

# DIASPORA 17

## FILM FESTIVAL

TORONTO, 2-5 NOVEMBER 2017



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

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Kingdom of the Netherlands



Cinema Studies  
at the University of Toronto



Toronto Film School  
AT RMC INSTITUTE ON TECHNOLOGY

Spanish Centre



WACC



Jackman Humanities Institute  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



Mezzetta



Pomegranate

NOW



STVT

SHAHRVAND



Afghan Post

IMMIGRATION,  
MOBILITIES,  
AND CIRCULATION



# WELCOME

**W**e are very pleased to welcome you to the 17th annual Diaspora Film Festival. The festival always brings award winning films about culture and diversity from around the world to Toronto, the most multicultural city in the world.

This year, the universal language of music is prominent in the storytelling under Music of Diaspora. In addition, we are happy to continue programming Diaspora in Short where filmmakers from here and away have a place to present their short films.

We would like to thank our sponsors for their ongoing support of the festival:

**Toronto Arts Council**  
**Consulate of the Kingdom of the Netherlands**  
**Goethe Institute**  
**World Association of Christian Communication (WACC)**  
**Im/migration, Mobilities, and Circulation**  
**Jackman Humanities Institute**  
**Toronto Film School**  
**Shahrvand**  
**Mezzetta**  
**Pomegranate**

Finally, we are so grateful to our volunteers, and of course to you, our audience.  
Hope you enjoy DFF17

Shahram Tabe and Paul de Silva



**Cinema Studies**  
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AT RCC INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY



Jackman Humanities Institute  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO





# INTERNATIONAL DISAPORA FILM FESTIVAL 17

2-5 NOVEMBER 2017

CARLTON CINEMA, 20 CARLTON STREET, TORONTO, ON M5B 2H5

<b>THURSDAY</b> <b>2 NOVEMBER</b>	<b>7.30 PM</b>	<b>TEHRAN TABOO</b> Ali Soozandeh   Germany/Austria   2017   96 min
		<b>{DIALOGUE WITH THE ARTIST}</b>
<b>FRIDAY</b> <b>3 NOVEMBER</b>	<b>7.00 PM</b>	<b>DJANGO</b> Etienne Comar   France   2017   117 min
	<b>9.10 PM</b>	<b>THEY</b> Anahita Ghazvinizadeh   USA   2017   80 min
<b>SATURDAY</b> <b>4 NOVEMBER</b>	<b>1.00 PM</b>	<b>DISAPORA IN SHORT</b> Short films about diaspora
	<b>3.00 PM</b>	<b>HARMONIA</b> Ori Sivan   Israel   2016   98 min
	<b>5.00 PM</b>	<b>HALAL FOR BEGINNERS</b> Conor McDermottroe   Ireland/Germany   2017   100 min
	<b>7.00 PM</b>	<b>GHOLAM</b> Mitra Tabrizian   UK   2017   104 min
	<b>9.15 PM</b>	<b>BABAI</b> Visar Morina   Germany/Kosovo   2015   104 min
<b>SUNDAY</b> <b>5 NOVEMBER</b>	<b>2.00 PM</b>	<b>HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS</b> Marc Waltman   The Netherlands   2017   100 min
	<b>4.00 PM</b>	<b>MORRIS FROM AMERICA</b> Chad Hartigan   Germany   2016   91 min
	<b>6.00 PM</b>	<b>SON OF SOFIA</b> Elina Psykou   France/Greece/Bulgaria   2017   111 min
	<b>8.00 PM</b>	<b>90 MINUTE</b> Eyal Halfon   Israel/Germany/Portugal   2016   90 min

Admission: \$15 Regular/ \$12 Students and Seniors.  
Festival Pass: \$75  
[www.diasporafilmfest.com](http://www.diasporafilmfest.com)

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# TEHRAN TABOO

Ali Soozandeh | Germany/Austria | 2017 | 96 min

In Farsi with English Subtitles

*Nominated, Camera d'Or and Critics' Week Grand Prize, Cannes FF 2017;  
winner, FIPRESCI, Jerusalem FF 2017*

## OPENING FILM



Thursday, 2 November 2017



7:30 PM

Toronto Premiere

The lives of three strong-willed women and a young musician cross paths in Tehran's schizophrenic society where sex, adultery, corruption, prostitution and drugs coexist with strict religious laws. In this bustling modern metropolis, avoiding prohibition has become an everyday sport and breaking taboos can be a means of personal emancipation.



Co-presented with Goethe Institute Toronto



# DJANGO

Etienne Comar | France | 2017 | 117 min  
In French with English Subtitles  
*Nominated for Golden Bear, Berlin FF 2017*



Friday, 3 November 2017



7:00 PM

Toronto Premiere

1943, occupied Paris. Django Reinhardt is at the pinnacle of his art. The brilliant and carefree jazz guitarist, king of ethereal swing, plays to standing-room-only crowds in the capital's greatest venues. Meanwhile his gypsy brethren are being persecuted throughout Europe. His life takes a turn for the worse when the Nazi propaganda machine wants to send him on tour in Germany.





