Program Guide

The organizers of FascinAsian Film Festival 2024 welcome you! This year, we’re excited to have you join us in-person in Calgary, Winnipeg, and online. Enjoy the show.
Message from Mayor Jyoti Gondek

On behalf of my City Council colleagues, thank you for being here to empower and celebrate Asian contributions to the film and media landscape!

The FascinAsian Film Festival is proudly unique to the prairies, and Calgary is equally proud to be the co-host city, along with Winnipeg! This year’s theme, The Year of the Dragon – The Year of Discovery, invites us all on a journey of exploration and enlightenment. Asian-Canadian perspectives, culture, and identity will be highlighted through the remarkable works of Asian-Canadian filmmakers and screen-based talent.

Through this festival, we bring Asian culture and storytelling directly into our homes, fostering deeper connections and understanding within our diverse community. It also offers a much-needed opportunity for creative expression, dialogue, and reflection. I encourage each of you to immerse yourselves in the experiences ahead, and may this festival inspire us all to embrace the diverse stories and voices that shape our city.

Congratulations to all the organizers, participants, and volunteers for another incredible FascinAsian Film Festival.

Sincerely,

Jyoti Gondek
Mayor of Calgary

FascinAsian Film Festival envisions a world where North American Asian storytellers, performers, and other film & media creatives can have equal access to resources and opportunities to shape and enhance cultural understanding in an insightful and positive way.

Mission
FascinAsian is committed to promoting and celebrating Asian perspectives, culture and integrity in film and media. F3 works to foster understanding and appreciation of Asian arts and culture within the Canadian mosaic.

F3 aims to highlight the talent of local, national, and international Asian filmmakers, performers, and other media arts creatives.

F3 strives to create programming that inspires, educates, and brings the community together in appreciation of the artform and the collective effort by its members.

Goals
- To share and highlight stories from the Asian diaspora and feature Asian talent from Canada and around the world.
- To educate and inform audiences about the unique Asian-Manitoban, and Asian-Canadian experience.
- To offer opportunities for education and training in film and media.
- To create an inclusive, safe and fun environment for Asian artists to share and celebrate their work.
- To create meaningful dialogue about issues of equal opportunity and equity in the media arts.
- To build bridges within the community through partnerships and collaboration.
- To facilitate a multi-day festival of events, supporting these goals.
- To operate an organization that will be fiscally and ethically responsible and sustainable.

SEE YOUR VISION COME TO LIFE.
Welcome to the 3rd Annual FascinAsian Film Festival

Dear Friends and Film Enthusiasts,

Welcome to a celebration of the Year of the Dragon - Year of Discovery! We are thrilled to have you join us for this vibrant showcase of Asian cinema, celebrating our heritage and diversity.

We want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our sponsors whose generous support has made this festival possible. Your commitment to promoting cultural understanding through the art of film is truly commendable.

To the dedicated Calgary team and to all of our volunteers, thank you for your tireless efforts and passion in making this event a success. Your hard work behind the scenes does not go unnoticed and is deeply appreciated.

And to our audience, thank you for being here to share in the magic of cinema and explore the rich tapestry of stories from across Canada and internationally. Your presence adds to the vibrancy of this festival, and we hope you leave inspired and enriched.

Finally, a special thank you to all the talented filmmakers who have submitted their works. We are honored to present a curated selection of short films and feature films over the four days, showcasing the diverse voices and narratives that make Asian cinema so captivating.

Let's come together in celebration during Asian Heritage Month and embark on a journey of discovery through the power of film.

