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2023 FESTIVAL SCHEDULE ANNOUNCED FOR
**BOSTON ASIAN AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL
(BAAFF)**

CELEBRATING 15 YEARS OF BUILDING ASIAN AMERICAN
COMMUNITY THROUGH FILM
OCTOBER 12 – 23, 2023

IN PERSON SCREENINGS AT EMERSON PARAMOUNT CENTER
OCTOBER 13 – 15, 2023

VIRTUAL ON DEMAND SHORTS PROGRAM
OCTOBER 13 @ 7:30PM ET – OCTOBER 23, 2023 @ 12:00PM ET

INCLUDING SPECIAL PRESENTATION OF NEW AMAZON SERIES
EXPATS
WITH LULU WANG IN-PERSON ON OCTOBER 22

[TICKETS ON SALE NOW](#)

[Boston, MA – Friday, September 29, 2023] – ArtsEmerson, Boston’s leading presenter of contemporary world theater and film and the professional presenting and producing organization of Emerson College, recently announced the film schedule for the **Boston Asian American Film Festival (BAAFF)** which is celebrating its 15th anniversary. The festival will run October 12 – 23, 2023 with in-person screenings scheduled at the Emerson Paramount Center October 13 – 15 and the virtual on demand shorts program from October 13 – 23. BAAFF builds community and empowers Asian Americans through film by showcasing Asian American experiences and serving as a resource to filmmakers and the Greater Boston Community.

This year, BAAFF will present six feature film presentations that include live filmmaker Q&A’s as well as six Shorts programs which includes the popular Queer & Here series. The features program includes Centerpiece Documentary Michele Rae Josue’s **Nurse Unseen** with Josue in attendance for an in-person Q&A at the Emerson Paramount Center, Jennifer Takaki’s intimate documentary feature of the life, work, and advocacy of Chinese American photographer Corky Lee **Photographic Justice: The Corky Lee Story**, the four shorts film block “Laugh with BAAFF!” featuring films **Halmoni’s Pot**; **Open and Shut**; **The Family Circus**; and **Running** and closing night film **Starring Jerry as Himself** with an in-person Q&A with filmmaker Law Chen following the screening. In-person feature films will also include Sing J. Lee’s **Accidental Getaway Driver**, Dawn Mikkelson and Keri Pickett’s documentary **Finding Her Beat**, and Christina YR Lim’s **B-Side: For Taylor**.

The six shorts programs for the festival are “Golden Girls”, “Serving Family Style”, “Laugh with BAAFF!”, “Queer & Here”, “Grave Affairs”, and “Lights Out”.

A very special presentation of an episode of a new Amazon series, **Expats** will take place on Sunday, October 22 at 2:00PM and 5:00PM ET at the Emerson Paramount Center which will include a 4:00PM ET in-person Q&A with filmmaker Lulu Wang of **The Farewell**. **Expats** is a six-part limited series based on the internationally best-selling novel, *The Expatriates*, by Janice Y. K. Lee. Set against the vibrant and tumultuous tapestry of 2014 Hong Kong, the series centers on three American women —*Margaret (Nicole Kidman)*, *Hilary (Sarayu Blue)*, and *Mercy (Ji-young Yoo)* — whose lives intersect after a sudden family tragedy.



Finding Her Beat / Dawn Mikkelson & Keri Pickett



Starring Jerry as Himself / Law Chen

Tickets range from \$15-\$20 for each feature film or shorts program or \$150 for an All-Access Festival Pass and \$60 for the Shorts Pass; tickets can be purchased 24/7 at ArtsEmerson.org, or by calling 617-824-8400 (Tue-Sat from 12:00PM ET - 6:00PM ET). The Paramount Center Box Office (559 Washington Street, Boston) is open for walk-up service Thu-Sat from Noon - 6:00 PM ET.

