

Third Annual Vacationland Film Festival

August 21 – 23, 2026

City Theater, Biddeford, Maine



PROGRAM GUIDE

Friday, August 21

4:00 pm Through the Ages

This series of short films explores the human experience through the ages – war, love, longing, belonging, family, and even time travel, set against a backdrop of the limitations of the law, nature, and rules.

RAMMR (2026) Director Kyle Grogan, 14 minutes



Set in Vinland in the year 1025 CE. In the years following Leif Erickson's death, the settlement he founded in modern-day North America quickly fell into chaos. Without his iron will to unite the settlers, old quarrels resurfaced, old factions were re-formed, and the smoldering embers of old hatreds erupted into flame.

The Tracks (2026) Director *Matthew Meunier*, 9 minutes



Stranded in the wilderness and chained to a dead man, an escaped convict loses his grip on reality as he obsesses over the image of a woman he's never met. Filmed in the woods of Cornish, Maine on 16mm film, featuring a cast and crew of local Maine filmmakers.

Versions (2024) Director *Gabe Hirst*, 15 minutes (SMCC)



Josh and Grace were perfect for each other, but circumstances out of their control caused them to drift apart. Right person, wrong time. So Josh creates a watch to travel across the multiverse, in hopes of finding a world where they are meant to be. But when the device goes awry, it sends him uncontrollably hurtling through the multiverse.

Die Pille (2026) Director Ted Omsley, 10 minutes



Lost on the brutal Eastern Front, German soldier Max refuses to accept defeat. Separated from his unit and surviving only with an aging comrade at his side, Max pushes forward through the frozen wilderness fueled by determination, desperation, and a steady supply of military-issued methamphetamine pills. An image of Max's life before the war manifests as a woman named Charlotte, but the moment of serenity is quickly overtaken by memories of fire, battle, and his commanding officer, Werner.

Jam Boy (2026) Director Sriram Emani, 22 minutes



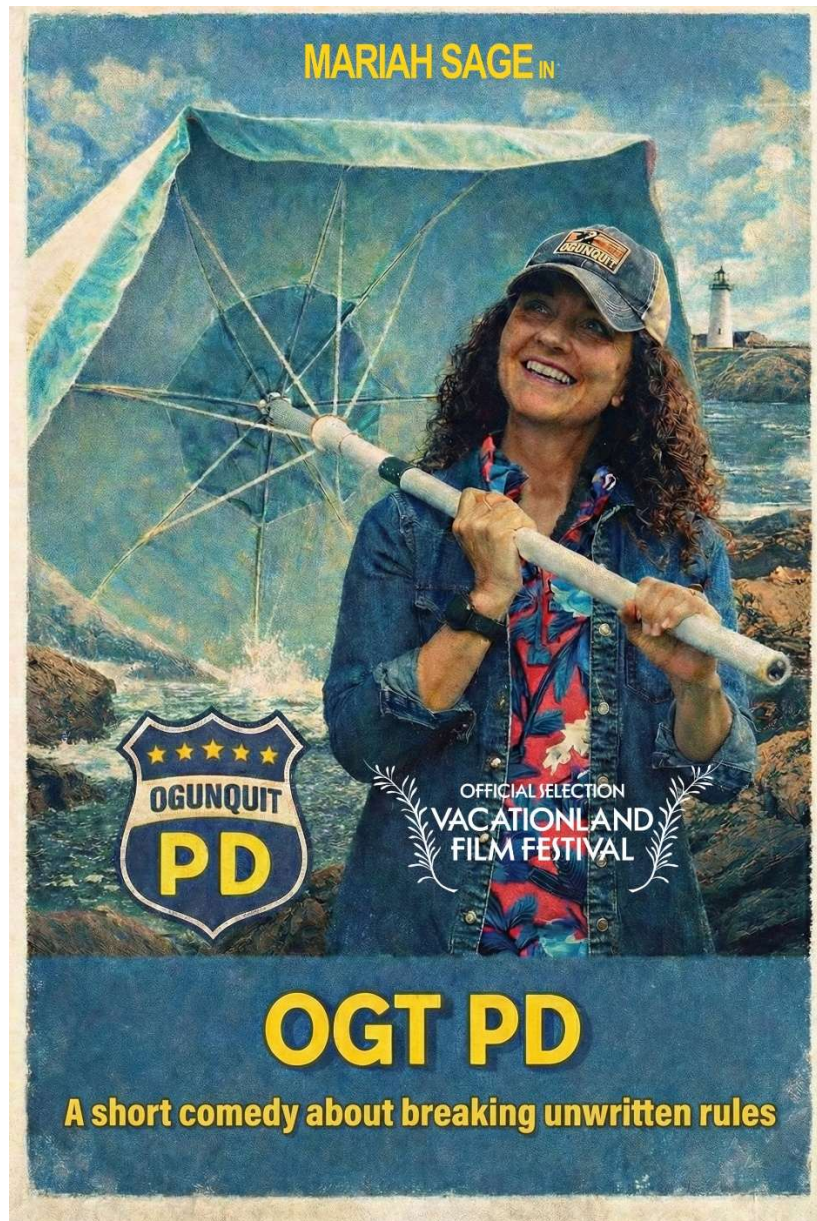
Jam Boy is set in a near-present world shaped by opaque immigration algorithms, following a model-minority coder whose pursuit of the American dream begins to cost him his identity, forcing him to decide what he is willing to give up in order to stay.

