



Cellar Door Film Festival Offers Audiences a World Tour of Speculative Cinema!

Festival returns with a mix of horror, sci-fi, and fantasy films from around the world.

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For Immediate release

OTTAWA, ON – Cellar Door Film Festival (CDFF) returns for a second year of strange and unusual cinema. After a successful first year featuring a sold-out opening night and enthusiastic audiences, Ottawa’s first film festival devoted to films in the speculative genres is opening up the cellar again to showcase sinister and supernatural films to Ottawa audiences November 5-7.

CDFF originated from a small cinema club whose members gathered to share their love and curiosity for strange and unusual films, and has grown to include an opening night at Ottawa’s historic Mayfair Theatre and screenings at the new arts venue LIVE! on Elgin on Friday and Saturday. “We’re very excited with the scope of this year’s line-up,” said Pat Mullen, Senior Programming Coordinator. “Our team received over three times the submissions from our previous year with films coming in from 45 countries across 6 continents, and the range of films was equally diverse.”

This year’s festival opens with *Liza, The Fox Fairy* (dir. Károly Ujj Mészáros), an enchanting Hungarian fantasy/comedy that’s been winning acclaim on the festival circuit with prizes from festivals including Fantasporto, Seattle, and Madrid’s Nocturna Festival where it won every prize in the Official Selection competition. Friday night includes “We All Go a Little Mad Sometimes,” a global selection of horror, sci-fi, and fantasy films, and the Russian/German horror film *III* (dir. Pavel Khavleev). Saturday offers two feature film presentations with the Canadian premiere of the Greek arthouse horror film *Norway* (dir. Yannis Veslemes), followed by the Closing Night screening of the acclaimed Mexican sci-fi film *The Incident* (dir. Isaac Ezban), which comes to Cellar Door after screening at festivals such as Busan, Fantastic Fest, and Sitges.

CDFF 2015 includes the premieres of three films that showcase the talent of the Ottawa film scene. CDFF screens the local horror/comedy *Boots* (dir. Magill Foote) and the sci-fi film *Odd One Out* (dir. Christopher Rohde), the latter of which won the prize for Best Experimental Film at the inaugural Ottawa Independent Video Awards earlier this year. The shorts selection also includes the Toronto-made horror film *George* (dir. Jullian Ablaza), which boasts writing and producing credits from Ottawa native/Algonquin grad Alix Van Pelt. The filmmakers of all three films will attend the festival and engage audiences in post-screening Q&As. The films were curated by the CDFF programming team of Patrick Mullen, Ramin Khanjani, and Renuka Bauri.

FEATURE FILMS

Liza, the Fox Fairy (Liza, a rókatündér)

Dir. Károly Ujj Mészáros Hungary | Fantasy/comedy | 2015 | Ottawa Premiere

Liza, the Fox-Fairy is a sarcastic fairy tale for grown-ups. Still single at thirty, Liza (Mónika Balsai) has only her imaginary friend, Tomy Tani (David Sakurai), the ghost of a Japanese crooner from the 50s, to guide her. Some bizarre dating games ensue, but as Liza’s beaux pile up in a comical body count, it seems that love isn’t for her. This offbeat film takes a flight of the imagination as Liza’s she sees herself becoming a fox-fairy, which is a demon of Japanese folklore that takes the lives of men. Liza’s power becomes deadlier the more she blossoms from dowdy old-maid to foxy lady. Dark, strange, and sexy, *Liza, the Fox-Fairy* enchants with its black humour and magical aesthetics as director Károly Ujj Mészáros dresses Liza’s frisky world in vibrant colours and fixings tailor-made for the *Mad Men* crowd. This smart, sophisticated fairy tale opens a door to a world one never wants to leave.

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Dir. Pavel Khvaleev | Russia/Germany | Horror | 2015 | Ottawa Premiere

When a mysterious epidemic devastates a village in an unnamed European country, sisters Ayia and Mirra promise to look after each other to the end of their lives. When Mirra, the younger sister, falls victim to the disease, Ayia turns to the local priest for guidance. Ayia soon discovers a collection of Shamanic books containing a series of mystic drawings that she deciphers as a ritual for spiritual healing, which she believes will save her sister. The Shamanic cure involves a complete immersion into the patient's mind, a journey into the deepest most hidden depths of their subconscious where terrifying monsters and demons roam. /// channels layers of the subconscious world in a fever dream of nightmares as Ayia plunges into the depths of Mirra's mind. This visionary first feature by Pavel Khavleev, co-founder of the electronic music project Moonbeam, intertwines myth, folklore, and religion to shake the foundation of the narratives that create our innermost fears. The film creates a visceral and all-consuming dream world with spectacular visuals and affecting score as Ayia confronts the dark demons that live within her sister and herself. The closer to the bottom of the ocean, the darker it gets...

Norway (Norviya)

Dir. Yannis Veslemes | Greece | Horror | 2014 | Canadian Premiere

The newest product of Greek underground culture of film and music (director Yannis Veslemes himself has a renown as a musician), *Norway* recruits staples of horror together with a dash of meta-narrative elements for an unusual experience in alternative horror. Though there are hints at a parallel between blood drinking as a kind of addiction and use of drugs in the manner of Abel Ferrara's *Addiction*, this is not the central point of the film. Instead, the vampirism is tied metaphorically to the underground music. The zany vampire of the film—fittingly dubbed Zano—is characterised by his unabated dancing to the beats, which, as he claims, are his lifeblood. Correspondingly, the Athens presented in the film has nothing to do with our typical idea of the city. Instead of the touristic landmarks, it is materialised in nightclubs and suburbs thronged by hustlers. This is a minimalist view of the city's nights reflected through the mirror of the cult scene. References to the local underground culture and events abound, adding to the quirky pleasure of the film as they enrich the mystery, enshrouding the capering Zano and equally curious folks he meets along the way

The Incident (El incidente)

Dir. Isaac Ezban | Mexico | Sci-fi/horror | 2014 | Ottawa Premiere

Rust Cohle's musing "Time is a flat circle" gets a head-tripping spin in *The Incident* as director Isaac Ezban whirls a terrifying time loop. The film features two parallel storylines with characters trapped in endless cycles: A police officer and two brothers find themselves stuck in a stairwell that keeps going up and down, while a family on a road trip plays a frightening game of "Are we there yet?" The repetitions are absurdly funny and horrifying alike. In between these stories are images of aging bride who rides an around and around, much like the hamster who spins on a wheel and connects the fates of them all.

