer:** Kip Kap productions.

**Cast:** Marcel Gonzalez, Damien Marchal, Guy Staumont.



**8:00pm: - Unwanted / Edon Rizvanolli/ KOSOVO-NETHERLANDS /Feature. 01:25:00.**

**Synopsis:** Alban, a lonely teenage boy, who lives in Amsterdam with Zana, his refugee mother from Kosovo, keeps getting into trouble while yearning for her acceptance. But the traumas caused by the war, which his mother initially hides away from him, turn eventually his world upside down.

**Director, Writer & Producer:** Edon Rizvanolli.

**Cast:** Adriana Matoshi, Jason de Ridder.



**Followed by Q&A**

**After Party at Producers Club Theater**

**(Address: 358 W 44th St, New York, NY 10036)**



**MAY 27/SUNDAY/PC THEATRE**  
**(358 W 44th St, New York, NY**  
**10036)**

**2:00pm:** - *Operation Wedding/ Anat Zalmanson Kuznetsov/ ISRAEL/Doc.*  
**01:03:00.**

**Synopsis:** Leningrad, 1970. A group of young Jewish dissidents who were denied exit visas, plot to hijack an empty plane and escape the USSR. 45 years later, filmmaker Anat Zalmanson-Kuznetsov reveals the compelling story of her parents, leaders of the group, "heroes" in the West but "terrorists" in Russia. It started as a fantasy, *Operation Wedding*, as outrageous as it was simple: Under the guise of a trip to a local family wedding, the hijackers would buy every ticket on a small 12-seater plane, so there would be no passengers but them, no innocents in harm's way. The group's pilot, who once flew for the Red Army, would take over the controls and fly the 16 runaways into the sky, over the Soviet border, on to Sweden, bound for Israel.

**Director:** Anat Zalmanson Kuznetsov,  
**Producer:** Sasha Klein & Guntis Trekteris & Anat Zalmanson Kuznetsov.

**4:30pm:** - *Ceremonial Tattoo/Giuseppe Lo Fiego/ITALY/Doc.* **5:00.**

**Synopsis:** Is the story of Sanya, an artist tattoo that lives in the jungle of Palenque,

Chapas in Mexico. She is a pioneer of the revival of ancient tattoo in



Mexico. The video shows her admiration and love for Mexican cultural heritage, the handmade tools she makes for her tattoos, the differences between electric and hand tattooing, the geometry she uses in her tattoos, as well as the "therapeutic" tattoos she has done from times to times.

**Director:** Giuseppe Lo Fiego.

**Cast:** Sanya Youalli.

- *Parivara /Alex Lora & Alex Kruz /US /Doc.*  
**11:01.**

**Synopsis:** Based on the true life stories of the children at the Goldungha Orphanage for the Blind in Nepal, *Parivara* is a positive and hopeful story following young Kopila through a fateful day in her life after the 2015 earthquake. It is a universal story demonstrating the beauty and resilience of the human spirit.



**Director & Writer:** Alex Lora & Alex Kruz,

**Producer:** Alex Kruz.

**Cast:** Shiva Sapkota.

- *Terraza 7 / Carlos Freire / US /Doc.***12:22.**

**Synopsis:** *Terraza 7* is a bar located in Jackson Heights, New York. It opened its doors in 2002, always with the promise of bringing us a show case of different cultures. Here the customers can find not only drinks and music, but *Terraza 7* also opens

its customers' eyes to a wide arrange of artistic expressions like music, poetry, paintings, and film. Also, Terraza 7 is a political platform for the Latino community in New York City.

After 14 years, Terraza 7 is about to shut its doors. Jackson Heights is a growing and developing community and it makes it harder for Terraza 7 to survive and to continue with its legacy. The community members are in denial to the resolution of closing Terraza 7's doors.

**Director & Writer:** Carlos Freire, **Producer:** Carlos Freire & Mariella Perez.

**Cast:** Carlos Freire.



- 10424 / Tatsuki Imaji / JAPAN / Short. 09:40.

**Synopsis:** Currently in Japan, more than ten thousand dogs are being culled each year. When compared to other developed nations in Europe, this number is considerably high.

This is a grim reflection of Japan's current lack of shelters. Even within so called 'animal welfare facilities', dogs are actually being put down. The naming of these places deceives the public from the reality that takes place there.

**Director & Producer:** Tatsuki Imaji.



- House no. 57 / Festim Rexepi / KOSOVO / Doc.15:00.

