

## 45th Asian American International Film Festival Announces Full Lineup



July 21, 2022, NEW YORK – The 45th Asian American International Film Festival (AAIFF45), presented by CITI, and a production of Asian CineVision (ACV) in association with Asia Society, announces its full lineup. The Festival runs from August 3-13, 2022 as a hybrid festival, both in-person at Asia Society and streaming online globally.

The full lineup consists of 18 World Premieres, 32 East Coast Premieres, and 31 New York Premieres. The films represent a total of 24 countries and 20 languages. This year's program includes 73 directors. More information on the full lineup can be found at <https://www.aaiff.org/program>.

General Screening Tickets (either in-person/online) are available at \$16/\$10. Tickets for General Admission Spotlight screenings are available now at the following prices:

- Opening Night Screening + Reception | **FREE CHOL SOO LEE**, August 3 at 7:00pm EST at Asia Society - \$100
- Centerpiece Screening + Reception | **YUNI**, August 6 at 7:30pm EST at Asia Society - \$50
- Closing Night Screening + Reception | **CHINATOWN BEAT SHORTS**, August 13 at 7:00pm EST at Asia Society - \$60

Pre-sale — up to 30% off — for Online All-Access Passes, Cine Passes and Gold Passes are currently on sale at <https://www.aaiff.org/ticketing> for \$80, \$100 and \$225 respectively through August 2.

Other ticket deals are also available now:

- 3-Pack (in-person): Providing a pack of 3 tickets that can be used for any in-person general screening. Does NOT include admission to tentpole screenings or receptions. \$40.
- 3-Pack (online): Providing a pack of 3 tickets that can be used for any online screening (video on demand). \$25.
- 5-Pack (in-person): Providing a pack of 5 tickets that can be used for any in-person general screening. Does NOT include admission to tentpole screenings or receptions. \$65.
- 5-Pack (online): Providing a pack of 5 tickets that can be used for any online screening (video on demand). \$40.
- Household Ticket (online only): Providing admission to one online screening (video on demand) for viewers living in the same household \$15.

## **SPOTLIGHTS**

**FREE CHOL SOO LEE - Opening Night Presentation** | August 3 at 7:00pm EST at Asia Society

*Directed by Julie Ha, Eugene Yi - U.S. - English/Korean*

In 1970s San Francisco, Korean immigrant Chol Soo Lee is racially profiled and convicted of a gang murder. After spending years fighting to survive, journalist K.W. Lee takes a special interest in his case, igniting a social justice movement.

**YUNI - Centerpiece Presentation - New York Premiere** | August 6 at 7:30pm EST at Asia Society

*Directed by Kamila Andini - Indonesia - Indonesian*

Yuni is a teenage girl—smart with big dreams of attending university. When two men she barely knows ask to marry her, she rejects their proposals, sparking gossip about a myth that a woman who rejects three proposals will never marry.

**CHINATOWN BEAT - Closing Night Presentation** | August 13 at 7:00pm EST at Asia Society

- **A FATHER'S SON - New York Premiere**  
*Directed by Patrick Chen - U.S. - English, Chinese (Cantonese)*  
Jack Yu is the only Chinese American detective in the 5th Precinct, and every manner of Chinatown crime will come his way.
- **DEAR CORKY - New York Premiere**  
*Directed by Curtis Chin - U.S. - English, Chinese (Cantonese)*  
Through his words and pictures, DEAR CORKY is an intimate look at the legendary photographer Corky Lee.

- **FROM SPIKES TO SPINDLES**

*Directed by Christine Choy - U.S. - English, Chinese (Cantonese)*

This raw, gutsy portrait of New York's Chinatown captures the early days of an emerging consciousness in the community.

## **SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

- 72 HOUR SHOOTOUT Top 10 Premiere - "Joyful Resistance" - World Premiere**

*Hosted by the Asian American Film Lab - U.S. - English*

The 72 Hour Shootout is an annual global filmmaking competition run by the Asian American Film Lab ([www.film-lab.org](http://www.film-lab.org)) to provide a platform for Asian American and other underrepresented stories and voices.

- CUNY SHORTS SHOWCASE - 63 mins**

Since 2004, the CUNY Asian American Film Festival (AAFF) has recognized and awarded over \$13,500 in cash prizes to student filmmakers enrolled at the City University of New York, including City College, Brooklyn College, Hunter College, Lehman College, College of Staten Island, and Queens College. The CUNY AAFF helps to promote the artistic visual talents and stimulate communication among CUNY students who are separated by the different campuses, and serve as a central location to display their creative works. Finalists screen at the Asian American International Film Festival.

- SELECTIVE MEMORY HAS NO BOUNDS: YES, MARTIAL LAW DID ACTUALLY HAPPEN - Curated by Angel Velasco Shaw**

- **Portraits of Mosquito Press**

*Directed by JL Burgos - Philippines - Filipino, English, Taglish*

Under the Marcos dictatorship, many journalists were either jailed or silenced.