Program Run Time: 1 hour, 10 minutes, Followed by Q&A

Friday, August 21

6:00 pm OPENING NIGHT: Welcome to Vacationland

OGT PD (2026) Director Mariah Sage, 7 minutes



*“At its heart, **OGT PD** is a humorous exploration of the unintentional friction that arises between tourists and locals. The film was sparked during our annual family vacation to our favorite place, Ogunquit, Maine. When we saw a group of police officers huddled near the footbridge, we speculated about what kinds of crimes might emerge in such a peaceful place. We invite you to explore the fine print of vacationing with OGT PD.”*

Summer Interlude (2026) Director Alex Lucier, 56 minutes

After receiving a rejection letter from film school, Levi spends the summer working at his parents' campground, dreading the fall. Without an out-of-state college as his chance to escape his small coastal Maine tourist town, he must enroll in the local community college, forcing two more years stuck in the same "run-down tourist trap" (his words) that he's been in his whole life.



With a week left until classes start, he runs into Sarah, a classmate who's taking an alternative approach to college. As the two get to know each other, Levi faces a decision between chasing his dreams and obeying his parents' wishes, taking it to the final hours as the summer sun sets.



Total Program Run Time: 1 hour, 2 minutes, Followed by Q&A

Friday, August 21

7:30 pm Friday Night Fright

Bring a friend and prepare to be scared. Warning: graphic violence and blood.

***The One Who Watches* (2025) Director Ryan Lemire, 11 minutes**



David, a rugged man in his 30s, seeks a quiet escape into the forest for some time off the grid. But strange noises outside his tent mark the beginning of a harrowing descent into the unknown.

As he wanders deeper, he finds disturbing signs, bloody clothing, eerie sounds, a mutilated corpse. The woods shift around him. He becomes lost, hunted by a presence that reveals itself only in fleeting glimpses and off-camera sounds. The lines between hallucination and reality blur.

In a desperate attempt to flee, David returns to his car, only to realize the watcher has always been one step ahead.

Night Terrors (2024) Director Cody Alexander Curtis, 9 minutes



Jessica, a young woman who lives on her own, does all that she can to escape the horrors and mistakes of her past. However, there is someone - or something - far worse waiting for her around every corner and there seems to be no way she can make it through the night.

Silent Voices (2025) Director Mary Pilot, 10 minutes (Adirondack Community College)



Ella, a college student in upstate New York, struggles with the consequences of her actions after making an erratic decision.