**Synopsis:** Ferdonije Querkezi shows how the members of the family kidnapped them on March 27, 1999. She tells the things she keeps from her beloved 4 boys and her husband as a reminder for them.

Today, she has decided that her home, be a museum house.

In the House No. 57, 11 men are been kidnapped, the bones of two boys are found in mass graves, but not the bones of two boys and mates whose fate is unknown for 18 years after the kidnapping of masked people.

**Director:** Festim Rex, **Writer:** Florentina Shala.

**Cast:** Ferdonije Querkezi.



6:00pm - Tide / Margareta F. A. Orkan / NORWAY / Short. 9:46.

**Synopsis:** At the line between tall mountains and the always moving sea a father works on his unusual boat. All the work he puts into it he does for his family. The anticipation of completing it is just as high as it is a burden. He must succeed.

**Director & Writer:** Margarta F. A. Orkan,

**Producer:** Rasmus Bergli.

**Cast:** Espen Østman.



- Forgive Me /Besim Ugzmajli /KOSOVO/ Short. 15:00.

**Synopsis:** Bujar, a youngster, is manipulated by a kosovar Imam in joining terrorist groups fighting in Syria. He secretly joins the war and then asks his older brother Agron to send Bujar's wife

Mimoza to Syria too. Agron horrified by his brother's actions confronts Bujar and asks him to return to Kosovo. Agron tries to prevent Mimoza from going to Syria hoping to convince his brother to return. Bujar threatens

Mimoza by marrying a war widow should she not join him in Syria.

**Director & Writer:** Besim Ugzmajli,

**Producer:** Besim Ugzmajli & Agron Shala.

**Cast:** Agron Shala, Semira Latifi, Kushtrim Asllani, Ekrem Sopi.



- *The Beginning* /Agim Abdula / MACEDONIA /Short. 13:00.

**Synopsis:** The world is full of lies and deception. People doubt in everything; everything seems suspicious to them. They even doubt in their own existence. They are not sure whether what they see is real or

imaginary, while the reality is completely different. Insecurity prevails. Is death the end or the beginning? That's the question.

**Director & Writer:** Agim Abdula, **Producer:** Bunjamin Kurtishi.

**Cast:** Naser Rafuna, Mirsad Abazi, Amernis Nokshiqi, Fatmire Sherifi.



- *Cookie Heart* / Charles Xiuzhi Dong /US / Short. 16:05.

**Synopsis:** Innocent Lisa flies from Germany to New York to birthday surprise Fabian - her childhood crush. Once loyal and caring

friend, he turns out to have lost his moral compass as a result of the omnipresent American college culture. Lisa discovers that Fabian seems to have developed two personalities: he's still kind during one to one interactions with Lisa, but seems

to have lost all decency when surrounded by his new friends, who do not even know when his birthday is. After coming out from the club, Fabian asks Lisa to wait outside as he wants to have sex with a barely conscious and extremely drunk girl.

**Director:** Charles Xiuzhi Dong, **Writer:**

Charles Xiuzhi Dong & Stefan Nachmann, **Producer:** Jenny He, James Qiu, Gabriela Naumnik.

**Cast:** Norah Hoffmann, Anders Geipel, Smitty Chai, Arianna Williams.



- *Easter* / Chih Chieh Wu/CZECH REP./Short. 10:00.

**Synopsis:** In order to offer a better future to her daughter, a Vietnamese mother migrated to Czech Republic. She even hired a Czech nanny to help her daughter integrate with Czech society. However, she starts to feel alienated from her daughter. How can she deal with it?

**Director & Writer:** Chih Chieh Wu.



- *Desir Pastel* /Mathieu Rivolier /FRANCE /  
Short. 13:38.

**Synopsis:** This story is about an angel coming down to Earth. A mute and attractive young woman, who is going to furiously turn upside down the daily life of a middle-class family.

**Director, Writer & Producer:** Mathieu Rivolier.



**8:00pm:** - *One Bedroom*/Darien Sills-Evans/  
US/ Feature. 01:23:00.

**Synopsis:** Breaking up is easy. Moving out is hard. After five years of ups and downs, an African American 30-something couple in a gentrifying Brooklyn neighborhood spends their final afternoon together arguing and remember better days, as one of them moves out and hopefully on with her life.