Decades after the fall of the strongman, members of the alternative press recount the dark times and how they braved dangers to publish real news.

- **Why is Yellow in the Middle of the Rainbow?**

*Directed by Kidlat Tahimik - Philippines - English, Filipino*

A visual essay that tells interconnecting stories about Spanish and American colonialism/imperialism and their impact on the Philippines, the Martial Law era, and the People's Power Yellow Movement through humorous, personal, and political lenses.

- DON'T SLEEP ON THIS CITY SERIES**

- **38 AT THE GARDEN**

*Directed by Frank Chi - U.S. - English*

In a hostile time for Asian Americans, the revisiting of an unlikely athlete's story 10 years later gives hope and shatters stereotypes on sport's biggest stage.

- **DREAMING IN THE CITY THAT NEVER SLEEPS: MADE IN NY SHORTS - 91 mins**

- ALL I WANT IS EVERYTHING - New York Premiere**

*Directed by Alexandra Cuerdo - U.S. - English, Korean*

ALL I WANT IS EVERYTHING is a coming-of-age crime drama about a good Asian girl gone very bad. Fiercely driven, Alice Kim battles class, race, and family pressure to become a drug dealer in New York City's wild underground rave scene.

- CHINATOWN: OUR ONLY HOME**

*Directed by Tony Wang - U.S. - Chinese (Mandarin, Cantonese), English*

CHINATOWN: OUR ONLY HOME explores the passing down of Chinese traditions across generations in Manhattan Chinatown during COVID-19 by examining the evolution of the Chinatown community through the stories of small businesses and young people's actions.

- EKIDEN - World Premiere**

*Directed by Haruna Azumi - U.S. - English, Japanese*

A documentary about six runners in New York City who participated in a traditional Japanese long-distance relay race, Ekiden.

- LIN - New York Premiere**

*Directed by Lillian Xuege Li - U.S. - Chinese (Mandarin), Chinese (Cantonese), English*

How can a woman become herself when she has been shaped and taught to sacrifice for the gaze of others? Lin has many roles—a mother, a wife, a waitress, and an immigrant. She is also a woman with a secret who finally decides to quietly rebel.

- SONNET CROWN FOR NYC - New York Premiere**

*Directed by Xiao Han - U.S. - English, Amharic, Arabic (Lebanese), Arabic (Syrian), Taino, Thai, Polish, Spanish, Greek, Guyanese Creole, Chinese (Cantonese), Chinese (Taishanese), Igbo, Korean, Romanian, French*

SONNET CROWN FOR NYC is a filmed sequence of sonnets that honors local businesses and the communities that enrich and sustain New York City, honoring their stories and the work they do for their communities.

- **THE WORLD'S GREATEST** - *East Coast Premiere*  
*Directed by Judy Lei, Kenneth Lei - U.S. - English, Chinese (Cantonese)*  
Eager to fit in, a NY Chinatown teenage loner struggles to find real friendship, love, and acceptance.

**ACV ARCHIVES**

- **FRECKLED RICE**  
*Directed by Steven C. Ning - U.S. - English, Chinese (Cantonese)*  
This is a story of Joe Soo, a 13-year-old boy coming of age and coming to terms with his Chinese American heritage in Boston during the 1960s.
- **HERE TO STAY**  
*Directed by ManSee Kong - U.S. - English, Chinese (Cantonese)*  
This short illustrates the effects of gentrification in Manhattan's Chinatown as an elderly man and fellow tenants in an endangered single-room occupancy building await the results of an anti-eviction lawsuit.
- **MAN PUSH CART** - *Presented and screened at Museum of the City of New York*  
*Directed by Ramin Bahrani - U.S. - English, Urdu*  
A night in the life of a once famous Pakistani rock star, Ahmad, who now sells coffee and bagels from his push cart on the streets of Manhattan.
- **THE CHINATOWN FILES**  
*Directed by Amy Chen - U.S. - English, Chinese (Cantonese)*  
Exploring the roots of the Cold War on the Chinese American community during the 1950s and the 1960s, THE CHINATOWN FILES presents first hand accounts of people being hunted down, jailed and targeted for deportation in America.

**VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS PRESENTS: DIGITAL HISTORIES AND ARMED WITH A CAMERA** - *59 mins*

- **A GUIDE FOR WHEN IMMIGRANTS BECOME ANCESTORS** - *East Coast Premiere*  
*Directed by Iliana Garcia - U.S. - English*  
An intimate portrait of a fourth-generation Mexican Filipino American, as they navigate what it means to inherit an identity rooted in cultural memory.
- **CAMBODIA TOWN THRIVES** - *East Coast Premiere*  
*Directed by Brandon Soun - U.S. - English*

As community members of Cambodia Town face threats of displacement, the Cambodia Town Thrives collaborative was formed to create a better future for their home.