Don't Look Down (2025) Director Ryan Lemire, 7 minutes

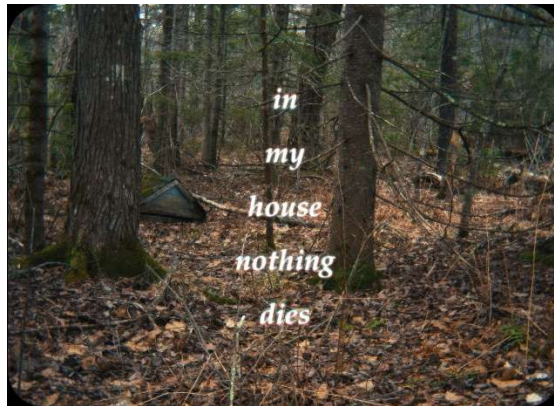


A lone hiker climbs an abandoned fire tower deep in the wilderness, seeking refuge as night begins to fall. But when strange sounds echo through the forest below, he realizes something is watching him from the darkness.

As the night progresses, fleeting movements and unexplained noises grow increasingly close. The tower, once a place of safety, becomes a prison suspended above the ground. Trapped high above the forest with nowhere to escape, the hiker begins to believe that whatever is stalking him may be closer than he thinks.

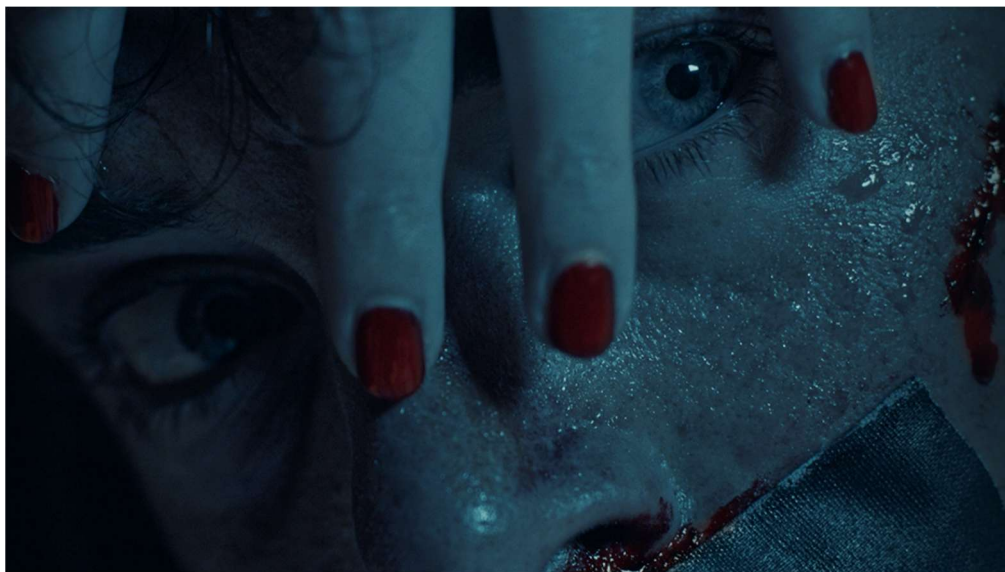
Just as the night falls silent and he believes the danger may have passed, the creature suddenly bursts through the floor of the fire tower, revealing itself in a terrifying final jumpscare.