Warm regards,

Alan Wong
President & Board Chair
Judy Eng-Hum
Vice President
FascinAsian Film Festival Board

Festival Times & Location

Thursday, May 2, 2024
Calgary Central Library – Performance Hall
800 3rd St SE, Calgary, AB T2G 2E7
6:00 PM – 11:00 PM

Friday, May 3, 2024
Fort Calgary
750 9 Ave SE, Calgary, AB T2G 5E1
6:00 PM – 11:00 PM

Saturday, May 4, 2024
Calgary Central Library – Performance Hall
800 3rd St SE, Calgary, AB T2G 2E7
11:00 AM – 11:00 PM

Sunday, May 5, 2024
Chinese Cultural Centre Cuisine
197 1 St SW, Calgary, AB T2P 4M4
6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Thursday, May 2</th>
<th>Friday, May 3</th>
<th>Saturday, May 4</th>
<th>Sunday, May 5</th>
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<td>Chinese Cultural Centre Cuisine</td>
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<td>CBC Asian Changemakers Presentation</td>
<td>Central Public Library</td>
<td>Opening Night Remarks</td>
<td>Fort Calgary</td>
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<td>Ru &amp; Boat People</td>
<td>Fort Calgary</td>
<td>Starring Jerry as Himself</td>
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Summary

Thursday, May 2

5:00 PM
Pre-Festival Kickoff
Kickoff the Year of the Dragon at the
Central Public Library. Doors open at 5:00 PM.

6:00 PM

CBC Calgary Asian Changemakers Presentation

FascinAsian is pleased to partner with CBC Calgary for the Asian Changemakers series. This event will feature five Asian Changemakers in Community Building, Arts, Leadership, Sports, and Youth Development. You’ll learn more about their stories through a video presentation and panel discussion.

This event is proudly sponsored by CBC Calgary.

8:00 PM
FEATURE FILM

Past Lives

The event will be followed by a special screening of the Oscar-nominated film, Past Lives, directed by Korean-Canadian Director and Playwright, Celine Song. Past Lives tells the story of Nora (Greta Lee) and Hae Sung (Teo Yoo), two deeply connected childhood friends, who are wrest apart after Nora’s family emigrates from South Korea. Decades later, they are reunited for one fateful week as they confront destiny, love and the choices that make a life.

Director(s) Celine Song
Runtime 106 minutes
Language English, Korean
Country of Origin United States, South Korea
Completion Year 2023
Friday, May 3

5:15 PM
Opening Night
Join us for Opening Night at Fort Calgary.
Doors will open at 5:15 PM

6:00 PM
★ Dragon & Lion Dance Performance
6:30 PM
★ Opening Remarks

7:00 PM
SHORTS FEATURE
★ Boat People
Preceding the feature presentation is Boat People, a short animated film that uses a striking metaphor to trace one family’s flight across the turbulent waters of history. Directed by Kjell Boersma and Thao Lam, this short is based on the picture book, The Paper Boat by Thao Lam.

7:15 PM
FEATURE FILM
★ Ru
Join us for our Opening Night with the feature film Ru, based on the Governor General’s Award-winning and critically acclaimed novel by Kim Thúy. Directed by Charles-Olivier Michaud and starring Canadians Chantal Thuy and Jean Bùi, Ru is the story of the arduous journey of a wealthy family fleeing from Vietnam, before landing in Quebec.

★ Q&A with actor Jean Bùi
Following the film presentation is a Q&A with Jean Bùi, one of the lead actors of Ru.

10:00 PM
★ Reception
We’ll cap off this extraordinary night with a delectable reception featuring sweet and savoury Vietnamese delicacies.

Saturday, May 4

11:00 AM
PRESENTATION
★ Discovering Asian Stories
FascinAsian is honoured to present a special literary presentation moderated by the creator and writer of Kim’s Convenience, Ins Choi. Join authors Teresa Wong, Katrina Kwan, Terry Fong, and Chad Soon for an engaging conversation on what it’s like to be an Asian author in Canada. The event will include an author panel, a Q&A session, and authors’ signing.