- **HEY THERE** - *East Coast Premiere*  
*Directed by Kitty Hu - U.S. - English,*  
A conversational exploration of inner child work through the lens of grief, love and community.
- **JOOK** - *East Coast Premiere*  
*Directed by Olivia Stark - U.S. - English*  
Over a FaceTime call during the COVID-19 pandemic, a grandfather teaches his three granddaughters how to make jook.
- **LET ME TAKE YOU HOME** - *East Coast Premiere*  
*Directed by Evelyn Hang Yin - U.S. - Chinese (Cantonese)*  
In the dreamscape of an old Chinatown, Ah Yeh finds home with his granddaughter.
- **SONG OF SIBERIA** - *East Coast Premiere*  
*Directed by Bryan Takeda - U.S. - Japanese, English*  
Following their surrender at the end of World War II, over 500,000 Japanese were forcibly captured and sent to Soviet labor camps called Gulags. This is a story of survival and the will to live.
- **THE BLESSING (祝福)** - *East Coast Premiere*  
*Directed by Ziyao Liu - U.S. - English, Chinese (Mandarin)*  
Unable to attend her mother's wedding in China due to the pandemic, a Chinese international student struggles to make a video to send her blessing.
- **THE FOURTH MARCH** - *New York Premiere*  
*Directed by Robert Shoji - U.S. - English*  
Many are familiar with the Selma to Montgomery marches in March of 1965. There was, however, a fourth march with Martin Luther King, Jr. and a young 21-year-old Japanese American activist that has been forgotten by time.
- **W(HO)** - *East Coast Premiere*  
*Directed by Candace Ho - U.S. - English*  
Unpack one Ho's journey with womanhood, internalized misogyny and sexuality from childhood to adulthood.
- **WINSTON** - *East Coast Premiere*

*Directed by Melanie Lim - U.S. - English*

Combining jazz and Philippine ethnic instruments build the foundation of Winston's unique musical style, earning him the title as the country's most influential film composer.

**RENDERING REAL: EXPLORATIONS OF ASIAN-AMERICAN AND ASIAN DIASPORIC ARCHIVES**

AAIFF45 is celebrating its retrospective with an online virtual exhibition featuring 11 artists and 4 organizations. As an extension and expansion of AAIFF's dedication to support Asian and Asian diasporic artists, the exhibition features projects that work with newer forms of media and moving image.

- Projects include: When Elephants Come to Town, Reflective Urbanisms: Calgary Chinatown, Wishing Well, Ten Miles of Track in One Day, The Musical Interpretation of Classic Painting by Binary: The Great Wave, Red Fuji, and Choju Jinbutsu Giga, Out of the Basement: The Basement Workshop and Asian American Movement Connective Threads, The rust in the furrow, The Collector, futureProof, Remembering Our Roots, and Korean Image Archive; Pavillion Curators are: Think!Chinatown, Self Evident: Asian America's Stories, Macro Waves, Close Isn't Home

**NARRATIVE FEATURES**

**BIRDS WATCHING (TORIOMINIIKU) - International Premiere**

*Directed by Kohei Inoue - Japan - Japanese*

Ayame and Tsugumi, who enjoy jogging, have been best friends since they were children. For Ayame who cannot get a boyfriend, Tsugumi invites her to go on a trip to a lake shore retreat so she can meet the friend of Tsugumi's boyfriend, Kota.

**BLESS YOU - World Premiere**

*Directed by Sanjay Sure - India - Hindi, Marathi*

Sadanand Murkute, a government clerk, and his family are struggling to cope with today's new normal. One weekend, while slurping the ice candy, Sadanand accidentally sneezes on his boss, leading the whole world to come to a grinding halt for him as a new drama begins.

**DAWNING (새벽) - East Coast Premiere**

*Directed by Young Min Kim - U.S. - Korean, English*

A trauma therapist, Haejin Park, is forced to face her family's darkest past after she returns to her childhood countryside farm to console her heartbroken younger sister.

\*Preceded by the following short:

**SWEPT UNDER - East Coast Premiere**

*Directed by Ethan Soo - U.S. - English*

After receiving a housewarming rug from his sister, a Cambodian adoptee discovers a dark history hidden underneath its surface.

**DEALING WITH DAD**

*Directed by Tom Huang - U.S. - English*

Margaret Chang reluctantly goes back to her hometown with her hapless brothers to deal with the sudden depression of their dad. The thing is, everybody hates him and he's actually nicer depressed than well.

**GOODAFTERNOON SWEETDREAM (굿애프터눈스윗드림) - East Coast Premiere**

*Directed by Seunghyeon Bang - South Korea - Korean*

Following her father's death, Ye Won hangs out with her friends, but her mind is elsewhere.

**NO NEW WAVE (曼岛日夜) - World Premiere**

*Directed by Ziwei Yao - Singapore, U.S., China, Taiwan - Chinese (Mandarin, Cantonese), English*

Ginny is a film graduate and a foreigner struggling to blend in and form attachments. Ginny tries to find her path in different ways and ultimately she is left with one last option.