**Director & Writer:** Darien Sills-Evans,  
**Producer:** Darien Sills-Evans & Devin Williams.

**Cast:** Devin Nelson, Darien Sills-Evans, Amber Reauche Williams, Stephen Hill, Jon Laster.



**Followed by Q&A**

**After Party at Producers Club Theater**  
(Address: 358 W 44th St, New York, NY 10036)

**MAY 28/MONDAY/PC THEATRE**  
(358 W 44th St, New York, NY 10036)

**1:00pm:** - *Behind the Cove* / Keiko Yagi/  
JAPAN /Doc. 01:45:00.

**Synopsis:** Rebutting the Academy Award® Winning Documentary "THE COVE".

Negative media coverage on Japan about the never-ending whaling issue prompted first-time documentary filmmaker Keiko Yagi

to find out more about the topic. With no budget, limited experience in filmmaking, no fluency in English, but armed with a video camera and a strong desire to find out about the truth of the matter on whaling, I started my research. What started out as a personal investigation triggered by childhood memories of whale meat dishes inevitably led me to the town of Taiji, the center of the whaling debate and the stage of THE COVE.

**Director, Writer Producer & Keiko Yagi.**

**Cast:** Louis Psihoyos, Richard O'Barry, Joji Morishita, Hideki Moronuki, David Hance.



**3:30pm:** - *A year in Antarctica*/ Julia Martins/BRAZIL/ Doc.

**Synopsis:** The documentary "A Year in Antarctica" followed a group of fifteen Brazilian Navy men and women who spent 12 months in charge of maintaining the Brazilian scientific research station in the ice continent, away from their country, families

and friends. The film crew made the trip to the station three times and during the winter, when the base becomes inaccessible, the members of the group themselves recorded their experiences. The film shows a thrilling and impressive experience that most Brazilians no nothing about.

**Director & Writer:** Julia Martins, **Producer:** Izabella Faya/Fernanda Reznik.



**6:00pm:** - *A Forest* /Adriano Curci / ARGENTINA/Short. 11:00.

**Synopsis:** The past and the present are intertwined in an old abandoned house in the middle of a forest. Into the trees, Martin walks. A tragedy. Into the trees, into the trees. Based on the song "A Forest" by The Cure.

**Director & Writer:** Adriano Curci, **Producer:** Christian Sotelo.



- *A True Story*/Viron Roboci/ALBANIA/Short. 19:53.

**Synopsis:** Albania during the dictatorship, told through the history of a family. The divorce of a young girl which is not well received, and her sudden disappearing, urges the authorities four years later to start a case, looking for the killers, considering the ladder to be granted. The vicissitudes, the tortures, the unending pressure in the interrogation rooms and the suffering of the family members who instead of denying the

accusations, try to tell themselves that they are "the authors of the murder", causes them to describe in detail the nonexistent murder.

**Director & Writer:**

Viron Roboci,  
**Producer:** Viron Roboci & Ermal Hoxha.



- *A Journey to From Love*/Abdullah Al-mulla/ QATAR/Short. 15:00.

**Synopsis:** Ashiq's surreal adventure into his inner being from the loss of his love and his journey to acceptance.

**Director & Writer:** Abdullah Al-mulla,  
**Producer:** Nadine Toukan.

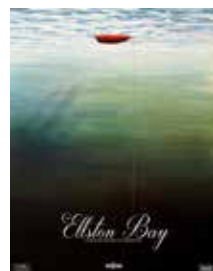
**Cast:** Mahmood AlMahmood, M.A. Lazurdi, Marine George.



- *Ellston Bay*/ Nicholas Eriksson /UK /Short. 15:00.

**Synopsis:** When Keir decides to re-establish contact with his long estranged father, he returns to his hometown by the sea, and quickly discovers that all is not as it seems on the surface.

**Director:** Nicholas Eriksson, **Writer:** Edward Carter, **Producer:** Tristan Loraine.  
**Cast:** John Rhys-Davies, Richard Kovacs, Christina Hardy.





- *Innocence* / *Miranda Jean & Michael Cicchetti* / *US/Short. 9:10.*

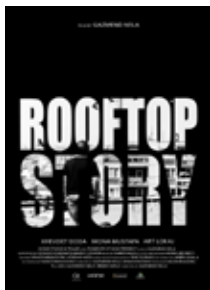
**Synopsis:** A short film about a girl in her late teens and her experience being sexually assaulted at a college party. A child named Paige tries to save her from committing suicide.



**Director:** Michael Cicchetti & Miranda Jean Larson, **Writer:** Miranda Jean Larson, **Producer:** Michael Cicchetti & Miranda Jean Larson.  
**Cast:** Miranda Jean Larson, Chris Krause and Mikayla Desroches.