Book List

Teresa Wong
Dear Scarlet
All Our Ordinary Stories (Available Sept 24, 2024)

Katrina Kwan
The Last Dragon of the East (Available Oct 8, 2024)
Knives, Seasoning, & a Dash of Love (Available Aug 27, 2024)

Terry Fong
Princeton: A Love Story

Chad Soon
The Longest Shot
Closing Time

In 1983, my parents immigrated from Hong Kong to the United States seeking a better future for our family. They persevered through the ups and downs and forged their own path in a new country and culture.

Director(s) Sherwin Lau
Runtime 20 minutes
Language Cantonese, English
Country of Origin United States
Completion Year 2023

Peace Offering

After a dinner incident between a mother and her daughter, Dawn gets thrown back into her past to confront her own family dysfunction in order to make peace with her daughter.

Director(s) Helen Lesmana
Runtime 3 minutes 57 seconds
Language English
Country of Origin United States, Indonesia
Completion Year 2023

Finding Nathan Fielder (With Jen Zhao)

Jen Zhao is a Canadian film school grad in LA with a visa that’s about to expire. She has just lost her brother (back home in Canada) to suicide, and her family urges her to come back to Calgary so they can grieve together. Instead, she does everything she can to avoid the circumstances by latching onto an obsessive belief: if she can find her idol, Canadian comedian Nathan Fielder, he will help her renew her visa and guide her through the pearly gates of Hollywood.

Director(s) Jen Zhao
Runtime 26 minutes 30 seconds
Language English
Country of Origin Canada, United States
Completion Year 2024

The Gold Teeth

SAHRA, an Afghan refugee girl in Canada asks an Iranian ex-dentist HAMED to extract her father’s gold teeth before they bury him so that she may use that money to smuggle her queer brother from Afghanistan.

Director(s) Alireza Kazemipour
Runtime 15 minutes
Language English, Persian
Country of Origin Canada
Completion Year 2022

Tailor Made

Tailor Made is a documentary about the passion and perseverance of Tam Nguyen, a refugee from Vietnam who came to Canada in the ’80s as part of the Vietnamese “boat people” and used his masterful tailoring skills to craft a new life for himself and many others. As October 2023 marks 43 years since Tam’s arrival in Canada, Tailor Made captures his reflections on his life’s journey and how he fulfilled a promise to dedicate his life to helping others.

Director(s) Quan Luong
Runtime 12 minutes 40 seconds
Language English, Vietnamese
Country of Origin Canada
Completion Year 2024

The Sun is Up and I Shall Live

The sole carer for her family, a young woman’s sunny optimism wavers on the chaotic day of her little brother’s school play.

Director(s) Jazmine Monaz
Runtime 18 minutes 45 seconds
Language English
Country of Origin Singapore
Completion Year 2023

This short film contains sensitive depictions of depression that may evoke strong emotional responses. Viewer discretion is advised.

The Yin and the Yang symbolize duality. Life and death. Freedom and repression. Light and dark. Even the polarity of the mind. These fascinating short films embody the struggle of being pulled in different directions that we can all relate to.

This event is proudly sponsored by IATSE 212
### Dreams of Discovery

From flights of fancy to hopes for the future and what possibilities may come, we welcome you to discover this fantastic selection of short films from around the world that embody what it means to dream in the literal and metaphorical sense.

This event is proudly sponsored by IATSE 212.

#### Shorts Program

**Tequila Sunset**
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.

**Director(s)** Jinsui Song
**Runtime** 21 minutes 58 seconds
**Country of Origin** United States
**Completion Year** 2022

**Desync**
Ana, a young Filipina filmmaker, shoots a re-enactment of a fight she once had with her mother. Embodying cultural pressure from her mother to work beyond her limits for the sake of perfection, Ana rewrites every painful exchange into a perfect one.

**Director(s)** Minerva Marie Navasca
**Runtime** 12 minutes
**Country of Origin** Canada
**Completion Year** 2023

**Where My Branches Stem**
Where My Branches Stem tells the story of a young Chinese woman who is tired from her nine-to-five work life in the big city prompting her to move back home with her grandfather, throughout her time at home the young woman mends not only her relationship with her grandfather but also her own sense of cultural identity.