**SILENT RIVER**

*Directed by Chris Chan Lee - U.S. - English*

Trapped in a lost world, a man meets a mysterious woman that resembles his estranged wife.

**THE GIRL FROM THE OTHER SIDE (とつくにの少女) - East Coast Premiere**

*Directed by Yutaro Kubo, Satomi Maiya - Japan - Japanese*

This is a story about an eerie being who lives in the outer land and a girl named Shiva from the inner land. They start to build an inseparable bond as they start to spend their times together in the outer land, where Shiva was abandoned.

\*Preceded by the following shorts:

**ANNAH LA JAVANAISE - New York Premiere**

*Directed by Fatimah Tobing Rony - Indonesia - Javanese, French*

In 1893, a 13-year-old girl came to work for French painter Paul Gauguin in Paris as his maid and model. They called her Annah la Javanaise. This is a reimagining of her story.

**DAISIES AND SPARROWS - East Coast Premiere**

*Directed by Ervin Han - Singapore - no dialogue*

On a quiet February morning in 1942, weeks after the Japanese empire occupied Singapore, a young Chinese boy accompanies his father on a walk from their home to a mass screening center.

**WE DON'T DANCE FOR NOTHING** - U.S. Premiere

*Directed by Stefanos Tai - Hong Kong, Philippines - English, Filipino (Tagalog), Chinese (Cantonese)*

A photo-montage recreation of memories shared by Filipina domestic workers in Hong Kong, WDDFN fuses still images with dance to showcase these women beyond their job descriptions, and follows one woman's journey to break free and run wild.

## **DOCUMENTARY FEATURES**

**A NIGHT OF KNOWING NOTHING**

*Directed by Payal Kapadia - India - Hindi, Bengali*

L writes letters to her estranged lover. Through these letters, we get a glimpse into the drastic changes taking place around her. Merging reality with fiction, dreams, memories, fantasies, and anxieties, a narrative unfolds.

**CHOSEN** - North American Premiere

*Directed by Joseph Juhn - U.S., South Korea - English, Korean*

In 2020, five Korean Americans - David Kim, Michelle Steel Park, Young Kim, Marilyn Strickland, and Andy Kim - of vastly diverse backgrounds with competing political views run for US Congress. David Kim is the only underdog with limited resources vying to be the first Korean American representative from Koreatown, Los Angeles.

**CODE NAME: NAGASAKI (KODENAVN: NAGASAKI)** - East Coast Premiere

*Directed by Fredrik S. Hana - Norway, Japan - Norwegian, English, Japanese*

CODE NAME: NAGASAKI tells the story of Marius and Fredrik, two young men who forged their friendship through filmmaking and decided to put their skills to a unique challenge: finding Marius' long lost Japanese mother.

**CROSSINGS** - East Coast Premiere

*Directed by Deann Borshay Liem - U.S., South Korea, North Korea - English, Korean*

In Crossings, a group of international women peacemakers sets out on a risky journey across the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea, calling for an end to a 70-year war that has divided the Korean peninsula and its people.

**SINGING IN THE WILDERNESS (旷野歌声)**

*Directed by Dongnan Chen - China - Chinese (Mandarin), A-Miao Language*

After hiding in the mountains for a century, a Miao ethnic Christian choir is discovered by a propaganda official and becomes a national sensation. The villagers must reconcile their faith, identity, and love with the real world in China.

**THERAPY DOGS** - *New York Premiere*

*Directed by Ethan Eng - U.S. - English*

THERAPY DOGS follows Ethan and his best friend Justin, who are students trying to make sense of their high school existence.

**WHAT ABOUT CHINA?** - *East Coast Premiere*

*Directed by Trinh T. Minh-ha - U.S., China - English*

Offering a journey into Eastern and Southern China's traditional architecture, the film addresses the process of "harmonizing" rural China and seeks to engage the viewer further by asking: What exactly is disappearing?

**Ones to Watch: Filmmakers Under 21** - *100 mins*

A collection of short films by talented filmmakers under 21.

**AND STILL, WE THRIVE** - *New York Premiere*

*Directed by Joy Xing - U.S. - English, Vietnamese*

A Chinese immigrant wistfully looks back on the triumphs and challenges of his 23-year-long journey in Canada, reflecting on the language barrier and his limited contact with home.

**BYKIDS: BUDDHISM, BHUTAN AND ME**

*Directed by Rinzin Jurmey - Bhutan - Bhutanese, English*

Rinzin Jurmey chose to join a monastery and dedicate his life to Buddhism at the age of 11. Now 18, he moves harmoniously between mountain village and city, embracing tradition and pop culture, religion and hip-hop, prayer and video games.

**FIT** - *World Premiere*

*Directed by Surya Sundararajan - U.S., India - English*

Mala struggles to find friends at her new high school but decides to try some new clothes in an attempt to fit in. However, she soon runs into trouble with her childhood friend, Shreya, after not being true to herself.