SHORT FILMS

Awakenings

Dir. Bhargav Saikia | India | Horror | 2015 | Ottawa Premiere

A governess confronts dark forces in this inspired re-imagining of Henry James's timeless ghost story *The Turn of the Screw*.



Blade of the Maiden

Dir. Keith Sicat | The Philippines | Fantasy | 2015 |

The big day has arrived for every warrior across the land to square off and prove their prowess in combat that is half dance and half martial arts. What award awaits the victor of these ceremonial fights?

Boots

Dir. Magill Foote | Canada (Ottawa) | Horror/Comedy | 2015 | World Premiere

An impoverished worker takes the opportunity to have a modicum of luxury in his life in this fun send-up to Soviet cinema. Everything has its price though, where do you draw the line?

Cetaphobia

Dir. Erin Coates and Anna Nazzari | Australia | Horror | 2015 | Canadian Premiere

A couple invokes the ire of a ghost in their once viable whaling community. After inscribing onto one of the whale's last remnants, a tooth, the cetacean spirit forces them into the murky depths where he once reigned.

Curl Up and DYE!

Dir. Duduzile Chinyenze | Zimbabwe | Horror/Experimental | 2014 | North American Premiere

Snips to one's face, fat re-assignment surgery - whose perceptions of beauty are actually being created? This African experimental film puts a psychological twist on body-horror and questions to what point are we willing to let others manipulate us?

George

Dir. Jullian Ablaza | Canada | Horror | 2015 |

Egg and his friend George remind us that the scariest monsters can reside in ourselves with this chilling tale of bullying directed by Jullian Ablaza and produced/co-written by Algonquin grad Alix Van Pelt.

A Good Deal (Une bonne affaire)

Dir. Denis Larzillière | France | Fantasy/comedy | 2014 | Canadian Premiere

A factory worker in the daytime, Guillaume spends every evening obsessively scouring flyers and coupons. Imagine his dismay, then, when one day he finds all his treasured flyers already picked up. Dripping with a stellar dark humour, *A Good Deal* is a scathing glance at the culture of consumerism that trespasses into the territory of sci-fi.

Mr. Dentonn

Dir. Ivan Villamel | Spain | Horror | 2014 | Ottawa Premiere

Be leery of where you find your bedtime books, or else prepare to for an uninvited guest hailing from the realm of shadows!

Odd One Out

Dir. Christopher Rohde | Canada | Sci-fi/Experimental | 2014 | Ottawa Premiere

An odyssey six years in the making, *Odd One Out* envisions a thoroughly original universe built by practical effects. Winner of the Ottawa Independent Video Award for Best Experimental Film.

The Prime of Life (La force de l'âge)

Dir. Quentin Lecocq | France | Thriller | 2014 | North American Premiere

Three young men, two employees and a nuisance of a trainee, are on their way to a new service assignment, but they are surprised by how they are received at their destination.



The Stomach

Dir. Dan Dixon | UK | Horror | 2014 | Ottawa Premiere

Body horror filters through Brit-gangster- flick fare in this tale about brotherhood and double-crossing. To recover a stashed sum of money the assistance of a 'ventro-medium' is sought, but the medium is already fed-up with ardour of his hosting experience.

The Urge 2: It Lies Within

Dir. Christopher Angus | Canada | Horror/Animated | 2014 | Ottawa Premiere

An inept vampire is foiled by his own uncontrollable flatulence when he tries to consume his victims in this animated send-up of horror films of yore. Trapped by a rising sun (and fierce woodland creatures), he finds freedom and redemption in the unlikeliest of places. Or is it?

Willa

Dir. Helena Hufnagel | Germany | Horror | 2015 | Canadian Premiere

Two lovers waiting for a train find themselves in limbo in this haunting adaptation of a short story by Stephen King. *Willa* culminates with a spectacular shot that freezes time, space, life, and death.

Advance tickets are \$9 will be available online through Uniiverse or before each screening for \$12 (cash only).
CDFF also offers festival passes for all 5 screenings for \$40.

All screenings are generously supported by CDFF's Major Sponsors The School for Studies in Art and Culture at Carleton University and Used Ottawa, as well as Supporting Sponsors the Alumni Association of Carleton University and The Haunted Walk of Ottawa, and Friend of the Festival Sponsors Stella Luna Gelato Café, The Odds and Sods Shoppe, Escape Manor, Bridgehead, Film Freeway, Can Con, and Ottawa Geek Market.

About Cellar Door Film Festival

Cellar Door Film Festival (CDFF) provides Ottawa with a showcase of speculative cinema: horror, sci-fi, fantasy, and everything else in between! From celebrating the creativity of the local film scene, to spotlighting the City as a setting for the sinister and supernatural, CDFF is committed to film culture, education, and production on local, national, and international levels.

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For more information, interviews, or to request screeners for review purposes, please contact:

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