**Director(s)** Teresa Kuo
**Runtime** 7 minutes 3 seconds
**Country of Origin** Taiwan
**Completion Year** 2023

**Pasta and Test Score**
One day, Luigi receives full marks for his first test in school. Excited, he decides to spend the night waiting for his mother’s return so he can share his results.

**Director(s)** Stanley Xu
**Runtime** 6 minutes
**Country of Origin** Taiwan
**Completion Year** 2023

**Kung Fu: Made in Rwanda**
China’s presence in Rwanda has gone beyond construction and investment. Today, icons, such as Jackie Chan and Donnie Yen, have sparked a growing fascination for Chinese sports and culture. Kung Fu: Made in Rwanda follows the journey of two martial artists as they go the extra mile to immerse themselves in the culture.

**Director(s)** Erin Liam
**Runtime** 4 minutes 54 seconds
**Country of Origin** Singapore, Rwanda
**Completion Year** 2023

**The Official Guidebook to Lying**
A lifetime of abusing his natural talent for making up stories has led an arrogant serial liar to quit his deceiving ways forever. As a final hurrah, this scrappy university student shares an epic 11-minute masterclass on how to execute the perfect lie.

**Director(s)** Corinne Langmuir
**Runtime** 11 minutes 39 seconds
**Country of Origin** Canada
**Completion Year** 2023

**Bumalik (To go back)**
This debut film from Winnipeg-based emerging director and producer MC de Natividad follows de Natividad, who immigrated to Winnipeg from the Philippines at four years old, on her journey to reclaim her lost language and identity.

**Director(s)** MC de Natividad
**Runtime** 27 minutes 28 seconds
**Country of Origin** Canada
**Completion Year** 2023

**Saturday, May 4**
**Central Public Library**
**Doors open at 3:30 PM**

**4:00 – 6:00 PM**

**Dreams of Discovery**

**SHORTS PROGRAM**

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**Country of Origin** Canada
**Completion Year** 2023
Saturday, May 4
Central Public Library  Doors open at 6:30 PM

7:00 – 11:00 PM
FEATURE FILM

Starring Jerry as Himself

Starring Jerry as Himself chronicles the fantastical misadventures of Jerry Hsu, an ordinary Taiwanese retired immigrant in Orlando, who accidentally becomes a spy in an international money laundering investigation.

9:30 PM
Dessert Afterparty & Musical Performance

Q&A with Director Law Chen & Dessert Afterparty to Follow the Screening

Director(s)  Law Chen
Runtime  76 minutes
Language  English, Mandarin
Country of Origin  United States
Completion Year  2022

Community Partner - Third Act Film Festival

Sunday, May 5
Central Public Library  Doors open at 10:00 AM

11:00 AM
PRESENTATION

★ The China Clippers: A Tribute to the Legends
Norman Kwong and Larry Kwong

FascinAsian Calgary is honoured to present a special tribute presentation honouring the legacies of two iconic Asian Canadian sporting legends, Norman Kwong and Larry Kwong. The unique event will feature two captivating documentaries, Norman Kwong's Heritage Minute and Larry Kwong's The Shift, chronicling the remarkable journeys of these trailblazing athletes.

Norman Kwong, affectionately known as the "China Clipper," made history as the first Chinese Canadian to play professional football in the CFL. His illustrious career, spanning two decades, is a testament to his perseverance, skill, and leadership, leaving an indelible mark on the Canadian sports landscape.

Larry Kwong, fondly remembered as the "China Clipper" and "King Kwong," broke barriers as the first player of Asian descent to compete in the NHL. His groundbreaking achievement paved the way for future generations of Asian Canadian athletes and inspired countless individuals worldwide.