**HEAVENLY MEETING (天堂会议)** - *World Premiere*

*Directed by Zhouxu Zhang - U.S., China - Chinese (Mandarin)*

In heaven, the customer service staff holds a meeting to save the dying hero.

**O~FORTUNA** - *East Coast Premiere*

*Directed by Che Chen - U.S., Taiwan - English*

This film is about a successful musician trying to rekindle his passion for music, but who accidentally falls out the window and goes through a journey in the world of his past, present, and future.

**PHO**

*Directed by Ethan Chu - U.S. - English, Vietnamese*

After building a seemingly successful life, a man must come to terms with the melancholic truth that he has detached from his Vietnamese culture and subsequently his grandmother, both of which he once held a close relationship with.

**THE WHITE ROSE - East Coast Premiere**

*Directed by Ian Kim - U.S. - English*

The story of the German students who resisted the Nazis by distributing incendiary leaflets, told in stop-motion animation through the account of former member George J. Wittenstein.

**TO AMERICA - New York Premiere**

*Directed by Arya Jo Singh - U.S., India - English*

In an effort to defend her “American-ness”, an Indian-American teenager writes a poem about her dual identity.

**WHO ARE YOU? (누구세요)**

*Directed by Ellie (Yejin) Koo - South Korea - Korean*

An experimental short film shot on 16mm, created with analog editing and direct animation, about Taemong, Korean conception dreams, exploring the relationship between culture, motherhood, future, and gender.

**WUHAN DRIVER**

*Directed by Tiger Ji - U.S., China - English, Chinese (Mandarin)*

A Chinese Uber driver in New York struggles to make ends meet as he picks up various passengers on a long and dreary night.

**Below the Line - 92 mins**

**A HUNDRED JOYS - New York Premiere**

*Directed by Amanda Ann-Min Wong - Canada - English, Chinese (Cantonese)*

Highlighting the rich tenacity of Toronto’s East Chinatown community, this film explores the area’s people, sidewalks, and businesses, giving voice to their experiences of community, identity, anxieties, and hopes for the future.

**GET LOVED** - *World Premiere*

*Directed by Teresa Lee - U.S. - English*

A lonely woman gets a chance to find connection in a marketing focus group for a corporate yogurt campaign.

**OST.** - *New York Premiere*

*Directed by Abhichoke Chandrasen - Thailand - Thai, English*

A scoring assistant working on a horror feature film finds her debilitating perfectionism has manifested as the film's malevolent spirit who will not let her live past the night unless she delivers a perfect score.

**RUBY** - *International Premiere*

*Directed by Momo Daud - Pakistan, Canada - Urdu, English*

A ruminative slice of life following Ruby, a recently-arrived Pakistani immigrant in Toronto. On a summer day, she waits alone in her apartment for her husband and child to come home.

**SOFT SOUNDS OF PEELING FRUIT**

*Directed by So Young Shelly Yo - U.S. - Korean, English*

SOFT SOUNDS OF PEELING FRUIT is a coming-of-age story of a rebellious Korean American teenager named Hayoung who begins to understand the complexities of her mother's love.

**STILL ROLLING** - *East Coast Premiere*

*Directed by Liang-Chun Lin - U.S., Taiwan - Chinese (Mandarin)*

A rookie filmmaker on a TV production set tries to survive a constraining environment where people don't respect her boundaries. During the wrap party, she begins to process what she experienced.

**THE VOICE ACTRESS** - *New York Premiere*

*Directed by Anna J. Takayama - Japan - Japanese*

Kingyo, a veteran voice actress working in Tokyo, possesses a unique ability to see the soul in all things, living and inanimate. The voice acting world is changing and she must find a way to reconcile her way of living with the modern industry.

**It's a Mad Mad Multiverse** - 103 mins

**POACHERS**

*Directed by Tiffany Lin - U.S. - English*

During the summer before they must leave for college, two best friends come across a unique business opportunity: illegally harvesting and selling succulents on the California coast.

**REINCIDENCE** - *International Premiere*

*Directed by Tiffany Lin - Japan - Japanese*

REINCIDENCE is a story about a woman waking up in a different world every time she sleeps and meeting the same man every time.

**SRIKANDI** - *East Coast Premiere*

*Directed by Andrea Nirmala Widjajanto - Indonesia, Canada - Indonesian*

17-year-old Anjani is still grieving her father's death while simultaneously trying to save his shadow puppet studio from being sold by her mother.

**THANK YOU, COME AGAIN** - *New York Premiere*

*Directed by Nirav Bhakta - U.S. - Gujarati, English*

After the trigger of a hate crime, an undocumented Indian American convenience store clerk comes crashing into his subconscious as he grieves the passing of his father during an attempted border crossing.

**THE 17 CLUB**

*Directed by Shota Mori - Japan - English*

After an accident, high school girl Nanairo gains the ability to "time travel just one second." But she is an aspiring novelist, and that is the plot of her own story.