in my house nothing dies (2026) *Director Nolan Saunders*, 3 minutes



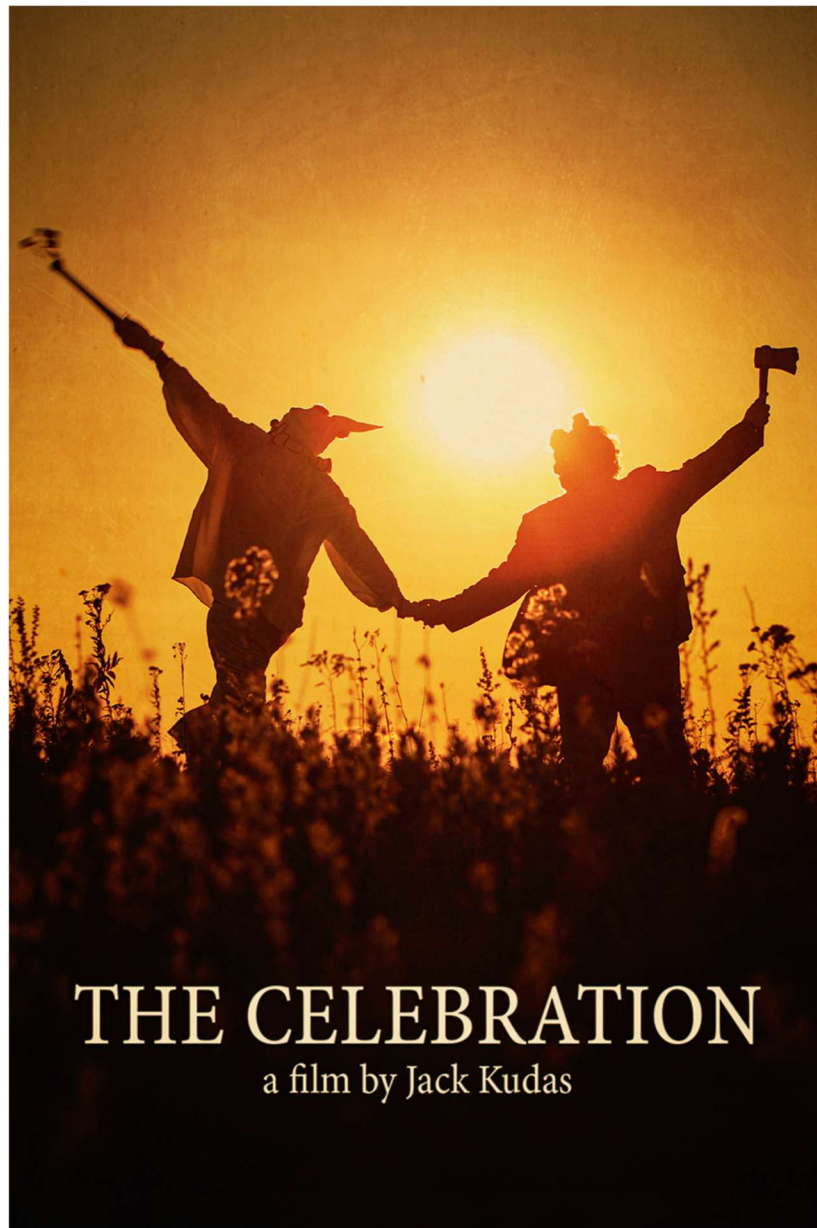
A troubled man reconciles with a horrific act.

Silent System (2026) *Director Mariah Larocque*, 14 minutes



Tony, a worn-down computer programmer, spends his days in isolation, coding endlessly for the company he once crossed the country to join. Now haunted by silent control, red fingernails, and fragmented memories, he spirals between routine and resistance as his mind and body begin to fracture. Flashbacks to an almost-love offer glimpses of a life once filled with possibility. But as the torment deepens, Tony is pulled into a tightening psychological trap; where the threat is quiet, the control is absolute, and silence serves everyone but him.

***The Celebration** (2026) Director Jack Kudas, 19 minutes*



When a college babysitter takes a last-minute job in a quiet Maine town, she discovers the house is haunted not by dolls but by two masked killers, an unholy pair bound by blood, ritualistic games, and relentless pursuit.

Maya must fight for her life and the baby's survival as innocence collides with cruelty, while the masked killers never intend to harm the child, they use him as leverage to force Maya the babysitter into their sick ritualistic game.

Total Program Run Time: 1 hour, 14 minutes, Followed by Q&A

Saturday, August 22

1 pm Will's Prize

In memory of filmmaker, son, sk8ter, friend, and cousin Willem “Will” Watkinson, we recognize the Youth (18 and under) filmmakers in our region. Will's Prize is an award for young filmmakers to help them with their production costs.

