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ShortFest 2024 releases notable programs and participants



SHORTFEST

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Published June 6, 2024 12:58 PM

The 30th-annual Palm Springs International ShortFest announced some important programs and participants for its forum, as well as the jury members who will decide on Academy-Qualifying Student Shorts and Special Jury Awards.

The ShortFest Forum will take place from June 21 through June 23 at the Renaissance Hotel in Palm Springs. It will feature panels, roundtables and interactive events with entertainment industry insiders, ShortFest mentioned.

Participants at this year's ShortFest Forum include representatives from 2AM, Adult Swim, CAA, Film Independent, FX, IndieWire, LALIFF, the Los Angeles Times, Management 360, Rain Management Group, Seed & Spark, SIFF, Sony Pictures Television, Sundance, SXSW, UTA, Variety, Verve, Vimeo, and WME as well as filmmakers Jack Begert (Director, *Little Death*), Laura Moss (Director, *Birth/Rebirth*), Pablo Feldman (Director, *Edge of Everything*), Sean Wang (Director, *Didi*), and Sophia Sabella (Director, *Edge of Everything*).

More information on forums and panelists, roundtables and awards can be found below.

Short to Feature

Friday, June 21 - 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Ready to make the leap from short to feature? Hear from this seasoned group of filmmakers on their creative journeys, challenges, and unexpected outcomes as they navigated the transition to feature filmmaking, and learn the best ways to prepare yourself for that next step.

Panelists: Jack Begert (Director, *Little Death*), Laura Moss (Director, *Birth/Rebirth*), Pablo Feldman (Director, *Edge of Everything*), Sean Wang (Director, *Didi*), and Sophia Sabella (Director, *Edge of Everything*).

Ask Me Anything: Festivals

Friday, June 21, 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

A Forum favorite! Join us for an open and candid conversation with festival experts, programmers and curators as they reveal how selection processes work, share tips for crafting strategies and preparing submissions, and outline ways to make the most of your festival experiences. Bring all your questions as the audience will be the moderators.

Panelists: Derek Horne (Distribution Coordinator, USC's School of Cinematic Arts), Diana Cadavid (Director of Industry Programs, LALIFF), Gabe Van Amburgh (Senior Manager, Film & TV Fest Programming, SXSW), Jean Anne Lauer (Director of Short Film Programming, Fantastic Fest), and Katie Bignell (Founder, Festival Formula).

How to Build a Career in the Film Industry

Friday, June 21, 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

It's a tumultuous time to be making films, and the industry has changed dramatically in the last few years, from strikes to pandemic whiplash, new technologies and everything in between. Hear from a panel of directors, producers, and executives on what might be next, the challenges and rewards of growing in this unpredictable landscape, and how we can move towards more professional sustainability.

Panelists: Amman Abbasi (Director, *Yasmeen's Element*), Ina Pira (Senior Curator at Vimeo), Katie White, (Producer, *ILY, Bye*), and Sam Bisbee (Producer at Park Pictures). Moderator: Katcy Stephan (Film Reporter at Variety).

Ask Me Anything: Financing Films

Friday, June 21, 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Whether short or feature, financing films is never easy. Learn about how this process works, debunk financing myths and hear from our panel of filmmakers and industry experts on their unique tips for securing funds for new projects. Bring all your questions as the audience will be the moderators.

Panelists: Helena Sardinha (Producer at Driven Equation), Monique Avila (Manager at the Sundance Institute), Olivia Mascheroni (Verve Ventures Agent at Verve Talent and Literary Agency), Sarah Winshall (Producer at Smudge Films), and Sav Rodgers (Marketing Director at Seed & Spark).

Pitch Perfect Masterclass

Saturday, June 22, 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Dive into the art of pitching with this engaging, interactive masterclass. Hear from a group of experts on the do's and don'ts of pitching and what makes for a winning idea and delivery. Submit pitches ahead of time for the chance to pitch directly to the panelists and receive feedback live! Three pitches will be pre-selected and confirmed prior to the panel.

Panelists: Constanza Castro (Co-Founder at 271 Films), Diego Najera (Producer), Domenica Castro (Co-Founder at 271 Films), and Emily Korteweg (Producer). Moderator: Alison Foreman (Features Writer at IndieWire).