BAAFF FESTIVAL SCHEDULE – FEATURE FILMS

Nurse Unseen

CENTERPIECE FILM - Documentary

Directed by Michele Rae Josue

\$15 | 92 minutes

English

Friday, October 13 at 6:00PM ET

at the Emerson Paramount Center

LIVE Q&A with filmmaker to follow film

Synopsis: NURSE UNSEEN explores the little-known history and humanity of the unsung Filipino nurses risking their lives on the frontlines while facing a resurgence of anti-Asian hate in the streets. The film unearths the colonial ties between the Philippines and the United States that has led to Filipino nurses becoming the unknown backbone of the U.S. and global healthcare systems.

Director Bio: Michele Josue is an Emmy award-winning Filipinx filmmaker based in Los Angeles. Her critically acclaimed feature-film debut MATT SHEPARD IS A FRIEND OF MINE is the winner of 10 Best Documentary and Audience Choice Awards from festivals worldwide and boasts a 100% rating on Rotten Tomatoes. In NURSE UNSEEN, Michelle unearths the colonial ties between the Philippines and the United States that have led to Filipino-American nurses becoming the unsung backbone of the United States healthcare system.

Photographic Justice: The Corky Lee Story

Documentary

Directed by Jennifer Takaki

\$15 | 87 minutes

English/Closed Captioning

Saturday, October 14 at 1:30PM ET

at the Emerson Paramount Center

LIVE Q&A with filmmaker to follow film

Synopsis: An intimate portrait of the life, work, and advocacy of pioneering Chinese American photographer Corky Lee.

Director Jennifer Takaki followed Corky Lee for nearly 20 years, documenting triumphs and tragedy. Her film offers a unique and moving memorial to one man's mission to bring justice to his community through photography.

Accidental Getaway Driver

CENTERPIECE FILM - Narrative

Directed by Sing J. Lee

\$15 | 114 minutes

English/Vietnamese

Saturday, October 14 at 4:30PM ET

at the Emerson Paramount Center

LIVE Q&A with filmmaker to follow film

Synopsis: During a routine pickup, an elderly Vietnamese cab driver is taken hostage at gunpoint by three recently escaped Orange County convicts.

Finding Her Beat (preceded by **Gund Kwok**)

Documentary

Directed by Dawn Mikkelson, Keri Pickett

\$15 | 88 minutes

English/Japanese

Sunday, October 15 at 1:00PM ET

at the Emerson Paramount Center

LIVE Q&A with filmmaker to follow film

Synopsis: A master of Japanese drumming and a Korean adoptee from Minnesota boldly convene an all-female troupe to perform Taiko, the Japanese drumming art that has been off-limits to women for centuries. As the early menace of Covid rumbles in the background, the group faces down hurdles to prepare for a historic performance in snowy St. Paul. Buoyed by dynamic drum performances and do-or-die spirit, FINDING HER BEAT is an energizing and uplifting story of music, cultural expression and sisterhood.

Gund Kwok

Short

Directed by Xudong Liu

18 minutes

English

Synopsis: The Lion Dance is a folk dance from Asia that was performed exclusively by men in the past. "Gund Kwok" is the first women's Lion Dance troupe in the U.S. Founded by Cheng Imm Tan, she and fifteen Asian women strive to break lingering stereotypes about the strength and images of Asian women.

B-Side: For Taylor

Narrative

Directed by Christina YR Lim

\$15 | 99 minutes

English/Korean

Sunday, October 15 at 4:00PM ET

at the Emerson Paramount Center

LIVE Q&A with filmmaker to follow film

Synopsis: A year after the sudden death of her mother, TAYLOR, a 14-year-old adoptee has secretly grown obsessed with finding her birth family in Korea. The loss has also taken a severe toll on her relationship with her father, BILL, a high school teacher who medicates his grief with alcohol. As summer begins, a Korean family unexpectedly immigrates to her all-white neighborhood and Taylor befriends a new maternal figure, AREUM who agrees to help locate her birth family. As the two grow closer, Areum's own struggle with the loss of her old life and home helps Taylor connect with her Korean roots and grieve her mother's death. But as they

delve deeper into her birth family's unforeseen truth about Taylor's origins that threatens to break her already fragile bond with her father.