Films by Willem Holden Watkinson:

Black Tarantula, 3 minutes

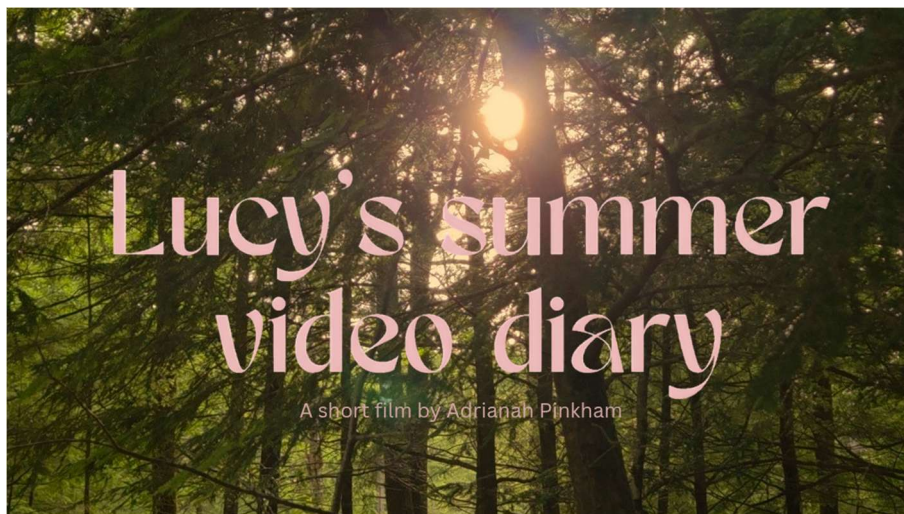


Headraiser, 3 minutes



This year's Will's Prize films:

Lucy's Summer Video Diary (2026), Director Adrianah Pinkham, 2 minutes (Edward Little High School)



A quiet summer video diary unravels to suggest the filmmaker may not have been alone after all.

Prison Break (2026), Director Cyrus Britton, 5 minutes (Scarborough High School)



This film was a project for a History of Film course where we had studied the techniques of the silent film era. We learned about how using facial expressions, movement and slapstick comedy can enhance a film without dialogue. The editor of the film, Jack Brown, added the title cards, a film grain and made it black and white to look more like a film from the late 1920s-early thirties.

Max Pressure (2026), Director Braeden Landry, 5 minutes (Sanford Regional Technical Center)



John Chaser, the world's most professional senior assassin, faces his biggest challenge yet as he must eliminate the three year reigning champ Max Pressure in the ultimate water gun fight.

Program Run Time: 45 minutes

Saturday, August 22

2:00 pm The Internal Landscape

This series of short films captures a range of human experiences, especially our internal struggles.

The Hangover (2025), Director Anthony Matos, 13 minutes



Marnie wakes up after a night out with a wicked hangover, and finds the house (and her life) in a state of disarray. The unexpected visitors throughout the day could push her to the brink of a breakdown.

I Hate Online Dating (2025), Director Graham Monroe-Ludders, 5 minutes



William's date goes poorly, so Smith gives him some heartfelt advice.

***Something Beautiful in the Daylight* (2025) Director Dylan Ricci, 13 minutes**



An ethereal film about facing anxiety and dealing with valid thoughts that might feel like delusions. It's told through the eyes of a woman who gains control of jumping from moment to moment, a luxury we often think about, but would we actually want this?

***In Your Dreams* (2025), Director Maria Larocque, 14 minutes**



Trapped in a cycle of nightmares and waking darkness, Adeline clings to hope as she searches for a way to escape what haunts her. Through EMDR therapy, a process designed to help reframe and heal from traumatic memories, she begins to confront her past, only to find the line between reality and the subconscious blurring beyond recognition. As her inner and outer worlds collide, Adeline must face the possibility that some shadows cannot be outrun, and that healing sometimes means learning to live with what lingers.