**THE LIMIT MODULAR BATH FOR TWO** - *International Premiere*

*Directed by Masaya Yoshida - Japan - Japanese*

Shimada is a popular entertainer on TV who is at a young woman's apartment despite being married to an actress. After finishing up with something, he finds a burglar, Kuwamoto, hiding in the bathtub.

**TIL IT BLOOMS** - *East Coast Premiere*

*Directed by Wendy Xu - Canada, China - English, Chinese (Mandarin)*

In the face of uncontrollable sorrow, an emotionally-constipated father desperately suppresses a "grief flower" sprouting from his face before his big speech at his father's funeral.

**Who Run the World** - 109 mins

**BEAUTY QUEEN** - *New York Premiere*

*Directed by Myra Aquino - Philippines - Kapampangan, Filipino (Tagalog)*

Set in the Philippines during World War II, a young woman struggles to find purpose after losing her father.

**LAST CALL** - *North American Premiere*

*Directed by Eysham Ali - Singapore - Malay, English*

Nadia, who is in her 40s, is a new airport ground staff. In her first week on the job, she must deal with a stubborn elderly passenger who arrives late for check-in and insists on traveling to attend his daughter's wedding.

**LAST HAWAIIAN SUGAR** - *New York Premiere*

*Directed by Déjà Cresencia Bernhardt - U.S., Kingdom of Hawai'i - English, Hawaiian, Samoan*

Twelve-year-old Nua makes peace with the mixed emotions she has about the land she lives on when she learns the sugar plantation she calls home will be closed forever.

**MOTHER IN THE MIST** - *New York Premiere*

*Directed by Kay Niuyue Zhang - China, U.S. - Chinese (Mandarin).*

Following Wuhan's coronavirus lockdown, a rural single mother, Zhao, embarks on a dangerous journey in search of her preemie newborn baby stranded in Wuhan City Hospital. Joining her path is a mysterious eight-year-old girl.

**SINCERELY MINÉ OKUBO** - *East Coast Premiere*

*Directed by Yuka Murakami - U.S. - English*

SINCERELY MINÉ OKUBO is a short biographical film on the artistic span and career of Miné Okubo, a Japanese-American artist best known for her graphic memoir Citizen 13660 (1946), chronicling the WWII incarceration while she was an internee.

**YAE: BLIND SAMURAI WOMAN** - *East Coast Premiere*

*Directed by Akiko Izumitani - U.S. - English*

In 18th century Japan, when a blind woman's father is killed by a young samurai avenging his own father's death, she agrees to be escorted to the nearest village.

**Fresh Starts and Sweethearts: Queer Shorts** - 101 mins

**FIRECRACKER** - *East Coast Premiere*

*Directed by Caroline Guo - U.S. - Chinese (Mandarin), English*

On the night of their anniversary, a Chinese woman is confronted with a life-changing decision: whether to keep her Asian-American girlfriend a secret from her traditional family with the upcoming Chinese New Year...or dare to be her true self.

**FIRSTS** - *New York Premiere*

*Directed by Jesse Ung - New Zealand - English*

On the eve of Chinese New Year, Steven, a closeted Chinese international student living in New Zealand oppressed by the expectations of his parents, plans to lose his virginity to a stranger that he meets online.

**HAUS OF PACIFIC** - *East Coast Premiere*

*Directed by DJ Chan - U.S. - English*

Haus of Pacific illuminates the tensions and beauty in the relationship between a queer son and his mother. The film explores the nuances of gender performativity and joy amidst the centering of trauma in queer Asian narratives.

**HOTTER UP CLOSE** - *New York Premiere*

*Directed by Leland Montgomery - U.S. - English*

On the eve of his 30th birthday, a gay slacker must overcome his crippling insecurities in order to find love.

**LUCKY FISH** - *New York Premiere*

*Directed by Emily May Jampel - U.S. - English*

Two Asian-American teenagers meet in the bathroom of a Chinese restaurant while having dinner with their families.

**MANEKI** - *World Premiere*

*Directed by Brandon Okumura - U.S. - English*

After being rejected by her favorite customer, a young cashier must grapple with her feelings when the customer continues to visit their ramen shop.

**MIDNIGHT RHYTHMS** - *World Premiere*

*Directed by Quincy Woo - U.S. - English*

A young gay man struggles with his sexual identity and spirals into the world of drunken façades and midnight afterthoughts, questioning who he is and if he's willing to take the risk to be his truest self where others can see.

**Leading From the Front: Filmmakers On Camera** - 98 mins

**AN UNFINISHED FILM** (未完成電影)

*Directed by Yi-Chiang Lin - U.S., Taiwan - Chinese (Mandarin)*

An image letter to the filmmaker himself after his debut feature shoot was forced to suspend by COVID-19 at the end of 2020.

**BUS GIRL** - *New York Premiere*

*Directed by Jessica Henwick - U.K. - English*

An aspiring young female chef navigates the cut-throat world of high-end cooking.