# THEY

Anahita Ghazvinizadeh | USA | 2017 | 80 min | In English  
*Nominated, Camera d'Or, Queer Palm, Cannes FF 2017*



Friday, 3 November 2017



9:10 PM

Toronto Premiere

Fourteen-year-old J goes by the pronoun 'They' and lives with their parents in the suburbs of Chicago. J is exploring their gender identity while taking hormone blockers to postpone puberty. After two years of medication and therapy, J has to make a decision whether or not to transition. Over this crucial weekend while their parents are away, J's sister Lauren and her maybe/maybe-not Iranian partner Araz arrive to take care of J.



# HARMONIA

Ori Sivan | Israel | 2016 | 98 min  
In Hebrew and Arabic with English Subtitles  
*Winner: Best Cinematography, Jerusalem FF 2016*  
*Nominated for four Israeli Film Academy 2016*



Saturday, 4 November 2017



3:00 PM

Canadian Premiere

Harmonia is a modern adaptation of the mythological triangle between the childless Abraham and Sarah and young Hagar. Sarah is the harpist of the Jerusalem Philharmonic; Abraham is its almighty conductor. When Hagar, a young horn player from East Jerusalem joins the Western Side Orchestra, she bonds with Sarah and a unique friendship evolves between the two women. Hagar, feeling Sarah's pain from not having children, offers to have a baby for her from Abraham, shaking the thin balance in the family. The biblical adaptation later develops to an emotional clash between the born son Ben a 12 year old phenomenal pianist and his two mothers. Harmonia uncovers the metaphoric emotional roots of the ancient conflict between the two peoples living in Jerusalem, now seeking harmony through a dramatic encounter between Western and Eastern music.





# HALAL FOR BEGINNERS

Conor McDermottroe | Irland/Germany | 2017 | 100 min  
In English



Saturday, 4 November 2017



5:00 PM

North American Premiere

Partly based on true events, this warm-hearted comedy about Ireland's first Halal meat factory tells the story of young Muslim Raghdan Aziz trying to find his place in the world of small town Sligo. While managing a rundown abattoir, he stumbles through cultural chaos and generational conflicts, dealing with enraged fathers, stoned buddies and his girlfriend's alleged ex-lover.

Described by writer-director Conor McDermottroe (Swansong: Story of Occi Byrne) as a feel-good migrant story, HALAL FOR BEGINNERS is a culture clash working class comedy. This uplifting adventure, celebrating multiculturalism in modern day Ireland, stars Nikesh Patel (London has fallen), Sarah Bolger (In America, The Tudors), Colm Meany (Star Trek: Deep Space Nine), Art Malik (James Bond- The Living Daylights) and David Kross (The Reader).



Co-presented with Goethe Institute Toronto



# GHOLAM

Mitra Tabrizian | UK | 2017 | 104 min

In Farsi and English with English Subtitles

*With Shahab Hosseini, winner of Best Actor, Cannes Film Festival 2016*



Saturday, 4 November 2017



7:00 PM

Toronto Premiere

Gholam is an enigmatic quiet Iranian cab driver with two jobs and no apparent interest in the money. Every day, he eats at his uncle's café while aware of being betrayed by him. Although he has agreed to his mother's plan to return to Iran, he has no intention of doing so. Once a war hero, he has disappeared from the battlefield without a trace. He does not want to look back into his past and has no conviction for the future. Yet, he gets involved in the conflict of a total stranger and carries it through to the very end.





# BABAI

Visar Morina | Germany/Kosovo | 2015 | 104 min

In German, Albanian, Serbian, English, with English Subtitles

*Winner, Best Director, Label Europa Cinema, Karlovy Vary FF 2015; One Feature Prize, Young German Cinema Award, Munich FF 2015*



Saturday, 4 November 2017



9:15 PM

Canadian Premiere

Ten-year-old Nori (Val Maloku) and his father Gezim (Astrit Kabashi) roam the streets of Kosovo selling cigarettes and barely earning a living. Only a few years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Gezim is lured west to Germany, leaving his son behind in search of a new life. Feeling deserted and desperate to claim some sense of stability, Nori embarks on a dangerous journey to Germany in search of his father. His tenacity, resilience, and sheer grit must be enough to guide him.



Co-presented with Goethe Institute Toronto



# HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

Marc Waltman | The Netherlands | 2017 | 100 min  
In Dutch with English Subtitles



Sunday, 5 November 2017



2:00 PM

Canadian Premiere

The grass is greener on the other side...