Christina YR Lim is a Korean–American writer/director who explores the Asian diaspora through fish-out-of-water, and coming-of-age stories. Lim's first feature film as an auteur, *B-SIDE: FOR TAYLOR* recently premiered at Cinequest and will be screened at RiverRun, CAAMFest, LAAPFF and more. She is currently developing her second feature, and is a fellow of The Black List x Women In Film Feature Residency, and Cine Qua Non's Storyline's lab.

Starring Jerry as Himself (preceded by **Closing Dynasty**)

CLOSING NIGHT FILM - Narrative

Directed by Law Chen

\$20 | 75 minutes

English/Mandarin

Sunday, October 15 at 7:00PM ET

at the Emerson Paramount Center

LIVE Q&A with filmmaker to follow film

Synopsis: A family documents how their immigrant father Jerry, a recently retired Florida man, was recruited by the Chinese police to be an undercover agent, only to discover a darker truth.

Closing Dynasty

Short

Directed by Lloyd Lee Choi

16 minutes

English/Mandarin

Synopsis: On a school day, a 7 year-old hustles strangers for money on the streets of New York City.

BAAFF FESTIVAL SCHEDULE – SHORTS PROGRAM

All Shorts Programs are streaming virtually October 13 at 7:30PM ET – October 23 at 12:00PM ET at [ArtsEmerson.org](https://www.ArtsEmerson.org) and shorts blocks cost \$15.

GOLDEN GIRLS - Shorts Program

83 minutes

In a time when violence against the elderly is at an all-time high, *Golden Girls* is in honor of the life and achievements of the older woman, showing us that not all stories are fully told quite yet.

Featuring:

Don't Be Sorry

Directed by David Au

10 mins | English

After her husband is assaulted in an Anti-Asian hate crime, a timid but resilient Korean-American senior is empowered to fight back when she discovers viral face-slapping competition videos.

Perry and a Pause

Directed by Tess Paras

10 mins | English

When Perry, a newly-divorced and disenchanting gig worker, is tasked to help an eccentric elderly woman with a cheeky art project, she becomes an unwitting accomplice to an even more taboo plan.

Supermarket Affairs

Directed by Hang Luong Nguyen

15 mins | Vietnamese, English | Subtitles when English not spoken | Ages 12+ Mature themes

While preparing for her husband's second death anniversary, a middle-aged Vietnamese immigrant woman and her Americanized adult daughter butt heads over how to best honor him, and inadvertently drag a handsome stranger at the local Asian market into their messy family dynamic.

Tequila Sunset

Directed by Jinsui Song

20 mins | Cantonese, Mandarin, English | With Subtitles

Some tequila, a little OJ, and a splash of grenadine. Is that too much to ask for? Jia doesn't think so. At 70 years old, she deserves a break! But when the toll of looking after her dementia-ridden husband gets too heavy, she starts imagining other creative solutions so she can finally relax.

The Old Young Crow

Directed by Liam LoPinto

12 mins | Farsi, Japanese | with English Subtitles

An Iranian boy befriends an old Japanese woman at a graveyard in Tokyo.

Nai Nai & Wai Po (Grandma & Grandma)

Directed by Sean Wang

17 mins | 13+ (Drug Use) | English and Korean with subtitles

Nai Nai is my grandma. Wai Po is also my grandma. Together, they are a grandma super team that dances and stretches their sorrows away.

SERVING FAMILY STYLE - Shorts Program

82 minutes

Guaranteed to make your mouths water, Serving Family Style highlights stories about the preparation and enjoyment of the meals we share with our loved ones, and how they play into the shaping of our own identities.

Featuring:

UpsideDown

Directed by: Razan Ghalayini

9 mins | English/Arabic with Subtitles

Mother's Tongue

Directed by: Vanesa Millado

13 mins | English, Punjabi and Cantonese with subtitles

After moving out of her family home and being estranged from her mother, Gurleen yearns to reconnect with her Punjabi culture through cooking. But as she attempts to do so, she quickly realizes she's missing a crucial element, her mother's touch.

When You Left Me on That Boulevard

Directed by: Kayla Abuda Galang

13 mins | English and Tagalog

Content warning: Slight strong language

Teenager Ly and her cousins get high before a boisterous family Thanksgiving at their auntie's house in southeast San Diego in 2006.