- BON VOYAGE (无始无明)** - *World Premiere*  
*Directed by Jiawen Li - China - Chinese*  
A journey behind the wheel, driving down memory lane.
  
- DE CLOSIN NIGHT** - *New York Premiere*  
*Directed by Shicong Zhu - U.S., China - English, Chinese (Mandarin, Shanghainese)*  
A Chinese theater student tries to get rid of her accent in order to land a college performance. But as she tries harder, the line between the skill set and her self-identity gets blurred.
  
- EXHAUSTED**  
*Directed by Tiffany Jiang - U.S. - English*  
Rattled by the devastating Atlanta spa shootings, a Chinese-American filmmaker turns the camera on herself to document the invisible toll of such racially motivated hate crimes suffered by generations of the AAPI community.
  
- ELVIS OF LAOS** - *New York Premiere*  
*Directed by Van Ditthavong - U.S. - English*  
Through dance and conversations - a famous Lao singer, his son, and his granddaughter examine the artist's life, inspirations, and legacy after leaving the war torn country in late 1974.
  
- GREAT LISTENER** - *World Premiere*  
*Directed by Tristan Nash - U.S. - Chinese (Cantonese)*  
An East Asian woman contends with what it means to be a “great listener.”
  
- TO REPAIR (修理)** - *New York Premiere*  
*Directed by Erin Shigaki - U.S. - English*  
A Japanese American artist investigates her community's history along with that of a Black American friend, finding common ground and creating an offering of solidarity building.
  
- W•ASIAN** - *New York Premiere*  
*Directed by Ashley Lobao - U.S., Malaysia - English*  
A young filmmaker explores her biracial identity through years of home videos.

**Growing Taller** - 101 mins

- AN INVITATION (访客)**

*Directed by Yeung Tung, Hao Zhao - China - Chinese (Cantonese, Mandarin)*

An 8-year-old boy reluctantly visits his divorced father in Hong Kong, who wants him to become a Hong Kong citizen.

**ENTRANCE (叩門)** - *North American Premiere*

*Directed by Matthew Leung - Hong Kong - Chinese (Cantonese)*

Desperate to get into the secondary school of his choice, a 12-year-old boy commits an unethical act after his entrance exam.

**FINDING VEGA** - *East Coast Premiere*

*Directed by Joey Xuetong Zhao - U.S., China - English, Chinese (Mandarin)*

A 12-year-old girl who lives in a Chinatown single-room-occupancy with her vegetative state mother has a passionate love for the starry sky. While eagerly wanting to realize her self-worth, she experiences a collision of reality.

**GUGU (奇怪的果)** - *World Premiere*

*Directed by Rae Hu - Hong Kong, China - Chinese (Wenzhou Dialect, Mandarin)*

Set in the backdrop of 90's Wenzhou, a young girl lies to her parents for the first time. Stirring feelings of guilt and nostalgia, the film explores life in China during the large-scale economic reforms, and childhood with absent parents.

**WHEN THE SKY WAS BLUE** - *North American Premiere*

*Directed by Rae Choi, Hao Zhao - Australia - English, Chinese (Mandarin)*

One Sunday between meals and chores with her family, ten-year-old Leah experiences small but striking moments of longing and loss.

**Turning the Page** - *92 mins*

**A WINTER GLOVE (장갑을 사러)** - *North American Premiere*

*Directed by Hyeonju Lee - South Korea - Korean, Japanese*

In-kyung, a piano teacher at a private academy, is informed by her longtime boyfriend, Sang-hyun, that he will be taking a job in Japan. She decides to start taking Japanese classes without his knowledge.

**JUN & JAYDEN** - *New York Premiere*

*Directed by Ling Yu Yan - U.S., China - Chinese (Mandarin), English*

Two skaters must come to terms with their dissolving friendship over the course of a week at the skatepark.

**ELITE MATCH** - *World Premiere*

*Directed by Kathy Meng - U.S. - Chinese (Mandarin), English*

Lily is a single Chinese mother who is online dating. One evening, Lily attends a singles mixer where she must reconcile between her preoccupation with her daughter's life and her desire to date.

**HUI JIA (回家) - East Coast Premiere**

*Directed by Roxy Shih - U.S. - Chinese (Mandarin), English*

A Chinese American family comes together for the first time after one of the adult children has died.

**THE RESEMBLANCE**

*Directed by Derek Nguyen - U.S. - English*

When a grieving couple go 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.

**YUGEN - East Coast Premiere**

*Directed by Ruth Du - U.S. - English*

Jing experiences the unsettling and mysterious powers of nature as she grieves the death of her child.

**Heirloom Large: Family Stories - 103 mins**

**A PORTRAIT OF US (우리의 착한 이야기)**

*Directed by Sarah Park - U.S., South Korea - Korean*

A short documentary that follows two Korean grandparents as they navigate their modern-day reckoning of their immigration story and grand-parenthood.