The Waiting (2025), Director Ted Omsley, 5 minutes



“The Waiting is our attempt to put into images what so many couples experience in private: the cycle of hope, grief, reconstruction, and trying again. It’s not just a medical story, it’s an emotional one. It’s about how waiting reshapes a relationship, how a single unanswered question can start to define your life, and how people find strength in the least cinematic spaces: exam rooms, kitchens, driveways, and the quiet hours before dawn.”

Ride the Wave (2026), Director Robbie Moore, 5 minutes



Darcy, a grief therapist in her late 20s, finds herself overwhelmed by the very emotions she helps others navigate after the loss of her mother. Unable to practice what she preaches, she begins to numb and avoid her grief until a simple walk with her dog leads to an unexpected discovery: a handwritten letter from her late mother.

Program Run Time: 54 minutes, Followed by Q&A

Saturday, August 22

4:00 pm Maine Art & Artists

This series of short films takes a look at the arts in Maine from different perspectives and through different methods.

Ammis, Maine (2025), Director Nolan Saunders, 2 minutes



A cinematographic study of the (fictional) coastal town of Ammis, Maine. Visiting Ammis is not recommended if you are looking for a vacation destination.

Ammis serves as the setting for other works written by the director.

Craving the Mystic (2025), Directors Kelsie Steil and Jennifer Hoffer, 6 minutes

Director of Photography: Jennifer Hoffer

Concept and Choreography: Kelsie Steil

Dancers: Elly Lovin, Kelsie Steil

Music: 5 130 by Michael Wall

About: *Craving the Mystic* was originally created as a stage work in 2023 by Kelsie Steil. This character-driven piece explores the human hunger for meaningful connection in a technological, isolating world, with dancers embodying archetypes and profiles that reflect authentic exchanges. The piece was adapted into a film in collaboration with Jennifer Hoffer, capturing the work's emotional intensity and visual depth. *Craving the Mystic* was awarded Best Dance Film at the Divine Feminine Film Festival and continues to examine how character, story, and embodiment intersect to reveal shared human experiences. Learn more: creatureworksdance.com

Filmed on Mackworth Island and in Portland, Maine.



The Loon (2026), Director Charles Stacey, 18 minutes (SMCC)



Benji has just graduated from art school and visits his estranged, dying father, where he is asked to participate in a long family tradition by creating an important piece of art.

TOGETHER: Signs and Intuitive Design (2026), Director Jeshua Soucy, 15 minutes



Together gives a glimpse into the lives of artists and partners Matt Demers and Allison McKeen. It follows their lives at home, in their studio, and their involvement in and support of the Maine art community.

The Mill, Minsk, Maine (2026) Director Mike Stuttman, 12 minutes



On a river. Processed trees, rocks, earth and sweat into other stuff. Built in the late 19th century. Continuously operated until 1981 when it was sold then mothballed. While mysterious pockets of industry persist, the site is now mostly abandoned.

Preservationists covet The Mill, but it is littered with over a century of industrial junk and toxic waste. The pace is much slower than when it ran continuously on three shifts, but there's almost always something still going on at the Mill....

Meet the characters of The Mill in this short film by Vacationland Animation.