**8:00pm:** - *Rooftop Story/ Gazmend Nela/ KOSOVO /Feature. 1:25:00.*

**Synopsis:** Lumi wants to exterminate all the crows of his city; he blames them for the loss of his family in a traffic accident. He meets Yllka which is in search of her son that she had given up him since his birth five years ago and was adapted from local family. She is seeking to take him back on his birthday. They make an agreement to help each other, so Lum to kill all the crows and Yllka to take her son and the two set out on an adventure in which they discover their past  
**Director:** Gazmend Nela, **Writer:** Gazmend Nela & Arian Krasniqi, **Producer:** Valon Bajgora & Yll Uka & Gazmend Nela & Arben Shala.



**Cast:** Xhevdet Doda, Mona Mustafa, Art Lokaj.

Followed by Q&A

After Party at Producers Club Theater

(Address: 358 W 44th St, New York, NY 10036)

MAY 29/TUESDAY/KAUFMAN  
ASTORIA STUDIO (34-12 36th St,  
Astoria, NY 11106)

## SPECIAL SCREENINGS PROGRAM/ Non-competition:

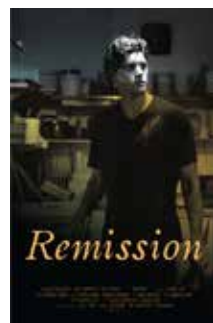
**4:00pm:** - *Remission* / *Eugenia Tan / AUSTRALIA/Short. 8:00.*

**Synopsis:** An estranged dishevelled young man is reunited with the family's patriarch only to cause an embittered rivalry with his brother, who until then, was inline to be the sole heir to the family's fortune.

**Director & Writer:**

Eugenia Tan, **Producer:** Liubov Korpusova & Eugenia Tan.

**Cast:** Alfredo Malabello, Ange Arabatzis, Jack Doherty.



- *The Interview* / *Isli Hoxha/ US/Short. 5:47.*

**Synopsis:** Faced with a crucial job interview, Lilly is haunted by her inner demon



**Director, Writer & Producer:** Isli Hoxha.

**Cast:** Cassandra Due, Isli Hoxha, Rich Maloy, Giorgi Razmadze.

- *All About Rita / Guy Chachkes /US/ Short.3:55.*

**Synopsis:**

A husband who suspects his wife is cheating engages a private detective. He finds out more than he bargained for.

**Director:** Guy Chachkes, **Writer:** Peter Stray & Alexandru Aldea, **Producer:** Alexandru Aldea.

**Cast:** Alexandru Aldea, Gustavo Pace.



- *Wood-chuck/Balaji Ragupathi/INDIA/ Short. 5:30.*

**Synopsis:**

Protagonist is lonely from childhood. He wants to make close friendships and his attempt always ends up in failure. What happens when he attempts to make friendship with a pizza delivery boy?

**Director & Producer:** Balaji Ragupathi,

**Writer:** Balaji R, Vasanthakumar M.

**Cast:** Sibbi Maruthu, Faniveer.



- *Basketball /Merita Syla / KOSOVO/Short. 14:23.*

**Synopsis:**

The movie "the basketball player" is a drama based on a passionate player, who suffers a car accident, and starts playing basketball on a wheelchair.

**Director:** Merita Syla, **Writer:** Femi Halimi,

**Producer:** Kenan Gurgurofci.

**Cast:** Kenan Gurgurovci Arjan Lekaj.



**5:00pm:** - *Top Models are Deadly / Larry Moore /US/Feature/ 01:32:27.*

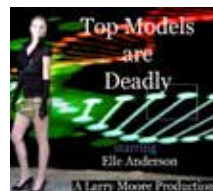
**Synopsis:**

A down private detective is hired to protect the promoter of a charity shows. Features Memphis, its people, and its music.

**Director & Producer:**

Larry Moore.

**Cast:** Elle Anderson, John Malloy, Max Maxwell, Larry Moore.



**7:00pm:** - *Xhanfise Keko-A woman Director in the Age of Celluloid/Mevlan Shanaj/ALBANIA/Doc. 01:00:00.*

**Synopsis:**

Director Mevlan Shanaj, through a highly sensitive and dynamic documentary, brings to the screen the life and work story of one of the most prominent, yet internationally

obscure, women directors in the history of world cinema, Albanian children film director, the late Xhanfise Keko. The film is told in her own words, in the words of prominent international film critics, her closest work associates, and her former child actors. Xhanfise Keko is the author of eleven full-length feature films for children, starting her career in the early fifties until the early nineties. Her name remains a legend in the consciousness and collective memory of Albania.