Axel is a Boeroe, a white Surinamer, who has been living in The Netherlands for 20 years. When his mom Gladys calls the family back for Christmas, supposedly to make an important announcement, Alex reluctantly returns back to Surinam with his wife. Over dinner, however, the situation explodes as Axel and his brother Virgil argue heatedly. On top of that, Axel's daughter Wonnie confesses that she is pregnant. This is the start of a rollercoaster adventure under the Surinamese sun.





# MORRIS FROM AMERICA

Chad Hartigan | Germany/ USA | 2016 | 91 min

In German and English with English Subtitles

*Winner of: Special Jury Award, Sundance FF 2016; Named Top Ten Independent Film by National Board of Review USA, 2016*



Sunday, 5 November 2017



4:00 PM

Toronto Premiere

Morris, a -13year-old African-American moves to Heidelberg with his dad, a professional soccer coach. After his attempts to fit in with German kids, he falls for a girl at a youth club. He finds his way to open up with his rapping talent and help from his new German girlfriend.



Co-presented with Goethe Institute Toronto



# SON OF SOFIA

Elina Psykou | France/Greece/Bulgaria | 2017 | 111 min  
In Russian and Greek with English Subtitles  
*Winner, Jury Award, Tribeca FF 2017, Special Award, Sarajevo FF 2017*



Sunday, 5 November 2017



6:00 PM

Canadian Premiere

Athens, 2004 summer Olympic Games. -11year-old Misha arrives from Russia to live with his mother, Sofia. What he doesn't know is that there is a father waiting for him there. The Greek father's obnoxious attempts at disciplining Misha are less than welcome. While Greece is living the Olympic dream, Misha will get violently catapulted into the adult world, riding on the dark side of his favorite fairy tales.





# 90 MIN WAR

Eyal Halfon | Israel/Germany/Portugal | 2016 | 90 min  
In Hebrew, Arabic, English, Portuguese, with English Subtitles



Sunday, 5 November 2017



8:00 PM

What if the fate of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict decided through a soccer match??!! After years of bloodshed, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is about to be resolved. A moment before another round of violence, the ideal solution has been reached: a soccer game. One game that will decide who gets to stay in the holy land, and who must leave.

Funny, wild, and politically incorrect, this political comedy kicks this exhausting conflict to the sidelines, where it belongs.

# DISAPORA IN SHORT



## AYNY - MY SECOND EYE

Ahmad Saleh | Jordan/Palestine/Germany | 2016 | 10 min

While venturing outside to collect scrap metal to buy a music instrument, two boys get trapped in a deadly danger. The strength they inherited from their mother keeps them standing.





## THE OTHER SIDE

Griselda San Martin | Spain | 2017 | 6 min | Canadian Premiere

Jose Marquez, a musician deported from the US, and his daughter Susanna have been separated for almost 15 years but meet every month on either side of the US-Mexico border wall.



L'ABSENCE

## THE ABSENCE

Hawa Aliou N'diaye | Senegal/France | 2016 | 8 min | Canadian Premiere

My father moved away from the family. His absence ruined my childhood. Today, I have the impression that his spirit haunts me wherever I go. I see him in every old man I meet.



## TOPRAK

Onur Yagiz | France | 2017 | 11 Min | Canadian Premiere

Toprak, 8, translates for his parents who can't speak French. Today, he goes to the hospital with them for his mother's second trimester examination. He will be the first one to know if the twin babies are brothers or sisters.



## THE VISIT

Mahsa Mortazavi | Canada | 2017 | 12 min | World premiere

The Iranian filmmaker, Mahsa Mortazavi courageously captures both her and her mother's dramatic story of love, separation, survival and the long lasting effects of the 1979 revolution.





Farid Zarrinbal and Harald Sandø | Sweden/Norway | 2017 | 15 min | North American Premiere

A young asylum seeker searches for his serenity with a few obstacle to overcome.



Jordan Bond and Lachlan Ryan | Australia | 2016 | 9 min | Canadian Premiere  
Vijay, a lonely taxi driver who recently moved to Melbourne, picks up a stray drunk, Chris. Vijay's distrust is slowly broken down as Chris befriends him. Over the course of the night Chris experiences some of Vijay's nightly troubles, and Vijay learns to see the city in a new light.



Mariana Luiza | Brazil | 2017 | 12min | Canadian Premiere

Maria, a young black woman entered college through the system of racial quotas and now lives abroad. Francisca, her mother, still works on a sugarcane plantation. Both exchange letters that revive memories and reflects the end of an economic-social era.



Nathalie Attallah | Canada | 2017 | 7 min | Toronto Premiere

In Water on Sand, the filmmaker's brother and grandmother reflect on their feelings and experiences as members of the Lebanese diaspora, giving rise to an inter-generational narrative about immigration and cultural displacement.