Joining guest host Chris dela Torre (host of CBC's Homestretch) will be family members and filmmakers: Greg Kwong (son of Norman Kwong), Sammy Heintz (Larry Kwong's granddaughter), Dale Lee Kwong (Larry's niece and Consultant for Heritage Minute), Brent Kawchuk (Film Producer), Michelle Wong (Executive Producer and Business Affairs Consultant), and Chad Soon (Author of The Longest Shot: How Larry Kwong Changed the Face of Hockey). They'll discuss the remarkable contributions to Canadian sports made by these two sporting trailblazers and offer an inside look at both Kwong clans.

Don't miss this unforgettable event as we pay tribute to legends Norman Kwong and Larry Kwong!
**Existential Threads**

The world is full of chaos. Yet we exist. We live. We survive. We laugh, we cry. We shout in anger and whisper of love. This collection of contemplative short films weaves together musings on the delicate tapestry of life.

This event is proudly sponsored by IATSE 212

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**Threads of Love**

A scrunchie business in Belleville, Ontario exploded in sales after going viral on TikTok during the pandemic. The success and hypergrowth of XXL & Co. highlights acts of service, the love language of East Asian parents. The film also explores the expectations immigrant children burden themselves with and looks at how one finds balance when confronting the Asian-Canadian identity.

Director(s): Amy Chyan  
Runtime: 17 minutes 21 seconds  
Language: English, Vietnamese  
Country of Origin: Canada  
Completion Year: 2022

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**Copykat**

When nonchalant graphic designer Mika discovers her creative director, Kat has won a national art competition by plagiarizing Mika's own work, she must confront the truth to protect her self-worth, sanity, and career before it's too late.

Director(s): Gino delos Reyes  
Runtime: 4 minutes 59 seconds  
Language: English  
Country of Origin: Canada  
Completion Year: 2023

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**FISHBOY**

FISH BOY is a lyrical meditation on faith, love, and polyamory through the eyes of an Asian American teenager. When 16-year-old Patrick (played by Ian Chen, *Fresh Off The Boat*) questions his love for God, his self-discovery manifests in his skin.

Director(s): Christopher Yip  
Runtime: 10 minutes 32 seconds  
Language: English, Cantonese  
Country of Origin: Canada  
Completion Year: 2023

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**EITR**

In EITR, Mohamed's fear of his true desires will be tested as he is caught off guard by the power of being seen, but can this connection break him out of his performative shell, even for a lingering moment?

Director(s): Fateema Al-Hamaydeh Miller  
Runtime: 14 minutes 46 seconds  
Language: Arabic, English  
Country of Origin: Canada  
Completion Year: 2022

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**Moonlit Night of Spring River**

This short animated film is a time-travelling and character-swapping animation of a girl sleepwalking through a Chinese garden. Accompanied by the classic melody of the traditional Chinese folk music Moonlit Night of Spring River, the movie provides an interesting perspective on the unique beauty of Chinese gardens and architecture of the Qing Dynasty (1636-1912).

Director(s): Joe Chang  
Runtime: 7 minutes 32 seconds  
Country of Origin: Canada  
Completion Year: 2024

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**My Son Went Quiet**

After the death of his wife, a South Asian father and his son begin seeing a shadow around the walls of their home, who the son believes to be his mother.

Director(s): Ian Bawa  
Runtime: 13 minutes 40 seconds  
Country of Origin: Canada  
Completion Year: 2024

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**Cinching Saddles**

In the mockumentary Cinching Saddles, we follow the wild journey of Calvinder, aka Cinch, who adopts a fake Texas accent and genuinely believes he's a cowboy, despite lacking any authentic cowboy skills. The series captures Cinch's comedic attempts to fit into the ranch's cowboy culture.

Director(s): Kevin Sengara, Aman Pannu  
Runtime: 7 minutes 40 seconds  
Country of Origin: Canada  
Completion Year: 2024

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**Closing Dynasty**

On a school day, a seven-year-old girl, Queenie, hustles and schemes ways to make money on the streets of New York City.