**Director & Producer:** Mevlan Shanaj,

**Writer:** Natasha Lako.



Followed by Q&A

## 9:00 PM / AWARDS CEREMONY

Best Feature Film  
Best Short Documentary  
Best Production Award

Best Short Film  
Best Actor Award  
Best Cinematography

Best Feature Documentary  
Best Actress Award  
+ Special Festival Awards

*Closing Night*

**Special Performance by:** Frank Sinatra School of Arts

**Frank Sinatra Ensemble:** Lucas Bargebuhr (Alto Saxophone), Astra Rincon (Alto Saxophone), Ben Levine (Tenor Saxophone), Earl Simons (Trumpet), Sebastian Arias (Trumpet), Brandon Dill (Piano), Tahj Greaves (Bass), Tarrell Nedderman (Drums), Simon Safos (Vocal)

**After Party:** George's at Kaufman Astoria Studio (Address: 35-11 35th Ave, Astoria, NY 11106)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Thank you to everyone who contributed to the overwhelming support received in making our 7th Edition of 2018 IFFNY a Great Success.*

Apolline Andreyes

John Blenn

Lee Bradshaw

Samantha Daniels

Ibër Deari

Stephen 'Illfix' Edwards

Jotti Ejlli

Candy Escobar

Jordan Griffith

Danielle Hall

Euxhenia Hodo

Giorgio Kolaj

Xhevat Limani

Martin Martinez

Ruslan Nazmutdinov

Dona Mavraj

Kendrick Merdani

Zikri Meta

Ivan Morales

Ferit Kuleta

Halil Mula

Margherita Peluso

Dino Rexhaj

Ilir Rizaj

Kamila Roth

Beqir Sina

Alfred & Ernest Tollja

Diar Xani

Amina Zhman

Anil Zogjani

**Thank you to CYNATION:** Josh Mak, Simon Lai, Andrew Teo, Aaron Mak ([cynationband.com](http://cynationband.com))

*To our incredible organizers:*

*Executive Director & Founder Mrika Krasniqi, International Liaison Director Ermira Babamusta*

*Festival Selector Ibër Deari, Festival Coordinators: Arlinda Prelvukaj, Itta Ram,*

*Program Advisor & Editor Bajram Shala, Marketing Consultant Lora Qosja,*

*Web Developer Egzon Bunjaku, Designer Hekuran Rexhepi, Asha Graphic*

## IFFNY Jury of 2018

Each year IFFNY invites key influencers in the entertainment and film industry to serve on our Jury Panel. This year we welcome the five honorable Jurors: Jotti Ejlli, Ibër Deari, Margherita Peluso, Kendrick Merdani and John Blenn. Jotti Ejlli will preside as Jury President and Ibër Deari is the Festival Selector.



### **Ibër Deari (Director, Producer, Writer)**

*- IFFNY Festival Selector*

Director, writer, producer, DOP Ibër Deari is born in 1990, in Macedonia. He is a talented director and writer, known for his award-winning movies: *My City Screams* (2015), *Toka* (2016), *A long way Home* (2017). Filming is his biggest passion and he has been making films since high school. He has also written and directed a number of short fictional and documentary videos. Ibër Deari studied *Film School* at the University of Audiovisual Arts "ESRA" in Skopje. He graduated in 2013 with the film "*Last Confession*". Deari earned his Master of Arts in the *Department of Film Direction* with

the film "*Toka*" (Land) and thesis "*To Film or Not to Film*".

Ibër Deari is the winner of numerous prestigious international awards, including: *Best Artist* in Macedonia from Milingona e Artë; *Best Film* for "*Between Paradise and Hell*" from Gässli Film Festival in Basel, Switzerland; the *Audience Award for Best Film* for "*Last Confession*" at New York Albanian Film Week in Manhattan; *Best Director* and *Best Film* for "*My City Screams*" at the Nine Eleven Festival in Prishtina, Kosovo; *Best Short Film* and *Best Director* for "*Land*" and *Best Director* for "*A Long Way Home*" at the International Filmmaker Festival of New York in Manhattan.

**Jotti Ejlli (Director, Producer, Writer)**  
– *President of the Jury*

Jotti Ejlli (Kastriot Ejlli) is a talented filmmaker, born in Albania. He has always been creative since he was young, growing up with love of art, cinema, painting and music. Jotti studied “Cinema”



(Discipline delle Arti della Musica e dello Spettacolo) at the University of Florence in Italy. After graduation, he moved to Milan, Italy to continue his studies at the SAE Institute for “Filmmaking”. Upon graduation, he started working as an independent filmmaker in Milan, where he completed many successful projects, documentaries, music videos and short films. His critically acclaimed debut short film “Rosso Fuoco” received positive reviews by film critics and the audience.