Lunchbox

Directed by: Anne Hu

16 mins | English, Mandarin with subtitles

Content Warning: Strong language, 13+

When a Taiwanese American woman prepares lunches from her childhood, she struggles to forgive herself for pushing away her immigrant mother.

Breaking Fast with a Coca Cola

Directed by: Amy Yasmine Omar

14 mins | English, Turkish with subtitles

After growing up in the secular households of their Turkish immigrant parents in the Midwest, Özlem and Ada are desperate to celebrate a tradition of their own. Together, they embark on a day of fasting and feasting for Ramadan and embrace their cultural differences along the way.

BENKYODO: The Last Manju Shop in J-Town

Directed by Tadashi Nakamura, Akira Boch

16 mins

Ricky and Bobby Okamura wrestle with closing their beloved family-owned manju shop after serving the San Francisco Japantown community for 115 years.

LAUGH WITH BAAFF! - Shorts Program (also in person Sat, Oct 14 @ 8:30 PM - Emerson Paramount Center)

79 minutes

A weed-buying grandma, a lonely customer service rep, and a dysfunctional Vietnamese-American family walk into a film festival... Laugh with BAAFF is a lineup of wild, genre-bending comedy shorts from some of the industry's top comedians and new comic voices.

Featuring:

“Halmoni’s Pot” (Grandma’s Pot)

Directed by: A. Lauren Lee

10 mins | English, Korean with subtitles | Content Warning: Strong language

Grandma Mee-Yung reluctantly agrees to go buy pot for her grandson. But pay full price? Never!

Open and Shut

Directed by: Kulap Vilaysack

12 mins | English | Content Warning: Sexual content, mild language

Struggling with isolation and family pressures, Jen becomes preoccupied with her mysterious neighbor.

The Family Circus

Directed by: Andrew Fitzgerald

17 mins | English | Content warning: Strong language

A Vietnamese-American family's plan to cover up a drunk driving accident begins to unravel when their emotional baggage spills out in front of the police.

Running

Directed by: Arpita Mukherjee

40 mins | English, Telugu and Polish – subtitles when English not spoken

Written by and starring Danny Pudi (Community, Mythic Quest) and directed by Arpita Mukherjee, RUNNING follows Danny as he sets out to uncover the story of his estranged father. Piecing together mementos, stories from his dad's old friends, and hard conversations with his mother, Pudi starts on a mission to solve the puzzle of his father and finds himself instead on a complex, funny, and vulnerable journey of self-discovery and acceptance.

QUEER & HERE - Shorts Program (also in person Friday, October 13 at 9:00PM ET at the Emerson Paramount Center)

69 minutes

A staple every BAAFF season, Queer and Here is self-expression and complexities of identity beyond orientation.

Featuring:

Cousins

Directed by Karina Dandashi

13 mins | English

The lyrics in the nursery rhyme “Al Asfoura” sung by the two cousins asks, “Where is your house, little bird? I only see you flying.” Growing up in America, I often felt untethered from my roots in Syria. COUSINS explores cultural disconnect between family members and identity within oneself. What does it mean to belong somewhere, and how do we find our way back?

Fish

Directed by Jeremy Hsing

14 mins | English

Content warning: Sexual situations, Conversations on death

Tiger never received the love he desired from his estranged late mother; however, when his mother is reincarnated as his pet goldfish, Tiger must set aside his grievances for one last chance at maternal love.

Gianna

Directed by Kait Schuster

11 mins | English

Content warning: Self harm, violence, strong language

Gianna is a queer horror comedy following Gina, a Filipina Gemini doing her best, as she takes the advice of her sliding scale therapist to spend a day with her INNER SABOTEUR. Enter Gianna. Will they make peace, or does Gianna, like, literally want Gina dead?

After Sunset, Dawn Arrives

Directed by Andy Yi Li

17 mins | Cantonese/Mandarin/English with subtitles

Content warning: Nudity, Mature content

In the early 2000s, old Chinatown, Los Angeles, when introverted and unsociable sixty-five-year-old Chinese man, Wan falls in love with a man who is nearly 30 years younger than him, Wan struggles to embrace his homosexual identity which he has been suppressed for his entire life and simultaneously confronts his guilt towards his long deceased Chinese wife.