One-on-Ones Session 1: Industry Executive Mentors (Filmmakers only)

Saturday, June 22, 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Don't miss the chance to meet in person with an industry professional as part of our One on Ones. These general meetings are designed to allow you the opportunity to ask burning questions about areas of the industry you are interested in working in or learning more about, general career advice, or ways to best position yourself and your work as you move forward. Limited seating, and advance sign-up required.

Participants: Ahbra Perry (Director, OTT Channels at DraftHouse Films/Giant Pictures), Albert Lee (Agent at CAA), Álvor Carretero de la Fuente (Head of International PR & Talent, Monterrey International Film Festival), Brandt Wrightsman (VP, Production & Development at Anton), Christine Davila (Producer and TV Development Executive), Dana Cox (Manager at Kaplan/Perrone Entertainment), Graciela Garcia (Jr. Exec, Mgmt at Cinetic Media), Ian Bignell (Film Festival Strategist at Festival Formula), Jacqueline Mosher (Manager at Rain Management Group), Jenna Dufton (Director of Festival Programming at Inside Out), Lamar Chase (SVP at Sony Pictures Television), Matt Klasco (Manager/Producer at Adventure Media), Missy Laney (Director of Development at Adult Swim), Nicholas Ducassi (Audience Engagement Editor, Los Angeles Times), Nick Romano (Creative Executive at 18hz), Peryn Reeves-Darby (Manager, Film Development & Production, at Fifth Season), Samantha Ring (Creative Development Executive, Children's Programming at Apple), Shams Mohajerani (Manager & Producer at 75East), Sudeep Sharma (Programmer at Sundance), Tracey Lincoln (VP, Community & Brand Partnerships at Imagine Entertainment), and Yulissa Morales (VP of U.S. Distribution at Epic Pictures).

One-on-Ones Session 2: Filmmaker Mentors (Filmmakers only)

Saturday, June 22, 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Don't miss the chance to meet in person with an established filmmaker as part of our One on Ones. These general meetings give you the opportunity to ask burning questions about their careers, aspects of filmmaking you are interested in learning more about, general advice, or ways to best position yourself and your work as you move forward. Limited seating, and advance sign-up required.

Participants: Alex Heller (Director, *Holiday House*), Andrew Carlberg (Producer at Western Skies Productions), Branton Choi (Producer at AGBO Films), Daniel Talbott (Director), Dave Paige (Director, *Deep Tish*), Jorey Worb (Founder of Worb and Co), Julia Kennelly (Producer, *Grace*), Kara Durrett (President at Pinky Promise Films), Kate Chamuris (Producer), Krista Minto (Producer, *Tea*), Manuel Crosby (Director), Mike Covino (Director, *The Self Tape*), Monika Skerbelis (Producer), O'Shea Myles (Career Services & Film Festival Coordinator at USC School of Cinematic Arts), Pamela Grant, Rona Edwards (Producer), Samantha Dols (Impact Producer), Steven Snyder (Producer, *Azi*), Sue-Ellen Chitunya (Producer), Sujata Day (Director and Actress), and Valerie Steinberg (Producer at Valerie Steinberg Productions).

Roundtable: Development & Repts (Filmmakers only)

Sunday, June 23, 12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Our signature roundtable event returns! In an intimate group setting, hear directly from prominent development executives, agents, and managers to learn about what they look for when finding projects, how they build relationships with filmmakers, and how your work can stand out from the crowd. Bring your questions - we'll rotate every 20 minutes so you'll be able to meet with 3 speakers total. This event is first-come, first-served with limited seating so we recommend arriving early.

Participants: Ahkeyah Andrada (Director of Development at Lord Miller TV), Alex Williams (Manager of Acquisitions & Development at XYZ Films), Kyle Jaeger (Manager at 2AM), Laura Garrison (Director, Comedy Development at FX), Lauren Holland (Agent at CAA), Marc Mounier (Literary Representation & Production at Management 360), Madeline Neil (WME), Matt Rosen (Manager at Rain Management Group), and Ugo Obioha (MP Literary Agent at UTA).

Roundtable: Artist Support & Programmers (Filmmakers only)

Sunday, June 23, 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Our signature roundtable event returns! Hear directly from prominent agents, managers, and organizations involved in artist support and granting to learn about how they find the filmmakers they work with and what opportunities exist for your project. Bring your questions - we'll rotate periodically. This event is first-come, first-served with limited seating so we recommend arriving early.