Program Run Time: 53 minutes, Followed by Q&A

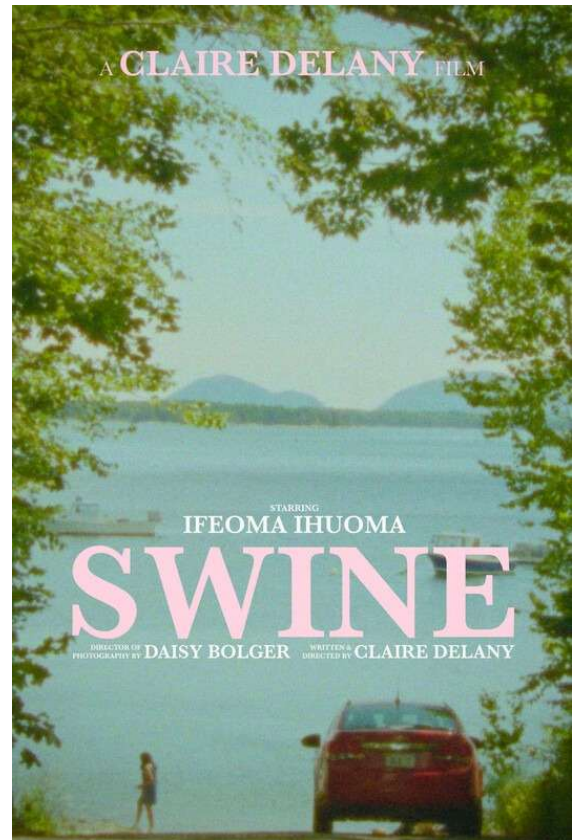
Saturday, August 22

5:30 pm Short Stories

Three Maine-based short stories.

SWINE (2026), *Director Claire Delany*, 25 minutes

After escaping tragedy, a young woman embarks on a northbound pilgrimage where she must confront her own trauma, and a strange Circean magic she struggles to control.



Mine. (2025) *Directors Jedidiah and Elijah Allen*, 20 minutes



Set in the dying days of a failing mine lease, a desperate man uncovers a supernatural gem that promises untold riches, at a cost his family can't afford. What follows is a descent into obsession—where generational debt, pride, and buried trauma collide with an ancient force pulsing beneath the Maine wilderness. The earth speaks. Are you willing to listen?

Abandoned Buildings, Director Benji Otte, 25 minutes

The film is a coming-of-age drama that follows Kyra and three estranged friends as they explore abandoned buildings in hopes to reconnect, and not to follow the same journey as the forgotten spaces around them. It's a story about returning to a place and to one another after a period of separation and loss.



Program Run Time: 1 hour, 10 minutes, Followed by Q&A

Saturday, August 22

7:30 pm French Family Friendly Feature

This fun program is suitable for all audiences. The first film, **The Adventures of Baxter & Clyde**, is a cartoon in English Language, made by a Mainer. **Coco Farm** is a French Canadian film in French, with English subtitles.

The Adventures of Baxter & Clyde (2023), Director John Michaud, 7 minutes



Evokes the tv cartoon shows of the late 1950s such as Tom Terrific and Rocky & Bullwinkle while paying homage to the filmmaker's family roots in Brownville Junction, Maine.

Coco Farm (2023), Director Sébastien Gagné, 87 minutes – In French with English Subtitles.



After his father faces financial struggles, twelve-year-old Max is forced to shut down the pawn shop he operates from his garage and move to a small country town. When Max discovers the world of small-scale farming, the young entrepreneur rallies the help of his cousin Charles, along with local youtuber Alice, to start an egg farming business in Charles's old decaying barn. The animal-friendly COCO FARM quickly becomes a major hit, but the three partners soon find themselves facing the harsh realities of an industry controlled by mega-sized agribusinesses.



Program Run Time: 1 hour, 34 minutes, Followed by Q&A

Sunday, August 23

11:30 am Documentaries

Second Responders (2026), Director Jon Cavallero, 18 minutes



Second Responders explores the emotional aftermath of the 2023 Lewiston, Maine, mass shooting from the perspective of public school teachers. Often overlooked in conversations surrounding tragedy and recovery, educators were forced to become emotional anchors for grieving students while navigating their own fear, trauma, and uncertainty. Through intimate interviews and observational storytelling, the film examines the invisible burden teachers carry in the wake of violence and the quiet resilience required to return to the classroom after a community is forever changed.

May the Water Not Freeze (2026), Director Zahira Chaudhry, 16 minutes



A farming cooperative in Western Maine prepares for their first winter while stewarding community with other Black farmers & cultivating Muslim foodways.