Aikāne

Directed by Daniel Sousa

14 mins | Ages 13+ | No Dialogue

Content warning: Violence

A valiant island warrior, wounded in battle against foreign invaders, falls into a mysterious underwater world. When the octopus who rescues him transforms into a handsome young man, they become aikāne, intimate friends bound by love and trust, and an epic adventure begins.

GRAVE AFFAIRS - Shorts Program

85 minutes

Don't be afraid to bring out your tissues, Grave Affairs follows stories of families honoring and mourning their deceased loved ones, and how it brings out the best and worst in them.

Featuring:

Mandarins

Directed by Chelsie Pennello

14 mins | English

A black sheep attempts to eulogize her mother with a story about pigeons.

The Resemblance

Directed by Derek Nguyen

15 mins

When a grieving couple goes to a “rental family” agency to hire an actor to role-play their dead son, they discover that their evening of remembrance is more than they bargained for.

The Van

Directed by Bernard Badion

20 mins | English/Tagalog Subtitles when English not spoken

A son’s stubborn father refuses to move unless a broken down van comes with him.

Video Funeral

Directed by Linh Tran

20 mins | Vietnamese/English

content warning: Death and grief themes

Lam, a Vietnamese international student, welcomes her younger sister, Phuong, to her Chicago apartment.

Phuong brings a DVD of their father’s funeral, which Lam could not attend.

Take Me Home

Directed by Liz Sargent

15 mins

content warning: Brief language

After their mother’s death, a cognitively disabled woman and her estranged sister must learn to communicate in order to move forward.

LIGHTS OUT - Shorts Program

84 minutes

Depiction isn’t always endorsement. Violence, obsession, revenge... Light’s Out explores the darker side of the Asian-American experience.

Featuring:

Astonishing Little Feet

Directed by Maegan A Houang

9 mins | English/Cantonese with subtitles

Content warning: Racism, sexual assault

Afong Moy, the first documented Chinese woman to come to the United States, realizes the men who separated her from her family only have interest in profiting off the peculiarities of her bound feet.

Sandals of Gold

Directed by Raj Kapadia

14 mins | Gujarati/Sanskrit with subtitles

Content warning: Mild violence

When an old, lonely, seemingly humble man witnesses his gold plated sandals being stolen outside a temple by a young thief, he opts for extreme measures to get them back.

Dirty Rotten Tofu and the Gohan Girls

Directed by June K Inuzuka

14 mins | English

Content warning: Strong language, violence

In the Old West, three Asian women fight for their freedom from a Chinatown crime boss who wants them back “Dead or Alive.”

Happy Ending

Directed by Élodie Yung

17 mins | English and Cambodian (with English subtitles)

Content warning: Sexual themes

Teen Troubles in Dirty Jersey

Directed by Waley Wang

16 mins | Korean and English with subtitles

Hearsay

Directed by Banban Cheng

17 mins | Mandarin and English with English subtitles

Content warning: Suggestion of domestic violence

A Cambodian woman, carrying a tragic secret, comes to America to work in an illicit massage parlor in hopes of making a better life for her family.

BAAFF SPECIAL EVENT

SILENT MOVIE DAY

The Oath of the Sword (1914) and BAAFF Preview Event

Presented by Northeastern University and Boston Asian American Film Festival

Friday, September 29 • 7:00PM ET • Blackman Auditorium

342 Huntington Avenue Boston, MA 02115

Festival Preview | Screening | Panel Conversation | Festival Door PRIZES!

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Join us for the East Coast premiere of this REDISCOVERED & RESTORED

Silent Film Treasure with a LIVE Orchestra.

The Oath of the Sword was produced in 1914 by the Japanese American Film Company, based in LA. It is the earliest known Asian American film production and illuminates a largely unknown chapter in American film history.

Musical score arranged by Allen Feinstein.