**COCOON LOVE (茧爱)**

*Directed by Xiaowen Wang - U.S., China - Chinese (Mandarin)*

A teen girl returns to her hometown and embarks on a journey of healing and self realization.

**LOOK LIKE YOU - World Premiere**

*Directed by Snigdha Kapoor - U.S. - English*

Tara, a South Asian queer woman, goes to see her eight-year-old biological son after many years, but is unprepared for the tensions that resurface with his white adoptive parents.

**MUSEUM OF MEMORIES - International Premiere**

*Directed by Navneet Mishra - India - Maithili*

A mother in conversation with her filmmaker son explores the 25 years she's spent in Mumbai.

**MURDER TONGUE** - *New York Premiere*

*Directed by Ali Sohail Jaura - Pakistan - Urdu, Sindhi*

In a family where people seldom speak, can mother tongue protect us? Or does it have us 'murdered'?

**ONLY THE MOON STANDS STILL**

*Directed by Johnson Cheng - U.S. - Chinese (Mandarin)*

Three generations of Chinese women say goodbye to their family ballroom dance studio. Winner of the 2021 AFI FEST Audience Award, executive produced by Lena Waithe.

**PILI KA MO'O** - *New York Premiere*

*Directed by Justyn Ah Chong - U.S. - English, Native Hawaiian*

A Native Hawaiian taro farming family is drawn into a logistically and emotionally complex quest to preserve their ancestral land.

### **Music Video Showcase**

**"1-1" DANCE FILM** - *New York Premiere*

*Directed by Lee Milby - U.S., China - English*

An exploration of duality and time, as a woman struggles with her inner conflicts.

**BUBBLE TEA**

*Directed by Bianca Catbagan - U.S., South Korea, Philippines, China, Japan, Mongolia - Bengali, English*

This fun video is centered around the younger generation of the AAPI community & uplifts the joy they find in simple pleasures despite the hate still aimed at them, evoking a sense of nostalgia for simpler times of being young & carefree.

**DIFFERENT THAN BEFORE** - *World Premiere*

*Directed by Mayumi Yoshida - Canada - English, Chinese (Cantonese)*

An Asian family celebrating at a Chinese restaurant faces a group of racist hecklers, which puts the Father (Baba) at a crossroads where he needs to decide what to do that is best for his family.

**IF I TOOK A PILL - TONIE**

*Directed by Kimberly Te - U.S. - English*

A piece about coming to terms with mental health struggles.

**TANK FAIRY**

*Directed by Erich Rettstadt - U.S., Taiwan - Chinese (Mandarin)*

Once upon a time, the magical Tank Fairy delivered tanks of gas (with plenty of sass) to the home of young Jojo, a lonely dreamer in need of a glittery godmother....

**"THE ONLY HEARTBREAKER" BY MITSKI**

*Directed by Maegan Houang, Jeff Desom - U.S. - English*

Mitski cannot help but turn the world to ash.

**WATER & OIL BY JENNI RUDOLPH - New York Premiere**

*Directed by Brandon E. Lee - U.S. - English*

Jenni Rudolph explores the search for wholeness and community as a mixed-race person in her music video for "Water & Oil".

AAIFF is presented by CITI, a preeminent banking partner for institutions with cross-border needs, a global leader in wealth management and a valued personal bank in its home market of the United States. CITI celebrates its AAPI colleagues and the community. The bank stands in solidarity against anti-Asian racism and xenophobia, and is focused on resilience and unity. Together, CITI and the Asian American International Film Festival are proud to offer another platform to spotlight the many achievements of the broader AAPI community.

**About the Asian American International Film Festival**

The Asian American International Film Festival (AAIFF) is proudly known as "The First Home to Asian American Cinema." Organized by Asian CineVision, it's the first and longest-running festival dedicated to showcasing the moving image work by media artists of Asian descent for and about the Asian diaspora experience. The Festival takes place in New York City, the second-largest Asian-American market in the U.S. Every year, AAIFF attracts audiences from all five boroughs of New York City, the tri-state region, and around the world.

**About Asian CineVision**

Asian CineVision (ACV) is a media arts nonprofit devoted to the development, exhibition, promotion, and preservation of Asian and Asian American experiences through storytelling. Our mission is to nurture and grow the community of makers and lovers of Asian and Asian American independent film, television, and digital.

Films submitted and screened at the festival are eligible to participate in our National Tour program, bringing Asian diaspora stories to broader audiences across North America through a rental service for cultural and educational institutions.

**Thank You**

The 45th Asian American International Film Festival is made possible with support from CITI, LIFEWTR, Asia Society, Mayor's Office of Media And Entertainment, NYC & Company, Third World Newsreel, The Corky Lee Photographic Justice Exhibit Organizing Committee, OCA, SAG-AFTRA, Tamiment-Wagner Collections, NYU Special Collections, Final Draft, Chowbus, NYU A/P/A and the many friends of ACV.

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