My Climate Future (2026), Director Jonathan Fisher, 27 minutes



Every generation deserves the chance to tell its own story. The award-winning documentary ***My Climate Future***, airing on PBS in 2027, gives young people a camera lens—and a voice—to show us how they experience a changing world and the future they hope to create. After all, America's youth have the most at stake—even as they did not cause the problem in the first place.

Program Run Time: 1 hour, 1 minute, Followed by Q&A

Sunday, August 23

1:00 pm Student Films

This series of films comes to us from film students at Maine and New England schools including Southern Maine Community College (SMCC), Bowdoin, and Emerson.

A Maine Adventure (2025), Director Tavi Greenfield, 22 minutes (Bowdoin)



This absurdist short film is a love letter to Reny's and a testament to the quiet meaning that can emerge out of pointless, repetitive pursuits. Filmed in a hectic 48 hours, it tracks four college students' attempt to visit all 19 Reny's locations faster than ever before. Its eccentric plot kind of says absolutely nothing, yet somehow also seems to reveal a deep truth of existence.

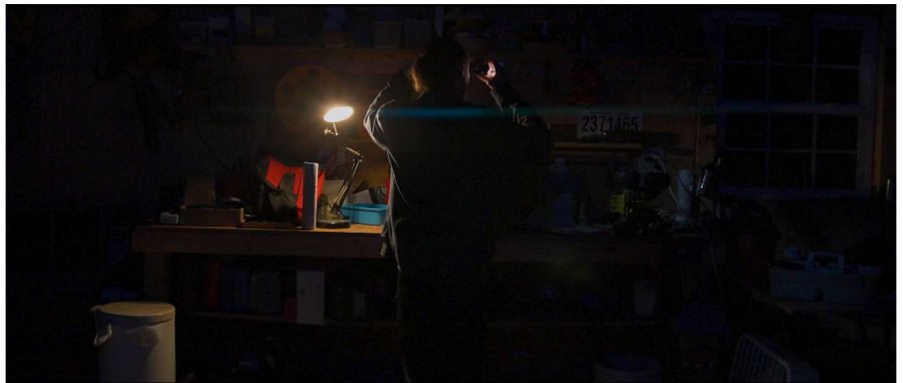
***It's Just A Common Nightmare* (2026), Director Chloe Falkner, 6 minutes (SMCC)**



After a bout of mischief, 10-year-old Aster knocks herself out and wakes up in the nightmare realm of a being with sinister motives. Escape is the only option, but the path home must be forged.

***Blueprint* (2026), Director Logan Files, 17 minutes (SMCC)**

Young inventor Percy escapes his father's pressure to choose a future by building a mysterious wristwatch-like time machine. After activating it despite his younger brother's warnings, Percy is thrown into a chaotic, neon-soaked future where he must stop a shadowy ruler from controlling time and save his family, his future, and time itself.



***MINE* (2026), Director Nolan Boston, 1 minute (SMCC)**



Two friends fight over the last slice of pizza. Testing their friendship with one another. Was it worth fighting for?

WikiHow Told Me I'm Cursed (2026), Director Margaret Nelson, 9 minutes (Emerson)

August, a girl with hilariously bad luck, visits a psychic to try to find a solution to the insane problems she's been dealing with lately.



Program Run Time: 54 minutes, Followed by Q&A

Sunday, August 23

3:00 pm Special Sneak Preview

Saving Black Bear (2026), Directors Nick Cassidy and Cash Cassidy, 67 minutes



Starring Xander Berkeley, Nick Cassidy, Cash Cassidy, Devan Zorn, and Julia Steady. This improvised mockumentary follows movie theater employees who, after finding out their theater is in danger of closing, go to crazy lengths to save their workplace.

Filmed on location at the Black Bear Cinemas in Orono, Maine, and now in the final editing stages, ***Saving Black Bear*** will have its official World Premiere at Black Bear Cinemas on September 9th.

Here's your chance to see what all the excitement is about!

Program Run Time: 1 hour, 7 minutes, Followed by Q&A

Thank you, filmmakers. And thank you to all the people who make the festival happen – the City Theater staff, our sponsors, and YOU, the audience!