Following the film will be a panel discussion with:

Denise Khor, Associate Professor, Visual Studies and Asian American Studies, Northeastern University

Arthur Dong, Academy Award nominated filmmaker and historian

Allan Feinstein, Director of Bands, Head Advisor, Teaching Professor, Northeastern University

Susan Chinsen, Moderator; Festival Director, Boston Asian American Film Festival

Expats

Screening of an episode of television series

Directed by Lulu Wang

\$20

Sunday, October 22 at 2:00PM and 5:00PM ET

Talkback with Lulu Wang at 4:00PM ET

at the Emerson Paramount Center

LIVE Q&A with filmmaker

Synopsis: *Expats* is a six-part limited series based on the internationally best-selling novel, *The Expatriates*, by Janice Y. K. Lee. Set against the vibrant and tumultuous tapestry of 2014 Hong Kong, the series centers on three American women — *Margaret (Nicole Kidman)*, *Hilary (Sarayu Blue)*, and *Mercy (Ji-young Yoo)* — whose lives intersect after a sudden family tragedy. CENTRAL, the feature-length penultimate episode of limited series *Expats*, shifts the narrative away from the entangled lives of expats to spend one fateful Sunday with two Filipina domestic workers and a disparate ensemble of Hong Kong locals as a massive typhoon descends upon the city and the 2014 political movement reaches a point of no return.

Lulu Wang

Lulu Wang's 2019 sophomore feature, *The Farewell*, which she wrote and directed, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in the U.S. Dramatic Competition. Wang went on to amass critical acclaim and awards for the A24 box office hit. The film won Best Feature at the 2020 Film Independent Spirit Awards and received

many accolades and nominations, including AFI's Top Ten Films of 2019, a Golden Globe Best Motion Picture – Foreign Language nomination, as well as Best Feature and Best Screenplay nods from the Gotham Independent Film Awards. In addition, *The Farewell's* lead actress Awkwafina received a Golden Globe nomination for Best Actress, while Zhao Shuzhen received a Best Supporting Actress nomination from the Independent Spirit Awards.

Wang's production company, Local Time, has several features, television series, and podcasts in development, including the feature project, *Children Of The New World*, with FilmNation, based on Alexander Weinstein's short story of the same name, and a US film adaptation of Hirokazu Koreeda's *Like Father Like Son* with Focus Features.

For production stills and other media kit assets, click [here](#).

PRESENTER INFORMATION

Boston Asian American Film Festival (BAAFF)

The Boston Asian American Film Festival (BAAFF) empowers Asian Americans through film by showcasing Asian American experiences and serving as a resource to filmmakers and the Greater Boston Community. BAAFF is a production of the Asian American Resource Workshop. BAAFF.org

ArtsEmerson

ArtsEmerson is the professional presenting and producing organization at Emerson College, and its mission is to bring people together to experience powerful performances that delight, provoke, and inspire, celebrating both our differences and common humanity. Founded in 2010 by Robert J. Orchard — the year the U.S. Census confirmed there was no single cultural majority in Boston — ArtsEmerson is committed to building a cultural institution that reflects the diversity of our city. Our imaginative and globe-spanning live and virtual performances, films, and conversations invites each of us to be part of a Boston that is more creative, equitable, and connected. ArtsEmerson is led by Executive Director, David Howse. For more information visit ArtsEmerson.org.

Emerson College

ArtsEmerson and HowlRound Theatre Commons both operate from within the Emerson College Office of the Arts. Based in Boston, Massachusetts, opposite the historic Boston Common and in the heart of the city's Theater District, Emerson College educates individuals who will solve problems and change the world through engaged leadership in communication and the arts, a mission informed by liberal learning. The College has 3,700 undergraduates and 1,400 graduate students from across the United States and 50 countries. Supported by state-of-the-art facilities and a renowned faculty, students participate in more than 90 student organizations and performance groups. Emerson is known for its experiential learning programs in Los Angeles, Washington, DC, the Netherlands, London, China, and the Czech Republic as well as its new Global Portals. The College has an active network of 51,000 alumni who hold leadership positions in communication and the arts. For more information, visit Emerson.edu. For media inquiries specific to Emerson College, please contact Michelle Gaseau (E: Michelle_Gaseau@emerson.edu, O: 617-824-3547, C: 617-429-2624).

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