In 2012 Jotti returned to Albania to continue with his successful work in various well-known projects, as a filmmaker and as a director of many popular television programs. In 2014 he collaborated with Kinostudio Dardan, to produce many projects in a very short time. In 2015 he wrote and directed his first feature film, “Hije” (Shadows), all accomplished as an independent production. “Hije” was released for the audience in 2016 and it screened in New York at AFW, where it won the “Artistic Achievement Award”. Jotti Ejlli is currently working on his next feature film “Nik”, that will launch its production in 2019.

**John Blenn (Director, Producer, Writer)**

John Blenn is well known in New York media circles as an entertainment writer and critic for over 40 years. In addition to publishing *Long Island Entertainment* for 7



years, he has also been featured in magazines and Newspapers such as *Newsday*, *Good Times*, *Island Ear*, *It's Hip*, *The Music Paper* and *Network*. He is also currently a contributing arts reviewer for *Village Connection*. Mr. Blenn has had over 80 plays staged with over a 23-year career as a New York playwright as well as serving as director/producer for the world premiere of Eddie Money's autobiographical musical, *Two Tickets To Paradise*.

When he isn't serving as a professor of mass communications & playwright-in-residence for Five Towns College, he also keeps busy as a SAG actor and producer. Among his screen credits are the Kevin James/Henry Winkler/Salma Hayek film, *Here Comes the Boom*, *Bronx Bull*, *911* and *Beneath The Darkness*, all Martin Guigui films, and *Big Fish Blues*, by Leslye Abbey. He's currently working on a book of the history of Long Island Comedy, continuing to produce theatre of Long Island as the owner of *Middle Class American Productions* (with wife Joni), Long Island's ONLY all-original theatre company, as well as handling several different tasks on several film projects.



## Margherita Peluso (Actress, Writer)

Margherita is a screen and stage actor from Milan who works in Italy, Australia and the USA. She studied with Emma Dante and Mamadou Dioum of *The Peter Brook Ensemble* in Italy, and later at *The Gloria Gifford Conservatory* in Los Angeles. Most recently she had the pleasure of studying with Fay Simpson and Larry Moss in NYC. She is a company member of an educational theatre company based in Melbourne, Australia called, *Make A Scene*. She is also an active member of *The Lucid Body Institute* in NYC. Margherita is a regular performer at *La Mama Theater* in both Australia and NYC, where she's acted in a wide variety of work, ranging from Luigi Pirandello's *Caps and Bells* to a provocative new translation of *La Medea* by Franca Rama and Dario Fo. Other shows include *Wounded* by Mario Fratti, at LES Festival in NYC, *The Count of Montecristo* produced by New Light Theater Company, NYC.



In addition to her theater work, Margherita is an accomplished film and TV actress, receiving several "Best Actress" nominations at Film Festivals around the world. She is a familiar face on Italian TV: *Blood Trust*, *Gray's Disconnected*, *Amore Criminale*, *Un'Amore di Strega*. As a writer, she has translated "*Le Beatrici*" with the author Stefano Benni,

premiered at NYC's "In Scena" festival. Margherita's current project "*Io, Marta*" has been workshopped at the prestigious international theater festival "*La Mama Next Generation*" in Spoleto. The show premieres at the Pirandello National Festival in Turin. Future projects include a Docu-Fiction about Marta Abba, and a new film called "*Chasing Marilyn*".

## Kendrick Merdani (Actor, Teacher)

Kendrick Merdani is a successful actor known for a variety of primetime TV shows like NBC's *The Blacklist*, *Allegiance*, Fox's *The Following*, CBS's *Person of Interest*, *MacGyver*, and USA's *Falling Water*. He earned his bachelor's degree in *Dramatic Arts* at CUNY and furthermore continued his professional training as an actor at the *William Esper Studio* where he completed the Two Year Meisner program under the tutelage of Terry Knickerbocker.



Kendrick has also trained with Maggie Flanigan and Shane Ann Younts for *Voice*, *Speech*, and *Shakespeare*. He's been seen performing in new and classic works at the American Theatre of Actors, Theatre for the New City, Shelter Studios, and Theatre 54. Kendrick also serves as Associate Teacher of *Meisner Technique* at Terry Knickerbocker Studio in New York.



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