Director(s): Lloyd Lee Choi  
Runtime: 18 minutes  
Language: English  
Country of Origin: United States  
Completion Year: 2022

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**Sunday, May 5**

1:00 – 3:00 PM

Central Public Library  
Doors open at 12:30 PM
Sunday, May 5

3:30 – 5:30 PM
Central Public Library
Doors open at 3:00 PM
FEATURE FILM

Float
Waverly (Andrea Bang, Kim’s Convenience) thought she had her future figured out, she’d start her medical residency in Toronto after a summer visit to her parents in Taipei. When her plans suddenly change, she makes an impulsive detour to a small Canadian town where she meets local lifeguard Blake (Robbie Amell, The Duff). After he saves her from nearly drowning at a beach party, Blake offers to teach Waverly to swim, and as the lessons continue, the two unexpectedly find themselves falling in love.

Director(s) Sherron Lee
Run time 100 minutes
Language English
Country of Origin Canada
Completion Year 2024

This event is proudly sponsored by the Director Guild of Canada Alberta Branch

6:00 – 9:00 PM
Chinese Cultural Centre Cuisine

★ Awards Dinner & Ceremony
Join us for the awards banquet where we will celebrate the achievements in Best Short Film, Best Performance in a Short Film, and Audience Favorite Short Film. Enjoy a Chinese ten-course feast and take part in some of the surprise festivities at the dinner.

This event is proudly sponsored by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation

Performers

FRIDAY
Honan Shaolin Golden Five-Clawed Dragon Dance
Honan Shaolin Golden Five-Clawed Dragon Dance includes oral traditions, rituals, and music. Two types of Golden Dragons are used, differentiated by their horns: the Heaven Dragon – Tian Long 莖龍 and Divine/Rain Bringing – Shen Long 神龍. In ancient times these dances were part of the ceremonies conducted on behalf of the Imperial government. The traditional dance had thirty established patterns, each used for different occasions, entrance rules, and special rules and taboos.

Jing Wo Lion Dance Team
Lion Dance is a form of traditional dance in Chinese culture and other Asian countries in which performers mimic a lion’s movements in a lion costume to bring good luck and fortune. The lion dance is usually performed during traditional, cultural and religious festivals. It may also be performed at important occasions such as business opening events, special celebrations or wedding ceremonies, or may be used to honour special guests by the Chinese communities.

SATURDAY
Melyssa Lee
Emerging singer-songwriter Melyssa Lee from Calgary, crafts musical memoirs into evocative songs about profound life challenges. In early 2023, she released her well-received first single, “Sunflower (acoustic)”, which quickly garnered attention, making its way to numerous sad song playlists, podcast interviews, community and college radio, and over 50K plays on streaming platforms. Her debut album “Treasures” will be released on May 24, 2024.
Thank you to all of our Funders, Sponsors and Partners!

Thank you to our incredible Calgary team for their dedication and planning throughout the year and our volunteers for all their hard work during this year’s festival!

Calgary Executive Team
Judy Eng-Hum, Festival Director
Cindy Ly, Festival Coordinator
Sylvie Croteau-Willard, Volunteer Coordinator
Kefira Mok, Social Media Coordinator
Ray Gee
Max Hum
Justin Sugita
Leo Kwan

Short Films Awards Jury
Vicki Chau
Michelle Wong
Gabriel Yee, Director/ Lotus Media Group

Festival Services
Web Design: Adnan Farouq
Graphic Design: Alex Wong
Videographer: Hanso Chang
Catering: Nan’s Noodle House
Media Sponsor: Cold Tea Collective
Hotel Partner: Hilton Garden Inn Calgary Downtown

Vicki Chau
Michelle Wong
Gabriel Yee, Director/ Lotus Media Group

Web Design: Adnan Farouq
Graphic Design: Alex Wong
Videographer: Hanso Chang
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We hope to see you all next year!

www.fascinasian.ca