Participants: Craig Parish (Programming Captain at Slamdance), Dea Vasquez (Associate Director, Fiction Programs at Film Independent), Francis Roman (Senior Film & TV Festival Programming Manager at SXSW), Joan Wai (Senior Manager of the Academy Nicholl Fellowships in Screenwriting), Larry Laboe (Co-Founder and Executive Director at NFMLA), Matthew Takata (Manager of the Feature Film Program at Sundance), Megan Leonard (Programmer at SIFF), Nick McCarthy (Director of Programming at NewFest), and Paul Sloop (Short Films Programming Manager at Cleveland International Film Festival).

Juried award winners will be announced on Sunday, June 23 at the Awards Brunch from the official selection presenting them with awards and cash prizes worth \$25,000 including five Academy Award® qualifying awards. This year's ShortFest jury members include:

Best of the Festival Award

- **Monique Avila** – Manager, Sundance Institute
- **Tracey Lincoln** – VP, Community & Brand Partnerships at Imagine Entertainment
- **Sudeep Sharma** – Programmer, Sundance Film Festival

Best Animated Short

- **David Ansen** – Film Critic/Lead Programmer
- **Katie Bignell** – Founder, Festival Formula
- **Dea Vasquez** – Associate Director, Fiction Programs

Best Documentary Short

- **Sam Bisbee** – Producer, Park Pictures
- **Larry Laboe** – Co-Founder and Executive Director, NFMLA
- **Sav Rodgers** – Marketing Director, Seed & Spark

Best Live-Action Short Over 15 Minutes presented by V Channels Corp

- **Rachel Lambert** – Director, *Sometimes I Think About Dying*
- **Peryn Reeves-Darby** – Manager, Film Development & Production, Fifth Season
- **Katcy Stephan** – Film Reporter, Variety

Best Live-Action Short 15 Minutes & Under

- **Kate Chamuris** – Producer
- **Branton Choi** – Producer, AGBO Films
- **Olivia Mascheroni** – Verve Ventures Agent, Verve Talent and Literary Agency

Best International Short

- **Amman Abbasi** – Director, *Yasmeen's Element*
- **Satinder Chhokar** – Finance and Sales, 2AM
- **Diego Najera** – Director, Narrative Film, Participant

Best U.S. Short

- **Lamar Chase** – SVP, Sony Pictures Television
- **Kara Durrett** – President, Pinky Promise Films
- **Evan O'Brien** – Company Coordinator, Neon

Best Comedy Short

- **José Acevedo** – Producer, Brooklyn Comedy Collective
- **Nicholas Ducassi** – Audience Engagement Editor, Los Angeles Times
- **Ahbra Perry** – Director, OTT Channels, DraftHouse Films/Giant Pictures

Best LGBTQ+ Short

- **Jenna Dufton** – Director of Festival Programming, Inside Out
- **Sam Intili** – Head of Creative, Kindred Spirit
- **Nick McCarthy** – Director of Programming, NewFest

Best Midnight Short

- **Sujata Day** – Director and Actress
- **Alison Foreman** – Features Writer, IndieWire
- **Jean Anne Lauer** – Director of Short Film Programming, Fantastic Fest
- **Laura Moss** – Director, *Birth/Rebirth*

Best Student Animated Short & Best Student International Short

- **Jack Begert** – Director, *Little Death*
- **Doménica Castro** – Co-Founder, 271 Films
- **Graciela Garcia** – Jr. Exec, Mgmt, Cinetic Media

Best Student Documentary & Best Student U.S. Short

- **Constanza Castro** – Co-Founder, 271 Films
- **Shams Mohajerani** – Manager/Producer, 75East
- **Helena Sardinha**, Producer

Bridging the Borders Award presented by Cinemas Without Borders and 360 Media

- **Keely Badger** – Executive Director, MOZAIK Philanthropy
- **Susan Morgan Cooper** – Filmmaker
- **Alberto Di Mauro** – Representative, ISSNAF
- **Wladek Juszkiewicz** – Director, Polish Film Festival Los Angeles
- **Yeganeh Moghaddam** – Filmmaker, Animator, and Illustrator
- **Chale Nafus** – Board Member, Austin Film Society and OUTsider Fest
- **Rachel O'Meara** – Actress
- **Bijan Tehrani** – Editor in Chief, Cinema Without Borders and President, Cinema Without Borders Foundation.

For more on the Palm Springs International Film Society and its festival events, please visit <https://www.psfilmfest.org>.